

Chapters from:  
**Philosophy of the Masters**  
(Gurmat Sidhant)  
by  
**Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj**

Part 4 of 4



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj  
1894-1974

Gurmat Sidhant is a book written by me--through my hands I would say, not by me, but by the God-Master within me. I used to write it down and take it to Master to read it to Him so that He may give the final yes.  
(Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj)



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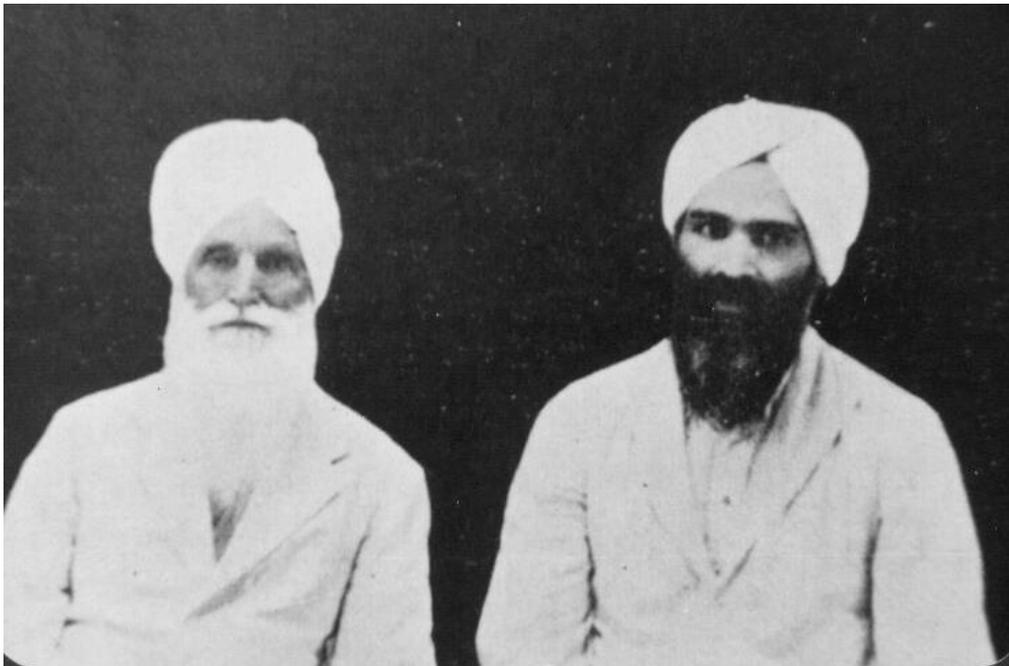
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Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj & Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj

## Introduction

In 1939 Sant Kirpal Singh began writing *Gurmat Sidhant - Philosophy of the Masters*, a comprehensive treatise on the science of spirituality, which on the request of Master Kirpal Singh was published under the name of His Master Hazur Maharaj Sawan Singh. The books comprise a complete encyclopedia of basic information on Sant Mat, the Teachings of the Saints.

“*Gurmat Sidhant* is a book written by me--through my hands I would say, not by me, but by the God-Master within me. I used to write it down and take it to Master to read it to Him so that He may give the final yes.”

“When I was writing that book *Gurumat Sidhant*, one writer came to visit and was sitting by me at night. I started at nine o’clock, went on writing, writing as fast as possible. He was sitting watching me. It was ten, it was eleven o’clock, it was twelve midnight, one o’clock. ‘From where are you writing?’ he said. ‘There’s nothing before you to copy.’ I told him, ‘My Master dictates to me. I’m writing so fast because I cannot keep up to Him.’ (chuckles) Whatever thoughts come up without thinking are always perfect.”



Sant Kirpal Singh – 1930’s

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# Love (Prem)

## Chapter 1

It is not easy to understand love because its true nature and greatness cannot be described in words. It is a pure and delicate feeling or emotion which can be experienced only by one who is in love. It is beyond the capacity of the tongue or the pen to describe it in any human language. Actually, love is another name for God. And just as it is not possible to reduce God's greatness to mortal dimensions, so also is it not possible to describe adequately in any words known to man, the grandeur and sublime appearance of love.

Nowadays, people misunderstand the meaning of love. The spirit and the meaning of love can be ascertained only from a true lover, and its glow or spark can only be seen on his countenance. If you wish to hear it described, you should ask Mansur or Christ, both of whom went to their death serene and filled with joy. You might even ask Mirabai, who drank a cup of poison as though it were nectar. You could also ask Arjan Sahib. He sat on hot iron plates, and exclaimed, *"Thy Will is sweet!"*

Surrendering one's life to the path of love gives to life a unique and exquisite taste, which can be enjoyed only by a lover or by one whose eyes bespeak intense love.

Love is a beautiful and sublime experience of the heart. Books are full of the word "love", but in the tears of love are flowing burning oceans. In the sighs of love there are thousands of tempests, and in the world of love there is no sense of time. A place where there is love becomes sanctified by it. In that environment there is a powerful current of exaltation, but it can be felt only by a heart that is filled with love. If we perform our domestic and other worldly duties with love, we shall enjoy our life in comfort and without any worries, because in the presence of love, the mind and intellect are powerless to disturb one's inner calmness. Love does not influence only human beings. Even the animals and birds are subject to its elevating influence.

Love is a complete cure for every kind of trouble. Maulana Rumi says:

*"Oh! The intoxication of my love, be happy, well and strong; for you are the only physician and cure for all my ailments."*

If we could experience true love, we would be our own physicians and could bring peace and happiness to ourselves. Then all our pain and sadness because of our separation from the Lord, which are caused by our not understanding the principles of love, would vanish and the radiant currents of joy would fill and invigorate our minds.

It is love alone that can give peace and happiness. Without it life is dry and worthless, and even the joys of heaven are of no value. A palace will appear as dreadful as a graveyard to a person who is bereft of love. But even the ill-furnished and dilapidated huts are beautiful if they are brightened with the spark of love. Through love, even jungles become filled with happy life and without love, populated cities may appear bleak.

Love is the richest of all treasures. Without it there is nothing and with it there is everything. He who does not have love in his heart is not entitled to call himself a human being.

The world is beautiful and we are naturally attracted towards it, because the Creator of both man and the world is the same God, who is love. God has filled both man and the world with currents of love, and the world is supported by love. Love's magnetic power is at work throughout the entire world. The sun, moon, earth, stars, sky – all are sending out currents of love to others.

Man has been created in the image of God, and God is love. Therefore His quality of love is predominant in the world. Because man possesses the quality of love within himself, the entire universe, which also contains strong currents of love, is constantly attracting man towards it.

Wherever there is love there is life. Where there is no love, life is worthless. Actually, a man is not a true man unless he has within him the Divine Spark of Love. God, in the form of love, is within everybody. Those whose eyes are open see all human beings as manifestations of God, like rays of the sun or the waves of the ocean. They know that the same spark of love has created them all. Therefore, who can be low or who can be high? Men in different positions of life and in different countries - be they yogis, sanyasis, brahmacharyas, Hindus or Turks – are all one in His eyes; and differences of caste, creed or country can never be of any importance to those who possess the quality of love. There is one God in heaven and one family on earth. Maulana Rumi says:

*“The current of love from the one God is flowing through the entire universe. What do you think when you look at the face of a man? Look at him carefully. He is not a man, but a current of the Essence of God (love), which permeates him.”*

Lord Krishna says:

*“He who is able to see My form in everything, who realizes that there is no difference between different beings, is, in fact, the true seer. Such a person I can never forget.”*

God looks on all beings as the same. No one is better or worse than another. In His eyes there are no nationalities, races or creeds. For Him all are His creatures. A person who understands this Truth is not capable of hating anybody. He is a lover of God, whose Light shines in all human beings. He loves everybody. People of all faiths - Hindus, Mohammedans, Sikhs and Christians – are the recipients of His love. All religious Scriptures, Saints and Masters have always preached this Truth: we should love every created being. According to the Bible, Christ said:

*“Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”* (St. Matthew 5:43,44)

A lover points out, by his own example, that the real way to love God is not through outer observances. Quarrels and disputes amongst persons of various beliefs are due to narrow-minded intolerance. Those who confine their love to their own countries or nations are also subject to the same narrow-mindedness. But one who places the ideal of love above everything else in his daily life is really following the command of his Lord. He is loved by the Lord.

A person who does not follow the path of love is not honored into the Court of the Lord. Such a one is entangled in the miseries of the world, and whosoever comes in contact with him is also miserable. It is the natural desire of all human beings to be happy, and happiness is the fruit of

concentration of the mind. This treasure of concentration and happiness of mind can easily be obtained through love, because these qualities are the natural attributes of love. Without love, everything in this world becomes subject to miseries and misunderstandings, which cause domestic quarrels, religious disputes, bloodshed and even wars among the nations.

Man naturally desires peace of mind. He wants to be free from cares and anxieties. All this can be achieved only through love. Those who do not follow the path of love cannot have a calm mind, and these people also create difficulties for others. Without a serene mind, even the pleasures of this world are full of pain. Happiness cannot be achieved without love.

Love is not dependent upon anything else. It is an ocean of faith and fortitude. It is an ocean of strength and faith. It imparts peace and serenity to the mind and to life. It is of real and lasting value. All the things of this world appear beautiful when there is love. By the currents of love the entire atmosphere is charged with joy, and the spark of God's light is visible in love.

One who is imbued with love is prepared to sacrifice even his life willingly, and he does not follow the path of intellectual quibbling. There is no song that is sweeter than the song of love, nor is there any story more enchanting; in fact, the very form of God is love.

There are many valuable gifts of God in this world, such as wealth, beauty, strength, power, good health, knowledge, fluency of speech and worship. Man is naturally fond of these things, but they are all lacking in something. Wealth makes a man proud. Beauty makes him blind. Power and good health are the cause of cruelty and arrogance. Knowledge brings in selfish ideas. Intellect is a delusion, and to indulge in clever speeches leads one to falsehood and to garrulous talk. External religious observances and worship are the cause of narrow-mindedness and bigotry. Better than all these gifts of God is the gift of love. And such gifts are beneficial if they are combined with the sweetness of love.

God is love. He is the Bestower and demands nothing in exchange for His gifts. Similarly, love demands nothing in return. It knows only how to give; hence it is free from all selfishness. A true husband gives everything he has to his wife. True parents are those who rear their children with love and expect nothing in return from them.

Love inspires generosity and obliterates selfishness, because it has no ulterior motive. If everyone in the world would live in the spirit of love, no worldly laws would be necessary. We need these laws because all have not learned to live in love, and as a result the world is entangled in a network of animal-like tendencies. If we would learn to love ourselves, our neighbors, our country and the whole of mankind, and God Himself, we should no longer be in need of worldly laws, because love begets love. Then there would be no lack of harmony or trust among the nations, and the only ruling power would be that of love. Christ says:

*"Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven."* (St. Matthew 6:10)

That Kingdom is in our hearts. There (in the realm of love) no law is necessary.

So long as we do not love each other, there can be no peace in this world. Warships, armies, ammunition, submarines, cannons, tanks and atom bombs cannot create peace and harmony in the world. If we are engrossed in these things, we are thinking of things that will bring destruction to mankind, and thereby are responsible for cutting our own throats. The present-day wars give a clear picture of this situation. If, on the other hand, we were to love and understand

each other, the result would be that we would live in peace, because in love there is no warfare. If we think of war and make preparations for it, talk about it and also hope for it, then we shall bring war upon ourselves. But if we think of love, plan and live with hearts filled with love and talk about the blessings of love, then we shall get nothing but love. If our environment and the entire universe should receive nothing but rays of love (from everyone in the world), then there would be no need for any worldly laws. Wherever there is love there is no (need for) law.

When St. John became so old that he was not able to walk and was able to speak only with great difficulty, another follower of Christ took him to a gathering of children to deliver a sermon. He raised his head and said: *"Little children, love one another."* Once again he said this and then repeated it a third time, after which he was silent.

At that the people closest to him said, *"Good man, haven't you anything more important to say to these children?"* To this he replied: *"I give this advice over and over again, because of all the qualities, that of love is the greatest need of mankind. If you would love each other and the current of love would fill your minds, you would possess all other good qualities. Love, and all things shall be added unto you."*

If you love, you will be a wise man. And when you become a wise man, you will definitely love. If a person is not good, he cannot be a loving soul. Guru Ram Das says:

*"Those in this world who have love for the Lord, possess real knowledge, and if by chance they utter any harsh word, they do not hurt anybody because they do not forget the spirit of love and therefore love everybody. They are the chosen ones of God."*

Guru Nanak says:

*"Oh God, if it pleases You, then only does one really and truly try to love, and the love of Your devotees is constantly directed towards You. In such a state of love they do not care for sleep. They are not arrogant because their minds are fully concentrated in Your remembrance."*

In love, all the bad qualities of the mind and intellect such as anger, sloth, talking ill of others, hatred, and so forth, are removed, and we are able to control our mind by means of love. Love reigns over everything. It is so beautiful that wherever it abides, anger, hatred, and other similar emotions cannot exist.

The mind is like a crow, which has no other wish than to annoy people. But as soon as it is steeped in love, it becomes a swan and troubles no one.

Love is a soul quality and is inherent in all of us, but not everyone can avail himself of it. This ocean of all joys is within us, and we need not spend a penny to achieve it. As soon as the soul is freed from the filth and attachments of the world, real love automatically makes its appearance.

Arjuna Sahib says:

*"A man may be extremely handsome, clever, learned and wealthy, and may have in him many other good qualities, but if he has not developed the love of God in himself, he should be considered the same as a corpse."*

Love is the cream of life. It is the beauty of the souls. By means of love the soul is brightened and its glow is reflected on the face of the lover. Farid says:

*“I am not afraid of losing my youth, provided my love for God does not diminish, for many a youth has withered away for lack of love for God.”*

The kingdom of love has been the highest of all realms in every age, and every Saint has said: *“Love God and love His creation.”* If we really love Him, then we automatically love His creatures. To love everybody is to help one’s own self. If one is engaged in business or a profession and does his work with love, he will never cheat anyone nor deprive other persons of their rightful due. The world is always prepared to listen to the message of love because it is inherent in all of us; and if we practice it daily it becomes manifest in us.

A Saint may not write Scriptures, may not build a temple, or may not give anything in charity, but loves everyone; he is loved by all. The wellbeing of this world depends on our loving everybody, or rather on all loving each other. In order to learn this, we must abandon anger, indolence, talking ill of others, hatred, and all other similar bad habits. A true lover is not confined to any one language or creed. He crosses all such boundaries and loves everybody. Love is the fulfilment of the law. If you love, then you are not doing only a single act, but many more without your realizing it. By loving, you send forth the currents of love far and wide in your environment and thus benefit the whole world.

Love is the greatest and most wonderful constituent of goodness. A truly loving man is actually the king of kings. How can anyone praise God without love? Or how can anyone serve his country? He who has not developed the spark of love in his heart may appear to be living, but he is dead within. The entire universe is beautified by the glory of love.

Those who profess to be lovers of God and His Saints but hate one another and are prepared to fight and quarrel with each other on account of their narrow-minded beliefs, cannot even be called human beings, much less devotees of God. Love is the greatest of all gifts because it instils life into dead hearts. It is intoxication, and in its ecstasy one is filled with bliss and his ego is destroyed.

People say that love is blind and mad, because a lover does not listen to anyone. But the lover of God is not blind. He has eyes that see the Truth. He sees only that One whom he wishes to see. He accepts only that One and believes in Him. He is not mad. He gives his heart to One alone, and is free from duality. *“Love is the Divine Law. It will triumph where reason fails.”* It is not possible to describe the sweetness of love’s qualities. Its flavor is so enrapturing that no one wishes to stop tasting it. Its fragrance refreshes the mind and gladdens the intellect, and a lover is always in high good spirits. Love has the power of magnetic attraction, and draws all beings into the sphere of its Divine Power.

## Love is God

Prior to the creation of this world, God was a vast ocean like All-Consciousness. He was all love, all bliss and self-sufficient. God was everything in Himself and was in a state of blissful quiescence. And His basic form was love. It was not love for any other being, because none existed. It was for Himself. It was part and parcel of Himself, and He did not have to depend on anything else for this. Such is the indescribable condition of love. But we may illustrate it to some extent by an example:

Suppose that you are in love with the Lord and have completely merged yourself in Him. Then your own self has been forgotten, your body and mind will be numb, and everything will be forgotten except your love for Him. You then lose yourself in the bliss of contemplating on His love, so much so that there is no difference between “I” and “You”, and you become bliss incarnate.

You cannot describe that state of mind, because God is love and love is God. Both are one and the same, and both are indescribable. God, in Himself, is a deep ocean of love. We cannot compare the bliss of contemplating His love with any other type of happiness or bliss.

Love is a quality of such a kind that it cannot be described in speech or in writing. If anything, it can be compared to a magnet which has extremely powerful attraction. Love was in the beginning of the world, and its influence is even now permeating all material and spiritual regions, whether visible or invisible. That is how all things are attracted towards each other and this world is in existence.

## Everything is the Result of Love

God is love, and love was in the beginning. The entire creation is the result of love. We have been sent down into this world through love, and the cause of our return will also be love. The Path of love is the real ideal. Whosoever is following this path is following the True Path. Shamas-i-Tabrez describes love as follows:

*“Islam and unbelief are of recent origin, but love and God existed even before the creation of this world. Therefore, if any person becomes a victim of love, you should not call him an unbeliever.”*

## Love is the State of Giving Away One’s Heart

Nothing that has been created in this world is devoid of love. Love in its full and complete form was the Ocean of Bliss. Therefore, in the Ocean of God’s Bliss, there was nothing but Bliss and Oneness only.

The meaning of Prem (love) is the merging of one’s self into the object of love. It has a wonderful attraction or strong pulling power. The word ‘prem’ is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘pre’, which means a thing that pleases the heart and attracts it. Another definition of ‘prem’ is a surrender of the heart.

How does one give away his heart? It is done by casting attentive and loving eyes at the beloved, while directing towards him the currents of loving emotions. The lover sees no faults in the beloved and considers him to be worthy of his high regard for him. This is giving away one’s heart.

Who is a lover? He is a person who becomes a slave of his beloved. After having placed his heart in the hands of the beloved, he roams about in constant anguish of separation.

The natural quality of love is remembrance with a concentrated mind. Concentration is the sequence of intense love. It is a feeling of self-forgetfulness.

Love is the term used for giving away one's heart on beholding another's attractive form or qualities, and having warm feeling in the heart for that being.

Love is that which transforms the small drop of the soul into the ocean of God. Love is also that which diverts the mind from all desires of the world and attaches it to the one Beloved, i.e. the Lord.

Love has a concentrating force, which is produced when love is attained to the highest and the fullest extent. It is a condition in which the lover completely forgets himself. In order to tread the path of love, one has to forget oneself entirely. By thus losing himself the lover is able to gain Life Eternal. Such a condition is by no means lassitude of mind, but rather an awakening of the energies which enable one to merge oneself forever in the consciousness of the Lord. Love is an infinite, endless ocean, which cannot be described.

### Condition of a Lover

Love is a music whose beauty does not diminish. It is a pain which is full of sweetness. It is a feeling which, once experienced, can never be forgotten. If you wish to know about love, you should ask a worshipper of love, or you may ask a nightingale that has fallen in love with a rose. Or you may ask a moth that has sacrificed its life, without hesitation, for the flame. Therefore, do not ask about love from any other person except a lover himself, because he alone can tell you anything about it.

Only a lover knows how to describe love. In his own beautiful and well-chosen words, he will help you to understand it clearly.

If you wish to see the spark of love, you should look into the eyes of one who is intoxicated with love. Then you will see how all intellect, reason, knowledge, mind and thinking have been swept away and have merged into the ocean of thoughts of the Beloved. From such a one you may get some idea of love.

Saints are an ocean of love, because they are already merged into the Lord, and the Lord is love. The currents of love emanating from the Saints spread out and influence every nook and corner of the world. By receiving such currents, one's heart is inclined to meet the Lord.

Love in which there is even a small amount of selfishness or selfish desires, or even a tiny thought of some bargain, is not real love. True love is only for the sake of love itself. The only wish of a true lover is to be united with the Beloved. Love is awakened when the currents of love, which emanate from the Beloved, enter into our hearts. This is true love, and it is not dependent on any outside influence.

What is Prem (love)? This is a question the answer to which is in the hands of a lover. Others cannot understand even a small fraction of it.

If you wish to know about love, go to a Saint and ask Him. If you want to know how the heart goes out of your hands, ask one who has lost His heart.

## True Love Implies Giving Up the Ego

What is true love? Shamas Tabriz said that it is the surrendering of one's own self. Unless one's self is completely surrendered, nothing can be achieved on the path of love. There is no half way.

The mind should be cleansed of all thoughts and desires, and thus become like a highly polished mirror. So long as one entertains greed and desires in his heart, the face of love will not be visible. By love alone the Saints achieve conscious union with the Lord. In other words, if there is any self-interest then it is not true love.

## Prem (Love) is a Constant Magnet

Everybody talks about love, but very few really know what it is. Sometimes a person thinks he is in love, and at another time he is not in love. Sometimes he is sad in love, and sometimes he is happy. This is not true love, for true love is constant and keeps the lover's mind fixed in one direction. It has nothing to do with the rise and fall of emotions, because a true lover is constantly absorbed in one thought alone – that of the Beloved. Kabir says:

*“Everyone talks about love, but no one knows anything about it. One who is absorbed in it day and night alone knows love. There was one who loved, but where has his love gone? He laughs and cries. Many people have seen him in this ever-changing condition. This is not Prem (true love).”*

Guru Ram Das says:

*“Those who have fallen in love with God are constantly absorbed in love and are happy with the Grace of God and Satguru.”*

## True Love is Permanent

God is Love. He is omnipresent. The soul is a drop of that ocean and it swims like a fish back into that ocean. Once the magnetic power of love establishes itself in a mind, it will never be destroyed. Arjan Sahib says:

*“Love has a unique pulling power. Once a person experiences it, he becomes so completely absorbed in it that even if he wishes to leave, it will not cease nor vanish.”*

Guru Amar Das says:

*“True love is permanent. Pens and inkpots, as well as writings made with them, become obliterated; but true love for God, which has been bestowed by Him, will never be effaced.”*

Guru Arjan says:

*“Oh God! Your humble servant has become absorbed in the elixir of your love and now that he has tasted it, he will never leave it.”*

Love has been in existence in all ages. It will never vanish from the world. If one has true love, then by seeing his Beloved he becomes indescribably happy. Persons in whom the love of God has been awakened and who are happily absorbed in it, are real Saints. And if their disciples love them, then their love will also not vanish. Their love will be everlasting, because the Saints continue to pull their disciples towards them with the cord of love. Such Saints are our real friends and benefactors.

## Love is the Nectar of Our Existence

Love is noble and pure. It purifies us and ennobles our life. It is the very essence of simplicity and purity. It is also the sustaining power of this world. Without it the world would be desolate and our life would be aimless. Love is the sustainer of life. Without it a man would be useless. It acts like a binding or uniting force, to keep everyone attached to each other. It induces us to work and to be active. It stimulates our intellect and energy of mind. It is the essence of true purity. It is the spiritual light that brightens our soul. It is the straight path that takes one to the Lord. All Saints and poets sing its praises. The story of love is indescribable. Nobody can really describe it, since it can only be experienced.

## Prem (Love) is Naam (Word)

God is love. God is also Naam and Shabd (Sound Current, Word). In other words, love is the Treasure of Naam and it contains that most powerful Elixir by obtaining which all our evil tendencies are destroyed.

## What is the Effect of Love?

We find that an ordinary sword will cut an object into two pieces, but the sword of love is quite different. When it is used, it unites two (souls) into one. It has the same influence whether a person is rich or poor. Love is a scale that will weigh stones and pearls alike. It settles on kings as well as on beggars without any distinction, because it does not discriminate between rich and poor. All are equal in the sight of love. It makes everyone restless and its effects can be seen with equal force in all conditions of life.

When a person is in love he is in a unique state of mind. In this state the flowers of separation bloom, cool and refreshing currents flow from sighs, and the heat produced by the sighs burns and destroys the duality in man. Whoever enters into love will experience all the phases of love. If love did not exist and if there were no sighs caused by love, the world would be deprived of many of its sweetest stories and most touching descriptions.

Whoever goes a-hunting in the arena of love, himself becomes the victim.

Love for God bestows such uplifting power, even in the destitute, that a lover considers kings and their crowns worth no more than a straw. A lover weaves silk and velvet with the blood of his heart, and places it under the feet of his Beloved. It is only love that can take a man into the Court of the Lord. To achieve it is the true aim of life.

If you wish to read the true story of a lover's success, look at his face. You will find the glow of love on it. By drinking the blood of life, through love, the flowers of happiness bloom. A true lover is always immersed in and saturated with the love of God. On this path of love, innumerable persons have sacrificed their worldly lives by spurning the power and pelf of the world.

## The Signs of Love

The state of a person's mind is always reflected on his face. Happiness or pain, love or hatred are reflected in his expression and if he speaks, then everything in his mind comes out clearly into the open.

When a spark of love for the Lord is lit in a person's mind, it cannot be concealed. His very eyes disclose it, even if the mouth is locked, love will burst out in the form of teardrops from the eyes. The body trembles, the hairs stand on end, and the lover smiles but cannot speak. Kabir says:

*"Love cannot be concealed once it has entered a person's heart. He does not speak it out but his eyes reveal it. Once love enters a man's heart it keeps him happy at all times, for he then becomes free from worries, and the currents of love flow out from him automatically."*

When love is awakened in the mind of a person, it keeps him happy and without worries. The currents of love emanate from him.

How can one become the recipient of this wonderful gift of love for the Lord? It is impossible to obtain it without following the instructions of a Master. It can be bestowed only on one who possesses a noble heart, and through the special Grace of God.

What are the signs by which love can be recognized? If you see a person who is miserable in his troubles and in a state of dejection, then you may know that he is devoid of love and is unfit to move in the sphere of true love. Even if the entire world should become full of thorns, the heart of a lover would remain fresh and blooming at all times, like a garden of flowers. His Beloved is always concealed in his arms, and you should never consider him to be alone.

*"Even when the entire universe is full of thorns the heart of a lover will ever blossom into the beautiful flowers of remembrance of his Beloved. Never think him to be alone, because the Beloved is always concealed in his bosom."* (Persian)

*"In the mirror of my heart is the picture of my Beloved. I can see Him at any time by simply bowing my head."*

## Four Things are Necessary in Love

1. No other idea should creep into the mind except that of the Beloved.
2. The question of bargaining or give and take should not arise.
3. All types of fear should be removed.
4. The lover should not be in a state of enmity or hatred with anyone.

Such persons are never disappointed or lose hope. Their Beloved (Satguru) is always by their side. Bulleh Shah says:

*“While saying my prayers I have forgotten to look at the Kaaba, because I do not know whether I should recite my prayers or should go on looking at You”.*

The prayers of a person who depends on rituals are said in a specified posture, but the prayers of a lover are always said in a state of self-forgetfulness (rising above the mortal self or ego). A person who says his prayers according to rituals washes his hands and his face before sitting in prayer, but a lover washes his hands of the world. In other words, so long as you do not remove your thoughts from the world, you cannot remember Him.

A lover is always happy in the remembrance of the Lord and of Satguru, who is a manifestation of God. Guru Amar Das says:

*“During Basant (spring-time) all vegetation is green and flowery everywhere. Similarly, those who remember God are always filled with life and joy. A lover remembers Him day and night and thus washes away the dirt of his ego.”*

He further states:

*“My mind always remains happy in the thought of my Satguru. How can any trouble or pain come to me?”*

The surest sign of a lover is that if he loses any worldly or material thing it causes him no pain whatsoever; but if time is lost without meditation, prayer or remembrance of the Beloved, it causes him immense pain.

A true lover is as fond of remembering his Lord as a thirsty man longs for water. The tongue does not speak but the mind is never empty, for the Beloved is always in his remembrance, and is never forgotten even for a moment. Love for the Lord and His lovers is always in his mind. He loves the ones who love Him, and also loves the entire creation.

When such lovers wish to speak about their Beloved amongst their friends, they are not able to speak, for their throats become choked.

## Love is a Universal Attribute

Love is born out of human emotions. The sweet fragrance of love permeates the orchard of life. Whenever there is a current of love in the mind, the heart is spontaneously attracted by it. This current or force is working throughout the entire universe. Look at a cow, how lovingly she licks her calf. All animals and birds love each other.

With what devotion a moth circles round a flame! A fish writhes if it is taken out of water. How a deer is irresistibly attracted towards music, and a serpent becomes hypnotized by the sound of the flute? And how a chakor (moon bird) gazes constantly at the full moon!

The feeling of love is universal. Animals, birds, insects, and even plants and flowers are full of it. The spark of the flame of love intoxicates a human being who is attracted to it. The entire universe sings its praises. There is no heart which is completely devoid of love. All are born into this world gifted with at least a particle of love. We all live on it, but those who do not follow the path rightly are sometimes drowned in it.

## Love is a Natural Quality in Man

God is love and the soul is a part of Him. The qualities of God are therefore naturally found in man. The entire universe is being sustained by love. In other words, it is a form of love. God created the current of love in this world, and by this current the world is kept in existence.

A human being is either attracted by the love of the universe, or is drowned in the ocean of love, which is God Himself. If there is no love, there is no existence. Wherever there is love there is life, and all the attractions of life are in existence. If there were no love, life would have no attraction for human beings.

Love is an innate quality of the heart. It is only through love that the sublime appearance of the truth is known, because without it man would be in anguish. A person who has no love for anything is not fit to be called a human being, because every human being must fix his love at one place or another.

This natural quality is inherent in the mind of every person. In some places people are engrossed in love for worldly objects. At other places they worship abstract heavenly goals. But here and there we also come across people who have correctly placed their love in the Lord. The love for worldly objects is temporary and transient. The love for a heavenly goal is better, but the noblest and the purest form of love is love for God.

Actually, he who possesses love in any form and has even a particle of love in him, is worthy to be called a man. This is the touchstone by which a man may be judged. He is worthy of being called a man to the degree in which he has the quality of love in him. If he does not possess the spark of love within him, he is very far from being called a human being.

Everything in this world is judged by the degree of its quality of love. A fire is a fire only so long as it emits heat and light; at the same time, all that glitters is not gold. Similarly, every person cannot be called a human being in the strict sense of the term. Only those persons are human beings who have the spark of love developed in them.

One may be a lover of physical beauty or a lover of collecting worldly objects, but by enjoying worldly loves of this kind one does not become a human being. A true human being has a feeling of sympathy and a loving heart for mankind. Such a person forgets his own troubles and melts like wax when he sees any other person in pain or trouble. Such a person has the feeling of love and fellowship in him. Kabir says:

*“A person in whom there is no love should be considered as a moving statue. He is like the bellows of a blacksmith, which breathes and yet has no life.”*

One who is humble and has love for and surrenders himself to the Lord, has respect for all, such a one is a living ocean of the powerful currents of love. His is a cup of love, full to the brim and running over. In other words, such a person is full of good will and pleasant manners. Such a one is really noble.

The greatness of a man is not measured by the amount of his knowledge, the number of his educational degrees, or the number of books he has read. Mohammed Sahib was illiterate, but a large portion of the world still respects him. Ram Krishna Param Hans was not conversant with book knowledge, but the whole of Bengal venerates and respects him. Guru Nanak and Kabir did not gain their education in a university, but thousands of people have a feeling of the deepest reverence for them. Their constant love for the Lord and for His creation is responsible for their greatness. They were fully engrossed in His love.

Knowledge is a child of books, but love is the mother of books. Without love, all austerities and rituals are useless. They are beneficial only if along with them one has love for God and for His children. But if a person engages in austerities or rituals without developing the quality of love for the Lord and for His children, then he is like a flower without fragrance, like a well without water, like a lamp without oil, or like eyes without sight. Such persons, even if they sometimes have a spark of spirituality in them, would prefer to keep their interest centered in worldly ties, and they flit from one object to another. The entire world is entangled in this net and there is no possible way out.

## Stages to Achieve Love

It has been observed that normally, when we hear about something very good, a desire arises in our mind to obtain it. When we keep somebody's company, a connection is made with him, and our mind feels happiness in keeping that company and in seeing that person as much and as often as possible. A certain feeling is produced in connection with that person, and that feeling develops into a current of love.

Love is like a fountain of fragrance in the garden of life. When this connection with our companion becomes strong, our attachment towards him changes into love and the condition of the mind becomes such that we do not like to part company, so much so that even if our reason tries to restrain us from meeting that person, the mind is irresistibly attracted. Then the mind rules the intellect, and as this feeling gradually increases, it becomes so strong that separation from our companion, even for a short period, makes us restless, and the mind is constantly attracted towards him and yearns to be with him. There is, however, still a slight control of the intellect over the mind, but the control is gradually reduced and the feeling then takes the form of intense love. In that state a lover begins to forget himself. He pays no attention to his body or his mind. He feels happy if the beloved is with him. Otherwise, he is like a dead body. He becomes indifferent to everybody, including his own kith and kin, and the entire control of the intellect vanishes.

A lover drinks from the cup of the wine of the beautiful eyes of the beloved and becomes intoxicated. He does not care for the opinion of his friends or relatives. His intellect and mind are completely devoid of the power of discrimination. Lord Krishna said that the feeling of love is so pure that when it is produced in a person, the ego, the idea of personal gain, narrow-mindedness and the passions, all vanish.

This is the path which a seeker has to tread in order to come near the beloved. But it sometimes happens that the currents of love irresistibly enter into the heart of a person as the result of just one gaze into the eyes of a true Master. Even one glance from the Master is enough to create in the seeker a feeling of intense love without passing through the stages of association, intimate connection and emotional attraction. The Granth Sahib says that a true Guru can achieve successful results for His disciples even by a single glance.

## Four Stages of Love

Normally love is created in four steps. The attributes of a person are the result of his nature, and they result in action which creates influence. Similarly, love is of four kinds:

1. That which is caused by special circumstances associated with another person. So long as this cause remains, love also remains, but it vanishes when that binding factor is removed. It is like a person who has an electric battery device in his pocket to keep him warm. As long as the battery works, he has association with it and a kind of attachment for it; but as soon as the battery is exhausted or cut off, his attachment also vanishes. This means that he did not love the battery, but was in love with the action caused by the battery.

