

Simran: Remembrance – A Stepping stone to Peace

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No explicit or implied reasons are given in *Raheras* as to why is it "difficult" to remember God. However, a cogent one could be easily deduced from the advice given all along in the SGGS® for remembering God. A recurring theme is the advice to remember God at all times, whether standing, or sitting, sleeping or awake, *with every breath*, even when you are taking food, etc. as exemplified in the following words from the Gurbani. Various terms like *swis swis nIq nIiq* are used to stress the importance of contemplation on a continuous basis. The importance of utilizing every available time-niche in the remembrance of God in our daily lives is beautifully illustrated in the following lines from *Rag Asa*:

*Kab ko bhaalai ghunghroo taala kab ko
bajavai rabab*

*Aavat jaat baar khin laagai hao tab lag
samarao naam (SGGS: 368-8)*

How long must one search for bells and cymbals, and how long must one play the guitar? In the brief instant between coming and going, I meditate on the *Naam*, the Name of the Lord. How long must one tune the five strings, and assemble the seven singers, and how long will they raise their voices in song? In the time it takes to select and assemble these musicians, precious moments elapsed, and my mind sings the Glorious Praises of the Lord.

In the following lines by Bhagat Kabir Ji, the opposite of the above scenario is described where, in his profession of a weaver and, during the time that it takes him to pass the thread through the shuttle, he forgets God. Kabir Ji regrets forgetting God even for such an infinitesimal length of time:

*Jab lag taaga bahao behee Tab lag
bisrai raam sanehee (SGGS: 524-17)*

As long as I pass the thread through the bobbin,
I forget the Lord, my Beloved.

Any time the saints forget to remember God,
for them it is like dying:

Gun gaavaa nit-nit sad har ke

man jeevai naam sun tera

*Nanak jit vela visrai mera suamee tit
velai mar jaae jeeo mera*

(SGGS: 562-3)

Each and every day, forever, I sing the Lord's
Praises. My mind lives by hearing Your Name.
O Nanak, that moment when I forget my Lord
and Master - at that moment, my soul dies.

An ultimate and blissful state of remembering
God is reached through continuous recitation
when a stage comes when the *Mantra* is heard
through every pore of the devotee:

*Gurmukh rom rom har dhiavai, Nanak
gurmukh saach samavai (SGGS: 941-5)*

The *Gurmukh* meditates on the Lord with every hair of his body. O Nanak, the *Gurmukh* merges in Truth.

*Rome-rom, rom-rome mai gurmukh
naam dhiae raam (SGGS (443-7)*

i.e. with each and every pore, in God oriented life, I meditate on the Lord.

Rewards of doing *Naam-Jaap*: It is observed that to lead people, or make followers of them, one must have some talent, power, quality or gift, it may be a temporal or spiritual power, oratory, magic, dancing, singing, story telling, reading palms or casting horoscopes, channeling, psychic powers or some other gift of performance otherwise no one listens. In spiritual matters, the saints, having acquired supernatural powers - *Ridhi Sidhi* - subtly demonstrate these to the persons who, in turn, will make a commitment to give up their evil

ways, like doing drugs, drinking, and follow them on their godly path.

By repeating over and over again, one gains an array of benefits and a potential of acquiring supernatural powers, like *Ridhi Sidhi*. These are among the many lures which gives strength and stamina to those who repeat the Mantra, with the help of a rosary or otherwise, for as long as they can - the more the count, the more the power gained. Without such an objective in mind, it is very difficult to keep on repeating a *Mantra* for tens of thousands of times. But one would do it if one knew the concomitant rewards. These rewards are described beautifully and in detail in the first six Ashtpadis of *Sukhmani Sahib*. Following is a listing of some of most sought after and major benefits of doing *Naam-Jaap* from the same Bani:

Naam as dispeller of the fear of Death:

*Prabh kai simran naahee jam trasaa Prabh kai
simran pooran aasaa* (SGGS: 263-2)

In the remembrance of God, there is no fear of death. In the remembrance of God, hopes are fulfilled.

Naam as *Aukhad* - Panacea for all diseases, woes and sufferings

Anik upavee rog na jaa-e Rog mitai har avakhadh laa-e (SGGS: 288-8)

All sorts of remedies have not cured the disease - which is cured only by giving the medicine of the Lord's Name.

Naam as *Parjat* (The Tree) - *Kamdhenu* fulfiller of all wishes

Paarjaat eh har ko naam/Kaamdhen har har gun gaam (SGGS: 65-5)

This Elysian Tree of miraculous powers is the Name of the Lord, the cow of miraculous powers, is the singing of the Glory of the Lord's Name.

