BOOK EIGHT

# Deeksha

*Initiation*

# Deeksha

IN ALMOST all the scriptural lore we come across, in one form or another, a term that stands for "initiation," i.e., introduction of a person into the principles of the inner science. The Muslims generally use the word "baet" for initiation, while others call it "deeksha." Among the Christians, the admission to the church is known as "baptism." The Hindus call it "duojanma" or the second birth.

This initiation or introduction into the tenets of a new science is not something formal or by word of mouth only. Its significance is far deeper than is generally understood. It is tantamount to adopting an individual into the very life and spirit of the tenets that are introduced to him in theory. It is conveying a Life-impulse to the initiate and giving him first-hand experience of the source of life. It thus has a two-fold aspect: theoretical as well as practical.

At the time of the initiation, the Master explains to the individuals concerned the theory of the spiritual science or Para Vidya (the Knowledge of the Beyond). It is an admitted fact that theory precedes practice, for a correct understanding of the subject is of paramount importance before one can put the theory into practice. A successful application and experimentation with verifiable results cannot be carried on without a correct knowledge and understanding of the subject.

As spirituality is the science of the spirit or soul—a Living Principle, the very Breath of Life—an adept in spirituality must impart to every initiate a particle of his

own Life-impulse (called "Jia Dan") before the initiate can understand what the "life of the spirit" is, as distinguished from the "life of the flesh" that he has been leading hitherto; for it is the spirit or soul alone that can apprehend and experience the Oversoul, when freed from the trammels of the flesh, the mind, the pranas or vital airs, and all the outgoing faculties, all of which constitute the outer man as engaged in the world and worldly pursuits on the sensual plane.

> By imparting his own Life-impulse, he instills true devotion in a person and unites him with the Lord.[1]
>
> GURU ARJAN

## Who is competent to initiate?

The initiation into the esoteric science of the soul can successfully and rightly be granted by some perfect Saint or Master—an adept in the art and science of Para Vidya or the Knowledge of the Beyond. One who has not himself extricated and freed his spirit from body bondage and transcended into higher spiritual regions and who has not seen Reality face to face and who has not, by spiritual practice, become established in Truth, cannot possibly do anything in this behalf. A Saint of the highest order alone is competent to reveal the Path and lead Godward, regardless of what we call him: Sant Satguru, Murshid-i-Kamil, Prophet, Messiah or Master-soul. As light comes from light, so does life from life. The scriptural lore, by itself, is unable to impart this life-impulse.

> Meet a Satguru and take his initiation,
> Surrender thine all and peep within.[2]
>
> GURU NANAK

> Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.[3]
>
> . . . ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light . . .[4]
>
> ST. PETER
>
> For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.[5]
>
> ST. PAUL

The instruction in the esoteric teachings consists of the exposition of Simran, Dhyan and Bhajan, that is to say, repetition (mental with tongue of thought only) of the words which are charged with the power of the Master; concentration or meditation (fixing consciousness or gaze) at the center of the two eyebrows; and linking the spirit with the saving lifeline within, ever reverberating in the form of the perennial Sound Current, the very life-breath of the Universe, of which the Master himself is the living embodiment. As soon as a devotee is able to transcend the physical body, the Radiant Form of the Master (Guru Dev) appears in the subtle plane and becomes a guiding force to the spirit on the journey into higher spiritual realms, bringing him back to the True Home of his Father. Henceforth the Master-spirit never leaves the soul, but continuously helps and directs, visibly and invisibly, directly and indirectly, in this life and the life hereafter, as the occasion may demand.

> Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.[6]

> And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.[7]
>
> CHRIST

> Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
> In thy most need to go by thy side.
>
> EVERYMAN

No man, however learned he may be, however high his morals be pitched, can by his own unaided efforts rise above body-consciousness. The experience of the spirit withdrawal while living can be vouchsafed only by a Master Saint and by no one else, and without this transcendence one cannot peep into the world beyond and take hold of the Sound Principle—the Divine Chord in man, the link between the Creator and His creation.

> It is the Divine Law that none can conceive of Him without a Satguru.[8]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.[9]

> Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.[10]
>
> CHRIST

Initiation from a Master-soul is of paramount importance, for herein lies the secret of all esoteric teachings and esoteric experience. It means a new birth and a new life, entirely in a new setting. This spiritual birth or birth in the Master is called a second birth, and enables a person to turn over a new leaf, to say goodbye to the past and march forward to this original Home, the long-forgotten paradise—New Jerusalem, the Holy City, Muqam-i-Haq or Sach Khand.

> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.[11]

> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.[12]
>
> CHRIST

## The Kingdom of God: Where it is

The Kingdom of God is at present a lost dominion for us. Ever since the fall of man, for his first disobedience to God's commandment, we stand ostracized from the Garden of Eden and have no access to it. Under the overbearing pressure of the world and worldly pursuits, we have become entirely extroverted and have no thought of God and His Kingdom within.

> The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.[13]
>
> CHRIST

The priceless Waters of Immortality lie buried and lost within the depths of the human soul. The call of the Master is:

> He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.[14]
>
> For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.[15]
>
> CHRIST

All this leads to the one inevitable conclusion of death in life, for without it one cannot rise into Universal Consciousness or cosmic awareness. This higher life of the spirit depends entirely on the grace of a living Master, capable of imparting his life impulse and granting the saving lifeline within.

> I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.[16]
>
> ST. PAUL

With initiation and spiritual sadhna or practice, one gradually becomes aware of his shortcomings and tries to weed them out, and the more he purifies himself, the more he grows into Divine Life. As the scales begin to drop off, the true values of life become more and more apparent. The spirit gradually gets freed from the shackles of the world and is enabled to transcend the physical body and make flights into the higher regions. Hereafter, "he walks not after the flesh but after the spirit." [17] Living in the world, he is no longer of the world. He now delights in the bliss of higher spiritual regions and not in the pleasures of the senses and sense-objects. The gift of Naam or Word comes only from a Master-soul who, by injecting his own life-impulse, befits an initiate for the spiritual journey.

The measure and speed of advance, however, depends on the individual's own make-up, the ground on which he stands, and the preparation that he may have made in past incarnations. As each one has a different background, each one has his own starting point. The seed is sown, but its unfoldment, growth and development depends on the nature of the soil in which it is planted.

The Master injects his own consciousness, Light and Sound, into each initiate. Once the contact with the Divine Link is established and the spiritual experience gained, however little it may be to begin with, at the lowest level, it can, by regular day to day practice, be developed to any length one likes until it becomes quite natural and normal,

a matter of voluntary withdrawal of spirit currents as and when one likes.

> The devotee of the Master comes and goes at his will and pleasure, with no let or hindrance.[18]

Each one however, as said before, takes his or her own time for efflorescence and fructification. The dormant spiritual faculties begin to quicken with life and the initiate feels within him a sort of fullness, a satiety, a blessedness. This is a gift imperishable and indestructible. It can neither be stolen nor washed away. The seed of spirituality once sown in the innermost depths of the soul must bear flowers and fruits, in the fullness of time. No power on earth can stand in the way of its growth or stifle it in any way whatever.

He who has once been initiated by a competent Master is assured, once and for all, his liberation from the bondage of mind and matter; it is but a question of time. The seed of spirituality sown in him is bound to sprout and fructify. The spirituality when awakened and the spiritual experience gained must develop, and the Master Power cannot rest contented until the child owned is reared and taken home to the house of the Father.

The true knowledge dawns only with initiation, for without initiation from a Master-soul, one can have no knowledge.

