

Let the Creative Nectar Flow!

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When we study the life of Guru Nanak, we find two familiar key-statements he used most often: first: “*Sat Kartar*” – **Meaning:** Creator is Truth, and the Second: “*Tainoo Kartar Chit Aaway*.” – **Meaning:** May You Remember the Creator.

The first was used to announce his arrival and his greetings on meeting someone. The second was a special blessing that Guru Ji showered on seekers who were pleasing to him. In both these statements the common word is “*Kartar*”; which means Creator. Creator is the one who creates, has creative instincts, has a creative touch, can create something that is attractive, useful and aesthetically appealing. So, we can see that Guru Ji has special affinity and high esteem for this creative aspect of God. Even in the *Mool Muntra* of Japji Sahib the first aspect of God has been defined by Guru Ji is Creator; by saying He is “*Karta Purakh*”. Because, the Creator has created the universe in innumerable ways of various species, color, and kind; Guru Ji describes it in these words:

“ਰੰਗੀ ਰੰਗੀ ਭਾਤੀ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ” (SGGS: 6)

Meaning: God created the universe in multitudinous colors, species and creatures....

Not only has He created it, what He commands comes to pass. Guru Ji describes this creativity in the following terse phrase:

“ਤੂ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ ਕਰਹਿ ਸੋ ਹੋਇ ॥” (SGGS: 723)

Meaning: Whatever You do, that alone happens.

Now we heard from Guru Ji that God is the Creator, let us ask Guru Ji to tell us about what kind of Creator He is? Guru Ji says:

“ਅਕਲ ਕਲਾ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ ॥” (SGGS: 470)

Meaning: The indescribable power of creativity pervades everywhere.

Guru Ji thus implies that God’s creativity reflects these two aspects of art and intelligence. No wonder everything created by Him has an indefinable artistic touch and is blended with super intelligence. Then what is the salient point of His creations? Let us use an illustration to relate to it. If we look at a painting of a famous artist like Leonardo da Vinci, Van Gogh, etc. we can see that it has a fine workmanship, reflects a keen observation and its vivid capture on the canvas. Now, if we own that painting then we know that it is worth millions. But that painting does not grow, evolve, move about or change, except by fading in colors. But the creations by Creator show all these characteristics and we can see them in plant life, vegetation, animal and human life etc. See, how plants develop from a seed and can blossom into a big tree. Then there is foliage change, and depending on the size of the plant, season, and effects of nature and so on. They also will produce flowers, fruits and even produce seeds which can be planted again thereby replicating the process. We can see similarities in the animal life and human life. This characteristic makes His creation intelligent as they flourish or reflect the effects of environment. But human creations become static or dormant in that respect.

The Guru has a keen sense of observation and appreciation of Nature’s creative aspect. He wants us to develop this aspect in our lives. By becoming creative, we can get

closer to the Creator. Because we can see this from our lives that when we have common interests or anything in common with someone there is always a closer relationship, sense of bonding and connection. So, we can apply that principle to get closer to the master Creator. Let our interests be creative, and then our creations will reflect the other aspect of intelligence. Even if our creation is small, insignificant in proportion to the huge creation of the Creator, that type of interest and aptitude will still act like a bridge and bring us closer to Him. In fact, if we see all the developments in the world; be it in arts, literature, dance, music, mathematics, sculpture, science, or technology have been made possible because of this trait of creativity. All the new devices, modern gadgetry, tools, technological advancement, and artistic development have been made possible by the creative bent of mind. When we study the lives of all creative geniuses in their field, we will notice a few qualities that made the creation possible. These qualities are:

- Keen Observation
- Hard Work
- Dedication and Focused Mind
- Perseverance
- Quality of Forgetting Themselves in their work

Although we are all blessed with the creative genes, yet most of us lose them over time as we do not use them. We can vouch for this by looking at atrophy that we develop and we are always looking for time saving devices. We don't want to create our own literature, poetry, music, paintings or products that we need, so we go to the market and get them. We want it readymade for us, it should work and we are happy to leave our contribution to mere pressing of the button. Our attitude could be summed in these words; "*Let somebody else do it.*" We do not want to create our own music but we all like it and this has given birth to a variety of means of listening to music. Music can be listened to at any time at any place from radio, tape recorder, CD player, computer and iPods etc. Same way we do not want to create our own literature, poetry, philosophy, art, or even the devices we want handed to us ready for use. We don't want even to read it, we would rather let somebody else give us notes, or audio books and summarize them for us. Guru Ji even noticed this tendency and lamented at the lack of application of creative traits in these words:

