

The Spiritual Vision of Guru Nanak

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THE SPIRITUAL PATHWAY THAT leads to 'union' with God is not the lonely trek of the ascetic who retreats into a forest or a cave. It combines meditation on the divine Naam, while carrying out the responsibilities of everyday life. The meditation transforms the essential quality of everyday life.

According to the *Janam Sakhi*, the traditional biographical account of Guru Nanak, he is said to have had a direct vision of Supreme Reality in His heavenly Court. "There, he was given a cup of nectar (amrit) and with it came the command: 'Nanak' this is the cup of *naam* elixir, drink it! This he did and was directed to go into the world and preach the Divine Name."

Guru Nanak exhorted his disciples to discard trust in external forms and in status conferred by caste or wealth and inculcate inner devotion by meditating on the Name. The 'ambrosial hour' of the early morning must be devoted to meditation on *Naam*. He preached the ideal of living pure amidst the impurities of attachment through a disciplined worldliness. He advised us to live like a lotus flower that remains unaffected in water, as also a duck which swims against the stream's current and becomes not wet, so with fixed intent on the Guru's word and uttering the Name, the dreadful world-ocean is crossed.

Guru Nanak adopted *Naam* Marg or dedication to the Name (*Naam*) and he preached the Name. According to him the world was ailing and the Divine Name was its panacea. *Naam* marg produces three-fold effect. It is purifying, as it keeps one away from vice. It is illuminating as it imparts knowledge and beauty, truth and virtue. Above all, it is unifying as it draws the devotee nearer to God and keeps him ever attuned to the Lord.

The way to spiritual enrichment is only through *Naam* Japana or *Naam* Simran. It is the gateway which leads to the Supreme Self. It brings total awakening to the slumbering soul and transforms the disciple and lifts him to the higher level of consciousness. Constant repetition of the Divine Name with love and devotion inculcates constant awareness of the Divine and keeps a person ever attuned to the Lord. It confers upon him the gift of bliss and liberation from the cycle of transmigration.

The Divine Name is to be prepared with love and devotion. Guru Nanak says, "Utter Lord's name and Meditate on it in thy mind." By enshrining the Name in the mind, the gem is obtained.

The individual being, separated from the Supreme Being by the wheel of transmigration, is longing for union with the Source. The devotee is conceived as the yearning bride (the wife) separated from Him, pining away in sorrow for the Beloved (God). Without her Husband, she cannot obtain peace and sleep. Her husband (the Lord) is within her home, but the ignorant bride does not obtain Him due to false curtain/wall of haumai (egoism). The Name is Nectar, which purges man of the poison of mammon. Whomsoever, the Lord blesses with His Name, his affairs are accomplished.

Haumai gives rise to five passions and creates a wall/curtain to separate the person from the original source, the Lord. It hinders man's progress towards the Supreme Reality as the ego is at variance with the name. Therefore, it has been termed as a 'chronic disease'. The man of ego carries the unbearable load of sins over his head and falls into the dreadful world-ocean. By indulging in egoism, he leaves this world with the load of worthless ashes of sin. However, if the Lord bestows his grace, then man discarding egoism is devoted to His Name and by meditating, night and day, on the Divine Name, he is emancipated. He who stills his ego, worldly love, greed, etc. obtains the Name's bliss and a seat in the tenth gate (seat of super-consciousness).

Guru Nanak says that within the mother's belly, with head downwards, man remembered with every breath the true Name in his mind. When he comes into the world, he forgets the Lord and abandons His Name. With the passing of time the black hair turn grey, man grows old, his body is beaten out of shape, even then he remembers not the Lord, his friend, in the end. Such a person forgetting the Lord's Name departs black-faced into hell and suffers like the fish, pierced with a hook, out of water and bears the agony of coming and going, i.e. birth and death, and passes through eighty-four lakh species.

By repetition of the Divine Name, sins are erased and filth does not attach. Mind's wanderings are stilled, it stays in peace and is rendered sublime. All desires are destroyed and lust, wrath, egotism etc. are banished. One is saved from the depredations of the five robbers and all sufferings are annihilated by the Ambrosial Name, the panacea for all ailments. Imbued with the Lord's Name one becomes detached and sits in trance in one's own home. Those united with His Name, the Lord unites them with Himself and they are honoured and robed in the Lord's court. Sublime bliss is attained and they are blessed with ecstasy.

Through the repetition of the Divine Name, man understands himself, realizes the Lord and His will and his light blends with the Supreme Light. Death's courier cannot touch him and he swims across the world-ocean. One is emancipated and knows the Lord's way and is not cast in the womb again and rid of birth and death for ever. The Divine Name helps in both the worlds – here and hereafter. It cannot be thieved here and at the time of departure, it shall accompany for succour.

Whosoever has realized the jewel of the Divine Name by contemplation and devotion in his heart, his mind remains fixed in loving devotion of the Lord. He realizes the pure Lord to be everywhere and in all the hearts. He becomes immaculate and detached and does the spiritual deeds day and night. In his mind he remains absorbed in the Lord's Name. Pain of birth and death does not draw near him, and Death's courier does not smite him. He is imbued with the Name and is inebriated with God's elixir. He flowers like the lotus flower in the water and instinctively remembers God with glee. Rare are such persons in the world, who remain detached. They save themselves and all their associates.

Let us conclude with Guru Nanak's sloka:

Those who have pondered on the name,
And have departed after putting in toil,
O Nanak! Their faces shall be
Bright and many shall be
Emancipated along with them.



