the Jap Ji
the message of Guru Nanak

the basic Sikh scripture

translated and introduced by

KIRPAL SINGH

about the translator . . .

Kirpal Singh, a modern Saint in the direct line of Guru Nanak, was born in 1894 in the Punjab in India (now part of Pakistan). His long life, saturated with love for God and humanity, brought peace and fulfillment to approximately 120,000 disciples, scattered all over the world. He taught the natural way to find God while living; and his life was the embodiment of his teachings. He made three world tours, was President of the World Fellowship of Religions for fourteen years, and convened the gigantic World Conference on Unity of Man in February 1974, attended by religious, social and political leaders from all over the world. He died on August 21, 1974, in his eighty-first year, stepping out of his body in full consciousness; his last words were of love for his disciples. His life bears eloquent testimony that the age of the prophets is not over; that it is still possible for human beings to find God and reflect His will.

BY KIRPAL SINGH

The Jap Ji: The Message of Guru Nanak
Prayer: Its Nature and Technique
Spirituality: What It Is
Naam or Word
Baba Jaimal Singh: His Life and Teachings
The Crown of Life: A Study in Yoga
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(COMPILED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES):

I. *The Holy Path*
II. *Self-Introspection/Meditation*
III. *The New Life*

THE JAP JI

The Message of Guru Nanak

Literal Translation from the Original Punjabi Text with Introduction, Commentary, Notes, and a Biographical Study of Guru Nanak by

KIRPAL SINGH

SANT BANI ASHRAM
Sanbornton, New Hampshire
1977

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First Edition 1959
Second Edition 1964
Third Edition 1967
Fourth Edition 1972
Fifth Edition 1976
Second Printing 1977

Photographed from the Third Edition, and lithographed, with the addition of "Guru Nanak and His Teachings," in the United States of America by The Sant Bani Press, Inc., Tilton, N. H. Binding by the New Hampshire Bindery, Concord, N. H.

ISBN: 0-89142-029-0

Dedicated
to the Almighty God
working through all Masters who have come
and Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj
at whose lotus feet
the translator imbibed sweet elixir of
Holy Naam—the Word

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THE PREFACE

The following version of *Jap Ji*, or the message of Guru Nanak, is sent out into the world in order to feed hungry souls, and quench their thirst for true knowledge of the higher life.

The original Punjabi text of the *Jap Ji* is exquisitely written and it is impossible to translate it without some loss. An effort, however, has been made in these pages to present a literal translation of the text to the public. Where the reader might lose the true import, recourse has been made to a free rendering.

The *Jap Ji* deals with the practical aspect of the problem of spirituality more than with mere theory. Neither is it a mere work of literature. Earlier translations into English have tended to ignore this and have often failed to convey the true import of the original. In this rendering, an effort has been made to concentrate upon the message that the *Jap Ji* contains, rather than to indulge in a literary exercise. The study of this work will help all people, irrespective of the religion that they may profess.

True religious thought is ingrained in the hearts of all beings. It is inherent and appears in the form of a search after Peace Everlasting and Joy Supreme. When this awakening comes to man from within, he takes to the religious pursuits as prescribed by one or the other form of religion. He also begins a keen and a passionate study of the holy scriptures. These are the elementary steps towards God-realisation and are necessary. But he who does not go beyond this stage, thinking it to be the be-all and the end-all of religion, never enters the realm of higher consciousness. These are primary means. He has to advance a step further, to quiet the spiritual unrest seizing his mind.

Man has to take to the subjective side of things, ultimately to commune with Shabd-Bani. This *Eternal Divine Music* is the Cause of all creation, and permeates it. Christ refers to it as the *Word*, the Mohammedan saints as *Kalma*, Zoroaster as *Sraosha*, the Hindu scriptures as *Shruti*, *Udgeet*, *Nad*, or *Akash Bani*. The Science of the "*Word*" has been practised and taught by almost all the Saints. It is the quickest, the easiest and most natural of all the sciences that exist for attaining complete oneness with the Lord. A study of this book will afford food for the soul that aspires to take a step further into the Inner Realm of the spiritual life.

These teachings are addressed to all humanity and no sectarianism is inculcated. The Master is for all mankind and for all times. Let us hope that this attempt at translation will give us a deeper insight into the problems of the Self and God.

Loving acknowledgement is here made to the teachings of the Great Masters who came in the past, and to later writers, like Tennyson, Huxley and others who have been referred to in the Introduction.

My thanks go to Shri Bhadra Sena and others who took keen interest in going through the manuscript and spent many hours in this labour of love.

—KIRPAL SINGH

INTRODUCTION

What is Jap Ji? Jap Ji is the beautiful hymn of Guru Nanak which appears as a prologue to the Guru Granth Sahib, the voluminous scriptural treasure of the Sikhs, which comprises over 1400 pages. The *Jap Ji* lays down the basic principles of his teachings and explains the means to achieve *at-one-ment* with the One Being, the Creator of all.

The title "*Jap Ji*" is composed of two words — "*Jap*" and "*Ji.*" "*Jap*" stands for meditation on a certain object to a degree that one loses his consciousness and merges into the very object of meditation. By this Japa the meditator is transformed into that very object, losing all sense of his own separate existence. Here this word conveys the idea of deep concentration or internal repetition of the Word, to the extent that it will efface the tint of ego in man, letting in Divinity which already exists in him with full expressive effulgence — spiritual life taking the place of physical existence. "*Ji*" means a new life — life achieved through meditation on the Word — which brings us in closer communion with the Ever-Existent Source of Life. This title thus contains within itself the solution of the mystery of life. It is really life-giving — True-life-giving — by contacting the Divine Word within.

"Only he is alive, O Nanak, who is attuned with Him; all else are dead." — *Majh War M.*1

Therefore if you wish to have life worth living, unite yourself with the Divine Word that is already within you.

Without realisation of God within, the body is but a bellows that breathes in and breathes out without any purpose. To live in communion with Him is the chief object set forth by the Great Master. The *Jap Ji* commences with the basic principles of life, and concludes by giving the substance of his teachings: Equality of man in the sight of God,

all being endowed with equal privileges; their approximation and separation due to their respective actions; their final emancipation through communion with the Divine Word, the Eternal Song; and competence of the Master-soul in raising others to find the Ever-Active-Will diffused in the world. It deals with the views of different schools of thought; and through questions and counter-questions, it seeks to establish the One Reality working at the back of all creation.

Guru Nanak begins by laying down the principle (in stanzas I, II and III of the text) that we must make His Will our own, in order to achieve oneness with Him. Communion with His Holy Naam — the Divine Word, which is an emanation from the One Being — reveals to us His Will. The Holy Naam is the Eternal Divine Song, reverberating throughout the whole creation.

The one thing which helps communion is Simran, the constant remembrance of the Lord. This, and the elementary steps ensuring success towards this end by meeting the qualifications befitting an aspirant for taking up the path of Truth, and the different spiritual planes through which the soul has to pass before achieving oneness with the Lord, form the subject matter of the thirty-eight stanzas of the text of *Jap Ji.*

The *Jap Ji* is a compendium of the teachings of the Master. Guru Granth Sahib, the supreme treasure of Sikh sacred literature, is, in a sense, an elaborate exposition of this preliminary statement. We will take up each subject as dealt with by the Master, in turn, and try to explain how He solved the riddle of life which has perplexed so many. Let us have the patience to study it carefully. Then we can see to what heights of spirituality the Master is calling each one of us.

RELIGION: OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE

Religion, as it is generally understood today, has been grossly misconceived. Prayers consisting of set phrases, forced ceremonials, time-consuming rituals, adherence to outward symbols at the sacrifice of their inner

spiritual meaning and superiority of one creed over another — these and similar other absurdities have usurped the title of religion. One religion is waging war against the other; brothers are fighting with brothers, on the plea of differences of opinion regarding the means to salvation. Bloodshed, falsehood, hatred, intolerance and bigotry have often been preached in the name of religion while the vital offices of religion, the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, are set at naught.

Reason has been banished altogether, reducing religion to a mere profession of creeds and dogmas. Words have replaced deeds. Religion no longer seems to be concerned with such ennobling issues as the knowledge of one's self, and union with the Divine origin. The seeking of God in the observance of outward means, and the repetition of verbal formulae, the haunting of pilgrimages and synagogues amidst unfeeling hearts, reveal the depths to which religion has sunk. Many God-gifted men in the past when faced with similar situations revolted against the fossilized religions and the ritualistic codes of priestcraft.

Is not all this deplorable? It is a sad spectacle, indeed! Fortunately, all this is due to human ignorance of true religion which knows no artificiality or fabrication. The slavery of the priestcraft is not the aim of religion. Its aim is not to bind but to set man free from its slavery.

The Master prescribes a religion which teaches the equality of Man. Nature does not distinguish between a Hindu, a Mohammedan or a Christian. All belong to the one humanity on earth. Guru Nanak exhorts us to accept this — the brotherhood of man — as the grandest religion (stanza XXVIII).

We should consider all men our equals, irrespective of colour or creed. Just as in a class, boys of all sects and denominations sit together, play together, love each other and learn the same lessons from one and the same teacher, just so the whole world should be as one class. No distinction of caste or colour should be observed. The Fatherhood of God and

the brotherhood of man are the true essence of religion. All humanity are alike, no matter if they pose under the garb of Sikhs, Hindus, Mohammedans, Jews, Christians, Buddhists or the materialists.

"All living beings are at Thy Feet, O Lord, Thou carest for them all,

Whatever pleaseth Thee is good, Nanak beseecheth Thee in this wise." — *Bilawal M.*1

The Master loves Nature and conforms to all the laws of Nature. He knows no artificiality or fabrication. Nature is beautiful, except when tormented by man. He therefore leaves Nature to take care of the outer man and to preserve it as best it may. The majority of the sages both in the East and West — Christ, Buddha, Ramakrishna and others — did not interfere in the least with the bodily form Nature gave them. There is in fact no higher religion than this. It is one aspect of religion, the objective side. But there exists also the other aspect which may be termed the subjective — the inner side of it of which we have no knowledge at all. In this respect the Master teaches us to develop the subjective life by the natural means, which consists in living in Divinity and realising the presence of God in our souls. This is the true nature of religion. It is not merely an oral profession, but a highly practical and living essence.

The first lesson to be learnt is to realise the existence of the Divinity in man and to feel, nay — see, its very presence everywhere. It is an ever-active and moving principle diffused throughout creation that accounts for the existence of the universe itself. Nature, with her immutable laws, infinity of forms and phenomena, is not a mere edifice of chance. By one Supreme Ruler is this universe pervaded, held in control and kept in order.

Man must reap the fruit of what he sows here or hereafter. All are subject to the domain of the Karmas and none is exempt therefrom. The only competent means for obtaining emancipation from bondage to the inexorable law of Karmas

is communion with the Holy Naam—the Divine Word, learnt at the feet of a Gurmukh, a Master. When one has understood this, one is fit enough to take the next step.

All men are equal and carry with them the spark of the Divine Light, ever effulgent and eternal. The rites of the synagogue or the mosque, the Hindu ways of worship or the Muslim prayers or the devotional services of the Christians, are but different ways of offering love to the one Supreme Lord.

All of us are playing in the lap of Dame Nature, day and night, serving in the capacity of either male or female, one the ever-active and the other passive. All live on the same earth, under the same sky, breathe the same air, drink the same water. In a few words, all are nourished by the same elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether.

Again, all enjoy the same privileges. All have the same eyes to see, the same ears to hear, the same limbs to move about and the power of articulation to speak. None is deprived of Nature's instruments, for Nature extends the same facilities to all alike and grants equal protection to each.

All human beings—here, there and everywhere—are the children of one Father, and form the links in the unbreakable chain of Divinity, like beads on one string. If you try to tamper with any one of them, you are bound to affect the whole chain. Therefore, molest not anyone is the injunction of the Saints. Baba Farid says in *Guru Granth Sahib:*

"If thou hankereth after a union with the Lord, torment not the heart of anyone." —*Shalok Farid*

Guru Nanak would have each one of us breathe affinity to the whole creation, and look upon the world with boundless compassion from the very core of our hearts, wishing peace unto all. He has set forth the above in beautiful words :

"O Nanak, may we rise up on the current of the Holy Naam—the Divine Word—to Thy Presence.

And wish peace unto all the world, under Thy Will."

Why, then, does there exist all this variety in the outward

symbols and external observance of the different religions? This, the Master explains, is due to the different formalities and customs prevailing in different countries. He says :

"Hindu temples and the mosques of the Muslims are all the same.

The Hindu ways of worship and the *Namaz* (Muslim mode of prayer) are all the same unto Him.

All mankind is but an emanation from the same source of life.

The differences between the men of various creeds—Turks, Hindus and others—are due to the customs and modes of living in their different countries." —*Guru Gobind Singh*

Let us take one instance : To go about bareheaded is a sign of respect in the West, whereas in the East it is taken as disrespect. This evidently changes the outward mode of worship of the West from that of the East. The Christians conduct their services in churches bareheaded, but in the East devotees perform their prayers with their heads always covered.

The climatic influences also play a great part in determining the mode of ritual. In Arabia, the cradle of Mohammedanism, for example, the Arabs, because of the scarcity of water, perform *Namaz* (offer prayers), after *Wazu* (washing of the face, hands and feet); but where water is not to be found at all, they have to be content with *Tayumum*, which is the use of sand for cleansing their limbs, before saying prayers. With the Hindus, in India, the use of water is profuse and a bath is considered necessary before observing religious practices. Such is also the case with dress and other similar matters. These regional practices were assimilated into the religions which sprang up there ; and it is this which accounts for the differences in the rituals and customs that we find among various religions today. Again, there are differences in temperament of the people in different parts of the world. When each one has his own inclinations and his own modes of thinking, it would be simply cruel if one were to force the

same views on all. As a result of this tendency, we have the different systems or schools of thought as they exist today, and these keep on increasing and multiplying with the progress of time. All are, of course, meant to make progress in the development of men's intellects. All men must therefore choose what is best for themselves, until at last they come to the subjective aspect of religion, which is one and the same for all humanity.

