

SIMRAN

Sikhism is based on two main principles — harmony and clean actions (ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮ). The fifth Guru says in *Gauri Sukhmani* :

Meditate on the Lord's Name and do what is clean.
 ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮੁ ॥

Simran literally means remembering. In *Gurbani* we find also the word, ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿ, etc., used for meditation.

On What to Concentrate

It is of basic significance to determine on what to concentrate during the practice of *simran*. The tenth Master in his thirty-three *Sawaiyas* says :

Some worship Brahma as the God, others point to Shiv as God,

ਕੋਊ ਦਿਜੇਸ ਕੇ ਮਾਨਤ ਹੈ ਅਰ ਕੋਊ ਮਹੇਸ ਕੇ ਏਸ ਬਤੈ ਹੈ ।

Some say that Vishnu is the Lord of the world, and that by worshipping Him all sins are erased;

ਕੋਊ ਕਹੈ ਬਿਸਨੋ ਬਿਸਨਾਇਕ ਜਾਹਿ ਭਜੇ ਅਘ ਓਘ ਕਟੈ ਹੈ ।

Think on this, thousand times, O fool, at the last hour all thy gods will forsake thee.

ਬਾਰ ਹਜਾਰ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਅਰੇ ਜੜ ਅੰਤ ਸਮੇ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਤਜ ਜੈ ਹੈ ।

Meditate on Him in Thy heart Who was, is, and ever shall be.

ਤਾਂਹੀ ਕੋ ਧਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨ ਹੀਏ ਜੋ ਥਾ ਅਬ ਹੈ ਅਰ ਆਗੇਊ ਹੂੰ ਹੈ ।

At the very beginning of the Holy Granth, we have clear injunction as to Whom to remember and on Whom to concentrate.

The first *shlok* gives the definition thus :

The True One was in the beginning, before all ages began;
The True One exists even now, and shall for ever be.
ਅਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ, ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

This is preceded by a clear cut concise conception of the Satguru about the Ultimate Truth :

The One Supreme Being, Whose Name is Eternal Verity,
the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, Immortal, Unborn,
Self-existent, the Enlightener; and Grace.

The fifth Guru in *Rag Maru* has also clarified it :

In the heart cherish the Timeless being, and remember
Him day and night.
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਰਿਦੈ ਧਿਆਇਦਾ, ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਣ ਜਪੰਥਾ ॥

Because Sikhism enjoins upon the worship of the Formless God (ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ), Who is :

God hath no quoit or marks, no colour, no caste, no lineage.

ਚਕ੍ਰ ਚਿਹਨ ਅਰੁ ਬਰਨ ਜਾਤਿ ਅਰੁ ਪਾਤਿ ਨਹਿਨ ਜਿਹ ॥

No form, no complexion, no outline, no costume, none can in any way describe Him.

ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਅਰੁ ਰੇਖ ਭੇਖ ਕੋਊ ਕਹਿ ਨ ਸਕਤ ਕਿਹ ॥

But God, the Creator, can be observed functioning in His Manifestation, Creation, and Nature wherein He obviously works meticulously (ਤਾਕੇ ਤਾਕ) as Guru Nanak says in *Var Asa* :

Bless Thee, O Thou, Manifest in Nature.

ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵਸਿਆ ॥

It is further explained in *Rag Parbhati* :

The Creator is in His manifest creation, and the creation is the Creator, Who is present everywhere.

ਖਾਲਿਕੁ ਖਲਕ ਖਲਕ ਮਹਿ ਖਾਲਿਕੁ, ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਸ੍ਰਬ ਠਾਂਈ ॥

Satguru's conception of God can be summed up somewhat in the following way : He is both *Nirgun* (Absolute) as well as *Sargun* (Personal). Before there was any creation, God was contained absolutely in Himself. At the time when He manifested Himself, there was none else. Taking counsel with Himself, what He did, came to pass. There was no world, nor any virtue or sin, or

any caste, creed, or gender. There was only the Formless One Himself. When He thought of making Himself *Sargun* or manifest in creation, He became related to what is called Name (*Naam*). To manifest Himself He made nature where He established His seat, and is immanent, diffused everywhere in the form of Love.

According to Sikhism, God is not an abstract imagination, but is a Personal Functioning Being. He is the Father of all, shaping the world, and supporting all from within. But He does not take birth. He has no incarnations. He Himself stands for all creative agencies. He Himself is All-in-All and is independent of all material conditions. There can be no question of creating the Creator, nor can He be set up as an image. (ਥਾਪਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਅਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਸੋਇ ॥).

So, it is such a God, All-in-All, the Uncreated One, on Whom we have to meditate and Whose Name we have always to repeat, and in Whose presence we have to live and act.

Simran is meant to take us from the *Sthul* (*Sargun*) to *Sukham* (*Nirgun*) God. Development in this process takes place through stages which can be enumerated as follows :

The first is to recite and repeat the Name audibly with the tongue.

Had I a hundred thousand tongues instead of one, Nay, if twenty times as many,

ਇਕ ਦੂ ਜੀਭੋ ਲਖ ਹੋਹਿ ਲਖ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਲਖ ਵੀਸ ॥

I would call upon the Name of God hundred thousand times with each tongue.

ਲਖੁ ਲਖੁ ਗੋੜਾ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ॥

In this path leading to the Master these are steps which we have to mount to become one with Him.

ਏਤੁ ਰਾਹਿ ਪਤਿ ਪਵੜੀਆ ਚੜੀਐ ਹੋਇ ਇਕੀਸ ॥ (ਜਪੁ)

and :

The tongue that utters not the Name should better be cut up bit by bit.

ਰਸਨਾ ਜਪੈ ਨ ਨਾਮੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਕਰਿ ਕਟੀਐ ॥ (ਫੁਨਹੇ ਮ: ੫)

This is the first step, which being audible keeps ears and mouth occupied, but along with it we have to occupy the mind also

by devoting it to what we recite. To understand the meaning is, therefore, necessary for further advance. Without understanding we will just be repeating like parrots. The ears are occupied in hearing the Creator functioning in His creation (ਅਖੀਂ ਕੁਦਰਤ, ਕੰਨੀ ਬਾਣੀ).

I see only God and hear only Him and speak of Him alone.

ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦੀਸੈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਏਕੁ ਏਕੁ ਵਖਾਣੀਐ ॥

For, it is all manifestation of the same Creator; without that One God I know of none other.

