

# My Guru, My Best Friend

**BHAGWANT SINGH DALAWARI\***

\* *Tapovan, Amravati. 444 602. Maharashtra.*

TO MY OWN UTTER DISBELIEF and dismay, I discovered at the age of 40 in 1970 that I had lived my life, (in terms of Guru Granth Sahib's declarations) at a subhuman level, because I knew nothing of NAAM – the divine spirit and panacea for all ills! Indeed God's name is an effective MANTRA for human and humane living. Since I did not know anything – and never cared to know anything – I had no idea that Guru Granth Sahib, my most effective guide and friend had declared that anyone who lived, ate and dressed or indulged in all kinds of activities of the world or relished the pleasures of the senses WITHOUT Naam in the heart, was a dog, a dead body subject to perpetual diseased state and devoid of comfort and peace. Until I fell victim to depression in 1968 and became a mental wreck, I had enjoyed worldly luxurious life in various foreign countries as a member of our Foreign Service. I had never thought that our Guru could be so categorical both in warning his disciples of Man's degeneration without NAAM and in redeeming the fallen disciples at once if they listened to and acted on Guru's dictates. Let us savour the gems from Guru Granth Sahib:

Warnings:

ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਜੋ ਪਹਿਰੈ ਖਾਇ ॥

ਜਿਉ ਕੁਕਰੁ ਜੁਠਨ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਇ ॥

[SGGS: 240]

(One who eats and dresses without NAAM in the heart is like a dog eating leftovers)

ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਜੇਤਾ ਬਿਉਹਾਰੁ ॥

ਜਿਉ ਮਿਰਤਕ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥

[SGGS: 240]

(Whatever you do without NAAM in the heart would be like outing make-up on a dead body)

ਨਾਮੁ ਬਿਸਾਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਰਸ ਭੋਗ ॥

ਸੁਖੁ ਸੁਪਨੈ ਨਹੀ ਤਨ ਮਹਿ ਰੋਗ ॥

[SGGS: 240]

(Anyone living a life of indulgence and relishing the juicy delicacies without NAAM in the heart would not find peace even in a dream and contact disease)

My two-year depression vanished with one stroke of Guru's piercing words at Bangla Sahib Gurdwara on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1970 around midnight and that stroke was of the following verse sung by Bhai Mohinder Singh, SDO, a great Kirtania:

ਜੇ ਤੂ ਮਿਤੁ ਅਸਾਡੜਾ ਹਿਕ ਭੋਰੀ ਨਾ ਵੇਛੋੜਿ ॥ ਜੀਉ ਮਹਿਜਾ ਤਉ ਮੋਹਿਆ ਕਦਿ ਪਸੀ ਜਾਨੀ ਤੋਹਿ ॥

[SGGS:1094]

(If you are my Friend, Lord, do not forsake me even for one instant. My heart is enthralled by your love: O my beloved, when shall I meet you?)

Why I now call my Guru, my most intimate friend and my most effective redeemer is because of the following reasons:

- Not only did my heart melt to hear the above verse, but it also introduced in the manner of MERE MANN PREM LAGO HAR TEER (p. 861, M. 4), a loving devotion.
- Not only did this verse erase my depression lock, stock and barrel but also established the permanent friendship between my Master Guru and myself, the slave disciple.
- Not only did my Guru fulfill the promise of never abandoning me even for an instant but also encouraged me to annihilate myself to develop more intense love.
- Not only did my Guru bring me out of the state of inertia but he also began to use me as an instrument of his love for humanity and service and as an example of his immense compassion for all human beings without discrimination of caste, creed, religion or sex.
- Not only did he effectively SHOW me internally and externally that he is my only friend but also the most intimate friend and the most sincere lover.

Perhaps I could never articulate my feelings for my Guru, but the relationship that he – not I, for I am too lowly to dream of friendship with the Almighty – has established through Guru Granth Sahib's messages is indelible, invisible and yet concrete, and the method of knowing him, talking to him, embracing him, loving him, is also unambiguously stressed. The all-embracing quality of our Sabad-Guru is that, to me, he SHOWS himself – not through my eyes, but through my heart – every instant by my side through SABAD-VICHAR. Let us talk of his *darshan*.

For me, Guru Granth Sahib is not just a holy book to be venerated, covered with fineries and provided quilts in winter and AC's in summer or bedecked with flowers and lights. In fact as I write this I am reminded of a *bhajan* that a blind leprosy patient sings when I have sessions with old and terminal patients every evening:

*Ajab Hairan Houn Bhagwan Tumein Kaise Rijahoun Mein  
Koi Vastu Nahin Aisi jise seva mein laoun mein  
Tumhi Murti Mein ho Vyapak Tumhi Phoolon Mein ho Vyapak  
Bhala Bhagwan ke Oopar Bhagwan ko Kaise Charhaoun Mein  
Teri Soorat Se Lajaate hain Chand Aur Taare  
Mahan Andher Ho Jahan Vahan Deepak Jalaoun Mein  
Kaisi Sharam Aati hai Tumkau Bhog Lagana  
Sab Jag Kau Tum Khilaate Ho Tumhen Kyoun Kar Khilaoun Mein  
Na Bhuja Hai na Aankeen na seena na Peshani  
Tumho Nirlep Narayan Kahan Chandan Lagaoun Mein*