The subjective or the true religion, then, refers to an eternal principle, not to outer forms and customs, and is, therefore, universal. It insists on the internal spiritual advancement, instead of attaching mind to external formulae. It is the one aspect where all religions meet. The same strain throbs in the teachings of all spiritual Masters who visited this earth of ours. We will see the truth borne out in the following pages, by giving illustrations and quotations to support this view.

There are then two aspects of religion : the one is the outer, which is the shell and the other the subjective, which is the pith or substance. Man has begun to realise that outer religion aims at the social reformation of a certain class of people only. Their advancement in the way of religion, each establishing its own rules and laws for observance, makes the conduct of life easy in weal or woe. It means giving up one's all for the service of that class of people alone. This, of course, is necessary for a man to live in the world. Following outer customs results in the several societies and communities as they exist today. This may be defined as social religion.

But the subjective religion is quite independent of the societies and communities, although they are the superstructure based on this solid foundation. Deterioration is the feature of time. Those who started the social religions, being fully aware of the subjective side, have left traces of Truth gleaming through their codes of outer rites and observances on which they were based. As time wears on, posterity simply hands down these codes, growing more and more ignorant of the

great and noble truths around which they were originally built. In these circumstances, adherence to outward rituals and forms inevitably takes the place of the inner meaning they once symbolised. Thus the material aspect remains and the essence is lost. Fanaticism, bigotry, caste-ism and sectarianism then are the inevitable results, as the followers of all religions betray in one form or another in the conduct of their lives. It is this that explains the corruption that has entered into the vitals of religion, making it not the bond of union, but the apple of discord.

The subjective aspect of religion gleams through the teachings of all the great scriptures of the world. There is no religion without a spark of Truth in it. All faiths are to be respected from this point of view. The subjective side of the religion is what all the Masters taught. It is one and the same for all. No distinction is made for any creed or class. All are welcome to partake of Truth without detriment or interference with their respective creeds. It is part and parcel of all the creeds, and affords men a deeper insight into their particular faiths. Subjective religion is not a matter of books. It is our own experience which stands to prove the truths taught by the various religions.

We will now go on to attempt an examination of this inner phase of religion, as conceived by Guru Nanak.

The Master explains the basic principles. There is One Being, who is the Creator and the Uncaused Cause of all. He has created the whole universe through His Ever-Active Will which is diffused throughout. The scientists have now come to find a unity in the varieties of the world's great phenomena. They trace the whole creation back to the one primal cause from which it evolved. It irresistibly follows that there is one cause alone which upholds the whole creation. Like the Sun, which is a responsible agent for the changes of seasons and growth of the vegetable kingdom, there is such an Existence responsible for all the phenomena of the world. The Master speaks of it as "There is One Being." This numeral

"One" is used only to denote the Absolute—the Wordless. Since we are finite, we express Him in finite terms.

"Thou art beyond all finiteness; we, being finite, praise Thee in finite terms.

How can we know how great Thou art?" —*Sorath M.* 5

"Whoever knows the mystery expressed by numeral 'One' he becomes one with Him." —*Ramkali M.*1

DIVINE WILL—HOW IS IT REVEALED?

"To make His Will one's own," is the means to achieve Him. Will, itself, baffles all description. Still, to give us an idea of it, Nanak explains it to some extent in stanza 2. It may be defined as something making and unmaking the universe, with a conscious entity at its back. The Absolute is Wordless, Imageless and Nameless. When It came into being, It was called Word or *Naam* which is the cause of all creation. The Word might be taken as the All-Pervading Spirit, working out the world's great phenomena. The Will is identical with this All-Pervading Spirit, but we must not imagine it as blind —for it is intelligent, sentient and purposive. This Ever-Active Will, enshrouded by the illusive matter, can only be revealed by attuning one's will to it. All other means fail. Man's ways are all in vain. The Master says :

"He who gives himself up to His supreme Will, wins the goal;

No other actions count in achieving this end." —*Ramkali War M.1*

The Divine Will is revealed unto man by communion with the Holy Naam—the Divine Word. The words Naam, Bani, Akath katha (indescribable song), Nad, Shabd, Gurmat, have been used by the Master in His discourses for the *one "conscious entity"* working at the back of all creation.

THE OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE ASPECTS OF NAAM

This Principle has two aspects, the one objective and the other subjective. The objective refers to the various qualities pertaining to His manifestations. It has its own use which will be dealt with later under the heading of *Simran*. The subjective is the "*quintessential reality*" which is at the core of all religious books. Without it there can be no creation, no spiritual advancement. Without it, nothing whatsoever can come into existence. This can be understood by a simple example, say that of water. The word "water" is the name, and not the thing itself which it represents. Just the same, Naam, or Word, has its two aspects: one the name and the second the "conscious spirit" it represents—working at the back of all creation. It is very difficult to describe this in words.

The Naam, or the subjective Reality or Word, had been there from the very beginning, and was there before the creation. It was a "Nameless-Something" which was God, from whose Conscious Manifestation a wish projected, accompanied by vibration which expressed itself in Sound and Light Principles. As the conscious current flowed down, it formed spiritual planes. With its further descent, it became the source of creation of the spiritual-material and the material planes. This Current-Consciousness emanated from God and is the Creator and Sustainer of all the universe with various planes and sub-planes. The term Shabd or Word as used by Nanak, signifies that Spiritual Current which expresses itself in Light Principle and resounds in fulness in its subtle spiritual planes. This Naam or Word helps in the elevation and edification of spirit, which being essentially of the same substance as Naam, is attracted by the latter, for "Spirit is the Breath of God" — (Bible). "It is the soul of God"—(Quran). All the saints of the world who came either before or after Guru Nanak, have sung the praises of this creative Life Principle or Word. A few

quotations will enable the reader to be convinced of this basic Truth as given in all the religious books.

EVIDENCES FROM THE VARIOUS RELIGIONS

Christianity: Saint John has stated in his Gospel:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." —*St. John I:* 1-3

"By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made."

Again, "He spoke and it was done." —*Psalm* 33: 6, 9

"Upholding all things by the Word of His Power." —*Hebrews* 1: 3

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth but the Word of God shall stand forever." —*Isaiah* 40: 8

"Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven." —*Psalm* 119: 89

St. Paul said: "For the Word of God is quick (living) and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of thoughts and interests of heart." —*Hebrews* 4: 12

Hinduism: According to the Hindu theological books, the whole creation was made through Nad. They also refer to It as Akash Bani (voice coming down from the Heavens). We have references to It even in the Vedas, the ancient scriptures of the world. We read of It in the Upanishads, as for instance, the *Nad Bind Upanishads*, which deal with the matter in a very lucid manner. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipaka* also speaks of this Sound Principle.

"He has taken the support of the Word, the melodious Tune." —*Chandogya Upanishad*

"Let Yogi sit on Sidh Asan and while practising the Vaisnavi mudra, he should hear the Sound through his right ear." —*Nad Bind Upanishad*

"By communion with the Word he will become deaf to the external sounds, and will attain the Turiya Pad or a state of equipoise within a fortnight." —*Nad Bind Upanishad*

"First the murmuring sounds resembling those of the waves of oceans, the fall of rain and the running rivulets and then Bheri will be heard intermingled with the sounds of bell and conch, etc."

Madame Blavatsky, the founder of the THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, in her book "Voice of the Silence," states that several sounds are heard when holding communion. "The first is like the nightingale's sweet voice, chanting a parting song to its mate. The next, resembles the sound of silver cymbals of the Dhyanis, awakening the twinkling stars. It is followed by the plain melodies of the ocean's spirit, imprisoned in the conch shell, which in turn gives place to the chant of *Vina.* The melodious flute-like symphony is then heard. It changes into a trumpet-blast, vibrating like the dull rumbling of a thunder cloud. The seventh swallows all other sounds. They die and then are heard no more."

Mohammedanism: Among the Muslim Sufis, it is known as Sultan-ul-Azkar, (the king of prayers). Another order of Sufis calls it Saut-i-Sarmadi, (the Divine Song). They also call it Nida-i-Asmani, (the sound coming down from the Heavens), Kalam-i-Qadim (the ancient sound) and the Kalma or Word. The fourteen regions were made by the Kalma—the Word.

Khawaja Hafiz, a great divine, says:

"From the turret of the Heaven a call bids thee Home.
But fallen into the snares thou listeneth not.
No one knows where the Mansion of the Beloved lies,
But sure enough the chiming of the bells proceeds therefrom."

Again:

"Take the stop-cock from thy ears, and hear thou the voice of emancipation, coming to thee.
Attach not to the material world.

The Elixir of life is showering from above.
The beat of love while sounding in the Heavens,
Sounds blessings to the souls of the devotees."

Maulana Rumi, in his *Masnavi* says:

"Grow not sceptical, but attune thyself to the Sound coming down from the Heavens.

Thy soul shall have revelations from afar.
What are these but glimpses of the Unrevealed;
Were I to speak of these sweet melodies
Even the dead shall rise from their graves."

Again:

"Rise above the horizon, O brave soul, and hear the melodious song coming from the highest heaven."

Prophet Mohammed says:

"The Voice of God comes unto my ears as any other sounds."

Shah Niaz, another Muslim devotee, says:

"Soul is the Will and the Secret of God. Its meditation is carried without the help of tongue and palate. Alas ! thou art stuck fast in the physical bondage and do not hear the Holy Sound of God. My Beloved is speaking to thee all the while, but woe to thee for thou heareth not the Voice."

"The whole universe is resounding with the Sound, and thou hast only to open the door of thine ear."

"For opening the ear, it is sufficient to stop hearing the outer sounds. If you do this, you will hear the perpetual and unending Sound. It is infinite and has no beginning nor end, and on account of that, it is called Anhad (without any limits). Without this Word—the Eternal Sound—an infinite expression of the Infinite, the world could not have come into existence. Hold communion with the Melodious Sound and lose yourself in it, O wise man."

Kabir Sahib says:

"Without the Word, Sound or Eternal Song, the soul sees not. Where could she go? As she cannot fathom the mystery of the 'Word,' she is wandering from place to place."—*Kabir*

"Mind hankereth after evils; through the Word, the Master restraineth it." —*Guru Teg Bahadur*

"Through the medium of Word, soul doth cross the endless ocean of matter. Lowly Nanak, therefore, glorifies His Naam (the Word)." —*Ram Kali M. 1*

"The Word is both earth and ether. These had their being through the Word. This Word expressed itself in other aspects as well. The whole creation sprang up after the Word. O Nanak, that endless Word is reverberating in each heart."

"The all-pervading Word has attracted all my mind. What else have I to think of ? Communion of the soul with the Word creates everlasting Bliss. At-one-ment with the Lord procures the Essence of Joy and Peace." —*Shri Rag M.*1

"I am emancipated. The God-Man has unfettered me. Through the communion of soul with the Word, I have gained the resplendent seat of honour: O Nanak, the all-pervading Naam or the Word dwelleth in the hearts of all. The company of the Gurmukhs procures communion with It." —*Malar M.*1

"Far off, on the other shore, is my Beloved. The God-Man's Word, alone, carries the soul across. In the company of saints, man is in clover and never repents." —*Tukhari M.* 1

"How can the ignorant get to the principle of union of soul with the Word? Without communion with the Word, soul comes and goes. O Nanak, the Gurmukh who is himself emancipated, meets by the merciful Writ of the Lord." —*Maru M.* 1

"The creation and the ultimate dissolution of the universe is caused through the Word. Again, through Word, it takes its existence anew." —*Magh M.* 3

"By good luck, the Lord consort has become ours. The Endless Song (the Word), resounding everywhere, gives a clue to His Court." —*Bilawal M.*5

"The Word made all the earthly and heavenly systems." —*Gauri M.*5

Tulsi Das says:

"He is the true saint, who talks about the secret of the

Divine Word (the Eternal Song). Having scrutinised the Unknowable and the Unthinkable. He has realised the Bani (the Eternal Song)."

Doolan Sahib speaketh:

"Word is the lock and Word is the key thereto,
With the chains of the Word, all are bound.
The Lord resideth in the form of the Word, I bow my head at Its Feet."

Charan Dass speaks:

"Ever since I heard the limitless Divine Song (*Anhad*), reverberating throughout,
The Indrayas (organs) have become tired of going out,
And the mind has shed all its ramifications,
All desires have been satisfied. Like a mad man, I have lost myself in the Word, and obtained complete oneness with It."

Swami Shiv Dayal Singh Ji describes the Word as:

"The Sound or the Word is the prime cause of all. It is also the be-all and the end-all. The three regions and the fourth were made by It. The Word and the spirit are of the same origin and both spring from the essence of the Nameless One. It is both the cause and the effect, and all were created by It. The Word is the preceptor, as well as the disciple and is resounding in the heart of everyone. The Word is water and It is the fish, also. Kabir spoke only of this Word. Nanak and Tulsi proclaimed the same Truth. The king and the minister, both are Word personified. Radha Soamni (the Lord of the Spirit) says: 'My brave son, listen to It.' "

The Word (Sound) is echoing and re-echoing in the whole of creation. There is no place without It. It is resounding in the living temple of the human body.

The Word forms a connecting link between man and God. Thus each body is the abode of the Almighty. This is Holy Naam—the Word permeating through all the pores of our bodies. With the help of it, we have to trace back our steps to the source from which we emanated. This is truly the only way back to God. There is no other way.

The Master says:

"By taking to countless outward formularies and rituals, we cannot escape the inner fires of attachment and lust, etc. Millions of way you may adopt and countless forms you may make, but not one is acceptable at His Court."

The Word withdraws us from the outer connections and recedes back into Its Origin. It is the way that Guru Nanak taught, and so did the nine Sikh Gurus after him. Namdev, Ravidas, Kabir and others whose compositions have found place in the Guru Granth Sahib, were one and all the teachers of the Surat Shabd Yoga, or the Science of communion of the soul with the Word. There have been others, too, such as Dhruva, Prahlad, Tulsi, Shamas Tabrez, Mulana Rumi, Hafiz Shirazi, and Christ, who practised the Word. Dadu, Paltu and Soami Shib Dayal Singh, each taught the same Truth, in his own time.

