

Meditation: Call of the Divine

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GURU GRANTH SAHIB IS REplete with exhortation to Godliness, Truthful conduct and life-long practice of moral conduct. The stress is on good clean life, detached from erring acts but not essentially from the worldly pursuits. The difference between Guru Nanak's path and other established religions is that others do not stress so much on giving priority to extrusion of faults. They rather hasten to initiate the individual presuming that, in due time, the behaviour of the man would automatically cleanse itself of moral weaknesses. This has been exploited by certain religious orders to form a mass base of the half-inclined and semi-initiated followers who have created havoc with the pristine value-based systems without their seriously accepting the concerned disciplines.

Even though the matter has been dealt with in great detail in the Guru Granth Sahib, there is an on-going serious debate in the Sikh community about the methodology of meditation. It is held by some scholars that in spite of stress on the practice of *naam simran*, they do not find clarity on the rules and methods of meditation in the Guru Granth (or in other standard works of Sikh savants) specifying the science and procedure of *Naam simran* in practice. They hold that the people, who are immersed into long hours of recitation of *guru-bani* feel the vacuum, and go in search of a methodology of meditation since the mere reading of the *Gur-Vak* is not the desired purpose. It has led many Sikhs to approach the ill-informed *bhais*, *granthis* and the self-acclaimed *Babas* to become their keen followers, who complement the seekers' travails with the Yogic and *Nath* theories, firmly discarded by the Sikh Gurus.

ਖਟੁ ਸਾਸਤ ਬਿਚਰਤ ਮੁਖਿ ਗਿਆਨਾ ॥

ਪੂਜਾ ਤਿਲਕੁ ਤੀਰਥ ਇਸਨਾਨਾ ॥

ਨਿਵਲੀ ਕਰਮ ਆਸਨ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਇਨ ਮਹਿ ਸਾੰਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜੀਉ ॥

[SGGS: 98]

*They utter the six philosophic schools orally,
Worship, applying marks, visit holy spots to bathe,
The eighty four asanas and the yogic practices,
Yet, they attain not the divine peace.*

They indulge primarily in reintroducing the practices of trance and breath-control or reading *en masse*, through the Adi Granth, in the style of Al Koran, or the continuous chanting of Ramayan, etc. There are more mendicants in the Sikh inhabited areas flourishing on the ignorance of the Sikh populace by preaching, in a hushed manner, the secret of the so called *naam-dan*. In order to maintain their hold on these hapless unfortunates, they strictly forbid them to discuss the methodology and the confidential *diksha* of *naam* with anyone and to remain glued to the *Baba* himself. The *Babas* prefer it this way, so that the subject remains perennially dependent on them and need not strive to improve his character and behaviour as such. The Gurus sing of total surrender, giving up the personal ego and fusion of

Self with All-Pervading *Para-Brahm* as the ultimate objective. Far from the Babas' stance strongly influenced by the traditional *Nath* or Yogic practices rejected in Sikhism, Guru Nanak's mission was to prepare the initiate to the purest and highest level of conduct:

ਸਭਿ ਗੁਣ ਤੇਰੇ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਵਿਣੁ ਗੁਣ ਕੀਤੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥ [SGGS : 4]

*You are All Virtue; I have none,
Without virtues there cannot be any meditation.*

When a person gives up resistance built on personal ego, a state of harmony takes place. This is experienced by each individual at least once in life-time, may be, willingly or unwillingly. This is, for instance, clearly visible in the people at the threshold of Death. Now, every one knows for sure that Death has to occur, but people go round living their normal span of lives, unmindful of the approaching hour of the supreme renunciation, doing their normal acts as if the Final Act is going to happen to all others, but not to them:

ਸੋ ਦਿਨੁ ਆਵਨ ਲਾਗਾ ॥

ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਭਾਈ ਸੁਤ ਬਨਿਤਾ ਕਹਹੁ ਕੋਉ ਹੈ ਕਾ ਕਾ ॥

[SGGS 692]

*That day is fast approaching,
Mother, father, brother, son and wife,
Ponder, who is whose?*

What is desired of the seeker is to understand how to surrender while there is yet time to understand the truth while he is alive, healthy, hale and hearty, and acknowledge that his strength and might is going to yield to a higher Truth, in spite of his myriad wishes and preferences. He must, therefore, acquiesce to act in accordance with the Divine dispensation, accepting the maxim that He is the Doer, beyond our reckoning and our limited view of matter.