> There can be no *jnana* (true knowledge) without meeting a Master-soul, nor meditation without a first-hand experience.[19]
>
> GURU ARJAN

But one who is fortunate may have the experience of both through the grace of a Master Saint. It means taking in a

particle of Life's Living Principle through some Godman or polarized God; i.e., a pole from where the Power of God works in this world. In the light of this knowledge, the mind gradually loosens its tentacles, which are holding the soul in hoops of steel, so that the spirit is able to free itself from the mind, and know and perceive her own true nature.

> O Nanak! Without knowing oneself by self-analysis,
> one wanders ever in the wilderness of delusion.[20]
>
> GURU TEG BAHADUR

> The whole world is in the throes of attachment and infatuation,
> A rare devotee of the Master escapes from the mighty maze of mind and matter,
> This infatuation keeps in perpetual motion the wheel of life,
> And it takes one time and again into the grip of *Kal*.[21]
>
> GURU NANAK

The process of liberating a human soul from the labyrinth of the sensual plane lies in the hands of a competent Master of Para Vidya or the Science of the Beyond; competent both in theory and practice. One who has himself liberated his soul and can at will go to the higher spiritual regions, can take others as well. It is a work of great trust and responsibility which the so-called Masters, with which the world always abounds, cannot do. Those who prescribe outer yogic practices or the performance of rites and rituals, sacrifices and austerities, pilgrimages and the like, are yet ignorant of the Inner Path that begins from the headquarters of the soul above the sensory plane and for which transcendence above body consciousness is the primary condition. It is there that one has "to knock," as Christ

put it, and he guaranteed that "it shall be opened." [22] The philosopher Emerson calls it "tapping inside." In Ramkali War, Mohalla 5, of the Guru Granth Sahib, we have a pen picture of the Masters of Apara Vidya or empirical knowledge of the world:

He, while working for religious merit, takes upon himself a load of sins,
And goes begging from door to door by offering initiation,
He himself has no faith in the Vedas and other scriptures,
And wants all worship and adoration unto himself.
Being a *kazi,* he sits in judgment over others;
While telling the beads, he ventures to expound Godhead;
With bribes, he tramples on the rights of others;
To the questions, he offers quotations from the scriptures.

GURU ARJAN

We live in the tumultuous sea of life without any moorings and are carried along by the fearful currents of attachments and infatuations. A rare devotee of the Master may be able to successfully face the storm and stress and cross over to a haven of safety, but the rest float down helplessly. If even after initiation an initiate takes recourse to disciplines and practices other than those enjoined by the Master, he cannot rid himself of worldly ties and takes a longer time to reach his Native Home.

All are drowned in the love of the world,
A rare devotee of the Master may ferry across.
Because of attachments, one comes over time and again,
Trapped in infatuation, one cannot but abide in the realm of death.

Even after initiation from the Master, people engage
in rites and rituals,
Neither can they snap the bonds nor reach the goal,
It is His glance of grace that can pull down the mighty
maze,
And then, O Nanak! One may get absorbed in Him.[23]

GURU NANAK

The true initiation is nothing but an introduction to Naam and a contact with the live creative Principle of Sound, which can be listened to, experienced and practiced from day to day.

Only the predestined get in touch with a Master-soul,
With the Water of Life (*Hari Ka Naam*) he grants the
true initiation (*deeksha*).[24]

GURU NANAK

Live ye in the haven of a Sadh,
And leave all thy wisdom and knowledge,
Let the Master's Instructions (*Guru Deeksha*) abide
in thy heart,
This, O Nanak! may happen through the Writ of the
Lord.[25]

GURU ARJAN

BOOK NINE

# Gyan or Jnana

## *Knowledge-Enlightenment*

# Gyan or Jnana

THE TERM "Gyan" or "Jnana" is derived from the Sanskrit root "gna," which is equivalent to the English word "know." In common speech, Gyan or knowledge is taken to mean thinking at the intellectual level, embracing within its fold all knowledge recorded in and derived from books, ancient or modern, spiritual or secular. No doubt this is a kind of Gyan or knowledge; and while it is an elementary kind, it is very extensive, varied and significant as far as it goes. We have need of it. A part of it, called scriptures, includes the theory of the science of spirituality. All scriptures—the Vedas and Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Smritis, Shastras, Puranas, and the Six Schools of Philosophy; the great epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata; the Holy Bible, the Holy Koran, the Adi Granth Sahib, and all others—form part of this branch of knowledge and come within the range of Apara Vidya, or the knowledge that comes through the senses. They form a wonderful record of the spiritual experiences of the rishis, prophets and saints of old, and inspire in us a longing to have similar experiences of our own. They also contain ethical truths of great value, which pave the way for an ethical life; and if followed scrupulously, they lay a solid foundation for a spiritual superstructure. So far, so good. But beyond this they are of no avail.

Apart from the Apara Vidya, or Gyan at the level of thinking and writing, there is a subtler and higher type of knowledge which is gained at the supra-mental level. It is

independent of the knowledge gained through the ordinary senses as it is intuitive and a direct experience of the soul. Hence it is called Para Vidya, or the Knowledge of the Beyond. In all religions it is spoken of as the real Gyan, or true knowledge. It is gained by the spirit or soul when it reflects back upon itself. It is an outcome of self-analysis by a regular process of inversion or looking within. It is a thing of actual experience and realization within one's own self, and gradually leads to self-knowledge and God-knowledge. When the light of self-knowledge dawns, all doubts and all differences vanish; one views the world in an altogether different setting, like a person standing on the summit of a hill, looking at the landscape around and below him stretching out in an endless undulating series. He finds himself looking on the great panorama of life in its variegated forms—a center, a hub of the creation itself. The past, the present and the future unroll themselves before him like an open book, and there is nothing that he does not know, nor does he feel the want of knowledge in himself. Now dawns upon him the answer to the great question—"What is that, the knowledge of which makes everything known?"—that has been asked by man since the world began. True Gyan or knowledge, then, lies in knowing and experiencing the Ultimate Reality, in the Light and Life of which we blindly live, move about, and have our very being rooted, and yet know it not. It is a great irony of fate, that we know so much about the world and worldly surroundings as to have a surfeit of them, but next to nothing of the vital motor-power called the soul—the Living Spirit, the life spark of consciousness that enlivens us and is our very life—our real self.

So there is a vast difference between Apara and Para

Vidya. The former keeps on expanding as we proceed, but with no way out. The poet Tennyson describes it aptly:

> Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
> Gleams that untraveled world, whose margin fades
> Forever and forever when I move.

It is a kind of wilderness through which there is no way out. Even a person with all his wits about him is sure to be lost in its labyrinthine maze. Like a flogging horse, he may kill himself with sheer exhaustion, but cannot possibly get through. Such is the terrible path on which we trudge.

On the other hand, Para Vidya has boundless possibilities, unfolding new realms of celestial splendor as the pilgrim soul proceeds on the Path. It is a very pleasant journey, for the wayfarer has with him a sure companion, an unerring guide who knows the Path and its dangerous turns and twists. He takes him along in safety, shows him especially beautiful scenes and makes him acquainted with everything on the way. His companion has a radiantly smiling face and a divine dignity, and imparts to him directly that first-hand knowledge of the Beyond of which the pilgrim may have read in books. With all its traps, turns and slips, the Path moves through a belvedere of uncommon splendor and affords a sure way out to a haven of rest and repose. The journey's end is nothing but the Kingdom of God where peace and quiet reign, the New Jerusalem or Holy City. Thus real Gyan or knowledge deals with Realized Truth.