The Holy Naam, or Word, can be practised by all alike, without the agency of tongue or palate. It does not require adherence to the outward observances of the social religions. This Word may be defined as the spirit-current which emanates from the One Being. It forms all the spiritual and material planes as It comes down, from plane to plane, reverberating in and out of all of them. As the lower planes are less subtle and more material than those above, the Word accordingly changes in sound as It comes down. Since It has to pass through five planes, It takes on five different sounds. These are five aspects of the one and the same Word. Guru Nanak deals with this at full length in stanza XV of the *Jap Ji*.

The whole of the Guru Granth Sahib is filled with beautiful pen-pictures, illustrative of the Word. There is no hymn which does not speak of It. A few quotations will suffice here. For exhaustive references, the reader is requested to refer to the voluminous treasure-house itself.

"Through the writ of the Ever-flowing Pen of the Creator, we were attuned with the Lord, according to the instructions of the Master. We heard the five sounds, sounding in His Presence and thus rejoiced at our union with the Lord."
—*Mali M.5*

"Day and night, I am in communion with the Lord, with my mind fully convinced. The temple of my body has thus been beautified. The five Sounds of the limitless Music—the Word—are resounding. O, the Lord has entered my body." —*Suhi M. 1*

"The five Sounds become audible through the instructions of the Gurmukh—the Personified Word. Great is the luck of him who hears Them. The source of Joy and Peace (Word), I see as pervading everywhere. Through the Word, the Lord made His appearance and became manifest." —*Kanra M.*4

"The five Sounds of the limitless Music (Word) are resounding within me. I am attracted to Them, as the Sarang or the sea-bird is attracted by the sight of water. Thy bondsman, Kabir, thus glorifies in Thee, O Lord, the Unknowable and above all human ken." —*Parbhati Kabir*

"The Lord, revealing Himself in five Sounds of the Word, has come."

Guru Nanak speaketh:

"He is the true Preceptor who shows the real Home within the temple of the body wherein five different Sound Currents are resounding and gives a clue of the Holy Naam." —*Malar War M.*1

"Word is the Guru. Soul is the disciple of the Word—the melodious song." —*Ramkali M.*1

"All the handmaids that meet the five Sounds, become the Gurmukh (or the devoted disciples) and reach their True Home, within. Whoever by practice of the Word finds out his True Home, Nanak, shall serve him truly." —*Malar War M.*1

Bhai Gurdas, a Sikh sage, tells us in no ambiguous terms:

"These five Sounds are heard when we rise above the body made of five elements."

"When the sphere of five elements is transcended, you hear the five Sounds in all their sweet and powerful melody."

The other saints have likewise spoken on the same theme, as the following:

"Everyday there are the flares of five drums at His

threshold, proclaiming His Greatness. One who hears that drum-beat, he is freed from egotism and envy and passes beyond finite existence." —*Shamas Tabrez*

"Silence thyself and listen thou to the melody of the five trumpets coming down from Heaven—the Heaven that is above all the skies overhead. I laid the ears of my soul at the threshold of my heart and heard the shrouded mystery but did not see anyone opening his mouth." —*Hafiz Sahib*

SOUND DIFFERENTIATED

There are many kinds of sounds echoing and re-echoing in the various regions of the creation and may, for convenience, be classified into two categories:

(1) Sounds proceeding from the left side. These are negative and material sounds and are connected with the respective ingrained seeds of inner passions. The devotee is willy-nilly attracted by these sounds. If one is fascinated by any one of these siren-songs on the left, one may find oneself hurled down into the deepest depths of the abysmal chasms of the passion to which the particular sound relates, for such sounds have a pull that is outward and downward. In such a sad predicament, the labour of years becomes of no avail and odds go against the pilgrim-soul. These are, therefore, to be avoided scrupulously, for they lead one astray from the spiritual Path.

(2) Next there are sounds that proceed from the right side. These are sounds from the spiritual planes and as such are positive in character and purely spiritual with a characteristic pull that is inward and upward.

These two kinds of sounds are so very similar and so closely resemble each other that one can hardly distinguish between them. Maulana Rumi, therefore, warns us to be careful in differentiating the right type of sounds. He says:

"There are sounds of a lower nature which very much resemble those of the higher,

Yet they have a downward pull and drag one to one's doom."

The particular Sounds that have an upward pull are five

in number, as stated by the various Saints, and may be apprehended through their grace and contacted in Their company. Such Sounds carry with them the effect of the spiritual planes from which they proceed and in turn produce the same effect on him who comes in contact with them. They have their own heavenly melodies, the rapturous strains of which depersonalises the soul by freeing it from the chains of mundane life.

Whoever comes near the fire, gets warmth, no matter whether he does so of his own accord or not. So the Holy Naam or the Divine Song, cannot but influence you when you come in contact with It, whether you will it or not and are in time or out of time. The Power of God cannot but influence you, should you get in touch with It.

The outer music has a marvellous effect on all living beings. It shakes off the grievous burden of the oppressive sorrow and unrest under which one incessantly groans and drives away all thoughts. It washes away the dirt of everyday life by its melodious tunes and captivates the soul. It withdraws the mind from the tumultuous hubbub of the objective world. It concentrates the mind, naturally, without having recourse to any fabricated methods. Music, indeed, has ever been the art of saints.

"What passion cannot music raise or quell." —*Dryden*

How marvellous is the effect of the external music ! What then will be the charm of the internal Divine Melody? It has its own inimitable fascination. It is exuberant with the spiritual vitality which takes man above all the pains and ills to which the flesh is heir. In times of storm and stress, one may harmonise one's self with the internal tunes and pass off unscathed from the pinching effects of worldly life.

These spiritual sounds are aids on the spiritual Path. A Competent Master, at the time of initiation, gives full instructions on how to differentiate between them from plane to plane, as well as how to catch hold of them on the onward march to the highest spiritual realm. Herein then lies the need for a Master-soul, for He is the inspirer of Hari Naam—

the Divine Word, in the depths of one's soul. Without Him, the Eternal Song ever remains a shrouded mystery with no access thereto. As Music personified, it is within His competence to manifest it, make it audible and thus lead one to the seat of the Almighty.

"A Gurmukh (saint) can free millions of souls by the quickening influence of his life-impulse (the Holy Naam)." —*Sorath M.5*

Misery and Pleasure Defined: It is a matter of common experience that we lose ourselves when we are fully engrossed in anything. This blessed state of self-forgetfulness comes only with the fixity of attention and the moment we are forced out of it, we become sensitive to our surroundings and feel upset even with the trivialities of life. Since all our lives we have been seeking pleasure in worldly pursuits and objects, we have become identified with them. Thus, we know nothing of the real and permanent bliss that lies far from them, in the depths of one's own self or soul. We cannot possibly wean ourselves from the so-called pleasures of the world until we are made to introvert and taste something better within.

The whole world is going astray in its search for the centre of true happiness or bliss. Material objects cannot give us bliss on account of the constant change to which, by their very nature, they are subject, every moment of their existence. Again, external objects *per se* have no pleasure in themselves, but it is our attachment to them that gives us pleasing sensations. But these objects, on account of their ephemeral nature, have to follow the changing panorama of existence. By these kaleidoscopic changes, the mind naturally gets bewildered, distracted and very often feels miserable. Everlasting Bliss or True Happiness can be had only by attachment to something that is permanent, unchanging and eternal. The evanescent charms of Dame Nature cannot afford man any happiness in the true sense of the word.

Guru Nanak says:

"Whosoever searches for Joy Eternal, let him seek that in All-Pervading Spirit (Naam)." —*Shalok M.* 9

To relieve the mind from the outgoing senses, it must be attuned to the sweet symphonies of the inner Music of the soul, the Word, reverberating in and through all. As this is eternal, so also will be our attachment to It and we will know no change and no pain. The mind will no longer wander away to external objects, once it gets steeped in the strains of the Eternal Song. With Its help, the world-weary soul rises into the higher spiritual planes. The Word has Its own innate effulgent Light and Song—ineffable and sweet. Where there is vibration, there is sound. It is a scientific truth. Light is also the inevitable result of vibration as both light and sound go hand in hand.

"Where there is scintillating Light, there the Limitless Song is sounding." —*Sorath Namdev*

Guru Nanak has dealt with the countless benefits that accrue from communion with the internal Sound—the Word —from stanzas VIII to XV of *Jap ji.*

Advantages Accruing from Inner Communion of the Soul with Naam—or Surat-Shabd-Yoga: These benefits may be grouped under physical, moral, mental and spiritual aspects of the inner communion.

Naam keeps the mind and body in a state of equipoise. Peace reigns supreme in its devotee; the ramifications of mind are done away with forever. All lusts cease to have their hold on the mind. The brain gets a soothing balm. It puts an end to wasteful hurry, and with it go all nervous tensions and mental strains and stress. Naam gives one immunity from all bodily and worldly pains and troubles. By withdrawing the attention within, the mind is stilled and the soul is freed of all mental conflicts. Even the sense of egotism itself—the most ancient malady—loses itself into airy nothing and with it, the perpetual dance of coming in and going out of the world comes to an end. The process of transmigration of

the soul is but the natural concomitant of the self-assertive will or egotism.

Guru Nanak says:

"Whenever one asserts the little ego, 'I,' as doing things, one assumes the unending role of an ever-active agent responsible for his actions and is caught in the intricate net of transmigration." —*Gauri Sukhumani M.5*

The elimination of egoism is, then, the only remedy for liberation from the unending cycle of births and deaths. It is a clear test of those who have realised at-one-ment with the Ever-Existing Divinity—the spiritual current diffused in the world. All labour undergone for total self-effacement is an effort in the right direction. It is called disimprisonment of the soul from the facts of life or disenfranchisement from all that is wordly. In a word, the secret lies in depersonalising the soul of all that is personal in it, for then one strikes at the root of all evil. The many recipes for this losing of the 'I-consciousness,' that floods the world today, fail to gain for us the goal of liberation. For with such methods, the ego feeds itself and grows from strength to strength and is not effaced. Unless one becomes a conscious co-worker with the Divine Plan, he cannot become selfless.

The very fact that we exist makes us want to understand the process of life. How and whence have we come into existence and what happens after death? The discovery of the theory of evolution by modern science, does not fully satisfy us for it deals with the physical side only and does not account for the higher planes of manifestation, which are the spiritual ones. The ancient sages realised that there could be no evolution without involution. The fact that something cannot come out of nothing proves that involution must precede evolution. To know the latter we must understand the former, just as to know the effect we must know the cause. The two are inseparable.

The gross body is not all. It has two other subtle bodies inside, the astral and the mental, which are composed of finer and less destructible materials. These bodies consist of mind

or intellect and the sense of the little ego 'I.' In them are stored up the impressions gathered in various lives. Only by studying the inner man, the mystery of evolution is understood. The soul is perpetually struggling to cast off the bondage of the matter and of the mind and soar upwards to God from whom it emanated. This struggle is ended only when it rises above the three regions: physical, astral and causal, and loses all sense of egoism, the cause of transmigration.

Huxley posited:

"Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that of transmigration has its roots in the realm of reality:

None but hasty thinkers will reject it on the ground of inherent absurdity."

Self-effacement can be achieved by no other means except communion with the Shabd—the Word, as will be evinced from the sayings of the Master.

He says:

(1) "O Nanak ! through the favour of the Guru, we were saved and the ego was consumed in communion with the Shabd (Word)." —*Wadhans War M.*3

(2) "In egoism, the peoples of the world are being consumed—they go round the endless cycle of births and deaths. The ignorant (those attached to the cringing nature of the mind), do not realise the Shabd. They will go to the other world as dishonoured." —*Siri Rag M.* 3

(3) "The whole world is going astray in the egoistic assertion of I-ness. Without the Shabd (Word), there can be no release from the ego. O Nanak, by communion with the Naam, the ego is effaced and oneness with the True Lord is achieved." —*Asa M.* 3

(4) "In misery and pleasure, the whole world is stuck fast. All their doings are directed by assertion of egotism. Without the Shabd (Word), superstition cannot be ended, and the ego cannot be lost." —*Siri Rag M.*3

(5) "All desires and attachments get singed by the Shabd.

A Gurmukh finds the Heavenly Light within." — *Ramkali M.* 1

True renunciation within comes through communion with the Shabd alone. Nature with all her evanescent charms ceases to have attraction for the renouncer. By renouncing everything, one penetrates into the all-pervading spirit. His attachment to the environments is done away with and his bondage to matter is ended. Thus, no more births and deaths await him. Hereafter the life of the senses and the glamour of the world fascinates him not, on his way to the Lord.

The Master says:

"By saturation with the true Shabd (Word), man truly renounces the world—and his coming and going is ended." —*Maru M.* 3

Detachment in attachment is also attained only with the aid of Shabd. Whatever he does, he does just with a sense of duty—with no attachment to the fruit thereof. The root-cause of misery lies in the fact of one's attachment. We are caught by whatever we do—in our inability to detach ourselves from everything. We must reserve the power of remaining detached from all things, however precious they may be. or however much one may yearn for them.

"Work constantly. Work, but be not attached to its fruit. Thus learn ye the secret of work." —*Gita*

What is it that aids in acquiring the power of detaching ourselves? None else but the communion with the Shabd. The Master speaks of this so beautifully:

"Unattached is only he, who communes with the Shabd." —*Majh M.*5

Again:

"Soul comes to be filled to the brim with the flow of life from the Fountain-Head of all, which makes her increasingly subtle from day to day. This enables her to rise into the higher spiritual planes until she reaches her Divine Goal in Sach Khand. Here, above the bounds of annihilation in Pralaya

(dissolution), and Maha-Pralaya (grand dissolution), she attains complete union with the Formless One."

Man is now endowed with all higher and supernatural powers. He knows the spirit of the scriptures, the secret of communion, the mystery of Self and of God, and becomes the abode of all virtues. He is overjoyed at the time of death, unlike others who are in dire agony at that time, since he has been accustomed to withdraw life-currents from the body at will. He is saved from all the misery that attends the death process.

This process of withdrawing the spirit from the physical body is what is enjoined by all the saints, and is absolutely necessary for a probationer to have access into the higher planes.

Guru Nanak stated:

"The Home you have to get to after death, reach there by withdrawing your spirit from the body, in your lifetime." —*Siri Rag M.*1

"Nanak, die (withdraw your spirit) while you are alive, such a Yoga you should practise." —*Suhi M.* 1

Dadu affirmed:

"Dadu, die (withdraw your spirit) before you are dead. All men die in the usual course."