ਆਤਮ ਪਸਾਰਾ ਕਰਣਹਾਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੀਐ ॥ (ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ: ੫)

The second step follows when the repetition becomes inaudible and continues without break with every breath and morsel. In *Var Gauri*, the fourth Nanak says :

The Guru's Sikh who remembers God with every breath and morsel is loved by the Guru.

ਜੋ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੋ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ ॥

If the word *Waheguru* is being repeated for *simran*, then inhale with *Wahe* and exhale with *Guru*. This practice will help the recitation of the Name by itself in every condition. But along with it the mind must also be kept devoted towards His bounties, kindnesses and His immanence in everything.

One who cherishes the Name in his heart,

ਉਰਿ ਧਾਰੈ ਜੋ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

sees the Lord reflected in all others,

ਸਰਬ ਮੈ ਪੇਖੈ ਭਗਵਾਨੁ ॥

and salutes Him every moment.

ਨਿਮਖ ਨਿਮਖ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਨਮਸਕਾਰੈ ॥

Such a man is capable of saving everybody.

ਨਾਨਕ ਓਹੁ ਅਪਰਸੁ ਸਗਲ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੈ ॥

It is always essential to do *simran* in His Grace and in deep gratefulness. *Simran* should be continued :

Rising, sitting and in sleep remember the Name,

ਉਠਤ ਬੈਠਤ ਸੋਵਤ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

for this is the constant practice of the servant.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨ ਕੈ ਸਦ ਕਾਮੁ ॥

When this repetition becomes a habit and the mind gives up feeling bored but enjoys the calm sweetness which *simran* affords, then the stage arrives about which the Guru says :

Those who do not forget but cherish the Name of the Lord in their mind while breathing and eating,
ਜਿਨਾ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਨ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਾ ਮਨਿ ਮੰਤੁ ॥
are blessed, for they alone are perfect saints.
ਧੰਨੁ ਸਿ ਸੇਈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਪੂਰਨੁ ਸੇਈ ਸੰਤੁ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਗਉੜੀ ਮ: ੫)

The third stage is then reached, when the inaudible recitation and repetition is re-enforced with the mind remaining devoted night and day to the reality of the Timeless Being :

In the heart meditate upon the Timeless Being and remember Him night and day.
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਰਿਦੈ ਧਿਆਇਦਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਜਪੰਥਾ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਮਾਰੂ ਮ: ੫)

When the Name is never forgotten and while sitting, walking, doing worldly duties, we remain and work in the presence of the Supreme Master. Our mind remains in the Divine Presence without any effort — this is the fourth stage called the stage of *Sahej Anand* (Undisturbed Bliss). Then the *Shabd* and our spiritual insight coincide and *simran* continues without any recitation, meditation or effort. This is called (ਅਜਪਾ ਜਾਪ). Here the mind begins to enjoy untold bliss of the Divine Nectar :

When with good fortune mind begins to feel the presence of the Lord, it reposes in the state of Eternal Bliss.
ਸਹਜ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਹੋਆ ਵਡਭਾਰੀ ਮਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਮੀਠਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥ (ਸੂਹੀ ਮ: ੪)

This is the top-most stage to be achieved.

Simran can very easily be continued while we are walking or riding a horse, a car or a bus or while ploughing the field, sitting on a truck or tractor or churning curd for butter or cooking meals, fanning the *sangat*, or serving the *pangat* or doing any other service or work. Discussing points in *bani* and anecdotes from history depicting the sufferings and sacrifices the Sikhs and Satguru bore to bring about our uplift and spiritual enlightenment and talking about the unlimited bounties, grace and blessings showered on us by the Satguru as compared to our own weaknesses and worthlessness, are in a way, a part of *simran*. Remembering the

battles fought for our deliverance and other acts of the Satguru to uphold righteousness and exact justice and stem the tide of bigotted tyranny, also form a part of *simran*. Feeling grateful and offering thanks while sitting by the fire in the biting cold or reposing under a fan and before a cooler in burning heat of the day and enjoying other comforts are also a sort of *simran*.

No special age is set for *simran*. It should be started straight away lest this span of life is snapped and we are called to account. The bell may toll and the time be up any moment. Nobody can vouchsafe whether the next breath will come or not (ਮਤੁ ਕਿ ਜਾਪੈ ਸਾਹੁ ਆਵੈ ਕਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਰਾਮ). Experience also tells that it becomes very difficult, almost impossible, to concentrate the mind when in pain or suffering from an ailment. It can best be done in good health and while we are fit. In *Rag Bhairon*, we get the clear warning in these words :

So long as your age and health are good,

ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਜਰਾ ਰੋਗੁ ਨਹੀ ਆਇਆ ॥

so long as time has not overpowered the body,

ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਕਾਲਿ ਗੁਸੀ ਨਹੀ ਕਾਇਆ ॥

so long as your speech has not faltered,

ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਬਿਕਲ ਭਈ ਨਹੀ ਬਾਨੀ ॥

O mind ! dwell on the Master who supports the Universe.

ਭਜਿ ਲੇਹਿ ਰੇ ਮਨ ਸਾਰਿਗਧਾਨੀ ॥

If you do not meditate now, then when will you do it ?

ਅਬ ਨ ਭਜਸਿ ਭਜਸਿ ਕਬ ਭਾਈ ॥

For, when the end approaches no meditation will be possible.

ਆਵੈ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਭਜਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥

Time is fast passing by. We should better take the time by the forelock and imbibe *simran* in our heart, making it an inseparable part of our life in such a way that even in distress, calamity, adversity and shock of suffering, the remembrance is not disrupted.

We should set out to do *simran* with a concentrated, clear mind and with consciousness of the presence of the Providence, with spirit and prayer :

According to my actions I may not find a place even in

hell; I depend only on Your Grace.

ਅਪਣੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਰ ਨਰਕ ਹੂੰ ਨ ਪਾਵਉ ਠਉਰ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਬਿਰਦ ਕੇ ਆਸਰੇ ਸੰਭਾਰ
ਹਉ । (ਪਾ: ੧੦)

and :

Grant me understanding to sing Thy praises,

ਤੇਰੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵਾ ਦੇਹਿ ਬੁਝਾਈ ॥

so that I may abide in Truth in accordance with Your
Will.

