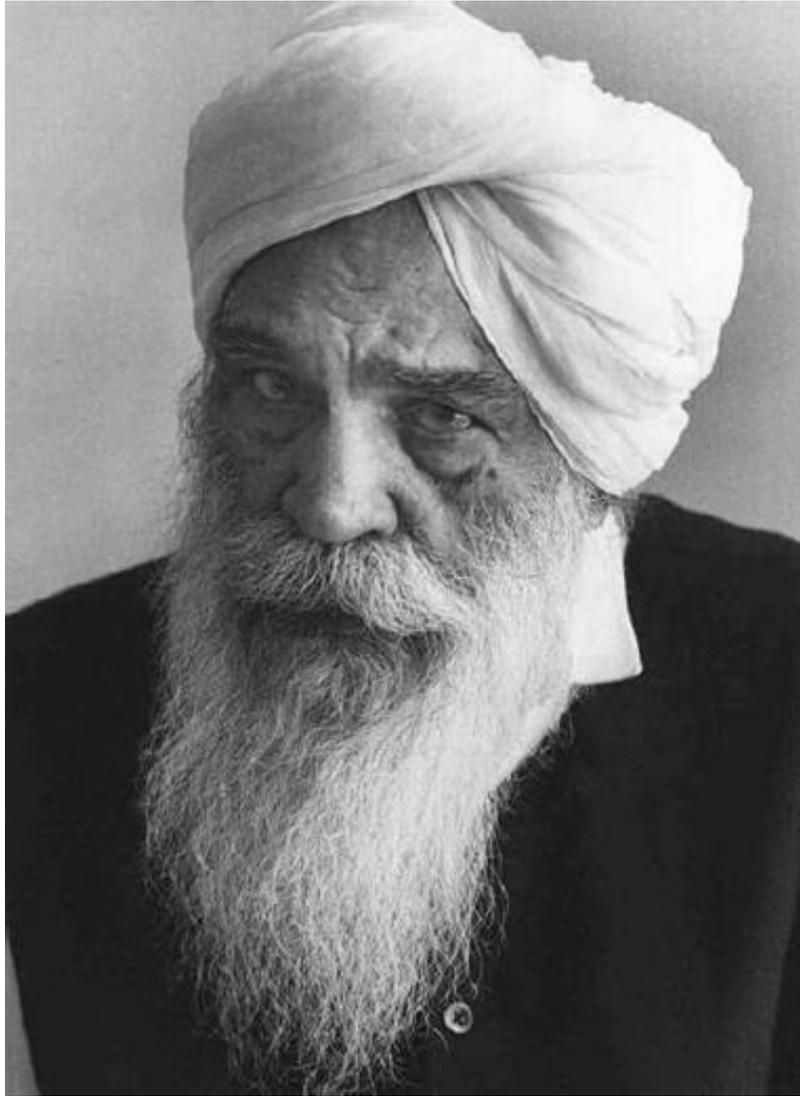


Guru Bhakti with Photos

Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj

Excerpts from *Philosophy of the Masters, Gurmat Sidhant*



Param Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj

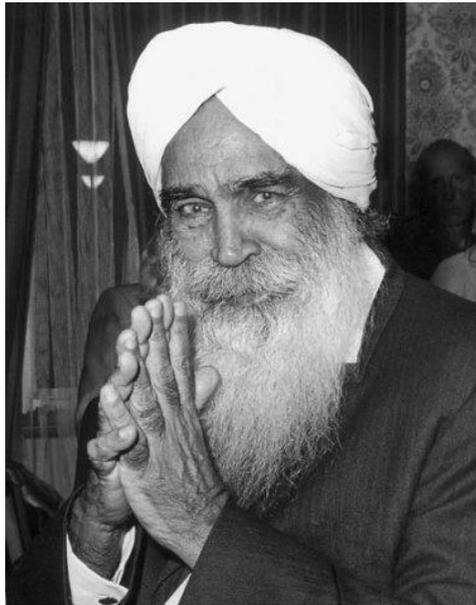
Devotion to the Master is the foundation of all practices. The other methods are all branches leading from it. Love for the Master is a unique treasure. It is impossible to describe this state of devotion in cold print. (Sant Kirpal Singh)



We have not seen God. How can we worship Him or offer our devotion to Him? Under these circumstances, whom should we worship? Who is the being in whom God has manifested, and who is able to create the right conditions for devotion and for helping us to increase our love for Him? Such a person is none other than a real Master.