To give another example, a person may be a good artist or painter. Someone else may love him because he may be able to make use of his art by getting from him a beautifully painted picture or an artistically illustrated book. His love is based on this one purpose alone, and as soon as that purpose is fulfilled, his object being attained, his love for the artist is gone. This shows that his love was of a selfish nature and was not for the painter or artist.

The average type of love in this world comes under this category, and is finished as soon as one's object or motive is fulfilled.

2. Another type of love is caused by some specific action performed by another person. When that action or work is finished, love also disappears. We shall try to explain this by an example:

A man may love his wife only for the fulfilment of his sensual desires. As soon as his desires are fulfilled or the woman becomes unfit for that purpose, his love for the woman ends and he would like to enter into a new relationship with someone else. This would mean that his love was aroused by low desires and was not for the wife at all.

Similarly, if a servant works well and obeys our orders, we love him. But when he becomes superannuated or indolent, he is turned out. When a horse is beautiful and has a good and fast trot, we love it. When it becomes weak and old, we try to get rid of it. Similarly, so long as a bullock is useful to us in our agricultural work we love it, but as soon as it becomes old, we get rid of it. Our love is not for the servant, the horse or the bullock, but for the work they can do for us.

Someone has truly said, "*We love the work done by people, but not the people themselves.*" It is even mentioned in the Granth Sahib:

*"A man of the world has many friends, but the friendships are all instigated by desire for material gains."*

3. The third type of love is that which is caused by the qualities of an object or a person. As soon as the qualities are removed, the love also vanishes. One person may be a beautiful singer and may have a sweet voice. Someone else loves music, and he also loves the singer; but as soon as the voice or the sweetness of the voice is gone due to illness or some other reason, his love also goes. Still another person may be handsome or beautiful and may be loved because of that quality. But if this quality should disappear (because of illness, accident or old age), the love for that person would also disappear, since he was loved for that quality alone. Normally, this is the state of love in the world. People love because of superficial beauty or external show. This is not true love. Love which is produced by a certain action or due to a quality is of a primary stage, but even this is not of a high degree, because as soon as the work or action is changed or lost, the love is also lost.

4. Superior to all these is the type of love which is neither dependent on, nor created by any material circumstance, action or quality, and consequently does not vanish with them. True love remains constant. Such a love is distinguished by one sign. It comes into being spontaneously, without any external cause. This love comes from the heart with strong currents, and in it there is no motive of gain or selfishness. This is known as natural love, and once experienced it becomes a permanent feature.

Such a love is superior to all other types, because it is neither dependent upon the quality or actions of its object, nor upon its transitory nature. Not only that, it does not cease even after death, because it merges into the soul. This degree of love is not found in the other types.

If a person loves another on account of some kind of circumstance or quality, the love is far from being natural or spontaneous. But if one possesses the natural love, all the other types are included in it, and all the actions, qualities and goodness inherent in the beloved are also loved and admired by the lover.

A true lover would be prepared to sacrifice himself in defense of the beauty of his beloved; he would be enraptured by the beloved's sweet voice, and any action done by the beloved would prompt him to surrender himself. He would be glad even to kiss the footprints of his beloved. It is said that wherever Laila used to go, Manu would follow and bow down at every footprint.

If one loves another without any selfish motive, he does not bother about the qualities of the beloved, and is always prepared to disregard the qualities for the sake of love, because the qualities without the beloved have no meaning or value for him. The heart of such a person is brightened by the light of love, and the beloved appears to be the center of all qualities and attractions to him. He loves for the sake of love alone, and is not dependent on the qualities, which are of no importance to him. He is concerned only with the person of the beloved but not his qualities.

The foregoing is a description of the four types of worldly love. Similarly, there are various types of spiritual love.

Generally, people love God because they are attached to His creation. He is the Sustainer of the universe and looks after sinners as well as Saints. He bestows health, children and various other gifts and comforts. He is the Forgiver of all evils. If one were to love God not for His gifts but for love alone – then such a type of love would be very high.

Another type of love for God is of a constant or permanent nature, because God Himself is permanent and His influence, qualities and actions or energies are naturally unchangeable. But the true and real type of love for Him is that by which the heart is attracted towards Him without any selfish motives. Such a love is produced in the mind of a person who is without any desires. Without any apparent reason the attraction is there. It is beyond description, and even if we were to try to describe it, the description would be incomplete. In fact, it is not possible to describe this lofty type of love within the limitations of worldly words or ideas.

If you were to ask what is true love for God, and what is the way by which one can be attracted towards Him, it would be difficult to give the answer in mortal language. The flow of tears from the eyes does not reveal the depth of love. The lover's feeling of restlessness is no indication of the intensity of his love. But if one were to follow the path of love for the Lord, the soul would then perceive a spark of that flame of this love. But the influence that this love exerts in man cannot be described by intellect.

All Saints love God for His sake only. Their love is very different from the love of ordinary people. When conditions are favorable and one is placed in comforts of life, then it is easy to love God. But the Saints do not waver in their love for Him even when they are deprived of comfortable circumstances. They sacrifice their body, mind, wealth and even their lives for the sake of love for the Lord.

Actually, love is not true love if it varies with changes in conditions, or vanishes in the face of adversities. True love is everlasting. It cannot be destroyed even by tempests of hardships. Such love is a guiding star for the world and its ignorant people. It cannot be valued in terms of money, but one may nevertheless be able to perceive its greatness and superiority over the ordinary type.

*“Love is not love, that alters when it alteration finds, or bend with the remover to remove. It is an ever fixed mark that looks on tempests and is never shaken. It is the star to every wandering bark, whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.”* (William Shakespeare)

A lover swims happily in the deep sea of God's love, like a fish in the water. A fish cannot live without water. The intensity of a true lover's love for the Lord is of such a nature that it is in every cell and vein of his body – from head to foot. He is always deeply immersed in his love for God, which is for the sake of God alone, and is free from the filth of all selfish desires.

## The Wine of Love

Hafiz describes the intoxication of true love in the following words:

*“Oh Master, take me into the circle of your lovers, for this madness of love for you is far better than the cleverness of the outside world. The lives of thousands of intellectual persons are not worth a moment of this madness. If the senses were to know how much bliss is in store for the heart that achieves this state of madness, then people now following the lure of the senses would become mad after this Divine Love.”*

Again, he says:

*“If you are poor but have directed the currents of your mind into the intoxication of true love, you will find it to be so powerful an elixir that it makes even poor people as rich as King Karoon. This is the best prescription for making a king, even of a beggar.”*

*“The wine shop where this intoxication of love can be obtained may be approached only by those who have but one motive in their minds; whose hearts, minds and even tongues are completely dyed in the hue of their Beloved. It is not possible for selfish persons or worldly people to enter the lane leading to the reservoir of the wine of love for the Lord.”*

In the above, Hafiz does not refer to the material wine, but to the spiritual intoxicant of love for the Lord. It has no material ingredients and has been in existence from the very beginning of time. Prem (love) cannot be described by human tongue. Hafiz says:

*“Oh my Master, bestow on me this intoxication of love as soon as possible, without entangling me in the web of outward discussions.”*

Shamas-i-Tabrez describes this wine of love in the following words:

*“This wine is the wine of spirituality. Oh ye distributor, bring this wine of God and give it to those who have been writhing in the anguish of separation from the Lord.”*

## The Intoxication of the Wine of Love

The worldly wine cannot be compared even to one sip of the wine of true love, for this love is the elixir of life and the soul. There is no comparison between that Divine Elixir and worldly wine. Hafiz says:

*“Even two thousand jugs of this wine cannot equal one drop of the wine of love for my Master.”*

Guru Nanak was once offered bhang (a narcotic) by King Babar, but He said:

*“Oh King, the intoxication of this narcotic, if taken in the morning, will vanish by evening; or if taken in the evening, it will disappear by morning, but the intoxication of love for the Lord continues day and night, and it never fails.”*

Shamas-i-Tabrez says:

*“I am so intoxicated by love that the entire world would be intoxicated by it, if I were to shout in my state of ecstasy.”*

He further says:

*“There is such an abundance of love – intoxication in me that a bread prepared from the wheat grown on a field fertilized by my body would intoxicate the bread-maker with the love of God. But I cannot describe the state of the person who would eat that bread. Even the person who sets the table for such a bread would become intoxicated, and the oven in which the bread was baked would dance with ecstasy from this intoxication.”*

## Where Can We Get the Elixir of Love?

This wine of love cannot be found in jugs. It is flowing out of the hearts of lovers. Persons who have not tasted the elixir of love are aimlessly running after the intricacies of worldly attractions and are deprived of this Divine Ecstasy.

## What is the Principle of Obtaining Love?

Just as there are regulations and principles laid down for obtaining different types of knowledge, in the same manner there is a definite code of discipline to be followed for admission to the school of love. It is necessary that these principles be followed rigidly: A lover must give up the thoughts of the world, the attractions thereof and of the world beyond, and must then be completely absorbed in contemplation of his Beloved at all times.

## Love for the Master and its Advantages

We have not seen the Lord, and we do not know how to love Him. But a Master is the manifestation of His love and to love the Master is to love the Lord. To love one's Master is to lose one's own identity completely in the Master and thereby merge into the Lord.

It is easy to boast about one's love for the Master, but it is extremely difficult to be a true lover. A disciple should gradually increase his love for the Master. As a result, that love will eventually turn into true ecstasy and His Form will then imprint itself in the mind of the disciple. Without Dhyan (contemplation on the form of the Master) it is not possible to strengthen the bond of love for the Master, nor will the Dhyan be complete; that is, it will not be possible for the disciple to hold the form of the Master within himself.

The attitude of the disciple towards his Master and God should be like that of a moth for the flame, and he should burn in the fire of his love for Him, because by such an immolation one does not die but attains everlasting life. The lovers that forget themselves completely in love for their Master drink from the fountain of the Elixir of Life and attain eternal bliss.

We love saintly persons because they are merged in His love. To meet them and to be in their presence is to meet God and to be in His presence. Jesus Christ says: *"He who has seen me has seen my father."*

Once God said to Moses, *"I was not well, and how is it that you did not come to inquire about my health?"* Moses replied, *"Oh God, you are the king of this world and of the regions above. How can you fall ill?"* The reply was: *"Moses, a certain very dear devotee of mine was not well and you did not go to him to inquire about his health. If you had visited him at that time, you would have automatically visited me."*

This clearly shows that love and service to the devotees of the Lord is love and service to the Lord Himself. Similarly, love and service to the Master and contemplation of His form is, in reality, love and contemplation of God. But people in their ignorance call it idol worship, man worship, or "gurudom" (guru worship).

*“Satguru makes it possible for us to be in the immediate presence for the Lord by His nectar-like speeches and discourses, oh Nanak, that person is fortunate who has his mind fixed in the Lotus Feet of God.”* (Adi Granth.)

Nearness to God is achieved and felt in two different ways: outwardly and inwardly. Outwardly, it is done by keeping the company of Saints, but inwardly one cannot attain it unless heart is connected with heart. And to create the path of contact from one heart to the other it is necessary to inculcate in one's self the highest form of love. When love and affection are firmly established in one's heart, then contemplation of the Beloved is easily achieved, because in the hearts of lovers the form of their Beloved is always present.

*“In the mirror of the heart, there is the image of the Beloved. By simply bowing the head one can see it.”*

In the Muslim Scriptures it is said that a Gurumukh is the mirror of God. God gives us a glimpse of Himself through His Gurumukhs, and to enable us to see Him, the Gurumukhs act as mirrors (of God). By seeing such persons we remember Him, and the sign by which we recognize such Gurumukhs is that by keeping their company and by meeting them we are automatically reminded of the existence of God. When this does not happen, we should take it that the individual is not a complete Gurumukh. Kabir says:

*“Oh Kabir, by the Darshan of (by seeing) a Saint I remember my God, and every such moment is credited towards the remembrance of the Lord. All other time is wasted.”*

One should not keep the company of a person who is devoid of truth, faith and love because he is like a mirror and we shall see our own reflection and that of our own thought currents in him.

When a devotee has firmly established the condition of love and affection within himself, his heart is then connected with the heart of his Master by the chord of love. This can be achieved only by inculcating intense love and practicing contemplation and remembrance. Hearts that are devoid of these qualities cannot achieve true love. Therefore, lovers of God remember Him by repetition of His Name and contemplation on the form of their Master. They are then able to benefit by contemplation outwardly as well as inwardly.

A Master is a lover of God. In Him there are boundless currents of true love. He is the physical form of that love. To love Him is to find the most important medium for developing love for God, because He is a manifestation of God, and His heart is full of love for Him. His face shines with the light and energy of God. By seeing Him, love and longing for God increases. To love such a person is to love God Himself, because by loving Him we always remember our Lord. Maulana Rumi says:

*“When you have accepted the personality of your Master, then God and His manifestation on earth are also automatically accepted. If you look at your Master as a different entity from God, you will lose the reality of God also. If you are searching for the reality of God, look at the face of your Master, and by looking at God through the luster of the Master's forehead, you will fall in love with Him.”*

A person in whose heart love for the Master has been bestowed by God is really fortunate, because love for the Master is the method by which we come to love God. To love the Satguru only for his own sake is better than any other type of love, because the inner beauty in Him is indestructible. God's beauty is everlasting, and He shines through a Satguru; therefore, love for the Master is free from all defects. But one must remember that in order to love God or the Master, it is necessary to create true longing.

As long as a person is absorbed in enjoyment of the sensual pleasure, real longing (for God) will not come. We must consequently keep away from bad company and also save ourselves from the snare of sensual pleasures. The soul is a particle of its origin, which is the Lord, and it has descended from the highest spiritual regions. It is, therefore, not a good thing to entangle it in sensual and worldly pleasures.

By loving the Master we inculcate love for the Lord within ourselves, and a desire is created in us to meet Him. This creates a sense for contentment within and at the same time the mind is controlled by keeping it busy in repeating His Names.

With the increase of love for the Master, love for the Lord automatically increases, and one is always inclined to remember Him intensely. By repetition of His Divine Names one becomes calm, and without this one is restless.

After some time the disciple's condition becomes one of love and there is an intense desire of the heart for the Lord. By remembering the Master, who is the manifestation of the Lord, the disciple begins to long for His Darshan; tears automatically roll down his eyes, and the soul becomes restless. The restlessness of the soul makes him forget himself. The repetition of the Names becomes so intense that the disciple becomes completely absorbed in it and forgets his own self. Guru Ram Das says:

*"My Master, who is God incarnate, has captured my heart, and I am restless to have His Darshan."*

This state cannot be described in words, because such a person is full of the ecstasy created by the elixir of love and is awakened into a state of super-consciousness (bliss). Those who are devoid of love for the Master cannot understand this condition. In the fire of love, everything in the mind of the lover is annihilated; and because it is not possible for him to bear that state of separation (from God) and restlessness, he cries out to the world, *"Please do not love."*

*"Had I known that love results in such an affliction, I would have announced to the world with the beating of drums that nobody should love."*

Only one whose mind and body are engulfed in the ocean of love can know the condition of love. No other person can do so. A lover is beside himself because of his intense longing, and people call him mad. But having tasted this unique love, he is so happy in it that he cares nothing for the world and passes his time in a state of constant love for the Lord. Bulleh Shah described this state of a lover in the following beautiful words:

*"I have loved my Beloved, and people taunt me. Nobody understands the condition of my heart, because I feel that I am in a strange atmosphere. Only he who has a longing for the indestructible Lord can comprehend Him. It is difficult to ascend to the summit of love. He alone knows who has done so."*

*“The fire of your love has consumed me in a moment, and this love has made me announce to the world: ‘Whoever is consumed by the fire of love is the only one who can comprehend it. No one else knows it.’*

*“Because of separation from Thee, people call me mad, and I am spending my time in quietness, shutting my eyes and closing my ears.*

*“Oh my Lord, please look upon me with Thy Divine Glance and be Merciful to this wretched creature of Thine! This love has been so unkind to me that everywhere people are taunting me. This butcher of love has been so unkind to me that I cannot describe it. Having pierced through my breast, it vanished. I cry stealthily to my parents by making every kind of pretensions. I am in such a state of love that people taunt me on all sides.”*

When one who has real love for the Master is in the Master’s presence his condition is unique, and due to the burning of the fire of love caused by the Master’s Darshan (sight of the Master) he appears to be an entirely different person.

By looking at the Master the remembrance of the Lord automatically comes into one’s mind, and by being absorbed into it the soul soars into the higher regions and is in a state of indescribable bliss.

Thus the two souls – the soul of the Master and that of the disciple – unite. Both become one. The soul of the disciple enters into the soul of overflowing love of the Satguru, and merges completely into the form of his Master, thereby attaining the state of the consummation of love or complete union in Him. The disciple is dyed in the hue of the Master’s love and imbibes all His qualities. As the Master’s qualities are far superior to anything imaginable, the disciple gains tremendous benefit.

This state of love is so ecstatic that Mohammedan Saints have compared it to the state of intoxication caused by drinking wine. But the state of bliss is indescribable, and can be known only by the devotee who has surrendered himself completely to his Satguru. In such a state the Master guides the devotee with Grace under all conditions. People who are engrossed in the sensual pleasures of this world cannot realize this.

In order to invoke love and Grace from the Lord, it is necessary for the devotee to enrich love for his Master and to seek Grace from Him.

One person may claim to love God. Another loves his Master. Which one of these two is nearer to God? Without love for the Master it is not possible to love God, because God is invisible. So the person who claims to love God loves Him only superficially. God is visible only through His manifestations (the Masters); therefore, to love the Master is to love God. If you desire to love God, you should keep the company of His lovers.

The currents of God’s love will then enter into your heart and make you a lover of God. The love for God increases in proportion to the increase of love for the Master, and the devotee begins to see Light inside.

Sometimes the Light is in the form of lightning, sometimes stars are seen, and sometimes the stars burst and the sun and moon are visible. Sometimes the luminous and brilliant form of the Master is visible within, and this enables the soul to see higher spiritual regions within and to cross Brahm and Par Brahm.

The Master forbids the devotee to reveal these secrets to others, because it is against the law of God and of Nature to do so. By the Grace of the Master these internal sights increase in number and intensity day by day; and by contemplation on the form of the Master the devotee's love for God is also gradually intensified, thus increasing his state of happiness into one of unalloyed bliss. Such a devotee is really fortunate, and after he has reached this state, if the Master shows indifference, then his life becomes miserable and is worse than suffering from hundreds of ailments. Kabir says:

*“It causes no pain or anguish if God is displeased with a true devotee, because he has the support of his Master, but if the Master is displeased with him, then he has no place to go in this world or beyond.”*

A Master possesses the unique magnetic power of love which draws a devotee towards Him and creates within him a feeling of indifference towards worldly attractions. This magnetic power is an inherent quality of the Master and emanates from His every action and movement. Everything that radiates from the Master – the light of His beautiful face, the lines on His forehead, even his indifference when he is displeased with the devotee, the luster round Him when He speaks smilingly – all pierce the heart of the devotee and thus attract him to his Master. Through the luster of the Master's face shines the luster of God, and one sees God in his Master. Hafiz says:

*“Even harsh words coming from the beautiful red lips of the Master are full of love.”*

This state of love is achieved by those lovers who have fully forgotten themselves and have merged themselves entirely into the Beloved. But in order to attain this condition one has to cross various stages.

Sometimes the Master appears indifferent and by other similar signs tries to eliminate ego and arrogance from the mind of His devotee. Sometimes the Master's love for the disciple is apparent and He thereby strengthens the love in the disciple, as a result of which the soul rises higher.

Sometimes true lovers of the Master feel their life to be miserable and have an intense longing to meet Him, and in their state of separation from Him they consider every breath to be as long as a year. To them this world is a place of horror, day and night. This state of unbearable pain cannot be described, and if one were to listen to an attempt at describing it, he would tremble. O God, may such a state never be the fate of any person!

## Love God and His Lovers

Everyone wishes to be loved by someone, and also desires to love someone. Everyone says, *“I want to love someone and I also want someone to love me, so that I may be useful to him and he may be of help to me.”* This type of love is also prevalent amongst animals. But it is necessary to understand what type of love one should have, and with whom one should create ties of love so that it may be beneficial.

Everybody knows that love for this world and worldly people and objects is the cause of many miseries, because these things are all temporary and will leave us sooner or later. We shall leave them at our death. Therefore, we should give our love to a being who is beyond death and who will never be separated from us, so that we may never feel the pain of separation.

Such a being is none other than God Himself, or His manifestation whose soul is completely merged in God and who has everlasting life. Therefore, it is God in the form of His Saints who are worthy of our love. God is within each one of us, and consequently He, unlike worldly objects, cannot be separated from us. To love Him will never cause any pain. Therefore, it is only God or His Saints with whom one can be in love constantly till eternity. So, if you wish to love and be loved at all times, then your love should be offered to God Himself through His manifestation on this earth, who is no other than the Satguru.

The highest and the greatest boon that anyone can have is the love for God; but only those on whom God bestows His Grace can be the recipient of this sublime gift. In order to create love for God in one's heart it is necessary to create love for the Master. If we love God, He loves us. Maulana Rumi says:

*“If love for the Master is in your heart, then rest assured that God also loves you, because the Master is the reflection of God on earth.”*

Another Saint says: *“You cannot fathom the Grace of God. His glance of love is on you at all times, like that of a lover for the beloved.”*

In the Quran it is also stated: *“I remember those who remember me.”*

It is extremely difficult to describe true love for God. Some people say that it is impossible to love God, and that love for God simply means that we should follow His commandments. Such people are ignorant of the real Truth. Hazrat Mohammed says:

*“None amongst you is a Gurumukh (true devotee of the Master). So long as you do not have greater love for me than for your parents, children and all other worldly objects, you cannot be a Gurumukh.”*

He then prays:

*“Oh my God, bestow upon me love for you and the love of those beings of yours who love you. Instill in me a longing that will bring me nearer to your love; and create in me a desire for love for you as intense as that which a person dying of thirst has for a drink of cold water – in truth, even more intense than that.”*

How can people who are submerged in worldly attachments know anything about God's love? So long as they are not free from worldly attachments it will not be possible for them to taste God's love. They cannot understand the valuable words of Hazrat Mohammed:

*“I am devoted to my God much more than to highly scented perfumes and even to beautiful women.”*

## Praises of Love by Various Saints

God is love. Just as it is impossible to praise Him adequately, it is similarly not possible to define love. Those who have drunk deeply out of the cup of love have become intoxicated by it, and in their ecstasy have sung songs of praise for Him. Below are given a few quotations by way of example:

*“Love is God. It is the religion and faith of man.”*

*“Love is a pilgrimage. It is a magnetic power which attracts the hearts and everything good and beautiful in them.”*

*“A heart full of love is contented and sweet.”*

*“Love is the comforter and sustainer of hearts. It is the hope, the longing for union, and surging emotion in the heart.”*

*“It is a Power. When we love, we learn the lesson of courage and fearlessness.”*

*“It is the shield against which no weapon can be effective.”*

*“It is Truth and Reality. It is faith and sacrifice.”*

*“It is a divine flower, which imparts its perfume to the entire universe. It is a fragrant flower through which man’s life is beautified.”*

*“It is a light by which the universe is illuminated.”*

*“It is a source of perfume which wafts spring-like fragrance into the hearts of men.”*

*“It is a story which will never end, and a problem for which there is no solution.”*

*“It is a silent emotion full of sweetness, in which man forgets himself completely.”*

*“It is a heavenly gift and good for the soul.”*

*“It is the nightingale, whose sweet songs have a magic effect on man.”*

*“It is the permanent union. Both, the lover and the beloved are imperishable. It is an indescribable state of their hearts.”*

*“It is a rare gem, and a man’s heart is its mounting.”*

*“It is a priceless jewel, which is within us at all times but is not obtainable (without guidance.)”*

*“It is as brittle as glass but as strong as steel.”*

*“It is a current of purity and a rare gift of God, bestowed on each one of us.”*

*“Love is the greatness as well as the purity of the heart.”*

*“To love is the real aim of man and the most needed ingredient of his life. The arrows of love are silent. God does not wish for anything but love for His creation.”*

*“Love is such a potent elixir that even one drop of it will awaken the dormant energies in man.”*

*“Love is the purest and the greatest benefactor of life.”*

*“Love is an unfailing medicine which sustains the heart and brings new life into it.”*

*“The key to heaven is love and not intellect.”*

*“Those who are devoid of love are also devoid of God, for God is love.”*

*“There are waves of unselfishness in the ocean of love, which can be seen and felt but are beyond description.”*

*“Love is not artificial. It is natural.”*

*“Love is not lifeless. It is life and full of activity.”*

*“Love is not blind. It increases vision.”*

*“Love is not a malady. It is the proof of spiritual awakening.”*

*“Love is the best means of seeking freedom from worldly worries.”*

*“Love is stable, imperishable and infinite. In the end all one’s ties and connections with the world are broken, but it is impossible for the relationship of love to be destroyed. It is stronger than chains of steel and unbreakable even by death. Because it is a part of the soul, even when the two bodies perish, its impression remains in the two hearts.”*

*“What is love? Two souls with but one thought, two hearts with but one tongue.”*

## The Treasure of Love is Rare

In this world there are innumerable treasures. We are well versed in knowledge and philosophy, but the state of being in love with the Beloved, expressed by painful sighs and tears because of separation from Him at night, is the lot of a rare few. Hafiz says:

*“I have innumerable treasures of knowledge and of intellect but, alas, I cannot write the story of the tears shed in separation at night, nor of the sighs of longing for my Beloved.”*

## Matter and Spirit

God is infinite. He has no form nor name. He is free from all limitations and qualities. But we have a physical form, and a lover’s heart naturally prays that his Beloved should also similarly appear before his eyes so that he may behold Him. The lover’s eyes long to see Him, his hands long to touch Him, his ears long to hear His sweet voice, and he wishes to embrace his Beloved. He desires to express his love, and therefore he wants to cloth the spiritual with a material form.

When we cover the spirit with material raiment and worship it, we call it material love. The Persian poets have named it physical worship. Hindus worship it as Sargun (spirit with qualities). But the worship of Nirgun (spirit without qualities) is known as spiritual worship. In different Scriptures it is called the worship of God, the worship of the Kaaba, and so forth. The object of physical and spiritual worship is the same. People who perform spiritual worship have to go to the Kaaba or to Dehr and bow their heads in worship there. The radiance of the same God who is in the Kaaba is in a Saint. The only difference is in the conception of the devotee.

## Love for the Spiritual and Love for the Physical

Love is of two kinds. One is physical and man-made and the other is natural or divine. Physical love is the love of worldly people who are continually tied to the world and its objects. Divine Love is that of the devotee of the Lord, and it establishes a permanent connection with God.

The satisfaction of sensual desires is not a man’s goal in life. These pleasures, besides pulling him down, have no permanence in them whatsoever. The real object of life is to connect the soul with the unchangeable Lord and thus be united with Him forever in eternal bliss.

Some people dislike the physical type of love, and others call it the first step towards spiritual love. There is a downward tendency in the expression of physical love by which the lower senses are excited. In spiritual love, the senses are all under perfect control.

The expression of love that is produced as a result of physical attraction is not the true form of love. Rather, it is the cause of one’s fall in the eyes of God. Extremely rare is the case of a person who can attain spiritual love through physical love.

Some of the Muslim Saints, however, considered it necessary to attain spiritual love through physical love. They considered physical love as the first step towards spiritual love. Their contention was that just as a staircase or a ladder is necessary in order to ascend a high wall, similarly to ascend the heights of spiritual love, one had first to experience the “ladder” of physical love. But this is necessary only for gaining concentration through contemplation.

Once such concentration has been achieved, one should immediately try to develop only spiritual love because the other method is beset with risks and obstacles.

Those who attempt to ascend to spiritual love by means of physical love usually remain at a standstill in the condition of physical love, which is nothing but an animal instinct. They cannot make spiritual progress. Maulana Rumi says:

*“The physical love is like a bridge, and a bridge is meant only to cross the river and not to live on. Those who stay on the bridge do not achieve any progress in their endeavor to meet the Lord.”*

Saint Bernard says: *“Love begins in the flesh and ends in the spirit.”*

The outer love should never be considered more than the first step towards the Divine Love. Both types of love are good, provided there is no motive of gratification of the senses. Love should be for the sake of love alone. The foundation of true love contains no trace of selfish aims or desires. Like God’s love for us, our love should also be expressed and offered to Him without any selfish motive or desire for reward.

Selfish love is called attachment, and is merely a physical emotion. When love is imprisoned within the limitations of low, narrow and selfish qualities, the result is pain and misery. This selfish love is advocated by some lecturers and leaders who have only their own personal gain in view. Their lectures do not deal with the real love, which is for God and His entire creation – whether Hindu, Muslim or Christian, and of any caste, creed or nationality.

Look at the state of adoration and self-abnegation of Manu! He ran after his beloved Laila like a madman. Even if he saw her footprint, he would consider it a sin to pass by it without first bending his forehead to touch the footprint with it in homage. It is written that once he was seen kissing the feet of a dog, and when asked the reason why, he said: *“This dog sometimes walks in the vicinity of Laila’s residence.”*

Manu’s love for Laila was so deeply imbedded in his heart that he had no room for anything else. Manu, however, remained at a standstill in physical love for Laila. Love for the physical form (which itself is not eternal) is only the play of lustful desires. Worldly love is usually of this nature. The only lasting and true love is for God, and is not confined to worldly forms. Worldly love keeps one away from Him.

After Laila’s death, Manu realized the truth. He said that his mad love for Laila caused him to feel ashamed. He regretted having showered all his love on a mortal being, for he then realized that the best friend is the one with whom we can be united forever.

*“Give your heart to the Being who is eternal. Why attach yourself to one who is subject to death and decay?”*

Saints have therefore taught us to avoid the expression of physical love and have directed us to love our Satguru instead of loving worldly forms, for the Masters are free from all worldly dross, and love for them will not entangle us in the ties of this world. And love for the Master is necessary, because His love reminds us of God. Such a state has been described by the Saints as merging oneself into the Satguru. As the Satguru Himself is merged in the Lord, one who

merges himself into the Satguru automatically achieves the next step, which is to merge oneself into the Lord. Thus one attains God-Realization.

A love that is produced as the result of action, qualities or personal influence is all worldly love. True love is a living force.

Shamas-i-Tabrez says: *“How long will you keep the dead beloved in your embrace? Why not take hold of the soul, for it will never die!”*

The true lover and the Beloved exist forever. You should not give your heart to flesh and bones, for they are perishable and will one day decay. To give one's heart to a destructible thing is to kill oneself. The physical type of love only succeeds in confusing the lover, moves him farther away from divinity, and prevents him from crossing the ocean of death.

Therefore, turn your mind away from the worldly love for your children, for your wife, for your wealth and treasures, for your sovereignty and fame. These are all ephemeral. Instead, we should turn our faces toward the Lord through His manifestation on earth, the Satguru.

Muslim Scriptures state that to die in love for the Lord is the real sacrifice. This means that whoever has died in such love has died a real death. The world is a dead thing and those who hanker after it are no better than dogs. Since this world is transitory and man is at the top of creation, it is improper for a human being to stoop to the worldly type of love.

There is no contentment in worldly love, whereas in love for God there is complete tranquility. Hafiz says:

*“What is the use of giving your love to a person who does not respond? The fault lies in the fact that there is not enough intensity of longing, although the healer of this pain of longing is always there.”*

We should learn the lesson of sacrifice from the moth which never wavers even though it is burnt to death by the flame by which it is attracted. Again, Hafiz says:

*“It is certain that so long as one is not prepared to sacrifice his life on the path of love, he cannot reach the Beloved.”*

## Method of Creating Worldly Love and Spiritual Love

Whenever we have a desire to express our love for someone, we should try to discover what kind of love the beloved would prefer. We should then inculcate in ourselves those qualities or actions by which the beloved is pleased and we should always talk about those things only, for by listening to them he will naturally be attracted.

Love is not created by sight alone. It is also awakened by constantly listening to speech or song about the beloved, and by talking about him. When you are able to develop the qualities that are liked by the beloved and he is satisfied that you have actually developed them, he will then automatically bestow his love on you. Take an example.

If you are interested in painting and have mastered the art, then as soon as a lover of art sees your proficiency or hears about it, you will naturally become the object of his interest or love. Someone else may be fond of music or may be interested in poetry, and you may study music or poetry and attain proficiency in it. Then, whenever that person listens to your music or poetry, he will be automatically attracted towards you.

We have many such examples in nature. When one is attracted by a certain quality or action, the lover should also develop the same kind of quality or type of action in order to become eligible for the love of the beloved.

The above methods are the means for the development of worldly love. But if such a love is developed with the object of satisfying one's own sensual desires or is subject to any other ulterior motive, it becomes the cause of attachment and must be shunned. If one indulges in this type of love, he loses his own good qualities and retards his progress towards the real love.

On the other hand, if this worldly love is not covered with the filth of sensual pleasure nor motivated by some selfish aim, then the true love, which is pure and divine, will ultimately be developed. Maulana Jami says:

*"If you have physical love which is not subject to any selfish or ulterior motive, then such a love is welcome, because it is the means of creating in you, love for God."*

Sufi Saints have also described physical or worldly love as the first step towards spiritual love. They say:

*"Love, whether it is material or spiritual, should be in every heart, because in the mirror of material love there is the reflection of spiritual love. The light of worldly love illuminates the path of Love Divine."*

*"Everybody, whether consciously or unconsciously, is in search of a beloved. And every place is suited for love, whether it is a mosque, a temple or a church. This universal search for a beloved is a reflection of the Divine Love."*

## True and False Love

Hafiz says:

*"True love is like a bright light, in which a moth will sacrifice itself in a moment. It is not feeble like that of the weak glow of a candle, of which the light itself will feel ashamed."*

Again:

*"Oh harken ye, loud-crowning cock! Why such a din? You should have taken a lesson of love from the moth, who burns to death without even a sigh."*

## Life is Useless Without God's Love

Of what use is the drinking of nectar to one who has not tasted the unique elixir of true love! Of what use is life for one who has not sacrificed himself on the path of love! Of what use is the reading of Scriptures or even the reciting of them if one has not understood their meaning! Such a one is only superficially calling the Beloved by the names of love, and has not created true love for Him within himself. Of what use is it to weep outwardly if one has not shed silent tears for the Beloved within!