ਜੈਸੇ ਸਚ ਮਹਿ ਰਹਉ ਰਜਾਈ ॥ (ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ: ੧)

During this progress, naturally there will be some hurdles, difficulties, and obstacles which one may have to face and overcome. For instance, people begin to talk and criticise, some in praise and some to ridicule, that such and such person has become a *bhagat* and is posing to be a spiritual person. This will create pride and fan the ego and after some time offerings and other services will begin to pour in abundance. This onslaught has to be safeguarded by inculcating humility in the mind :

I am sacrificed to that Guru-conscious person who has inculcated humility in the mind.

ਹਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਘੋਲਿ ਘੁਮਾਇਆ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਰਿਦੈ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਆਵੈ । (Bhai Gurdas)

We should proceed unmindful of them all as :

I now seek the Master's protection after all.

ਅਬ ਹਮ ਚਲੀ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਹਾਰਿ ॥

O my God, I have sought Your refuge, save me or punish
me as You will.

ਜਬ ਹਮ ਸਰਣਿ ਪੁਛੁ ਕੀ ਆਈ ਰਾਖੁ ਪੁਛੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਮਾਰਿ ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

The clever flatteries of the people have been cast in the
fire.

ਲੋਕਨ ਕੀ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ਉਪਮਾ ਤੇ ਬੈਸੰਤਰਿ ਜਾਰਿ ॥

Let them say good or bad, I have surrendered myself.

ਕੋਈ ਭਲਾ ਕਹਉ ਭਾਵੈ ਬੁਰਾ ਕਹਉ ਹਮ ਤਨੁ ਦੀਓ ਹੈ ਢਾਰਿ ॥

Anybody who seeks Your protection, O Master, save him
with Your kindness.

ਜੇ ਆਵਤ ਸਰਣਿ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਪੁਛੁ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਕਿਰਪਾਧਾਰਿ ॥

Nanak has sought Your protection, O Master, save his
honour.

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਣਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਲਾਜ ਮੁਰਾਰਿ ॥

At a certain stage, the nearness to the Divine Master starts to affect what one says. If one begins to indulge in showering blessings and curses, whatever is earned and gained is then lost. In advanced stage of *simran*, a very interesting hurdle is sometimes experienced. Our mind (*atma*), when deep in *simran*, sometimes leaves the physical body and soars high. It enjoys the spiritual flight. But as we have not yet reached the stage of perfect harmony, a lurking fear steps in and works like a spoke in a moving wheel, the fear that the *atma* may not find its way back to the body. The incidence of Baba Ram Rai's end is recollected. Baba Ram Rai used to practise yoga and indulge in enjoying spiritual flights leaving his physical body lying. One day when the attendant knowing this practice of Baba was away on some work, people seeing the body thus lying motionless thought that Baba Ram Rai was dead and cremated the body.

In this state of *simran*, fear of the unknown around the corner becomes another serious obstacle. If we have a clear conscience and nothing to be shy of in our actions, this fear and hesitation turn into joy and enthusiasm (ਚਾਉ) to view and enjoy the unseen. It is sustained effort and understanding of the *Shabd* that help overcome such hurdles. When these hurdles are crossed and super-natural powers generated are subdued, our intelligence and spiritual insight is energised. As a consequence, the vision is widened and one gets flashes of the unknowable past and future and other unperceivable happenings. The visions, the beautiful flashes and other experiences that we get as we advance in the process of *simran*, cannot be described. These can only be felt and cherished by personal experience. They are like a sweet nectar whose taste can only be enjoyed by the one who drinks it. As is said in *Rag Gauri* :

It is like sweet wine of Mahua flower;

he alone can know its taste who has drunk it.

ਅਲਉਤੀ ਕਾ ਜੈਸੇ ਭਇਆ ਬਰੇਡਾ, ਜਿਨਿ ਪੀਆ ਤਿਨਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥ (ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣ
ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ)

And :

If a dumb person tastes the juice of heavenly nectar, how can he describe the taste when asked ?

ਗੁਰੂਗੀ ਮਹਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਰਸੁ ਚਾਖਿਆ, ਪੂਛੇ ਕਹਨੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਹੋ ॥ (ਸੋਰਠਿ ਨਾਮ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ)

Recitation of *Gurbani* is an important part of *simran*. We are enjoined upon to commit to memory the five *bani*s recited when *amrit* is prepared, and *Rehras* and *Keertan Sohila*. These are to be recited during morning, evening and at night when going to bed. This is to ensure regularity and continuity of *simran* in all conditions. In initial stages, some times we get bored by reciting over and over again the same word or *bani*. But it affords a good opportunity to practise concentration and create will power to keep in control the mind which is so very fickle and wild. All the same, if we switch to reciting for a little while some other *bani* from the Scripture, it helps revive interest and brings the mind back from its wild wanderings. Achievements and experiences are gained only by personal effort. But this is not the final stage. The veil of ignorance and superstition is wrung aside only by the flash of Divine Love.

When one eats up the desires, spiritual discipline (ਸਿਧਿ) is attained and then enlightenment dawns.

ਅਚਰੁ ਚਰੈ ਤਾ ਸਿਧਿ ਹੋਈ ਸਿਧਿ ਤੇ ਬੁਧਿ ਪਾਈ ॥

When the arrow of love pierces the body doubt is removed.

ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੇ ਸਰ ਲਾਗੇ ਤਨ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਤਾ ਕ੍ਰਮੁ ਕਾਟਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥ (ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮ : ੪)

It is then that in the admiration and love of the Master, one forgets the self and 'I-am-ness' is effaced, as a result of which complete harmony is achieved with God. This stage is described as :

In the human soul abides God, the soul exists in God : this is realised through the Guru's teaching.

ਆਤਮ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਆਤਮੁ ਚੀਨਸਿ ਗੁਰ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ॥ (ਭੈਰਉ ਮ : ੧)

When "I" was there You were away; now that You are there my 'I-am-ness' has disappeared.

ਜਬ ਹਮ ਹੋਤੇ ਤਬ ਤੂ ਨਾਹੀ ਅਬ ਤੂਹੀ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

Winds blowing in the seas raise high waves, but they too are nothing but water.

ਅਨਲ ਅਗਮ ਜੈਸੇ ਲਹਰਿ ਮਇ ਓਦਧਿ ਜਲ ਕੇਵਲ ਜਲ ਮਾਂਹੀ ॥
(ਸੋਰਠਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ)

Then one begins to say :

I am but nothing, O God, every thing belongs to You.

ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤੇਰਾ ॥

On one side You are the absolute Lord, while on the other
You are the Related Immanent One. Between these two
ends my Master is playing His plays.

