

Divine Grace: How to be blessed with it

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Part II@

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@ Part I appeared in **The Sikh Review**, November 2005.

In order to arrive at this stage of divine consciousness it is necessary for us to prepare our heart so that it can freely and without any hindrance develop a linkage to supremely Divine heart. This is possible only when we can, in deep humility, visualize our heart earnestly seeking sanctuary at God's feet. The following hymn beautifully describes this thought.

ihrdY hir ky crx vswel

suKu pwieAw shj Duin Eupjl, rogw Gwix imtwel

soriT mhlw 5, pnw 619

"Enshrine the Lord's feet in your heart, (then) obtain peace and divine linkage (consciousness), (thus) great many maladies get eliminated".

[sorath mahala 5, SGGS: 619]

It needs to be stressed that a deep inner humility and complete surrender of oneself are absolutely essential for first initiating and then sustaining a linkage of one's heart with the Supreme Being. This will require concerted efforts and a focused and attentive mind so that one can feel the inner visualization of the heart at the sanctuary of God's feet. Since our scriptures tell us that God and our Guru Nanak are symbolically the same, you may feel more comfortable in visualizing Guru Nanak and his feet, and then bowing yourself in utmost reverence so that your heart can feel the touch of Guru Nanak's imaginary feet. This will require considerable practice, and with a regularly sustained practice you will achieve this state. **The benefits of having acquired such a state are manifold from good health to freedom from diseases to successful completion of one's work and to eventual union with God in your present life.** The following additional hymn describe elegantly the wonderful results of such a state:

ihrdY nwmu vswiehu , Gir bYTy gurUu iDAwiehu

guir pUrY sc kihAw, so suK swcw lihAw

soriT mhlw 5, pnw 621

"Imbibe naam in heart, sitting at home remember Guru. The perfect Guru has stated the truth, and peace is obtained from the True one (God)".

[Sorath mahala 5, SGGS: 621]

gur ky crn kvl ird Dwry

ibGnu n lwgY iql kw koel, kwrj sgl swry

soriT mhlw 5, pnw 624

"*Enshrine Har's (God) in (your) heart*, (then) not an iota of obstacles comes, and all affairs are taken care of.

[sorath mahala 5, SGGS: 624]

It is indeed necessary that the holiness of heart be fully maintained in all your daily activities by completely following the instructions contained in God's eternal message as enunciated in SGGS, because it is through following these teachings that you can keep your heart pure in sustained form. It is important to note carefully that If you do not practice the integrity of character and honesty in your daily lifestyle, then, just recitation of God's name is not going to bring any cleansing of your mind and heart. The hymn below illustrates this point beautifully:

hir hir krih inq kptu kmwvih

ihrdw suD n hoel [sUhl mhlw 4, pnw 732]

"One who utters God's name but practices deceit all the time, that person's heart does not become pure".

[suhi mahala 4, p. 732]

Your heart is normally in a restful and peaceful state. **It is your mind, which is always**

wavering, always on the run, just like a monkey. That is why it is your mind, which needs to be controlled and disciplined.

Let us, therefore, start with a very intense personal prayer, recited with a completely focused and fully attentive mind, in order to seek divine intervention, and petition Almighty in a most humble way for the gift of divine grace. Only then will your heart and mind become receptive to receiving God's love and God's grace. Furthermore, while seeking God's grace, also pray intensely for divine mercy so that your sins can be wiped off, as instructed by the following hymns:

hir ikrpw kir suix bynql, hm pwpl ikrm qrwh slok mhlw 4, pnw 1314

“Oh God, on hearing my petition bless Thy grace, (so) we sinners, (like) worms, can be ferried across”.

[Slok Mahala 4, SGGS: 1314]

hir krhu ikRpw jgjlvnw, guru siqguru myil dieAwlu [slok mhlw 4, pnw 1315]

“O, God, life-giver of the world, bless Thy grace, (and let me) meet the gracious Guru, the True Guru”, remarks G. Ramdas.

[slok mahala 4, SGGS: 1315]