“ਇਕਨਾ ਨਾਦ ਨ ਬੋਦ ਨ ਗੀਅ ਰਸੁ ਰਸ ਕਸ ਨ ਜਾਣਿਤਿ ॥” (SGGS: 1411)

Meaning: So many do not know melody or music, divine knowledge, philosophy, poetry etc., they do not realize good (virtues) or bad (vices) either.

Here we can see that Guru Ji has noticed even the lack of development of finer arts, and creative qualities. Development of these traits would have made us better at judging good and bad. Now let us look at the Gurus, our Gurus have such a keen sense of observation that they noticed and appreciated not just the art and intelligence in the creation but they also saw the Creator in it. Guru Ji has expressed it in these words:

“ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਤੂੰਹੈ ਤੂੰਹੈ ਮੇਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਉ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਈ ਜੀਉ ॥” (SGGS:98)

Meaning: You are everything; You are my Beloved. I am a sacrifice to Your Creative Power.

Then: how do we develop the creative qualities, which can make us forget ourselves in the process of creating, and also bring us closer to the ultimate Creator? How can one become creative? One factor that all creative people have is a sense of observation and imagination. Besides the imagination they also possess the opposite trait in equal measure, which is being a realist. Such a person can create a cohesive balance of these two traits to create unique developments in their chosen field. Most creative people are very passionate

and at the same time very objective about it as well. The minds of creative people are much more focused and those of others are quite scattered with constant changing of thoughts like the clouds in the sky.

Let us take inspiration from Guru Ji's teachings and develop a burning curiosity, a lively interest to enable us to make qualitative observations. Then with commitment, intense desire, dedication, and perseverance make a significant contribution to society. This will be a lasting legacy, not because of its impact on the society but because the way it impacts us personally, by inspiring to get closer to the ultimate Creator. This new artistic expression, a resolution of a problem, or a new way of understanding can only happen when **the creative juices start flowing within**. Then this new constituent of the blood will not be for a limited time only, but the entire life span. Therefore it is imperative that its seed be sown early in childhood.

Let us now look, briefly, at some ideas that will help us in keeping the creative nectar flowing: **First:** The potential to be creative is available to us all, so let us use it or else we will lose it. **Second:** Internal motivation, commitment to create, to solve a problem or even to make a breakthrough technological feat must become the ignition mechanism that fires the creative engine. **Third:** We will have to strive consciously to stimulate creativity. Many documented methods have been implemented to get the creative juices flowing. Some of those proven techniques are:

- Attribute Listing – Listing all the attributes of the problem: physical, mental, emotional, and social etc. Then concentrating on one attribute at a time address all issues associated with it.
- Forced Relationship – In this technique the problem is defined, and then everything known about is listed, followed by a list of everything one knows about the challenge. The next step is to build a relationship between the two, thus generating new possibilities.
- Brain Storming – First created by Alex Osborn in 1930, where the problem is first defined. Then all ideas are simply written as they come to mind without any critical analysis. Then each idea is explored in depth, either rejected as unviable or used to further develop and enhance the creative process.

Fourth: Don't be afraid to make mistakes, instead learn from them. Test knowledge through experiences. Do not worry about failures. **Fifth:** System Thinking – Try To see how everything connects to everything else. We have to see patterns, relationships and processes; and look how they all fit together. **Sixth:** Having Clear goals of Every Step of the Way – The clarity of thoughts has to be immense and it is not like normal everyday life where demands are contradictory. **Seventh:** Merging of Action and Awareness – When the challenges are stimulating to mind the creative process begins to flow, all other distractions, concerns are sidelined and a deep involvement with the activity firmly grips. **Eight:** Forgetting Self, Time and Surroundings – All distractions are sidelined and a new mental condition develops. As this scenario unfolds one becomes so completely involved with the task at hand, that one loses sense of time, one sees oneself drowned in the world of possibilities. One completely loses the sense of self and the sense of surroundings. One is fully and completely saturated with what is there. The sense of time completely disappears, for example; looking at the clock to check when it is the time to go home, is no longer a concern. One is transported to another world, a new canvas where stimulating environment oozes.