"Learn to die so that you may begin to live." —*Bible*

"Die (withdraw your spirit) before you are dead." —*Quran*

Maulana Rumi has well defined what this death means. He averred:

"Die, O friend, before you are dead, if you want everlasting life;

Through such a death alone, Adris (a saint) reached heaven before us.

You have striven very hard, but still the veil of matter is not rent asunder, because the death which was real you could not attain.

So long as you do not die, your coming and going cannot

be ended. Until you ascend to the highest rung of the ladder, you cannot get to the roof.

Just as if a man ascends only 98 out of 100 rungs of a ladder, he cannot reach the roof.

Or just as a man who has only 99 yards of cord, cannot get water in the bucket from a well 100 yards deep.

So long as you do not completely withdraw your spirit from the body, the cycle of deaths and births is extended. Let the flaming light of your candle (soul) lose itself into the light of the Morn.

So long as our stars are not hidden, rest assured, the sun also remains out of sight.

Just the same, O wise man ! the Lord does not make His appearance unless the veil of matter is rent asunder.

Therefore, choose the death, and in this way rend asunder the veil.

This death is not the death that carries you to the grave. It is only a withdrawal of the spirit—a change to give you a life upwards.

Mustafa has said to the seeker of Truth, He wants to see you dead so that you may have everlasting life.

So that while alive you may move on earth and when dead, your soul may fly into the heavens.

The soul has her Home in the High Heavens. If once it is withdrawn, no transmigration awaits it.

Because he has learnt to withdraw his spirit while alive, this death cannot be conceived of as a possibility.

So long as you do not die, what benefit can you derive? Go and die, so that you may reap the fruit of your earthly life.

The mystery of dying before death is this, that through such a death, the Grace of the Lord descends."

Kabir stated:

"Death from which the whole world shrinks is welcome unto me,

I rejoice as it is a harbinger of perfect peace and joy."
—*Shalok Kabir*

Such a liberated one goes to meet death more than half way. At the time of departure from the body, he himself joyously withdraws the spirit currents within, as he has been accustomed to do so as a matter of his daily routine. Such a death is unattended by any kind of pain or misery that awaits all others at the last moment. The Hindu scriptures describe the pain at leaving the body to be as that of a thousand scorpions stinging together at one time. The Muslims compare it to the anguish that would be felt on passing a thorny bush through the alimentary canal right from the rectum to the mouth. Of course, everybody has at one time or another been an eye witness to the death pangs at a death-bed. Lastly, one gains access to the Mansion of God. He is thus saved through communion with the Shabd and made competent to help many another to attain the highest heights of Spirituality.

The application of this practice is called "the Surat Shabd Yoga—Yoga of the Sound-Current—the communion with the Divine Lord." It is the only effective means prescribed by Guru Nanak, for the liberation of the soul from the bondage of the mind and matter, and for the ultimate complete oneness with the Lord. He says:

"Live thou, uncontaminated in the world, just like a lotus flower with its head above the muddy pool, or like a sea-fowl that springs into the air with wings unaffected by the water. O Nanak! Surat Shabd Yoga (communion of the soul with the Word) is the only means whereby one can safely cross over the endless ocean of matter—attune ye with it."

"Without contact with the Shabd (Word), ye cannot meet the Lord God and thy coming into the world goes in vain."

"Without the Shabd none can ford over to the Divine Goal."

All efforts put in for securing communion with the Shabd (Word) are efforts in the right direction. Guru Granth Sahib amply bears this out:

"When Shabd is communed with, the Lord is met. All of

man's efforts in this direction, are crowned with success. There is no other way, but this."

SIMRAN—WHAT IT MEANS, AND ITS USES:

Communion with the Word—the Eternal Music—is possible with a life of Simran, or the constant remembrance of the Lord. It does not mean mere mechanical muttering, which is discarded by the Master. Kabir affirmed:

"While the rosary moves in the hand and the tongue wags in the mouth, the mind is concentrated on external effects. This is no Simran."

Again:

"Once the rosary quarrelled with me, saying: Why, O man, dost thou moveth me round and round? Just turn the bead of thy mind and I will introduce thee to the all-pervading God."

"Thou, shalt not take the name of God in vain," but take it with some purpose in view. The constant remembrance of the Lord is but another form of love. Whom you love dearly —you think of always. This constant thought of the Lord is what the Master exhorts all to do, for as you think so you become.

Simran is the remembrance of the Lord done mentally (with the tongue of thought), with the heart filled with devoted love, concentrating on a particular centre in the body. It is an act of centering the self and occupying the mind with the constant idea of the Lord, casting out all ideas of the objective world. The constant dwelling on our environments, has so taken hold of the mind that we cannot even for a single moment drive away the thoughts of external objects. From infancy onwards, this practice has been going on in full swing, and it has now grown into a regular habit of our lives.

Habit is said to be the second nature of man. It is at this stage rather difficult to extricate the mind from external objects. The more you try to do so, the more it becomes restive and the more it runs out into the mundane affairs of life. It

has formed a strong alliance with all that is external. It is always thinking of what is foreign and exotic and is carried away by the glamour and fascination of the world. Whatever habit we have formed, we can unmake it as well. The thoughts of the world and of all that is worldly is the source of bondage to outside things. The Master too uses the same means inwardly as does Dame Nature to bind us to the external world, and makes the mind purely one-pointed. The constant thought of the Lord, by mentally dwelling on the Holy Naam, brings the mind back from the world and holds it to one place. At the outset it is difficult to concentrate as it takes time to bring the mind under control. But there is nothing to be disheartened about. Failures are stepping stones to success. Where there is a will, there is a way. We must stick to the process until the mind is channelled. The glory of Naam always reminds one of the highest ideal of human life. It soothes the mind and prevents it from going astray.

The constant remembrance of Naam withdraws the mind from the outer objects and concentrates it on the Divine and the supernatural. It makes the mind self-centred so that desires fail to draw it out and the siren songs of the world lose all their magic attraction. This part of the practice is technically termed by Guru Nanak as *Simran*. It further helps in the withdrawal of the spirit-current from the body to its seat, situated at the ganglion between and behind the two eyes called *Ajana Chakra*. Unless the soul current is withdrawn completely at one focus, further ascent of the soul is not possible. This process of withdrawal from the body is the one thing that is absolutely necessary in spiritual advancement. It is achieved through the simple preliminary method of Simran. With the help of a Gurmukh Master, the process of inversion and self-analysis becomes quite easy and natural to practice.

In Simran lie the seeds that help in the development of the soul. Nanak reveals this secret in the concluding portions of stanzas V, VI and XXIII, and at full length in stanza

XXXIII of the *Jap Ji*. Fortunate indeed is the man who always revels in the blessings of his Master.

Attachment to the outer world is the outcome of constant remembrance which makes man adhere to his environments, through the law of cause and effect. All impressions ingrained in one's mind must bear fruit in due course. None can escape the result. It is these impressions that we have to nullify by constant remembrance of the Lord, and by making this the ruling principle of our life. In transmigration, man is led to environments to which he has been mostly attached. When you think of the Lord all the time, nothing can bind you to matter; hence you do not have any rebirths, for it is said:

Through Simran of the Lord, you do not pass through the womb." —*Gauri Sukhmani M.*5

Simran makes man introspective and concentrative. Extraordinary powers inevitably follow as a result of the concentration of mind in the inner planes, for "Ridhis and Sidhis (extraordinary powers) are the slaves of Naam." —*Gauri M.*5. The Master, however, warns the probationer against the use of them, for these lead him to the outer pursuits and estrange him from the goal he has set up before him. Simran procures true knowledge, high meditation and unerring intellect. It causes one to lose all sense of individuality, which fades away into the Boundless Being, creating a sort of waking trance. This state is utterly beyond words but is a sure reality beyond the ken of death. The hold of the ego is loosened, the spirit-currents are withdrawn and one rises into a halo of light. The body appears as something not of oneself. One's life, as compared to higher life, may be likened as a spark to the sun.

"Simran washes away the dirt of sins from off the mind." —*Gauri M.*5

Simran befits a person for receiving and enjoying the sweet nectar of the Holy Naam. Guru Nanak explains this in detail by giving illustrations in stanza XX of the *Jap Ji*.

"Lastly, through Simran one hears the sweet music of the

unending Song of the Universe (the Word) and has experiences ineffable." —*Gauri M.*5

Tennyson, in his poem "The Ancient Sage," gives a description of what can be achieved by repetition even of one's own name. In a letter he also refers to the grander life achieved by him, by meditating on his own name. He says:

"A kind of waking trance I have frequently had quite up from childhood. This has generally come upon me through repeating my own name two or three times to myself, silently, till all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of consciousness of individuality, the individual itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into Boundless Being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the wisest of the wisest, utterly beyond words, where death were an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming but the only true life I am ashamed of my feeble description."

Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, was also accustomed to this practice of concentration. He lost all his consciousness of personality by concentrating upon his own name. The Master, however, enjoins the Simran of the Lord and not of one's own name. Meditation on one's name leads to a dip into one's own consciousness which is small, as compared to the Higher Consciousness of God.

There are several ways of performing Simran. When it is done (i) with the help of tongue, it is called *Baikhri,* (ii) when done in the gullet by touching the tip of the tongue with the palate, it is known as *Madhama,* (iii) when done in rhythm with the beat of the heart, it is described as *Pashhanti* and (iv) with the flow of one's breath, it is called *Para.* The last method is practised by Yogins. Masters, however, do not recommend this. The first three methods also do not give complete concentration, as the mind more often than not skips about while repetition is being done mechanically. The Master, therefore, advises mental Simran —done with the tongue of thought — termed *Zikre-i-Ruhi.*

The practice of Simran begins with the repetition of the Lord's objective names slowly with a mental poise. At first the process is objective, but in course of time it becomes subjective. Then the constant thought of the Lord continues without cessation. The Master refers to this when He says:

"O Nanak, a Gurmukh starts the repetition of Naam only once." — *Gauri Sukhmani M.*5

Once this starts, the remembrance becomes automatic, continuous and constant and one never forgets the Lord.

"O Kabir, there is a great mystery in the repetition of the Lord's name and one must try to discover the same:

For many repeat that name, without any fruit.

But others with wondrous results." —*Shalok Kabir*

Again, the Master says:

"All repeat the name of God, but none can fathom the mystery of It.

If through the favour of a God-Man it gets ingrained in the mind, only then one reaps the fruit thereof." — *Gauri M.*3

Let us pause, and summarise what has been said before we proceed further. According to the Master, the purpose of human life is to achieve complete oneness with the Lord. Aye, we must reunite with the Source from whence we once emanated. But how can we reach this Goal?

"Complete at-one-ment with the Lord comes through knowing His Will,

And His Will is revealed through communion with the Holy Naam. This, in turn, is helped by a life of Simran."

Non-assertion of egoism or humility is the way that helps in knowing His Will through Simran. It has already been mentioned that Simran helps in the withdrawal of spirit-currents from the body. After complete withdrawal is achieved, only then the ascent of the soul into higher spiritual planes becomes possible. To understand this and the mystery of self and the universe, requires a brief explanation.

THREE GRAND DIVISIONS AND THEIR FEATURES

Guru Nanak says that creation is divided into three main Grand Divisions.

"The first is the 'Region of Truth and Pure Spirit' unmixed with matter." —*Ramkali M.5*

Here the spirit reigns supreme and there is total absence of matter. This is the region where the Lord Himself dwells and may be defined as the purely Spiritual Region. This is free from the haunt of death and destruction. Whoever reaches its domain, obtains true Salvation. The Master says:

"Once you reach the region of the Formless, you obtain the abode of everlasting Joy and Peace." —*Sorath M.*1

Again:

"The Formless dwells in the Pure Spiritual Region." —*Jap Ji Stanza XXXVII*

The Second Grand Division consists of Pure Spirit and a subtle form of matter combined in varying degrees. The upper part of it is called Par Brahmand, wherein the spirit is more to be compared with the subtle forms of matter. In the lower parts called Dasam Dwar, both are in equal part. This is the region of the universal mind and is termed by various names by various Masters. Here the Spirit is mixed with matter in its subtlest form, the latter being totally subordinate to the former. Spirit in this region predominates and is pre-eminently the ruling force. This region undergoes a change at the destruction of the universe in the Grand Dissolution (Maha Pralaya), and in Dissolution (Pralaya). A man in this domain is safer than in the one below it.

The third region is the Grand Division of spirit and matter in its grossest form and is called "And." It is comprised of Trikuti and Sahansrar planes. It is the sphere of Maya or matter. In this region matter has the upper hand and spirit is subordinate to it, so much so, that the latter feels dependent on the former for its manifestation. In this region the spirit, on account of its association with matter, undergoes untold miseries and is subjected to the law of transmigration.

Both these divisions are referred to as Kaal and Maha Kaal respectively.

In going upward, after rising above the body-consciousness, we first find ourselves hemmed in by matter all around in the And (the Third Grand Division). Then we have to rise into the Brahmand, the region of the Universal Mind. There we feel much better, but still we are not immune from danger or destruction. The first region or haven of safety is the Sach Khand, or the Realm of Truth, which is above the reach of Maha Kaal or the Grand Dissolution. This, in brief, is a sketch of the macrocosm—the Great World Universe. These three divisions also exist in man on a miniature scale. If you want to know about macrocosm, you must first know about the microcosm.

Guru Nanak says:

"In the body itself there is everything: the spiritual region, the heavenly plateaux and the material planes.

In the body dwells the Lord Supreme who nourishes all.

In the body lives the formless, the inconceivable, beyond the human ken.

Those who have material eyes only, seek Him in vain, in outward things.

In the body there are the priceless jewels of Divinity.

In the body there are all the material realms and planes.

In the body is the treasure of the Holy Naam, reached only through meditation on the Word of the Master.

In the body are all the gods: the Brahma, the Vishnu and the Shiva, and the whole creation itself."—*Rag Suhi M.*3

Another saint also has said the same thing:

"Brahmand is in man on a miniature scale, and whoever seeks it, will find it.

O Pipa, the highest Truth may be realised only through a Master." —*Dhanasri Pipa*

This very truth is also enunciated by the Muslim saints who state:

"Macrocosm is in the microcosm and thus you get to God."