The best and the highest method of meeting God is to love the Master and to remain at His Lotus Feet. This is the first step of the ladder towards God-Realization.



It is essential that we give our heart to our Master, for, when one gives away one's heart, one automatically gives one's whole body and puts one's entire life in the hands of the Master.

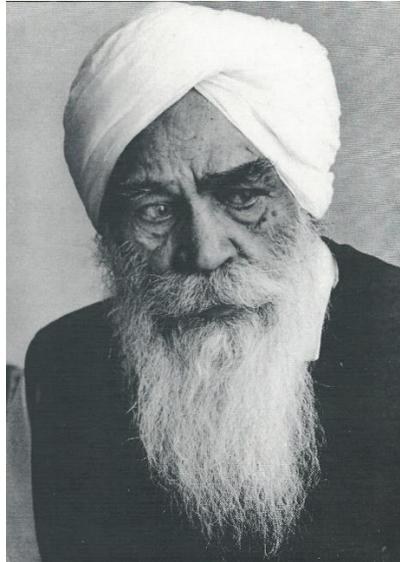


This body, mind and life – and even our religion, all bind us to this world. As soon as they are surrendered at the Lotus Feet of the Master, we become detached and shall not be born again. Then nothing remains in the way of the progress of the soul towards God-Realization, and our running about in this world is finished.

Devotion consists in fixing the form of the Master in our heart. This devotion should be similar to that of the chakor (moon-bird) for the moon. Then love is awakened in the heart of the disciple. So long as love is not of that type, the effort to create conditions for such a love should be continued. Once devotion of this high type is established in a human heart, the soul automatically starts rising upward and is able to catch hold of the Sound Current.



Those who try to listen to the Sound Current without having true devotion for their Master are ignorant. Because one listens to the Sound Current only by the grace and mercy of a true Master. The magnetic power of His love and our devotion attract the soul towards higher regions.



A Gurumukh is a person who is a true devotee of his Guru. By being a Gurumukh one is able to open the gateway for the soul to soar towards the higher regions.



Devotion to the Master is the foundation of all practices. The other methods are all branches leading from it. Love for the Master is a unique treasure. It is impossible to describe this state of devotion in cold print.

The Master has a unique spiritual beauty and magnetic power of attraction. His form radiates thousands of blissful currents of attraction which invigorate the body and the mind.



Even if one were to see the Master's face at all times, or for hundreds of times and with hundreds of eyes, the mind would never be satiated, because every time that face is seen it is beheld with a new light and a greater radiance.



Just as the sparkling wine in a wine glass pleases the mind of a drinker, similarly, devotion to the Master gives physical strength and mental happiness to the devotee of a Guru when he beholds the beautiful eyes of his Master.



A fish cannot live without water, because without it, it dies gasping for water. Similarly, a Gurumukh is sustained by spiritual energy as a result of diving deep into the ocean of love for the Guru. For him, nearness to the Guru is heaven, and to be away from the Guru makes him burn in the fires of hell.

A papiha (rain-bird) is fond of rain drops, and will drink no other water. Similarly, a true devotee will not look with the same amount of love at any person other than his own Guru, because his Guru is the support of his life, and the disciple will not accept any other support.



Love for the Master is sweet and magnetic, and is able to bring happiness to the disciple. On beholding the Guru, there is an indescribable ecstasy which is spontaneous and permeates every pore of the body. Even by having a small taste of this ecstatic state the soul is steeped in the Master's love.



It is true that love is not awakened unless there is real beauty in the beloved. The nightingale will hover over fragrant flowers, but it will never go near artificial or paper flowers. The spiritual beauty of the Guru attracts thousands of souls by awakening love in them, and takes them beyond the limits of birth and death.