The marvelous combined effect of divine grace and divine mercy is to rekindle your mind, so that you get a re-awakening of the ever-present divine-life-current in your mind. Such an effect will produce in you a deep sense of gratitude, and steer you to become humble. This is all the result of your heart-filled passionate prayer. **The prayer is thus the single most important factor, in first initiating, and then sustaining a warm relationship with God.** It is of utmost importance that intensely focused prayer is offered most sincerely from your mind and your heart. Above all, the prayer must flow spontaneously and naturally from within you, and be laced with deep humility (free from any arrogance). It is, indeed, important that while praying you have an unwavering faith in God, be upbeat, and have a firm determination clearly focused on your desired goal. Remember, there is a divine power in faith working for you, and therefore you are not alone. These are unforeseen spiritual magical forces that will keep you focused on your objective. So don't give up on your darkest moments. Be persistent, and rekindle the flame of your purpose to keep guiding you. Remember, “ **it is always darkest before dawn**”. So **keep your vision clear and focused, and your faith unwavering**. Only then you will be blessed with the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual energy, and thus become recipient of a free flowing grace. It is now clear that the **absolute requirement for acquiring grace is for you to have an unwavering and unflinching relationship with God through absolutely clean mind and pure heart**. As stated above you can acquire this state through an intense personal prayer. Remember, divine grace is not a commodity, which you can purchase in the market. If this were the case the rich people would be able to buy it without much effort and be loaded with it. Sure enough, grace is a divine gift, which is bestowed upon us. Some of us may be blessed with grace in abundance, while others may receive only a scant amount. This is illustrated by the hymn:

sBnw Eupir ndir pRB qyrl, iksY QoVI iksY hY GxYrl [mwJ mhlw 3, pnw 119]

“Your grace (loving glance), oh God, is on everyone; some have a little, others have it plenty”.

[majh mahala 3, SGGS: 119]

The question then arises, **why is the grace blessed in different amounts?** What, you as an individual can do so that your plate will be full of grace? Let us consider an analogy of an empty glass. If you keep it in an inverted position you won't be able to put any thing, say milk, into it. The glass must be in upright position for it to receive milk. This is described well

in the hymn:

nwim smwvY jo BwMfw hoie EUMDY BwMfY itkY n koie [gEuVI guAwryrl mhlw 3, pnw 158]

“Naam remains in a upright mind-vessel, in the inverted position nothing stays”.

[gauri gwarairee mahala 3, SGGS: 158]

Clearly, then, your mind must be in a receptive upright mode to be able to receive grace. Further, if your glass is dirty and polluted and you pour milk into it, the delicious milk will turn bad.

BwMfw Doie bYs DUpu dyvhu qEu dUDy kEu jvwHu rwg sUhl mhlw 1, pnw 728

“Wash the vessel, purify it with incense, only then proceed to get milk”.

[rag suhi mahala 1, SGGS: 728]

What these two hymns, then, tell us is that for your inner mind to be the recipient of grace, it must first be in upright position, and second it must be really clean, and therefore worthy of Divine grace. It is **only into a clean, rightly positioned mind that Divine grace flows smoothly, spontaneously, and abundantly**. Guru Arjan Dev in the following hymns describes the key requirements for acquiring Divine grace.

kmnl sunIAY jsu gopwl, nYnl pyKq swD dieAwl

rsnw gun gwvY byAMq, mn mih icqvY pUrn BgvMq

hsq crn sMq thl kmwelAY, nwnk iehu sMjm pRB ikrpw pwelAY

[iQql gEuVI mhlw 5, pnw 298]

“ Hear the praises (glory) through (your) ears, see the benevolent saint with eyes. Sing the glorious virtues of infinite God with (your) tongue, and contemplate on perfect God in heart (mind). Perform service of saints with (your) hands and feet, oh Nanak, this way obtain God’s grace”.

guir rMgy sy Bey inhwl, khu nwnk gur Bey hY dieAwl [gEuVI mhlw 5, pnw 194]

“Those to whom Guru imparts love, they become joyous. Nanak says, unto them Guru has become gracious”.

nwnk dieAwl hoAw iqn Eupir

ijn gur kw Bwxw mMinAw Blw

[quKwrl mhlw 5, pnw 1115]

“Oh Nanak, (God) becomes gracious (merciful) on those, who accept Divine Order as beneficial”.

[tukhari mahala 5, SGGS: 1115]

What we learn from this last hymn is that as long as you do not willingly accept Divine Order as beneficial and good for you, then your arrogance, your self-interest, your ego cannot be destroyed, and therefore humility won’t sink in. **Without humility you will not be able to acquire other virtuous qualities needed for a clean and pure mind**. It should then be obvious that a perfectly pristine mind, resulting from a virtuous life of truth and righteousness, earnest and fervent prayer, meditation, singing praises of God, humility, altruism, complete surrender, and total submission to Divine Order, are all prerequisites for acquiring Divine grace. Here is an example from Guru Gobind Singh’s life, which can guide us and help us in acquiring grace. Once a boatman was very much touched on hearing the following hymn recited by a Gursikh:

jIA jMq qyry Dwry, pRB forl hwiQ qumwry

[soriT mhlw 5, pnw 626-7

“All beings are under your support, oh God, my string (cord) is in your hand”.[sorath mahala 5, SGGS: 626-7]