It is not the thinking and creating quality that makes human beings unique amongst the species in the entire creation, but it is the ability to harness these qualities that makes man

unique. As Hazrat Inayat Khan put it in these words in his book: *Mastery Through Accomplishment*; “The more thoughtful, the more awakened the mind, the more can be found in man the fullness of that attribute for which the whole world was created.”

Let us strive to create something new and in the process of becoming creative strive to get closer to the Creator. It is by developing this trait of observation, noticing and admiring we can get started on this road. Just as to appreciate art we have to understand art, its beauty, its finesse, and in the process understand the artist and the thought behind the art. Now, we are trying to get closer to the Greatest Artist, whose canvas is the entire creation. His art, intelligence is unlimited, which we cannot match but can relate to and in the process of appreciation strive to merge in it. Let us strive to explore this path, and in the process we would have developed a genuine appreciation of the great creation. Then the product of our own creative efforts would have enriched the world, but the self would have experienced a unique, evolutionary and uplifting experience. No wonder Guru Ji has told us that we are here in this world to evolve, not at the physical level but at mental and spiritual level.

“ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਤੂੰ ਆਇਆ ਲਾਹਾ ਲੈਣਿ ॥ ” (SGGS:43)

Meaning: Oh Being! You have come (to this world) to evolve.

Let us try to dive deep into the self and by doing so, touch that Perfection within each of us. By the flow of creative juices within let us create a stream of creativity, a river of creativity that merges in the ocean of creativity, the Creator. Notice, how Guru Arjan Dev Ji shows us how to love the creative aspect of God:

“ਕਰਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਮੁਸਤਾਕੁ ॥ ” (SGGS: 724)

Meaning: O Creator, through Your creative potency, I am in love with You.

Another quote by Guru Ji with the same viewpoint:

“ਨਾਨਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟੀ ਆਇਆ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਕਰਨੈ ਜੋਗੁ ॥ ” (SGGS: 260)

Meaning: O Nanak, then He comes to be seen - the One who is worthy of praise.

Here we can see that Guru Ji is enamored by the Creative potency of the Creator. This can only happen when the creativity is being witnessed clearly. If we carefully research the approach of creative people, we will find that they all have figured out that nature reflects the best, and optimal creative designs, so they tap into it for insights. Let us look at an example, an Italian sporting firm CAMP has been making ice axes for over 100 years. When they approached Franco Lodato to design for them, he started by asking; “What is the best example of a hammer in nature?” He found the answer that it is the woodpecker that delivers twenty (25) pecks per second, and it uses its entire body mass of one (1) pound when delivering it. Lodato incorporated those features in his design by eliminating straight shaft, changed the angle of the pick like woodpecker’s beak and in the process created a best seller for CAMP. Now, it has become a standard carry on item of avid mountaineers. In fact there are countless examples of creativity being inspired by nature, and a new term *Biomimicry* has been coined to describe it. Seeking inspiration from nature is a sign of an evolved mind, but Guru Ji wants us to take this process to newer heights. Guru Ji wants us to take to the level that we are in love with the Creator, who has created millions of unique species, which we can observe, admire their spectacular colors, beauty and intelligence and learn from them. Can we imagine what Guru Ji thinks of those who have not developed this sense of keen observation of nature? Guru Ji says:

“ਸੋਈ ਕੁਚੀਲੁ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨੈ ॥ ” (SGGS:1151)

Meaning: One who does not know about Lord’s Creation is un-skilled (not evolved).

With Guru Ji’s Grace we know now that we are born genius, as we have been blessed

with creative genes and talent, so let us use them to the maximum. Let us not become complacent about them as if we do not use it we lose it in any case, because of its non-use. We can start today by asking more and better questions, trying out and experimenting with new things. This new approach tends to give order to consciousness, and wandering of the mind is reduced, thus improving psychological health and development. If the creative juices flow in every vein of our being then let us try to experience it first hand. With folded hands, and prayers in our hearts let us make it happen.



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