

Seed of the Divine Called Nanak: Let's look deep in our hearts

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When conception takes place, great energy concentrates inside the womb. What a wonder of creation that, in nine months, in utter darkness and solitude, a unique baby emerges. Unbelievable, yet true. When a child is born, a potential unseen seed lies inside in the form of a soul or *atma*. Once this seed is showered with the *Amrit* of the Guru, it erupts and mushrooms into a living dynamic consciousness, that may be called Nanak. Each one of us is born to be a Nanak. But how many of us become so? The sole criterion is '**Meeting the true Guru, that is Satguru**'. Once a meeting of minds takes place, developing into an intimate relationship with Guru Granth Sahib - Scriptural Satguru - the conditions become congenial for the disciple to savor the nectar of *baani* or the Shabad Guru. Continuous shower of this nectar on our *munn* softens it, making it *nirmal*, or pure, over a course of time, thus erupting into a blossomed flower, called Nanak.

Every *shabad* of Guru Nanak (and other attained spiritualists enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib) is the **Amrit** which a Sikh has to imbibe. ਇਮਿ ਇਮਿ ਵਰਸੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਧਾਰਾ ॥ ਮਨੁ ਪੀਵੈ ਸੁਨਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ

॥ [Guru Arjun Dev ji - SGGGS: 102.] Every human being has an intense thirst, but not being aware of how it can be quenched, one remains entrenched in the cycle of birth and death, of hope and desire. Satguru, out of experienced truth, shares it with us and says, "*Munn peevaai sunn sabad beechara*", but we fail to listen to it. During my life, till the age of almost 39, I kept on hearing the *shabad* now and then, but with no tangible transformation. All efforts at hearing were in vain. True to Gurbani, without the holy *sangat* chances of transformation are indeed rare. It was in the year 2001 that I came into the *sangat* of three beautiful souls: Bhagwant Singh ji Dalawari of Amravati in Maharashtra, Ramesh Singh ji of Tatanagar and Atambir Singh ji of Khanna. Since then there was no turning back on the road of spirituality. From them I realized the vast difference between *hearing* and *listening*. That which is absorbed and retained by the mind upon hearing is listening. The key to listening is '**vichaar**', meaning contemplation.

Once I began to listen to the *shabads*, I could feel something inside me growing and could feel the transformation taking place. I could feel the symphony in me created by the words of the Master. Today if I do not happen to sit with my Guru, my day appears to be incomplete. I enter the *Babaji's* room, uncover the *roomalas*, shut my eyes, then open them and turn to the page in Guru Granth Sahib and read the *hukumnamah*, "ਆਸਾ ਮਨਸਾ ਬੰਧਨੀ ਭਾਈ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਬੰਧਕਾਰੀ ॥ ਪਾਪਿ ਪੁੰਨਿ ਜਗੁ ਜਾਇਆ ਭਾਈ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰੀ ॥ ਇਹ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਗਿ ਮੋਹਣੀ ਭਾਈ ਕਰਮ ਸਭੇ ਵੇਕਾਰੀ ॥ [SGGS: 635]

I thank the Divine Guru Nanak for freeing me from the chains I was trapped in. All those rituals and ceremonies I had been doing so long in the name of religion, have now become meaningless. I have stopped doing penance, neither do I participate in *Akhand Paath*. My visits on full moon to Chandrakona (Kharagpur, West Bengal) have ended. Nor do I go, in pilgrimage, to Hemkunt Sahib, or Amritsar, for ritualistic baths. All these actions had held me in chains - feeding my *haumai* (ego) turning me into a slave of my false notions, when I needed freedom, peace and happiness.

Reading above *shabad*, I couldn't help muttering, "Baba Nanak, your presence is desperately, desperately needed in the 21st century". The *shabad* tells us, "*All those actions,*

rituals and ceremonies which one does with the hopes and desires, arising for accumulating more and more maya, are futile, chaining us into entrapments in our self-made cycle of sins and virtues, even as we drift away from NAAM and the love of the Lord.” The shabad goes

on: “ਸੁਣਿ ਪਿਡਿਤ ਕਰਮਾ ਕਾਰੀ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਰਮਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭਾਈ ਸੇ ਆਤਮ ਤਤੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ ॥ [SGGS : 635]

Before I pondered on the text, I was under the impression that it was addressed to Pundits, i.e. priests, not for Sikhs. Like most gullible Sikhs I remained stooped in ignorance. Today I realize, with the grace of God, that this *shabad* is meant for all men of reason. It applies to those Sikhs who ape Pundits by making rituals an unnecessary part of their lives. Guru Nanak says, “**Only that activity can produce happiness which is contemplation on the essence of our soul**”.

Ask yourself, “Do I contemplate?” If yes, you are on the mark, walking the right path. If not, you will be like the spider, (as Guru Nanak says in the later part of the *shabad*) which creates a web and gets trapped due to its own folly.