In the human body, we trace the three divisions referred to above on a miniature scale:

Man Is an Epitome of the Three Grand Divisions of the Creation:

1. Spirit or the soul, represents the region of the spiritual division.

2. Mind or the mental plane, refers to that of the universal mind.

3. Physical body or the material planes, consist of three bodies: the causal, the astral and the gross.

The gross body is the fleshy sheath we have. It consists of the gross matter and gross organs of actions and senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin and excretory and generative organs. It is shaken off at the time of physical death.

The astral body consists of subtle matter and subtle organs and is active in dreamland state. In this is located the mind.

The causal body is the root-cause of the other two bodies. Its activity is confined to the deep sleep state. The latter two bodies along with the mind continue to exist after death and create a new form or physical frame at each rebirth.

Macrocosm thus exists in the microcosm of the human body. The knowledge of the latter serves as means to the comprehension of the former. If one could succeed in attaining the Region of the Spirit within himself, by shaking off these sheaths, he can cast off all pain and misery and enjoy incessant Bliss and Peace untold. A life of matter is all misery which one cannot escape until one is able to separate oneself from it.

The attainment of the Region of Spirit then is the thing that is required, for it can lead to the abode of Perpetual Joy and Supreme Happiness, even while living in this physical body. It is only by riding the current of the Holy Naam, (the eternal Music in man), that this state is reached, with the help of the True Master. The Holy Naam—The Word—comes down from the highest spiritual planes, the region of Truth,

into the material planes. It is the saving lifeline that can carry souls into the plane beyond the reach of dissolution. All other means fall short of the goal.

The kingdom of God is within you; you may seek it there. It is within your finite body that communion with the Word can be held. This ultimately brings you to the Region of Infinite Truth—the Sach Khand.

Possibility of Communion of the Microcosm with the Macrocosm Regions: Now we will see whether there is a possibility of communion between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Man is an epitome of the macrocosm. There are in Man nerve centres, lying in a dormant state, and these can be quickened by the practice of the Divine Word—the Sound Principle.

There are six reflex centres in the Pind or the body, corresponding to the six centres in the Brahmand or Cosmos. These in their turn, are reflections of those in Par-Brahm or the purely spiritual region.

The lower six centres are the ganglions at the rectum, the generative organ, the navel, the heart, the throat and the sixth midway between the eyebrows, which is called *Til* or *Ajna* (see stanza XXI of the *Jap ji*) and is the seat of the soul in man. It is from here that the spirit-current descends into the body, giving life and strength to the physical frame and its respective limbs. This spirit-current plays an important part in the nourishment of the body and if this is cut off from any part, it loses all vitality and forthwith ceases to function.

The six centres of the Brahmand and of the spiritual regions are also to be found within us. When the spirit-current is brought into play with these centres, one can have contact with their corresponding planes.

Concentration of Spirit-Current Is Necessary Before It Can Rise Into the Higher Spiritual Planes: These centres correspond with those of the macrocosm in the Brahmand and spiritual regions. The spirit-current enables one to peep into those grand divisions. The development of the elementary

powers of spirit is, therefore, most necessary. It is the concentration of this spirit current which plays the greatest part in the achievement. If it is applied to the physical body, one gains strength. If it dwells upon the intellect, one develops great mental powers. In the same way, if spirit is made the object of concentration. spiritual life inevitably follows and supreme bliss is attained. There is an unseen nerve that connects all these centres which is called *Sushumna Nari* or *Shah-rug*. It is through this that the spirit current passes from the lowest region to that of the highest region of Truth.

The concentration of the spirit then is the opening process, so that the spirit may progress to the higher regions. Until all outgoing faculties are self-centred or inwardly focused, the spirit does not gain strength enough to go up. There are ten outgoing faculties or indriyas:—five are the gross—eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin through which the five others—the subtle indriyas—of sight, audition, smell, taste and touch keep man attached to the outer world. It would thus appear that it is the constant thought of these faculties which externalises man.

We constantly think of the world through three main sources. First, we have the eyes that visualise the outward phenomena and bring them within the mental gaze. Through the eyes we gather in no less than 83 percent of our impressions from outside. The second source is that of the ears which pull our attention to outward sounds and remind us of things in the objective world. Through the ears we get 14 percent of our outer impressions. The third source is that of the tongue (palate) which, through taste and speech, keeps the memory of the outward world always afresh. The remaining three percent of the outward impressions are received through tongue and the rest of the sense organs. It is through these three main faculties that man remains constantly in touch with the outer world and is ever engaged either in receiving impressions from without or impressing others with his own thoughts. The energy of the mind is thus drained away, leaving one bankrupt. The Master tells us not to

exhaust our energy. We must accumulate and preserve our energy, so that we may be able to rend asunder the various sheaths of matter which encase the self within us.

The spirit or soul is attached to the objective world outside, on account of objective impressions. Unless the outgoing faculties are controlled and the spirit is freed from the bondage of life, it cannot rise above body-consciousness. The three faculties of speech or taste, sight and audition cause a constant outflow of energy through their respective sense organs. For the depersonalisation of the soul, it is necessary to channelise our energy inwards and upwards through the processes of inversion and self-analysis.

The Master explains the process in these words:

"It is by putting the three organs under constant restraint that one hears Anhad.

O Nanak, in the deep trance state, one knows no eve nor dawn."

Boo Ali Qalandar, a Mohammedan saint, speaks of this process, as follows:

"Close thine eyes, ears and tongue, and if with all these, the secret of Truth is not revealed unto thee, thou may scoff at me forthright."

Kabir also describes the same thing in his own inimitable way:

"The Guru has shown me the channels through which the mind stuff flows out,

By stopping the outgoing faculties, I hear the Melodies of the Eternal Song" —*Sorath Kabir*

"Fix thy soul on the remembrance of the Lord and lock thy tongue,

Closing down all the outer doors, peep thou within." —*Kabir*

Guru Arjan says:

"Whosoever keeps under control his ten senses,

He shall see the Light of God dawn within him." —*Gauri Sukhmani M.* 5

These organs of tongue, eyes and ears, etc., are at work in the physical frame, while one is in a wakeful state and they work likewise in the astral plane when one is in a dream state. The faculties of these organs get enhanced and become powerful if one were to restrict their outward flow. It is then that one gains strength to fathom the subjective world, for without the quickening life-impulse of the soul they lie dormant.

Uses of the Three Restrictions and Their Process: The three restraints are to be exercised by training the faculties to work inwards. The first restraint, that of speech, consists in doing Simran or the constant repetition of the name of the Lord with the tongue of thought. The agency of lips and tongue is not needed. The use and the effect of simran have been dwelt upon in the previous pages. The second restraint refers to the faculty of sight, and consists in contemplation of the spiritual patterns within, which open out in full effulgence. If you practise *Tratak* or concentration at some black spot outside, with your eyes fixed on it, your own inner light is projected outside. Accordingly, when you fix your inner gaze just midway between and behind the two eyebrows (the seat of the soul in man), you see your own light inside. That light is yours and is already there and you have to fix your inner gaze on it. Where there is the Word—Holy Naam—there is Light; where there is Sound, there is Refulgence for the two are inseparable. The Light patterns are of five kinds corresponding to the five different kinds of Sounds, which are seen and heard as the spirit ascends upwards into the five different planes. The Monduk Upanishad speaks of these as the "five fires in the head."

Some scriptures prescribe the fixation of the inner gaze on the facial form of the Master, so as to make the mind stable. But you do not have to meditate on the flesh and bones of the Master's face, but on something shining forth through it. The face, especially the eyes and the forehead, constitute the seat for the full play of the spirit of the Master. Hence, to medi-

tate upon the Master's eyes prepares a soul for the dawn of Divinity, by imbibing His Nature. This helps the devotee a good deal. As you think of the Master, you rise in the Master Himself. As you think, so you become.

"The form of the saint shines forth in full effulgence.

The sages and the seers live in the timeless One and are fit to be meditated upon." —*Sarang M.* 5

The Master's form is the nearest approach to Divinity, for He is the Son of God. One who doth not know the Son, cannot know the Father. Therefore, it is said:

"Meditate on the Form of the Master.

Take His words as Gospel truth;

Let the footfalls of the Master resound in the recesses of your heart.

The Master is the Infinite, bow thou unto him." —*Gond M.* 5

"Think of the Feet of the Master in your heart; By constant remembrance of Him, you will cross the ocean of illusive matter." —*Gond M.* 5

By meditating on the Form of the Master, thou shalt be honoured both here and hereafter." —*Gond M.* 5

Again:

"Remember the True Master within yourself, and with the tongue repeat the Word given by the Master,

With the eyes visualise the Form of the True Master, and with the ears hear the Holy Naam—the Eternal Song.

He who is saturated within and without in the True Master, the Word Personified, gains a seat of honour in His presence.

Nanak saith, on whomsoever the Lord showers His grace, He bestows this state.

But few be the chosen ones, who obtain this gift." —*Gujri War M.* 5

Here we have to be on our guard. If, however, the Master, on whose form you meditate, is not really spiritual, you will become what he is. This course, therefore, is dangerous,

unless you are sure of the perfection of the Master. But you cannot differentiate the right person from the wrong. It is, therefore, safer to fix your inner gaze on the Light which a Competent Master will give you at the time of initiation. The True Master will gradually appear within, in His own radiant form, after some practice, the genuineness of which you can always verify by repetition of the charged words given by the Master. Only a competent Master can appear within at the time of initiation or later on in meditation after some practice. This will save you from any deception or temptation.

The third restraint relates to the faculty of audition. This is to be attuned to the Eternal Song reverberating in and through all. The Sound is the real essence of the Lord. The Master says:

"O my ears, hie on, hie on; hear the Truth for which you were attached to the body;

And listen to the Eternal Music—the True Bani." —*Ramkali M.* 3

It does not mean that we are to neglect the use of these organs in relation to the outer world. But these are to be so trained that they may become positive aids in the way of spiritual development, thus conveying a two-fold benefit. The training is meant to make the mind self-centred and prevent its stuff from needlessly flowing outside. The first process, *Simran*, forms the basis of spiritual pursuit. It has to be continued till the goal is reached. The second and the third, *Dhyan* and *Bhajan*, follow of themselves one after the other.

"Restrain the mind stuff from ebbing away through the nine portals in the body;

This will gain thee access to the tenth door leading to the True Home of Thy Father.

There the unending Music is resounding day and night,

Through Gurmat (instructions of a God-Man) this Song is made audible within." —*Majh M.* 3

Wajhan Sahib saith:

"How dost thou say that the husband is away? for thou canst see Him by closing the ten doors;

Then wilt thou hear the Eternal Music beat on thy ears,

And thou shalt be transformed from a serf to a king.

All kinds of melodies are in the body,

And enchantingly Sweet Song is being set afloat.

O Wajhan ! whosoever hears this song, great is his fortune."

These three restraints help in concentration to the highest degree. The first, Simran of the charged words given by the Master, brings back the mind from outside and withdraws the spirit from the body to the seat of the soul in the body. This is first sinking from the circumference of our being to the centre of our being. This also keeps reminding us of the highest ideal set up before man, which is self-knowledge and God-knowledge. The second process—Dhyan—also helps in concentration and fastens the soul inside. The last process—Bhajan or listening to the spiritual music in man—carries the soul into the beyond, to the source from whence the life current or sound principle of the Holy Naam or the Eternal Song, emanates. Just as in a pitch dark night when one sees naught or knows nothing before or behind, the bark of a distant dog or the far off flicker of a candle light helps one onward in his journey, so does the Spiritual Song and the Refulgent Light help a probationer soul on the Path in its solitary ascent to the true Home of the Father.

The long process begins with concentration at the seat of the soul in the body, situated just between and behind the two eyebrows, where mental Simran is done in full earnest. This enables the withdrawal of spirit current, at present diffused in the body, and concentrates it at the seat of the soul, with the result that confines of the gross matter of the body and of the outward world are cut off. The spirit once unfettered and disimprisoned from the finite existence, now gets an ingress into the *Til*, *Nukta Sweda* or the *Third Eye*, and from here proceeds further, with the help of a God-Man, to higher planes within. After passing confidently through

the astral planes, one reaches the *Dasam Dwar*, with its Sacred Fount of Nectar, the true *Amritsar*, *Mansarover* or *Prag-Raj* in man. The Muslims call it *Hauz-i-Kausar*. A bath or baptism therein frees the spirit from the sheaths of the astral and the causal bodies and finer matter. This is the real baptism with the holy-waters of immortality. The spirit now left to itself, is fully refulgent with a Light brighter than that of several suns. Now cognisant of the true essence which is none other than that of the Lord Himself, it proceeds further with the help of the Master in His Radiant Form until the spirit reaches the pure spiritual region: the Sach Khand, New Jerusalem or *Muqam-i-Haq*, where Sat Purush—the Formless One—resides. Therefrom with the help and through the Grace of the latter, the Spirit is passed on to the Nameless One, stage by stage. This aspect of the ascent of the soul from material planes to spiritual-material regions and thence to purely spiritual regions, forms the subject matter of stanza XXI of *the Jap Ji*. Therein the Master has dealt with the three most important stages out of the five spiritual stages: Til (the starting point), Dasam Dwar, and Sach Khand. The five regions are also explained at the end of *Jap Ji*.

The man who has access into *Til* and bathes in the lustre of the luminous astral figure of the Master, is called a Sikh or a disciple of the Master (a devotee). As he progresses upwards, he reaches the Dasam Dwar, the third in the stages of development, and becomes a Sadh (a disciplined soul). When he reaches the Region of Pure Spirit, he is given the epithet of Sant or Saint. One who has reached the highest Spiritual Region of the Nameless One, the Unknowable and the Imperceivable, becomes a Param Sant, the saint of saints. These expressions occur in the text of the sayings of the Masters. These are specific terms with significant connotations and have no reference whatsoever to those engaged in the outer pursuits of forms and formularies, or in the performance of rites and rituals or observance of fasts and vigils, etc.

Guru Nanak was a Saint of the highest order, the Param

Sant who reached the Region of the Nameless One, as will be evinced from His own words:

"Fly above the region of Truth, of the Pure Spirit, then reach the stage of the Unknowable and the Imperceivable. Above this is the abode of the saints, and lowly Nanak dwells there."