When we love someone, we imbibe his qualities and become like him. In accordance with this principle, if we worship our Master, we will imbibe all His qualities and we shall become like Him. The beauty of the beloved always enters the life and body of the lover.

People say that they believe in God, that they worship Him and also love Him. We can believe that they have faith in God and that they also worship Him, but it is not possible for everybody to love Him. True and intense love can be experienced only through another human being. For instance, we observe that a man loves his wife, but if she dies and then visits him in her astral body, he will cry out that it is a ghost and will not want to see her. The reason is very clear. She is no longer composed of the same elements and is now in her astral form, while he is in the physical or gross form.



Similarly, God is invisible and inaccessible, and man is still in his gross physical form. So at first, a human being needs a Master in the physical form, who will enable him to rise out of the physical body (die daily), make him finer (pure spirit), and thus make him capable of loving the Lord.



Someone might say, perhaps, that God can manifest His beauty and consciousness to human beings by His Divine Will. Truly, this is possible; but so long as a person does not soar high and attain (at least) astral consciousness, he will not be able to understand or realize within himself the beauty, the power and the light of the Lord. If the Lord were to manifest Himself to a person who was not so prepared, that person would be overcome with awe.

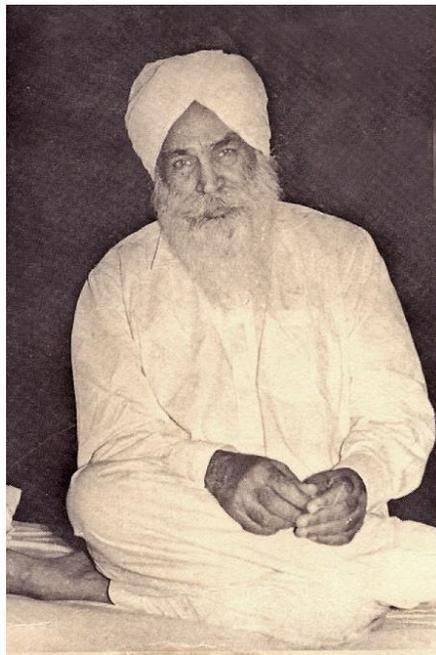


We should consider this matter with a calm and clear mind. That is, true and intense love can be developed only for someone of one's own species. This is a proven fact and cannot change. When God wishes to accept the love and worship of human beings, He comes in the form of a human being.

God is all-pervading. A thief steals, but the all-pervading Lord does not stop him from this evil act. The conscious power which stops one from doing such acts is that of the Master. He teaches, guides and helps. God is omnipresent, like electricity; but electricity cannot help us unless we make contact with it through a finite switch and thus connect ourselves with the source of the electricity.



The relationship between beings of the same species has a great deal of power in this world for creating love and attraction. We are on the physical plane, and we can only love one who is also on this physical plane. We are human beings and we should love only a human being. We have not seen the Lord. How can we offer our love to Him? In other words, it is clear that in order to love the Lord we must love Him through one of His manifestations. Such a man is the Guru.



A Master has two forms. Externally he is a human being; but internally he is, in fact, God. He is in the form of a human being outside; but he is God-in-man, or God-plus-man. He has contact with human beings on one side, and with the Lord on the other. From this point of view he has two aspects. One is that of a human being, and the other is that of God.

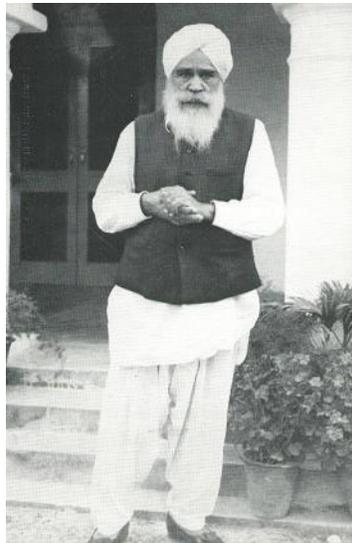


A Master is the medium through which individuals are connected with God. In other words, Paramatma (God), Shabd (Sound Current or Word), and Guru (Master) are three different forms of the same Lord. If we offer devotion to Shabd in the physical form, which is the Guru, we are then immediately connected with the Lord inside. Devotion to the Guru is, in fact, true devotion to the Lord.