In the Bhagavad Gita, we come across two terms: Gyan and Vigyan. The knowledge of that One live principle, called Paramatma or God, actively operating in all living

creatures that appear and disappear like so many bubbles, is called Gyan; and the realization that the said live principle is the material and efficient cause of all that exists is known as Vigyan. A person possessed of Gyan or Vigyan then actually sees nothing but God in His creation and creation as established in God; that is to say, the two as identical and not separate from each other—God in man and man in God—which is akin to the pantheistic view of religion (identification of God with the Universe).

The Gurbani or the scriptures of the Gurus (the Granth Sahib) have nowhere identified book-learning with Gyan. On the contrary, the term Gyan is used to indicate the Sound Principle (as is evident from the terms employed: Shabd, Naam, Sach, Kirtan, Dhuni, etc.) which is continually reverberating in fullness in each individual.

> The Word of the Master is ever sweet,
> It is the true knowledge and true meditation,
> Rare is the soul that may taste Its sweetness,
> For the grace of the Master makes It sweet.[1]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> Know ye the true knowledge and meditation to be the *Dhuni* (Sound) Divine,
> Blessed is the ever-green tree with the immense shade.[2]
>
> GURU NANAK

We have need, great need, for knowledge on the intellectual level, and that we get from scriptures and discourses of Masters. We cannot practice spirituality unless we first know its theory: what it is, its technique, how it can be practiced, obstacles in the way and how to overcome them, etc. We cannot therefore ignore the theory aspect of Para Vidya, for theory always precedes practice in every branch

of knowledge. But after having learned the theory, we must put the theoretical knowledge into practice so as to make it our very own. Theory by itself cannot satisfy the innate craving of the spirit which must be fed on manna or the heavenly food—the Bread of Life—to satiate her hunger and supplied with the Water of Life to quench her thirst. Theory and practice, therefore, go cheek by jowl and are interdependent. But to achieve the goal, one has to work for it and this requires stilling the mind and intellect before anything else. After full comprehension of the theory, nothing remains but to gain practical experience of it at the level of the spirit, far above the level of the senses and sense organs. We have thus to separate the two by a process of self-analysis or transcension of the body consciousness, a practical demonstration of which the Master gives in the laboratory of the body at the time of initiation.

*Jnana* or true knowledge with the Master is the Word and it comes through practice of the Word,
He alone achieves it who accepts and follows the instructions of the Master, with all his heart and soul.[3]

GURU RAM DAS

Jnana and meditation on *Sach* (Truth) have a very deep meaning;
No one knows of their inmost secret and greatness.[4]

Jnana, meditation, the Divine Song (*Dhuni*) and the Sound (*Bani*) are all one,
All, all repeat the same ancient story of the wondrous and the speechless One.[5]

Practice Jnana, meditation and Harmony by absorption in the Sound (Shabd),

Be ye one with Him Who is beyond all limitations, peerless and without fear.[6]

GURU NANAK

If you wish for a dip in the sacred pool of Naam, that pool is verily within you;
A true pilgrimage for the soul is Shabd which is replete with Gyan.[7]

GURU ARJAN

The Master has applied to my eyes the collyrium of Gyan,
The light became effulgent within and the darkness vanished.[8]

GURU AMAR DAS

Jnana with the Master is Naam and he makes one steady in it,
One who is destined, gets it by devotion to the lotus feet of the Master.[9]

GURU RAM DAS

With the manifestation of Light one becomes enlightened,
The Light of Jnana has now been implanted in me by the Master;
By drinking the ambrosia of the Word (Naam), the mind is fully at rest and devoid of fear.[10]

GURU ARJAN

With the dawn of Jnana, there is light on every side,
In His boundless grace, He has accepted a filthy worm like me.[11]

RAVIDAS

This knowledge then is self-luminous. When it comes, there dawns an everlasting Light in the initiate's soul. From then on, he walks always in God's kindly Light which accompanies him wherever he may be. This is true devotion and grants one full protection from all harm.

The scriptures tell us that Jnana is characterized by the Light Principle. Guru Amar Das, speaking of Jnana as taught by the Masters, describes it as "Eternal Light within," which serves as an altar for ceaseless devotion and grants one the full fruit of Naam:

> The Master's Jnana brings forth eternal Light within,
> It keeps one absorbed in ceaseless devotion: the greatest gift of the all-pervading Word.[12]

> The devotee of the Master knows the Sound (Shabd),
> And rests in the ambrosia of His Word (Naam).
> The Master's Jnana is refulgent high,
> And it drives away the darkness of ignorance.[13]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> The company of a Sadh is the company of Truth and the congregation sings His glory,
> The scintillating Jnana sheds luster within, dispelling all darkness born of ignorance.[14]

> With the practice of Naam (Word), one is rid of all sorrow and pain, for It brings in supreme bliss,
> The Jnana of the Master is all ablaze, filling one with Light to the deepest depths of the soul.[15]

> Those with a writ of the Lord in their forehead do meet a Master Saint,
> And have all their doubt and distrust driven out by the blaze of Jnana.[16]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

Guru Arjan also tells us that with the dawn of Master's Jnana within, comes the advent of Heaven's Light both within and without, enveloping all; and the mind gets satiated and is freed from all illusions and delusions. One is thus led to the inexhaustible Fount of the Waters of Immortality, drinking which he becomes desireless and losing all fear of death gains Life Everlasting.

With Heaven's Light, all things get truly lighted as a result of the Jnana from the Master;
By drinking the Water of Life, the mind grows still and becomes fearless.[17]

GURU ARJAN

In scaling the spiritual heights, the pilgrim has actually to pass through the light of the stars, the moon and the sun. This Knowledge or Enlightenment comes only when the spirit takes its course in the Sukhman or Shahrag, a central narrow channel between the two eyebrows.

To hail the light of the moon and the sun within, as the soul rises into the astral world, is described by the scriptures as the Path of Jnana or True Knowledge.

In spite of fire in the core, how charmingly fragrant is the vegetation,
And so with the boisterous waters of the great seas when confined within their bounds,
The real sun and the real moon are both within the human body,
And yet one rarely gets to know true Jnana, the very soul of all that exists.[18]

GURU NANAK

Guru Nanak, in Jap Ji, Stanzas 35 and 36, while telling us at length of the Realm of Divine Knowledge (Gyan Khand) with countless gods, goddesses and deities, beautifully sums up the description:

Divine knowledge illumines in the realm of knowledge,
While divine symphonies play unending music, and joy and bliss reign supreme.

Heaven's Light always serves as an unfailing friend in moments of dire distress, both without and within; and

one walks steadily in it, in life and after. In Sukhmani, Guru Arjan has devoted a full ashtpadi, a hymn in octave or eight stanzas, to this Light and the way it guides and leads the soul when it quits the body. This Light is there in the Sukhman, but one cannot get access to it without the help of a Master:

The Light of Jnana is a powerful aid both within and without,
Commune with It, O mind! as It destroys all affliction and sorrow.[19]

GURU ARJAN

The Light of Master's Jnana is a peerless jewel that grants salvation,
O Nanak! he may give It to whomever He wishes to grant the honor of His Court.[20]

GURU AMAR DAS

The Light of Jnana has been manifested within,
I have easily won the gift of the Word.[21]

GURU ARJAN

Make a vintage of Jnana, and ferment it with meditation on the fire of His love and reverence,
The Sukhman is bubbling over with the Water of Life, drink ye to thy fill.[22]

KABIR

The Master is knowledge personified; and this knowledge he imparts to a rare gurmukh, i.e., one who completely surrenders himself to the guru. A Satguru can manifest this Light which is capable of granting Nirvana. It is an inner science and one has to work for it under the guidance of a perfect Master; no one has ever got it without him.