GOD-MAN

Without a God-Man, the Mystery of Soul Is Never Revealed: With all that has been said here, or may be said, the mystery of the soul remains a sealed book. No expression can reveal the Truth at the back of the creation. The ascent of the soul to the higher regions is impossible unless one is ushered into those planes. Of course, one may be able to withdraw the spirit currents into the eyes from the body, through Simran or see some Light at times, but there is nothing in there to take or guide him upward. Many were held in these elementary stages for ages and ages, and no help came to guide them up. Some have called this stage the be-all and end-all, but they still linger at the outskirts of grosser matter and in the stronghold of the finer matter. It is here that the help of some competent body is needed to extricate the devotees from the iron-grip of subtle matter. That somebody should be the man who has gone through the different stages of spiritual development and has made a pilgrimage to the region of Pure Spirit, Sat Naam, far beyond the hold of matter. The Master says:

"He who has known the Sat Purush, is the True Master.
In His company alone a Sikh (devotee) is emancipated.
O Nanak! he will see the Lord and sing praises of the Almighty." —*Gouri Sukhmani M.* 5

Three Essentials for the Progress of Soul to the Lord Explained : There are three essentials for the progress of the soul to unite with the Lord. These may be summed up as:

(1) Satguru or the True Master.

(2) Satsangat or the congregation of the votaries presided over by the Master.

(3) Sat-Naam or the True Naam.

Masters form a Divine Brotherhood in God. They are the gems of humanity who have completed their evolution and risen into God-consciousness. They have achieved complete oneness with the Divine Being and are overflowing with the Holy Word or Divine Life in its fulness. They re-incarnate in human form in order to guide the destinies of the child humanity to the goal of life. They form, as it were, the connecting link between man and God. They belong to the order of the "Great Ones" who are charged with the duty of watching the human race. They take true seekers after God under their care, to hasten their realisation of at-one-ment with the One Being.

The Qualifications of a God-Man: A True Master cannot be known all at once. He is a God-Man. A God-Man alone can truly know a God-Man. He may be described as one who is brimming over with spirituality far above the life of the senses. He has freed Himself from the various sheaths of grosser and finer matter, and has seen the All-Truthful with His eyes, within and without. He is competent to unfold the spiritual possibilities lying dormant in man. All are provided with the same stuff inside them, like the stuff of a battery already charged. But He is the one who has connected Himself with the great Magnetic Battery of the Lord, and receives direct messages from Him. He is the mouthpiece of the Eternal. We, each one of us, have the same stuff in us, but our batteries are disconnected. We need reconnection so that we may also serve as live batteries and be able to receive messages of the Lord. We need such a One who is Himself connected, and who can also connect our batteries with the Lord. He has in Him the Refulgent Light of the Infinite, and is competent to re-light our extinguished lamps. An unlighted lamp is incompetent to light other lamps. All are spiritually blind, when they come to the feet of a Master. He opens their inner eyes which are latent, and enables them to see the Light of God. He opens their inner ears and makes

them hear the sweet Melody of the Divine Music of the Word or Naam.

"Be ye perfect as thy Father in Heaven is perfect," said Christ. All are destined to be perfect and in the end they will attain the state of perfection. Whatever we are now is the result of our past acts and thoughts. Our future is being moulded and determined by what we now think and do, but this shaping of our future does not preclude us from receiving help from outside. A fruit tree that ordinarily if left to itself bears fruit in five or six years, would, when treated scientifically with fertilizers etc., bear forth fruit in abundance and more quickly by two or three years. Similarly, the unfoldment of the spiritual life is quickened by the help of a Master. This help is of immense value. Such outside help quickens the inner possibilities of the soul. It awakens the spiritual life in us and leads us to the highest goal in the end.

Scriptures Unable to Awaken Spirituality: This quickening impulse cannot be derived from sacred books. As light comes from light, so comes life from life. A soul must receive live impulses through the lyrical glances of some Master-Soul. Mere book knowledge, or any intellectual development, fails to awaken spirituality. Through book learning, the intellect is certainly fed but the spirit gets no food. This is why each one of us can speak wonderfully of spiritual matters, but the actual life betrays not a speck of it.

"We may read and read endlessly and may read on devotedly for months and years, nay, ceaselessly all our lives;

But, O Nanak, all this simply feeds and fattens the ego only and is of no avail." —*Asa War M.* 1

A living spirit can be quickened into life only through the living impulses from a Master-Soul. You may call such a Man by any name you like, but such a Man is a necessity. Each religion has testified to the need of such higher help.

We do not deny the need of help from outside in all our

objective pursuits. We usually look to someone who is expert in a given subject. Why should we then be ashamed to seek the help of somebody in the pursuit of what is purely subjective—the Spiritual path—and what is hidden from our objective vision and is wholly shrouded in mystery? How grateful we should be, if somebody were to lead us into the inner recesses of the subjective world? Whoever has risen to the highest heights of spirituality, above the ken of both gross and subtle matter, can transmit power and lead us safely across the ocean of illusive matter.

Maulana Rumi, a Muslim divine, says:

"If you intend going for a pilgrimage (to the Divine), take with you One who has already pilgrimaged, no matter whether He be a Hindu, a Turk, or an Arab."

All-round deterioration is the main feature of our time. Literal words of the scriptures without the spirit or meaning behind them, have taken the place of living-the-life with most of us. Immersed in ignorance, some feel that they know everything and offer to take others' burdens on their shoulders. Thus, with the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch. The world is full of so-called teachers. Such teachers have steeped the world in ignorance. These creatures of darkness, wise in their own conceit, pretend to give away untold treasures of Divinity. They are just like a beggar who wants to make a gift of a million dollars! Thus, without the help of One who has truly imbibed the Truth beyond, no progress can be made in the way of Spirituality. The Master has said:

"Rare indeed is the man who knows God-hood. If one is begging from door to door, cursed shall be his life and cursed the order to which he belongs." —*Bihagra War M.* 3

The Master again says:

"Never prostrate thyself at the feet
Of him who calls himself a spiritual preceptor and goes abegging.
A True Master earns his own living and shares it with others;

O Nanak! only such a One can know the way to the Lord." —*Sarang War M.* 1

Necessity of a God-Man: "Whosoever wishes to see a king, must first seek the company of one who is a favourite of the king. Whosoever is aching to see the Lord, let him seek One who has become one with Him."

Again:

"Let no man in the world live in delusion;

Without a God-Man none can cross over to the other shore." —*Gond M.* 5

Maulana Rumi says:

"He who wishes to seek the presence of the Lord, tell him to sit in the company of the saints."

The saints are competent to change the course of our lives from beginning to end and are the means for leading us Godwards. They receive revelations from the Most High and whatever they say is veritable truth.

The Master says:

"Listen ye to the true testimony of the saints, for surely they say what they actually see with their own eyes." —*Ramkali M.* 5

You need not care for their outer appearance. Remain at their feet out of devotion. All who love the Lord—Hindus, Muslims, Christians and men of all other denominations—are one to them. They have the Sun of Divinity hidden within their physical bodies. They are the Music of the Eternal Song.

The Master explains this very Truth in the fifth stanza of *the Jap Ji.* Such are the Masters, then, who manifest the Eternal Song within us and make the same audible to us. All illumination and perfection is in them. All that is good and excellent is in such a Master. He is a God-Man, nay, a polarised God—a pole from which the power of God works in the world.

Who is the Guru: In the terminology of the saints, the saint who practises and teaches the science of the Word, is called a Guru.

The word '*Guru*' is a Sanskrit word which comes from the root '*Giri*' which means "to sound or speak." The word '*Guru*' is, therefore, held to mean one who practises the Sound Principle, who communes with It, and who makes It audible within man. Paltu Sahib defines the Guru, as the Being who brings the Word—the Eternal Song—from the heavenly spheres and makes It audible to us. Guru Nanak also says:

"He who shows the Real Home in this body, is the true Guru—the All-Powerful. He makes the Five—Sounded Word reverberate in man and thus sounds forth the clue to the Word." —*Malar War M.* 1

Swami Shiv Dayal Singh Ji defines the Guru as:

"Guru is He who loves the Word. He worships none else than the Word. He who practises the Word is the All-Competent Guru. Revel thou in the Dust of His Feet and humbly stick unto Him."

Kabir also says:

"All Sadhus are great, each in his own way. But He who communes with the Word is worthy of adoration."

But to meet such a Guru is through Divine Dispensation alone.

"In the fullness of Thy Grace, Thou makest a God-Man meet us." —*Majh M.* 3

Without instruction from a God-Man, the Word cannot be communed with, and when this communion is received, it leads the soul to the Lord, from whom the Word emanated. Then all our efforts have their full reward.

"Communion with the Word means union with the Lord, and all efforts blossom forth into full fruition." —*Sri Rag M.*3

When you, through immeasurable good fortune, find such a holy person, stick to Him tenaciously with all your mind and

all your soul; for you can realise through him, the object of your life—self-realisation and God-realisation. Do not look you to His creed or colour. Learn the Science of the Word from Him, and devote yourself heart and soul to the practice of the Word. Guru is one with the Word. The Word is in Him, and incarnates in the flesh, to give instructions to mankind. Truly the Word is made flesh and dwells amongst us. In the Gospel, we have:

"Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us."

When we learn to shake off the mortal coil at will and are able to rise above the body-consciousness and enter into the Astral World, the Guru appears in His Radiant Astral Form to help us on in the planes above. He does not leave us until we reach the Almighty. Christ has said in clear words:

"I shall never leave thee nor forsake thee until the end of the world."

In the words of the Master:

"Bani or Word, is the True Teacher, and the True Teacher is the Word personified." —*Nat M.*4 *and Ramkali M.* 1

Again:

"Within is the Heavenly Light and from it Bani or Sound doth proceed,

And it doth attune the soul with the true Lord."—*Sorath M.* 1

"There in the inverted well, a Light is ablaze without any oil or wick,

And from the Refulgent Light, there flow symphonies sublime." —*Paltu Sahib*

Now comes the question: Where can we find the Sound and Light? It is far away from the mortal gaze, encased in sheaths upon sheaths of matter. We must rise above the stronghold of matter if we are to find it. It can be seen and felt, but with eyes that are different from the mortal eyes of flesh. We have full respect and regard for all the holy scriptures, because we find therein the teachings of the Word—the Bani. Strictly speaking, ink, paper and the print, do not

form the object of our worship, but with them the word, the Word-teacher, written large. Similarly, in the physical body of the Saint, we worship the Word personified in His person. And as such the two are inseparably respected. It is just like a beloved, sitting inside a house with the doors closed. We want to bow. How can we? We know for certain that it is the beloved to whom we like to bow and not to the mud, lime and mortar of the house in which the beloved resides. We bow down before whom? Do we bow to the mud walls? No, but before the indweller of the house behind the walls; however, to all appearances we may look as though facing the mud walls.

The Word, or Bani, is the True Teacher for all mankind. It is the one for all. It was the True Teacher in the past. It is the same Teacher now. It shall ever be the Teacher for all times to come. There is no second Teacher or Guru of mankind. The man who has found Him (Word-Guru), who has become one with Him—the Word in Him—is related to us in the same way as the beloved referred to above. It is the self-luminous Radiant Figure within the physical body of the outer man, who is our True Teacher, and who is one with the Lord. It is none other than the Lord Himself as He Himself appears in the Form of a Sadh, for "God verily appears in the form of a Sadh." —*Gauri Sukhmani M.* 5. The great treasures of Guru Granth Sahib, as all other holy scriptures, sing paeans of such a God-Man who can unite us with the Lord and lead us across the ocean of matter. In this context we read:

"He who hath his seat across the Heavens is sounding the Eternal Song;

O Nanak! the glory of a Sadh, the holy scriptures cannot fathom."

Again:

"Without the Word, darkness prevails within; Man does not have It, nor escapes he the endless cycle of births.

With the key in the hands of a God-Man, none dare unlock the door,

Rare good fortune may bring a God-Man to the rescue." —*Majh M.* 3

"The God-Man and the Lord, consider them as one,
And struggle not thou in ignorance." —*Gond M.* 5

"All ye that hanker after a state of inner silence, called Sahaj,
Know thou for certain that without a God-Man, there is no admittance." —*Sri Rag M.* 3

"Whosoever glorified the God-Man, knows the Lord.
All pain is annihilated, all pain by discerning the true Shabd—the Word." —*Asa M.* 1

"Meeting the God-Man the mind leaves off all ramifications,
And one obtains an ingress into the True Home within." —*Asa M.* 3

"Great is the God-Man, the Sat Purush,
For He gives satiety and satisfaction." —*Wadhans War M.* 4

"To taste the precious ambrosial water for which you came into the world,
That you can taste only through the Grace of a God-Man." —*Sorath M.* 1

"The service of the Master makes the Sound-Current audible,
And then one gets to know Salvation."—*Sorath M.* 3

"The Word of the Master manifests the Divine Light." —*Bilawal M.* 5

"When the True Master is served, the Eternal Music becomes audible; and then only is the mystery resolved." —*Sorath M.* 3

"The God-Man lights the lamp of the Word." —*Bilawal M.* 5

"When a God-Man is met, the Lord makes His appearance." —*Bhairon Nam Dev*

"Through the favour of a God-Man, you will see the temple of the Lord within you." —*Parbhati M.* 3

"With all the dexterities at thy command, Thou cannot commune with the Naam,

For It comes as a gift from the God-Man."—*Malar M.* 5

"Consider God-Man and Lord as one and the same,

For whatever pleaseth one is acceptable to the other."
—*Gond M.* 5

"The treasure of Naam—the Spiritual Current—is in the temple of God (body). The ignorant do not recognise It. Through the favour of the Guru, It is realised and the Lord gets embedded in the core of the heart." —*Parbhati M.* 3

"The prophet says that God had said:—"The earth, the sky and the higher regions are all quite insufficient to accommodate me. I cannot be contained in them all, know thee, O dear ones. But strange as it may seem, I abide in the heart of a Saint. If thou seekest me, seek me in Them. " —*Maulana Rumi*

Therefore learn to worship the Satguru.