The question arises, why should a man worship another man? The answer is that there is a great difference between one man and another. A Guru has assumed the form of a man, but he is not an ordinary man. Internally he is always in conscious contact with God.



There is no other method of achieving spiritual progress except through devotion to a Guru. Without devotion to the Guru all other actions or religious practices are fruitless. Just as one does not become wealthy by getting wealth in his dreams, similarly, one's acts, without devotion to the Guru, bear no fruit.



Like the Lord, a Master has a finite and an infinite aspect, and it is by devotion alone that we are able to see Him in both of these aspects. We can see the form of the Master through the eyes of our devotion. Then we shall see that the light of His eyes is spread over the entire universe. A Master may be compared to an ocean, and a disciple to a rivulet that flows into and merges itself in the ocean. Thus the disciple completely loses his identity in the ocean-like spirituality of his Master.

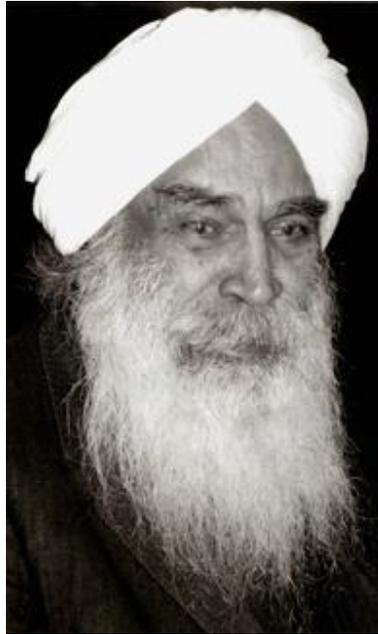


So long as we do not complete our devotion to the physical form of the Master, we shall not be able to listen to the Shabd, nor shall we be able to meet the Lord.

By devotion to the Guru we are able to get rid of the worldly attachments. The gross attachments can be cut off only by means of Guru Bhakti (devotion to the Master), and the finer attachments of the mind will be sublimated by means of Naam Bhakti (devotion to Naam or Shabd). Naam Bhakti can be obtained from no one but a Guru. So long as we do not meet a Guru, we cannot get Naam; and so long as we do not obtain Naam, the ties or cords binding our mind to the world cannot be cut.



Guru and God are two different entities, but their Godhood is one. Similarly, the Guru and his devotee appear to be two different persons but they have one soul; that is, their souls are one, and when a devotee speaks, it is not he but the Guru who is speaking. His eyes show the spark of the Guru's light. The Guru is always one with him.



Devotion to the Master is intense love for Him. If we love anybody, we serve him. We are prepared to sacrifice everything for him. Love knows no burden and no compulsion. A devotee gives away everything for the sake of his Beloved – his body, wealth, mind and soul; in fact, everything is surrendered at the altar of the Master. To serve the Guru is to be devoted to Him.

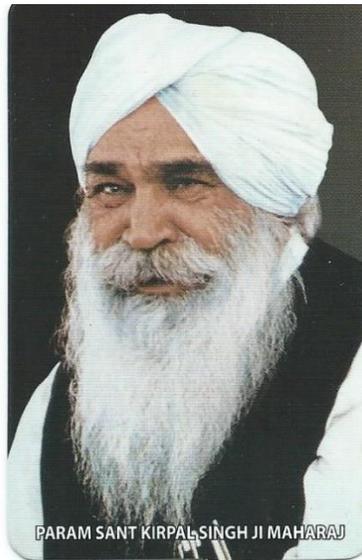


The Master is also equally concerned about His disciple. He wishes the disciple to make progress in all respects. Sometimes He is angry with His disciple for his benefit, but the heart from which this seeming anger emanates contains a never-failing fountain of love for the disciple. The words may appear to be harsh but they are saturated with love.