ਈਐ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਊਐ ਸਰਗੁਨ ਕੇਲ ਕਰਤ ਬਿਚਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਮੇਰਾ ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

You are within the body and also without, for, You pervade
everywhere.

ਨਗਰ ਮਹਿ ਆਪਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਫੁਨਿ ਆਪਨ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੇ ਸਗਲ ਬਸੇਰਾ ॥

You are the Ruler and also the Subject, at some places
You are the Master while at other You are the Servant.

ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਰਾਜਨੁ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਰਾਇਆ ਕਹ ਕਹ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਕਹ ਕਹ ਚੇਰਾ ॥

From whom do we hide and whom do we cheat, for
wherever I see, Your Presence gets near and near.

ਕਾ ਕਉ ਦੁਰਾਉ ਕਾਸਿਉ ਬਲਬੰਚਾ ਜਹ ਜਹ ਪੇਖਉ ਤਹ ਤਹ ਨੇਰਾ ॥

Nanak, since I have met the Guru-saint, I see no difference
between the ocean and the drop.

ਸਾਧ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਭੋਟਿਓ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਾਗਰ ਬੂੰਦ ਨਹੀ ਅਨ ਹੇਰਾ ॥ (ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ: ੫)

Here one transcends the need to understand. One has only
to accept and adore. The Satguru has offered a new approach,
above the traditional paths of knowledge, work, devotion and
renunciation. This is the path, the doctrine, of Name. This means
creation of the mood of aesthetic ecstasy, which in other words
means aesthetical insight leading man through appearances to
reality. One gets intuitional understanding of the Divine Being.
That is why Sikhs are sometimes referred to as mystics. When
proceeding on this way we come across many distractions and we
gain some such powers which are not understood by a common
man and get wondrous flashes and experience other inexpressible
visions. We should better be careful and not get attracted by and
involved in them. The goal is beyond them which is the place of
the Formless and Timeless God, about whom Satguru says :

The Lord is without form, feature, or hue, beyond the

world's senses.

ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖੁ ਨ ਰੰਗੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਿੰਨ ॥

He touches man's understanding through His Grace.

ਤਿਸਹਿ ਬੁਝਾਏ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਿਸੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੁਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ॥ (ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ)

A stage is achieved when, in the perceptible and imperceptible, the Light shines from only One Source. Then :

The Master alone speaks in every heart.

ਸਭੈ ਘਟ ਰਾਮੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਰਾਮਾ ਬੋਲੈ ॥

Who else but God speaks.

ਰਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੋਲੈ ਰੇ ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

Of the same clay are moulded the elephant and the ant, and vessels of different shapes.

ਏਕਲ ਮਾਟੀ ਕੁੰਜਰ ਚੀਟੀ ਭਾਜਨ ਹੈਂ ਬਹੁ ਨਾਨਾ ਰੇ ॥

The Master is functioning in every thing, in plant life, animal life, crawling life and winged life.

ਅਸਥਾਵਰ ਜੰਗਮ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਮ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਸਮਾਨਾ ਰੇ ॥

(ਮਾਲੀ ਗਉੜੀ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ)

And :

Whatever, even the deer, the fish and the birds utter, I hear in them none else but my God.

ਜੋ ਬੋਲਤ ਹੈ ਮ੍ਰਿਗ ਮੀਨ ਪੰਖੇਰੂ ਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਾਪਤ ਹੈ ਨਹੀ ਹੋਰ ॥ (ਮਲਾਰ ਮ : ੪)

Previously we were proceeding from *asthul* to *sukham*, now at this stage we observe *asthul* in the *sukham* as well. All the notes and noises originate through the five elements in this world. It is the Supreme Master who strikes the notes :

Now that my Friends (Guru-conscious loved ones) have come into my home (mind), the five strains of Divine Music have begun to ring within me, unstruck.

ਪੰਚ ਸਬਦ ਧੁਨਿ ਅਨਹਦ ਵਾਜੇ ਹਮ ਘਰਿ ਸਾਜਨ ਆਏ ॥ (ਸੁਹੀ ਮ : ੧)

The vision of the immanent God is then observed and enjoyed through our senses :

This Universe that you perceive, is the manifest image of God; in it we have the vision of the Lord.

ਇਹੁ ਵਿਸੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਤੁਮ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਏਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਹਰਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਨਦਰੀ ਆਇਆ ॥

(ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ : ੩)

Beyond the circle of religions (*Vedas*, Semitic Texts, etc.),

and the whole world,
 ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹਭਾ ਹੂੰ ਬਾਹਰਾ ॥
 Nanak's Master is clearly seen manifest all over.
 ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੁ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਾਹਰਾ ॥ (ਆਸਾ ਮ : ੫)

God is thus delivered from the bonds of religions and is brought back to man. With the help and strength of the Guru, by and by, with *simran* we reach a stage when we forget our self completely. There our soul forgets even our body and enjoys the Bliss of the nearness to the Universal Soul. Ultimately, when we attain complete harmony, we reach the City of Bliss ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ which is described as :

“Without Sorrow” is the name of the Town,
 ਬੇਗਮ ਪੁਰਾ ਸਹਰ ਕੇ ਨਾਉ ॥
 where there is no suffering or anxiety.
 ਦੁਖੁ ਅੰਦੋਹੁ ਨਹੀ ਤਿਹਿ ਠਾਉ ॥
 Nor is there any harrasment of tax on goods.
 ਨਾਂ ਤਸਵੀਸ ਖਿਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਮਾਲੁ ॥
 Neither is any fear of mistake, nor dread of any slump.
 ਖਉਫੁ ਨ ਖਤਾ ਨ ਤਰਸੁ ਜਵਾਲੁ ॥
 I have now found my wonderful fatherland.
 ਅਬ ਮੋਹਿ ਖੂਬ ਵਤਨ ਗਹ ਪਾਈ ॥
 There it is eternal peace and bliss.
 ਉਹਾਂ ਖੈਰਿ ਸਦਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥
 The Sovereign is everlasting and eternal.
 ਕਾਇਮੁ ਦਾਇਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੀ ॥
 There is no second or third rival but only one Master.
 ਦੋਮ ਨ ਸੋਮ ਏਕ ਸੋ ਆਹੀ ॥
 The population is ever famous, for there abide who are wealthy and content.
 ਆਬਾਦਾਨੁ ਸਦਾ ਮਸਹੂਰ ॥ ਉਹਾਂ ਗਨੀ ਬਸਹਿ ਮਾਮੂਰ ॥
 They are free to go about anywhere they like and enjoy.
 ਤਿਉ ਤਿਉ ਸੈਲ ਕਰਹਿ ਜਿਉ ਭਾਵੈ ॥
 They know the secrets of the Mansion and nobody checks them.
 ਮਹਰਮ ਮਹਲ ਨ ਕੇ ਅਟਕਾਵੈ ॥
 Says Ravidas the emancipated tanner;

ਕਹਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਖਲਾਸ ਚਮਾਰਾ ॥

he who is my fellow citizen in this land, is my loved friend.