Guru Amar Das Ji says:

"The worship of the True Master is the worship of the Lord;

With boundless compassion, He connects you with Naam,

And ferries you across the ocean of delusive matter.

Those that worship the lifeless and the tombs,

Go with their labours all in vain." —*Malar M. 4*

God-Man Is the Only True Friend: All the worldly connections are severed at the time of death. All friends, all relatives, the wife and children, must part. Who is there to accompany you to the other world? Oh, none. But the Word —the Word personified in the God-Man does. It helps you in all your undertakings here and hereafter. The God-Man receives the initiates at the time of death, when all others fail. Like a never-failing Friend, He always holds out His helping hand in weal or woe.

The Master says:

"O Nanak ! sever all thy connections of ephemeral nature, and seek thou the lasting friendship of a Saint,

For all else shall forsake thee even in life, while He remains steadfast unto the last and thereafter." —*Maru War M.* 5

"Whosoever fears the pangs of birth and death, let him seek out a Sadhu." —*Gauri Sukh M.* 5

When one resigns himself to the will of the Master, and places himself under the protecting power of the Master, the Master will hasten to wake up the Divinity in him. The Master never leaves the probationer, once taken over, until He betakes him to God, whose prototype He is on earth. He talks face to face with his devotee and gives him his counsel in time of need. He moulds the disciple into the likeness of God and makes him a living temple of the Divine Consciousness.

"Whoever shall leave me not in weal nor woe, neither in the beginning, now nor in the end, such a friend my mind hankers after." —*Gauri M.* 5

"Catch hold of the hem of Him, O courageous soul, who knows the mystery of all the planes above and below, and who may accompany thee both here and hereafter." — *Maulana Rumi*

There are three things required of a Sikh or the disciple in relation to his Master, to enable him to create receptivity of the Master's favour. He must sacrifice his body, his mind and his possessions—nay, even his very life should be consecrated at the feet of the Master. It is not because the Master is covetous of any reward from His disciple, but that the disciple should sacrifice all he holds dear in this life. The Master does not accept a speck out of it, but gives them back, all intact, as a sacrificial offering. He instructs the disciple not to defile himself by misuse of his possessions, but to make the best use of them to the benefit of his brethren, the poor and the needy, the sick and the infirm, so as to help in the harmonious development of all around him.

Let the disciple stand before his Master with his all at His feet, but the Master would accept naught out of it. He would thus stand in full resignation, ready to receive the Grace of the Master and the beginning of his realisation. He

has to make himself a vehicle for the Master, like a rebeck or a lyre to be played upon, creating sweet symphonies of the Holy Naam. All social connections, all attachments to worldly possessions, all clinging to name and fame, all the physical comforts, all the evil thoughts surging in the mind, are to be placed before the Master, to let Him work His will through him.

Discipleship truly consists in unswerving devotion and resignation to the will and pleasure of the Master. It, however, does not consist in seeing the form of the Master, but in attuning to His Divine Will. By complete resignation, all mental chattering is thrown overboard and then there are no more cravings or desires. The tumultuous hubbub of the life of senses is replaced by calm and collected serenity born of resignation and true renunciation. It is in these silent hours that spiritual consciousness begins to dawn.

The bonds of relationship between the Guru and the disciple are the strongest in the world. Even death cannot sever them, for they are tied by the Divine and Omnipotent Will of God.

"O Lord, it is by Thy Grace alone that we are led to the Satguru." —*Suhi Ashtpadian M.* 4

The Master ever remains with the devotee, wheresoever he may be. Death and distance are immaterial in the relationship of the Master and the disciple. He is always by his side, here and hereafter.

The Master acts as a lodestar in all spiritual endeavours. He extends all feasible help to the devotee with His exhortations without and within, always keeping him steady on the right path and bringing him back to it even when anything goes awry. Distance does not stand in His way. The Master's helping hand goes to the devotee, far and near—in the burning desert-sands, on the snow-capped mountain-tops, and in the dreary wildernesses. He exercises a healthy and a corrective influence on the spiritual aspirants by releasing forces within His field of influence, like a mighty lodestone that has marvellous attraction within its magnetic field.

"The True Master nourishes the devotee with His own life-blood. The follower of the Master is always in a state of perpetual bliss." —*Gouri Sukhmani M.* 5

Maulana Rumi repeats the same thing :

"The hand of the Master is the hand of the Lord;
Long and high, it penetrates through the seven heavens."

The Master talks with His devotee face to face in all the planes and gives him His wise counsel in times of need.

Guru Nanak says :

"The Master is ever with me, and so is the Lord.
I am doing all my work with a constant remembrance of Him." —*Asa M.*2

"The Master looks after me in all places ;
What fear have I, then, to entertain." —*Majh M.* 5

How to know a God-Man : But how to distinguish such sublime personalities who come down into the world of mortals, to help humanity in its onward march to the Supreme Fountain of the Spirit ! Whenever they come, they are self-manifested and those endowed with spiritual vision know how to recognise them.

"A man of realisation alone can know a realised soul." —*Gouri M.* 5

Everybody, however, is not spiritually advanced. There are, of course, some well defined and prominent features in the life and conduct of the Saints. With these in mind, a mortal eye may be able to distinguish the Saints from the common run of men.

A Real Master is a world Teacher and not a teacher of any particular sect or creed. He looks at humanity from the level of the soul and addresses all ensouled bodies alike.

A True Master is known by the catholicity of His teachings, for His appeal is universal to all. In His fold sit all as brethren-in-faith with no bars of colour or creed.

Again, a True Master is not fond of outer pomp and show, but lives on His own resources and never depends on others for His living :

"Whosoever styling himself a Teacher, lives on the charity of others,

Never bow before him.

He who earns his livelihood by the sweat of his brow and shares it with others,

O Nanak! He only can know the Way." —*Sarang War M.* 1

"How can we have the company of One in whose presence the mind gets stilled ?

The Saints are the true friends for they alone inspire God-intoxication." —*Suhi M.* 3

"Seeing a God-Man with all-loving devotion, not only stills the mind but wards off all afflictions." —*Suhi M.* 5

Whenever one happens to be in the presence of a real Master with an open mind, one finds waves of solace wafting towards him and feels an uplifting surge in himself. His personal aura has its marvellous effect. His words, charged as they are with high spirituality, sink deep into the heart of the listeners and never are without effect.

God-Men always speak with an authority born of conviction for They have a first-hand knowledge of everything stemming from direct communion with the Original Source or Universal Cause.

They speak from the standpoint of the soul to which learned philosophy has no access. All saints have borne out this truth. The more you indulge in literary pursuits, the more you are lost in the wilderness of bookish knowledge. There is more truth in His talk than all the words of learned philosophy can show. We have, as far as possible, to make the best use of all these, but not to lose our way in them, for—"Reasoning is the help and reasoning is the bar as well."

The True Master is one who himself quaffs the water of life—Truth—and offers the same to others as well. He is competent to open the inner eye of the aspirants that they

may see the Light of God and unseals their inner ears that they may hear the Voice of God—the Sound Principle, reverberating in all creation.

"Verily, a True Master unveils the eye,

And grants a glimpse of the true abode."

Again :

"He who can show us God's abode in the body,

Oh, take Him for a True Master indeed !"

"The glory of a Sadh even the Vedas do not fully comprehend." —*Gauri M.*5. It baffles all description. So naturally, saints lay more stress on personal self-experience. They come to the basic or central standpoint of all religions from the sayings of the saints of all denominations. God-Men do not look to outward appearances nor on the distinctive garbs of various orders, but accept the true values of life. They do not interfere with the ancestral faiths professed by their disciples, nor with the mode of their social life. On the contrary they exhort everyone to remain in their social-religious orders and learn the spiritual meaning of life and live by the same. They do not create any new creeds or new religions. Those who seek inner spiritual elevation may derive benefit from God-Men without forsaking the creeds they profess. But saints do not advocate the idea of seeking Higher Life through objective pursuits. They look to the human body as the living temple of God and instruct their disciples to find Him therein by the practice of the Science of the Holy Word.

"Verily this body is the temple of God with the Word made manifest therein.

For the ignorant, God lives apart from man and is inaccessible." —*Parbhati M.* 3

"God Himself made the holy temple of man and resides therein.

Through the Grace of the Master, one meets God,

After burning away all outer attachments." —*Shalok M.* 3

Again :

"Never seek God in the outer world for His abode lies in thy House (of the body).

The ignorant, knowing not the value of the temple of God, vainly lose their earthly lives." —*Ramkali War M.* 3

God-Men do not attach any great sanctity to places of pilgrimage other than the congregation of Saints. They direct our attention to the Saints who blessed the places which are now called the places of pilgrimage.

"To meet the Saints and to have Their company is the greatest pilgrimage.

To see a Saint is worth travelling to all the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage." —*Sorath M.* 1

Saints prescribe no other form of worship or the performance of any ritual other than that of the communion with the Word—the Holy Naam. They enjoin the worship of the Divine in the living temple of the human heart. Such indeed is the true realisation in this earthly life of that universal bliss-giving spiritual-current which permeates all creation.

"The treasure of Naam is in the temple of God (body),

But the ignorant do not find it there." —*Parbhati M.* 3

"Pure are those who are in communion with the Word.

Without the Word, there can be no worship.

The whole world is steeped in superstitious ignorance." —*Ramkali M.* 3

The second essential in the soul's progress on the Path is the Holy Congregation (Sat-Sangat) as that has an elevating effect. The whole atmosphere is surcharged with the life-impulse conveyed by the Master when He presides, and the devotees attending the congregation derive immense benefit therefrom. It is practically a school wherein probationers are helped both by word and thought. All the mystery concerning the *Word* is explained and brought home to the devotees as the be-all and end-all for them.

"Sat-Sangat (or the Holy Congregation) is that place where no subject other than the Holy Naam or the Word, is taught or explained." —*Sri Rag M.* 1

There, book knowledge of the philosophies of the different schools of thought is not advocated. Living a life in Divinity is the only thing of value in this direction. The soul that has risen in Him, and is conscious of Him all the time, is the prime moving figure in the congregation. The lyrical glances of such God-intoxicated Men not only awaken the latent spiritual sensibilities of the probationers but gradually bring them into full play. Their eyes are exuberant with life, and they, being in tune with the Great Source of Life, convey life-giving rays to those around them who come to seek their help. Their Grace-pouring glances enable the disciples to grasp the heavenly Song—the Word, reverberating in them. They easily get the riches and the wealth of spirituality when in the Holy Congregation. By exhortations and practice, they are helped onwards on their way to the Divine Goal. Thus the seekers are prepared for the higher life, by the influence they receive from the magnetic effect of the personal auras of the God-intoxicated votaries in the Holy Congregation. Everybody has a field of influence within which he affects all who come in that area. This field of personal magnetism is larger or smaller, according to the strength of the personality.

A great stress is laid upon the necessity of attending the Holy Congregation; this is so much so that Sat-Sangat is often valued a little more than the God-Man Himself. This is evident from the fact that it includes the God-Man in addition to other God-intoxicated votaries. The Holy Congregation is a place where the outgoing tendencies and evil propensities of the people attending it are easily modified, moulded and subdued by the magnetic power of the Master overhead. The Master terms the Sat-Sangat as the only true place of pilgrimage wherein the probationers progress towards the Divine Goal—the Highest Spiritual Plane—*Sach Khand.*

"In a true Sangat, the communion with the Holy Naam—(the Word)—is procured,

O Nanak! never mix with men steeped in selfish ends."
—*Gujri War M.*5

Where there is no such personality to preside, the benefits of Sat-Sang cannot be derived. The Master says :

"Without the God-Man, there can be no Sangat,
And without the Word, no one can ford over to the other shore." —*Maru M.* 3

Kabir says :

"Without the God-Man there can be no Holy Congregation." —*Gond Kabir*

"In the absence of the Master, when devotees sit together in His sweet remembrance, they receive the blessings of the Master.

Christ says :

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst."

The third essential in the soul's progress is the True Naam —the Shabd or the Divine Word—which the True Master teaches. The Holy Naam has two aspects : one aspect can be expressed in words spoken or written with the help of lips and tongue or by means of pen and is defined as *Varn-Atamak* ; the other aspect cannot be expressed as such and is known as *Dhun-Atamak*. The repetition of the *Varn-Atamak* Naam is used for Simran purposes and in four different ways : (1) with the tongue, (2) in the throat, (3) in the heart, and (4) in the navel. These methods are respectively called (1) Baikhri, (2) Madhima, (3) Paschanti, and (4) Pra. With the repetition of Naam in any of these four ways, the *Antish Karan* (the conscience) is purified and some supernatural powers including prevision and transvision are achieved (the use of which is however deprecated and prohibited). Bliss, meekness and love of the Word also do follow a little in this way. Since these ways involve the lower centres or *chakras* for meditation in the human body, the true seeker is advised to practise the concentrated Simran with the tongue of thought at the centre at the back of the focus of the eyes (which is the sixth and the highest centre of the six centres in the *Pind* or the body). Naam reverberating above this centre, attracts the soul like a powerful magnet and pulls it out of the lower

physical into the higher subtle and spiritual planes. The ascent of the soul into the spiritual regions is only possible through communion with the Naam.

The *Dhun-Atamak* is something in its true aspect. For instance in the ringing of the bell, the sound proceeding from the bell may be called *tun-tun*. This cannot appropriately be portrayed in so many words, yet the Word (or Sound) reverberates in the living temples of all physical bodies. This sound principle is competent to take man's soul to the Highest Spiritual Region from which it emanates. This celestial Melody proceeds from the Heavenly Light within. In the words of the Master :

"Within is the Heavenly Light and from It, a Sound (or Bani) doth proceed,

A communion with It attunes the soul with the Lord."
—*Sorath M.* 1

This Sound should not be confounded with the sound of the circulation of the blood, etc., heard through the ears for it relates to the elements only.

This aspect of the Naam, though inexpressible and ineffable, is yet very real and Eternal. It is a transcendent spiritual Current which emanates from God and permeates all creation. No words can portray Its true significance nor can describe It accurately. The Master, however, describes It as :

"The fifty-two letters of the alphabet and the three grand divisions—the Pure Spiritual Region, the Spirituo-Material Region and the Materio-Spiritual Region—are in this Word. All the letters may fall away, but this Word shall stand for ever." —*Gauri Kabir*

The Word or the Holy Naam is a gift from the Master alone. Without this the Lord cannot be known.

