

The Spirit of Surrender – Traversing the Path from ‘Manmukh’ to ‘Gurmukh’

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In moral and spiritual terms, ‘surrender’ connotes a spontaneous and instant affirmation of the Divine power. It is saying, without any hesitation or thought process coming into play, **Yes Master!** The power of ‘yes’ is tremendous and whosoever has courage to say “Yes” to the Master, rises to great heights in self-development and self-introspection. Do not confuse self here with the ego. Ego is false, an illusion which crumbles slowly and steadily when one starts to become aware of one’s true self – “*Munn tu jyot sarup hai, apna mool pahchaan*”...[SGGS 441, M-3] (*O my mind, you are the very image of the Luminous Lord; recognize the true origin of your Self*).

Surrender to the Master is similar when one surrenders to the person one loves. No wonder Guru Gobind Singh ji remarked, “*Jin prem kio, tinn hee prabh paio*”. To be in love with someone is an important device - a *tareeqa*, through which one learns what is to feel when one surrenders to the beloved. Surrendering to the other in love means that one has dropped the ego. Without dropping the ego, - or the *haumai*, a term used in the *baani* - surrendering in love is not possible. “*Haumaai Naave naal virodh hai, dui na vasai ik thaa*”...[SGGS 560, M-3]. Just as *haumaai* and Name of the Lord cannot co-exist in the heart at the same time, *haumaai* and love also cannot. This universal fact has to be understood, in depth, in today’s scenario of terrorism and religious fanaticism prevailing in the God gifted planet called Earth. No other planet has yet been found favorable for human habitation in all respects. Earth is one planet which, if anything were to destroy it, would be due to the *haumaai*, overpowering our true self. Any strife, conflict or war occurs due to the *haumaai* or ego of one person, or a group of persons, following an egoistic person, either politically, or in the name of religion.

History is replete with numerous examples, such as that of Alexander, Hitler, Mussolini, Chengiz Khan or Aurangzeb. Possessiveness or the desire to possess things, whether tangible or intangible, also wealth, power and fame, goads one to acts of brutality, cruelty, barbarism and evil. Owning things, creating wealth, getting power and becoming famous are not bad, but to become a slave to impulse is so. Nothing is permanent in this universe, except the laws of Nature which keep the solar system in its orbit. “*Jo deesaai sou upjaai binsaai*”... [SGGS 352, M-1] {*whatever is seen is subject to birth (creation) and death (destruction)*}. Whatever is created shall one day be destroyed. After daylight comes nightfall. The waves in the ocean which rise have to fall. “*Jaisey jal tey budbuda upjaai binsaai neet. Jag rachna taisey rachee, kaho Nanak sunn meett*”...[SGGS 1427, M-9] (*as the bubbles in the water well up and disappear again, so is the universe created, says Nanak, listen, o my friend*). Birth means that death is also round the corner- when, where and how is not known to us.

Awareness of this fact of impermanence is the key to dropping the ego. False pretensions and the veils of falsehood one creates act as barriers around our true selves. Dropping the false pretensions and unmasking the veils of falsehood makes the conditions favorable for love to enter our beings. Creativity always mushrooms from love. Love in one’s life is bound to result in the budding of creative talents inherent in a person. Love helps the talent to come into the forefront. Hence the importance of discarding *haumaai* so that love can enter. *Haumaai* has to be dropped or discarded at all costs, this should be the basic learning to be grasped at an early age in the short span of one’s lifetime which is gifted to us.

Unfortunately, what one learns, right from schooling days, is competitiveness and one-upmanship portrayal to others, thus boosting our ego more.

Ideally the learning process in schools and colleges should be to instill feelings of love and brotherliness in each being that will help us to live harmoniously in society amongst diverse cultures and religions. It is love alone which can usher in world peace and amity. The solution does not lie in making forcible converts, or issuing of *fatwas* (citing the recent one issued by a Muslim cleric banning listening to, and playing of, musical instruments in a North Bengal hamlet) or edicts, which will only give a fillip to more repressions. One has to come out of conditioning and repression that society grills into us.