The boatman asked the Gursikh whose hymn he was reciting. The Gursikh remarked that it is a hymn of Guru Nanak, whose tenth successor is now Guru Gobind Singh. The boatman enquired, if I earnestly pray, will the Guru come to see me?” The Gursikh responded that

Guru jee always listens to the innermost prayers of his devotees, and assured him Guru Jee will surely visit him. He will come riding a horse with a plume on his turban, not just by himself, but be accompanied by several of his disciples. The boatman started praying with profoundly keen desire to see Guru Jee, who felt his yearnings. Lo, behold Guru Jee along with Bhai Daya Singh and 19 other disciples, on the way for hunting, came to the bank of Sirsa River where the same boatman was stationed, and hired his boat to cross the river. The boatman intuitively realized that this must be Guru Gobind Singh's party based on the description given by the Gursikh. Happily, the boatman ferries them across the river all the time singing the above-cited hymn. After hunting, Guru Jee and his group returned and rode the same boat back. Guru Jee asked Bhai Daya Singh to pay fare to the boatman but the boatman refused to accept. Guru Jee asked the boatman, "why don't you want to accept the fare". The boatman said, "Guru Jee, your and mine profession are similar so think of your ride as a professional courtesy". Bhai Daya Singh, Guru Jee's confidant, seemed puzzled and tells the boatman, "what are you saying dear brother, Guru Jee is God in human form, and you are just a boatman." The boatman replies, "I am speaking the truth as I see it. You, Guru Jee", he continued, "are the most superb boatman because you ferry people across the world ocean to God's kingdom. In that sense we are brothers. You came to my place and I ferried you across the river. When I come to your place, you ferry me across the worldly ocean". Guru Jee embraced the boatman for his insightful vision, unwavering faith, devotion, and dedication, and remarked, "you have ferried 21 of us across the river, through Divine grace 21 of your past generations are ferried into God's kingdom". **Such is the power of grace.** It is stories like these, which can be inspiring, motivating, and yet very instructive in conveying our Guru's message.

The message from this story is that Divine grace is directly bestowed unto you, as a devotee, from the Guru when you are constantly seeking it through contemplation, dedication, and devotion, all in deep humility and through complete surrender of yourself. In this way when you seek God's refuge then Divine grace flows spontaneously. This is well illustrated in Guru Arjun's hymn:

srix pey pRB Awpxy gur hoAw ikrpwlu

[isrl rwg mhlw 5, pnw 48]

"On surrendering to your God, Guru becomes gracious (benevolent)".

[siri ragh mahala 5, SGGS: 48]

Benefits Flowing through Divine Grace

First, the divine experience of grace will illuminate and enlighten your inside so that all the bounties, the comforts, the joys, the blessings, indeed everything, in life will come to you as a result of Divine grace and Divine mercy. We observe this in the hymn:

imhrwnu swihbu imhrwnu swihbu myrw imhrwnu

jIA sgl kEu dyie dwn

[iqIMg mhlw 5, pnw 724]

"Gracious (merciful), God the gracious, my God is gracious. (God) blesses gifts to all the beings".

[tilang mahala 5, SGGS: 724]

Additionally, your doubts and superstitions will disappear in accordance with the hymn :

guir pUrY imhrwin Brmu Bau mwirAw

[slok mhlw 3, pnw 854]

"Through the grace of perfect Guru, doubts and superstitions get eliminated".

[slok mahala 3, SGGS: 854]

Second, divine grace will enable you to detach yourself from worldly attachments without renouncing your personal, social, and professional responsibilities and duties. This way, living in this world with all your obligations, you will still feel deeply absorbed in God. That is

the beauty of divine intervention and divine interaction in your life. This concept is beautifully expressed in the hymn below by Guru Nanak:

ndir kry qw eyhu mohu jwie, nwnk hir isEu rhY smwie [Awws mhlw 1, pnw 356]

“Through Divine glance these attachments go away, oh Nanak, stay absorbed in God”.

[asa mahala 1, SGGS: 356]

Third, the gift of **divine grace leads to blessings of Naam, the key to spiritual uplifting, divine enlightenment, and eventual union with God.**

nwnk ndrI ndir kry, qw nwim Dnu pLY pwie [slok mhlw 3, pnw 850]

“Nanak, when gracious God shows Divine glance, then (one) obtains the wealth of Naam”.

[slok mahala 3, SGGS: 850]

Thus, with the blessings of divine grace and divine mercy you will now be well equipped to elevate yourself through prayer, worship, and meditation into a higher state of mind, and your mind will be constantly and effortlessly focused on divine lotus feet of Guru Nanak. You will now become a true devotee of God, who will then listen to whatever you may have to say. Guru Amardas describes this scenario in the hymn:

nwnk iqn kw AwikAw Awp suxy ij lieAnu pMnY pwie [slok mhlw 3, pnw 853]

“Oh Nanak, those who are tuned to God, their request is heard by Him”.

