

Elements of Meditation¹ in Gurbani (4):

Indispensability of Divine Grace²

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During the posture for *Meditation* we should find ourselves seated and seeking the grace of the Guru and God to be our savior. This grace is essential to acquire the technique that will produce any outcome of our effort.

ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਜਿਹ ਨਰ ਕਉ ਕੀਨੀ ਤਿਹ ਇਹ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਪਛਾਨੀ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਲੀਨ ਭਇਓ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿਉ ਜਿਉ ਪਾਨੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਪਾਨੀ ॥⁴

The one is blessed by the Guru's Grace alone knows the way to fulfillment. Says Nanak, "That one merges in God, as water mingles with water".

We must abandon all our previous concepts of our own efforts to bring about the change in our consciousness. We must rise above our humanness, leave behind all thoughts, people, and activities of the illusory self. We should surrender to the Divine for the gift of Naam. Let no one consider capable of being on the spiritual path on its own. Were it not for the grace of God, one would not be reaching out toward *Meditation*.

ਘਾਲ ਸਿਆਣਪ ਉਕਤਿ ਨ ਮੇਰੀ ਪੂਰੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਮਾਈ ॥ ਜਪ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ ਸੁਚਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਈ ਆਪੇ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਈ ॥⁵

Rigorous practice or clever tricks have not worked for me; I shall act according to the instructions of the perfect Guru. What ver acts he makes us perform constitute the chanting, the intense meditation, austere self-discipline and rituals of purification.

It is the nature of the human being to love self-indulgence: riches, desires, animosity, greed, attachment and sensuality. These operate in our consciousness as agents of the Devil to separate us from the Divine consciousness. We must recognize these influences and seek Guru's assistance in over-powering them.

ਕੰਚਨ ਨਾਰੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੀਉ ਲੁਭਤੁ ਹੈ ਮੋਹੁ ਮੀਠਾ ਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਘਰ ਮੰਦਰ ਘੋੜੇ ਖੁਸੀ ਮਨੁ ਅਨ ਰਸਿ ਲਾਇਆ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਕਿਉ ਛੂਟਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਇਆ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਮੇਰੇ ਰਾਮ ਇਹ ਨੀਚ ਕਰਮ ਹਰਿ ਮੇਰੇ ॥ ਗੁਣਵੰਤਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਬਖਸਿ ਅਵਗਣ ਸਭਿ ਮੇਰੇ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਕਿਛੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਨਹੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਜਾਤਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਵੰਗੁ ਨ ਮੇਰਾ ॥ ਕਿਆ ਮੁਹੁ ਲੈ ਬੋਲਹ ਗੁਣ ਬਿਹੂਨ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿਆ ਨ ਤੇਰਾ ॥ ਹਮ ਪਾਪੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਗੁਰ ਉਬਰੇ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੇਰਾ ॥ ੨ ॥ ਸਭੁ ਜੀਉ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਮੁਖੁ ਨਕੁ ਦੀਆ ਵਰਤਣ ਕਉ ਪਾਣੀ ॥ ਅੰਨੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਕਪੜੁ ਪੈਨਣੁ ਦੀਆ ਰਸ ਅਨਿ ਭੋਗਾਣੀ ॥ ਜਿਨਿ ਦੀਏ ਸੁ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਪਸੂ ਹਉ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣੀ ॥⁶

Attractive women lure the soul of the man; emotional attachment to Maya is so sweet to him. His mind has become attached to the pleasures of houses, palaces, horses and other enjoyments. The Lord God does not enter his thoughts; how can he be saved, O my Lord King? || 1 || O my Lord, these are my lowly actions, O my Lord. O Lord, Har, Har, Treasure of Virtue, Merciful Lord, please bless me with Your Grace and forgive me for all my mistakes. || 1 || I have no beauty, no social status, no manners. With what face am I to speak? I have no virtue at all; I have not chanted Your Name. I am a sinner, saved only by the Company of the Guru. This is the Generous Blessing of the True Guru.

The Divine grace to meditate is not found in the human intellect, nor is it found in such peace as the world can give. Participation in discussions, reading statements or books about *Meditation* do not bring it forth. These may be of assistance in leading us to a point where we are prepared in the silence to receive the grace of God, but it is *Meditation* which lifts us to a state of spiritual apprehension where divine grace may be bestowed.