Guru Nanak further says, “*Without Satguru, Naam cannot be discovered. Without Naam, doubts won't go away. By serving Satguru happiness is obtained, and our munn becomes nirmal, pure residing in truth. By serving the Guru, understanding dawns. Without knowledge, true path is not obtained. Those who have greed, will always have unsavory speech reeking of falsehood*”.

The question arises, “**How are Sikhs to serve the Guru?**” By adorning the Guru Granth Sahib with the most expensive *roomalas*? By seating him in beautiful *Palkis*? By lighting incense or spraying perfume? By doing *parikrama* around the *Palki* or rubbing one's nose against the *thara sahib*? By paying to the granthi to do *ardas* for material gains, or a fee for *Akhand Paath* for whatsoever cause it may be?

No! All these are cobweb of *bharna* from which we must come out. All the above are rituals which have nothing to do with spirituality. Instead of asking the ignorant *granthi*, why don't we ask our '*Shabad Guru*'? Why do we need middlemen in the garb of '*mahants*' managing the shrines?

How am I to serve the Guru? Guru Amar Das ji, the third Nanak says, ਕਿਸੁ ਹਉ ਸੇਵੀ ਕਿਆ ਜਪੁ ਕਰੀ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਪੂਛਉ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਭਾਣਾ ਮੰਨਿ ਲਈ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਇ ॥ Whom shall I serve? What shall I chant? I will go and ask the Guru. I will accept the will of the true Guru, and eradicate selfishness from within...[SGGS:34].

Guru Ram Das ji, the fourth Nanak explains, ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਜੇ ਚਲਹਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਭਾਇ ॥ The true works to serve the true Guru, if he walks in harmony with the true Guru's will...[SGGS: 1246] **But which part of me must serve the Guru?**

Guru Arjun Dev ji replies, ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਲਾਗੁ ॥ O my mind, attach yourself to the service of the true Guru [SGGS: 50] **Then what does service of the Guru imply?** Guru Nanak replies, ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਹਉਮੈ ਮਾਰੇ ਕਰਣੀ ਸਾਰੁ ॥ Guru's service is **reflection upon the shabad**. Subduing ego, practice pure actions [SGGS: 223]

What happens when one serves the Guru? Guru Nanak says, “ਗੁਰ ਸੇਵਾ ਤੇ ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਤਾ ॥ Serving the Guru, I have come to understand my true self [SGGS 415] and Guru Amar Das ji says, “ਗੁਰ ਸੇਵਾ ਤੇ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਹੋਰ ਥੈ ਸੁਖੁ ਨ ਭਾਲਿ ॥ Serving the Guru, peace is obtained; do not search for peace anywhere else. [SGGS: 548]

Let me sum up: **the answers to all our queries are within Guru Granth Sahib. One does not have to go anywhere or to anyone else to seek the answers.**

Are we bold enough to face the ground reality? The situation we are in today is of our own making. Because a lay Sikh does not dare to raise any protest, or charge our

caretakers with gross negligence of performing the duties and responsibilities as per the guidelines of Guru Granth Sahib, a situation has arisen in which Sikhs are being misled and turned into hypocrites. Had we been true followers of Guru Nanak, our scholars and intellectuals would have thought twice before sanctifying certain erroneous actions codified into the Sikh Rehat Maryada in 1945, that go against the essence of the core teachings of Guru Nanak.

Indeed, I really felt like banging my head on the wall when I read the recent news of a '*Sant baba*' in Punjab influencing and misleading the Jathedars that by 'non-stop relay of *Akhand Paath*, through loudspeakers, over the sugarcane crop in his fields, would produce pure sugar which could be used to make pure *patashas*' used in the *amrit sanchaar* ceremony while baptizing Sikhs! Does this imply that because the *patashas* were not made in this manner before, it has led to the degradation of *Sikhi*? Why don't our Jathedars have the courage and the intelligence to expose such hypocrisy? When shall God grant courage to our Jathedars to rebel against whatever is inimical to *Sikhi* and preach the true basic tenets of Sikhism? **We urgently need a Sikh Reform Movement to elevate Sikhism to the glory it deserves.**

On 5th of November, 2006, Sikhs will celebrate with much gusto, the *parkash utsav* of Guru Nanak. Let this celebration not remain a ritual, farce, or ceremonial or formality that belittles the essence of Nanak. Let us all pledge that **'instead of framing Guu Nanak's picture on the walls of our houses, offices, Gurdwaras and calendars widely distributed by pious Sikhs (and Sindhis) on this day, we shall, from now onwards, frame the teachings of Guru Nanak deep in our hearts, and not do mere lip-service. Let us personally read, listen and put into daily practice the gems and pearls of the 'art of living' experienced by all those who attained spirituality that is enthroned within the 1430 pages of the Holy Granth.'**

Every Sikh has the potential of a Nanak manifest inside him/her. Explore this potentiality. Do not let this gift of human garb go waste. "*Munn tu jyot sarup hai, apna mool pehchaan.*" **The external Gurdwara is only a manifestation of the internal sanctum sanctorum which every Sikh has to build day by day during our sojourn on earth.**

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