[slok mahala 3, SGGS: 853]

Fourth, at this stage even when you are in tune with God, you must still keep on seeking, in deep humility, God’s grace and divine mercy for only then you will spontaneously follow your Guru’s instructions in every sphere of your daily life. The wonders which then divine grace bestows on you are beautifully described in the hymn:

qmrl ikRpw qy jplAY nwEu, qmrl ikRpw qy drgh QwEu

qmrl ikRpw qy sdw suK hoie, qmrl ikRpw qy BRm BEu BwgY [gEuVI mhlw 5, pnw 192]

“Through Thy grace (one) remembers Naam, through Thy grace (one) obtains place in Thy court. Through Thy grace (one) acquires eternal peace, through Thy grace doubts and fears get eliminated”.

[gauri mahala 5, SGGS: 192]

Fifth, what the above-cited hymn reminds you is that the initial grace begets more and more divine grace. When you get blessed with perfect Divine Grace, then your mind is completely disciplined, and is fully under your control and your heart is fully in tune with divine power. Your mind and your heart are now fully attuned to God. This then is the ultimate blessing, which is the outcome of a virtuous lifestyle, total devotion, and complete surrender and submission of your inner self. Thus, we see this idea reflected in the following hymns:

minu sibd mrY, buJY jnu soie

[DnwsrI mhlw 3, pnw 665]

“Mind is conquered through Word, the person who experiences this knows that”.[dhanasri mahala 3, SGGS: 665]

mnu bis AwvY nwnkw jy pUrN ikRpw hoie

[iQqI gauVI mhlw 5, slok, pnw 298]

“Oh Nanak, mind is controlled when perfect grace is bestowed”.

[thiti gauri mahala 5, SGGS: 298]

Sixth, it is only when your mind is completely under your control, and you are constantly remembering God, that you are able to stay continuously tuned to Him. This process also ensures you freedom from all kinds of fears and doubts. Above all it allows you union with God in this life. Under these pristine conditions your mind will also remain holy, crystal clear, calm, and peaceful. This will then produce most brilliant enlightenment inside you, in

accordance with the hymn:
pRB ikrpw qy hoie pRgws

[gEuVI suKmnI mhlw 5, pnw 271]

“Through Divine grace, (inner) enlightenment is obtained”.

[gauri sukhmani mahala 5, SGGS: 271]

Finally, with perfect divine illumination within, you will be able to radiate warmth, sensitivity, goodwill, care and concern to every one around you. You will then be able to provide altruistic service as a matter of routine. You will now willingly and happily share all your blessings including your wealth, abilities, knowledge, and kitchen with others, especially the needy one’s. Such **selfless service to mankind constitutes service to God, and thus enables you to acquire a lasting union with God**. This is beautifully illustrated by the hymns:

gur syvw qy hir pwelAY, jw kau ndir kry

[slok mhlw 3, pnw 850]

“To those whom God is gracious, they acquire (union with) God through service of the Guru”.

[slok mahala 3, SGGS: 850]

kir ikrpw hir myilAw myrw siqgur pUrw

[gEuVI bYrwgx mhlw 4, pnw 168]

“By bestowing grace, God has united me with my perfect satguru (Guru Nanak)”.

[gauri barugun mahala 4, SGGS: 168]

Remember, it is only with and through the divine providential grace, and support, guidance, direction, wisdom, and spiritual knowledge from your Sat Guru, Guru Nanak, that you will become fully capable of accomplishing the goal of your life.

In summary, then, **invite most humbly and most passionately with all your heart the True One, God, to reside in your heart**. This will happen through and with divine grace. The True One in your heart will highly motivate and deeply inspire you to lead a really righteous and truthful lifestyle during all your daily activities and dealings. When you truly practice this at every step of your life, recognizing God’s manifestations all around you, then, the final result is, that this spiritual eternal bonding will provide you with a supremely divine union with God. This is beautifully enunciated in the hymn:

jw kY ihrdY eyko hoie, scu krxl scu qw kl rhq, scu ihrdY siq muiK khq
...pwrbrHmu ijin scu kir jwqw, nwnk so jnu sic smwqw

[gEuVI suKmnI mhlw 5, pnw 284]

“In whose heart only one (God) resides, that person’s deeds are truthful and truthful is his/her way of living. The one who recognizes the creator as True, that person gets merged in the True One”.

[gauri sukhmani mahala 5, SGGS: 284]

[concluded]