ਜੋ ਹਮ ਸਹਰੀ ਸੁ ਮੀਤੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥ (ਗਉੜੀ ਗੁਆਰੇਰੀ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ)

Thus, we arrive at the Divine Door which is described as :

How beautiful Your Door; how lovely the Mansion where You sit to watch over all.

ਸੋ ਦਰੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਕੇਹਾ ਸੋ ਘਰੁ ਕੇਹਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਬਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥

How many minstrels are there with countless instruments of different kinds.

ਵਾਜੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਦ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਸੰਖਾ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ ॥

How many heavenly musicians who sing in various tunes and different measures.

ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਰਾਗ ਪਰੀ ਸਿਉ ਕਹੀਅਹਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਗਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ ॥

The elements of water, wind, and fire serenade at Your Door and there is the Lord of Justice singing to Your glory.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਪਵਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੈਸੰਤਰੁ ਗਾਵੈ ਰਾਜਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਆਰੈ ॥

To You sing Chit and Gupt, the scribes of heaven, on whose record the Lord of Dharam weighs the deeds of beings.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਚਿਤੁ ਗੁਪਤੁ ਲਿਖਿ ਜਾਣਨਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਧਰਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੇ ॥

To You sing Siva, Brahma and the spouse of Vishnu, all beautified by Your kindness.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਈਸਰੁ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਦੇਵੀ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਸਦਾ ਸਵਾਰੇ ॥

At Your door sing Indras, seated on their thrones with the choirs of other gods and goddesses.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੁ ਇੰਦ੍ਰਾਸਣਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਦਰਿ ਨਾਲੇ ॥

The Siddhs, wrapt in meditation, and the seers in their discourses, sing to You.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਸਿਧ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਸਾਧ ਬੀਚਾਰੇ ॥

The celibates, and men of Truth and Contentment and mighty warriors also sing to You.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਜਤੀ ਸਤੀ ਸੰਤੋਖੀ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਵੀਰ ਕਰਾਰੇ ॥

To You sing the great sages with the scriptures of different ages, and the Pandits who read them.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਪੜਨਿ ਰਖੀਸੁਰ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਵੇਦਾ ਨਾਲੇ ॥
 To You also sing the beauties that enchant the hearts in
 heaven, on earth, and in the nether regions.
 ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਮੋਹਣੀਆ ਮਨੁ ਮੋਹਨਿ ਸੁਰਗੁ ਮਛੁ ਪਇਆਲੇ ॥
 Gems created by You along with the sixty-eight places
 of pilgrimage sing of You.
 ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਰਤਨ ਉਪਾਏ ਤੇਰੇ ਅਨਸਠਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਲੇ ॥
 Valiant warriors and the brave-hearts sing to You, and so
 do the four sources of life.
 ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਜੋਧ ਮਹਾਬਲ ਸੂਰਾ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਖਾਣੀ ਚਾਰੇ ॥
 To You sing earthly regions, heavenly spheres, and the
 whole Universe, created and sustained by You.
 ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡਾ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਰਖੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਧਾਰੇ ॥
 But to You sing those who please You and who are steeped
 in the nectar of Your love.
 ਸੇਈ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਜੋ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵਨਿ ਰਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਗਤ ਰਸਾਲੇ ॥
 Many more also sing to You whom I cannot even visualise
 or recall.
 ਹੋਰਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਸੇ ਮੈ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਨਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਕਿਆ ਬੀਚਾਰੇ ॥
 (ਆਸਾ ਮ : ੨)

An outline of the daily routine of a Sikh is given by the
 fourth Guru :

He who is called a Sikh of the Guru, should rise early
 and remember the Lord's Name.
 ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ, ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥
 He should start the day early and take bath and have a
 dip in the Pool of Nectar.
 ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਭਲਕੇ ਪਰਭਾਤੀ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਰਿ ਨਾਵੈ ॥
 Through the Guru's teachings, he should dwell upon the
 Lord, so that all his sins are washed off.
 ਉਪਦੇਸਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੁ ਜਾਪੈ ਸਭਿ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਪਾਪ ਦੋਖ ਲਹਿ ਜਾਵੈ ॥
 And when the sun rises, let him sing the Guru's word
 and reflect on God's Name while sitting and standing.
 ਫਿਰਿ ਚੜੈ ਦਿਵਸੁ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵੈ, ਬਹਦਿਆ ਉਠਦਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥
 He who remembers my God with every breath and
 morsel, that Sikh becomes the Beloved of the Guru.

ਜੋ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੇ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ ॥
 To whom my Lord becomes kind, the Guru gives
 instructions to that Sikh.
 ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ॥
 Nanak craves the Dust of that Sikh of the Guru who
 always remembers and makes others remember the
 Name.
 ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਧੂੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਕੀ ਜੋ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥
 (ਗਉੜੀ ਮ : ੪)

Purpose

The purpose of *simran* is to never forget the presence of God. It creates a feeling of His Presence in us and our existence in Him. In *Baramaha, Rag Majh*, the fifth Satguru says, “When the flow of sap is stopped, the branch withers and the tree cannot bear fruit.” ਜਲ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਾਖ ਕੁਮਲਾਵਤੀ ਉਪਜਹਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਦਾਮ । *Simran* keeps the sap flowing and the contact fresh with the fountain-head of Life. Thus, when both God and Guru have filled the individual, Godly virtues, powers, and vigour is generated. This presence of the Guru as the functioning force in the Sikh links him to an inexhaustible source of power and virility. *Simran* is, therefore, an exercise in experiencing the Presence of God. Through *Simran* we realise the Truth and get our minds attuned to the Will of the Ultimate Truth. This is impressed in *Jap* as follows :

O Satguru, make me understand one thing,
 ਗੁਰਾ ਇਕ ਦੇਹਿ ਬੁਝਾਈ ॥
 that there is but one Benefactor of all creatures. May I
 never forget Him.
 ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਸੇ ਮੈ ਵਿਸਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

Simran will lead to the realisation of His presence everywhere around and within us, and our being existing in His lap. When we get aware of His unfailing presence within us, we realise that we cannot hide even our inner thoughts from Him.