Bhakti is difficult and very rare. To follow outward observances is easy and common. Bhakti is not merely an outward practice. When one is blessed with the wealth of devotion, the Master becomes a part of every cell of the body of the devotee and guides him with His grace. But such devotion, full of intense love, is achieved only by one with good karmas.



It is difficult to understand true devotion, because it is achieved without any selfish motive and by freeing one's self from all ambition. It is something for which, under the influence of love, one has to sacrifice everything – body, mind, life and all beliefs – and desire nothing in return.



In this world the mind of each individual is filled with thousands of ideas, but in devotion there is no such thing, for then the mind is fixed on one thing alone and will not be turned from it under any circumstances.

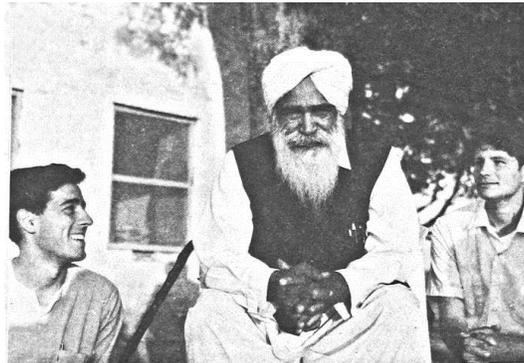


The sight of a true devotee becomes so keen that he sees his Beloved in every place and in everything. His thoughts, his contemplation and the intoxication of his love occupy his mind at all times, and his longing becomes intense.

Why should we love the Master? It is done chiefly so that we may imbibe the nature and ideals of the Master. By loving the Master, His consciousness brings Light within us and we forget everything about this mundane world.



We are naturally in a state of attachment to this world, whether it be our household, our children, our friends or others. A Master has a unique magnetic power by which we are attracted to Him.



The purpose of our love for Him is that our love may be detached from all other objects and centered around Him. If a stream of water has nine outlets, and if it were allowed to flow through only one of the outlets – all the others being closed – its pressure would be so strong that the water would pour out in a flood, even if the opening is a tiny one. When our love is detached from everything else and is attached only to the Guru, then we are free from all the evil ties and attachments of the world, and contact God.



A devotee always remains absorbed in the love of his Guru, who is the manifestation of God. Persons given to rituals and ceremonies say their prayers a number of times daily, but a devotee remembers his Guru at all times, with every breath of his life. He will never forget his Guru – who is the manifestation of God – and always remembers with his mind and with his body the sweet recollections of his Guru's actions.

Devotion to the Guru is in fact devotion to the True Lord. If one were to call it worship of man, then such man-worship was founded by God Himself. He commanded the angels to bow down before man when He created him. A Master is a human being, but He is a complete person, and without Him a disciple can have no success in this life or hereafter.



The currents of love emanating from the heart of a devotee strike against the heart of the Master, draw power from it, and return to the heart of the disciple with a double force. In this manner the spiritual powers of the Master enter the heart of the disciple and it appears to him that the Master has become one with him, and he himself feels one with the Master. Once the disciple is in communion with the Guru, all the gates of bliss and happiness are open to him.



How can one make one's Beloved one's own? This may be explained by an example: A newly married girl talks about her husband with her friends. Her object is to fix the love of the beloved in her mind by remembering him, and his form is always before her mind's eye. In her mind she sings praises of her spouse. In this manner she increases her remembrance of him and fixes it most firmly in her heart.



...one should repeat and remember His Name at all times, even while sitting, walking or traveling. The Sikh scriptures lay considerable emphasis on Simran (repetition and remembrance), because it is by Simran alone that one is able to fix one's love for the object of his love in the mind.

The contemplation of a devotee is always fixed on the form of the Guru, and he thinks about his Master day and night. His attention is centered on Him uninterruptedly. When he dies the soul will go where the Guru is. It cannot go anywhere else.