*“Of what use will it be to a person to drink the Amrit (Divine Nectar) if he has not tasted the elixir of love? Of what use is it to one who has not sacrificed himself at the altar of love?”*

*“Worldly people have seen the world and have enjoyed its fruits and its orchards. They have also read and recited books and Scriptures, but all this is without gain.*

*“Wali calls his Beloved incessantly but the Beloved demands the surrender of the heart, without which He cannot be won. Thus Wali's crying, ‘Oh my Beloved!’ throughout the night is fruitless.”* (Wali Ram)

The people of the world are engrossed in reading Scriptures, but they have not really understood them. If one should read only ‘two and one-half’ letters of ‘love’, he would then understand the real meaning of love. [In Hindi language the word Prem (love) consists of two and half letters.] Shamas-i-Tabrez says:

*“The soul that does not contain love for God would be better off if it did not exist at all, for if such a soul is dwelling within a human form, it is receiving no benefit therefrom and is living a life of shame.”*

*“A person who has not been dyed in the hue of love has no more value in the eyes of God than a piece of wood or stone.”*

*“The life that is passed without love is without any benefit, for love is an elixir for the heart.”*

Shamas-i-Tabriz further states:

*“Love is attained only through great good fortune. Without it, life is fruitless. Only a very few extremely fortunate persons are blessed with the gift of love. The part of life that is wasted without love for God should not be counted, for it is all useless. If life is passed without love, one will be shamed before the altar of God.”*

Kabir Sahib also says the same thing: *“A person in whose heart there is no love, and who does not have the Name of God on his tongue, is no better than a beast; and he dies without having received any of the benefits of his human birth.”*

*“Devotion without love is all sham. Ignorant people lose all the benefits of the valuable human form with which they have been endowed by simply filling their stomachs like beasts. The body in which love does not exist should be considered a crematorium. Such a one is breathing without life, like the bellows of a blacksmith.”*

Guru Arjan says:

*“A person may be very handsome, may belong to a prominent family, may be extremely wealthy and clever, and may be a gifted speaker; but if he does not possess devotion to God, he should be considered no better than a corpse.”*

Except for the Divine Love, all other types are undesirable. So long as we do not sacrifice that to which we are most attached, at the altar of God’s love, we cannot obtain Salvation. Our soul is the hidden treasure of love, and it is most essential that we turn our attention from the world and its objects and direct it towards Him.

## Love of Saints and of Ordinary People

Saints always teach only love, because love and God are one. God is love, and God’s reflection is love. The only difference between the Saints and other people is in the quality of their love. Saints are love incarnate and bestow the gift of love on others. They love the evil people as well as the good ones, and their love is of the highest type. Love is the true religion and real guide.

Some people say that we should love God’s creation, so that we may be able to love God. On the surface, this principle appears feasible, but if we go deeper, we shall be able to see that this principle is not entirely correct, for pure love is free from all attachment to the world of matter and illusion, and is found only in the regions beyond the reach of mind and Maya (matter and illusion).

In the lower regions, love is entangled in physical matter and attachments. Consequently, it is covered with worldly dross because of our selfish motives. The love of those who are engrossed in the pleasures of the world is full of the poison of physical attachment. This way of living cannot create pure love in us, because such poisonous love causes us great harm; and it is impossible for us to free ourselves from it by our own efforts alone. This lower type of love will further entangle us in worldly attachments and will definitely not create Divine Love.

The Saints, however, possess the pure spark of love for God alone. If we love them, then love for God will be kindled within us. God is omnipresent. So, when we love Him we love His whole creation, and we thus radiate currents of love for all.

God is Shabd. God is love. Therefore, Shabd is also love. Saints are Shabd incarnate. They bestow the gift of Shabd on others. Those who practice Shabd and listen to the Divine Music become oceans of love. They love everybody and by the currents of this Divine Love radiate a virtuous influence in this world.

The highest form of all practices is to create love within. If the spark of love is removed from rituals and ceremonies, they are nothing but empty formalities and are unable to attach us to the love of God. We may succeed to a certain extent in creating love within ourselves for human beings, but such a love will naturally not be lasting. Real and lasting love can be achieved, however, if we sit at the Lotus Feet of a highly evolved soul (a Saint or Master).

The dormant love within our souls can be awakened by the practice of Shabd, which keeps us above the dross of Maya. Generally, lecturers or teachers who are devoid of any practical spiritual consciousness and who have had no opportunity to seek and love a Master, advocate in their speeches that there is no harm in love for each other – male and female; but in actual practice many cases have occurred where people who listened to such advice have fallen into the pitfall created by the snares of Maya. We should love only Ram Naam, that is the Name of God, or His Saints. All other types of love only succeed in binding us to this world.

The teachings of the Saints do not imprison a disciple in rituals and ceremonies. Their teachings guide us to awaken the dormant love within ourselves, the love that is inherent in the soul. This love can be awakened by devotion to the Master, and by the inner contact of Shabd.

Nowadays religions are considered to be embodiments of noble ideals with virtuous and philosophical thoughts added to them. Prayer is also added, and all these things aid us in creating in our minds an appetite for God's love. But this is not food for the soul, which is hungry and which can be fed only by Shabd or Naam: By means of Shabd the real love is kindled within us, and that is the food which alone can satisfy the soul. Once this love has been awakened within us, it will do everything for us, and we will find this food of love in the entire world. Without awakening the true love within ourselves, we cannot tread the path of true spirituality.

## Love is True Worship and True Austerity

Many people subject themselves to austerities and perform various difficult practices. If the object of these austerities is to achieve supernatural powers, it is actually a trap to further entangle one in the snares of Maya. Such practices only succeed in moving one farther away from the goal of God Consciousness.

A devotee practiced various austerities with considerable diligence for many years and finally acquired the power to walk on water. But actually a devotee (one who spends the same amount of time in practicing Shabd), who crosses the river in a boat by spending a trifling sum and conserving his spiritual powers, is far superior. The labor expended during many years in achieving the power to walk on water is without any actual spiritual value.

Love is the true austerity which bestows humility, teaches us to remain in the Mauj (Will) of the Beloved, and removes the attention from worldly pleasures and pains. Such a mind does not waver and is always fixed in the Beloved. If such a person were to face difficulties or troubles, he would bear them without complaint, for he remembers only the Beloved in his heart, and he creates a new world of love around himself. He is not attracted by the outer world nor affected by its troubles. In addition to this, the spiritual secrets are disclosed within him and he comes nearer to God-Realization.

Such a happy state of love is the possession of a rare devotee. This love is sweet and has attractive powers. When it is achieved, all other attractions are burnt up, and only the Name of God remains in the heart of the devotee. This love is a bright flame in which everything is consumed except the Beloved.

Actually, when the fire of love is fully kindled, nothing remains in the devotee, because everything is consumed by the flame of true love.

## Love is the Basis of All Activity

All activities, religions and repetitions or remembrances are based on love. It is a true and beautiful ornament which decorates the soul.

*“Oh my mother! The love in my heart is my daily activity, is my prayer, and is also the True Ram Naam (Name of God).”* (Adi Granth)

*“The bride (soul) has bedecked herself with ornaments, viz., the necklace of virtuous qualities, the bindi (dot on the forehead) of love, and the jewels of spiritual knowledge.”* (Adi Granth)

## Love is True Prayer

Love is the true prayer to God. By this kind of prayer the lover is so intoxicated with the ecstasy of love that he cannot even walk with steadiness and staggers. When the flame of love is kindled in his heart, his eyes light up with happiness and joy, and he thrills to the rapturous currents of ecstasy. Such a state of intoxication in the remembrance of the Lord is far better than thousands of other methods of trying to reach Him.

By repeating the Name of the Lord only once, love is felt in every cell of the devotee’s body. In other words, it (repetition) comes from the heart, and tears flow from the eyes in an unending stream.

If you wish to go to Kaaba (the highest place of Muslim pilgrimage), you should go by the path of tears in your eyes. Then you will reach that place in no time. Fasting without devotion and prayer, without tears, will not bear fruit.

Prayers without tears, the counting of beads without melting of the heart, repetition (of the Name of God) without love, reading Scriptures without devotion, are all roads leading towards the door of God. However, in these activities there is no devotion in the heart, not any tears in the eyes, and the road is naturally dry and endless. But if one’s heart is drenched with tears of love flowing from the eyes, communion with God is attained much sooner.

Love is the true form of worship of God. Without it, knowledge and contemplation are useless, and he who remains without love is unable to inculcate within himself the secrets of achieving God-Realization. Prayer and meditation without love will not achieve the desired results, even if performed for years. So long as a person does not kindle the spark of love within himself, he remains without the secret knowledge of God.

Various methods are practiced with the aim of attaining communion with the Lord: repetition or remembrance, austerities, devotion, detachment, knowledge, the practice of yoga and many others.

But true love is a much higher and nobler observance than any one of these. The very basis of all these methods is love. Without love, no method or its practice will take a person to the Court of the Lord. Without love, yogic practices are as good – perhaps as bad – as a disease, because one cannot succeed by such methods.

Guru Arjan says: *“Repetition, austerities, pleasures, comforts, arrogance, fame – all these should be sacrificed at the altar of Love, even if only for a second.”*

Maulana Rumi says: *“That eye is fortunate which sheds pearls of tears in the remembrance of its Beloved. That heart is fortunate which is burning in separation from its Lord, because every spell of remorse is accompanied by a unique happiness. A person whose only aim is towards this end is the most fortunate one.”*

Just as rain is a blessing for the earth and enables it to produce multicolored flowers and beautiful shrubs and trees, in the same manner when tears from the eyes fall on the earth of the heart, the buds of the secrets of the knowledge of God burst into blossoms. The path of love is therefore the highest, so much so that God Himself is love.

Love is the life and spirit of all practices. No practice can be beneficial without love. Love is a force that has no equal, and its praise is sung in the Vedas, Puranas and other religious Scriptures. All Saints, Sages, Fakirs, Incarnations and evolved souls such as Guru Nanak, Kabir, Tulsi Sahib, Swami Ji, Shamas-i-Tabriz, etc., were worshipers at the altar of love, because it is the easiest and the shortest path leading to communion with God.

Through love alone can God be realized. Guru Gobind Singh says: *“I am telling the truth to you all and you should listen to me with attentive ears. Whosoever has practiced love has achieved communion with God.”*

Tulsi Sahib says: *“Whosoever has loved has found God. Nobody has succeeded in achieving this end without love.”*

He further says: *“A holy person, a thief, a robber – all try to remember God; but He cannot be pleased without the spark of love.”*

Kabir Sahib says: *“A yogi, a celibate, an ascetic, a philosopher – none amongst them is able to realize God without love, because the region of Satguru is the most difficult to approach.”*

All austerities and practices are empty without love. Knowledge and contemplation in themselves are also unsuccessful efforts, but all these practices are performed only to inculcate love. If there is no love, then all meditations are dry and useless.

Love is the most powerful and effective of all practices to meet the Lord. It is the only method by which one can attain communion with Him in an instant. Shamas-i-Tabrez says:

*“If the road is lengthy, you should fly on the wings of love. When you unfold the wings of love, you need not ascend by means of the steps.”*

He further states: *“You should ride on the steed of love and go forward without fear, because that steed is very swift. The path may have ups and downs, but it will take you to your Goal in no time at all.”*

## Love is Higher than Religion, Rituals, etc.

The state of love is much higher than that of religion, rituals, etc. A person who is intoxicated with the wine of love will reach the goal by means of a single sigh, as compared to thousands of years spent in other methods.

Who can understand the waves of ecstasy that arise in the heart of a person intoxicated with Love? Only he can taste this, who has himself trodden the path. A heart devoid of love cannot understand this.

### One Has to Dedicate His Life, Bravely and Quietly in True Love

True love is like a fathomless ocean which has no shores, and there is no help for anyone overwhelmed by such love unless he sacrifices his own life. Hafiz says:

*“You must go on burning in sorrow and pain and you must not resort to any treatment for this condition, for there is no remedy for this pain. It is a burning longing for communion with the Beloved, and for this there is no remedy.”*

Just as life is not possible without breath similarly a lover’s life exists only in his beloved. The lover is always unhappy in the love for his beloved, and sacrifices himself like a moth that flies into the flame as soon as it sees a spark of fire. Hafiz says:

*“When the Emperor of love presented a robe to me, the meaning of the gift was very clearly explained to me in the following language: ‘Oh Hafiz! Be careful. You must remain quiet because this is not the path of the talkative. It is the path on which one has to merge oneself in love and become love itself.’”*

Again, Hafiz says: *“Have patience in your heart, for so long as you do not sacrifice your life on this path, you cannot travel up to your Beloved.”*

### Love is the Path of Surrender and Sacrifice

In love there is no law except the Will of the Beloved. Whatever the Beloved orders or commands, the lover bows his head in obedience. A wealthy man cannot dream of his own commands in the state of love, where one must undertake to be humble and agree to be subservient. Ego and love cannot remain together. Kabir says:

*“If you wish to taste the Nectar of Love, you cannot be arrogant. Two swords cannot be contained in one scabbard.”*

A lover prefers to be wounded by the arrows of love than to wound another person with them. Love knows only how to give, its principal characteristic being the surrender of one’s life and breath. Love does not know how to command. A lover considers it to be his good fortune when he is bound by the commands of others.

Real love removes the lover from the worries of pleasure and pain, praise and blame, poverty and wealth, and takes him beyond all such limitations. Love enters every cell of the lover and gives him unlimited power, so that he is never in need of wealth or fame, or honor or name. He has no desire for this world or the next. He is freed from the web of heaven and hell. He is no longer tempted into the snares of rituals or worldly ties.

To demand worldly conveniences from God is to separate oneself from the aims of love. Not to remain in His Will, nor to be contented in happiness or even in pain is to fall down from the heights of devotion. A lover loves only the Beloved, and the Beloved is the be-all and end-all for him. He sees only the light of his Beloved in this world and in the sky above. The Beloved is his real world. Nearness to the Beloved is his heaven, and being away from the Beloved is his hell.

Only the Name and praises of his Beloved are on his tongue – nothing else. The repetition of the same Name is never-ceasing, and sighs of separation when the Beloved is farther away from him are wrung from his body as well as his heart. He asks for nothing from the Beloved except the Beloved and longs to surrender himself entirely to the wishes of the Beloved. In the ecstasy of his love and in his complete surrender, he considers poverty or wealth, pain or pleasure, health or illness, and whatever else may happen as gifts from the Beloved. He feels no difference between pleasure and pain. By the Grace of love he rises above these things and remains above the limitations of the body.

Real love demands complete surrender. Not only this, but one must be happy in the happiness of the Beloved, and must not wish to go beyond the Will of the Beloved. To him all worldly things are dead, and he leaves them for the persons hankering after them. He shatters the glass of his own intellect and remains only in the Will of the Beloved. He has only one aim, and that is the remembrance of the Beloved. His life is spent in the Will of the Beloved. He wishes for neither happiness nor sorrow, but is contented in His Will. If a misfortune comes to him, he forgets the pain of that misfortune. People of the world, at one time or another, make demands from God. But a lover asks for the Beloved and nothing else. Sheikh Sa'adi says:

*“People tell me to demand something from my Beloved, but I shall demand only Him from Him – nothing more.”*

Similarly, a disciple bows his head to the Will of his Master in the same way that a dead body lies inert like a mound of earth, without any will of its own. In such a state, one receives the highest type of spiritual wealth. Another Saint says:

*“One who has been wounded by the sharp sword of surrender and sacrifice receives every minute fresh life from the secret power of God.”*

Bhai Gur Das says: *“No one has become a disciple by mere lip service. A disciple's will should be like that of a dead person. He should move as he is moved, work as he is desired to work, and should not work against His Will”.*

We cannot have communion with our Beloved so long as we do not remove our attention from worldly desires and do not go beyond the limitations of our own mind. Love is beyond all limitations. One reaches it only after shedding the dross of mind and intellect. A devotee sees the Light of his Beloved only when he forgets himself in the ecstasy of love. Then he sees Him everywhere.

The madness of a lover's ecstasy brings before his eyes a new world which is beyond this physical region and beyond the region of mind, and he takes every word of the Beloved as a sweet command. To live in Him is the highest and sweetest elixir. It is even dearer than life. The current of love takes one beyond good and evil, belief and unbelief, to a state so sublime that it cannot be described. One who is intoxicated in this unique state of bliss – in which any thought of separation or communion is lost – becomes an embodiment of love.

Real love will not permit one to follow one's own bent of mind. Real love is another name for implicitly following the desires of the Beloved and desiring only to please Him by remaining in His Will. In such a state one does not consider his own comforts or discomforts, but effaces his own self for the comfort and convenience of the Beloved. He feels a rare and special bliss or happiness, so great even in discomforts that the people of the world cannot begin to imagine them.

This does not mean that it is the lover only who suffers. The Beloved suffers much more for the sake of the lover. The moth burns only once and is free from all pain, but the flame burns all the time.

In love, one must sacrifice one's own possessions and forget the self completely. A spark of real love is eternal, and by it the self or ego is completely consumed or obliterated. Physically, the lover may appear to be suffering, but inwardly he feels a higher type of happiness which no one else can realize.

Real love turns poison into nectar, fire into ice, snakes into garlands of flowers, pain into pleasure, and blame into praise. To a lover, to be flayed alive is no more than a child's play, for to him, it is simply like removing a garment. It is nothing for him to go to the scaffold smiling and to sacrifice his life. These are all considered blessings in the arena of love. How can anybody describe or understand this? Kabir says:

*“Oh Kabir! Death, of which the whole world is afraid, brings happiness to my mind, for real bliss can be attained only by death.”*

## Love is the Path of Sacrifice

There is no question of gaining anything in love. It is not something that can be bought in a grocer's shop. Love is a matter of giving, and not of taking. Surrender your body, mind, life, beliefs – then only will you know the bliss of walking in the precincts of love. Sarmad says:

*“I gave my body, I gave my life, and also gave my beliefs. The whole world is entangled in these things, but all these entanglements have been removed from me. What greater blessing could anyone wish for?”*

*“Mind, body and wealth are placed before my Master, and my very life is sold to Him for the sake of His love.”* (Adi Granth)

One should happily lose his life (give up the ego) in this path and should not expect anything in return. Khusro says:

*“Oh heart, you should be happy because you will be slain tomorrow in the bazaar of love, but there is no guarantee that you will see the Beloved.”*

*“Where there is love, there is no thought of personal gain. Both cannot be together. When the body is dyed in the hue of love, it is cleansed of all evils and desires.”* (Maulana Rumi)

Kabir says:

*“Love does not grow on trees. Love is not sold in the market. On this path the poor and the rich are on the same level. Whosoever surrenders himself, gains thereby.”*

In the path of love we have to destroy our ego. We have to leave pride behind us. The Beloved cannot be met unless one is completely devoid of these qualities. Maulana Rum says:

*“One cannot reach the Court of the Lord so long as he does not lose himself. One can start with the ABC in the school of love only after he has removed his ‘self’. Only that person can understand the beginning of treading towards this path who has been wounded by the arrows of love. Those who intend to travel on the path of love should heed my message, viz. that they can tread it only if they have completely lost their self.”*

## True Love is Not for Weaklings

Love is a beautiful ocean of nectar. Once a person dived into it, he receives eternal life. In this world people talk about love in one form or the other, and everybody desires to inculcate love in himself, but the real path of love is the most difficult one. It is not for those who insist on a life of ease and comfort. It is only for those who are prepared to sacrifice their life. Those who wish to follow this path go towards it with their head (ego) on the palms of their hands. Hafiz says:

*“To go toward the Beloved is not the work of ease-loving people. To enter into this profession of love is the work of Saints who are always in a state of ecstasy and are not concerned with the worries of this world. To love is not the work of weaklings and cowards. Only the brave and strong-minded can enter it.”*

To take to the path of love is not the work of ordinary people. Only these who are fearless and who are prepared to sacrifice their very lives can do so. Cowards cannot approach it. The Lord of love is very high and it is not possible for weaklings to gain access to His Court. So long as we do not sacrifice our head at the altar of our Beloved, we cannot succeed on the path of love. Hafiz says:

*“The least condition that love demands is the surrender of one’s head (ego). If you are not able to do this, you should go away and not even talk of love.”*

Kabir says: *“The cup of love can be enjoyed only by those who are prepared to sacrifice their head (ego). It is not the work of a greedy person who is not capable of sacrificing himself. His talk of love is only superficial.”*

Kabir further states: *“Love is not an easy thing. Only he can enter the abode of love, who is prepared to leave his head on the ground. Not only should he place his head on the ground but he should also step on it. If one can do this, he is ready to tread the path of love; for then alone will he be able to taste the elixir of love.”*

This means, in other words, that when the soul is concentrated at the eye-center, it is supposed to have entered the home of love, and only then is it able to taste love's unique elixir. Kabir says:

*"This is not the home of your aunty (mother's sister). It is the home of love. You can enter it only after you put your head on the ground and step on it. Kabir says: If you can do this then you may enter, for this is the home of love, the indescribable path – high above – and you can come near it only if you are able to cut off your head and put your foot on it (completely surrender yourself)."*

Another Saint, Nag di Das, speaks in a similar vein: *"Only those who are able to cut off their head (banish their ego) and step on it are able to enter the garden of love."*

On this path one has to sacrifice his very life. It will be better if you give it to your Beloved. Otherwise, one day, the Angel of Death is sure to take it away. Why not do it yourself?

Love knows only how to give. One has to abandon all desires and to leave all power and fame, and has to become the slave of someone. Such is love. To achieve true love is to lose one's self completely in love. One has to awaken in one's Beloved and completely merge in God. That is love. It is a work of sacrifice and surrender. To meet the Beloved is very difficult, because one has to bargain for this path with one's own head. Guru Sahib says:

*"If you are fond of playing the game of love, come to my lane with your head on the palm of your hand. You should travel on this path only if you are prepared to surrender yourself and claim nothing."*

## The Path of Love is Difficult

The path of love appears to be quite easy, but it is as difficult as Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga or the path of Vedanta. In order to travel any one of these paths, it is necessary to efface one's self. How very difficult it is to please anybody in this world. Man tries hard to do so but is not always successful. How much more difficult it is for him to please God!

The path of love is as sharp and as narrow as the edge of a sword. There is room for only one to tread on it. Here God and the devotee have to become one, and the least waver or negligence on the part of the devotee will cause his downfall. Therefore, only the strong-willed can follow this path with the support of God and the Master and by surrendering themselves at all times into the lap of the Beloved. Such fortunate devotees are guided at every step and cannot fall.

## Love is Not the Work of the Greedy or the Conscience-Sellers

Love is a pure emotion. Everybody cannot obtain it. Those who are given to worldly pleasures only waste their lives in enjoying transitory pleasures and remain devoid of the true wealth. Sarmad says:

*"God does not bestow the pangs of love on those who are lost in worldly greed. How can a bee realize the burning sensation of a moth which loses its life the moment it sees a light? It takes a long time to meet the Beloved, for the treasure of love cannot be given to everybody."*

Jami Sahib says: *“The pangs of love for the Beloved cannot be obtained by everybody in this world. This treasure is only for those who are living for it alone.”*

Love cannot be gained without devotion to a Master. A worldly man cannot understand it. Only those who have one-pointed attention can share it; that is, those whose mind and heart are one, and who have faith and devotion. A person who is prepared to sell his conscience or, in other words, to deceive himself, cannot drink from the cup of love. To tread the path of love is the work of those resolute souls who will not turn back no matter what may befall them. They alone can meet the Beloved. But those who have only shallow pangs of separation fall down long before they are able to reach the Goal.

## Love is the Path of a Madman

This is not the place for vain arguments and discussions. Hafiz says:

*“So long as your mind is spread out in cleverness and knowledge, you will not be able to know the real Truth. I wish to give you one piece of good advice. You should not admire yourself, but destroy your ego so that you may attain freedom.”*

He further states: *“Do not try to search for the pearl of love in schools. If you desire to find it, you should go beyond them. You should hide your heart in the locks of your Beloved’s hair, and become totally oblivious of the world. In other words, you should remain in a state of ecstasy in the contemplation of your Beloved, for the arguments of your intellect will be harmful in the path of love.”*

Again, he says: *“The path of love is full of innumerable dangers. The first requisite is that you should leave your intellect behind.”*

## The Influence of Love

Love itself is the beginning and the end. It is a pure emanation of God’s current, which enters the heart of a pure person and spreads its influence all round, thus purifying the entire area. The heart of a lover is pure, and at the same time those who have the opportunity of meeting him cannot escape his purifying influence. If one comes across such pure souls, his heart is so greatly influenced that he feels as if purity has entered into him from head to foot.

Love is not worldly or material. It is divine. If you see two hearts sacrificing their very existence at the altar of love, you should understand that they are vessels filled with divine influence. By their mere touch, even withered hearts become fresh and are renewed. You cannot conceal it.

Even if the tongue does not speak, the eyes reveal it by the tears that fill them. Kabir says:

*“Try hard to conceal love. But it cannot be concealed once it has taken hold of a person. Even if one does not talk about it, the eyes disclose it.”*

The refreshing rainfall comes from the sky, but when the eyes of two lovers meet, they are flooded with tears of love. It takes time for a Swanti drop to turn into a pearl, but the water oozing from loving eyes flows like a string of shining pearls. The dryness within is removed and one's entire being is refreshed from head to foot.

Just as milk and water become one when mixed, the two loving hearts blend themselves into divine union with the water of love. It is then difficult for them to be separate entities. Love is true. It contains no deceit and no superficiality. Coming under its influence, two hearts unite into one in such a manner that one cannot detect any difference between them. Then one is not able to find out who is the disciple and who the Master, who is the lover and who the Beloved. The curtain of duality is removed. The lover and the Beloved become one.

*“You are me, I am you. You are body, I am the life. Let nobody say hereafter that I and you are different.”*

*“If I am the body, you are the life. If I am the life, you are the body. You have surrendered your heart to me. I have surrendered my heart to you. Two bodies now have one life and one emotion. This is the ideal of love. How can a third person realize it!”*

Love is a sword by which two lovers combine into one. The lover adores the Beloved to such an extent that he becomes his very self. It is said that Radha was so deeply engrossed in her love that she considered herself as Lord Krishna. In this state of rapture she would ask her friends if they had seen Radha anywhere. This type of union has also been described by Bulleh Shah, as being a characteristic of Heer.

*“I have been crying, ‘Ranja, Ranja’ and I have become Ranja. Please do not call me Heer anymore, because I am now Ranja.”*

Dadu says: *“Real love is that in which a lover transforms himself into the Beloved, and on such lovers even God showers His Grace.”*

When love produces this condition in one's heart, he needs no meditation, prayer or any spiritual effort, because love is the real meditation, is the real prayer, is the real union. A true lover is a real believer in the oneness of God and is a true discernor of the jewel of His non-duality. But this does not convey the correct meaning. Actually he himself becomes the very embodiment of His attributes.

True union and one-pointed attention come only with love. The spiritual progress achieved by means of meditation over a number of years can be had in a moment through love, because the union of inner sight takes the lover immediately to the goal. This is real love and this is true yoga. In fact, this is the be-all and end-all. This should be our aim. This should be our goal, and this should be our fast, our prayers, our meditation and everything else. You should therefore kindle the light of love within you and burn away the rut of repeating mantras, performing austerities, etc.

The value of a man's life is greatly enhanced by love, for the influence of love is unique. It lifts a man from the state of being a mere nothing to the celestial heights. Maulana Rumi says:

*“With love, even bitter things become sweet, brass is turned into gold, and everything that is soiled becomes clean. With the pain of love in one’s heart, love itself becomes the remedy for it. Thorns then give the same pleasure and fragrance as would beautiful flowers. Under the influence of love even the peevish temperament, which is as sour as vinegar, turns into a sweet intoxicant as that of wine. People become as smooth as oil, as soft as wax, even if they were as hard as iron.”*

*“By love, poison becomes nectar, and a tiger is turned into a harmless mouse. Disease turns into a blessing, and tyranny into mercy. The dead are even brought to life, and kings become slaves by means of love.”*

Love is an intense light which shows us the way of spirituality. A person is blind without love. He is also lifeless, and a dead body is no more than food for beasts.

## Love Eliminates All Worries

The object of love is to lose oneself in the identity of the Beloved. True love is continuously on the increase and always radiates its fragrance. It never wanes. Bulleh Shah says: *“The spring of love is always fresh.”*

The devotee becomes true and pure through love. In him there is sympathy and there is love, by means of which he achieves the realization of union (with God). Love is an alchemy which turns simple folk into spiritual gods. Love is the remedy for all ills. It removes all pain and sorrow. By means of love the dirt of the mind is washed away, and the soul shines forth in its own light and becomes worthy of meeting the Lord. The intoxication of love removes all dross and helps the soul to rise and travel upwards through the (super-conscious) spiritual regions.

## The Reward of Love

The flame of love is lit within a few fortunate devotees. As soon as it is kindled, all dross is burnt away, that is, the devotee becomes pure and clean internally, and can then see the Light and hear the Shabd (Word or Sound Current) of God within himself.

One who desires to achieve communion with the Almighty Father should first of all wash the dirt from his mind with the water of love. The bandage of ego should be removed from our eyes, because then alone it is possible for us to see the Lord. And this bandage can be removed only by emptying ourselves of everything except the remembrance of the Beloved. No thought of any kind should be allowed to enter between the devotee and the object of his devotion.

Love is so exalting that it takes us beyond the conception of good and evil, and completely merges us into the Beloved. Muinuddin Chishti says:

*“There is no evil. There is no good. I am so absorbed in the form of my Beloved that He has become my form within me and I have become His form. We two have become one.”*

How very fortunate is the devotee who sacrifices himself in the fire of love, and thereby destroys his ego and meets the Lord. So long as one does not lose himself, he cannot see the Lord. If you wish to purchase God, you have to sell yourself to Him.

One who is devoid of love is imprisoned within the circle of selfishness. His life is worse than that of a beast, for he is caught in the net of selfishness and is blinded with the arrogance of his own ego. He is a prisoner within the limitations of his own self. He can see nothing beyond himself.

Love is essential for attaining God-Realization. That is why true seekers always ask God only for His love and nothing else. Maulana Rumi says:

*“The attraction of God’s love is more intense than any other attraction. It is the attraction of the devotee for the Beloved, and this is also the key that enables one to unlock the secrets of God.”*

The scattered attention cannot be concentrated without love and it is not possible to enter the spiritual regions. So long as the soul does not go up, one remains ignorant of the knowledge of the spiritual regions.

Therefore, in order to achieve true knowledge, it is essential for one to love a True Master. It follows that without devotion to a True Master, we shall remain devoid of the realization of the nearness to God. True knowledge cannot be attained by intellect. It is to be perceived by the soul. In order to achieve God-Realization, we necessarily have to devote ourselves to a True Master.

There is no such thing as caste and creed in love. A lover cannot hate anyone, and whosoever has even a slight remembrance of God is very dear to Him. Lord Rama ate fruits which were half eaten by a low-caste woman. Devotion is not attained so long as there is in the mind any question of caste and creed, high and low.

There is no law in love. There is no knowledge of any outside activity, for the mind is occupied in love to such an extent that even the days of the week are erased from the memory.

Kabir Sahib says:

*“Wherever there is love there is no formality. There is neither intellectual nor professional status. As soon as the mind becomes absorbed in love the idea of dates and days of the week completely disappears from memory.”*

It is by the magic of love alone that a lover removes the covering of his pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow, knowledge and ignorance. In love, gain or loss are equal.

## Love and Intellect

There is a vast difference between intellect and heart. It is as great as the distance between the earth and the heavens. Knowledge is connected with a person’s intellect and is of a restless nature. It tries to take a person towards cleverness, and establishes a stronghold of selfishness in him. But the heart is connected with the inner currents emanating from a place where love and devotion are generated.

In the path of spirituality the heart is more effective than the brain. Intellect merely brings light, but the power of spirituality is produced in the heart. Intellect is the cause of one’s attention being scattered out into the world; but love removes us from this completely, by the concentration of attention.

The display of knowledge is a type of exercise for the brain, and its result is ego, anger, hatred and lack of faith. Love is another name for true affection. Pure love is essential in the development of spirituality.

When the heart is pure, God immediately attracts it towards Himself. If we have love for the Beloved, we shall certainly be attracted towards the object of our love. In our present state the world is our beloved. Love for wife and for children has completely captivated our hearts, and we are no better than their prisoners.

If one worries about himself and his possessions, and loves and longs for wealth, heaven, and the like, how can he – a man of the world – attain God-Realization? So long as the dust of worldly desires is not removed from our heart, how can our Beloved attract us towards Him?

While living in this world one may give all his possessions to his relatives, friends, wife and children, but should not give his heart to anybody. The heart is the property of God, and one should not be false to this sacred trust. One should keep his heart for the True Beloved, and may give away everything else that he has.

There is a unique type of ecstasy in love which cannot be experienced by men of intellect. If people of the world were to know that the heart becomes extremely happy when it is drowned in the ocean of love, then many intellectuals would run after it in order to be tied down by the chords of love.

A man's intellect is limited. It cannot see beyond the world and its objects. Only true love can reach beyond these bounds, because love transcends all limitations and sees things which an intellectual cannot conceive of, even in his dreams. Shamas-i-Tabrez has described the difference between knowledge and love in the following words:

*“Knowledge says that the world is scattered in all the six directions – north, south, east, west, above and below – and that there is no path leading beyond this. Love says, ‘There is a path and I have been on it many times’. A lover may be full of troubles, but in his mind there is always a surging wave of joy for the Beloved.”*

*“The intellectuals of the world spend their lives in groping the dark, which is full of worldly worries.”*

*“The human intellect says that there is nothing beyond this body or physical life. It is followed by death and nothing else. The path of love is full of the thorns of troubles, and one should not tread that path under any circumstances.”*

*“But love says, ‘Thorns there may be, but there are also life-giving flowers on that path. In love, one goes beyond this body, because then only can one find the life eternal. Therefore, do not be afraid of the thorns of this apparent death.’”*

Shamas-i-Tabrez further states:

*“The intellectual cleverness is an impediment on the path towards God-Realization. You should free yourself from it, and then the path will be clear.”*

*“Knowledge may appear to be attractive, and its attractions also appear to be pleasing to the heart, but it is like a thick covering over the soul and life, and the path of spirituality is hidden. You cannot unravel the way to this path with your intellect. When you disengage your heart and your life from the grasp of the intellect, then only will this path become easy for you.”*

Again, from Shamas-i-Tabrez:

*“Whosoever has become a slave of the love of God is a real emperor of great fortune. You should close your mouth like that of an oyster. You should not speak; otherwise, this very tongue of yours will be the enemy of your life.”*

When a person receives the secret of love and is intoxicated with it, then only will he know its depth and will no longer need the help of intellect and cleverness. Hafiz says:

*“You should become so mad in the intoxication of love that others may be worried about you. On the other hand, the increase of intellect and knowledge in you will bring a corresponding increase in your worries.”*

There is no greater remedy than the madness of love. By means of this madness (ecstasy) you should transcend all worldly ties. Some people lose faith in their beloved because of their shallow knowledge, but have you ever seen a man lose faith on account of his madness (ecstasy)?