(I am perplexed, my Lord, how shall I please you? There is nothing in the world which I can put to use to gain your approval. You exist in the idol and you exist also in the flowers. How can I, my Lord, place Bhagwan on Bhagwan? The light that you throw in the world by your countenance puts to shame even the moon

and the stars. Then why not place lamps at a place where there is darkness? When I try to feed you through BHOG LAGANA. I feel ashamed. When you feed the whole world, how can I offer food to you? In any case, you have neither hands, nor eyes, nor chest nor forehead. You are NIRAKAR with no form and you remain immersed in the world and yet so aloof. Where can I then put CHANDAN-mark?)

When Guru Gobind Singh declared Guru Granth Sahib as our perpetual Guru it was clear that JYOTI – the light that came from the first Guru to the second and so on will perpetually shine in Guru Granth Sahib – will be our Guru and the JYOTI will be understood and seen through SABAD-VICHAR. But by foolishly treating Guru Granth Sahib as an IDOL for only external veneration, we do not reap the grace and the assurance that our Guru showers. The methods to recognize the Lord are detailed in Guru Granth Sahib and once we listen to and act on the dictates of the Master, we automatically are blessed by his friendship and are permanently redeemed. Savour these verses:

ਸਾਜਨੜਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਾਜਨੜਾ ਨਿਕਟਿ ਖਲੋਇਅੜਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਾਜਨੜਾ ॥ ਜਾਨੀਅੜਾ ਹਰਿ ਜਾਨੀਅੜਾ ਨੈਣ ਅਲੋਇਅੜਾ  
ਹਰਿ ਜਾਨੀਅੜਾ ॥ ਨੈਣ ਅਲੋਇਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਸੋਇਆ ਅਤਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਗੂੜਾ ॥ ਨਾਲਿ ਹੋਵੈਦਾ ਲਹਿ ਨ  
ਸਕੈਦਾ ਸੁਆਉ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਮੂੜਾ ॥ ਮਾਇਆ ਮਦਿ ਮਾਤਾ ਹੋਛੀ ਬਾਤਾ ਮਿਲਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਭਰਮ ਧੜਾ ॥ ਕਹੁ  
ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਸੂਝੈ ਹਰਿ ਸਾਜਨੁ ਸਭ ਕੈ ਨਿਕਟਿ ਖੜਾ ॥ [SGGS: 924]

(Friend, my Friend is always standing by my side.....)

Of course without acting on Guru's advice, it cannot strike to us that our Friend God is always standing by everyone's side.)

(SGGS: 924. M.5)

*Sadd hee nere door na jano  
Gurke sabad najeek pachchano*

(He is always near you and you can recognise Him through Guru's shabad)

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੇ ਸਭ ਹਰੀਆਵਲੀ ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥

[SGGS:1285]

(Says Nanak: Through NAAM everything begins to bloom by meditating on the Guru's Shabad.) (SGGS, 1285, M.3)

ਜਿਨਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਮੁਖ ਸਦ ਉਜਲੇ ਤਿਤੁ ਸਚੈ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ ॥

(SGGS:1422)

Those who have the treasures of NAAM in their hearts have amassed these valuables through meditation on Gurbani. In other words, our Gurus have emphasised that the presence of the Lord within and without can be witnessed through the meditation on Guru's Word. It is, therefore, imperative that to fall in love with the Lord and then submit everything to Him and become a non-entity through self-surrender, one has to KNOW that He is our most intimate friend and guide. Look at the following Gurbani messages:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਤੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਬਾਲ ਸਖਾਈ ॥ (SGGS: 94)

(Satguru is my friend since my childhood)

ਮੈਂ ਤੁਝ ਬਿਨੁ ਬੇਲੀ ਕੇ ਨਹੀ ਤੂੰ ਅੰਤਿ ਸਖਾਈ ॥

(SGGS:792)

(Except You I have no friend at all and You alone are my succour until the end of my life)

ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਦਿਸੰਦੜਿਆ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਵੇਵੈ ਮਿਤੁ ਅਸਾਡੜੇ ਸੇਈ ॥

(SGGS:520)

(On seeing whom our unwise inclinations vanish, they are our real friends.)

This friendship is so dependable that God never lets me down. In fact, Guru himself has openly declared and I have witnessed this in my life times since 1970.