*Naam as Sin Erasure: Anik bisthaar ek te bhae
Ek aradh praachat gae SGGS (289-7)*

The many expanses of the cosmos have all come from the One. Adoring the One, past sins are removed.

Naam as giver of Ridhi Sidhi

*Prabh kai simran ridh sidh nao nidh
Prabh kai simran giaan dhiaan tat budh
AGGS (262-17)*

In the remembrance of God are wealth, miraculous spiritual powers and the nine treasures. In the remembrance of God are knowledge, meditation and the essence of wisdom.

*Eh dhan sanchoh hovot bhagvant SGGS
(288-5)*

Grasp firmly the theme of the Lord's Name. Gather this wealth and fortune. Pure are the instructions of the humble Saints.

Remembering God is like thanking Him for His many bounties, especially for the gift of life. In our mundane existence it will be analogous to thanking a person once or twice, or at the most thrice. But imagine how will it sound if you keep on thanking someone *ad infinitum*. Not only will it look odd but difficult to do. Providentially, when it comes to thanking God we, as per our Guru's advice, are expected to do so if we have to reap the benefits which accrue from such a practice:

Jap jann sadaa sadaa din rainee. Sabh te ooch nirmal eh karnee. SGGS (283-12)

Meditate on Him for ever and ever, day and night. This way of life is exalted and ennobled.

The desirability of the repetitious nature of *Naam-Jaap* is given by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, in *Jap Ji Sahib, Pauri 32* and by Guru Arjun Dev Ji in his *Bani Sukhmani Sahib*.

*Ik doo jeebhao lakh hohe lakh hovah
lakh vees*

*Lakh lakh geraa aakheeah ek naam
jagdees*

Et raah pat pavreea chareeai hoe ikees

SGGS (7-6)

If I had 100,000 tongues, and these were then multiplied twenty times more, with each tongue I would repeat, hundreds of thousands of times, the Name of the One, the Lord of the Universe. Along this path to our Master Lord, we climb the steps of the ladder, and come to merge with Him.

Next let us take the multiple-word *Mool Mantra*, which literally means addressing God as, "You are the only God, Your Name is True, You are the Creator and the Cause of every thing, You are without Fear, You are inimical to None, You are not subject to Death, You are not subject to Birth, You are attained through

the grace of the Guru." Imagine repeating this for 108 times just to complete one round of the rosary. How about if you were to repeat the said rosary 100 times? Does it sound like an easy task or an interesting work? Pretty tiring! Repeating a *Mantra* so many times becomes a mechanical function and becomes the equivalent of doing a *Tap* like - subjecting one's body to harsh weather, etc., assuming difficult postures. One expends energy.

Once jobless workers were asked to say *Naam* on rosary for the same length of time they ordinarily put in their work. They were overjoyed at the prospects of beating hunger and readily accepted the offer. However after three days they found it very boring and could not keep up the bargain. In spite of no other prospects of employment they handed over the rosaries back to the Saint, with apologies for being unable to carry out this assignment even in lieu of payment.

The word *Japp* is sometimes used to equate the rigorous discipline of repeating *Naam Jaap* to

the physical austerities used by Yogis and some other faiths. It is not to be confused with the *Naam Jaap* as a quantitative and qualitative equivalent of the other forms of *Jap-Tap* and rituals, as in the following quote:

*Anik punah charan kart nahee tarai
Har ko naam kot paap parharai*

(SGGS: 264-3)

By performing countless religious rituals, you shall not be saved. The Name of the Lord washes off millions of sins.

*Giaan dhiaan sagle sabh jap tap jis har hirdai
alakh abhevaa* (SGGS: 356-4)

All wisdom and meditation, all chanting and penance, come to one whose heart is filled with the Invisible, Inscrutable Lord.

In conclusion, it appears that the tougher part lies in, (1) imbibing a genuine belief in the *existence* and *presence* of God all around us,

(2) visualizing Him in some fashion, and then, (3) devoting all - or most - of our time on a regular basis in remembering him in some way or the other, as described above. The last and the most difficult part seems to be, (4) the repeating of the *Mantra* we choose to recite to meet the goal of a certain count, duration or continuously.

If we are able to do the *Naam-Jaap* initially, we will be doing it as habit, knowing the numerous benefits (rewards) accruing from this practice, until such time that we get used to it and, perhaps, start getting the blissful and uplifting feeling - the ultimate goal.

Like any other endeavor, it is always the first step which is difficult. Once we start on a regimen, stick with it, get used to it, then it becomes a part and parcel of our life. Until such time that we reach this stage, we are most likely to discontinue in spite of the promise of rewards - as was done by the laborers in the anecdote above.