If pain and worry have increased, then you must become love-mad, because by this madness the pain will decrease. Some people run from this world into the wilderness on account of worldly worries; but if they were to drink deep from the cup of the madness of love they would be without worries even in this very world.

The whole world, whether a king or a beggar, is without this ecstasy of madness. But the few who are in this state of rapture are happy in this world. If you can find the wings of the ecstasy of madness you will ascend into the heavens above, as did Christ. This ecstasy of love opens up for us hundreds of gates of the secrets of spirituality.

On the spiritual path there is room only for lovers. Here cleverness is of no use. Clever people have no respect or regard for others, and are not better than a particle of dust. They are not fit for this path.

Intellect, which is considered to be of the highest value in this world, hangs on the scaffold of a lover like a thief. People who are considered highly intellectual and of great knowledge in this world are perishable, and suffer from the disease of worldly obstacles in the eyes of a lover. Swami Ji says:

*“In the eyes of a devotee who goes up to the spiritual regions, people who have only intellect and knowledge are considered to be ignorant.”*

*“Hundreds of thousands of clever acts and intellectual acrobatics are responsible for our ties to this world. And not one of them is the least bit of help to us in meeting the Lord.”* (Jap Ji)

Love is not to be found in self-appraisal, nor in knowledge or pages of books. The kind of love that is commonly understood by the world has nothing to do with the path of real lovers. True lovers give up the limited knowledge inherent in man and become free from greed and avarice. Real lovers, who have fully imbibed the effects of love, say that they have passed thousands of miles beyond the dirt of worldly knowledge and the intellect.

*“True lovers say that you may be as learned as Socrates, but we will have nothing to do with you. Your path is different, and you must go your own way. Our path is the Name of God and we cannot join hands with you.”* (Shamas-i-Tabrez)

*“Without the help and guidance of a Master, the soul is unable to reach the goal of love. Limited knowledge and intellect alone cannot reach the place where only ecstasy and madness of love can go. The heart of a lover cannot be trapped by the net of the body and physical attractions, because it has already reached a place which is nameless, limitless and beyond the reach of matter.”* (Shamas-i-Tabrez)

The souls of such lovers of God find His Abode in the spiritual regions, far above, where the Negative Power and Illusion do not exist and cannot ensnare them into their net. Swami Ji says:

*“Masters came into this world and turned the souls of their devotees from crows into swans. They have the power of attracting lovers towards themselves, and for such lovers the Negative Power becomes helpless. The Masters have given us an Abode which is indescribable. I am unable to praise its greatness.”*

Hafiz also says:

*“Oh, Negative Power, be gone! You should spread your net somewhere else, because my home is now much higher.”*

*“A Master is the King of lovers of God. He has pitchers full of the Elixir of Spirituality for releasing people from the bonds of limited knowledge and the intellect. Whenever a person of high attainments, be he a philosopher like Socrates or a physician like Luqman, comes to the Master in search of Truth, the Master makes him as innocent as a child by giving him a glimpse of Himself, full of the light of Spiritual Knowledge, and He fills such a one with the currents of the intoxication of love. Then all limited knowledge and argument is destroyed, and the mind is no longer confused.”*

*“A Master is like the huma bird, and on whomever his shadow falls, even the lowliest of the low becomes a spiritual king.”* (Shamas-i-Tabrez)

The limitations of knowledge, as this world knows it, are the foundation of all our worries. Under the influence of the intellect, one is always drowned in mental worries and whirlpools of thoughts to such an extent that the heart becomes practically lifeless. A cold heart does not have the ability to love, for which a warm heart is essential. Shamas-i-Tabrez says:

*“Man receives life energy by plunging into love. A heart which does not possess life and energy cannot reach the gates of love. Who is alive? Only those who have been born into love. If the current of love is blown into dead hearts, even they will receive life forever, and such a heart never dies.”*

It is necessary for a lover to have a beloved. Love is entirely dependent upon this essential factor. In the religion of lovers, it is considered sacrilegious to be away from the Beloved even for a single moment.

Love is another name for attaching the heart to the Beloved. It is not a child's play. Only those of sterling worth, who are free from the ties of the world, and who are fearless, can become lovers. It is the work of one who is free from all worldly desires, and who is able to keep his mind clear of the dirt of duality. When the leaven of love begins to act, then a lover cannot turn his attention towards any object except the Beloved. He will have nothing to do with anybody except his own Beloved – the Master. His heart does not jump from one branch of the world to another. He remains absorbed in the love of his Master by freeing himself from all other thoughts.

*“He is tied to the apron strings of his Master, and in such a state the wings of intellect and worry cannot flutter.”* (Shamas-i-Tabrez)

Love is the most effective means of taking one to his Beloved. There is no comparison between lovers and people who are steeped in the limitations of the intellect. The intellect cannot reach up to the condition of love.

Khwaja Farid-ud-din Attar has very aptly compared love with finite knowledge and has described the influence of both of them in the following words:

*“What does love accomplish? It causes the drop to become an ocean, the soul to merge into the Lord, and the lover to become oblivious of the two worlds. Love is an experience through which the soul awakens into the Lord and becomes free from all attachments and worldly ties. It is another name for the annihilation of one's ego and for union with God.*

*“The knowledge of a person, which is limited, can see only the superficial causes, but love calls out, ‘Do not lay eyes on these superficial causes’. The human intellect says that one should search for good in this world and the next, but love says, ‘Do not search for anything except God.’*

*“Man's limited knowledge compels him to achieve worldly status and to make material progress, but love teaches one to efface even one's own self. Intellect wants us to search for the remedy of all ills and to experience all pleasures, but love orders us to seek the pain of separation. God has created this world and the next, out of love.”*

The way of finite knowledge and the way of love are different. The former scatters one through the desires of the mind, while the latter teaches one to concentrate on one object only. The former asks you to see the world and fill your mind with the different kinds of knowledge that exist in the world; but the latter says that the Beloved is the fountain of all knowledge, and that you should dance attendance in the lane of love and concentrate on Him within yourself. The former persuades you to associate with your friends and companions; but the latter warns you to remain away from friends who would lead you astray from your Beloved.

Intellect goads you to achieve a high status in this world and to become a leader of your country or creed; but love says, *“Sit in a lonely corner and be happy in the remembrance of the Lord of all regions.”* Limited knowledge asks you to acquire intellectual superiority and proficiency in the arts; but love wishes only to take you on the path where the soul is truly enraptured in Divine

Ecstasy. The human intellect considers it impossible to meet and see the Lord, because intellect is limited. But love beholds to its heart's content, His manifestation in both the worlds.

Due to their limited knowledge, the majority of the people do not believe that there could be a Living Master in the world today. But love says, *"You should remove the bandage of ignorance and selfishness from your eyes. Then only will you see not one but many Perfect Masters. It is due to our own faulty mind and intellect that we fail to meet a Perfect Master."*

Intellect believes that comfort and happiness in this world are entirely due to wealth. But love says that real happiness is in concentration and stability of heart, and one should not run after the worthless treasures of the world.

The human intellect goads us to remain in comfort and to pamper ourselves; but love says, *"Sacrifice your head and your dear life to your Beloved."* At most, the intellect will take you to the pleasures of heaven. But love says that to ask for anything except the Beloved, or to desire anything else, is the cause of misery, pain and sorrow. Therefore, one should never desire anything else.

Ordinary mortals consider lovers to be mad and call in physicians to diagnose their ailment; but the lover says that he is active and intelligent through the help of his Master, and prays to his Beloved to remove the limited understanding of the ordinary mortals, *"Oh my Beloved! Please take them out of this darkness of ignorance."*

Does this mean that knowledge and intellect have no merit? All Saints and holy men teach the people of the world through their discourses. They differentiate between truth and untruth by intellectual reasoning. If that is the case, then how is it that knowledge described above is depicted in such disparaging terms?

Limited knowledge cannot see beyond the physical self and keeps one devoid of love for the Beloved. A man may be very learned and also highly intellectual, but he cannot reach the gate of the Beloved by mere learning. So long as he does not merge himself in the Lord, who is all love, he cannot be successful, and his intellect will beguile him towards the wrong path. If, however, knowledge is used without the negative influence of the intellect, then it can be free from its limitations and dross. Otherwise, one will always remain submerged in sensual pleasures. But one can have communion with God, who is omniscient, if the mind and senses are under the control of knowledge. Such a state can be achieved only by one who is guided by a Living Master. Then he really meets his Beloved.

Hazrat Mohammed Sahib says:

*"One small particle of such a knowledge – knowledge of virtue and of a Master – is better than fasting and prayers. A person who has this type of knowledge is my life, and his soul would give its fragrance to my life. But those who are without this type of intellect are fools. You should keep away from them, because it is fools of this kind who are responsible for so much bloodshed. You should endeavor to make your intellect One with His. Then your mind will no longer be scattered and, through concentration, you will be able to know the inner secrets of God."*

A man should not be guided by his limited knowledge, but should seek guidance from the All-Wise, because his limited knowledge is the cause of his perverted intellect. The All-Wise is capable of giving true Light. Limited knowledge keeps one scattered in the darkness and entangled in worldly activities, and like a snake or a scorpion continually injects into him the poison of Illusion.

A human being is superior to a beast because his intellect is capable of discerning between good and evil. This power of discernment is essential for every human being, because through it he can clearly distinguish the difference between Truth and untruth. Guru Nanak says:

*“The life of those who sell the Name of God by writing it on paper, is unworthy. If the crops are withered, the storehouse for them will be of no use.”*

No one can reach the Court of the Lord without true and real effort. If we are destroying our knowledge in useless discussions and arguments, we cannot be called truly intelligent beings. We should contemplate and think of the Master with discrimination, because by this means alone can we achieve Grace in His court. We should carefully try to understand the meaning underlying the writings of wise and noble men and thoroughly consider them in all of their aspects. When convinced that the path of spirituality is the right path, only then should we follow it and in good faith. This is the only way to tread the path of God and spirituality. Except for this, all other paths lead one towards the Negative Power.

*“Detestable is the life of those who sell the Lord’s Name for a livelihood. If one’s crops are destroyed, of what use is the storehouse for them? No one can receive honor in the Court of the Lord unless he works for the Truth with Devotion (without any thought of reward).”*

*“Knowledge which is wasted in discussion is not the real knowledge. But if one serves the Lord with true wisdom, then he also receives honor along with it. It is through knowledge alone that one can understand what one reads and can discriminate while giving charity. Oh Nanak! This is the True Path. All else is the path of the Negative Power.”* (Guru Nanak)

It is, however, necessary to develop love in order to achieve contact with the Truth and merge in it. The soul is a particle of God, and its inherent quality is love. Knowledge or learning is necessary only to be convinced that the path of spirituality is the one to follow. When one has been able to distinguish the difference between Truth and untruth, the need for knowledge no longer exists. Intellect is necessary only to help us in selecting the path which will enable us to merge in the Truth.

Learning and intellect are our guides only in the beginning but after we are convinced which is the right path to follow, then we have to become one with it and to merge into it. This is possible only through love. If a person continues to be guided by intellect or learning alone, then these guides become a barrier. *“Reasoning is the help and reasoning is the bar.”*

The soul is wrapped in four coverings of the individual mind:

- 1) Chit – Memory; inner attention;
- 2) Mann – Mind; character, inclination;
- 3) Buddhi – Intellect; power of discrimination;
- 4) Ahankar – The ego

Only after all these coverings are removed does the soul become capable of beholding Him. The mind should leave reasoning, and with it the intellect should also go. Then alone will our footsteps go towards spirituality. The Upanishad says:

*“The senses of knowledge and mind should be concentrated. Intellect should also stop working. In such a state, the highest spirituality is attained.”*

We should sacrifice our own entire learning in our love for the Beloved, because intellect is supported by love alone. Intellect is like the shadow, and God is the Sun. A shadow has no comparison with the sun.

## Love and Beauty

Physical beauty is subject to destruction, but true love or real attraction never perishes. Beauty may perish, and even good works may cease. Graceful actions and attractive deportment may be no more, and even the beautiful face may vanish; but true love lives so long as the lover is alive. Even after his death love does not disappear, but merges into his soul. Physical beauty is temporary. It may be glamorous today and gone tomorrow. After youth and good health pass away beauty fades, but love remains forever.

Physical beauty rests on a weak foundation and is ephemeral. But love is the natural quality of the soul and is eternal. A life full of love enhances beauty, and beauty of this kind radiates soul force. Beauty of this type has a unique attraction, because it produces love. If beauty is not dyed with the attraction of soul force, love does not exist. A nightingale loves only live flowers. It is not attracted by artificial flowers or by those painted on a wall or on a piece of paper.

Love never perishes, even if the bones of a lover are ground fine like powder. Just as the perfume of sandalwood does not leave it, even if it is completely ground up, similarly the basis of love is the soul, and it is indestructible and therefore eternal. Beauty can be destroyed, but not love.

Wherever there is love there must be beauty. Love brings joy and luster to the eyes. The currents of love emanate from Saints and men of God. Their beauty is doubly enhanced. Their love is of the soul and not of the physical body. Such persons are handsome or beautiful despite their color or physical deficiencies. They have developed the inherent love of the soul, and their physical body is dyed deep in the spiritual color which reflects real inner beauty.

## Love and Knowledge

The difference between knowledge and love is that knowledge continually tries to banish duality but love retains it as a precious treasure and itself remains without duality. Love is a condition like that of one life and two bodies. A devotee is so absorbed in the love of the Lord that he is not aware of any distinction between himself and the Lord, he does not see the Lord as a separate entity, but realizes that he and the Lord are one. Intellect cannot understand this, because it is one of the mysteries of spirituality and cannot be comprehended by intellect alone. Shamas-i-Tabrez says:

*“I am a strange Shamas-i-Tabriz, for I have become the lover of my own life; by looking within and worshiping within myself, I find God and nothing else.”*

Dadu says: *“The love for my Beloved has been so ingrained in my body that every cell cries out, ‘Oh my Love, oh my Love! Except for You there is no other’.”*

*“The truth is that it is necessary to write love letters to the Beloved only if the Beloved is really at some distance, but when He is in the body, He is in the mind, and He is in the very life, how can one send messages to Him by means of letters?”* (Kabir)

People generally do not consider that knowledge and love are necessary for spiritual life, and they select either the path of love or that of knowledge, according to their inclination. There are others who consider the path of action to be the true path and therefore spend their life in doing good deeds for others. Actually, both knowledge and love should completely combine and manifest themselves in the form of good actions.

Love and knowledge awaken discernment in us, as a result of which virtuous actions are performed spontaneously. Love and knowledge are really not two different paths, but the combination of these two is the very core of life. They are also the beauty of life and in their combination lies true life. They are the two sides of one Truth, the two wings of the same bird. If true knowledge is awakened or developed, the river of real love immediately begins to flow.

The heart is the haven of love. For the One, whom our intellect wishes to know by means of knowledge, our heart tries to feel true love. We can meet that One by means of knowledge, but real union can be attained only through love. Knowledge takes us up to that One, but love makes us merge into Him. Those who consider it sufficient to meet Him cannot experience the ecstasy of merging into Him. There is no difference between love and true knowledge.

What is love? It is another name for dedicating one’s affection. The Ish Upanishads says:

*“Whatever is in existence in this world is filled with God. You should therefore cover this world with the Name of God.”*

One has to surrender oneself to God. Then there is nothing but God. This is love. This is knowledge. You may think about this and you may even carefully discuss it, but you will not find any difference between true knowledge and love.

The heart is given away and it makes its center in the Beloved and remains fixed there. This is true knowledge. Knowledge does not mean merely to understand or to know. It actually means to become that which we really are, i.e., to know ourselves. The Upanishad then continues:

*“Whatever has been given by Him you should enjoy by renunciation. Do not be attached to it, and do not covet the wealth of another.”*

The highest type of love for the lover is to live in the Will of the Beloved. If we imbibe this quality, we attain true knowledge. Those who are entangled in desires and in greed cannot achieve true knowledge.

To know God, in other words, is to love Him and to merge into Him, to be filled with His unique beauty and to become one with Him.

## Love and Detachment

Real detachment is not merely running away and leaving everything. Rather, it is that pure state of the mind in which all desires are burnt up by going beyond all attractions of the world. But without understanding, detachment is an impossibility. When such a state is combined with the longing to meet the Lord, it is called love. Therefore, love and detachment are not two different qualities. They are two separate names for the same state of mind.

One may be termed a devotee or a lover in proportion to the degree of his detachment. Those who do not possess love for God in their hearts do not have even a particle of detachment. As the mind becomes free from desires, to that extent is it filled with love. One who is steeped in attachment for the world cannot be a lover. You should bow before God by saying good-bye to worldly desires; otherwise the prayer is not genuine.

Detachment and true love are one and the same thing. So long as the mind does not have an aversion to worldly desires it cannot attract love. No doubt it has been noted that sometimes devotees, in the beginning, in spite of being detached, do ask God for material necessities. There is no harm in this, provided one is treading the spiritual path with the proper attitude and not for the fulfilment of any desire connected with the senses.

*“I need only the bare necessities of life; that is, wheat flour, a pinch of salt, a little pulse – as much as will keep me alive. Then I also need a bed, a pillow, a mattress and a blanket to protect me against the wind and cold. I do not want anything else except the privilege of being devoted to Thee with all humility. I have no other desires except Thy Name.”* (Kabir)

Actually, a detached devotee never seeks anything from the Lord. He asks for only Him, because everything else is transitory and is the cause of pain.

*“To demand anything from Thee beyond Thyself will cause nothing but worry and pain. Oh Bless me Thou with Thy Blissful Name that I am rid of the craving of my mind.”* (Adi Granth)

Such a devotee does not ask for anything from the Lord, because he does not feel the need. His pains, worries and prejudices are all destroyed. Whoever has tasted the elixir of love will not run after anything else, and whatever he says will be acceptable in the Court of the Lord. This means that a devotee of this kind will not pay any attention to any material thing.

## Love and Attachment

Love is not attachment. There is a vast difference between the two. In attachment one is entangled with his body, wife, children, relative, religion, caste and country. In other words, one has a feeling of indifference or estrangement regarding everything that is not related to his attachments. Attachment is finite, and a person in that state cannot be guided by real knowledge.

There is a strong feeling of selfishness connected with attachment. But in love one sees everything with the same eye – whether it is a human being or a beast. He loves all alike; in fact, he loves the entire creation.

The ideas of selfishness and of a limited sphere of interest enter into attachment, and to fulfil these ideas man may stoop to evil designs and actions. The result is misery and nothing else. Love is free from this dross. A lover loves all.

In attachment, one falls low. He cannot look at everything with a disinterested eye. The world of attachment is like a bargain counter, where one gives only in exchange for gain, otherwise he has nothing to give. Love knows only how to give.

A lover also knows that the true love, which is God, is within every creature. He loves everybody – the good and the bad – without any idea of gain. Love is the support of life. It is the giver of energy.

## Love and Lust

Love is not the name of sensual desires, in which there is a preponderance of lust. True love cannot be found in everybody. Generally, people love with selfish motives. Love and sensual desires are two different things. There is a world of difference between them. One is a unique life-giving current, while the other is a filthy evil that drains life out of the body.

Lust is always for selfish gains. A lustful person tries to make the other person the object of the satisfaction of his desires. But true love aims at giving happiness and comfort to the beloved. Such a lover has the quality of enduring pain in order to give pleasure and happiness to the beloved, and is happy in the will of the beloved.

Love sacrifices body, mind, beauty, youth, intellect, wealth and even life at the altar of the Lord's temple. A lustful person is always restless and desires to keep the object of love with him. Lust is full of darkness. Love is full of light, like the sun. Lust is selfish, but love wishes to give even itself. Lust aims at self-gratification, but love is satisfied only when it sees others happy. Lust is like a dark whirlpool of agitation, but love is like a clear stream. Lust is like coal, but love has the value of a diamond.

Love gives away everything for the Beloved and is restless if the Beloved is not constantly in his mind. Lust causes the loss of all strength of mind and cannot concentrate on any one thing. Lust is limited and causes increasing debility and selfishness. It is the cause of trouble, hatred, dejection, peevishness, and restlessness of mind. A lustful person falls low in his own eyes, but a lover is free from all these evils and is able to detach his soul from the world. He actually makes love a spring-board for meeting the Lord.

The innate quality of a man is love. But this very power or current of love, if directed towards sensual desires, removes a person from the path leading to God-Realization. This misdirected energy is termed lust. But when this very current of love forsakes the pleasures of the senses and is directed towards God, it becomes the True or Divine Love.

The difference between lust and devotion to God is only in the direction in which the current of love flows. Jalhan says:

*“It is not difficult to realize God. One simply directs the current from one end to the other.”*

For devotion to the Lord or His love, it is not sufficient merely to renounce the desires for sensual pleasures superficially. It is necessary to give them up sincerely and with a strong will; otherwise the current of love will not move towards God. It is essential to eliminate all desires of the senses from the mind. By not loving or dwelling on the outer pleasures the inner attraction of the soul will automatically awaken.

Love is the natural inclination of the soul. It is impossible to separate it from the soul. A lover seeks a True Master, and love is the means of placing a man at the feet of the Lord in much the same manner as a worldly lover sacrifices himself for his beloved by forsaking his name, fame, etc.

## A Lover

The status of an ordinary worshipper is better than that of person attached to the world. The former has meditated, has done good works, and has abstained from evil in order to find a place in heaven and to save himself from the fire of hell. But better than a worshipper is a hermit who tries to avoid all evil actions and desires only communion with God. Such a one has sacrificed the world in his desire for heaven, and is engaged in the worship of God. And better than hermits is the status of lovers, who have ascended the steps towards the love of God and have forgotten this world and the next in their love for Him. They have no fear of hell and no desire for heaven. They want to travel only on the path on which the Beloved takes them.

*“We have no concern with hell; we have no desire for heaven. We shall go wherever our Beloved will take us.”*

Bu-Ali-Kalandar Sahib says: *“Lovers of God are not afraid of the fires of hell. Nor do they feel tempted towards heaven. They are the lovers of their Beloved. What should they do with the beauties of heaven?”*

Sheikh Sa’adi says: *“Only he who forgets this world and the next is able to taste the wine of union with God.”*

An ordinary worshipper or hermit desires to go to heaven; but a lover desires only to see the rays of God’s Light, for that is his heaven.

This world is really a prison house, and the world hereafter is the place of satisfaction of one’s desires. A lover does not care to purchase either world even for a farthing.

Some people are overwhelmed by worldly troubles, and others are filled with desire for getting the pleasures of the world beyond. A lover is above both of them. He desires neither this nor that. Sheikh Sa’adi says:

*“Once a lover was asked if he wanted hell or heaven. He replied, ‘Do not ask me anything about them. I want only that which my God wishes for me’.”*

The aim of a hermit is heaven. A lover wants only the Lord. Consequently, there is a vast difference between the two. An ascetic is happy in his austerities and rituals, but a lover is absorbed only in the experiences of love.

Hazrat Mohammed Sahib says:

*“This world is not attractive to those who have the aim of achieving the world beyond; the world beyond is not attractive to those engrossed in worldly pleasures; and both, this world and the next, are not attractive to the lovers of God.”*

The same idea has been expressed by Muin-ud-din Abdulqadir Jilani. He says:

*“If a person wishes to reach heaven and enjoy its pleasures, he should turn his attention away from worldly objects and desires. But if a person desires only nearness and communion with God, he should turn his mind away from the desire for heaven.”*

Hence, one should forget this world in order to get to the world beyond; and he should forget the world beyond in order to divert his attention towards God. One whose mind is happy in the remembrance of God cannot be satisfied with anything else.

A hermit has his mind fixed on the desire for heaven. He may be living in this world but he is not a man of the world. Similarly, a devotee of the Lord may talk about the world beyond but he is above both, this world and the next. He is always absorbed in remembrance of the Lord and has a constant desire for His Darshan. He has no attachment or desire for the beautiful things of this world such as gardens, palaces, etc. Hazrat Shah Niyaz Ahmed says:

*“I have sacrificed the austerities of this world, my meditation, etc., at the Lotus Feet of my God. My religion is love for Him and to be intoxicated in that bliss. I keep myself dyed in the color of His love. Oh, you ascetic! Please listen to me in the name of my God! You should discontinue your austerities and rituals, and instead should drink the cup of wine of the love of God. The intoxication from that bliss is much more exhilarating than any other intoxication. You cannot find such a bliss anywhere else.”*

Lovers do not believe in salvation by means of reading Scriptures alone. They read only the Scripture of love. A lover is indifferent to outward praise and talk of his Beloved. His only desire is to merge in Him. A Faqir says:

*“Oh my Teacher! Please close all the books and teach me a lesson of love. I have completed this course and now you should show me the face of my Beloved.”*

Shah Niyaz Ahmad says: *“Oh my Lord! Teach us the one word of your love. I do not wish to waste my life in reading stories about you.”*

Hafiz Sahib has also described the same idea in beautiful words:

*“This austerity and ritual, whose covering I placed over me, have now been pawned for a cup of the wine of my God’s love. Detachment and sacrifice are useless. I have drowned them in the pure wine of the love of my God.”*

Hafiz Farid-ud-din Attar says:

*“An atheist and a man of the religion of the world may be happy in his atheism and in his religion respectively, but, oh my Lord! grant my heart a particle of the pain of longing for you.”*

Hazrat Mohammed says: *“People of the world are like eunuchs; people who desire the world beyond are like women; but those who want only the Lord are real men.”*

This shows that the status of a lover is the highest of all. The description of the rituals and austerities by which one can gain heaven is given in religious Scriptures. But the description of love is confined in the hearts of lovers alone. It cannot be described in any language.

“Lover” is the name of one who has sacrificed his heart. Shamas-i-Tabriz says:

*“The giving away of one’s heart means that the lover should go straight to the Beloved and should not conceal himself in any corner.”*

Who is a true lover? One who has cleansed himself from the dirt of all worldly thoughts and desires by burning them in the fire of devotion and separation. His mind is always restless to meet the Lord, just as thirst makes a man restless for water. The lover’s mind and body have been pierced by the arrow of God’s love. His real friend and Beloved is none other than God Almighty.

*“My mind is restless without the sight of my Lord, just as a thirsty person is restless without water. My mind has been pierced through by the arrow of the Name of God, and no one now resides in my heart except my Lord.”* (Adi Granth)

A lover’s attention is withdrawn automatically from this world and the next, and is fixed only in the Lotus Feet of God.

*“I have given my true love to you by breaking away from all others. My love has now been fixed in your Lotus Feet because this is the true, complete and pure aim.”* (Adi Granth)

*“A lover’s inner attachment is only for the Lord. Everything else appears to him to be bitter. If he does not have His Darshan then every enjoyment of this world appears distasteful.”*  
(Adi Granth)

Guru Amar Das says:

*“So long as a lover breathes, he seeks the Lord and tries hard to meet his dear Beloved. He keeps awake night after night in devoted attention to this end.”*

The happiness which a lover gets by meeting his Beloved cannot be described in any language.

Guru Ram Das says:

*“When a person has imbibed true love for his Beloved Master, his mind and body both become cheerful by meeting Him, for a Master who is a manifestation of God has a strong and true attraction for the heart. By having a glimpse of the light of His beauty, one forgets his own self. Such a lover is fully absorbed in that bliss. The eyes of a lover are always drowned in love, and they see only God and God’s Name. The eyes that see anything else except God should be removed.”* (Adi Granth)

Paltu has also described the state of a lover, saying:

*“Oh my mother! My heart has been so completely given away to my Beloved that I cannot live. I am prepared to sacrifice my life for the sake of my Beloved. This is my ailment and it will cost me my life. There’s only one remedy, and that is that my Beloved should meet me. The snare of love has captured my heart and I have become senseless and indifferent to everything about me. Oh Paltu, who can teach us the way without a real physician in the form of my Master! Oh my mother! I have given my heart away and I am restless.”*

Love is a burning fire into which everybody cannot leap. That can be done only by a rare lover. Hafiz was so intoxicated by this fire that he cried out:

*“Yes, my Master! Let the passing round of the cup filled with the wine of God’s love continue. In the beginning this love appeared to be easy, but it has now become very difficult. Oh my Master! Please be kind and show me the path by which the real Light of my Beloved can be seen in God’s Truth, for there is no remedy for the pain of love except meeting the Beloved and drinking that wine.”*

Love appears to be a child’s play in the beginning, but it is full of many dangers. To follow this path is not the work of an ordinary person who is given to greed and other worldly temptations. A crop destroyed by water-logging can be revived only by judicious watering. Similarly, the pain of love is removed only by the ecstasy of love. Therefore, we have to pray before our Master, begging Him to take us to the world where we may be free from sin, where we will be free from all anxieties and ties with this world and the next.

We should remember that we are talking about true love – a love that is not to be found in the satisfaction of the senses or in sensual pleasure. Maulana Rumi says:

*“This is not the love which is generally experienced in this world, and brought about the luxurious living and rich food. Here love means attraction for God, which is the true purpose of human life.”*

A beloved is loved by the lover, and the lover longs for the beloved. He is the worshipper of his beloved and does not turn his eyes towards anybody else. He is always thirsty for the sight of his Beloved and he cannot live without his beloved even for a single moment. You may give him wealth and all other valuable things of the world, but his hunger or longing will not be satisfied, except by meeting his beloved. Love for his beloved is in every cell of his body and his mind. He cannot be sustained by anything other than the sight of his beloved.

*“Whatever pleases the Lord brings happiness to the lover. Just as a thirsty man cannot live without water, similarly, the lover cannot live without the Lord even for a moment. Oh my mother! I have no appetite even if you should put all kinds of delicious and tempting food before me. Nothing can sustain my mind except the Darshan of my Beloved.”* (Adi Granth)

He prays for the sight of the Beloved. He even goes so far as to taunt the Beloved and says:

*“Oh my Beloved! If you are really my true Beloved, then do not conceal yourself from me even for a single moment. My life and my body have been wounded by meeting you (and then being separated). When shall I have a glimpse of you? Oh my Beloved! I have seen and enjoyed the whole world, but there is nobody like you. You should come and let me embrace you so that my*

*mind and body may be happy. You are the only friend in this world. I place my head at your door. My eyes are longing for your Darshan. When shall I meet you? There is a storm of restlessness within me for your Darshan. Without you all decorations of the body and all pleasures are useless.*” (Adi Granth)

A lover is steeped in the love of the Beloved. Where else can he go? Fish cannot bear separation from water and will die without it. The life of a lover is in the Beloved. Without Him, he is dead. Guru Arjan Sahib says:

*“Oh my mind! Merge yourself in the Lotus Feet of God, for I am becoming restless and thirsty without His Darshan. Oh my Beloved! How I wish that I might have wings so that I could fly up and be near You.”* (Adi Granth)

Guru Ram Das says:

*“How can they live if they have true love within them and are separated from the Beloved? We have been separated from Him for many ages. Oh Beloved, please make it possible for us to meet Thee! No one can live without his Beloved once he has been pierced by love for Him. Happiness fills every cell of the body whenever a lover gets even a glimpse of His Light.”*

Guru Nanak has drawn a beautiful picture of the state of mind of a lover:

*“A current of deep depression fills the mind of the lover who longs for his Beloved. The Beloved is far off. She sends messages through persons going towards His dwelling and longs to obtain news of her Beloved, and her eyes are full of tears in separation from the Beloved.”*

A real lover does not see anything except true love. Love is his home, his wealth, his religion and his belief. He is a worshipper of love. He regards places of worship that are filled with worldly activity as being completely empty of love. Love can live only in the place of love where there is nothing else. Bulleh Shah once uttered the following words expressing these thoughts:

*“In a Dharamsala (a place of worship) live cheats. In temples one finds robbers. Swindlers are to be found in mosques. But lovers of God remain aloof.”*

The path of a lover is different from the path followed by others. The sky of love's land is also something different. Love is the pilgrimage of lovers. If places of pilgrimage and worship are devoid of love, then they are useless.

Lovers do not hate anyone. In their eyes there is nothing but love and more love. They seek love and their thoughts are always concentrated on their Beloved. It is there that they pray and bow their heads. Where does their Beloved live? The reply is: everywhere, in each one of us. God is love and love is another name for God. He is in everything and His current is flowing everywhere.

*“Love is the form of God, just as God is the form of love. Both of them live as one, like the sun and the sunshine.”*

When love completely fills a person, the limited desires of that lover's ego are destroyed, and he lives in the boundless love of the Lord. He does not find pleasure in anything of this world that can compare with his attachment for Him. To a lover, the wealth of love makes him look upon all the treasures of the world as mere nothing. He is prepared to sacrifice everything for his Beloved, including his religion, this world and the next. Hafiz says:

*"If my Master should give me the power to control my mind, then I would be prepared to sacrifice this world and the next even for the one black mole on His face."*

## The Religion of Love

The religion of a lover is nothing but love, under the influence of which a unique type of concentration and a feeling of loneliness enter his mind. His thoughts pass beyond the limit of union and duality. If one imbibes even a small particle of love, he will consider the whole world worth no more than a straw. The heart of one who has tasted even a few drops from the cup of love finds no taste at all in the worldly pleasures. He desires neither heaven nor salvation. Paltu Sahib says:

*"Saints do not want salvation. They have no desire for the four treasures of the world, because their desire is neither for the treasures of the world nor for salvation. They spurn supernatural powers, and they run away from the seat of heaven. They do not go on pilgrimage; they do not fast; they have no desires in their mind. Even good actions have no attraction for them. They do not want heaven, nor are they interested in coming into and going from this world. They consider even the seven heavens no better than a piece of straw. The devotees of God have such a desire, O Paltu! That they do not want salvation nor do they desire the four treasures of the world."*

God lives in His own latent state of love, and a lover frees himself from the bondage of body and life and becomes a form of God. When the fire of love is kindled within a lover it destroys everything except the Beloved.

Love is such a strong current that a glimpse of the Light of the Beloved attracts the lover. When it plants the deep-rooted bliss of intoxication in a lover, the heart and the life are then automatically sacrificed for the Beloved. Knowledge, intellect, fame and reasoning or discussions are all swept away in the fast-running currents of love. In fact, whenever someone tastes even a few drops from the cup of love, his intellect and his worries all vanish.