When Guru Gobind Singh gave the call for a 'head' to the assemblage of His followers at Anandpur on the Vaisakhi day of 1699, it was symbolic of surrendering oneself to the Master. What was it that Guru ji wanted ? A head, five times. Physically offering of one's head implies that one is willing to sacrifice one's life. Metaphorically it meant one is willing to sacrifice one's mind (accumulated thoughts) to the Guru. Mind through various generations has become cluttered with filth and impurities which have to be given up as a sacrifice to the Guru. Cleansing the filth of conditionings and repressions from our minds has to be the No.1 priority on the path of spirituality. Only when one cleanses the mind of accumulated behavioral data, does the *bhanda*, or the vessel of mind, become receptive for something fresh and new. "*Bhanda dhoey baais dhoop devoh tou doodhey kou jaavoh*"...[SGGS 728, M-1] (*wash the vessel [of mind], sit down and anoint it with fragrance, then go out and get the milk*) Guru Nanak wanted a Sikh to empty - and thus cleanse - the mind so that His words could penetrate the beings of His disciples. "*Nanak sach bhanda jis sabad piaas*"...[SGGS 158, M-3] (*O Nanak, true is that vessel of the mind, which thirsts for the shabad*). Without the penetration transformation is not possible.

Spirituality is actually transformation. If no transformation is taking place, then take it for granted that one is not walking on the right path. No matter how much time is spent in reading and listening to -the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, Gita, Ramayana, Koran, Bible or Guru Granth Sahib, be assured that without it's contents or Words penetrating the mind vessel, all efforts would be in vain. "*Bin boojhey sabh hoey khuar*"...[SGGS 791, M-1] (*without understanding all is misery*). Guru Nanak wanted a person belonging to any caste, creed, sect, religion or community to transform himself or herself from the state of a *manmukh* to that of being a *gurmukh*. A *manmukh* is one who is not receptive to the Guru since he/she is facing away from the Guru. **A *gurmukh* is a person who is receptive to Guru Granth Sahib.** The whole of Guru Granth Sahib lays great stress on eradication of ego, cleansing the mind, contemplation (*veechar*) of *Naam* and becoming a *gurmukh*. Who becomes a *gurmukh*? One who is willing to give his or her head to the Guru or Master. Names of the five **beloved ones** have been cited in Sikh history to have offered their heads to the Tenth Master. This does not mean that only five were initiated into the brotherhood of the Khalsa in 1699. Here again it is an indication, symbolic for a Sikh to imbibe the qualities of *daya, dharam, mohkam, himmat and sahib* - compassion, faith, perseverance, courage and grace. **By inculcating these qualities one becomes worthy to be called a Sikh.**

Surrendering calls for great courage. Surrendering to the Guru requires immense fearlessness. It is like taking a plunge into the ocean without any demur. Guru Gobind Singh accorded the status of perpetual Guru to Guru Granth Sahib to whom one has to surrender by taking a spiritual bath daily as a routine. The *hukumnama* which a Sikh is enjoined to take daily enables one to bathe spiritually. "*Satgur hai amrit sar sacha munn naavey maail chukavaniaa*"... [SGGS 113, M-3] (*The true Guru is the true pool of nectar; bathing in it, the mind is washed clean of all filth*). Revolving around the *hukumnama* taken daily, one has to

ponder throughout the waking hours as a sub-conscious effort (*sehaj subhaai*) and do self-introspection so as to let the full impact of the one whole *shabad* to sink into the vessel of one's mind, acting as *amrit* oozing out through our daily actions and inter-actions with others while living in society. As we usher in the New Year with Gurburab celebrations, let us visualise the historic call that echoed in the hills of Anandpur in 1699. The 'CALL FOR A HEAD' is relevant even today in 2007. Indeed it shall always remain significant for the future generations. "*Itt Marg paair dhareejai, sarr deejai kann na keejai*" [SGGS 1412, M 1] (*if you want to walk on this path {of spirituality}, be ready to give your head {mind} without any qualms*). Are you: "**Ready for Surrender?**"