Ask of Brahma, Narad, Ved Vyas, and others,
All testify none can have it without a Master.[23]

Water stands in a pitcher; a pitcher without water is of no consequence,
The mind is wedded to Jnana (knowledge), but True Jnana (Flaming Sound) never comes without a Master Saint.[24]

GURU NANAK

O Mother! One cannot get the Light of Jnana without a Guru,
One may try all means; he cannot get to the Lord.[25]

GURU ARJAN

Without the Master, one cannot contact the Word nor find the Path,
The Light of Jnana is the true essence, for It leads Godward.[26]

Without the Master, one cannot have the Light of Jnana or inner peace,
O Nanak! Without the Word, the worldly-wise forfeit the human birth.[27]

GURU AMAR DAS

I offer myself as a sacrifice to my Master, who has united me with the Lord,
He has applied to my eyes the collyrium of Jnana by His Word,
And with these eyes I now see the world in its true colors.[28]

GURU NANAK

The Master alone can give the collyrium of Jnana
That shows the all-pervading Power of God.[29]

GURU AMAR DAS

The Master has given me the collyrium of Jnana that has dispelled all darkness,
With the grace of God a Saint is met,
O Nanak! One witnesses the Light within.[30]

The Light of True Knowledge is the greatest gift of a Master-soul,

The Master has given me the greatest gift of Jnana
by creating in me a craving for the Word (Naam),
He has linked me with Truth (the Power of God), a
treasure-house of supernatural powers that grow
from more to more.

GURU ARJAN

When with spiritual discipline (Simran and Dhyan, constant remembrance and concentration) the mind gets stilled and is at rest, then enlightenment comes. Rare indeed are such souls in the world; all those who are full of passion, anger or egoism, as most of us are, cannot have it. With it comes perfect satisfaction. Mind is controlled and the soul awakens from the lethargic sleep of ages. All desires come to an end, and one gets absorbed in his own self, and is gifted with all-pervading prevision and transvision, and rises into cosmic awareness. All karmas are burned away. Death, the last enemy of mankind, loses its sting; the minions of death cannot come near such a jivan-mukta or liberated being. These benefits cannot be had by outer intellectual wrestling.

Adorned with the kindly Light of God, the spirit becomes acceptable to the Lord Consort.

The wandering wits learn to live under control and
delight in Truth,
And one drinks the Jnana Ras (the exhilarating vintage of Naam) and desires nothing else.[32]

With all our washings of the body we cannot keep
it clean,
But the elixir of Jnana (the Word) purifies both the
mind and the body.[88]

The collyrium of Jnana destroys all fear and makes
you see the Reality,

And you gain omniscience with the stilling of the mind.[34]

Devotion to the Master creates love true and eternal,
And the gift of Jnana gives knowledge of the three worlds.[35]

GURU NANAK

Awakened into the Light of Jnana, Kabir is dyed in the color of the Lord,
All the world over are deluded; my mind is now metamorphosed by the all-pervading Power (Ram).[36]

KABIR

How can one control the wandering wits?
The mind can be stilled through the grace of the Master, and with Jnana he returns to his Native Home.[37]

GURU AMAR DAS

Flower blossoms into fruit and then fades away,
All actions are for Jnana and then fall off.[38]

GURU RAM DAS

Nanak says: He alone wakes up into Reality
Who applies the collyrium of Jnana to his eyes.[39]

Jnana is a supreme embellishment for the bride (soul);
Blessed is the bride that loves her Lord.[40]

GURU AMAR DAS

The wild elephant of the mind is controlled and domesticated by the mahout of a Guru, by means of the Rod of Enlightenment. The Light of the Guru, variously called Shabd, Naam or Dhun, forms a link between the soul and the Oversoul, and once this is firmly grasped, one can easily transcend to the Mansions of God.

Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and put

on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.[41]

ST. PAUL

The agency that regenerates or transforms our nature is the Holy Spirit. The experience which He must bring to us is called the New Birth, the Resurrection or the Second Advent.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.[42]

ST. PAUL

Jnana or Enlightenment comes as a gift from God:

Thy glance of grace gives one right understanding,
And brings one to the crest jewel of Jnana.[43]

Seek not Jnana in the world for verily ye shall not find it,
With the writ of the Lord one gets it, and not by one's endeavors.[44]

GURU NANAK

Inside the body is the Jnana of the Master, a crest jewel that grants salvation,
O Nanak! with His glance of grance, he may grant it to whomever He may like, and make him acceptable.[45]

GURU AMAR DAS

Those who are devoted to the Satguru are honored and accepted in His Court,
The Light of Jnana dawns in them to whom He may grant it.[46]

GURU ARJAN

Having once been gifted with Enlightenment (or Jnana or Divine Knowledge and Experience), one must practice it from day to day so as to develop it and not lose the holy

Light of Heaven by sheer neglect in the mighty swirl of the world. Jesus Christ, in unambiguous terms, warns us against this danger of losing the peerless gift from God and His Elect, the Godman:

> Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.[47]

BOOK TEN

# Charan Kamal

## *The Lotus Feet of the Master*

# Charan Kamal

## 1. *The Lotus Feet*

VERY FREQUENTLY, we come across the term "Charan Kamal" in the scriptures of various religions.

> Listen, O simpleton! Learn to fall at the feet of a Guru.[1]
>
> GURU NANAK

> If your thoughts be centered on the feet of the Guru,
> You will get all your desires fulfilled.[2]
>
> GURU ARJAN

In the Gospels also we find references to anointing and kissing the feet of Christ. Among the Hindus and Muslims there is still the custom of doing obeisance by touching the feet of divines and holy men. Let us try to understand the significance or import of injunctions and practices like these.

A living Master is a great necessity in the science of spirituality. He is the central figure around which the entire system revolves. He is the human pole through which the divine power works in this world. Without his guidance and help, one can do nothing and achieve nothing. No wonder then that one has to surrender oneself at the holy feet of the Master. As Kamal or the lotus flower is considered to be something sublime and sacred, the feet of the Master are generally spoken of as Charan Kamal or the Lotus Feet, fit to be worshiped and adored in all sincerity and humility.

Without the munificence of a Guru one gets naught,
Though one may engage in millions of meritorious deeds.[3]

GURU AMAR DAS

Set aside all thy wisdom and fall at the feet of a Guru.[4]

Be thou the dust of sadhus' feet and forget thyself altogether,
Leave all thy cunning and learning and fall at the feet of the Guru.[5]

Leave aside all thy wisdom and knowledge,
And fall at the feet of the Saints.[6]

GURU ARJAN

Listen, thou ignorant self, learn to fall at the feet of the Master,
Be thou devoted to the Word and then thou shalt have no fear of death.
The unfortunate ones have a heavy load on their heads and can never be happy.[7]

GURU NANAK

It is with a writ in the forehead that one communes with the precious Word,
And thy works shall be fashioned out by devotion to the holy feet of the Master.[8]

Think of the King of Kings—the Lord of Creation,
Depend on Him alone who is immanent in all;
Cast aside all thy artifices and get hold of the Master's feet.[9]

GURU ARJAN

O dear self! Thou wouldst be blessed by devotion to the all-pervading Power,
Serve day and night at the feet of the Master, for that is the true devotion to the Lord.[10]

GURU NANAK

From exhortations like the following of Guru Arjan, it is clear that he wants us to find a living Master and surrender ourselves to him, to profit from his company and close association by molding our life and conduct according to his pattern, for in this lies the secret of spiritual success. "To contact the feet of a Guru" in this context means to meet a Master and enter his fold.