¹ The term meditation means different things to different people. We use it to refer to traditional Sikh meaning interchangeably for *Naam Jap* which is a behavior and skill to recite the *gurmanters* or verses from scripture and *Naam Simran* which is a contemplative state of mind to experience divinity. These meanings often may not be the same as prevalent in the Western vocabulary.

² The verses from the Sri Guru Granth Sahib are cited with the author, source, page and line numbers according to the Granth published by Shiromni Parbhandak Committee, Amritsar. Each verse is followed by a brief commentary relating to the subject of this discussion and may be distinct from an exact translation.

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⁴ Bahadur, Guru Teg, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 633, l. 19.

⁵ Dev, Guru Arjan, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 915, l. 19.

⁶ Das, Guru Ram, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 167, l.12

ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਸਬਦੁ ਘਟ ਮਹਿ ਵਸੈ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਭਰਮੁ ਗਵਾਏ ॥ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਾਮੋ ਮੰਨਿ ਵਸਾਏ ॥⁷

When the Lord extends grace to some one, all doubts vanish and the Sabad begins to abide in this seeker's mind. Both body and mind are rendered pure and the Name comes to reside in the consciousness.

In the state of *Meditation* the whole purpose of our existence must be made a fitting instrument through which God's glory may be revealed. We shall never fulfill ourselves in *Meditation* by trying to express our individuality, fulfillment lies in letting the Infinite Invisible bring Itself through into expression by His Grace. Here we do not strive and attempt to glorify ourselves, but every time we meditate, we continue to remind ourselves as the Guru said,

ਨਾਨਕ ਕੀ ਬੇਨੰਤੀ ਹਰਿ ਪਹਿ ਅਪੁਨਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵਹੁ ॥⁸

Says Nanak: "It is my prayer to Thee, Father, make me dwell only upon Thy Name"

It the Grace of God that is a very crucial ingredient in success of *Meditation* and we must continue to pray for that in our meditation posture.

ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਆਪਣੀ ਜਪੀਐ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ॥⁹

O Lord, bestow Thy Grace on me so that I may dwell on Thy nectar Name.

ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵਹਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਲਹੀਐ ॥¹⁰

When Thou so will, I contemplate Thy Name, and it is Thou alone who blesses me with bliss.

In our meditation posture we must find ourselves saying:

My Guru, "I am here to seek your Grace. I can do nothing on my own. My body, soul and consciousness are not mine. You bestowed them upon me as an opportunity to realize you. I have no wisdom or ability of my own. I have no understanding; and I have no initiative of my own. I am sitting here as a humble seeker of your blessing so that your infinity may flow through me by your Grace. You have started me on this path through your teachings".

ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਘਾਲ ਨ ਪਵਈ ਥਾਇ ॥¹¹

Without the Guru's Grace, one's strivings bear no fruit.

In the effort to *Meditation*, there will come a certain moment when the seeker is penetrated by a ray of God, when a touch of God breaks through into his consciousness, not because of himself, but in spite of himself. From the moment that ray touches him, the goal is inevitable: he will be imbibed in *Meditation* find his way right to the Divine consciousness.

The amount of illumining force and power of *Meditation* that flows through us is determined by divine grace. Whether or not we reach the final goal of *Meditation* is not our problem. Some will seek and strive until they exhaust themselves and yet will not attain it; others will go along easily and steadily; and a few will spontaneously burst out all over with the springtime of the Sabad-consciousness.

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਐ ਜਿਸ ਨਉ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਰਜਾਇ ॥¹²

He alone worships the Lord on whom His Grace bestowed.

Here we are rewarded and we recognize that reward by our humility and continuously being thankful.

ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਿ ਕੈ ਆਪਣੀ ਦਿਤੇਨੁ ਭਗਤਿ ਭੰਡਾਰੁ ॥¹³

He on whom is His Mercy gathers the Treasure of Devotion.

The point of this discussion is that the experience of the Divine that we seek in *Meditation* is one that is achieved purely through grace. In whatever degree it comes, it comes as the gift of God. It does not come

⁷ Dev, Guru Arjan, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 944, l. 14.