Nothing can be concealed from You, the Omnipresent,
 who watches everywhere.
 ਅਗਹੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਪਿਛਹੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਤੁਝ ਤੇ ਕਹਾ ਛਪਾਵੈ ॥

Our actions, our thoughts, our feelings, our living will, by itself, become unblemished and we will be on the right track. *Simran* will take us nearer and nearer to the fountain-head of Life. Suffice it to say that this “nearness” and “presence” will generate saintly virtues and Godly values in us and make us God-conscious. The basic purpose of *simran* is that the human mind be controlled and trained to become attuned with the Divine Will so that whatever is brought about by the Almighty Creator is accepted not only without demur and complaining but with calm pleasure. Persistent, patient, continuation of remembering will create love. Remembrance and love, thus, become inseparable.

The *Sawaiya* of bard Balh gives a moving detail thus :

Satguru, contemplating and remembering Whom the vision is cleared of darkness.

ਜਿਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਿਮਰੰਤ ਨਯਨ ਕੇ ਤਿਮਰ ਮਿਟਹਿ ਖਿਨੁ ॥

By dwelling on Satguru the Lord's Name comes to dwell in our minds every moment.

ਜਿਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਿਮਰੰਥਿ ਰਿਚੈ ਹਰਿਨਾਮੁ ਦਿਨੋ ਦਿਨੁ ॥

It is Satguru by remembering whom the fire burning in the heart is quenched.

ਜਿਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਿਮਰੰਥਿ ਜੀਅ ਕੀ ਤਪਤ ਮਿਟਾਵੈ ॥

By dwelling on the Satguru one is blessed with miraculous powers and all the treasures.

ਜਿਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਿਮਰੰਥਿ ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਨਵ ਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

Balh says, that is Guru Ram Das and associate with his *sangat* and praise Him in gratefulness.

ਸੇਈ ਰਾਮ ਦਾਸੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਬਲੁ ਭਣਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਧੰਨਿ ਧੰਨਿ ਕਰਹੁ ॥

By following the Satguru, one realises the Supreme Being, O man ! Ever remember and contemplate the Satguru.

ਜਿਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਲਗਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਸੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਨਰਹੁ ॥੫॥੫੪॥

This is the reason we get the instruction of the Guru.

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਟੇਕ ਰਹਹੁ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤਿ ॥

The Guru

Along with *simran* of *Akal Purkh* in the Scripture *Gurbani*

impresses upon us *simran*, and *Jap* of the Guru as well. To go to an unknown place it is necessary to have instructions from a guide who knows the place thoroughly and can point out correctly the obstructions, pitfalls and difficulties and other troubles that we may have to face on the way. Such a guide is the Guru who, in his heart of hearts, belongs to that very place. He will not only tell us which way to go and which difficulties and obstructions we will have to face, but also the ascent being very slippery and difficult, he will take us by the hand and lead us to the goal. The importance and significance of the Guru being next to God has been discussed in detail elsewhere. Without the Guru it is pitch dark and nothing can be perceived (ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਘੋਰੁ ਅੰਧਾਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਮਝ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥ ਸਵੱਯੇ ਮ : ੪ ਕੇ). To attain the goal, therefore, we have first to create in us devotion, faith, and love for the Guru and surrender our intelligence, thoughts, mind and body to the Guru (ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਸਭੁ ਸਉਪਿ ਗੁਰ ਕਉ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਪਾਈਐ). That is why Bhai Nand Lal says :

Remember Him, remember Him, always remember His remembrance.

ਯਾਦਿ ਉਕੁਨ, ਯਾਦਿ ਉ ਗੋਯਾ ਮੁਦਾਮ ।

It is the Guru who lifts the veil of ignorance and shows the light. It is the Guru who reveals the mysteries of the Unknown and Unseeable. In *Rag Gaund*, the fifth Guru says :

The Creator is known through the Guru.

ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ਸੋ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥

Then again we come across such command :

I am sacrifice to that mediator friend, by meeting whom the Master is known.

ਘੋਲਿ ਘੁਮਾਈ ਤਿਸ ਮਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਵਿਚੋਲੇ ਜੈ ਮਿਲਿ ਕੰਤੁ ਪਛਾਣਾ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ : ੫)

And further :

O my mind, recite only the Guru's Name.

ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਨ ਮੋਰ ॥

for me there is no one else but the Guru.

ਗੁਰੁ ਬਿਨਾ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਹੋਰ ॥

In the above quotation the words — “Guru Gur” — need to be clearly understood. They mean the Guru of the Gurus, i.e., God. So here the order is to meditate on the Guru and also Guru's

Guru. So the Guru functions like a small starting engine. We had some big T.D. Fourteen tractors and even a bigger tractor many years ago. These machines had a small engine on top of them. This engine was first started and then it was put in gear to start the bigger engine. These bigger machines were too big to be started by any other means. So the Guru works and functions to switch us on to the Guru God. The first step, therefore, is to grasp the Guru's Lotus Feet and absorb the Guru's wisdom. So much so that we become and function only as instruments under the command of the Guru Master. In *Rag Jait Sri* the fourth Nanak says :

The jewel of the Lord's Name is enshrined in my heart,
as the Guru has placed his hand of Blessing Grace on my
forehead.

ਮੇਰੈ ਹੀਅਰੈ ਰਤਨੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਹਰਿ ਬਸਿਆ ਗੁਰਿ ਹਾਥੁ ਧਰਿਓ ਮੇਰੈ ਮਾਥਾ ॥

Sins and sorrows, gathered birth after birth, have all been
washed away; the Guru having blessed me with the Name,
all my accounts have been settled.

ਜਨਮ ਜਨਮ ਕੇ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਦੁਖ ਉਤਰੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੀਓ ਰਿਨੁ ਲਾਥਾ ॥

The fifth Nanak says in *Rag Parbhathi* :

Meditating on the Lord's Name, one is rid of all the sins.
ਸਿਮਰਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਸਭਿ ਕਾਟੇ ॥

The records of our deeds with the *Dharmraj* are all torn
away.