Bow at the feet of His devotees.[11]

Remain always in the company of the Saints,
And be devoted to the feet of the Master.[12]

Blessed is the moment when I see the Master,
Let me be a holocaust at the feet of the Master.[13]

I live simply to see you
And to do obeisance at your feet.[14]

I get constantly enlivened by seeing the Master,
And quench my thirst with the washings of his feet.[15]

May I always live in the sweet remembrance of the Word and be blessed in body and mind;
Let me drink the washings of thy feet, O merciful Master divine.
Blessed indeed was the time when I reached thy door, O Lord;
O Nanak, God in His utmost mercy led me to the door of the Perfect Master.[16]

GURU ARJAN

The feet of the Master are often spoken of as a pool of sacred nectar that grants salvation to the world-weary pilgrims on the Path.

Listen ye to the Saints: Salvation lies in the true Word,
Service at the feet of the Master and devotion to his Word is the true pilgrimage.

Such a one is acceptable at His Court and obtains a seat of honor.[17]

GURU ARJAN

Again there is abundant sweetness, strange and peculiar, in the feet of the Master, and untold blessings flow therefrom.

Sweet are the lotus feet of the Master,
With God's writ one sees them;
Myriad are the merits that follow such a blessed vision.[18]

GURU ARJAN

The washings of their feet are taken to be an Elixir of Life, by taking which one gets Life Eternal. To meet a living Master is no easy task. Really blessed is a person who has the good fortune to come across one and recognize him.

O Nanak! It is extreme good fortune of one
To cast aside pride and fall at the Master's feet.[19]

O Nanak, it is through fullness of karma that one gets devoted to the feet of the Master.[20]

Nanak says: Blessed am I,
That I serve the feet of a Sadh.[21]

GURU ARJAN

It is with the grace of God that one gets an opportunity to meet a living Master and have loving devotion for his feet:

God linked me with a Saint,
And I found a boon companion,
And acquired love for His feet.[22]

He on whom God showers His mercy
Begins washing the feet of a Satguru.[23]

GURU RAM DAS

God has graced me with His mercy,
The feet of the Master are now implanted in me.[24]
GURU ARJAN

Blessed is the day when a person engages in the service of the Master's feet and bows in all humility before him and touches his lotus feet with his forehead and beard.

Blessed are the eyes that see the Master's Form,
Blessed is the forehead that touches his feet.[25]

Blessed is the day that I met the Master,
And did obeisance at his feet.[26]
GURU ARJAN

Blessed are the beards that touch his feet.[27]
GURU AMAR DAS

Bhai Gurdas says in this context:

Through ages one has had a human birth,
But blessed is the life wherein one takes refuge at the Master's feet,
Blessed are the eyes that behold the Master,
Blessed the ears that hear the Master,
Blessed the nose that smells the fragrance of his feet,
Blessed the tongue that repeats the words of the Master,
Blessed the hands that serve the Master,
Blessed the feet that circumambulate the Master.[28]

Refuge at the feet of the Master includes the merit of millions of pilgrimages,
Even the gods and goddesses are eagerly engaged in the service of the Master;
Refuge at the feet of the Master brings about fruition of all desires.
All supernatural powers flow from him and so doth immortality;

Refuge at the feet of the Master takes one to the region of desirelessness.
Devotion as enjoined by him works out salvation from bondage;
Refuge at the feet of the Master has a merit that is inconceivable,
He works without any thought and is the potential cause (material and efficient) of all that exists.[29]

Since the time I took refuge at the feet of the Master
All the world seems engaged in worshiping at his feet;
His lotus feet constitute a pool of the Water of Life (*Charan-Amrit*);
I wish and long for the dust of his feet—the dust that has created the Universe.
His lotus feet are the true wealth and a true haven of peace,
They grant ineffable vision and lead to the Path Godward:
His lotus feet have a glory that is indescribable and incomprehensible,
Not this, not this, I bow to thee again and again, O Lord.[80]

BHAI GURDAS

It is really a great blessing to have a living Master. We have in the scriptures countless merits that accrue from the lotus feet of the Master. He dispels all our sorrows and afflictions. One is rid of the deadly sins of lusts and passions, attachments and desires. The body and mind both get purified. Freed from all bondage, one takes life as it flows by, unfettered and unaffected, fearless of what may come—including death itself, which he knows how to meet. With the Power of the Word, he leads a life of perfect contentment and ecstasy and rises into Universal Consciousness and hereafter lives at all times at the level of the soul. This is Jivan Mukti or liberation while living.

Blessed is the time I see the Master,
And make an offering of myself at his feet.[31]

A true Satguru is a great Donor,
When I see him all my ills vanish;
His lotus feet are worthy of adoration.[32]

GURU ARJAN

I adore the feet of the Satguru,
Guru is the helmsman
And his Word the barque by which we cross over.[33]

GURU NANAK

A glance of grace from the Satguru is more than millions of kingships;
The moment he manifests the Word, my body and mind feel exhilarated;
But it is with the writ of God that one gets devoted to the feet of the Satguru.[34]

Whatever the condition, sitting or standing, I sing the virtues of the Lord and my sorrows and afflictions disappear.
Nanak says: It is with the fullness of Karma that the mind gets attached to the feet of the Master.[35]
All things are added unto him who casts a loving look at the Master;
Those whose minds are fixed in the feet of the Master are truly blessed.[36]

Nanak says: If it be so ordained,
Leave all pride and be engaged in the feet of the Master.[37]

GURU ARJAN

Blessed are those whom the Satguru has accepted,
Nanak is ever attached to the feet of the Master.[38]

GURU NANAK

As ye sow, so shall ye reap, and reap the seeds sown in ages past,

On whomsoever He showers His mercy, he washes the feet of the Satguru.[39]

GURU RAM DAS

## Inner vision of the Master's feet

A living Master is not a physical entity alone. He is an active live principle that transcends at will the physical plane and traverses into higher spiritual regions. The Radiant Form of the Master, called Guru Dev, guides and helps the human soul to extricate itself from the trammels of the flesh, by means of Simran or repetition of the charged words given by the Master. In subtle regions the spirit is enabled to stay by the magnetic influence of the Radiant Divine Form of the Guru (Divya-rup). Hence the necessity for devotion at the sacred feet of the inner Radiant Form as well.

Keep the feet of the Master ever engraven in thy heart;
Thou shalt have all thy wishes fulfilled.[40]

Let the remembrance of the Master's feet abide in thy mind,
All thy sufferings shall vanish and thine enemies be destroyed.[41]

Let the remembrance of the Master's feet abide in thy mind
And thou shalt be saved from the hell fires.[42]

The feet of the Master are manifest in my forehead,
This is why all my trials and tribulations have now ended.[43]

The blessed form of the Master is manifest in my forehead;
Whenever I peep within, I find him there;
His lotus feet are the source of my very life.[44]

GURU ARJAN

The entire Radiant Form of the Master as it appears within is blessed indeed. The Divine Light emanating from the feet of the Master is resplendent and is the first to dawn; with it comes the entire form. As a harbinger of the Divine Presence, it is fit to be worshiped and loved. From stage to stage this Holy Light grows in luster. Swami Tulsi Das, the famous author of the Hindi Ramayana, spoke of it as follows:

> The nails of the Master's feet are more lustrous than the shining crest jewel. A concentration on them opens the inner vision and one becomes all-knowing.[45]

Maulana Rumi also speaks of it:

> When the *Pir* (Master) appears within, you become knower of the past, present and future.