⁸ Dev, Guru Arjan, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 216, l. 13.

⁹ Dev, Guru Arjan, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 46, l. 11.

¹⁰ Dev, Guru Arjan, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 749, l. 9.

¹¹ Dev, Guru Nanak. In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 932, l. 8.

¹² Das, Guru Amar. In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 28, l. 11.

¹³ Das, Guru Amar. In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 36, l. 11.

because we earn it; it does not come because we deserve it; it does not come primarily because we are good men or women. In fact, it is often likely to come to the sinful one, because the inner struggle of the sinner may be greater than the struggle of the good man, and such a struggle is often highly preparative for receiving the Grace. But the Grace comes unrelated to our efforts. Guru said,

ਘਾਲ ਨ ਮਿਲਿਓ ਸੇਵ ਨ ਮਿਲਿਓ ਮਿਲਿਓ ਆਇ ਅਚਿੰਤਾ ॥¹⁴

He, our Lord, Meets not through (forced) effort, nor (show of) service, but Meets He all-too-spontaneously.

ਕਬਨੀ ਬਦਨੀ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਭਰਾਂਤਿ ॥ ਸੋ ਬੁਝੈ ਹੋਵੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਦਾਤਿ ॥¹⁵

ਜਾ ਆਪਿ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਹਰਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਤਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਾਉ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥¹⁶

When the Lord is in His Mercy, He makes us contemplate His Name.

The only responsibility that we have is that our desire be for the Divine-experience, and that desire be shown forth by the sincerity of our effort and the depth of our devotion for *Meditation*. That is the extent of our responsibility. The experience of *Meditation* is purely the gift of God. No one earns it; no one deserves it; and no one knows why it comes to some and why it does not come to others.

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਉ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਮਿਲਿਓ ਅਚਿੰਤਾ ॥¹⁷

Says Nanak, I encountered God spontaneously.

Assuring fact is that in the experience of every earnest seeker, there comes a period of the Grace. It may be achieved through something that is heard, something that is read, or more often, it comes through a direct contact with the consciousness of a spiritual teacher like the Guru Granth Sahib. When it comes, the student needs no further help from sources outside of himself. His entire grace is received from within and his entire illumination, equipoise, and regenerative power come from within.

From that moment on, the seeker becomes a blessing to others along the way, bringing inspiration to them. As this person goes deeper into the meditation, he/she awakens in others this same Grace. In proportion as any individual receives the grace, that grace becomes a light unto those who are within their orbit. Everyone who has ever received an inspiration has been the light to others, and it was the light in some one's consciousness that brought about the Grace to others. Whatever degree of Grace we realize, it automatically makes us, in that degree, a help to all those who touch our consciousness.

ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ਵਡ ਸਮਰਥ ਤਾਰਨ ਤਰਨ ॥¹⁸

Dwells he on the Lord's Name and makes others to follow the Way of the All-powerful God, the Emancipator of all.

Saint Kabir compared God and the realized person and concluded that both deserve our offering as each one has a contribution to make.

ਕਬੀਰ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਉ ਦੁਇ ਭਲੇ ਏਕੁ ਸੰਤੁ ਇਕੁ ਰਾਮੁ ॥ ਰਾਮੁ ਜੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕੋ ਸੰਤੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ਨਾਮੁ ॥¹⁹

Kabir: Serve only the Saint and thy God, for God emancipates thee and the Saint makes thee cherish thy Lord.

It is the purpose of *Meditation*: that each one may attain a degree of that Grace through the experience of the *Meditation* and once one has achieved the Grace inspires others to *Meditation*.

ਆਪਿ ਦ੍ਰਿੜੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥²⁰

He meditates himself, and makes others dwell upon the Lord's Name.

¹⁴ Dev, Guru Arjan, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p.672, l.12

¹⁵ Dev, Guru Arjan, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 1256, l. 11.

¹⁶ Das, Guru Amar. In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 555, l. 7.

¹⁷ Dev, Guru Arjan, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 1157, l. 4.

¹⁸ Dev, Guru Arjan, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 1206, l. 9.

¹⁹ Kabir, Bhagat. In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 1373, l. 6.

²⁰ Dev, Guru Arjan, In: Guru Granth Sahib (1604), p. 274, l. 9.