

# Knowing Oneself

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When a young person has it in the mind that they are right and there is significant social support for their belief, parents had best beware. You cannot make a young person disown their conscience, but you can educate it at an early age, remembering that a person's basic character is fundamentally set by the time he/she is five years old.

These youngsters are not to blame. They are the outcome of a colossal failure of parenting, education and every kind of institution. There is a pall of ignorance over the land. Money and worldly gain today is more highly appraised than moral and spiritual values. It is a dark age.

A Sikh is one who inculcates Sikh values and keeps the Sikh identity. *Veechaar* has its limitations. What is needed are more people who do not just talk the truth, but actually live it. That kind of leader embodies a bright and magnanimous spirit. They need not impose anything. Followers come from nowhere, begging to follow.

I do not believe I belong to a religion in the old sense – a body of required rituals and affirmations, and a separate social class. **I have a practice.** That practice enriches my life with a profound sense of self-awareness. It feeds my inner urge towards God. It denies my apathy. It engages my compassion. It elevates my spirit and makes me feel great.

Gursikhi is a discipline - not a theology, a culture, a body of thought, or a long-gone tradition. This discipline lives in me. It breathes in me. It gives me life.

The fruit of this discipline – the early rising, the meditation, cold baths, dressing in the Guru's likeness, and the rest is an indomitable feeling of **dwelling in God**. We call it "buoyant spirits" or *charhdee kalaa*.

To achieve it, you need to know how to still the chatter of your mind. You must meditate and engage the power of your soul. The process is called *tapas* – and it is the furthest thing from any academic's mind you could imagine. They don't teach it in universities, colleges and schools. *Tapas* is calculated inconvenience. Sometimes it is a total discomfort, but it makes you bright, intuitive and very calm inside. Together, *jap* and *tap* light the way.

Cultural values are nice. Sikh culture is no less charming than French or Japanese or any other culture. I appreciate the *bhangra*, the *samosas*, the amazing hospitality, Lohri, the *saag*, festive gaudily-coloured turbans, the *mehndi*, the *gulab jamans*, *kabadi*... It is marvelous, but it is not what we need right now.

What the world really needs is more saint-soldiers, more fiercely passionate critics, more leaders who lead by following the Guru's *rehit*. Regrettably, you cannot legislate them into being or create them by moralizing alone. First, you must become one.

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## Cricketing Hero: Now a biography of Monty Singh

According to Press Trust of India, with cricketers' popularity again surging after last years Ashes (and footballers's mediocre display in the World Cup), British publishers are showing interest in still just nine-Test young Panesar's autobiography.

Panesar, the first Sikh to play for England, after his stellar role in his team's series victory against Pakistan this summer, is likely to sign a book deal worth \$250,000 to write his memoirs. More than 15 British publishers have shown interest in Panesar, who has a substantial following among England fans since his spin bowling achievements, *The Sunday*

*Times* reported recently.

News of the book deal highlights a growing commercial interest in cricket by publishers and others. The winning of the Ashes last summer, the dramatic rise of Twenty20 cricket and the defeat of Pakistan this summer have all helped to make the game popular again.