This is tantamount to what is technically called "Fana-fil-Sheikh" or merging one's identity in, or becoming one with, the Sheikh or Master. Hereafter the duality between the disciple and the Master ceases and they become one in spirit. The disciple truly becomes a Guru-man. The Astral Form of the Master appears when one rises above body consciousness. When the sensory currents (or consciousness) through the process of Simran collect at the center between the two eyebrows, the light sprouts forth and when one goes further this Radiant Form manifests itself. So long as this Divine Form of the Master does not come to guide, one cannot march on the spiritual path and gain the Kingdom of Heaven; for Guru precedes God and leads us Godward. This Radiant Form remains ever with the disciple, no matter where he may be, and helps the pilgrim spirit on the Path; leads her beyond the Trigun-atmak regions (physical, astral, causal) and takes

her to the Fourth Grand Division called Sat Lok, which is a purely spiritual realm.

> The feet (Light) of the Master shine in my forehead,
> No more am I a prey to trials and tribulations.[46]

> The Blessed Form of the Master is ever present in my forehead;
> Every moment as I look up, I do behold the Divine Form;
> And now I live and breathe by the grace of the Master's lotus feet.[47]

> Blessed indeed is the human body in which dwell the feet of the beloved.[48]
>
> GURU ARJAN

The manifestation of the Guru Dev, or the Astral Form of the Master, is purely a gift of God. By Divine grace alone, initiates are blessed with this precious gift.

> I am enraptured with seeing the lotus feet of the Radiant Form of the Master,
> It is by the grace of the Master that one comes to serve the Lord.[49]
>
> GURU ARJAN

## The Lotus Feet of God (Naam)

We have pertinent allusions in the scriptures to God's Feet as well, for example:

> Contact thou the feet of Hari through the Guru's Shabd.[50]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> Meditate on the Lotus Feet of the Lord.[51]
>
> GURU ARJAN

There is in fact no difference whatever between the Lotus

Feet of the Lord and of the Master. But what do the words "Lotus Feet" stand for and what do they signify? These words mean nothing more nor less than the Sound Principle called Naam, Kalma or Word, which, emanating from the Highest Region and passing through various grades of density, reverberates at the lowest level of the subtle plane at the center between the two eyebrows; and this is what the Master links the spirit with at the time of initiation.

> Wonderful is the Harmony of God,
> By devotion to the Lotus Feet of the wondrous Lord one becomes a Sadhu.[52]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Here the term is synonymous with the Sound Current, which manifests Itself through the grace of some Master, and by attuning with which one becomes a Sadh (disciplined soul).

> Should you live with a Saint for some time,
> A melodious strain of soft music appears of itself.[53]
>
> Cutting asunder all bonds, one gets established in the Lotus Feet,
> And remains absorbed in the Sound Current.[54]
>
> GURU ARJAN

In the terminology of Saints, devotion to the Word is devotion to the Lotus Feet of the Master, and those who get absorbed in the Harmony of the Word drink the Water of Life proceeding from the Lotus Feet of the Lord. In fact, the reference here is to the Sonorous Light which, emanating from the Feet of the Master, welcomes the pilgrim soul as it proceeds on its journey Homeward through the astral and subtle regions.

Nanak prays: Make me a slave of such votaries who are absorbed in Thy Lotus Feet.[55]

GURU ARJAN

Again, when through spiritual sadhna the Kindly Light of God dawns within, that too is described as the Lotus Feet of the Lord, since it emanates from His Feet and is the dust of His Feet (Charan Dhur).

The moment His Feet are firmly established within,
A Light dawns and one meets the Lord.[56]

GURU ARJAN

Naam or Word is the fountainhead of Heaven's Light. Devotion to the Naam is nothing but devotion to His Feet.

While walking or sitting, waking or asleep,
Be in tune with the Word (Guru-Mantra),
Be devoted to His Feet in the company of a Saint and thus cross over the sea of life.[57]

GURU ARJAN

The greatness of the Lotus Feet is the be-all and end-all. It is the summum bonum of life.

In the bliss of His holy feet, I remain absorbed from end to end.[58]

KABIR

One cannot describe the beatitude of His Feet. But one can experience and feel something of the bliss arising therefrom:

O Kabir! With what should I compare the bliss of the Lotus Feet?
Words fail to do any justice, but one can be convinced by having some experience of it.[59]

KABIR

By remaining in constant touch with the Light and Sound Current, one can always be devoted to the Lotus Feet and derive untold benefits therefrom.

Those who depend on the Lotus Feet of the Master,
Are all the time absorbed in the Word.[60]

They that live by the Lotus Feet depend on One alone,
God is their only refuge, the woof and warp of their existence.[61]

My comrade, friend and guide is the Most High,
His Lotus Feet within me are my very life.[62]

His Lotus Feet are my support,
He is the treasure-house of all Bliss,
Let me be engaged in His Kirtan,
So long as the life-breath lasts.[63]

Thy Feet are helmsmen to ferry us across the sea of life.[64]

With Thy Feet, Thou hast ferried many across the world.[65]

The mind rides in safety in the ship of *Hari Charan*.[66]

GURU ARJAN

The Lotus Feet appear in the depths of the mind:

To listen to the Kirtan (Word) is the daily routine of a Sadh,
When the Lotus Feet become fully manifest within, one lives by constant devotion to them.[67]

With the Lotus Feet within, I meditate on them all the time.[68]

GURU ARJAN

He alone engages in the worship of the Lotus Feet to whom God may grant it.

All are strung like beads on one string;
He alone takes shelter in the Feet who is so destined.[69]

By Thy glance of grace attract us to Thy feet.[70]

GURU ARJAN

The wealth of the Lotus Feet comes as a gift from the Satguru and he himself makes them manifest:

One engages in the devotion of the Lotus Feet,
If one gets the gift of the Feet from a Satguru.[71]

I offer myself a sacrifice at the Holy Feet,
And a sacrifice unto the Master for showing them to me.[72]

The Master has given me the wealth of the Lotus Feet,
And the unmoored has found a sheet-anchor.[73]

GURU ARJAN

It is through association with Sadhus and Saints that the Lotus Feet appear within:

The Sadhus and Saints manifest the Heaven's Light,
And the Lotus Feet do manifest within.[74]

GURU ARJAN

How do the Lotus Feet come to abide in the mind? It is through Simran that the Lotus Feet appear.

The Simran of God drives away all afflictions,
And the Lotus Feet do appear in the mind;
Meditate on the all-pervading Word all the time,
And drink the Water of Life, O loved of the Lord.[75]

Sing of the virtues of the Lord with the Saints and waste not the precious life;
By singing the praises of the Lord, one not only saves himself (from the wilderness of life) but even those who are his kith and kin;

The Lotus Feet have now come to abide in my mind
and I meditate on them all the time,
Nanak hath taken his shelter with God and hath offered his all unto Him.[76]

GURU ARJAN

When the all-pervading consciousness in man which is operating through sensory currents gets collected and concentrated through spiritual sadhna at one center, the seat of the soul, just behind and between the two eyebrows, the Lotus Feet or Naam becomes manifest. The spirit gets so much absorbed in the beautiful music that one is lost to himself and an indissoluble union between the soul and the Oversoul is effected. Face to face with Reality, he gets so much established therein that thereafter the world loses all its charms and cannot move him from his purpose.

The lotus feet of the Master are wondrously luminous. A rare Sadhu with great good fortune may be able to cast his eyes on them. These do appear in the heart of the devotee, behind the two eyebrows.

A rare Sadhu may fall in love with the Lotus Feet of the Lord.[77]

The Lotus Feet do appear within the mind of a devotee.[78]

GURU ARJAN

If one gets in touch with the Lotus Feet, he attracts to himself the merit of all austerities, pilgrimages and acts of charity and devotion.