A lover sacrifices everything for his Beloved. His belief, religion and life are all given to his Beloved, and he forgets everything in his love. He cries out and exclaims with very great joy:

*"I am now a slave of my love, and free from the worries of both the worlds."*

A lover is dyed in the hue of God's love. His talk is the talk of the Lord, and he is emancipated from all the sensual pleasures. Jammi Sahib says:

*"Now that you have become a slave of love, you should abandon your ideas of the fame and the superiority of your family, because these have no merit on this path."*

A lover who is intoxicated in the love of his Beloved lives only in thoughts about Him. He has no connection with the good or the evil of this world.

Hafiz Sahib says:

*“For a lover, the feet of the Beloved (Master) are the feet of God. He considers the gardens of heaven, the beautiful trees there, and the palaces with beautiful women in heaven as being no better than a particle of the dust of His lane.”*

The power of love becomes very strongly attractive within a lover. His sole desire is to meet the Beloved. It is said that even if the home of the Beloved were in the center of the ocean, or if the path to it were beset by hundreds of snakes and even ferocious tigers and lions might be roaring in his way, and the angels of death were also trying to obstruct the way, even then a lover would not be deterred from walking on the path of his Beloved. Nothing can deter him from going to his Beloved, because his world exists only for the Beloved. Hafiz Sahib says.

*“Nothing can enter my mind except the thought of my Beloved. Give both the worlds to my enemies, because for me my Beloved is all that I want.”*

There is no room in the heart of a lover for anything except the Beloved, and he always wishes to be in constant contact with Him. Kabir says:

*“My Beloved is in my eyes like a thin coating of collyrium. How can there be any place for sleep in my eyes when He is there all the twenty-four hours and there is no other work except to remember Him. The true and faithful wife is she who does not keep her husband away from her eyes even for a single moment and does not look at any other person. She closes her eyes and is plunged deep into his remembrance, and in the remembrance of love, she blossoms like a rose and speaks only of the sweetness of love.”*

Such devotees of the Lord always speak of Him with love and devotion. And when they speak, their throat is choked with love, their hair stand on end with the strong current of their love, and pearls of tear-drops flow from their eyes. If the Beloved is by their side, then they beg for longer nights in order to be with the Beloved for a longer period. Such a lover feels that the state of intense concentration will come to an end if the night were to end sooner. Therefore he prays for the nights to be long and that they should never end, so that he may not be separated from his Beloved. He desires to sleep less so that he may not be away from his Beloved. The family into which such lovers are born is worthy of all praise. As soon as the mind of a lover concentrates, he imbibes the qualities of God and becomes a master of many extraordinary powers.

The mind of a lover is strong and deep like that of an ocean. It does not contain tempests of other thoughts. His aim is one-pointed and there is only one thought in his mind – that of the Beloved. When we love, then love becomes the sustainer of our soul, and our complete attention is concentrated in the Beloved. Then all superficial ties are cut, and the soul is freed from the shackles of this world and flies to the regions above. That highest region is its true abode. Swami Ji says:

*“Your abode is there, my dear. But, alas, you are tied down by the strings of this world.”*

In its true abode the soul enjoys at all times the bliss of union. Love transforms it from the material and physical attachments to the finer, spiritual regions, and the drop of the soul is merged in the ocean of the Lord. In such a state a lover is not an ordinary person. He is the master of supernatural powers. Love, in reality, is such an alchemy that it turns even common persons into spiritual emperors.

Kabir Sahib says:

*“The lovers have such great power that they can even take a leap to the highest region by simply exerting their own internal force.”*

The lover’s attention is then constantly fixed in the Beloved, and his mind suffers a state of restlessness on separation.

The unique quality of love is this: If a seed of love is sown into its field, it is followed by pain, burning, separation.

These are the crops that grow. The lover sometimes complains, *“Oh, why did I ever love?”* Sometimes he berates his eyes and reprimands them for ever having cast a glance on the Beloved, despite the fact that he had stealthily cast a glance at his Beloved. He will not speak about this subject to anyone who is not able to understand the condition of his heart, for to talk of the pain of one’s heart to a person who has never felt such pain is to invite more pain. He, however, keeps the Beloved within his eyes, wherever his eyes go. He regards his Beloved as of more importance than even his own life. Khusro Sahib says:

*“I have become an infidel on account of love. I do not need this superficial religion of mine. Every cell of my body has been filled with the rays of love. I do not need even the sacred thread. We lovers have no anxiety regarding the dissolution of the world, because our aim is to continue to see the glory of our Beloved.”*

Tulsi Sahib says:

*“A lover, even when he is awake, is asleep to the world. Whether sleeping or in a state of wakefulness, his soul’s attention is fixed on the Beloved, and that link never breaks. His love is like that of the moon-bird for the full moon. It continues to gaze at it as long as it shines. It will strain its neck backwards till it almost touches the ground, but will not change its position from the time the moon appears in the east till it sinks in the west.”*

## The Intoxication of Love

In the religion of love-intoxicated people there is neither day nor night. They are constantly engaged in the contemplation of the Beloved day and night, and they do what cannot possibly be done by people of the world or even by very intellectual and clever people. The nights of the world are their days. In other words, they are awake in remembrance of the Lord day and night. Even the force of calamities cannot remove their attention from their Beloved.

The heart and the mind of lovers are always drowned in the remembrance of the Beloved. They have no concern for their body, because they have lost themselves in the remembrance and contemplation of their Beloved. They have no rest or peace unless their mind is fixed on their Beloved. Worldly troubles, poverty, pain, hunger or anxieties do not distract their attention. Sheik Sa’adi says:

*“There is no patience in the heart of a lover, which is like a sieve through which water of patience immediately passes.”*

*“Lovers are not affected by any calamities or unrest in this world, because they remain aloof from worldly distractions. They should keep silent, because nobody is able to understand the secret of such lovers. The lovers of God are not even aware how and when the sun rises.”*

*“A lover has become mad after his Beloved, and there is joy in that intoxication. He has broken the cup of his body and has no feeling about it. What effect can anybody’s clever and intellectual talk have on him? He has passed beyond the gardens of intellect.”*

He is so intoxicated in love that the wine of ecstasy drips down his eyes at all times. Maulana Jammi says:

*“I am so intoxicated with the bliss of love that the wine of intoxication is overflowing from my eyes.”*

Shamas-i-Tabriz has also described the state of intoxication of a lover of God in the following words:

*“I see the caravan of camels as well as their drivers happy from head to foot in the intoxication of love. The rich are intoxicated, the priests are intoxicated, my friends are intoxicated, and even my enemies are intoxicated. I see them all in a state of unique bliss. Oh heaven, how long will you continue moving! Look at the movement of the elements: Earth is intoxicated; water is intoxicated; wind is intoxicated; and even fire is intoxicated. This is the state which I see outside. But please do not ask me about the state of my inner being. My senses, my intellect and even my soul are intoxicated, and they have achieved a permanent bliss of intoxication. The roots of these tree-like bodies are drinking the secret wine of love. Have patience, because even you will one day wake up into this state of intoxication. In my mind there is a festival of bliss. You should try to feel the effect of the wine of Divine Love, so that even the walls and the doors are all intoxicated.”*

When the wine of God’s love is flowing in the mind of a lover, he sees that bliss everywhere. Shamas Tabriz has very forcefully pleaded for an increasing ecstasy of God’s love in the following quotation:

*“If you are intoxicated, increase it and become senseless in it. Try to know yourself, and become wise in it. We cannot do anything without.”*

He further says:

*“Oh you men with superficial eyes! If you are not familiar with our nature, please go away! Try to understand the true nature of our intoxication. This Divine Ecstasy has now given me all its qualities.”*

*“Even death cannot mar the happiness of those who have been pierced by the pangs of love, because contemplation on the face of the Beloved has become a shield for them. How can the arrows of this world pierce them?”*

## The Emotions of a Lover

As soon as love is awakened, the lover is dyed in its hue. A lover always desires to continue to see his Beloved and listen to the Beloved's words most attentively. Every part of the lover's body, from head to foot, is attentively engaged in seeing the Beloved and in listening to the words of the Beloved.

A lover yearns to see the face of his Beloved as one longs to see the moon, and is delighted by its beauty. There is always a strong desire in his mind to listen to the words of the Beloved, for to him they are full of nectar. He feels that if his arms cannot embrace his Beloved, they should be broken and if his eyes cannot enjoy the sweetness of the sight of the Beloved, they should become blind. He desires the Beloved to live in his eyes so that he may not see anybody else, and the Beloved also may not see any other person. Kabir Sahib said that a lover conceals his Beloved in his eyes. He does not see any other person, nor does he permit the Beloved to see anyone else. He says:

*“Oh my Beloved! Come into my eyes. As soon as you come, I shall immediately close them so that I may not see any other person and that you also may not see anyone else.”*

In love there is no other desire, just as nothing remains in a burning fire. The people of the world demand fulfilment of their desires from God. But a lover in whom the fire of love has been kindled demands only God from God. Guru Ram Das says:

*“If the precious jewels and treasures of all the seven worlds and the seven oceans were taken and placed before a lover, and someone were to ask him whether he would prefer this wealth or the Beloved, the lover would not even consider the treasures. He asks from God for only the nectar of His Name.”*

Hafiz says:

*“The beggars in the vicinity of the Beloved do not even have any desire for heaven, because the victims of love are actually free from both the worlds.”*

When a lover is fully absorbed in love for his Beloved, he does not give a thought to anything belonging to this world. A lover imbibes the beauty of the Beloved in his mind at all times, and tries to understand the greatness of the Beloved in his heart. He does not see anything else in the whole world.

## How Should One Love?

Love is the inherent quality of the soul. This cannot be described in any language. Even the Saints and other wise men have to explain it by giving examples. Love is the sustainer of life, just as a lotus lives on water, its growth is in the water and it blossoms through the currents of water in it. Similarly, love is the life of the soul, and the existence of the soul is dependent on love of God. The soul becomes happy when love takes hold of it. Guru Nanak says:

*“God is the Elixir of our life and you should love Him. As your love for Him increases, your soul will blossom on the water of love like a lotus.”*

He further states:

*“Love for the Lord should be like that of the lotus for water.”*

Water is the sustainer of the life of the fish, which feels happy and comfortable in streams of water. Without water, it feels so much pain that it cannot live. Just as the chatrak (rain-bird) is thirsty only for drops of rain and does not drink the waters of streams and tank; just as the dawn bird longs only for the sun and does not sleep the whole night because she is always looking for the sun to rise when her mate would come and meet her; or just as water has love for milk and if put on the fire will burn itself first (will evaporate) and will not allow the milk to be burnt, in the same manner you should love your Lord.

*“Oh my mind! Give your love to the Lord just as fish loves the water. If the water is plentiful it is happy and its mind is at peace, but without water it cannot live for a single moment. Oh my mind! Have love for the Lord as the rain bird has love for the drops or rain. It will not drink even a drop from the tanks and streams filled with water before it.”*

*“Oh my mind! Love your Lord as the water loves the milk. It protects the milk when put on a fire and does not permit it to be burnt. Oh my mind! Have love for the Lord like that of a dawn bird for the sun. It does not sleep the whole night, because it longs for the sun to rise to enable it to meet its mate.”* (Adi Granth)

*“Just as a rain bird is thirsty only for the drops of rain, and a fish longs for water, oh Nanak! My thirst will also be quenched by the Elixir of God’s Name.”* (Adi Granth)

Guru Ram Das says:

*“A lover is attached to the beloved just as much as the lotus is to the sun; just as much as a peacock loves the clouds; and whenever the clouds appear the peacock starts dancing in an ecstasy of happiness.”*

He further says:

*“Just as the kunj (a bird that flies far and high) keeps its mind always fixed on its little nestlings, even during its distant flights above the earth, similarly you should keep your mind always in the remembrance of God.”*

Guru Arjan Dev has also given similar examples and has strongly advocated love for the Lord in the following words:

*“Just as a butterfly is intoxicated with the fragrance of the flower, so much so that it confines itself within its petals and dies rather than come out to save itself; similarly a lover should have an equally great love for the Lord and should attain eternal life by meeting Him.”*

*“Just as a deer places its head on a musical instrument or a calf loves to meet its mother; or a wife longs to go to the house of her husband; or as a hungry man longs for food; you should love the Lord with the same intense longing.”*

In the same manner, many other Saints have given us examples of love for the Lord, all of which are worthy of our attention.

Saints are surging oceans of God's love, and they act as lighthouses in our life's journey in this world. Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan, Kabir Sahib, Tulsi Sahib, Swami Ji, Lord Chaitanya, Parahans Ram Krishna, Shamas-i-Tabriz, Maulana Rumi, Hafiz and many other Saints have left their footprints on the sands of time for our guidance. Their lives were oceans of love. By studying their writings, love for spirituality will be awakened in our minds. But above all, we should meet a Master who is the manifestation of God, so that we may receive guidance and be able to obtain within, the nectar of love.

## The Place of Love

Love is above the three gunas (attributes). Our body, our life and our mind are connected with the three attributes of Nature, but love is very much above them and is a part of the soul. Therefore, it is free from the taint of Tamas, Rajas and Satvic desires. That is, it does not wish to remain, to receive, or to be anything. Divine Love is free from the mixture of illusions and is always pure in the regions above; but in the regions below it is mixed with physical matter and the low desires of animalism.

Where can we obtain love? It is within us, but everybody cannot get it. We may feel it, but we cannot grasp it. The whole world is busy searching for it. We can experience it only within ourselves. Maghrabi Sahib says:

*“When I looked in, I found within me that which has been sought for ages by all mankind, from one corner of the world to the other. We have been searching for it for many ages here and there, but we have found it only in our heart. Therefore, you should not search for your lost Beloved outside. You will find Him only in the recess of your heart.”*

The place of love is in the soul which is a particle of God, who is love. It is therefore inherent in the soul.

Love is manifested in various ways, that is, for children, wife, family and other relatives, etc. When we look at a thing with the eyes of love, it becomes beautiful. *“When love kindles, it beautifies everything.”* Actually, love is a feeling of beauty – sometimes it is concealed and sometimes it is revealed. When feelings of hatred are manifested, love is concealed. When feelings of attraction appear, then love also appears. But it is within us at all times. Our very life is love. We have come from love and we live in love. We have to merge in love, as it is the protective cover of our body.

Truth is love and it resides in our heart. Love is Naam. It is deeply engraved in our mind and in our body. Whoever tries to search for it, gets it. Love for the Lord is awakened in the disciples of a Master. Thus all their desires are satisfied and they worship only the Lord. They tread the path of love and are fully engrossed in its bliss. The love of a Gurumukh is true love. By means of such a love he meets his Beloved and is happy in the enjoyment of love's bliss day and night; and he achieves the state of Sahaj. [Sahaj means easy, natural, real. Esoterically, it means the transition from the state of “becoming” into that of “being” one with the Supreme Lord; hence a state of supreme bliss].

This kind of love is awakened in Gurumukhs by the Beloved (Master) Himself, and they are absorbed in it day and night.

*“Gurumukhs have love in their hearts. That is the true love by means of which they have communion with the Lord. Day and night they are happy in their love. This love is awakened in the hearts of Gurumukhs by God Himself and, oh Nanak, they remain happy in that bliss and ultimately merge into the eternal state of Sahaj.”* (Adi Granth)

## Teachings of Love in the Old Scriptures

We can find teachings concerning love in the Scriptures of all the religions, according to the customs and circumstances prevailing at that time. Muslim Saints mentioned love profusely in their books. In the sayings of Christ there is also particular emphasis on love. In the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Shastras we also find teachings about the path of devotion. The path of love or devotion is, however, achieved only through the Grace of the Lord.

The Upanishads lay great stress on self-surrender to the Will of the Lord. Teachings concerning the path of love have also been described in the Adi Granth and by many Saints, such as Tulsi Sahib, Swami Ji, Dadu Sahib, Paltu Sahib and others, in a unique manner. It teaches the doctrine of “oneness” while leading a life of love as a householder in this world.

## Love is Our Birthright

God is the ocean of love, and the soul is in essence a drop of the same ocean. Love is inherent in our system. Love is the Emperor, and we are His children. We must take good care of the kingdom of our love. How long can we remain confined within the limits of our body? It is shameful for us to remain entangled in the worldly attachments of wealth, etc. We should not desire anything except love.

## Love is Only Available Through a Perfect Master

This tree of love is concealed from the eyes of the ordinary worldly people, and it can be seen only by the rare few children of the Lord, even though it is indescribable. To understand the mysteries of love is not the privilege of everybody. You should therefore keep the company of a person who has eyes that can see the greatness of love, who sings songs of love like a nightingale, and who is always happy with the flowers of love. Such a one is not subject to any law, because this treasure is bestowed only through the special Grace and Mercy of God Himself.

Love is another name for losing one’s heart to another. How it is lost can be answered only by those people who have experienced it.

*“What is Love? You should ask a Master. How is the heart given away? You should ask one who has lost his heart.”*

## Love Not Reduced to Speech or Print

The story of love cannot be reduced to cold print, just as it is impossible to limit an ocean to its waves. A pen is powerless to describe love’s mysteries fully and clearly. It is also beyond the power of the human tongue to describe love. The description of love cannot be expressed in writing or in speech, so one cannot get it from the pages of books.

Whatever people may say about it, their words are not the path of love. The roots of love are in the Infinite, and its green leaves are spreading beyond limits. The tree of love is not supported either by the earth or the sky. It is described to a certain extent in the Scriptures. The people of learning are unable to give a faithful description of it because it is indescribable. Only a rare person (a true Master) can impart the knowledge of love correctly to a true and real seeker. The worldly people are all ignorant of it. Hafiz says:

*“If you wish to join my class, throw away all of your books. The knowledge of love is not found in them.”*

## The Form of Love

There is no difference between love and God. God is love, and love is God. Both are beyond thought and description. The Elixir of Love can be tasted only by inner experience. All descriptions of love are far from the love itself.

A lover is actually like a doll made of salt. When plunged into the sea in order to find its depth, the doll dissolves in the water and no trace of it can be found. Or a lover is like a moth that goes near a light but does not return. Just as a dumb person feels happy by eating something sweet but is unable to describe its sweetness in words, similarly the taste of love, even when it is experienced, is indescribable.

*“I met my friend and asked her the signs of her Lord. But she does not know how to speak, because she is filled with the intoxication of the bliss of love.”* (Adi Granth)

Love cannot be described in any language. But if and when a rare individual experiences true love, it is manifested in every cell of his body. In other words, it is like seeing the very Lord Himself in that manifestation. Love has a definite existence which can only be experienced and cannot be described by superficial examples. As and when it is experienced, no other proof is necessary.

The very appearance of the sun is the proof of its existence.

This Elixir can only be tasted by actual experience. It cannot be conceived by thinking, reasoning or by arguments. Mind and intellect are only confusing.

## Love Can be Seen in a Lover

If you wish to see love, you should meet a lover. Then you will discover its unique currents. A lover is like a cup which is overflowing with the Elixir of Love, and by looking at him a desire to follow him is awakened. Shamas-i-Tabrez says:

*“If you are unable to detect a lover, you should at least see the spark of love in him. A tiny spark of that special current enabled Mansur to ascend the scaffold with a smile and sacrifice his life.”*

## Love in the Beloved

The existence of love is caused by the beauty of the Beloved. Love is first awakened in the Beloved. Unless there is an attraction from the latter, any action by the lover will be of no avail. If there is need for medicine, then it is necessary to have pain, because if one is not ailing he needs no medicine. The Beloved always keeps an eye on the condition of His lover and imparts all the love that He can attract.

We have no pain (of love) within us, otherwise the physician is always there. The physician of love has the power even to give life to the dead and is a fountain of mercy, but if we have no desire or no pangs, on whom shall He bestow His mercy? You should therefore stop running after the world, but have a longing to go in the direction of love, because this alone will free you from the demon of death. You should hunt for the Truth and not care for other games, because this hunting will even scare the Angel of Death. All the thoughts in one's mind – even if they are as beautiful as flowers – are thorns if they are not directed towards the Beloved. The wealth of the spark of love can be seen only in lovers. If you turn away from such lovers, you will be sorry in the end.

## Methods of Developing Love

Masters have described the methods by which love can be awakened. These methods are known to them by their own inner experience, and to follow their instructions is known as spiritual practice. The method of the Masters is the concentrated essence of the various moral and religious practices that are prevalent in the world – such as going to temples and mosques or other religious places, reading of Scriptures, prayers, worship, charity, pilgrimages, and so forth. These are all outward observances. Austerity, contemplation, and other practices are good for cleansing the mind and senses. They are all included in religious ceremonies and act as an incentive to the soul, because out of their sincere practice love for the Lord can be awakened.

Just as a nurse feeds a child on milk and is responsible for his growth and well-being, similarly these observances are helpful to seekers in their progress towards a spiritual life. The real spiritual practice works as a mother to the soul. It must be remembered that it is only a mother who gives birth to the child, and the milk is produced in her breasts. A nurse is helpful only in external care. To give birth to a child is the function of a mother.

Similarly, of themselves, ritual, ceremonies, religions, Scriptures, etc., cannot create true love. All these austerities and prayers can be given up where there is love. In spirituality, it is only the Saints or the Masters who are the bestowers of spiritual birth to a person.

A Master makes the devotee follow methods which He Himself has experienced within. He guides the seeker in this internal practice and, like a mother, helps in the spiritual growth of the child of love by making him drink the Divine Elixir. Then the devotee realizes the Truth.

All rituals and ceremonies by which the fire of love can be kindled are good, because in that fire all desires and temptations are burned. Guru Ram Das says:

*“Actions such as austerities, fasting and worship are good only if they aid in awakening one's love for God.”*

Bulleh Shah expresses the same thought in the following beautiful words:

*“Religious customs are our nurse; rituals and ceremonies are our mother; but if we wish to achieve something really worthwhile, that can be done only by spiritual practice (inner method). Then alone do we realize the real Truth.”*

The aim of all rituals was the same in the beginning, but with the laps of time and by not following them sincerely they have all become superficial and nominal observance. Thus, the very rituals which were intended to bring us salvation have become our ties.

Love is to be found in its original form in every human being. God is love and the soul is a part of Him; therefore, the soul is also love. But because the soul is concealed under the coverings of the mind, love is also concealed along with it. It is necessary that we remove the covering. This can be explained by an example:

Electricity is present in everything, but it is in a latent form. When we produce it by means of a battery, its currents can be radiated for thousands of miles. Similarly, Divine Love is a big electric current. We can call it human electricity, but this electricity is a thousand times more powerful and bright. When it is produced, it destroys all dirt and unclean ideas rising in one's mind. Then the soul shines forth in its inherent brightness. In other words, the path which may have taken hundreds of years to attain by other methods is covered in the twinkling of an eye by means of love.

Love is inherent in every person and it may be kindled in two ways. One is by the Grace of the Lord or that of His manifestation in this world, namely a Master. The other method is by means of spiritual practice.

Just as electricity exists in every particle, in a latent state, but it is produced with the help of a battery and brightens a large area, similarly the spark of love is produced in the heart of a seeker by the Grace of God or a Master and this force then becomes apparent.

The second method, that of spiritual discipline, such as repetition (Simran), contemplation and listening to the Sound Current, also produces this powerful electric current of love in human beings.

In actual practice, the first essential is to awaken love for God by means of repetition and then by contemplation. As we repeat the Five Holy Names with the tongue of thought, our attraction and love for Him increase within ourselves. When a lover remembers Him and becomes fully absorbed in His remembrance, then God turns the lover's attention towards devotion by His Divine Grace.

Simran (Repetition) done with faith, produces a unique feeling in the heart. By doing Simran a feeling of bliss and divine influence fills the heart. This state is produced sooner or later, according to the individual devotee's sanskaras (predominating nature, the results of past karmic impressions).

Dhyan is the second spiritual practice. At its beginning, with the help of repetition of Charged Names, the sensory currents withdraw from the body below to the eye-focus; that leads to the perception of the Inner Light. Then starts the second phase of Dhyan – Contemplation. It can be

attained by absorbing ones attention into the Inner Divine Light so much so that one forget oneself completely. Dhyān leads to Bhajan.

The third part of the spiritual practice is Bhajan, listening to the Shabd, Naam or Sound Current. God is Shabd, and God is also love. Therefore, Naam or Shabd is love. As the soul contacts Shabd, love flows out from within. Guru Nanak says:

*“The love and attachment by which one merges into the Truth is not possible without Naam.”*

Guru Arjan says:

*“Love is Naam, with which the attachment to physical attractions is destroyed.”*

Guru Amar Das says:

*“Devotees of the Shabd Practice receive honor in the Court of the Lord. Love for God is awakened in them, and by it they are forcefully attracted towards God.”*

*“A Gurumukh achieves love by means of contemplation on God. By the adornment of Shabd his ego is destroyed.”* (Adi Granth)

The principal way towards the achievement of love is the Satsang and company of a Perfect Master, and through His Grace. Guru Arjan says:

*“Only those who have the Grace of the Lord on them are attracted to spiritual practice. But love for the Lord is produced in them by the company of Saints and by listening to their Satsang. It is only by the teachings of Saints that love for a perfect Master is produced in us and our love is fixed at His Lotus Feet. Without a Master, love cannot be produced and the dirt of egotism is not destroyed. He puts us on the path of Shabd. When we listen to it we ‘know ourselves’ and attain Sohāng (I am That).”*

*“Oh Brother! Without a Master, love cannot be awakened. One who follows the dictates of his mind cannot get it. He may perform all kinds of religious acts, but they will be without rewards.”* (Adi Granth)

*“It was through the pure Grace of the Perfect Master that my love was fixed at His Lotus Feet.”* (Adi Granth)

Guru Arjan says:

*“One cannot achieve love without a Master. You should bear it in mind that God is love, and He is manifested in the Master, and it is the Master who enables one to meet the Lord.”*

One cannot be truly devoted without a Master, nor can one attach oneself to Shabd. We can practice Naam through intense love for our Master. And true love which never perishes can be achieved only through a Perfect Master.

*“Devotion is not possible without a Master. Love for Naam is also not possible. Oh Nanak! I can practice Naam only by the Grace of my Master’s love.”* (Adi Granth)

*“True love can be produced by loving a perfect Master, because, oh Nanak! this never perishes, and we sing of the glory of the Lord.” (Adi Granth)*

Shamas-i-Tabriz says:

*“The Master felt my pulse when I was already exhausted through religious practices. He said, ‘Alas! Whatever austerities and worship you have done are all useless. The aim of the lovers of God is neither to gain learning nor to gather treasures of the intellect, nor to have any connection with gains and losses of the world.’ After saying this, He gazed into my eyes, and the gaze of my Master effaced my very being. Then He said, ‘Go and drink that wine which is full of the intoxication of bliss and spend the remaining years of your life in that happiness. You should now leave all outward rituals and entanglements.’ ”*

Just as God has already put electricity in the clouds and other things, in a latent form, but various actions are needed to produce it in its dynamic form, similarly love is in every soul in a latent form, because God is love and we are a particle of Him.

One way by which love is created is that the Master or God Himself awakens love in a soul and intoxicates the soul with the ecstasy of love. Secondly, by following spiritual practices the hue of love imparts its color to a lover. But both of these ways are possible only through the abundant Grace of the Master, by which alone all obstacles are removed and a desire is produced in the heart of the seeker to go from one spiritual region to the next. Guru Arjan says:

*“Religious preachers and religions are both unaware of love. The whole world behaves like a fool. People have forgotten God and are heading for hell.”*

Shamas-i-Tabrez says:

*“Atheists and all religious preachers, religions and the followers of the world’s many faiths are bereft of this treasure in their heart.”*

## How Love is Produced

Love is produced or awakened in the heart in various ways. The first method is Darshan (to behold the Beloved). The second is to talk to the Beloved personally; and the third is Dhyan (contemplation of the Beloved).

We see someone and create a mental picture in our mind of his sweet manner of talking and his attractive face, and feel happy in that thought night and day. This is the first stage.

Sometimes we listen to the description of someone’s beauty and forget ourselves in thinking of that individual. This is the second stage.

When we fill our heart with the purity and noble qualities of someone and think about him day and night. This is the third stage.

But when we are attracted by His handsome form and behold His beauty, and have been pierced by the sharp arrows of love, then that attractive face keeps shining before our mind’s eye at all times.

## Essentials for Permanent Love

Six principles are essential in the Path of Love:

1) There should be no selfish motive in our dealings with the Beloved. Do not ask from Him anything except devotion to Him. Love should be selfless. To desire or to ask for comforts, wealth, children, etc., is selfish love.

2) Love should be reserved only for the Lord or for the Master. If you are attached to others, your love is naturally scattered and its intensity is decreased. When our love is thus scattered, we cannot meet God nor can love remain alive. You should live in this world without becoming entangled in it. Naam Dev was once asked: *“When does your Lord show His face to you?”* He replied: *“When I am able to detach myself from all relations and friends. He comes only then.”*

3) Love should be constant. It must be constantly centered on the Lotus Feet of the Beloved. A lover’s mind, intellect and soul should all be dedicated to the Beloved. The mind should think of the Beloved, and He should always be in the lover’s thoughts. By means of the intellect one should think about Him, and a longing for His Darshan should constantly rankle within the soul. One should not become engrossed in worldly activities which dissipate the attention fixed in the Lord.

4) Love for the Lord should neither decrease nor break in its continuity. One should keep oneself engaged in observances and should have associates through whom he will continue at all times to get food for love. The knocks of love should be constantly received, so that the longing for God and the attraction for Him may be always on the increase.

5) A lover should observe the practice of good conduct. Just as medicine is a remedy for an ailment, but along with it abstinence from undesirable food is also essential, similarly, the remedy for ailments of the soul is love, and good conduct in life is comparable to abstinence from intake of undesirable food.

What is good conduct? First, one should always speak the truth and should avoid telling lies. To describe anything correctly is to speak the truth. Whatever one has in his mind and whatever one feels should be spoken out. In other words, the heart, the brain and the tongue should all combine into one truth.

What is the basis of all evils?

- a. Action which is done underhandedly.
- b. Action which compels the door to tell lies in defense.
- c. To think evil of others.

If we feel that by doing something evil nobody will find out, and the consequences would be most unpleasant if someone did find out, that is the first root of evil. Actions performed with this mental background are conducive to disbelief in the omnipresence of God. Such a mental state also destroys one’s own spirit of right-thinking and creates fear of the world. By such actions, concentration of the mind is lost and restlessness is created.

When a particular action is committed and substantiated with lies, the mental state described above continues. A liar, to substantiate his lie before others always goes on thinking of arguments to support it and spends a lot of time in anxiety to propagate it. To tell a lie requires a very good memory otherwise it is disclosed from one's own words (by contradicting the previous statement).

If we think ill of somebody, we forget the connection of our soul with others. If we realize that God above knows all about our actions and is omnipresent, then all secret evil actions will automatically be avoided and we shall tell no lies, and the qualities of the soul will manifest profusely. Kabir says:

*“There is no austerity like truth and no sin like falsehood. Those in whose hearts truth prevails, also have God residing in their hearts.”*

To think evil of others is to cut one's connection with his own soul with a sharp axe. Not to think evil of others is to create bonds of friendship with the soul. In this manner our love will be universal and will not antagonize anybody. The temple of our heart will be clean and a worthy seat for the Lord. A Muslim Saint says:

*“Clean the temple of your heart of all rubbish so that it may be a fit abode for your Beloved.”*

One with a pure heart is constantly happy. Do not hurt anybody's heart. The human heart is far better than thousands of places of worship. A man-made temple may be a place to worship a deity, but the heart is the place of pilgrimage that leads to God.

If you hurt anybody's heart, then your worship, your fasting, reading of Holy Scriptures or performance of daily duties are of no value before God. Practice non-violence. Do not think ill of others nor cause pain by your anger, back-biting, etc. To see God in everything – whether man or beast – and not to injure anyone, constitutes good conduct. By trespassing the principle of good conduct, we cannot love God nor can we have His Darshan (nor can we behold Him).

6) Our love for the Beloved, that is, the Master or God, should be reverential and full of humility. In love we forget ourselves. A father loves his child, and if the child pulls the father's beard, he does not punish the child but livingly and quietly removes the child's hands from the beard. A lover also realizes that a servant is a servant, a Master is a Master, a child is a child, and a father is a father.

A servant will be a servant despite the fact that he may become very dear to his master. We must remember that a devotee is a devotee and that the object of his devotion is the Lord. A lover's love for the Beloved is good only if he does not disregard the Beloved's instructions. He should not argue, but should constantly keep his head bowed in the observance of His commandments. He should be respectful at all times. In other words, he should not transgress the limits of respect.

The maker of a lover is the Beloved, and it is the internal attraction of the Beloved that creates love. It is through His Grace that the love remains alive. Otherwise, it is entirely useless. A lover should always consider his Beloved to be the Emperor of Emperors. If the Beloved yields to the obstinacy of the lover, it is His Grace. The greatness of the Beloved does not suffer thereby. His commands are the orders of an Emperor and the commands of God. You should constantly obey Him. Never utter words of disrespect under the influence of arrogance or the

pride of your intellect or strength. Never should an idea of equality or disrespect enter your mind.

If, on the path of spirituality, a seeker transgresses the limits of reverence or respect, he falls in the eyes of the Beloved and will ultimately be degraded into misery and hatred. Everybody loves humility and proper respect; therefore the Beloved of your heart should receive much more of this love and respect.

God is in the hands of His devotees. This is the magnanimity of the “Oneness” of His love. The Beloved bestows on the lover the key of all His powers, which can even be exercised by the lover, but the lover always remains within the bounds of his Beloved’s Will, except that in rare moments of forgetfulness he may transgress the limits. He always keeps before him the wishes and the commands of his Beloved (the Master). He has no personal desires. A lover remains happy in the Will of his Beloved. It is for this reason that he is dear to the Master.

We should always ask from the Lord and from our Master, with great humility, for the gift of love. Disrespectful people remain devoid of the Grace and Mercy of God.

## How Can Love be Maintained?

If you wish to make friends with somebody, you first create a longing for him in your mind. If you wish to love God, you should cultivate a longing for God. Love cannot remain alive without continuous cultivation. We can maintain love by love.

If we wish to be happy in some work, the happiness can be achieved only by doing that work regularly and continuously. Similarly, in order to become a lover we have to persist in our love. In order to get love we have to do something, and if we wish to keep our love for someone alive, we have to follow certain principles. And for this it is necessary to sacrifice time and possession. Love can be maintained by exerting the same amount of effort that we spent in winning it.