The first condition is to have only one object in mind, for devotion should be offered to one only. The rays of the sun are able to burn a piece of cloth if they are concentrated through a magnifying glass, but if they are spread over a large area they are unable to do so. Similarly, if the currents of devotion coming from one's mind are concentrated on one's beloved, then the fruit of devotion increases and one can act in any manner one desires.



We should think of only one object and we should repeat the Name (the five Holy Names) of only one object (the Lord). That object should rest firmly in the seat of our mind and we should sing His praises at all times and remember Him with concentrated attention.

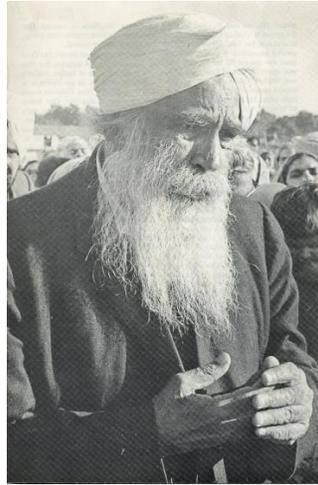


Even if you have many good qualities, you should lead a life of humility and consider those qualities as a gift from God, because God loves the humble. Remember this well in your heart and do not enter into unnecessary disputes or critical discussions, because such discussions lead nowhere. They may be compared to churning water.

The gift of devotion is in the hands of God. In other words, He Himself makes it possible for us to be His devotees. He cuts asunder all the ties binding His devotees to the world and makes them free.



The path of devotion is a difficult one. It is achieved only through a Master and by those on whom God has bestowed His grace. Then only are their minds inclined towards devotion to Him. Even angels are yearning for devotion to Him, but it cannot be obtained without a Master. We cannot become devotees merely by reading holy scriptures and other books.



Only through the teachings or “bachans” (words) of a Guru is one capable of becoming a true devotee. No other method can accomplish this, because the treasure of devotion is obtained only by service to the Master. All other practices are external and lead us outward, hence they are not capable of producing devotion in us. The internal fires of passion cannot be subdued without the grace of the Master.



A person attaches himself to devotion only if a Master, who himself is free from the shackles of birth and death, gives him the gift of devotion, frees him from the cycle of birth and death, and puts him in communion with God.

In the Sikh scriptures the practice of Shabd Dhun (listening to the Sound Current or Word) is called devotion. True devotion is love for Guru Shabd, by means of which a person fixes the Lord in his mind. Devotion to Shabd is dear to God. We cannot have true devotion by running about in the world. Devotion can be achieved only by engrossing ourselves completely in Shabd.



Without such devotion it is not possible to remove the coverings of dirt from one's mind. By means of Shabd and by adorning herself with it, the soul completely surrenders herself – like a wife to her husband – and thereby attains communion with God.



True devotion can be achieved only through a Guru. By devotion one can listen to the Sound Current within oneself, by means of which ego is destroyed and the devotee attains happiness forever and meets the Lord.

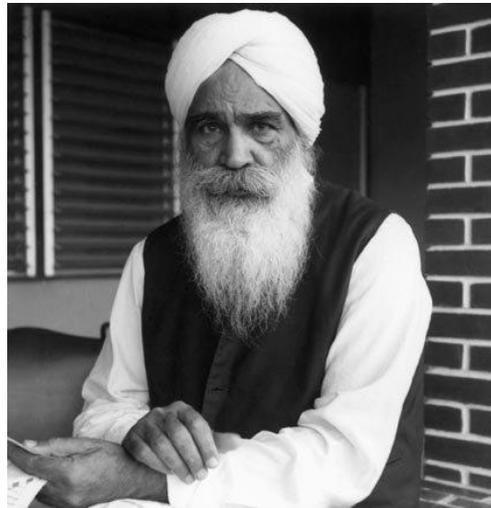


The practice of Shabd is true devotion, because by means of this we are able to join ourselves with the Truth, and the Name of God is imprinted in our minds permanently.

Devotion to God is unique and can be achieved only by rare Gurumukhs, because a Gurumukh realizes the treasure of devotion. But knowledge of how to obtain this treasure can be obtained only from a Sat Guru, as the Sat Guru is actually the keeper of the treasure of devotion.