A meditation on the Lotus Feet of the Lord grants the merits of all devotional exercises and disciplines.[79]

Meditate on the Lotus Feet of the Lord;
This is the greatest pilgrimage and an act of ablution.[80]

Meditate day and night on the Word and drink Its ambrosia,
It shall give thee the benefit of all virtuous deeds and yogic exercises.[81]

The whole world is in the throes of lusts, passions and egotism,
The shelter of a Saint and devotion at his feet will dispel all troubles born of ignorance.[82]

A whole-hearted devotion to the feet of the Master saves one from all pangs and sorrows.[83]

Leave off all worldly comforts and embellishments of no consequence,
All passions and all delights take to their heels once you get to the feet of the Satguru.[84]

GURU ARJAN

By killing egotism the mind gets subdued,
And one loves the Master's feet forever;
By the Master's grace, the body and mind are purified,
And one communes with the Holy Word.[85]

Let my body and soul be a sacrifice unto the all-absorbing feet of the Master;
Satguru is a veritable Pool of Nectar, and His Word rids the mind of all imperfections.[86]

GURU AMAR DAS

The mind linked with the feet of the Master
Leaves the path of death far behind.[87]

GURU NANAK

As ballast in the boat moves across the river,
So does a devotee of the Master safely cross the sea of life.[88]

By devotion to the feet of the Master, I live by remembering Hari;
By meditation on the Par Brahm, I drink the Amrit.[89]

Wheresoever I see I find myself at The Feet,
May I be a sacrifice to The Feet.[90]

GURU ARJAN

The devotion to the True One is ever wonderful,
By meditating on the Master's feet one gains the highest merit.[91]

GURU NANAK

## 2. *The Dust of the Lotus Feet*

## (CHARAN KAMAL DHUR)

The phrase "Charan Dhur" has also been used in the scriptures alternately with "Charan Kamal" and both signify the same thing.

### The dust of the feet of living Masters

As the need of a living Master is of supreme importance so is the need of the dust of his feet. Whatever comes in contact with the Divine human pole is indeed very blessed: the hem of his garments, the chair or carpet he sits on, the horse he rides on, the things he uses for one purpose or another. Many a person cured himself of leprosy or blindness by touching the hem of Christ's robe.

The entire world is Thine, my Lord;
Everyone eagerly seeks for the Dust of Thy Feet.[92]

GURU RAM DAS

The service of Thy Feet is a panacea for all ills,
Even the angels and seraphim wish for Thy Dust.[93]

GURU ARJAN

Blessed indeed is the place which a Saint treads upon,
The Rishis like Shankara and Narad pay homage to it.[94]

Wherever a Sadhu walks the land,
The entire region becomes purified.[95]

GURU RAM DAS

Shamas Tabrez, a Muslim Saint, tells us:

With the Dust of a Saint, enlighten thine eyes,
Then shalt thou see all from end to end;
Make for thee a collyrium from the Dust of the Elect;
It shall make thee pure and also renovate thy sight (enabling thee to see God).

Wherever God's elect sets up his habitat, that place becomes sanctified and in course of time grows into a place of pilgrimage. In fact, all sacred places owe their origin to the sanctifying influence of one or another holy man of God. The sanctity of Nankana Sahib, Panja Sahib and Kartarpur, for instance, is due to Guru Nanak who was closely associated with these places. Amritsar or the Pool of Nectar owes its origin to Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan. Similarly, Mecca and Medina owe their spiritual influence to the Prophet Mohammed. The importance of the holy city of Jerusalem is because of King David, the Hebrew prophets, and Jesus Christ. Banaras, Hardwar and Allahabad on the banks of the Ganges, where the Rishis of old sat in meditation, have captured the imagination of Hindus who throng these places from year to year to gain religious merit. Sarnath and Bodh Gaya are still honored because of Lord Buddha. The relics of these various holy places are revered even by the heads of states, and monuments are raised to preserve them. But God's elect never stand in need of holy places. On the contrary, the

sanctity of all such places is due to them. Truly a Godman is a moving place of pilgrimage.

It is not the places that grace men but men the places.
ST. AGESILAUS

All the places of pilgrimage set up after the various gods and goddesses pine for the dust of the Sadhu's feet,
All, all wish for a devotee of the Lord so as to be blessed with the feet of a Sadhu.[96]

The sacred Ganges, the Jumna, the Godavari and the Saraswati all strive for the dust of Sadhus' feet,
As this dust alone can purify them of the enormous number of sins left over by the sinners.[97]
GURU RAM DAS

In the dust of the Saints' feet, one can find all the merits of the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage:

Through the mercy of the Saint, infatuation and delusion are swept off,
A smearing with the dust of the Sadhus is the most meritorious.[98]
GURU RAM DAS

With the true Word there comes in perfect satiety,
In the dust of a Saint there is the merit of all pilgrimages.[99]

The sight of a Saint grants one perfect vision,
The dust of a Sadhu has the merit of ablution at sacred pools.[100]
GURU ARJAN

The light of myriads of crest jewels is of no consequence,
And so also is the luster of millions of suns and moons of no value,
As compared to the scintillating light of him in whom He dwells,

And this happens only when countless merits earned
in past lives fructify together;
Siva, Sanakadic and Brahma also wish for the company of such a noble soul,
And he obtains the merit of all the pilgrimages
In whose forehead shines the light of His sight,
The sight of His Lotus Feet flaming in his forehead.[101]

BHAI GURDAS

The merit of visiting all the holy places comes of itself to a person who bows in humility to a living Saint. It is because of the dust of the feet of such a Saint that a person is able to rise in cosmic awareness and become a theist in the true sense of the word.

The Kind and Gracious Lord has become visible,
And Nanak lives by the dust of His Saints.[102]

GURU ARJAN

Nanak ever prays for the gift of Saints' dust,
Nothing else does he want from the Giver.[103]

GURU RAM DAS

It is a great good fortune to have the dust of Saints,
O Nanak! By devotion to the Master one worships the Lord.[104]

Make me of lowly mind, my saintly friend, your mercy has made me fortunate enough,
I have had extreme bliss ineffable;
Nanak is now gifted with the dust (light emanating from the feet of the Master).[105]

GURU ARJAN

In the world of Thy creation, my Lord,
All seek the dust of Thy devoted Sadhus.
O Nanak! He who is so destined
Gets the dust of the Sadhu (light of his feet) and is safely carried across.[106]

GURU RAM DAS

Thou art the support of Thy devotees from time out of mind,
Nanak ever craves for the dust of their feet; O grant it, Munificent Lord.[107]

O Knower of all the hearts, complete within Thyself,
Grant unto me the boon of Sadhus' dust.[108]

The dust of Thy devotee is wondrous sweet,
He alone gets it who holds the writ from Thee.[109]

GURU ARJAN

With a great good fortune one gets from the Saints the gift of dust (light),
It is by devotion to the Master that one gets absorbed in the Lord.[110]

GURU RAM DAS

Fortunate is he who secures the dust of a Satguru,
Nanak would ever like to sacrifice himself unto such a Master.[111]

Blessed is he who makes friends with a Sadhu,
Nanak seeks the dust of such devotees, may He grant him that dust.[112]

GURU ARJAN

I would like to adorn my forehead with the dust of devotees of the perfect Satguru,
O Nanak! The gift of dust from them comes through a great good fortune to those alone who remain absorbed in the Holy Word.[113]

GURU AMAR DAS

### Inner dust of the Master's Radiant Form

The Holy Light that emanates from the feet of the Radiant Form of the Master on the astral plane is often described as the dust of the feet of that form.