ਧਰਮ ਰਾਇ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਗਰ ਫਾਟੇ ॥

A Sikh is thus linked up with an inexhaustible source of power. A change then takes place not only in physical fitness but also in his mental and spiritual outlook. He will become and work as a garrison of the Lord of Hosts, a host in himself.

The Guru being one with God, our life line with the Fountain-head of Life will thus be energised.

Mind

The hardest nut to crack is to control the mind and mould it to an attitude to become attuned to the Will of the Universal Mind. About the mind being defiant, restless and unstable, the Satguru says :

O mother ! my mind is not in my control.

ਮਾਈ ਮਨੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਸਿ ਨਾਹਿ ॥

Night and day it hankers after vice; I know not how to stop it.

ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਬਿਖਿਅਨ ਕਉ ਧਾਵਤ, ਕਿਹਿ ਬਿਧਿ ਰੋਕਉ ਤਾਹਿ ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

It listens to different scriptures but cares not about their teachings even for a moment.

ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਕੇ ਮਤ ਸੁਨਿ, ਨਿਮਖ ਨ ਹੀਏ ਬਸਾਵੈ ॥

Lured by another's riches and woman, wastes the life in vain.

ਪਰਧਨ ਪਰਦਾਰਾ ਸਿਉ ਰਚਿਓ, ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਿਰਾਵੈ ॥ (ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮ : ੯)

The mind may be a hard nut but there can be no advancement in *simran* (ਨਾਮ ਅਭਿਆਸ) without cracking, and training it. It is only when we are able to conquer the mind that we conquer the world (ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ). The human mind is like a spark from the Universal Soul. It is essential, therefore, to understand this reality. The Guru says :

O mind ! you are the embodiment of Light, better appreciate your origin.

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥ (ਆਸਾ ਮ : ੩)

The human mind is like a double-edged sword. It cuts both ways. It can lead us to deliverance and can also drag us to hell. So when the reality has dawned, the mind will work as a driving force and take us to the desired end. Satguru explains in the following words :

The mind is like a ruler, it is pacified when it is satisfied through the grace of the Guru. Its cravings are then stilled.

ਮਨੁ ਰਾਜਾ ਮਨੁ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਮਾਨਿਆ ਮਨਸਾ ਮਨਹਿ ਸਮਾਈ ॥

The mind, united with God, when separated, is wasted away. When understanding dawns it sings the praises of the Lord.

ਮਨੁ ਜੋਗੀ ਮਨੁ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਬਿਓਗੀ ਮਨੁ ਸਮਝੈ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਈ ॥

Rare persons mould the mind with the *Shabd* and control the mind with the grace of the Guru.

ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰਿਆ ਤੇ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥

Nanak : The Master is All-prevailing; emancipation truly

comes through the *Shabd*.

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਭਰਿਪੁਰਿ ਲੀਣਾ ਸਾਚ ਸਬਦਿ ਨਿਸਤਾਰਾ ॥ (ਭੈਰਉ ਮ : ੧)

The human mind becomes blurred because of hopes and fears, desires and attachments, etc. This dirt has got to be cleaned to make the mind crystal clear (ਨਿਰਮਲ ਮਨ). As a consequence, our intelligence will also become capable of discriminating between good and bad (ਬਿਬੇਕ ਬੁਧਿ). It is only the understanding of the *Shabd* and its interpretation in our actions which can do this cleansing.

The human mind works in two ways. Firstly, it functions through our physical organs and senses. Secondly, it works by itself, direct and straight, without any help of our organs. In the second way, it functions by becoming one with things. As for instance when we get annoyed we straight away get enraged. Similarly, the mind functions during love, lust, and passion. But we remain aware and in knowledge of being in that state, as we become one with wrath, love, lust, or passion and so on. In the same way, we are aware of our origin and have the knowledge of our being, though the experience of Reality follows only if we get into complete harmony and become one with It. We miss the harmony and the feeling of one-ness, because we work under the impression of being separate and independent from others — the Creator and other beings. Mind is in the habit of working independent of our physical organs and senses as in hypnotism, in dreams, and under other subconscious conditions. So if we link our mind with something and become one with it, we can realise its identity and origin and can appreciate its intentions without the help of our organs. In the same way, if we can lift our mind above human failings and attachments, and link it with the Supreme Being, we can get the Divine vision and experience spiritual one-ness. It is the Supermind who can lead and take us to this state. And this Supermind is the Guru.

Mind can be stabilized but with some centre. This centre is not to be static or dead as stone. But to direct the mind and put it under discipline in due course leads to its centre. We have to search for this centre with the help and light of intelligence. The void, the longing, the urge, and unsatisfied desires and incompleteness in us

are indications that every thing is not a myth but there is some Central Reality. In lack of perfection, there is lurking desire to attain perfection without feeling any frustration. This longing and urge, in spite of awareness of being transitory, points towards some thing which is real, and this Reality is the centre around which the mind is made by Nature to revolve. Within this centre is the Ultimate Reality. We have first to link with the perceptible Reality, the functioning Immanent Force and then switch on to the imperceptible Central Reality. We can understand it with intelligence, but we attain the goal only by actually proceeding towards it. Bhai Gurdas has said :

Enquiring about the way but not taking a step to proceed will not take us to the domain of the Beloved.

ਪੂਛਤ ਪਥਕਿ ਤਿਹ ਮਾਰਗ ਨ ਧਾਰੈ ਪਗ
ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਕੇ ਦੇਸ ਕੈਸੇ ਬਾਤਨ ਸਿਉ ਜਾਈਐ ।

Even about *kirtan* which is the sole way of worship in Sikhism it is said :

By singing and listening with closed eyes, deliverance is not attained unless Guru's instructions are imbibed and lived upon.

ਗਾਏ ਸੁਨੈ ਆਖੈ ਮੀਚੈ ਪਾਈਐ ਨ ਪਰਮ ਪਦੁ
ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਗਹਿ ਜਉ ਲਉ ਨ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥

The fourth Satguru in *Rag Asa* says :

Some people sing His praises by singing, some through instruments like a conch and some by reciting scriptures and other ways but the Providence is not pleased or appeased by such acts.

ਕੋਈ ਗਾਵੈ ਰਾਗੀ ਨਾਦੀ ਬੇਦੀ ਬਹੁ ਭਾਤਿ ਕਰਿ
ਨਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਭੀਜੈ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਜੇ ॥

For those, who had deceit and vice in the mind, their bewailing is in vain.