In my childhood, adjacent to our backyard was the kitchen of our family hotel, where the cook's mate used to sit and hack the chicken. I was fascinated and awe-struck to see that butchering, as chicken after chicken was guillotined. Some used to make shrill noise and dreadfully undergo the ordeal while others perhaps understood the inevitability of the final blow to come and submitted silently or with a mild whimper. So is the destiny of man. After elevation to the highest positions of power and pelf, he must go, depart with a whimper or lot of noise, but go he must. While living life in Society as a useful member, therefore, passionate infatuation with the mundane matters may be re-focused, instead, with the same zeal to atonement with the Lord:

ਜਿਉ ਬਾਰਿਕੁ ਪੀ ਖੀਰੁ ਅਘਾਵੈ ॥ ਜਿਉ ਨਿਰਧਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

ਤ੍ਰਿਖਾਵੰਤ ਜਲੁ ਪੀਵਤ ਠੰਢਾ ਤਿਉ ਹਰਿ ਸੰਗਿ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਭੀਨਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

[SGGS 100]

*Like a child enjoys drinking milk,
Like the penniless man is satiated with wealth,*

*Like the thirsty feels the cool with cold water,
So does this mind feel atoned with God!*

There are innumerable similes given in the Guru Granth Sahib on this very subject, to demonstrate the state of God-intoxicated mind and its intensity, compared with the normal worldly behaviour.

ਜਿਉਂ ਦੀਪ ਪਤਨ ਪਤੰਗ ॥
ਜਿਉਂ ਚੋਰੁ ਹਿਰਤ ਨਿਸੰਗ ॥
ਮੈਗਲਹਿ ਕਾਮੈ ਬੰਧੁ ॥
ਜਿਉਂ ਗੁਸਤ ਬਿਖਈ ਧੰਧੁ ॥
ਜਿਉਂ ਜੁਆਰ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਲਾਇ ॥

[SGGS 838]

*Like the dying of the moth over a lamp,
Like the thief making entry for theft,
Like the elephant overpowered by sexual urge,
Like the house-holder dealing in malpractices,
Like the gambler unable to resist gambling,
O Nanak, in passion join with the Lord!*

Meditation is, thus, not in inducing trance-like state of mind, but consciously to love God as one does the material things. That is the uniqueness of the Sikh parlance. The scriptures are universal and open to all members of society. Everyone understands the texts according to one's given intellectual level. The understanding person lives in the midst of this world, fully participating in its functions and routine, but with the difference that he is not lost head-over-heels, but acknowledges the direction of right and wrong. It is important to be upgraded by honest practice of truth and truthful living. Guru Gobind Singh added the oath-taking at the time of *khande-ki-pahul* administration as a precondition.

The first step is, therefore, to follow unquestioningly a routine to imbibe the discipline in action.

ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥
ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਭਲਕੇ ਪਰਭਾਤੀ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਰਿ ਨਾਵੈ ॥

[SGGS 305]

*Whoever calls himself a Sikh of the True Master,
He must get up early in the morning and meditate,
Let him make an effort to wake up early at day-break.*

In the same *sabd*, Guru also avers:

ਫਿਰਿ ਚੜੈ ਦਿਵਸੁ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵੈ ਬਹਦਿਆ ਉਠਦਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥
ਜੋ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੋ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ ॥
From dawn he sings divine hymns of the Guru,

*And meditates while sitting or standing, (In all postures).
Whosoever recites my Lord with every breath,
Such a God-centric person is blessed by the Master.*

Based on this stipulation, the succeeding stage for the seeker is to fully immerse in love and presence of God, as an all time activity. Such a person sheds the selfish view of the world and life as he has no time any more to promote self-centered activities, even being a house-holder.

੧) ਜੇ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੀਐ ਤਾ ਕਿਤੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਭਗਤਿ ਹੋਇ ॥ [SGGS 35]

*If one were to consider the time and mood,
How would one select a particular time to meditate?*

੨) ਇਕੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਿਨੇਹੀ ਹੋਇ ॥ [SGGS 35]

*If one were to forget Him even for a moment,
What sort of meditation would that be?*

The Guru then advises the pilgrim of divinity:

ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇ ॥
ਸਾਚੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਤਾ ਥੀਐ ਜਾ ਹਰਿ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਇ ॥

[SGGS: 35]

*O my mind, concentrate on God's name,
True adoration is that,
When the True Lord dwells in the mind!*

The true Gursikh, in the final stage, perceives himself as a part of the cosmos, without his own small ego or worldly worries bothering him, verily the true purport of *Vairag*:

ਜਿਨਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੇਹੁ ਤੈ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਸਚੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥
ਰਾਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਡੇਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰੇਮਿ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥੯॥
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਚੀ ਆਸਕੀ ਜਿਤੁ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮੁ ਸਚਾ ਪਾਈਐ ॥
ਅਨੰਦਿਨੁ ਰਹਿ ਅਨੰਦਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਹਜਿ ਸਮਾਈਐ ॥

[SGGS : 1422]

*Those God-centrists who are imbued with the Beloved's love,
Nanak, they are merged in the true love day and night,
God-centrists have true love whereby they attain to the True Lord,
They remain in a state of constant bliss,
O Nanak, they remain in pure beatitude.*

Human mind has been prone to the hypnotic inducement for a long time. It is deeply imprinted in it, fully convinced that meditation is what the Indian yogis have defined since the ancient times. In Christian, and other occidental systems, meditation denotes a similar discipline of concentration into a state of trance. In Islam, the prayer is fixed in time and postures. But Guru Nanak broke fresh ground

by redefining meditation as different from this classical view-point. He pleaded with the Muslim audiences to shed mundane worries and get into the state of communion with God. The meditation of trance is, at best, of a temporary and periodic duration, and, once out of it, the subject reverts to worldly affairs with the same trickery which is part of his mental make-up.

Many *Siddhas* and monks who had abjured the world to find celestial peace showed their impatience, their boiling rage and baseness of nature, like the famous *Durbasa Rishi*, and even the recorded exploits of those who had graduated to the level of celestial beings, gods, goddesses, including their chief *Indra*. They at times behaved worse than ordinary people with overpowering weaknesses in their character. These holy men lost their composure on such minor issues and occasions as begging alms and misbehaving with house-holders. This was leading humanity nowhere, and was counter-productive and a waste of many lives. There is a story of a nun who was very fond of apples but wished to get rid of this fascination. She would keep the apple near her pillow and tried to keep her mind away from its aroma. She became a nervous wreck as it became too much to either ignore it or eat it and find peace. It is nothing more than the classic *hath-yoga* behaviour. It leads to a sense of rage, frustration and longing which further results in aggressive relapse in any person. Guru Nanak was against such practices.

Then, what is the new methodology as propounded by the founder of Sikhism about meditation? It was the fervor of sincere devotion, sublime love and a state of God-intoxication when man realized that there was nothing he could do since ultimately God was the Doer. And he would glow with that knowledge and not want even for a moment to be cast out of such a psychological state of mysticism. That is the *mantram* of *Wah-e-Guru*.

It is affirmed that all names by which God is remembered are sacred, and may be freely employed, as desired and convenient for the Sikh, without any hesitation or reservation about it being either of classical Sanskrit, Arabic or of any other religious usage, so far that these satisfy the disciple. More than one hundred names have been used in the Guru Granth Sahib, which are repeated and sung with relish by the Sikhs. **But the state of ecstasy of *Wah-e-Guru* remains unmatched for a Sikh in enchantment and love with God, where nothing is abhorrent and all enchants!**

ਸਚਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪਿਆਰੁ ਗੁਰ ਪੂਰੇ ਤੇ ਪਾਈਐ ॥

ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਹੋਵੈ ਭੰਗੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਈਐ ॥

[SGGS: 1422]

*True love is received from the accomplished Master,
It never perishes, O Nanak, ever sing his virtues.*

A state of beatitude is only possible by adopting fully the purity of mind and action. One may claim riddance of falsification, but the mind must be brimming with adoration and love for the Creator and His creation at the highest level.

For such souls, each and every moment is a discovery and enchantment over the unmeasured variety of God's infinite reach. One gives up a myopic view of life and the universe. Guru Nanak calls this attitude the state of *Vismad*.

It is perhaps for this situation prevailing in the so-called spiritual scene, that in Sikhism, intoxicants are taboo and the prohibition is sought to be strictly enforced:

ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਮਦੁ ਜੋ ਪੀਵਤੇ ਬਿਖਲੀ ਪਤਿ ਕਮਲੀ ॥
ਰਾਮ ਰਸਾਇਣਿ ਜੋ ਰਤੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚ ਅਮਲੀ ॥

[SGGS: 399]

*Wretched crazy men drink only mind-boggling spirits,
Nanak, those drenched in God's ambrosia are truly intoxicated.*

In the final count, it is the sincerity and honest submission of Man that fashions his character, on the role model of the Creator himself, and merges his ego in the Lord, and becomes forever one with Him. This is the sublime state of meditation in Sikh parlance:

ਇਸ ਤੇ ਊਪਰਿ ਨਹੀ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥
ਜਾ ਕੈ ਮਨਿ ਬਸਿਆ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ॥

[SGGS: 292]

There is none other higher thought:
Than living in God, constant in mind.