## Where is Love First Produced?

Love is first produced in the heart of the Beloved. If there is no light, the moth will never burn itself. Love is born in a man through good fortune by the Grace of God, and then only is one able to go into the company of Saints. Guru Ram Das says:

*“Regarding those who possess the wealth of love, you should understand that He Himself has granted this favor to them out of His Grace. This treasure can be obtained only through a Master. It is exceedingly difficult to serve Him, but that is also the means of achieving all joy. This love is bestowed only on such persons on whom God Himself bestows it with His Grace. The company of Saints is also achieved by previous karmas and good fortune.”*

## Love by a Gurumukh and a Manmukh

To love God is the rare fortune of a Gurumukh. To him the meeting with the Beloved is like the wearing of a garland of all good qualities around his neck. To awaken love within, to have the Darshan of the Lord, to love Scriptures, to produce a pure Light within – all these are the privileges of a Gurumukh. This state cannot be achieved by a Manmukh.

*“We meet our Beloved and we have achieved happiness. We have also worn around our neck the garland of all good qualities. Oh Nanak, it is only a Gurumukh who can achieve this love for God. Such a person has love inside and has the Darshan of the Lord. He listens to Scriptures and is happy. The pure Light of God appears in such a Gurumukh.”*

*“A Manmukh is one who follows the dictates of his mind. He cannot have love for God nor for a Master because, oh Nanak, only with the Grace of a Guru, who is the bestower of pain and pleasure, can one merge into the Lord.”* (Adi Granth)

## Qualities Awakened Through Love

1. Destruction of the ego. Another name for love is continuous remembrance. By remembering the Beloved continuously, attachment and love for Him are awakened within and the ego or self is destroyed. The lover then begins to merge into the Beloved to the extent that he becomes His very form. Bulleh Shah says:

*“I have been crying ‘Ranja, Ranja, my beloved’ so much that I have become Ranja.”*

To forget one’s self is the fundamental principle of love. All the desires of a lover narrow down to the Will of the Beloved. His whole self is dissolved into the Beloved. When there is no self, then where are the desires? Even God is in search of such true lovers. Our ego is an obstacle between us and God.

*“So long as thou art, how can thy Beloved be thine?”* (Bu-ali-Qalandar)

He further states: *“When you have emptied yourself by constant remembrance, you will find the path which leads to the Presence of the Lord.”*

Maulana Rumi says in this direction: *“When there is no ‘I’ in you, then your God will have communion with you. Therefore, you should try to forget yourself.”*

A lover destroys his ego and thus loosens the ties of worldly attachment. Then the love which is between the lover and the Lord is born and he meets the Lord. Such love destroys all our selfish desires and makes the soul worthy of flying to the spiritual regions above. It is true that a person who has his body and his bodily energies under control also has control over higher regions. Love is a certain remedy for all our ailments. That person is really fortunate who, by sacrificing himself, effaces his ego and thus is in intimate communion with God. Without destruction of one’s ego, it is not possible to have the Darshan of the Lord. If you wish to purchase Him, sell yourself.

2. Love only gives, and takes nothing. Love is such a unique quality that whosoever gets it has no other desire left in him. Love makes man selfless and free from all care. In love, there is never any question of taking, because it knows only how to give. We love children and continue giving them things. We never desire anything from them, and they are a source of happiness to us.

The foundation of love is to give. Wherever there is love, there will be only the feeling to give, and the desire to receive anything will never be formed. Love is selfless. It is not selfish. Even in the love of God, the feeling of giving or surrendering ourselves to Him is the first step. In the beginning we may pray to God for the necessities of life, but this state is prior to the development of love for God.

Generally, people worship God with some ulterior motive, and they ask for worldly blessings. They pray that their children may be healthy, and they ask for the joys of heaven. Such people are either lovers of the world or the comforts of heaven. Only a rare few worship God for the sake of God alone. Our aim should be to remember God only out of love for Him. We should not blacken our heart by worldly desires, and should ask from Him nothing but love for Him.

*“To ask from you, o my Lord! anything other than You, is to seek trouble. Give me patience by your Naam, so that all hunger of the mind may disappear.”*

With the appearance of love, our ego is consumed in the Will of God. Demands automatically cease and we are happy only in accepting the Will of the Beloved. A devotee considers it a sin to demand anything from God.

*“When we love somebody, what do we do? We sacrifice everything – our heart, our life, our body, etc. Whatever pleases the one whom we love also pleases us. Have we fallen so low that while trying to love Him we should also demand from Him the fulfilment of our desires? When we do this, have we any right to call ourselves lovers of God? We are not His lovers, but the lovers of His gifts.”* (Maulana Rumi)

Then, how can one meet God? Only he will meet Him who has sacrificed himself for Him, who is constantly and selflessly engaged in Naam - whether sitting, sleeping, awake, walking, etc. Such a man is of God, and God is his.

Those who demand things of the world from Him will get their worldly desires fulfilled, but they will not meet God. He knows all our thoughts, so how can we deceive Him? He knows even the latent desires in our mind, and whatever we ask God for, He gives. The fifth Sikh Guru says:

*“My kind Lord has permitted me to know that His children will be given whatever they desire. You should therefore become His children and ask only for His Darshan so that His Lotus Feet may reside in your heart.”*

A Master is the manifestation of God. A lover of a Master does not even demand salvation or Sat Naam. His love is for the sake of love and he gets everything without asking for it.

A wife loves her husband and because of that love he tries to satisfy her needs without her having to ask him. Similarly, a Master, who is the manifestation of God Himself, gives everything to us. He gives us whatever we need, without our asking. Above all, He bestows the highest treasure of love through which peace, concentration, a blissful life and inner awakening are produced. The lover's devotion is for Him alone, and in the eyes of a true devotee both the worlds appear to be nothing.

3. Love is selfless. True love is free from all desires. Selfishness and love cannot meet. Love decreases in proportion to the degree of increase of selfishness; and love increases as selfishness decreases.

Leaving aside spirituality, it is not good to have a feeling of selfishness even in the ordinary day-to-day life. If we love someone with any selfish aim, then it is not love; rather, we love our own selfish ends. Similarly, those who worship with a desire for wealth, offspring, fame or heaven are not real devotees. That kind of love is more like a trade or a business. True love is only for the love of the Beloved. Sheik Farid says:

*“Where there is greed there is no love, and if greed is there, that love is false.”*

Every soul is love in its very essence, but if this love is confined to a certain state and is directed in the form of a desire then the soul energy is stopped. When a person gives up all desires, his soul-currents of love emanate with great force. The fullness of life is a state of desirelessness.

A yogi desires salvation, but a lover or a devotee does not want this and is happy only in the pure love of the Lord. The root of all evils, namely selfishness, is the basis of all evil acts by anyone towards another. But a devotee of the Lord is absorbed only in Him, selflessly. It is impossible for any idea of evil to be entertained by such a person.

4. Love brings fearlessness and courage of a high order. The first sign of true love is that the lover becomes free from fear. A lover is happy only when he sacrifices his heart and his life. When one is pierced with love, how can he be afraid of death? The Master acts as a shield for him, so how can the arrows of death pierce him? Such a lover has no fear of anybody except the Beloved.

Even a delicate woman will be prepared to attack a tiger, if she sees her children in danger. How can one be afraid of anything, if he has dedicated his life to love? Where there is fear, love has not yet affected the heart. The first stage of love is fearlessness. Kabir says:

*“Oh Kabir! Only those will be able to drink from the still well of love who will be prepared to sacrifice their heads. No one else will be eligible to drink. Oh Kabir! The cup of love is full of flavor, but to drink it is very difficult because the one who distributes this wine demands the sacrifice of your head.”*

The courage of a lover is also of a high order. People generally get tired when they work, but the hands and the feet of a lover are given a unique strength and activity. He does not remain idle. His heart assumes the greatness of an ocean. He has no worries. For him even impossible things become possible. Every difficult thing becomes easy. Guru Arjan says:

*“If the path of love is beset with oceans, mountains, forests and endless deserts – all these appear to be equal to only one step forward on account of love.”*

A lover does not worry about obstacles in his path. Farid says:

*“The home of the Beloved is far off. The road which leads to it is filled with mire on account of rain, but the lover has only the thought of the Beloved in his heart. When he walks on such a road his clothes become wet and he even slips at every step on account of the mud. But he does not care and goes forward somehow. He does not want to break the continuity of his love. Then he cries out, ‘Oh God! This rain should be a torrential rain and this blanket of mine should be drenched.’ With these words he goes on to meet his Beloved so that his love may not wane.”*

5. Love has a force which imparts increased power of endurance to the lover and makes him capable of enduring pain. Lovers who have been madly in love have actually made friends with death. They feel a sense of pleasure in facing troubles, and they may fight all their life against hope but they never waver.

The world of lovers is not easy. Bilwamangal was able to ford a river on a dead body, thinking it to be a log of wood, because he was intoxicated with love. He even climbed the roof of his beloved's house by means of a hanging snake, mistaking it to be a piece of rope. The darkness of the night, the torrential rain and the fearful tempest, all faded away before the whirlwind of Bilwamangal's madness of love. Manu's love was similarly expressed for Laila. Farhad was the lover of Shirin. They danced attendance from door to door; they fell against stones and had to climb mountains. They even starved for lack of food, but nothing could deter them from their love, till death overtook them. These are examples of the ventures of physical love.

Love is a force greater than any other. Love is energy, which gives power to life. The Upanishad says:

*“Those who practice Pranayam crush their enemies into small bits like a clod of earth when struck against a stone.”*

A lover achieves strength to bear all kinds of troubles and tortures. People of the world are unable to bear slander but a lover becomes indifferent to it. His soul receives such strength that he does not succumb to any ailment. Love is a perfect remedy for all inner ailments.

6. Love comprises service, sacrifice and true subjugation of mind. A mother moves around the bed of her sick child with such devotion that she has no idea of day or night, but she does not complain about her own inconvenience. A child wets the bed but the mother puts the child on the dry side and herself sleeps on the wet side the whole night. She never entertains a feeling of anger or hatred in her mind for the child. A mother may have been hungry for a number of days; she has a little food which she gives to her child, and herself quietly lies down and suffers from starvation. She never complains. She is patient and thankful.

This is the gift of self-sacrifice and subjugation of the mind, which are the sequence of love. People try to control passion, anger, greed, attachment and pride. That is not an easy job, but through true love they are all completely toned down. We bow before such love.

7. All things become easy in the presence of love. A person under the influence of love performs the most difficult tasks with comparative ease. Through love, even impossible things become possible. Love knows no burdens. You may have to work very hard. There may be a great burden of responsibilities on your shoulders. But if you clearly understand the law of love, all these difficulties will be performed by love without trouble. *“He does much who loves much.”*

If a person loves a certain type of work, he works at it incessantly because love feels no burden. A lover does not mind burdens and he therefore gladly accomplishes work beyond his capacity. He never complains of his inability to do any work because he considers himself capable of doing every type of work in the atmosphere of his love. Love gives him such energy that he does not consider anything impossible.

8. A lover pays no heed to public opinion or his own high position. In true love all such feelings vanish. The idea of high or low birth also disappears. One who is in love has no connection with such things.

*“If you are a lover of the Divine Beauty, you should rise above criticism. One who is fully dyed in the color of love is unconcerned about all public gossip and opinions.”*

Hafiz says: *“We do not care for public opinion, nor praise.”*

Whosoever has dedicated his honor at the Feet of the Lord will be protected by God Himself. Such devotees are always intoxicated with love and are free from anxiety. Kabir says:

*“A person who wishes to taste love and also wants to maintain his fame or honor should know that these two things cannot stay together; just as two swords cannot be contained in one scabbard. I have not seen such a thing nor have I ever heard of it.”*

9. Love brings to the lover the quality of concealing the bad qualities of others. Love hides all evils and bad things. In a lover's eyes the beloved appears to be pure and free from all evils. He sees the spark of his beloved in everybody. Therefore he talks sweetly to the liking of all. His attention never turns towards the faults or defects of anyone in this world. Why should he then criticize or talk ill of anyone? Criticism is the outcome of the absence of love.

10. Lovers are awakened through love, and love's power remains constant. One whose mind has become alive through love is beyond death, and memory of his name lives forever.

There are many other attributes of love. By obtaining or developing love, many virtues are added. *“Love and all things shall be added unto you.”* In love there is unique oneness, happiness, comfort and fulfilment. Through love, one is able to benefit his own self and also his family.

When the mind is filled with love, the ego is destroyed; fear, worry and transmigration of the soul are ended; all mental anguish, all pains and ailments are finished. Illusion (Maya), bad acts and evil intellect are also effaced. Desire, restlessness and all the mind's dirt are removed. All longings are fulfilled and devotion is produced. Such a devotee crosses the ocean of life and attains salvation. He is honored and receives honor in the Presence of the Lord. He achieves the state of Sahaj. Because of the love within himself, God is always his guide. He meets God, and God resides in his heart. The mind becomes satisfied. He goes to his Real Home, and is freed from the cycle of births and deaths.

Love has been described and given a high place in the Sikh Scriptures, and there are numerous verses invoking the spirit of love within. It is suggested that the reader should read them carefully, and by imbibing such love make his life fruitful.



# Prayer or Supplication

## Chapter 2

What is supplication?

Prayer is called in Persian, 'Dua', which means to call. It means calling on the Lord or some other person for help.

A materialist considers this life to be a machine, the parts of which are being run by the blind forces of cause and effect, and he does not admit that there is an Ultimate Being who is directing it. But one who knows the reality, while agreeing that the law of cause and effect is working, further knows that this is being done under the orders and directions of a Supreme Being. He, therefore, while keeping an eye on the causes-and their effects, appeals to the Lord, the Supreme Cause, for help.

### The Helplessness of the Materialist

We find that a materialist, while possessing all means and materials, does not reach the ultimate objectives he desires. All his material possessions do not enable him to do so. He then becomes helpless. He perceives no ray of hope in the darkness of his failure. He does not like anything. His life becomes a burden to him. He feels no interest in life and in his despair he may commit suicide. He lives like a corpse devoid of life. As compared with this, a person who knows the reality makes an effort to gain worldly wealth, but knowing that the Lord is the ultimate Cause of all causes, leaves the fruits to Him and surrenders gladly to His Will and pleasure. The Lord may do whatever is good for him, for it is only the Lord who knows what is good for us. If the result is in accordance with his wishes, he is thankful. If it is to the contrary, he submits to it cheerfully, because he knows that whatever is happening is in accordance with the order and will of the Lord. He asks for the Lord's help at every step, because he knows that there is always something that is beyond the reach of his own efforts. Crying for help in this way is called prayer.

In reality, prayer is the gathering and stilling of the waves of the mind at the inner center. When some desire springs up in the mind or one is worried by some worldly affliction, he thinks in his heart of the power of the Lord and looks to Him for inspiration. The heart of man is the dwelling place of the Lord. The Lord is the great storehouse of power. He is the true and complete ideal. By contemplating on Him a man gains peace within himself and becomes powerful. When he gets this power, he is able to think of ways of getting out of his troubles. The mind gets power to put forth effort. By offering prayers, the mind gets one-pointed. A patience-giving current of thoughts is generated which makes a man alert and active. He develops habits of patience, contentment and forbearance, and acquires courage and strength with which to face difficulties. These are the fruits of prayer.

The wise know that there is great strength in the soul of man. The mind is related to the soul. Therefore, when the waves of the mind are stilled, they come under the influence of the soul and gain strength from it. The soul is conscious and powerful, since it is a particle of the Lord. The Lord permeates it. Man considers himself to be limited and feeble, and it is indeed true that one becomes what he thinks himself to be. But the soul is a particle of the Lord, and the Lord is infinite. If the particle thinks of the infinite for some time, it finds itself to be infinite.

*“You are a particle of the infinite, and if you think of the infinite for some time you will become infinite.”*

When the soul is connected with the Lord, it receives infinite strength from His Current of Powers. Although you are finite, there is a power within you which is infinite. This is the Lord Himself. On understanding this, one begins to understand the reality of the fact that the soul and the Lord are one. The soul takes the dye of the Lord and becomes one with Him.

*“The Father and son are dyed in the same hue.”* (Bhairo M5, 1161-15)

*“I and my Father are one.”* (Bible)

Those with true intelligence go inside and pray. They then get benefit from the Merciful Current of the Lord. Those of lesser wisdom worship symbols or go to mosques or temples where there are idols, and pray before them. There are those who know the spiritual regions and go inside and get direct help through the mind, while there are others who go to certain holy places such as rivers and so forth, and pray there. All of them get results according to the one-pointedness of their mind and faith. No such action is without results.

Some deny the existence of God, and do not think it proper to offer prayers. The Lord is invisible and unseeable. He cannot be seen by the senses. But He permeates our soul. He is not separate from us, whether we believe in Him or not. He is the soul of our souls. He sustains them. He is in truth one – Mahatmas call Him by various names.

We have already said that prayer can be described as the stilling of one's inner feelings at the mind center. In this are included detachment and practice, knowledge and contemplation and worship and recitation.

## Prayer is a Universal Feeling

Prayer is a universal feeling, which a person feels when discomforts, trouble, disease, danger or calamity visits him and he wishes to avoid these things; or when he wishes to satisfy some bodily need or obtain spiritual gain; or when he wants strength to face some difficulties because he does not find sufficient power in himself; or when he wants the help of a powerful being. We see every day that we are often obliged to ask some stronger or more capable person to help us. When a student cannot solve a problem, he seeks the aid of his teacher. Similarly, in the case of illness, we ask a physician to treat us. A subordinate asks his officer to help him. These are examples of a kind of prayer.

When we face any difficulty or an enemy pursues us and we find no refuge, we ask for help from the powerful Lord of the universe or from persons in whom He is manifest. This is called prayer.

It is natural to ask a more powerful or more able person to help us, and it is all the more natural to turn for help to that Supreme Power who is the Lord of all regions and universes and is their Creator, or to one who is one with Him. The fact is that we cannot help praying to Him.

How prayer should be offered so that it may be acceptable to the Lord and to the Master, is the next point to be considered. All the religions say that supplication to the Lord or to the Master is the way to obtain Grace of every kind. It is only through prayer that spiritual advancement can

be achieved. Prayer is the most natural, direct and easy means of connecting individuals with the Creator, and connecting the slave with the Lord. Every seeker needs prayer from the beginning to the end, until he realizes the Lord and merges in Him. Through prayer, all bodily, religious, national and social needs are fulfilled. The ailments of mind and body are eliminated, and prayer ultimately becomes the means of bringing about the union of the soul with the Lord. By the Grace of the Lord, the mind, which is like a crow that eats filth or a crane that eats fish, becomes pure like a swan.

*“Whether you are a swan, a crow or a crane, only His Mercy is of any avail. If He so wills it, He turns a crow into a swan.”* (Sri Rag War M1, 91-4)

## Do Not Extend Your Hand in Supplication Before Anyone Other Than the Lord and the Master

He is the Creator and Lord of the Universe. All other powers are sustained by Him. He is the Supreme Power of all powers. Whatever you wish to ask, ask it of the Lord. There is no dearth of anything in His Court. Kabir Sahib says, *“Nothing is wanting in His court.”*

Guru Arjan Sahib also says that when his kind Friend pervades everything and is everywhere present, how can His servant be in need of anything?

*“He whose Friend is present everywhere what can such a person want?”* (Gauri M5, 186-8)

All the gods and goddesses and lower powers draw their strength from Him. All depend on Him. If you have to ask for anything, pray to Him. Why ask of the servants? Man can be true – the Khalsa (Pure Being) – only when he does not look to anybody else. Guru Gobind Singh Ji says:

*“One who, with the flame burning brightly, meditates in his mind on the One without thinking of another; one who is filled and adorned with complete love and affection and does not believe in fasting or the grave or the tomb; one who recognizes only One and no other and does not indulge in pilgrimages, charity, kind acts, austerities and self-discipline - when the candle burns clearly inside him, then he is Khalsa or the pure one.”*

Guru Arjan Sahib says, *“All is from the Lord, who is the chief giver and the dispeller of fear. Remember Him and make supplication to Him.”*

*“Pray to the giver of joy and the dispeller of fear, to whom He is kind, his deeds bear fruit.”*  
(Sri Rag M5, 44)

*“Praise the One and repeat His Name; remember the One, and keep the One in mind. Sing never-ending praises of the One, with body and mind meditate on the Lord, He is One and One alone. The only Lord pervades everywhere, the One has become many; by praying to the One sin departs; the One Lord pervades the body and the mind; by the Master's Grace Nanak knows that One.”* (Gauri M5, 289-5)

Guru Ramdas says, *“If you have to perform any action, pray to the Lord. He will make it successful. The Master is our true friend, relation and helper.”*

*“If you wish for success in any action, pray to the Lord. He accomplishes your task for you. The Master is the true witness. He is the dispeller of fear and is kind. He protects his servant.”*  
(War Sri Rag M5, 91-5)

Guru Arjan Sahib prays, *“O Lord! This body of mine is Yours. I pray humbly and earnestly before You. Everything is due to Your greatness. Otherwise nobody would even know my name.”*

*“I pray to You, for the body and mind are Yours. Oh Nanak! It is all His greatness. Otherwise, nobody would know my name.”* (Asa M5, 383-11)

The strength and refuge of the Saints is the Lord who is their Master. They pray to Him. There is no fixed place for their worship. They tell their joys and sorrows to Him alone.

*“I am mad. You are my Master and I pray to Thee; I have no other place in which to pray to You; I can tell my joys and sorrows to You alone.”* (Suhri M4, 735-1)

Always ask of the All-Powerful One. If you ask any other, you will find that he is already full of troubles and cannot give you any help.

*“To whomsoever you may pray in this world, his hands are full of his own troubles. He who prays to the Transcendent One crosses the ocean of the world.”* (Gujri M5, 497)

It is beneficial to pray to the All-Powerful One. There is no dearth of anything with Him. To ask of the lower powers or of the gods and goddesses does not lead to complete success. They can give us benefits or boons that are within their own sphere, but they cannot save us from death and rebirth. They are all involved in this lower cycle. They cannot give salvation. Guru Arjan Sahib says that he who prays to the Lord is free from all the three fevers and troubles, gets the wealth of happiness, and is saved from calamity.

*“He removes the three fevers. He takes away troubles and gives peace. He who prays to the Lord meets with no obstructions.”* (Todi M5, 714-12)

It is clearly written in the holy Quran that one should call upon the Lord only for help. Crying to the Lord is the true crying. Hazrat Ibrahim told his tribesmen, *“Go away. I leave you and all others except Allah to whom you pray. I cry to my Lord. I am confident that I will not be left without help when I cry to Him.”*

He again said, *“Oh followers of the book, turn your faces towards one who is your friend and mine. We should not pray to anyone except the Lord ‘Allah Talah’, and should regard none other as His equal.”* (Alamar Ayat 7-8)

We have as yet not seen the Lord, therefore we do not completely rely on Him and have faith in Him. When there is no complete faith, how can one's prayers be heard? But there is the Light of the Lord in the Master.

*“He appears in the garb of a Holy Man.”* (Mam M5, 1075- 7)

*“The Lord speaks through him; the Lord resides in the heart of a Holy Man.”* (M 5 263-4)

*“His words are the words of the Lord, although they come from the throat of Abdullah.”*  
(Servant of God)

The words of the Master, although they come from the throat of a human being, are the words of the Lord. To ask of the Guru is to ask of the Lord. He is in every way powerful. If you wish to pray to Him who is able to give life or take it away, call upon Him who is the living God and have confidence and faith in Him. Do not turn to any earthly refuge. Turn your inner attention to Him. No thought of receiving help from anyone else should ever enter the mind. The attention should be directed to Him alone. Your cries for help will reach Him. Kabir Sahib says that if a disciple is on one side of the ocean and the Guru on the other, the disciple should turn his attention to the Master. The Master will then make all his efforts successful. The Master is the King of kings. Everything is within His power. He has the power to do everything. The world of kings bows at His door.

*“He who is the Overlord of kings and chieftains, He in Whose power is the whole world, He who is the doer of all things, no one is beyond Him, pray to your Master, He will crown your efforts with success. He Whose court is the highest, He Whose name sustains the devotees, He Who pervades and owns all, He Whose glory is present in all minds, He by remembering whom death cannot harm, He by remembering whom dry land becomes green, He by remembering whom the drowning ones swim across, oh Nanak, He has heard my prayers. The Saints will have mercy on me and I will dwell in the Name.”* (Gauri M5, 182)

He can give all the four boons, that is, dharam (righteousness), wealth, happiness and salvation. He has power to give all.

*“He who wants the four cardinal boons, he should serve the Holy Men. He who wants to cast his woes away, he should sing the Name of the Lord in his heart. He who wants glory for himself, he should live with Holy Men and give up his ego. He who is afraid of death and rebirth, he should take shelter with the Saints.”* (Gauri M5, 266-4)

If you go to the door of the Lord or the Master, go as a beggar. There is no one else before whom one should bow. He is the only one who can listen to the prayer of one who is caught in the whirlpool of Maya. He is the only one who can put healing ointment on the heart that is bleeding from attachment and greed. It is only He who can revive lost hopes. All these qualities exist only in the Lord, or in His other form, the Master. He heals bleeding hearts by sending them the Current of His Inner-Consciousness. Bhai Nand Lai Sahib says:

*“The Perfect Master heals the heart, the healing is done in the heart.”*

For this reason a disciple, whether near or far from his Master, should give up all intellectual cleverness, surrender his mind and body to Him, and place all his sufferings before Him.

*“Whenever the heart is suffering pray to him; give up cleverness, and surrender body and mind.”* (Gujri War M5, 519-11)

In the holy Quran it is said, *“Who else is there who would listen to the prayers of the helpless and afflicted and remove his troubles?”*

Jesus Christ says in the Epistle of St. John in the Bible: *“Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you.”* (St. John 14:23)

If you have to pray, pray to the Lord or to His manifested form the Master, who can give you all.

## Pray to the Living Presence of the Lord

There can be no doubt that just like asking for help in worldly affairs from one who is powerful, the asking for aid from the Power who is the fountain of all powers and wealth, is a true and effective prayer. But to sigh while praying, considering Him to be separate from us is ignorance. He is a pure and infinite Being, but in His Mercy He dwells within and illumines our soul. Therefore to pray for help to that Power which is seated in our soul is the key to success. To pray to Him as a Being apart from us is not true prayer, for we are then praying to a Being whose existence we doubt, and there is still a feeling of egotism or separateness. Some doubt still persists as to whether or not we will receive His Grace, and there is not complete faith and confidence.

That Reality permeates our entire being, although we are not conscious of it, and the Current of Divine Power and Light is flowing inside us. When we turn within and merge in that power our soul-force awakens within us. Just as our hidden physical strength is awakened by physical exercise, similarly, in prayer we bring to the surface our inner feelings and emotions and through such prayer the soul awakens and we obtain spiritual benefits.

It sometimes happens that by praying to some power apart from ourselves our wishes are fulfilled due to self-intoxication induced by our heart-felt desires and feelings. But the illusion about the Lord being separate from us still persists. Our life is then not based on any firm foundation. We are not conscious of the treasure of powers and abilities that lies within us. Our soul is a particle of the Lord. He permeates our soul. By praying to Him and merging in Him one shares in His powers. But he who considers Him to be a separate being cannot enjoy this wonderful pleasure and the full benefits of merging in Him. Those who think that the Lord is on high and directs the affairs of the world from there seldom receive a response to their prayers. The Lord is with you and within you and not far away from you. The Lord is inside you. He is none other than the spirit of your soul. Pray to Him and praise Him inside, and ask for His help.

## Prayer and Effort

Should effort be given up when praying? It should be remembered that until man becomes a conscious co-worker with and under His will, he should not give up effort. It is not the purpose of prayer or grace that you should make no effort, except to go on praying. This can be made clear by an illustration.

A boy is late for school. What would you think of him if he were to sit down and pray, "*Oh Lord! Let me not be late.*" It would be proper for the boy that, while praying, he should also rely on his own effort and should walk quickly in order to reduce the delay. In the first instance there would be more and more delay. We should take a lesson from one aspect of this illustration only. While making an effort, also extend the hands in prayer. This is the chief cause of success. A sincere desire for anything and a sincere effort for it is true prayer. This is praying in the right way.

All too often we pray with our lips and act otherwise. Such a prayer is not granted. When a man makes a sincere effort for something from his heart, that prayer issues from the very pores of his cells, even though he may not utter a syllable. Whenever necessity arises or a calamity comes, then make an effort with firmness and confidence and pray to the Lord to remove the defects due to imperfections and weakness in you.

It is said in the holy Quran that when Moses and Harun prayed for victory over the infidels and their men, they received the reply, *“I have accepted the prayer of both of you. You should now stand firm in your efforts and not follow the example of those who do not know the reality.”*

The prophet Moses told his people, *“Ask for help from the Lord and be firm. Do not lose courage in the face of calamity. Only he loses courage who has no refuge. The Lord and His human form, the Master, is your everlasting refuge. If in spite of effort you fail, take it to be His Will. If one loses while trying, take it to be His Will.”*

## Which Prayer is Granted?

*“A devotee's prayer never goes in vain. A man's prayer is never wasted.”* (Belawal M5, 819-11)

*“Whatever the devotee asks of the Lord is granted. Whatever the devotee desires of the Lord is granted at once.”* (Asa M5, 403-16)

*“Whatever you ask of the Lord, He gives; oh Nanak, whatever a devotee says comes true.”*  
(Dhanasri M5, 681-19)

Guru Sahib says that the Lord, the Father, has ordained that whatever a child asks shall be granted.

*“The Father has ordained that whatever a child asks shall be given to him.”* (Malar M5, 1266)

In the Sura Momin of the holy Quran it is stated, *“Cry to me and your request will be granted.”* Again it is said in the Sura Baker, *“Oh Prophet: whenever any of my creatures asks you about me, tell him that I am with him; if he cries, I hear him and grant his request.”*

It is said in the Bible: *“What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”* (St. Mark 11:24)

It is again stated: *“Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.”* (St. Mathew 7:7,8)

It is seen, however, that people ask for thousands of things and all of their prayers are not granted. Then what is the meaning of the above words? Let us see which kind of prayer is granted, and why every prayer cannot be granted.

The prayer that can redeem sinners and cure physical, mental and spiritual disease must be made with full faith in the Lord and the conviction that He is all-powerful. Our feelings which have not found utterance are not hidden from Him. He is cognizant of every feeling and thought. He knows the sufferings of both the good and the evil.

*“He knows what is within the heart; He knows the sufferings of both the good and the bad.”*  
(Pat Chaupai 10)

The dwelling up of a strong desire is in reality the making of a prayer. If we should surrender our desires or acts to the Lord before expressing them, then there would be no obstacle in the way of success.

That prayer is right which is full of yearning and pangs. It should be made with patience and full confidence, and with a loving heart, in all humility and submission.

*“Oh mind! Stand in awe of the Lord. However low, even the lowest of the low, He calls him to Him.”* (Devghandhari M5, 529-8)

Prayers should be made according to the directions of the Master and in order to reform one's life. When you pray in this way, you express gratitude for favors received. Gratitude cannot be expressed by mere words that have no connection with our conduct. Since the Master is the Shabd and the Shabd is His form, He is in the Shabd. He who makes the Shabd a part of his life becomes dear and acceptable to the Master. He says, *“If you love me, do as I say.”*

*“The words of the Master are words of bliss; they are Nectar itself.”* (Kanara M4, 1311)

Christ said, *“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”* In order that the prayer may be acceptable, it is necessary that the disciple should be devoted to the Master and His words should dwell in the heart. He can then ask for anything and it will be given to him. Feel happy in remembering the Lord and he will fulfil your desires. Christ says:

*“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”* (St. John 15:7)

*“Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”* (Psalm 37:4)

If you crave forgiveness for your sins, you should first forgive others and then pray. Christ says:

*“When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”* (St. Mark 11:25)

The situation is, therefore, that when we commit any bad act and ask forgiveness of the Lord, He then forgives us; but at the same time He warns us, *“Beware, go and do not do it again.”* Christ, when he forgave a woman for committing adultery, said, *“Go and sin no more.”*

A judge may reduce a sentence, but this does not mean that the criminal will become a better man. He may well do the same evil deeds again. But according to the spiritual law by which the Master forgives sin, he also tells the sinner to sin no more, so that he may turn away from sin and may be able to enter higher regions. What good can it do a man to cry if he goes on taking poison? It is very necessary for him to stop taking poison. How can prayer be of any help if there is no sincere aversion to doing sinful deeds?

Ceaseless effort to make our life pure and truthful is true prayer. This draws to us the Mercy of the Lord, and His Grace and limitless blessings then fulfil the sincere and pure desires of our heart. By merely asking of the Lord or the Master that we may love Him, we do not, as a matter of fact, begin to love Him. But if we consciously pray for a truthful and pure life and try to elevate our life, we will then be molded as He wills and will begin to realize His presence and to share His love.

To pray effectively, it is necessary that we should conduct our life as desired by the Master, and that we should experience happiness in the remembrance of the Lord. Our prayers should be in harmony with the Will of the Lord and the Master, and we should feel happy in whatever He

wills. A peculiarity of human life is the love that knows how to give, but not how to take. But one becomes entitled to all the powers of the Lord by loving Him. He benefits the world through them, but remains aloof from all. We have to love the Lord. It is His Will to give or not to give to us. Our duty is to remain happy in the sphere of His Will. It is, therefore, considered unbelief for the Saints to pray. Maulana Rumi says that Saints rejoice in the Will of the Lord. They consider it unbelief to pray, *“Oh Lord! Take away this suffering from me.”*

## Intellectual and Logical Difficulties in Prayer

Many would like to know why we should pray when the Lord knows all our needs. A father, for example, takes care of the expenses of his family's food, clothing and education without being asked to do so. If we are to be given only after asking, then it seems possible that we might not be given something owing to our lack of knowledge or comprehension. It is also possible that we might ask for something which would be to our disadvantage. We know from experience that we sometimes pray for things and get them, but when they turn out to our disadvantage, we are sorry that we prayed for them. Just as a father knows what is good and essential for his child, similarly, our heavenly Father also knows what we really need and what will be to our advantage. Saints, knowing that the Lord knows our needs, advise us to pray with this in mind.

*“Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him.”* (St. Mathew 6:8)

*“Great is Your glory, for You know our innermost feelings.”* (Asa 463)

*“He knows the inner thoughts of all hearts; He knows the sufferings of the good and evil.”*  
(Sri Mukh Wak, Patshahi 10)

The Saints have given examples of short prayers for our guidance, and some of these are cited later. The purpose of these prayers is to help us to know our needs and to have them fulfilled. When we receive their fulfilment, we should be thankful. The Saints ask us to pray for the fulfilment of our desires as a child asks its mother with full confidence.