Partake of the Bread of Life in the precious immortal Naam,
And smear thy forehead with the dust of the Saints.[114]

GURU RAM DAS

Sant Tulsi Das Ji speaks of it thus:

Take care to retain attention within the two eyebrows,
Purifying the mind and body fix thy gaze at one center;
Then shalt thou penetrate into the Beyond, seeing the Reality face to face,
O Tulsi! The dust of the Saints spreads before thee a carpet of Light.

## Inner dust: What it is

In the Sikh scriptures it is described as Eternal and Everlasting Naam or Word—the Sound Current.

Nanak prays for the Sadhus' dust,
It is the precious Naam of God.[115]

I would like to make my hair a tasseled fly-drive for the Saints,
And bow in adoration unto them at the *Til* (still point in the body where his Radiant Form appears) and adorn my face with their Dust (Light).[116]

GURU ARJAN

The dust of the Saints is in every one of us. We live by the Light of God within, technically known as Charan Dhur or the Dust of the Feet. It has in it the Sound Principle or Harmony—the active life principle that grants life everlasting.

The dust of the Lord's feet is a peerless gift that one can pray for and seek. The gods, goddesses, Rishis and Munis long for it.

I have adorned my forehead with the Dust of the Lord (Heaven's Light);
Even the Rishis, Munis and gods are far removed from it.[117]

NAMDEV

In the Dust of the Sadhus lies the merit of myriads of pilgrimages, fasts and vigils, and countless yogic disciplines.

One can acquire the merit of myriads of pilgrimages and yogic practices if one is able to secure the gift of dust from a Sadhu (Inner Light).[118]

GURU ARJAN

In addition to these references to "the dust of the Saints' feet," there are also references to "the dust of Gur-sikhs' feet;" that is, the dust of the true Sikhs or devoted disciples of the Master.

The lowly Nanak asks for the dust of the devoted disciples of the Master (*Gur-sikh*)
Who himself practices the Holy Word and instructs others to do the same.[119]

GURU RAM DAS

This dust (the Light and Sound of God) is an elixir of life that grants salvation—a life of bliss both here and hereafter.

### Charan Dhur: Its merits

1. It rids one of all pains and sorrows, and the grief of separation.

They alone are rich, O Lord (complete and perfect as Thou art) who practice the Word under the guidance of a Master,
Poor Nanak asks for the Dust of a Sadhu, for it rids the mind of all pains, sorrows and grief.[120]

GURU RAM DAS

All ills vanish, pains and sorrows depart,
When one is purified by the dust of the Saints.[121]

All ills have taken leave, now that I have tasted the Dust of a Saint;
It sanctifies the sinner in no time by dispelling the darkness of ignorance.[122]

GURU ARJAN

2. It casts off lusts and egotism.

Take a daily dip in the dust of the Master,
It will wash off the egotism of ages on ages.[123]

Besmear your face and forehead with the dust of a Sadhu and rid yourself of the filth of lust and fury,
See the Light of God even in the pariah and wish well to all.[124]

GURU ARJAN

3. It sanctifies the mind by destroying sins and removing the accumulated filth of ages.

My perfect Satguru, I have taken shelter with thee;
The mind gets rarefied with the dust of the Saints.[125]

The eyes are purified by Thy sight, and the hands when they are engaged in Thy service;
The heart is purified by Thy presence within and the forehead by the dust of the Saints.[126]

GURU ARJAN

The sacred waters of the Ganges, Jumna, Godavari and Saraswati strive for the dust of the Sadhus (outer);
We, filled with all ills and egotism, can also be purified by the dust of the Sadhus (inner).[127]

GURU RAM DAS

A dip in the dust of the devotee's feet washes down the ills of ages upon ages.[128]

Besmear the dust of Saints on your forehead,
And cleanse yourself of the ills of past ages.[129]

GURU ARJAN

4. It fulfills all wishes and desires and even the innate latencies of the mind.

The contact with the feet of the Master awakens Reality and fulfills all desires;
The dust of the Saints is wish-yielding and brings about union with the Lord.[130]

GURU ARJAN

In His great mercy, God has brought me to a perfect Master,
All my heart's desires have now been fulfilled with the dust of the Master.[131]

GURU RAM DAS

5. It is the harbinger of peace and bliss, grants freedom from the cycle of births and deaths, and saves one from the Angel of Death.

After long and ceaseless wanderings I have come unto Thee, Hari Rai, the Destroyer of all fear;
The devotees get bliss through the dust of a Sadh and Nanak too has been so blessed.[132]

Be in communion with the Holy Word, for that is the true devotion;
The company of the Saints puts an end to births and deaths, O Nanak! This is the virtue of their dust.[133]

Obeisance unto the Saviour, who got us absorbed in Him,
A bath in the dust of a Sadhu, O Nanak! bestows innumerable blessings.[134]

Their (Saints') very sight is the source of great bliss,
And their dust rescues one from death.[135]

Nanak says: He who secures the Saint's dust within,
Even the Angel of Death cannot come near him.[136]

GURU ARJAN

6. It helps in saving millions of souls and one becomes Jivan Mukta or liberated in life.

Besmear the face and forehead with the dust of a Sadhu,
O Nanak! Thus saved, sing the praises of the Lord.[137]

GURU ARJAN

Grant unto me the devotion of the Master, O Satguru, so that I may remain absorbed in the all-pervading Word;
Grant me the dust of a perfect Master, O Lord, so the sinners like me may also rest in Thee, freed from all bondage.[138]

GURU AMAR DAS

Dyed in the color of the Lord, my mind sings of the Lord,
Salvation comes from the dust (the Word) of a Sadhu.[139]

God be merciful to poor Nanak!
Grant unto him the dust of the Sadhus so that he may be saved.[140]

GURU ARJAN

7. It opens the inner vision wherewith one sees and witnesses the all-pervading Power of God everywhere.

I crave the dust of Thy devotees;
By practice of the Word, O Nanak! God Himself becomes visible.[141]

In the dust of the Sadhu, one witnesses the presence of God around him.[142]

GURU ARJAN

8. It gives bliss here and hereafter and one is honored at His Court.

Whoever dedicates his life to the service of the Lord (Hari)
And with full faith has besmeared his face with the dust of a Sadh Guru
Shines in the glory of the Lord both here and hereafter and is imbued with intoxication to the core of his heart.[143]

Those who adorn themselves with the dust of a Sadhu,
Turn their back on the world and turn to the Word,
They are honored in His Court and their faces shine with glory.[144]

In the Court of God they sit in honor and glory,
Lowly Nanak prays for the dust of such devotees of the Master.[145]

GURU RAM DAS

9. It grants the bliss of Sehaj.

O Nanak! In the dust of the devotee there is the bliss of Sehaj and extreme ecstasy;
All things get straightened by themselves by devotion to the perfect Master.[146]

GURU ARJAN

10. It effects union with Truth.

Live in devotion to the feet of a Sadh,
Besmear your body with the dust of his feet,
Serve him with all your mind and soul,
Then shall you reach the True Homeland.[147]

GURU ARJAN

It grants conquest over death and all the deadly sins drop off by themselves. Nature, the handmaid of God, becomes a bound slave. With the inner vision opened, one sees God everywhere and spends his days happily in His beneficent presence, a conscious co-worker with Him.

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11. Gond Ravidas
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13. Sri Rag M3
14. Asa M4
15. *Ibid.*
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47. Luke 11:35

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9. *Ibid.*
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18. Todi M5
19. Asa M5
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