ਸੇਵਕੁ ਕਉ ਨਿਕਟੀ ਹੋਇ ਦਿਖਾਵੈ ॥ ਜੋ ਜੋ ਕਹੈ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਤਤਕਾਲ ਹੋਇ ਆਵੈ ॥

(SGGS:403)

(The Lord shows himself absolutely near his servant. And wherever the sevak needs him, He runs to him)

We had heard that FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED, but I had never thought that Guru Granth Sahib could provide such a shining example of this friendship. I have often stated and written that ever since the Guru showed me his grace on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1970 (and became my Friend through JE TOUN MITTARASADARA HIK BHORI NA VICHCHORI), he has not let me down. On the contrary, whether I asked for his help or not, it was available just as one's father or mother would not wait for his child to demand help. The moment a parent finds that his child is in distress and needs help, he helps unconditionally. But the worldly parent has his limitations. My perfect Guru, in all his perfection, of knowledge, capacity and willingness, is always protecting me, as a friend:

ਅਉਖੀ ਘੜੀ ਨ ਦੇਖਣ ਦੇਈ ਅਪਨਾ ਬਿਰਦੁ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥ ਹਾਥ ਦੇਇ ਰਾਖੈ ਅਪਨੇ ਕਉ ਸਾਸਿ ਸਾਸਿ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲੇ  
॥੧॥ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਿਉ ਲਾਗਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਮੇਰਾ ਚੀਤੁ ॥ ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਹਾਈ ਧੰਨੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਮੀਤੁ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
ਮਨਿ ਬਿਲਾਸ ਭਏ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੇ ਅਚਰਜ ਦੇਖਿ ਬਡਾਈ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਆਨਦ ਕਰਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਪੂਰਨ  
ਪੈਜ ਰਖਾਈ ॥ (SGGS:682)

(He never lets me fall into difficult times because of His own gracious nature. Considering me His own, He protects me with His own hands and brings me up every instant. I am now in total love with my Lord. Glory to MY FRIEND, he helps me always from beginning till the end. I am enchanted by his grandeur's wonder. Says Nanak, live in bliss in communion with Him; He has saved my honour fully.)  
(SGGS: 682, M.5)

The experienced truth of this shabad overwhelms me. Indeed I always believed in this effective friendship of the Lord because of the assurances of Gurbani, but KNOWING that by just listening to and trying to live the commands of the Master, I often wonder how I have never seen DUKH in these 34 years. And quickly, my wonder evaporates when I meditate on the above shabad. Hasn't my Friend assured me that He remains my friend from beginning till the end? Of course, I never knew

any Gurbani before 1970 and knew nothing what the Guru has said in Guru Granth Sahib, but for the last thirty-four years I have really not faced any difficult time EXCEPT when I deliberately ignored the commands of my Guru. I feel He is protecting me day in and day out and I live in His presence all the time. I love to remember, in my own interest, that He is my perfect Master and am amazed in ecstasy on watching HIM looking after my minutest needs.

But then why should anyone be surprised? Look at the assurances our Guru has bestowed on us. As I have said before our parents are not all-powerful but whatever they can they do for us, but my Father, my Friend, is all-powerful and all-Merciful. Look at the effectiveness of His friendship when He protects me like a parent:

ਤੁਮ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੇਰੇ ॥ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਮਹਿ ਸੂਖ ਘਨੇਰੇ ॥ (SGGS)

(You are my mother, my father and I am your child; I have innumerable comforts because of your grace).

Guru Gobind Singh himself talks of the Lord as his Friend in the following shabad:

imqR ipAwry f hwl mUrldw dw kihnw ] .....XwrVy dw swf s~Qr cMgw  
BT KyiVAw dw rihxw ]

(Relate the tale of His disciple to my Friend, Beloved God, .....Even the utmost sadness and adversity sent by my Friend Lord is better than living in prosperity without Him)

It is said that the tenth Guru addressed this message when he was in apparent loneliness having lost his mother and four sons and many followers. The strength of the Guru's words in having complete confidence in his Friend Lord reinforces my belief that the slavery of Guru Granth Sahib is the greatest liberation on Earth. And Guru Gobind Singh bequeathed to us this TREASURE which we venerate externally as a SACRED SCRIPTURE but never wish to live the dictates of our Masters.

This attempt to portray the most effective friendship of the Lord through Guru Granth Sahib's protection is to appeal to the Sikhs to shun merely external exhibition of devotion by constructing majestic mansions as Gurdwaras, by ostentatious display of fineries on Guru Granth Sahib and parading our piety devoid of internal purity. Let us live the Guru's Word and then witness in our life, the wonders of the sweetness of Guru's protection as a valuable Friend. Let me conclude this piece with

Guru Arjun's following verses from the shabad ਜੇ ਭੁਲੀ ਜੇ ਚੁਕੀ ਸਾਈ ਭੀ ਤਹਿਜੀ ਕਾਢੀਆ ॥ (SGGS: 761)

ਸਜਣ ਤੁਹੈ ਸੈਣ ਤੁ ਮੈ ਤੁਝ ਉਪਰਿ ਬਹੁ ਮਾਣੀਆ ॥ ਜਾ ਤੁ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਤਾ ਸੁਖੇ ਤੂੰ ਨਿਮਾਣੀ ਮਾਣੀਆ ॥

(SGGS: 761)

(You are my Friend, You are my relation, I am very proud of You. When You reside within myself, I am in peace feeling the pride of the pride less.)

Once we begin to live the dictates of our Masters and treat Guru Granth Sahib as our PERFECT GURU internally aligned to his directions, we shall find ourselves in perfect peace, always protected by our most intimate friend, our most effective

redeemer. May God give us this wisdom to live the Master's commands in day-to-day life!