"True is His Word and True His Eternal Song—the Bani,
A rare Gurumukh may discern it.
By saturation with the True Word is renunciation achieved,
And the coming and going ends." —*Maru M.* 3

Kabir says :

"The Word like a magnetic stone attracts the soul to spiritual realms above.

Without the aid of the Word, none can rise above the body,

Let one try any means one may like."

Again:

"When the Word is touched, the Lord is met;

All efforts are then crowned with success." —*Sri Rag* M. 3

"Without the Word, the whole world is estranged, and none has any say therein;

Whomsoever the Lord wishes to save is attuned with the Word." —*Shalok M.* 3

"Without the Word, one cannot meet the Beloved,

And human birth continues in vain." —*Sri Rag M.* 3

"My Lord, the Ever-Existent, is seen by practice of the Word (the Holy Naam),

He perisheth not, nor doth He come and go.

Hold communion with Him who pervades through all,

And do not meditate on one nailed to the perpetual wheel." —*Gujri War M.* 3

Swami Shiv Dayal Singh Ji, speaking of Shabd, tells us:

"Wondrous indeed is the power of the Shabd.

How can I describe the glory of Shabd?

Those who have tasted the sweetness of Shabd,

They alone know the greatness of Shabd.

Every moment I feel the protecting power of the Shabd,

How may I describe the grandeur of the Shabd?

Without the Shabd, one wanders in ignorance,

And knows not the value of the Shabd.

They who solved the mystery of the Shabd,

Who have intense love for the Shabd,

And who practise Shabd in right earnest,

Such indeed are the truly blessed.

None can control the mind without the Shabd,

Attune ye therefore to the Shabd.

In vain goes the human birth,

If one gets not the treasure of Shabd.

In the depths of the soul resounds the Shabd;

Why dost thou not listen to the strains of Shabd?
Sit in solitude and silence thy mind,
Then alone shalt thou have the Shabd revealed.
Cast aside torpor, languor and lassitude,
And ever remain in touch with the Shabd.
The five-sounded Shabd is resounding within;
Learn ye to listen to the Shabd.
The Master gives the knowledge of the Shabd;
Meditate ye on the Shabd.
I have discoursed much on the Shabd,
Yet alas, none cares to follow the Shabd.
In vain do they forfeit the human life,
Who catch not the life-line of Shabd.
I, for one, now end this discourse on the Shabd.
None but the destined get to the Shabd."

Communion with the Word or Shabd is the only true worship. Without this practice, nothing can eradicate the ingrained evil propensities of the mind. Whosoever complains of the fast developing ramifications of the mind, does not hear the Music of the Word. As time wears on, ignorance creeps in; the sublime truths given by the Masters, are not understood, and their true import is lost sight of.

The term *Guru-Bani* (the Word) occurs very often in the Guru Granth Sahib. Wherever the expression Shabd appears therein, it has been taken to mean the hymns written in Guru Granth Sahib. This is because of ignorance of the Conscious-Sound-Current or the Word ringing in and through all creation. Let us turn to the Guru Granth Sahib itself, to ascertain what it has to say on the subject. The following hymn throws sufficient light on the fact that Word is something conscious—much more than that which the words can depict.

"By merging in the Shabd we rise into a new life.
The way to Salvation lies through the Shabd.
The body and the mind are purified by the Shabd,
And God too gets ensconced on the tablet of the mind.
Without communion with the Shabd, we are blind and deaf,

And the human birth continues in vain.
Without tasting the Nectar of the Hari Naam,
The human life is but a shadow and a mirage,
And one remains endlessly in the cycle of births and deaths.
Like filthy worms do we revel in the filth,
Wrapped in the veil of utter ignorance." —*Sorath M.* 3

"Those who know not the Word, are blind as well as deaf (for they do not see Its light and do not hear Its melodious song). Of what use is their coming into the world ? They enjoy not the sweet elixir of the Hari Naam and lose their earthly lives in vain. They go round in the endless cycle of births and deaths. Like filthy worms, they drown themselves in the filth of sensualism. They are truly devoid of intellect and revel in the darkness of ignorance." —*Sorath M. 3*

Again:

"The Bani (Word) resounding through the four Yugas, proclaimed the Truth to all."—*Sri Rag M. 3*

"There is deep concentration in the Sound-principle (Dhun).
I now know what concentration virtually means;
The Word manifested by the Master is ineffable (Akath)." —*Ramkali M. 1*

"The Perfect Master reveals the True Word (Sachi Bani));
Leading through the Sukhmana, it takes one to Sahaj (state of equipoise)." —*Maru M. 5*

"The Bani of the Master (Word) resounds in the entire creation." — *Maru M. 5*

The expression *Akath Katha* (indescribable song), *Dhun* (harmony), *Anhad Bani* (limitless Song) as used by Guru Nanak in the Granth Sahib, are all synonyms denoting one and the same Principle, that is Naam, Shabd or Word. The Word is above the ken of *Buddhi* (the thinking faculty) and is heard only when one rises above eyebrows. The understanding of the Word comes only by direct revelation to the soul.

"All knowledge and meditation emanate from the Sound-Principle (Dhun),

But the Sound-Principle itself cannot be defined." —*Sri Rag M. 1*

"True Bani is given by the True Master,

And is reverberating in the Sukhmana." —*Maru M. 5*

"The Bani of the Guru is all-pervading;

It proceeds from Him and He Himself manifests It." —*Maru M. 5*

"The unstruck music is heard through the Grace of a God-Man,

But few there be that commune with It." —*Ramkali M.* 1

"Perfect is the limitless song (Anhad Bani),

And the key thereto is with the Saints." —*Ramkali M.* 5

A Saint gives full instructions about the True Naam (the Word), to His disciple at the time of initiation. It is He who inspires the Holy Naam and makes It manifest in the initiates. He just shows them that the treasure of Divinity lies hidden within, and He tells how to get in touch with It (as we find in *Jap Ji*, stanza VI).

"This body is the holy temple of God, the Light of the All-Truthful shining therein.

Peerless are the gems hidden in the temple of the body;

Few there be that find them through the instruction of the Master." —*Gauri War M.* 4

"Discipline thy body and thy mind,

And meditate on the Word of the Master.

O Nanak, search in the body for the treasure of Naam,

This thou can get through boundless love of the Master." —*Asa M.* 4

The Bani of the God-Man resides within all of us. The same proceeds from God, and He Himself makes it audible. Whosoever communes with It is saved and attains the Eternal Region of Truth. The Bani (Word) of the Guru is heard right in the "*Sukhmana*," attuning into the "*Sahaj State*" (the state of equipoise).

According to the Master, four things are of lasting value, while all else are subject to decay and dissolution in course of time. They are Naam or the Bani; Sadhu (or the disciplined soul), who sees himself in the Father and sees the Father in the Master; the Word personified (Guru); and the Lord (Gobind). Whosoever forms an alliance with them, is saved and reaches above the ken of destruction.

"Eternal wealth is of the Naam alone. All other riches come and go. Fire cannot burn this wealth nor can thieves steal it. This wealth of the Lord pervades the very souls of all and always goes with the soul. It is found through the Perfect Master and never falls to the lot of one immersed in the life of the senses. Great indeed is the merchant, O Nanak, who gains the riches of Naam !" —*Gujri War M.* 3

Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs, left the Sikh sanctuary on a permanent footing. He gave us the mystic form of Guru Granth Sahib as the standard guide to go by. Thus, we can avoid human errors creeping in through ignorance. The compositions of the Saints of almost all the denominations--Hindus, Mohammedans, Brahmans and others —equally find a place in the Holy Granth. This shows that Spiritual Heads, in spite of different castes, were equally welcome to partake of this Heavenly Banquet Hall of Spirituality. As a practical example, Guru Nanak had Bhai Bala and Mardana, one a Hindu and the other a Mohammedan, on His right and left as His boon companions all through His travels in Asia. All humanity without distinction of creed or colour, are welcome to the way of Spirituality as taught by Him.

Guru Gobind Singh clearly indicated in the Guru Granth Sahib, a Way to the Lord through Shabd (Word). Apropos of this, He enjoined the Sat-Sangat or the Holy Congregation constituted by five *Piaras* (or the beloved of God) and called it the *Khalsa*—the pure. He defined the term *Khalsa* as those in whom the full Heavenly Light was effulgent, and promised His own presence in them for all time. In His own words:

"Khalsa is my own form and I reside in the Khalsa."

The Master enjoins the Sikhs to look only to such Khalsas or the pure ones for initiation, known as *Pahul or Amrit.* He said:

"Whosoever keeps long hair without Pahul from the Five Khalsas (the pure or the Piaras), and wears the outer garb only is the most ignorant of the followers."

The Khalsas are the sadhus, whose praise Guru Granth Sahib speaks of in volumes. Guru Nanak was Shabd personified. He changed His form and came as Guru Angad, who transformed Himself into Guru Amar Das, who in turn, rose into Guru Ram Das and passed into Guru Arjan Dev. The Shabd personified continued to descend until It took the form of Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs, who clearly stated that He will live in the Khalsa--or the pure ones—for all times. Of course, all Saints promised Their continued existence for all times in the shape of Shabd. The 'Khalsas' then are the '*Word Personified*,' the Word in them and they in the Word. Thus, Guru Gobind Singh placed the trinity of religion in the Sikh sanctuary on a permanent footing:

TRINITY IN RELIGION

(1) The Shabd or the Naam; (2) the Sat Sang or the Holy Congregation; and (3) the institution of Khalsas for initiation purposes or going to the feet of the Khalsas for instructions, abiding by the dictates of Guru Granth Sahib—the Standard Guide.

Next, Guru Nanak goes on to tell us of the elementary steps leading to advancement in the Spiritual Path. These steps form the subject matter of stanzas XXVIII and XXIX of *Jap Ji.* The qualifications befitting a probationer taking up the spiritual quest, are given in stanza XXXVIII. At the end of the *Jap Ji*, a description of the Five Spiritual Planes which the pilgrim soul has to traverse on the way to the Lord, is given.

The experience of our own souls will stand to prove that this view of religion, as taught in *Jap Ji* by Guru Nanak, is

the correct one. We will not have to wait for that purpose until death. The Master does not believe in promises on credit. If a man does not see the Lord while in this body, who is going to believe in life's consummation after death?

"O Lord, if thou art to give us salvation after death, what is the value thereof?—O, none !" —*Nam Dev*

The devotion of oneself to the practical side of the teachings will prove the efficacy of the means devised by Nanak. A calm and Supreme Joy begins to reign over the mind at the very outset. With the progress of time and practice, sweet Symphonies are set afloat in the living temple of the human frame, and a world of Heavenly Light is made effulgent. Ultimately, man is brought face to face with the Heavenly Light in that place in which It is made all resplendent. In the end, man is brought to face the "Effulgent Spirit" in Its full swing. It is only then that the universe appears full of the Lord and that there is nothing of the world that is not the Word.

The Master wants each of us to penetrate through the fleeting forms and patterns and pass on from the phenomena of Nature to Nature's God. He warns us not to be misled by alluring attractions and wild enchantments spread out by Dame Nature through her evanescent charms and fleeting beauties. We should take them merely as signposts pointing to the Lord, the Eternal God that resides within and pervades each of the ephemeral productions. He further wants us to summon up all our energies and press them into service, so as to make our bodies the living temples of the Divine Music —the Word, in our earthly sojourn. He, therefore, says:

"O man, thou hast come into the world to make a profitable business.

But alas, thou art engaged in fruitless and bewildering things of life !

The night (of earthly life) is nearing its end." —*Sri Rag M.*3

"The merchandise that thou hast come to deal in, is the all-pervading Naam—the Word—to be had from the Saints." —*Gauri Sukh M.*5

"Thou hast got a human birth and this is thy chance to contact God." —*Asa M.*1

"Now or never" is the motto given by Guru Nanak. Attachment to the objects of the senses, the gorgeous display of riches and wealth, the luxuriant abundance and opulence, the licentious sensualism of ease and affluence: all these contribute to the imbalance of the unsophisticated mind. These are the thorns and thistles that mar the beauty of the undisturbed state of mind, which is the soil best suited for the dawn of Divinity. Every day, every hour and every passing minute, are leading us more and more into the bondage of sensuous worldly phenomena.

Nanak says:

"Attached to the objective world, how could we have a glimpse of Thee, O Lord, the Ever-existent One?" —*Bilawal M.* 5

We must stop short and see where we stand and into what heights of spirituality the True Master has come to lead us.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

The Master sets before us the goal, which is to attain complete oneness with the Lord—the One Being. We can reunite with the Source from which we once emanated, and regain our permanent abode in the Home of our Father, where joy and peace reign supreme beyond the reach of annihilation and ignorance, beyond all miseries of the troubled ocean of life.

The Master exhorts us to realise Him in our souls, to rise in Him, losing all sense of the little ego "I," in the living temples of our bodies. The Kingdom of God is within us. We have to recognise the Inner Man as the image of God, the physical body as the temple of God, the tabernacle of the Holy Ghost, in which the Lord makes His appearance. In these living temples we have to attune our souls with God and live in closer communion with Him.

"The temple of God is this body, in which the crest jewel

of all knowledge makes its appearance. The ignorant never dream of this possibility. To them man cannot be the living temple of God." —*Parbhati M.*3

"This living temple (body) God Himself made and He Himself dwells therein. Through the instruction of the Guru, He is found (therein) after all attachments and delusions are burnt away."—*Shalok M. 1*

According to Guru Nanak, the whole of creation is to be recognised as the great temple of the Lord, which He permeates through and through. We have to become the flute for the breath of the Lord.

"This universe is the temple of God, but without the Guru (God-Man), darkness reigns supreme;

And those that think otherwise, they are the most ignorant of people." —*Parbhati M.*3

"This universe is the abode of the True One;

And the True One verily dwells in it." —*Asa di war M.*2

With these words, the reader is now invited to study carefully *The Jap Ji*, with fervent beseechings to the Lord that He may grant us all the favour of communion with the Shabd so that we may rise unto Him.

—KIRPAL SINGH