The real or true devotion is beyond these three gunas (qualities). It is pure. It is without desire, is dedicated entirely to contemplation of the Lord, and will manifest itself through a surge of emotions from tear-laden eyes. A devotee of such a pure type is always happy at the Lotus Feet of the Lord. He has no desires and does not care for worldly pleasures, nor do the comforts of heaven have any attraction for him. Even the idea of salvation cannot remove his attention from the Lotus Feet of the Lord.



Narad described this devotion by saying that the inner feelings of a person who is successful in his devotion are of such a nature that he thinks himself to be a tool and the object of his devotion as the user of the tool. He thinks himself to be a cart, and the Lord is the one who sits on it and guides it.

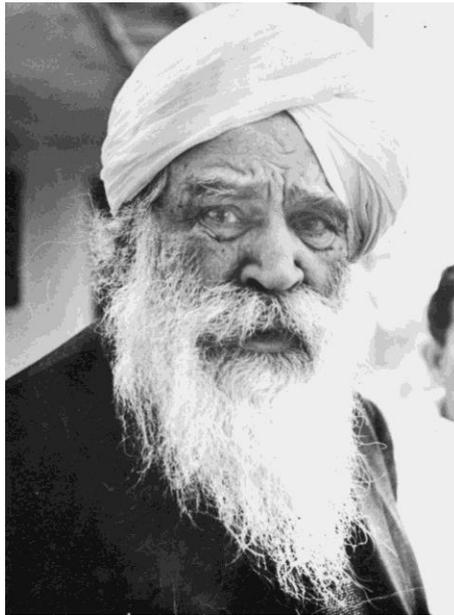


By devotion all the desires of a person are sublimated, resulting in contentment; and he is therefore freed from the cycle of birth and death. His mind has no desires, because all his desires are fulfilled in remembrance of God. He loves everybody, since he loves God and thinks all as His sons.

Hatred and enmity vanish by means of Bhakti. One remains intoxicated in devotion to the Lord, because the elixir-like sweetness of devotion keeps him indifferent to all pleasures and pains of the world. On meeting the Lord, one gets everything and therefore does not run after the world. He remains happy at the Lotus Feet of his Lord.



A devotee absorbed in love for his Lord is happy day and night, and does not desire anything else. He is full of love for his Beloved, for whom he has no thought of selfish love. Nothing else is needed by such a devotee.



By devotion to the Lord, the entire attention of a devotee is dyed in remembrance of the Lord – sitting, rising, coming, going, sleeping, walking, eating, drinking – all these actions are surrendered to Him. As a result, the devotee is freed from the shackles of the world.



So long as devotion is not awakened in our minds, we cannot be freed from the cycle of birth and death. A devotee ultimately merges in the Lord. His ego, which is the cause of his remaining in the cycle of birth and death, is destroyed, as his thoughts of “mine” or “I-ness” vanish. In this manner, his cycle of coming and going is finished.

A devotee is colored in the dye of devotion. If a person is absorbed in some particular thing, he becomes one with it. If he devotes himself to Naam Bhakti (the practice of Shabd, the Sound Current or Word), he achieves a superior kind of devotion to the Lord. Devotion frees one from fear, pleasure and pain, and brings instead bliss, peace of mind, satisfaction of the heart and contentment.



By becoming a selfless devotee one becomes detached permanently from the world. Devotion removes one from the dark labyrinth of the world and makes him pure. Even the Negative Power does not come near a devotee. Ego is destroyed, mind and body become pure, doubts are removed, and the mind is fully imbued with devotion.



Now you will understand the basic need of Guru Bhakti. It does not mean dancing around the Guru or shouting this way or that. If you do not care to listen to what the Guru says or to understand and follow His behests, it is not Guru Bhakti at all. Such persons cannot get any spiritual benefit even if they lived with the Master for ages upon ages. On the contrary, those who turn their backs upon the world and are wholly engrossed in the love of the Master, and make loving devotion as their ruling passion, they easily and quickly get transformed into the likeness of the Master. (<https://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/gurbhakti.htm>)



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