*“We are children; You are our Father and Master; guide us.”* (Asa M4, 450)

*“We are ignorant and simple children; oh Father, instruct us.”* (Kalyan M4, 1321-4)

Even if our prayer for the removal of a calamity may not be granted, it always happens that we get added strength to bear it and in this way we better realize our latent capacities. We sometimes think of ways and means by which these calamities and sufferings can be removed.

## Internal Difficulties – The Heart's Ground for Prayer

The Heart's Ground for Prayer: It is necessary to prepare the heart for praying. This consists of praying in humility and with reverence and devotion. Guru Angad Sahib says, *“The Lord knows all, and is the cause of all that happens. He has the power to fulfil our desires by Himself. Stand before Him and pray in all humility.”*

*“He knows all; He can do everything Himself; oh Nanak! Stand before Him and beg humbly and earnestly.”* (Maru M2, 1093-3)

Guru Arjan Sahib also enjoins praying with both hands folded.

*“Pray with folded hands.”* (Bkairav M5, 1152-6)

The second requirement for praying is that the wavering of the mind should be stilled and that the mind should be focused on some inner center and concentrated there again and again. Until the mind is stilled at some center, both the seekers and the followers of the inner path weep at the antics of the mind. When we withdraw our thoughts from the external world and try to focus them on a center in the invisible world, our pent-up thoughts and fears due to our sins in the past come to the surface of themselves. They should either be eliminated by calm and cool reasoning or removed by praying. The best way to remove these difficulties is to conjure up the form of the Master inside ourselves and to lose ourselves in contemplation of Him. It is this kind of constant contemplation which opens the way to the Lord and makes us fit for His Mercy.

In inner praying, a seeker sometimes meets with difficulties due to receiving no apparent response to his prayers. He may then begin to feel that there is no truth behind it. Not feeling the presence of the Lord, the seeker feels as if he is praying in a void. Some seekers rely on the fact that though they do not see the Lord, He sees them. But this state does not last for long. On closing the eyes, we see a vast expanse of darkness and see nothing beyond it. We take this silence as a response to our prayers. The senses cannot function in this silence, and the seeker feels in this state of unconsciousness that he has lost the way. He wishes to walk further on the strength of faith, but he falls again and again. It is a very delicate stage and requires the guidance of a Master. In addition, a certain amount of dryness enters our mind. It does not want to pray. If it is forcibly made to pray, the desire to do so fades away. A seeker has to spend a long time in this stage of dryness and darkness, and many a time his efforts prove fruitless and he does not find the abode of the Lord. These illusions of Maya and Kal mislead a seeker. The method of removing them is to be steady in contemplating on the inner image of the Master and in trying to achieve one-pointedness.

### Three Methods of Prayer

Prayer is performed in three ways.

One is audible, in which we say prayers with our tongue. Ordinary people repeat certain prescribed passages from religious scriptures or recite prayers composed by some Saint. Some think that these are not very beneficial, since they represent the feelings of the Saints, while true prayer is an inner cry from the individual's own heart. Unless our prayer represents the inmost feelings of our heart, we do not derive benefit from it. Reciting other people's prayers is like wearing the clothes of others which do not fit us. The prayers of Saints and Holy Men serve us as a model in as much as similar feelings may arise in our own minds, and in this way the reciting of such prayers helps us.

The second method of praying is mental, in which the tongue does not come into play. In this kind of prayer, concentration is necessary. Before doing so, one feels the presence of the Lord who pervades everywhere, and prays for His help and becomes absorbed in His contemplation. While so absorbed, pray. For this, concentration is necessary. The mind should be withdrawn from everything outside and should be focused on the presence of the Lord or the Master. Then give vent to the feelings of your heart with devotion and gratitude; confess your weaknesses and ask for help. Open your heart to the Lord. For doing this successfully, patience and firm

determination are necessary. It cannot be done in a hurry. It is like learning to play a violin or some other instrument, which requires patience and determined practice.

In the beginning the mind does not take to it, but slowly and slowly, with remembrance of the Lord and contemplation of the Guru, the mind becomes still and success is achieved. When a seeker makes a little progress by means of audible and mental prayers, he should wait for a while for His Mercy and Grace.

When this practice is perfected, he will perceive, after praying, the flow of peace and bliss in his soul, and the mind will become joyful. After tasting this joy, the mind does not wander. These are signs of the descent of the Mercy of the Lord and the Master.

Ordinary people consider this to be all. A seeker, however, should be thankful and should all the more desire for union with the Lord. In such union a seeker rises above the bondage of the body and reaches the presence of the Lord and the Master, from whom all blessings originate. He then sees in operation, the invisible hands which cannot be described. The seeker feels that he is no longer in his body and that he has entered a new kingdom. He floats in spiritual regions and becomes a dweller in them in this very life. He sees the Lord face to face, and enjoys this supreme happiness.

Because of the power of the Lord's attraction the seeker's heart, mind and soul become dyed in the color of the Lord. This can be called mystical prayer, the third method. It has been described by many Saints who have experienced it. This kind of prayer can be found even today. But this kind of prayer can be achieved only through the special Mercy and Grace of the Lord. The effort of the seeker does not count. Such an experience, even for a moment, leads to faith in the Lord and the Master, and produces confidence in spiritual progress and experience. All sins, selfishness and fears vanish. We progress and become the recipients of the inner Grace of the Saints.

## Praying Aloud

Does praying aloud affect us? Yes. It makes us serious for a time and elevates the thoughts. But if the matter is considered deeply, we will realize that when we do not know the Reality, praying loudly holds us back from preparing the spiritual ground, and the thought of gaining praise from others sometime enters our mind. There is danger of our becoming impostors by praying aloud. Such prayers, which contain no truth and do not come from the heart, are simply meant to please others. Physical sensations produce in us mental or emotional happiness and joy. If we were to make some spiritual progress, then we might gain some higher experience from such emotional happiness. But until we are acquainted with the secret of the soul, we cannot gain it. Human passions cannot influence the Lord. It is not necessary to cry loudly to enable our prayers to reach Him. He is not far off. His unseen ears are everywhere. He knows the secrets of every heart and mind, and He can fulfil every desire. Spiritual wealth cannot be gained by praying aloud. One should offer silent prayers with the tongue of the soul, and should pray that he may always act according to the Will of the Lord.

He dwells in every heart. He sees everything and knows our secret feelings. The Lord hears even the footfall of an ant. In the holy Quran it is commanded, *"In all humility cry silently to the Lord"*. It is again stated, *"There is no need to make any noise, for He hears everything."*

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib says:

*“The trumpeting of the elephant reaches Him a moment later, but He hears the cry of an ant even sooner than that.”* (Akal Astut)

There is no need for a seeker to utter loudly when praying. Even the silent current of his thought reaches the other side. The voice of thought is sufficient.

## Praying in Public

In praying before the public we exaggerate our feelings. If we pray for a thing without desiring it in our heart of hearts, that is, if our head and heart do not wish earnestly for a thing, our prayer is nothing but a public and futile repetition of words. But if our prayers are sincere, and we wish for a thing from our heart, then the Lord, on hearing our prayer, grants it. Can the recital of prayers in public, which have no relation to the feelings of the heart, bear any fruit? Can the words we utter reach that omnipotent Lord more rapidly than our inner feelings? No, never. Audible prayers become mere formalities. They do not arouse our feelings, nor do we become absorbed in them. The prayers that spring from the heart of someone else cannot by repetition achieve their object unless they come from our hearts also. These prayers cannot be beneficial and cannot change our lives for good. The arrow which is shot without the bow being drawn to the breast cannot hit the target. Similarly, words which are not spoken from the heart do not reach the Lord. He knows our real needs even before we speak.

The Vedas, the holy Quran and other religious Scriptures, all insist on congregational prayers for the good of all. Can such prayers be of any benefit? Yes, certainly. If a number of persons offer prayers for the common good in humility and with sincere hearts, they get the Grace of the Lord and the prayers are never in vain. To wish for the common good is to live within the Will of the Lord. Many benefits come from it. It is a good way of keeping nations and societies awakened. It is customary amongst the Sikhs to offer common prayers. It is specially mentioned in their scriptures.

*“Nanak, praised be the Name. May all prosper by Thy Will.”*

The Gurus give examples of such prayers and these will be mentioned later. In Sura-i-al-i-Imran (a verse in the Quran) it is stated:

*“Oh our Sustainer, keep us on the right path. Do not let our minds wander. Shower Thy Mercy on us. Surely, no one can exceed You in Grace.”*

In the same Sura the following prayer occurs:

*“Oh our Sustainer, forgive us for our lapses; overlook the excesses we have committed. Keep us steady on the right path, and give us victory over the forces of the infidels.”*

What is the purpose of our offering such prayers? We pray in order to elevate ourselves, or to benefit the hearers, or to put before the Lord the sufferings and needs of all, or to tell the people of our devotion. The prayers of the last kind are useless.

There is a mention of such a specific prayer in Sura-i-Bakar. It says: *“Oh our Sustainer! If there has been any default or mistake on our part, do not take us to task; forgive us. Oh Lord! Do not place on us the restrictions and limitations which You imposed on those who preceded us. Oh Lord! Do not subject us to a burden we cannot bear. Oh God! Forgive and pardon us. Have mercy on us. You are our Lord and Master. Give us victory and success against the infidels.”*

## Place of Worship

It is not necessary to offer prayer in a religious place. What is necessary is an inner urge only. Sufficient solitude is necessary so that there may be no obstruction or interference. It may be in the home or outside of it. Any place where solitude can be had is suitable. You can use your bedroom for the purpose. There may be religious books or pictures there to remind you of Holy Men whom you revere. If there is no room available, a particular portion of a room may be used. If this is not available, then any place such as a temple, satsang hall, mosque or church can be used. If this is not available, pray while walking alone, whether on the plains or in the hills, in a jungle or on the bank of a stream. Concentrate in the forehead, on the Lord or the Master, and place your inner feelings before Him. These places have some influence on prayers, but in reality no particular place or temple is required. All this world is the temple of the Lord.

*“This world is the body of the Lord and He pervades it.”* (Asa War M2, 463-13)

That place is holy where the Lord is remembered. All this earth is sacred. All places are fit for prayers. Alnusai said, *“For me the whole earth is a mosque and is sacred. Whenever the time of prayer arrives, my followers can say their prayers wherever they happen to be.”* The Lord is omnipresent. He created the entire universe, and He is its Lord. He does not dwell in man-made temples.

*“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”* (The Acts 17:24)

Homes, jungles, waste lands, hills, rivers – wherever you bow to the Lord – is holy.

*“All is holy where devotion kneels.”* (O. W. Holmes)

All this creation is of the Lord. He dwells everywhere. It is not necessary, therefore, to turn your head in any particular direction while praying. The main thing is a firm conviction that the Lord is inside you. There should also be the conviction that we are responsible for our own actions. In the holy Quran it is said:

*“Whether East or West, all belongs to the Lord. You may turn your head in any direction and you will face the Lord, for He is present everywhere.”* (Sura Albakar 14-3)

It is further stated:

*“There is no great benefit in turning your face in a particular direction. The true holiness lies in one's firm conviction in the Lord and the judgment day”.* (Albakar 22-2 Quran)

The truly sacred place for praying is this body, within which dwells the Lord.

*“This body is the temple of God, and the jewel of knowledge is to be found therein.”*  
(Parbhati M3, 1346-4)

*“The body is the temple of the living God.”* (Bible)

*The heart is the mosque, and the body adorns it.*

Go inside and pray to the Lord. It is not necessary to go anywhere else in order to pray. Search the Vedas and the Puranas and you will find that all say that He is residing in the heart.

*“Oh, where am I to go when bliss is in my own house? My mind does not waver. It has become incapable of moving. Where I go, whether on land or sea, I see the Lord everywhere. The Vedas and Puranas were consulted; one should search Him there only if He is not here (in the heart).”*  
(Ramanand Basant, 1165-13)

That Beloved to whom we are to pray is in reality inside us and we are wandering outside in the world. The Nectar of the Lord is in the corner of our heart, while we are remaining thirsty.

*“The Beloved is in the home, while I search in the world outside. The water is in the pot, and I am wandering in thirst.”*

When you pray, enter the closet of the body and shut the outer doors. Do not let the attention wander outside. Open your heart to the Lord within. He will listen to the prayer made in this secret spot. Christ said:

*“But when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee.”* (St. Mathew 6:6)

This body is the temple in which the soul resides. By closing its doors, evil thoughts are kept away and thoughts of the Lord gain strength. The Lord is within us. We cannot see Him with our outer senses. It is only the Inner Eye that can see Him. The gross eyes cannot see Him. When the gross eyes are closed, then the inner eye which can see Him, opens. Guru Nanak says those eyes which can see the Lord are different from the outer eyes.

*“Oh Nanak! Those eyes are different by which He can be seen.”* (Maru War M5, 1110-1)

The Gurus say that on gathering together the attention from the ten senses, the Lord appears within.

*“It is spread in the ten senses, in his soul there is Light.”* (Gauri M5, 236-14)

In order to reach the depth of true prayer, the senses, which lead to the spreading of attention, should be restrained. Close the lips and forget about the body, and unite with the Lord or the Master at the seat of the soul within.

In order to pray correctly, it is necessary that we should go inside and shut the outer doors, withdraw our attention from the body, and direct it to the feet of the Beloved. In this sacred place pray to the Master, the incarnation of the Lord. He will appear and will lend a helping hand. Such a prayer will be accepted. To lose oneself in the remembrance of the Lord, with inner purity and sincere feelings, is true prayer. This should not be merely for show or

ostentation. It should be with sincere feelings and not mere verbal effusion. If a prayer is made with true inner feelings, then the all-powerful Lord listens and invaluable benefits accrue from His Mercy.

## Conditions for Prayers

The first condition for praying is that there should be a Being to whom prayers are offered. One should have full faith in the Lord or in His form, the Master, in whom He is manifested. When there is no faith or belief in His power, there can be no true prayer. We have read about the Lord in books or heard about Him from the Saints. He is manifested in the Saints. He who has seen a Saint has seen the Lord.

*“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”* (St. John 14:9)

We have our Master to pray to, and a disciple should ask Him for His aid at every step. There should be full faith in His powers, and full love, confidence and humility. The prayer should be pure in thoughts and offered in humility, free from selfishness, filled with love and full of confidence. There should be no doubt or disbelief. Such a prayer made in humility does not go in vain. With a humble mind, surrender all to His Merciful Grace.

*“I am nothing, nothing is mine, protect me from disgrace; I am Thy servant.”* (Belawal Sadana, 858)

Such a prayer inspires the soul and lifts it up towards the Lord.

## The Necessity of Absorption

While praying, keep yourself in the presence of the Lord and give up all thoughts about the body. If you think on the one hand of the Lord and on the other of the body, your thoughts will be divided. You are then a worshipper both of Kal (the negative power) and Dayal (God). You should go into His presence with the coverings of the mind and body removed. You alone, in your humility, should be there. Then only you and your Lord will be there. To remain always with the Lord is to carry out His orders. A wonderful love for the Lord will then awaken in you.

The relationship between us and the Lord is that of a particle and the whole. When we are fully united with Him, then no thought of the body will remain and egotism will disappear. The conscious Current of the Lord will in this way give us a new life, and all calamities and afflictions will be removed. Under these conditions, when we give up bodily actions in remembrance of God, a new life-giving Current of the Lord enters us, and our material and spiritual deficiencies are removed.

## The Necessity of Truth and Contentment

For praying truly and well, it is necessary that our lives should be based on truth. Our conduct should be pure. There should be truth in our heart and mind. We should speak the truth. Truth is related to conduct. Truth and conduct go together. Wherever truth is mentioned there is talk of conduct, for truth comes first and then right conduct.

The common saying is: *“Practice truth and right conduct, and become truthful and holy.”* It is necessary to preserve the purity of one's life and its influence. If one practices truth, then whatever he says will be true. Nature will help him. It is necessary to have contentment also. As long as there is no contentment, the mind does not give up spreading out, and without one-pointedness there can be no true prayer. Guru Nanak says that if prayer is made with truth and contentment, the Lord will hear it and will call the devotee to sit near Him, and that such a prayer is undoubtedly granted.

*“The prayer made with truth and contentment is heard, and the devotee is seated near the Lord.”*  
(Ramkali M1, 878)

## Praying with the Heart

One's prayers should come from the heart. Our heart, head and tongue should agree. Pray in such a manner that your inner feelings are aroused, every pore begins to weep, and all the veins become like the strings of a violin. The feeling of love should pour forth and you should become absorbed in your prayer. Your discrimination should awaken. Consider the Lord to be present and a witness. Present your inner feelings to Him. There should be nothing whatever between you and the Lord. Ask for His help in all humility. There should be no egotism or showiness. There is no need to stand on high platforms and to cry loudly.

*“Oh Kabir, the priest cries from the minaret, but the Lord is not deaf. He, whom you are calling, is inside you.”* (Shalok Kabir Ji, 1374-8)

## No Particular Language or Words are Necessary for Prayers

No particular language is necessary for praying. If, while one is praying, he considers himself bound by some formula, the inner flow of love is not continuous. One is thus deprived of full spiritual benefit. Long and learned phrases are not necessary. A prayer should be replete with inner feelings. Although long words and phrases may satisfy our intellect, they lead to one becoming subject to the disease of ostentation. By becoming involved in the structure and recitation of the words, we become far removed from the true feeling of the heart. Our prayers then do not correctly represent the state of our heart and conduct. Our condition becomes that of a grave made of lime and mortar which contains the corpse of an infidel.

It may be observed that we often indulge in hypocritical prayer in which our heart and head are not in agreement. In Tibet, people go about in the streets with a prayer wheel, a machine that repeats prayers for them. When it is turned, the names written on it are turned, and it is considered that the names have been repeated so many times. People even earn money for turning a prayer wheel once or twice. How can such prayer benefit anyone?

Even when our prayers appear to be beautiful and full of feeling, but our inner life is impure, then all our prayers would be false in the sight of the Lord. But if our prayers express our inner feelings and our heart is dyed in humility and love, then our prayers are heard and granted by the Lord. It is not wise to deceive ourselves and others, for the reality cannot be kept hidden and will someday become known. To repent, after realizing a mistake, is the first step towards reformation, and the next step is to reform oneself. The temptation to indulge in sense pleasures incites us to commit sins, and we have to pay for them. We reap as we sow.

Maulana Rumi has given a beautiful example of prayer. Moses, one day, met a shepherd who was praying in loving words, *“Oh Lord, where are You? I will be Your servant. I will mend Your clothes, and will comb the hair of Your head. Oh Lord, let my life be sacrificed to You. I will sacrifice my wife and children and my home for You. I will supply You with milk. If You are willing, I will serve You. I will kiss Your hands and feet. I will stay on guard at Your gate while You sleep. I will bring milk, ghee, cheese, fried cakes, pots of curd and other good things for You to eat and drink. I will sacrifice all my goats for You, and will ever remain weeping in longing for You.”*

On hearing this, Moses said, *“Fie on you. You are mad. You are no longer a believer, but an infidel. What is all this useless and impure talk? Keep silent. Your impurity has polluted the world and soiled the silken cloth of religion. If you will not stop, the fire of wrath will come and destroy the earth. The Lord, like the sun, does not need these things, for He has no body. Nor does He depend on hands and feet. If your talk is meant for those who have become one with the Lord, then also it is ludicrous. If a believer is called by the name of Fatima he would feel offended, because it is the name of a woman. He would feel annoyed and would beat you. The Lord is free from birth and death, and to pray to Him as though He had hands and feet is to insult Him.”*

On hearing this the shepherd said, *“Oh Moses, you have sealed my lips. I am bewildered and on fire.”* He tore his clothes and began to weep, and then ran away to the jungle. Moses then heard the voice of the Lord saying, *“Alas! Why have you separated my seekers from me? I sent you to the world to bring about union, and not separation.”*

*“You have come for uniting and not for separating.”* (Maulana Rumi)

The Lord then continued to speak to Moses, saying: *“Everyone remembers Me in accordance with his own language and temperament. Whatever the shepherd offered, I accepted. I am not pleased with you, for I regard the refusal of such offers as reprehensible. My duty is to shower Grace. By telling beads it is not I who become pure, but they who do so. Oh Moses, I do not look at the outside, but at the inner state. I accept whatever men say when they pray, even if it is poorly expressed, when it comes from the heart. The feelings of the heart are the real thing; the words merely express them. I want real longing from the heart. Generate yearning within yourself. Kindle the fire of love which burns away all thoughts and languages. Oh Moses, those who observe rules and regulations are different from evolved and devoted souls. For the lovers, every breath produces yearning.”*

Nobody levies a tax on ruined villages. It is not necessary to wash the blood of the martyrs. Their blood is purer than purest water. Their faults are better than hundreds of good actions done by others. Do not expect guidance from observers of form. The religion of love is different from other forms of worship. For lovers, the Lord is the only religion and creed. If a ruby does not bear the seal, it does not matter.

When Moses heard these angry words of the Lord, he ran to the shepherd and told him, *“I have brought good news for you. The Lord has accepted your prayers. Your unbelief stands on the same footing as belief. Your belief is the light of life. You may say whatever you like without any fear.”* The shepherd replied, *“I am now above these matters. When you scolded me, I took a different turn. But then I crossed the skies in one bound and became a confidant and close friend of the Lord. My condition is now beyond description.”*

## Time for Prayers

Most people think that a certain time is necessary for prayers, and that this must be found when they are not busy with their duties. But to pray properly it is not necessary to spend a long time on reasoned speeches. One should express his inner feelings in simple language while praying. All times are suitable for prayer. Morning, evening and bedtime are particularly beneficial.

The difficulties relating to the time and place for prayer are fewer than the difficulties of praying inwardly. We do not know what we should pray for and how to pray. It is therefore necessary to pray, "*Lord, teach us to pray*". We should take advantage of the examples of the prayers composed by Saints and Holy Men.

## When to Pray

It is usually the case that a man calls for the help of the Lord when he is helpless or in poverty. But when he attains affluence, he no longer feels the need of prayer and thinks that his own strength and social forces will suffice for the future. He thus makes a big mistake.

Man should pray under any and all conditions. When in difficulty he should pray for the solution of his problems, and when there is no solution, for strength to bear them or to keep up his courage. When, as a result of his efforts, he sees prospects of success, he should pray for the Mercy and Grace of the Lord, in order to avoid relying on his own efforts and his egotism. Unless His Grace and Mercy join with our own efforts, no real success can be achieved. When the heart's desire has been obtained then sacrifice all in thankfulness and gratitude to Him.

## The Working of Prayer

To confess our sins in prayer and to think that they are thereby washed away or removed is a mistake. This kind of mistake keeps us away from true spirituality. Our sins will only be forgiven when the Lord or the Master forgives them. Actually, such prayers may become the cause of evil. A man may offer such prayers and then keep on committing sins without hesitation. And all the while he goes on praying under the false impression that his sins will be forgiven as a result of his prayers.

The Master comes to persuade men to give up sin and to unite them with the Lord. Our duty is to act in accordance with His wishes and to give up all evil deeds which are worldly. We may thus save ourselves from sins and by the practice of Naam and remembrance, unite ourselves with the Lord. Love for the Lord and the Master reforms us, and makes us follow the path of the Lord. Man may forgive, but it is the all-pervading power of the Master which ultimately reforms a sinner.

How can we become true, how will the chain of untruth be broken? Oh Nanak, it is written that the Master's Will should be obeyed.

To cry to the Lord for forgiveness and to think that we can then commit more sins is a mistake. Diseases are punishments for sins. When there has been a sin, it can only be atoned for by undergoing suitable punishment. The root cause of all sins is identifying oneself with the body. Unless we rise above bodily considerations, thoughts of sensual pleasures and desires to enjoy them do not disappear.

*“Many a seeker gets into trouble because his search for pleasures leads to disease. The desire for pleasures does not go without submitting to His Will. Till then one wanders.”* (Maru M1, 1034-16)

To think that His Mercy is dependent on requests made through prayer is a mistake. He does not forgive or punish as a result of whether or not we ask for forgiveness. This is to make prayer an instrument to permit the committing of sins. The Master acts with great circumspection and consideration. On the one hand He forgives sins; and on the other He restrains the disciple from committing them in the future so that he may become clean and pure.

Prayer cannot change the principle of truth, nor can it enable one to understand it. It is through the attraction of inner love and yearning and by obeying the directions of the Master that we are led to the truth. Our prayers to understand the truth need not be said loudly. Such prayers can be made mentally or by living properly and in His Will.

The purpose of prayer is to lead us to act according to the wishes of the Lord. We are weak and feeble. We wish to reach the Lord with the aid of the Mercy and Strength of the Master. Even though we may fall at every step, that power helps us. It is a law of spirituality that if a disciple takes one step on the path indicated by the Master, the Master takes a hundred steps to meet him. He is the bestower of all benefits. He is beyond praise or comprehension. He is immortal and limitless.

*“If you take one step to take refuge in the Master, the Master meets you on the way by taking hundreds of steps. If you remember the Master just once, the Master remembers you again and again. Even if your devotion is as small as a fragment of a cowrie shell, the Master showers all benefits on you. The Master is all Merciful, His praise is beyond understanding; I bow again and again to the one and incomprehensible Master.”* (Bhai Gurdas Ji)

## Effects of Prayer on Others

Prayer is a great power. In prayer the current of our contemplation unites with the Lord, and the seeker receives many wonderful benefits as a result. Can others be benefited through our prayers? Since the soul is a particle of the Lord, all souls are interrelated. The Lord pervades all. To wish well to everybody is, therefore, in accordance with His Will. The currents of goodwill that emanate from great souls are for all living beings and benefit them. There is particular mention of this in the Sikh Scriptures. They say that by remembering great souls, the inner feelings are aroused and a connection is made with them. Such a prayer results in spiritual progress, and in the end, one prays for the good of all.

*“May all prosper according to Thy Will.”*

After Muslims complete their prayers, they pray for the believers and unbelievers, that is, for Muslims, Hindus and others. Buddhists pray for the welfare of all. Christ said that one should pray for his enemies. Hindus pray for the welfare of all living beings, both sentient and insentient. The practitioners of Christian Science cure those who are ill by means of prayers. To wish well to others is in accordance with His Will. Those who are experts in the science of telepathy know that one is affected by the thoughts of others, whether they be near or far. It has also been observed that the prayers of one person sometimes result in another person having some experience, which may be in the form of an inner vision.

Sincere prayer from the heart of the disciple reaches the Master, and remembrance of the disciple by the Master produces peace and bliss in the disciple. This is really a form of telepathy. In this way, we can connect our thoughts with the Master and can also use them for the good of others. To benefit another it is necessary that we first connect our thoughts with the Lord and then contemplate on the form of the other person and pray that he will be connected with the Master also. During such prayer, we have to feel the presence of the Lord and surrender our attention to His merciful and loving will. In this way, we lay the foundation for good to come to others.

## Why All Our Prayers Are Not Granted

It is a common experience that all things which one asks for in prayer are not received. The reason for this is that we do not know the Mercy of the Lord, and ask for things that are not for our real good. That Power wants our evolution and progress. When that Power finds that what is asked for would involve the devotee further in the world, He does not grant it. If the Lord does not grant us the things we ask for, in order to save us from sinning, this is for our good. In the Christian scriptures, it is said:

*“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”*

We are entangled in bodily and sensual pleasures. Our vision does not rise above them. If we were to receive all we ask for, we would certainly be involved in more sensual pleasures and our sins would increase.

The question: *“When the Lord or Master hears all our prayers and has the power to grant them, why does He not do so?”* In this connection it should be understood that man is merely one part in the machine of the universe, and is related to all other parts. Our desires, therefore, affect the whole world. Our vision being limited, we cannot see beyond ourselves and our surroundings. But the Lord or the Master can see the whole of the universe. He knows everything from the beginning to the end. He knows the devotee's genuine needs also. For example, the residents of a city which is being oppressed by unbearable heat may pray for rain, while the farmers are praying for more sunshine to ripen their crops. The human intellect is limited and an individual does not know whether what he is asking for would in the long run be for his good. He simply looks to the immediate circumstances and is unaware of the future. Relying on his limited intelligence, he often prays for something that would harm him. In his haste, he demands many things and then realizes his mistake and is thankful that his prayer was not granted, for otherwise he would have suffered a great loss.

It is said in the holy Quran, *“Just as a man prays for his good, he often asks for things that are harmful.”* The fact is that man is very hasty and short-sighted.

The Lord or the Master knows our past, present and future. He knows when a thing asked for is not for our good, and therefore does not grant it. It often happens that a seeker asks for something which is not to his real advantage. He presses for it, and a promise may be made, but the thing is not given to him. A child may ask his mother for poison. Owing to his insistence the mother may make a promise, but she will never give the poison to the child, even though she may outwardly consent to do so. It is not for the good of the child, but he does not know owing to his ignorance. The Saints, therefore tell us that we should always pray to the Lord:

*“Oh Lord! I know nothing. I have been sold into the hands of the mind and Maya.”*

(Ravidas, Jaitsari, 7101)

Nizami says: *“Oh my Well-Wisher, lead me to that which is for my good. Show me the path that leads to Your pleasure and to my salvation.”*

*“Keep me on that path, Oh my Well-Wisher, that You wish me to lead. That path should lead to Your pleasure and to my salvation.”* (Nizami)

The Lord and the Master are omniscient and know fully well what is for our good and what would do us harm. It is said in the holy Quran, *“Oh Lord, give us in this world that which will help us hereafter also, and save us from the sufferings of hell.”*

## Is it Necessary to Pray to the Lord?

The Lord is not pleased with the words of one's praise. They make no change in the Current of Mercy and Grace which is being showered on us, for He is the embodiment of knowledge, love and mercy. Of course, by praying in humility and faith, we can take more advantage of that Current of Mercy. But he does not stand in need of vocal prayers, for He knows our hidden feelings.

Prayers cannot make any change in the Current of Mercy. It is what it is. But prayers can bring us into harmony with this Current. It is not necessary to beg for our needs. This often becomes an obstruction.

The Lord is love. Is it proper for us to ask Him to be more loving? He knows all. Can we tell Him anything that He does not know already? Can we change His perfection? Is it necessary to pray to Him for more Mercy when He is already giving us more than we deserve? By not voicing our feelings, we come nearer to His Presence and Grace. He is eternal. He is the same in the beginning, the present and the end.

*“True from the beginning, true through the ages; He is true and shall be true.”* (Jap Ji, Stanza 1)

The Lord is the embodiment of truth. Truth emanates from Him continually without His being reminded of it. How can man with his limited intellect advise Him? The Current of His Mercy is flowing everywhere. It is taking care of us of itself. It knows what is for our good. It is present everywhere. It perceives our feelings and hears us. Where then is the necessity to pray before Him?

*“Wherever I look, I see You dwelling there; to whom should I Pray? The Lord hears all.”*  
(Gauri M5, 205)

It is our duty to be in harmony with Him and thus to derive the utmost benefit. It is very necessary that we should meditate on Him in our heart, so that His reflection may shine within us. The soul is a particle and an image of Him and shares His wonderful qualities. To learn to understand the Lord is a continuous process and to succeed in it, we should surrender all our thoughts, powers and desires at His feet. It is strange that while we say that the Lord is present everywhere and is eternal, we try to tell Him about ourselves. Are we thankful to the Lord for all the gifts and mercies shown to us? If we are sincerely thankful, we become deserving of more Grace even without asking for it.

Guru Arjan Sahib in the fifth canto of the Sukhmani Sahib speaks of the many gifts and blessings we are enjoying and tells us how to express our gratitude for them. He says that it is through His kindness that we enjoy many kinds of food, have many kinds of sweets, live in palaces, reside in comfortable houses, wear good clothes and fine ornaments, sleep on comfortable beds, receive public honors, have healthy bodies, all our faults remain hidden, and we ride elephants and in carriages, possess gardens, houses, estates and wealth.

The Lord has satisfied our desires. We are respected in this world and hereafter. We are beautiful and hear the Shabd with our inner ear. We have influence. All our works are successful, and we are honored at the time of death. For all these and other blessings we should express our gratitude; we should remember that they come from Him and should meditate on Him. We should contemplate on Him and pray to Him. We should always remember Him. We should always praise Him and fix our attention on Him. We should not be remiss in His remembrance and should never forget Him. He should ever dwell in our hearts.

Where else could we find refuge if we should give up such a bountiful Lord? We should keep in mind the Lord through Whose Grace we eat so many delicious kinds of food. By remembering Him, through Whose Grace we perfume the body with sweet-smelling scents, we will get salvation.

*Contemplate with your mind on Him through Whose Grace you reside in comfortable houses.*

*Remember all the twenty-four hours, Him through Whose Grace you live at ease in your home.*

*Oh Nanak! Remember always Him Who is worthy of your contemplation through Whose Grace you enjoy so many pleasures.*

*Whom else could you love if you should give up Him through Whose Grace you have fine clothes and beautiful ornaments?*

*Praise always Him through Whose Grace you sleep on comfortable beds.*

*Contemplate with your mind on Him through Whose Grace you are kept on the path of duty.*

*By remembering the Lord you will be honored and will accompany your Lord to His home, oh Nanak.*

*Love the Lord through Whose Grace you have this healthy body.*

*Praise the Lord through Whose Grace your secrets remain hidden and your mind is at rest.*

*Kneel before the Lord and Master through Whose Grace all your defects are kept concealed.*

*Even if you do not receive His Grace, remember the Lord on high with every breath.*

*Oh Nanak, be a devotee of Him through Whose Grace you were given this rare human body.*

*Oh mind, do not be remiss in remembering the Lord through Whose Grace you wear fine ornaments.*

*Oh mind, do not forget the Lord through Whose Grace you ride on horses and elephants.*

*Keep in your mind the Lord through Whose Grace you possess lands and gardens.*

*Remember always, while standing or sitting, the Lord Who has molded your mind.*

*Meditate on the One Unseen, oh Nanak, Who will look after you both here and hereafter.*

*Oh mind, always think of Him through Whose Grace you give generously in charity and donations.*

*Remember with every breath the Lord through Whose Grace you observe right conduct.*

*Remember always the Lord of wonderful form through Whose Grace you also have a beautiful form.*

*Remember day and night the Lord Who has given you this noble body.*

*Praise the Master, oh Nanak, through Whose Grace your honor is maintained, through Whose Grace the ears hear the Music of the Name. The eyes see the world's wonders, the tongue becomes sweet, one lives happily, the hands move and work, the full fruits of action are obtained, the state of bliss is enjoyed, and one merges in all-embracing peace. How can such a Lord be given up and another loved? Love for Him awakens with the Grace of the Master.*

*Do not forget the Lord through Whose Grace you have come into this world.*

*Oh foolish mind, remember the Lord through Whose Grace you have become great.*

*Oh mind, live in the presence of Him through Whose Grace you have found the truth.*

*Oh Nanak, remember Him along through Whose Grace all obtain salvation. He Himself makes one remember the Name, the Lord Himself makes one sing His praises.*

*By His kindness you get Light; by His Mercy the lotus opens.*

*When He is pleased He dwells in the heart. By His Mercy the intellect becomes pure.*

*Oh Lord, Your Mercy is supreme; one can achieve nothing by one's own efforts alone.*

*Oh Lord, Your devotee serves wherever You wish;*

*Oh Nanak, one has no choice in the matter. (Gauri M5 Sukhmani 269)*

One should not forget the giver of the blessings when one receives blessings. Those who forget Him do not remember death.