ਜਿਨਾ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕਪਟੁ ਵਿਕਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਤਿਨਾ ਰੋਇ ਕਿਆ ਕੀਜੈ ॥

God the Creator knows every thing howsoever we may hide our vices.

ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਸਿਰਿ ਰੋਗੁ ਹਥੁ ਦੀਜੈ ॥

Those who have clear conscience will achieve harmony

through His *simran*.

ਜਿਨਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹਿਰਦਾ ਸੁਧੁ ਹੈ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਲੀਜੈ ॥

Word

Some people who labour under the influence of Hinduism are very fussy about a particular word being used while repeating the Name in *simran*. This is like propitiating a particular god with a particular sanskrit *mantra* with a set of specified observations and rituals to be performed correct in the minutest detail; or like offering *Nimaz* while reciting *Ayats* in Arabic, both Arabic and Sanskrit being understood by only a select few. The question of the attitude of mind, which is the mainstay of Sikhism is absent everywhere. The Satguru has, therefore, attached no sanctity to any particular word being used. The word which is best understood by the recitor and which has a tradition and association connected with it to help in concentration and focussing the mind, should be taken up for *simran*. It may be Ram, Rahim, Parmatma, Ishwar, Waheguru, Akalpurkh, Satnam, Allah, God, Rabb, Almighty Lord, Gobind, Gopal or any other word indicating the Supreme Being. Amongst the Sikhs nowadays, 'Waheguru' is generally used, because for us, behind this word lies tradition, history, and philosophy. But it is not necessary that it may have the same association and hallowed sanctity for all people in all lands of the earth. In *Gurbani* we find innumerable words for God being freely used. There is a full *Shabd* of considerable length in *Rag Maru* by the fifth Guru, in which almost all the words prevalent at that time, irrespective of any school of thought or religion, are used for the Godhead without any distinction. This *Shabd* is generally known as *Sahansar Nama* which means "millions of Names." The whole of the *Jaap* by the tenth Guru having 199 *Chhands* contains only the different names of God with different adjectives attached to them. On the first page of Guru Granth Sahib just after the *Mool Mantra*, in which the Satguru's conception of God is summed up, there is the order '*Jap*' followed by the *shlok* :

True One was in the beginning, before all ages began;
the True One exists even now and shall ever be.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

Jap means repeat, recite, and meditate. But nowhere, either before or after, is there any such word used as *Waheguru*. In fact, this is the least used word in the Scripture. Mostly *Wah* is used in praise and admiration of the Guru — ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿ ਜੀਓ or sometimes it is used for God himself. Presumably '*Waheguru*' was brought into vogue by Bhai Gurdas during the fifth and sixth Satgurus' period and it gained ascendancy during the period of the tenth Guru when the Sikhs accosted each other saying :

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa; Waheguru ji ki Fateh.

In the Scripture we find different names used for God with instructions to repeat (ਜਪੁ) in *simran*, such as :

O my mind, recite and dwell always and continuously on God who is the Truth. (Satnam)

ਜਪਿ ਮਨ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ॥ (ਰਾਗ ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮ : ੪)

Recite and dwell ever on the Immanent God (Ram)

ਰਮ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਜਾਪ ॥

so that the afflictions of greed, attachment and ego are rid.

ਕਲਿ ਕਲੇਸ ਲੋਭ ਮੋਹ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਜਾਇ ਅਹੰਤਾਪ ॥ (ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਮ : ੫)

And

Dwell upon the Lovable Sustainer of the Universe (Govind, Gopal, Lal).

ਜਪਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦੁ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਲਾਲੁ ॥ (ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ : ੫)

O my mind, dwell upon the Immanent God who sustains the earth (Ram Gopal)

ਮਨ ਜਾਪਹੁ ਰਾਮ ਗੁਪਾਲ ॥ (ਕਾਨੜਾ ਮ : ੪)

I have become undoubtedly blessed by dwelling upon the Supreme Being. (Har or Hari)

ਹਉ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਿ ਭਈ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥ (ਕਾਨੜਾ ਮ : ੪)

O mind, dwell on the Lord of the earth and of *maya*; (Gobind Madho)

ਜਪਿ ਮਨ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਾਧੋ ॥

The Supreme Being who is Unfathomable and Infinite (Hari)

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਅਗਮ ਅਗਾਧੋ ॥ (ਕਾਨੜਾ ਮ : ੪)

Time and Place

No time and place are particularly specified for *simran*. Whenever the mind can be brought into proper mood and concentration, and taken away from worldly worries and responsibilities, it is the best and most appropriate time and place for *simran*. Some people try to be 'spiritual mystics' and say that the doors for the Divine audience open at 2.30 a.m. and one must be ready to enter at that moment, as if at other times of the day and night they remain closed and shut. Evidently they display their ignorance of the Satguru's teachings and the Sikh tenets. *Simran* can be done at any time of the day or night. Generally, people are free from their worldly duties and anxieties at night. During the second half of the night, the pressure of sleep also diminishes and Nature is calm, the air is clean, purified, and light, and the body is also relaxed. If the mind is applied to *simran* at that time it can be focussed with comparative ease (I have found that some times while going in an automobile the mind gets concentrated pretty quickly as there is nothing else to do except to observe the Wonderful Master functioning in His beautiful Creation and at play in His Nature, provided, of course, the person at the wheel is known to be dependable !). If this is done after an early morning bath, it is still better. Sikhism does not believe in dogmas and stunts. There is no sanctity attached to any particular time or date or period. The Satguru clearly says that :

All the months and days and periods are good if the Master looks with favour,

ਮਾਹ ਦਿਵਸ ਮੂਰਤ ਭਲੇ ਜਿਸ ਕਉ ਨਦਰ ਕਰੇ ॥

and all the places are sacred where the *Shabd* Guru repairs.

ਜਿਥੈ ਜਾਇ ਬਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਸੇ ਥਾਨੁ ਸੁਹਾਵਾ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਜੇ ॥

Blessed is the hour, the second, the moment,

ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਘੜੀ ਧੰਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਮੂਰਤੁ ਪਲੁਸਾਰੁ ॥

Blessed is the day, the auspicious opportunity, when I see the Guru's vision.

ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਸੰਜੋਗੜਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਡਿਠਾ ਗੁਰ ਦਰਸਾਰੁ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ: ੫)