*“The gift is a blessing; the giver is forgotten; the fool does not think of death.” (Dhanasri M5, 676)*

If, on receiving His bounty, we do not show sincere gratitude but merely express verbal thanks, we deceive both ourselves and the Lord. We cannot hide the emptiness of our gratitude from the Lord and the world. One makes himself liable to be punished by such behavior.

## Fruits of Prayer

The purpose of prayer is to connect one's inner self with the Lord, and to become absorbed in Him. Prayer is the essence of spirituality; through it we begin to realize Him.

Prayer is the best relaxation and recreation. The soul, mind and body gain blissful rest and happiness, which cannot be obtained by any other means. Even with the minimum of sleep, no harm is caused to the mind or body.

We find that in prayer one's inner stability increases, fearlessness is augmented, and inner purity is obtained. Diseases can also be cured in oneself and in others. At times of need and danger unexpected help is received. These experiences show that it is necessary to pray to the Divine Power. When no human efforts can avail, an appeal to the Lord and the Master brings the needed help.

*“Where all human efforts fail, there prayer succeeds.”*

A deep impression is created on the human mind by prayer. Even if one's fate is not changed by prayer, we are certainly changed. Our whole attitude towards meeting a calamity or affliction changes. The power of the mind to strive for salvation is strengthened. When the angle of vision changes, the whole world changes. The earth and the sky take on a different color. A man feels very much perturbed when a calamity comes, but when the angle of vision is changed, he bears the calamity cheerfully.

The highest form of prayer does not consist in the actual act of praying, but in awakening in the Lord. When this state is reached, diseases disappear, sins are destroyed, and death becomes non-existent. True prayer consists in increasing love in the inner self for the Master, and merging in Him. When we are in communion with Him, then by coming in contact with the Lord the inner powers of our soul are awakened. Prayers for selfish gain and for spiritual progress are very different. As compared to spiritual prayer, the other prayer is of no consequence. Reference has already been made to this point.

## Stages in the Development of Prayer

After some time the devotee begins to feel more happiness and peace in his inner spiritual progress than in his bodily comforts. The following prayer occurs in the Varhad Arnayak Upanishad: *“Lead us from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, and from death to immortality.”*

As the gaze of the devotee is turned away from outer things, he begins to feel that all worldly pleasures are unreal. He experiences the Everlasting and Eternal Being, and worldly pleasures appear to be transitory and perishable. He, therefore, thinks it of no value to ask for worldly comforts.

*“What should I ask for? All is transitory.”* (Kabir, Dhanasri 692)

All the world is busy eating, drinking and making merry, but a devotee has no liking for or interest in these activities. He attends only to the essential needs of the body, and spends the rest of the time in communion with the Lord. He prays, *“O Lord! Take me out of the ocean of this world. You are my only refuge.”*

*“Many lives have been spent in eating, drinking and making merry. Take me out of the ocean of the world. Oh Lord, Nanak relies on you.”* (Gauri M, 261)

In accordance with the teachings of the Gurus, the devotee looks after the body only so that the Lord may dwell in his heart and his tongue may repeat His Name.

*“May the holy feet of the Lord dwell in my heart, and may my tongue repeat the Name of the Lord; Oh Nanak, remember the Lord who preserves the body.”* (Bihagara War M5, 554)

He is conscious of his ignorance on this path, and knowing his weaknesses he extends his hands in prayer for help.

*“Oh Lord, take me across; I am ignorant, and do not know the way. Help me, oh Lord!”*  
(Nam Dev, Guru, 873)

As the disciple's inner sight changes, so does his prayer. In the beginning, he is conscious of the body and of bodily needs. He thinks it necessary to pray for them. But as his Inner Eyes are opened, he begins to feel the spiritual needs, and his prayers change. He knows that he has to control the senses and still the mind in order to reach the spiritual regions and the original home of the soul.

This is not an easy task. The impressions of many births are in the mind and his inclinations are based on them. He cannot give up his old ways. He sometimes turns to spiritual seeking, while at other times he is drawn the other way by the needs of the self and the body. He sometimes succeeds, while at other times he succumbs. His heart is not in the world or its wealth, but the mind cannot yet remain fixed in the Lord all the time. He feels that he is full of sins, while at the same time people are calling him good.

*“Oh Farid! My clothes are black and my dress is black. I am full of sins, but people call me a Dervesh.”* (Farid, Salok, 1381)

The devotee gets tired of this unavoidable conflict and wishes to give it up. He gives it up for some time, but the love of the Lord does not let him wander. The waves of hope spring up in him, and he again turns to Him.

*“He who falls while walking is not to be blamed; Oh Kabir! He who does not move has all the way to go.”* (Kabir Sahib)

Unless all the ten senses are controlled and the mind is turned inward, there is no Light in the soul.

*“He who controls the ten senses, in his soul there is Light.”* (Gauri M, 236)

The diseases of the mind are very dangerous, but they appear very sweet to the devotee. One cannot give them up even though he may be tired of them. A lustful person cannot easily give up lust, even though he knows its bad results. For overcoming these diseases, he needs the help and strength of some powerful personage such as the Master.

*“Control the mind by the strength of the Master.”* (Sar Bachan)

To gain victory over the mind, the help of the Master is very necessary. By the strength of the Master, the mind that is entangled in attachment and Maya awakens.

*“Awaken your sleeping mind by remembering the Master.”* (Suhī M4, 758)

Maulana Rumi also says that the mind cannot be controlled without the help of the Master.

### Ask For the Lord of the Lord

For the needed help cry to the Lord or His incarnation, the Master, *“Oh Lord! We are cunning, hard-hearted, crafty and lustful. But take us across in spite of all this. You are all-powerful, You can give us refuge. Save us through Your Grace.”*

Jap (repetition of names), Tap (austerities), rules of discipline, cleanliness and self-discipline cannot rid us of our faults. *“Oh Lord! We are in utter darkness. Pray take us out of it. Favor us with a kind and merciful glance.”*

Guru Nanak says:

*“Cunning, hard-hearted, crafty and lustful am I; Oh Lord! Take me across despite my faults. You are powerful and the giver of refuge. Preserve me by Your Will. Jap, Tap, Name, cleanliness, self-discipline will not rid me of my weaknesses.”*

*“Oh Lord! Through Your Grace take Nanak out of this utter darkness.”* (Kanra M5, 1301-18)

He again prays: *“Oh Lord! Save us. We can do nothing by ourselves. The only way to control the mind is to listen to the Melody of the Name. Please give this to us. Oh Lord! Save us.”*

*“We can do nothing by ourselves. By Your Grace give us the Name.”* (Dhanasri M5, 675)

*“To those who pray to the Lord through the Master and Holy Men and take refuge in Him, the Light of the Name is revealed.”* (Gojri M4, 492)

Yogis of the past, learned men, ascetics, yatis (self-disciplined men) and men of letters all became tired of their efforts to find the true way and failed. Nothing they did was of any avail against the mind. None of their efforts succeeded in controlling the mind. The only effective way is the practice of the true Shabd or Name, and this can be had only from a Master.

*“Control the mind by listening to the Melody. It will not be controlled by any other method. The mind can only be controlled by hearing the Melody; the yogi practices yoga, while the learned increase their knowledge; the ascetics are tired of austerities, and the practice of self-discipline also failed them; the devotees engage in mental contemplation and are deceived; the pandits read the Vedas and enlarge their knowledge, but fail; keenness of intellect does not help, and inaction leads to regret. No other practice can help. Practice listening to the Shabd. When the Shabd is realized the Master is found, and the disciple attends on Him with detachment, when the practice of Surat Shabd is perfected, then only is the mind controlled.”*  
(Sar Bachan, 216)

After receiving the wealth of Naam, the wandering of the mind comes to an end. It then does not wish to remain away from the Lord, but wishes to live with Him forever.

*“Oh mother! I have been given the Lord's Name; my mind has stopped its wavering and is now still.”* (Basant M9,1186)

In this state the devotee feels that the Lord is always with him. He hands over all his sufferings and worries to Him and is unmoved by either pain or pleasure. He is convinced that the Lord is thousands of times more intelligent, wise, strong and merciful than himself and that He looks after His devotee and is his greatest well-wisher. He hands over his worries and his intellect to Him, and remains content with His Will. His intellect becomes keen, and his prayers become perfect. He surrenders everything to the Lord and says, *“O Lord! You are the refuge of all living beings. You came here for the sake of all. Whatever You will is good for me. This is my only prayer.”*

*“Whatever meets with Your approval is right conduct. You are the ever-existing formless One.”*  
(Jap Ji, Stanza 4-2)

*“All living beings depend on You, and You take care of them; whatever You will is good for me. This is the prayer of Nanak.”* (Belawal M1, 765-13)

*“Oh Nanak! Praised be the Name. May You bless all.”*

In the end, after attaining joy in surrendering to the Lord's Will, the seeker gives up praying. He knows that the Lord knows all. He remains happy in the state ordained by the Lord; he loves all actions of the Lord.

*“Wherever I look, You are there. This is my firm conviction. To whom should I pray, when the Lord hears everything?”* (Gauri M5, 205-9)

*“Wherever He dwells, there is heaven.”* (Majh M5, 106-7)

*“Your acts are like Nectar to me. Nanak prays for the gift of the Name only.”* (Asa M5, 394-4)

When the omniscient One knows all, to whom can we pray? When He is present in every heart, to whom should we make our supplication?

*“The Lord knows all and is omniscient. To whom then should we pray?”* (Sorath M5, 625-1)

*“What can the lowly say in prayer, when the Lord is present in all hearts?”* (Kama M4, 1304-10)

The Saints have attained this state and it seems to them to be infidelity to pray and to doubt His Grace. Saints always remain reconciled to His Will. They are absorbed in Him. The devotee and the Lord become one. The Lord is in control of the devotee, and whatever desire springs up in the heart of the devotee is at once granted by Him. Wherever the devotee may go, the Lord goes, and He helps him at every step, just as a mother helps her little child. Guru Arjan Sahib says:

*“Whatever is asked is given by the Lord; oh Nanak! Whatever is said by Him proves to be true.”*  
(Dhanasri M5, 681-19)

*“Whatever the work of the devotee may be, the Lord hastens to do it, He always shows Himself to be with the devotee. Whatever he asks from the Lord, the same comes to pass at once.”*  
(Asa M5, 403-15)

Kabir Sahib says that his mind became as pure as the water of the Ganges. The Lord followed him, saying, “*Kabir, Kabir.*” He further says that the Lord was always waiting for him to ask for something so that He might give it to him.

*“Oh Kabir! The mind has become pure like the water of the Ganges. The Lord follows me, saying, 'Kabir, Kabir.' ”* (Kabir, Salok, 1367-8)

The hunger of the devotee is satisfied when he meets the Lord, and he then no longer feels hungry or thirsty. He receives from the Lord the treasure of Naam, and this gives him all the nine powers. He gets whatever his heart desires. His prayers never remain unanswered.

*“When You are his Father, oh Lord, how can he be hungry? He receives the Name and the nine miraculous powers from You, and he gets whatever he desires.”* (Malar M5, 1266)

*“His supplications never go in vain.”* (Bilawal M5, 819-11)

He now knows the reality of prayer. To pray means that one is still not perfect. But when the Lord makes a man perfect, he lacks nothing.

*“My heart responds to Your Will, since it is perfect.”* (Ravidas, Dhanasri, 694-6)

What can a devotee ask for when the Lord is always with him? The devotee is absorbed in the form of the Lord. Both become one. Who is to ask and from whom? What a wonderful description of this state has been given by Guru Arjan Dev Sahib:

*“He is deathless, so I am fearless; He does not desert me, and I am not a prisoner; He is not a pauper, and I am not hungry; He has no cares, and I have no trouble; Him no one can destroy; He is the one who gives life; He is free from bondage, and we are not bound; He does not have to toil, and we are not slaves; He is not attached, and we are not attached; He is bliss, and we are happy in His Will; He is not worried, and we have no cares; He is not stained, and we too are not stained; He is not hungry, and we have no hunger; He is pure, and we are pure because of Him; we are nothing; He is the only one; He is both in front and behind; oh Nanak! The Guru removes all delusion and doubts; I have become one by uniting with Him.”* (Asa M5, 391-1)

## What Should be Asked of the Lord and the Master

The Master is the mouthpiece of God. It is the Master in whom the Lord is manifest. Just as we can go to a sea-beach and bathe, enjoy the splashing of the waves, and offer flowers and sweets to the sea, similarly, the Master is the beach of the limitless ocean of the consciousness of the Lord. The Master is full of spiritual consciousness, and the Light of the consciousness of the Lord is in Him. He is omniscient and knows all our needs and requirements. If a spiritually hungry devotee sits beside the Master in all humility, is this in any way less than prayer? He knows the heart and mind of everyone.

### Ask for the Name From the Master and Saints and Beg of Them for Their Grace

We should pray to the Master to unite us with the Lord, as those in whose heart the Lord dwells sleep peacefully. We should pray, *“My Master, I thirst for the sight of the Beloved. I ever remember His feet and hope to see Him in my heart.”* In the Saints the Lord Himself is present, having assumed their form.

*He assumes the form of the Saint.* (Maru M5, 1005-8)

Oh Saints! I have come to You as I have heard that the Lord is kind to His devotees. I have taken shelter with You. Oh Lord Hari! Save the honor of Your slave. I have been separated from You for many ages. Oh Lord! Unite me with You. A great fire is consuming my mind and body. Oh Master! I rely on You. Hear my prayer. This is my only supplication before Your Saints, that they may, in their kindness, make me one with You.

*“Oh Mother, unite me with the Beloved; all my friends in whose houses dwells the Lord sleep peacefully.”* (Malar M5, 1267-15)

*I remember Your holy feet, and pine to see You; I pray to the Saints; my heart thirsts to see You.* (Malar M5, 1268)

*“When I prayed to the Saints; the Lord, who is kind to His devotees, appeared; oh Nanak, He hastened to them to save their honor and make them His own.”* (Todi M4, 712)

*“I have great hope of seeing the Lord; oh Master, hear the prayer of Nanak.”* (Maru M4, 896-17)

*“Oh Saints, Nanak prays to You to make him your own.”* (Suhi M5, 759-18)

*“I will ask of the friends who have found Him; I will fall at their feet and learn the path.”* (TelangM1, 725-4)

Oh Master! We are insects of Maya; have mercy on us and give us the Light of the Name. Oh Master, beloved of the Lord, the Transcendent Being, I pray to You.

*“We are like insects; we take shelter in You; have mercy and give us the Light of the Name.”* (Gujri M4, 10-2)

Bhai Gurdas has given a beautiful example of prayer by a disciple. He says, *“Oh Master! I am a sinner. I am separated from You and am a very low and worthless fellow. I have all the faults. I am in the habit of stealing and committing adultery. I am a gambler. I have an eye on the houses of others. I am a backbiter, an evil-doer and indolent, and am deceiving everyone by my hypocrisy. I am intoxicated with lust and anger and am full of greed, attachment and egotism. I am unfaithful and ungrateful. Who can save me? Oh Master! I pray to You as a pauper. You always forgive; forgive me also.”*

*“I am accursed, a sinner, low and worthless; a thief, an adulterer, a gambler and one having an eye on the houses of others; a back-biter, evil-doer, indolent, a hypocrite and deceitful to all; one who indulges in lust, anger, drink, greed, attachment and egotism. One who is faithless and ungrateful, and trusted by none. I always pray to the Merciful Master.”* (War 36, Pauri, 21)

The Master is our caste and honor. We have sold ourselves to Him. Oh Master! Whether good or bad we are now Master and disciples. Have mercy and save our honor. We bow at your feet without any pride. You are the pride of us humble ones. You are all-powerful.

*“Guru is our caste and honor. We have sold ourselves to Him. Oh Nanak! We are called Master and disciples. Save our honor.”* (Suhī M4, 731-10)

We pray to the Perfect Master that He may unite us with the Lord who exists in the beginning, the middle and the end.

*“He who is in the beginning, the middle and the end; for Him my mind yearns.”* (Gauri M5, 240-10)

When one meets the Lord, true bliss is obtained, and for him the messengers of death cease to exist.

*“I prayed to the Master and He united me with the Lord; by this union I obtained bliss and the messengers of death died of starvation.”* (Sri Rag M1, 55-13)

Oh Master! We live by seeing You. Oh Lord, hear my prayer, make me Your slave by giving me the gift of the Name, and take me under Your protection. Oh my Master and true friend! This is my prayer, that You who are all virtue, may never forget me.

*Oh Master, I live by seeing You. My destiny is fulfilled. Oh Lord! Hear this prayer of mine. Oh provident Lord! Give me Your protection, and make me Your own. Never deprive me, oh Master! of Your protection. Oh My Lord and friend, hear my prayer, let Your feet dwell in my heart. Nanak makes a prayer. Oh All-virtuous One, never forget me.”* (Suhī M5, 741-18)

Oh dispeller of all fears, my Master! Nothing is hidden from You. You are merciful. Redeem us fools.

*Nothing is beyond You, oh dispeller of all fears; Nanak has taken refuge with the merciful Master; redeem the fool.* (Belawal M5, 806-6)

All the world is burning in the intense fire of attachment and Maya (delusion). In order to escape from it, it is necessary to take refuge with the Lord. We, therefore, pray to the Master that He in His mercy may save us from this burning fire and show us His compassion.

*“On seeing the world in flames, we run for the shelter of the Lord. We pray to the Perfect Master for safety in the Name of the Lord.”* (Vadhans M3, 571-15)

## What Should We Ask of the Lord?

When a dutiful wife goes to her all-powerful Lord full of hope, she surrenders her all to Him. Her clothes may be torn, but the Lord is pleased with her attitude. Can she then remain poor? No, never.

*“Give to Him what is His, and accept the Will of the Lord; he is blessed fourfold; oh Nanak, the Lord is always kind.”* (Gauri M5, 268-11)

She asks the Lord for Himself above all. When the Lord comes, what else remains?

*“If a man is absorbed in the Lord, what can he lack?”* (Gauri M5, 186-8)

A king once went to a foreign country. Before he left, he asked his queens what they would like him to bring for them. One asked for clothes, another for delicious foods, yet another for useful articles, another for articles of beauty, and still others for diamonds and jewels. The youngest queen, who was generally considered a fool but who in reality was the wisest of all, said, *“Oh Emperor! Come back yourself and keep me at your feet, and I will have everything I could wish for.”* The king came back and sent the other queens the presents they had requested and then went to the youngest queen with all he had. How fortunate was that queen! The king had the feeling that he should give all he possessed to her because she truly loved him. The queen sat at his feet, and touched the feet of her all-bountiful lord, and enjoyed his loving gaze. The other queens received a few gifts, but she had the love of her lord. Of what use were the gifts without the lord?

*“She did not wish for either food or water, but sighed in separation; how could she feel at rest?”* (Gauri M, 244-19)

We, due to our short-sightedness, ask the Lord and the Master for various boons, and these may often increase our sufferings. Instead of asking for boons from the Bountiful Lord, ask for Himself. Then how can there be any lack of anything? To ask for boons is to display a feeling of inferiority and a lack of respect. The queen knows that she is the consort of the king and will have palaces, servants, food, clothing and everything else she may want without asking for them. But if her Lord does not love her, then palaces, silken clothes and every other kind of fine possession would bring her no happiness.

*“Burn the expensive articles of adornment; live in the dust, oh Nanak, if He is with you.”* (Salok M5, 1424-19)

If the lord is with the queen and these other things are also there, then it is pleasing to possess them. But one who is dyed in the color of her lord is glad to live without them, for the love of her lord is all-sufficing. Our primary needs are physical, and all the world is entangled in meeting these needs. The Lord looks after all. Every living being is provided for at birth. His fate is there before the formation of the body. The milk is there in the breast of the mother before a child is born. Our body takes shape according to our fate. All our suffering is due to short-sightedness.

*Fate came into being first, and then the body; oh Tulsi, it is strange that the mind is not at rest.*

The body and its requirements are perishable. If you look around you carefully, you will find that nothing is eternal.

*“One is born and dies, and merges in non-existence; all this passes before the eyes of the universe.”* (Kabir, Gauri, 325-12)

Only the Lord and His Name (God in action) remain forever. All else is perishable. Ask the Lord for Himself and thirst for His sight.

*“I pray to the unmanifest to manifest Himself; Your servant Nanak is standing at Your door.”*  
(Gauri M5, 241-18)

Our original home is the Lord's home-Sach Khand (True Region). We have remained separated from the Lord for a long time. We do not remember for how long we have been wandering, but when we become tired of wandering, we should take refuge with the Lord and pray, *“Oh Lord! have mercy on us and unite us with You.”*

*“Our actions have led to our separation; have mercy, oh Lord, and unite us with Yourself, we have come to seek refuge with You, oh Lord, after becoming tired of wandering in all the four corners and ten directions of the world.”* (Majh M5, 133-7)

*O Lord! We have been separated from You for many ages. You know about all our births. Years have passed without our seeing You. We are now living in the hope of seeing You. I separated from You many births ago, this birth is now dedicated to You; Ravi Dass lives in the hope of seeing You, it is long since he did so.* (Ravi Das, Dhanasri, 694-8)

Guru Amar Das Ji prays, *“Oh Lord! We are very much deluded in this world. Have mercy and grant us the boon of seeing You.”*

*“We are very much deluded, O Benign Lord, have mercy on us; be merciful and grant us the blessing of Your sight.”* (Dhanasri M3, 666-13)

Guru Arjan Sahib directs us to pray, *“Oh Lord! We have been wandering in various bodies in various births and have had many sufferings. We now have a human body owing to Your mercy. Kindly show Yourself to us.”*

*“I wandered in various bodies and suffered much; owing to Your kindness I now have a human birth; pray, show Yourself.”* (Gauri M, 207-11)

Oh Lord! We are standing at Your door. Unite us with Yourself. O Savior! Save us, for we are tired of wandering. Oh Lord! You are kind to the devotees. You are the redeemer of sinners. There is no one besides You. I cry to You for help in all humility and helplessness. Oh Gracious Lord! This universe is a dangerous ocean. Take me across by holding my hand.

*“Unite me with Yourself; I am lying at Your door; oh Savior, save me, for I am tired of wanderings; oh Lord, redeem me, for You always help Your devotees; no one can help me except Yourself; take my hand, and lead me across the ocean of the universe.”* (Jaisri M, 709-12)

All wives are happy when they are united with their lords. How miserable am I. I am full of sins, and the Lord does not pay any attention to me. Oh Lord, when will my turn come? Other brides are living happily. Please, I beg, give me some of Your attention and love.

*“The other brides are making merry; I am the unfortunate one. I am full of sins, and the Lord pays no attention to me.”* (Suhi War M3, 790-12)

*“Nanak, the unfortunate one prays for her turn; all other brides are happy; give me Your love as well.”* (War Ramkali M3, 959-15)

*“All my friends have gone to please their Lord; but where can I, the wretched one go? O my friend, I am beautiful but the Lord does not love me.”* (Vadhans M1, 558-2)

Oh Lord! It would be better to show me the gallows than to remain so indifferent to me. It is agony to live without You. Clasp me to Your breast. Accept my prayer. I am dying with longing for You. Turn Your beautiful face towards me. Why do You torment me by turning away?

*“Death is preferable to Your indifference; hear me and hold me close. Oh look at me, my Beloved, why torment me by turning away from me.”* (Kabir, Asa, 484-8)

I am impatient to see You. My mind is distracted, and I am passing my days in unbearable worry and anxiety. Oh Lord, give me one look of mercy. My life can be happy and fruitful only if I see You. Oh Bewitcher of the mind! Be kind to me. Remove my delusion and appear within me.

*“I am thirsty for a sight of You, and I am tortured with anxiety; oh Transcendental Lord, have mercy on me.”* (Asa M5, 431-3)

*“Life is fruitful if the Lord is seen; oh dearest Beloved, have mercy and remove my delusion.”* (Sarang M4, 1221-10)

I pray earnestly, O Beloved, I am ready to sacrifice my all for union with You even for a moment. Alas! How should I plead, that I may make You hear? I am tormented with restlessness because of my hunger and thirst to see You. The Lord can be realized by the Word of the Master. Oh Lord, I beg of You to enable me to realize the truth.

*I pray most earnestly and I would sacrifice my life; wealth and honor would I forego for even a moment of union.”*  
(Belawal M5, 908-12)

*“What should I ask for or say? I am hungry and thirsty to see You oh Nanak! He can be known by the Word of the Master.”* (Suhi M1, 7621-9)

Oh Thou Eternal Great One! You are the faultless sustainer. I pray to You. Man lives in ignorance and does not remember the Lord, and in this way, wastes his life. Your creature always forgets. You, however, keep the honor of Your innate nature. Oh Helper of the worthless! How can I recite your virtues? What wisdom can an ignorant slave possess? This life and body are Your gifts. As we have taken refuge with You, You have saved us from the great fire of this world by taking us out of it. We rely and lean in confidence on You, and have

given up all other hopes. You are unknowable and limitless and unutterable. You cannot be described in words. Oh Lord! I have taken refuge with You, and You can protect me. I surrender my life and body to You. This is all Your kindness; otherwise who would know me? Whatever I have to say, I say to You. To whom else can I pray? Oh Lord! You will not find anyone more helpless than I, and none is more merciful than Yourself. We profess to be Yours, but are so in name only. Make us perfect.

*“Oh Creator, pray hear my prayer, You are the great Merciful Sustainer.”* (Tilang M1, 721-4)

*“I remained ignorant and did not remember the Lord, and so wasted my life. Oh Nanak! He keeps the honor of His innate nature, though we always forget Him.”* (Sorath M5, 633-16)

*“Oh Forgiver of the worthless, how can I sing Your virtues? What wisdom can this ignorant slave display? This life and body are Yours.”* (Suhi M5, 738-2)

*“You saved us who took refuge with You by taking us out of the great fire. We have reliance and confidence in our hearts in You, and have no other hope.”* (Suhi M5, 748-7)

*“He is the great unknowable, limitless Lord. He cannot be described in words. Nanak has taken shelter with the Lord who can protect him.”* (Jaitsri M5, 704-7)

*“I pray to Thee, all my body and soul are Yours; Glory be to the Lord; oh Nanak, nobody else knows my name.”* (Asa M5, 383-11)

*“Whatever I have to do is according to Your Will; to whom else should I pray.”* (Bharun M1, 1125-5)

*“Oh Merciful Lord! You are our protector. There is no one else like You. How can we go anywhere else? I have confidence in Your words; fulfil them, I pray.”* (Ravidas, Dhanasri, 694-6)

Oh Lord! You are my strength and my pillar of reliance, I therefore pray to You. I have nowhere else to go and no one else to pray to. All my pleasure and pain are with You. I am foolish and lowly. I am ignorant. I have taken shelter with You. Forgive me.

*“I am mad; I pray to You, my Master; I have no other place to pray. My pleasure and pain are with You.”* (Suhi M4, 735-2)

*“The greatness of the Lord cannot be described; I am foolish, worldly and lowly; oh Lord and Master, forgive Nanak, the ignorant one. He has taken shelter with You.”* (Suhi M4, 736-6)

We are foolish, unwise and ignorant. Oh Lord! We are without any merit, like the stones. Give us shelter through Your kindness. Oh Lord Hari! Be merciful, make us rise above the world, and grant us salvation through the Shabd. We are sinking in the quicksand of attachment. Oh Lord! Give us Your hand. Oh Merciful Lord! Do not look at our evil habits. How can one wash off the dirt and make himself clean? We human beings are so made.

*“We are foolish, worldly and ignorant, and take shelter with You, the Unborn One; have compassion and save us, oh Lord; we, like the stones, have no merit.”* (Belawal M4, 799-6)

*“Oh Lord! Be merciful and redeem us; help the soul by means of the Shabd. We are sunk in the quagmire of attachment; oh Lord, give us Your hand to hold.”* (Asa M4, 446)

*“Have mercy on me, a helpless one, oh Bountiful Lord. Do not judge my merits and demerits. How can clay be washed clean? So is man made.”* (Ramkali M5, 882-17)

Oh Lord of my life! I am an orphan and have taken shelter with You. Have mercy and compassion on me. In this deep well of attachment and delusion, my reason can do nothing. Pray, give me Your hand and save me. I have committed many sins. We are evil-minded and thieves. We have taken refuge with You. Save our honor, we beg of You.

*“Have mercy, Oh Lord. I am an orphan and seek shelter with You; let me hold Thy hand in this dark well. My reason helps me not.”* (Gauri M5, 208-13)

*“We have committed many faults and sins. We are evil-doers and thieves, and have committed many thefts. Nanak has taken shelter with You. Oh Lord! Be merciful and save his honor.”* (Gauri M5, 172-11)

Oh Lord! You are my Creator, unknowable and limitless. Hear my prayer. I am foolish. I am never awake. I am without beauty or reasoning power. I am separated from my home and have come to take shelter with You after a very long time. I have no money and no longer have the attraction of youth. I am an orphan. Protect me.

*“Oh Protector, unknowable and limitless! hear my prayer; Nanak is foolish and never is he awake; he can see nothing, for the night is dark.”* (Tukhari M1, 1110-3)

*“I am without beauty or intellect, and come from a distant foreign land; I have no wealth or youthful attraction. Help the orphan, oh Lord.”* (Gauri M3, 204-2)

I commit faults every moment. I cannot get free of this world because of my actions. You are the forgiver. Forgive me, and take me across this ocean. I make innumerable mistakes and am a great sinner. Oh Lord! Please forgive me. We have committed as many sins as there are drops of water in the ocean. We are stones, and will be drowned. Have mercy and compassion, and save us from drowning.

*“We cannot escape from our actions, for we commit faults every moment; oh Forgiver! forgive us and take Nanak across the ocean.”* (Gauri M5, 261-1)

*“We commit mistakes which are innumerable; oh Lord! forgive me, I am a great sinner.”* (Shalok M3, 1416-5)

*“Like the drops of water in the ocean, there is no count of my sins. Have mercy and compassion, and save me from drowning like a stone.”* (Gauri M5, 156)

All the world is burning in a deep and mysterious fire. Oh Lord! Have mercy and save it. Use the methods and devices that can save it.

*“The world is burning; save it through Your mercy, save it by the methods by which it can be saved.”* (Belawal M3, 853-10)

Oh Lord, You are unfathomable, limitless and beyond measure, and no one is Your equal. I pray that I may never forget You. You are the sustainer and are all-powerful. We pray for this boon, that Your feet may reside in our hearts.

*You are unfathomable and limitless, oh most High. None is like you; this is our prayer, oh Lord! that we may not forget You.* (Suhi M4, 747-6)

*“Oh all-powerful provident Lord! I ask one boon of Thee; have mercy on Nanak, and let Thy feet dwell in his heart.”* (Kalyan M4, 1321-6)

Oh Lord! All thoughts, whether good or bad, are in Thy control. We are merely instruments, and You are the director. Oh Creator! We act as You wish, and we have no say in the matter.

*“Both good and bad thoughts are in Your control, oh Lord; we are instruments and You are the Director; oh Lord of Nanak! You are the Creator and we play as You wish.”* (Belawal M4, 800-10)

Oh Lord! How can one serve Thee, and how or why can he be proud of such services! Thy Light is working in us, and we do everything in Thy Light. If Thou should withdraw Thy Light, what could one say or do?

*“How can anyone serve You or be proud of such service? If You withdraw Your Light, how can one discourse on You?”* (Belawal M3, 797-11)

Ask for the Lord Himself of the Lord. To ask for anything else is to ask for trouble on one's head. Oh Lord! Give us Your Name, so that we may gain peace and our hunger may be removed.

*“To ask for anything other than Thyself is to ask for trouble on my head. Give me Thy Name, so that peace may enter into my heart and satisfy my hunger.”* (Ramkali War M, 957-19)

A Muslim Saint has also said that we should ask the Lord for Himself alone and nothing else, since all else is perishable.

*From God nothing but God should be asked; all else but Him is perishable. From God ask not for things which are going to perish; from God ask for nothing but Himself. Do not blacken your heart with false thoughts.* (Maulana Rumi)

## Ask the Master for the Lord

The Lord dwells in the Master. He dwells in Him in the form of the Sound Current. The Master is a God-man. Pray to the Lord, *“O Savior! You are merciful and compassionate. Be kind and lead us to a Master who will sustain our spirit, and through whom we may find You.”*

*“You are merciful and compassionate; hear my prayer with Thy ever-attentive ear; connect my soul to the Master who has realized You, Oh Lord.”* (Gauri M, 168-17)

Oh Lord! Have mercy, so that I may have faith in the Name and obtain refuge in a Perfect Master.

*“Oh life-giving Lord! Give me faith in the Name; give Nanak the refuge of a Master who is a Perfect Adept.”* (Kanra M4, 1310-16)

Oh Lord! Lead us to a Master by remembering whom we may obtain salvation, by seeing whom we may become happy, and for whom we would gladly die.

*“Oh Lord! Lead us to a Holy Man, by remembering whom we may obtain salvation. May we feel happy on seeing Him, and may we gladly sacrifice ourselves for Him.”* (Bhairon M4, 1135-8)

We should pray to the Lord and the Master to give us the opportunity to see them, to seek refuge with them, to get from them the Name, to have their help in escaping from the snares of the sense pleasures, and to aid us in crossing the ocean of the world. They are all-powerful and can grant us anything they wish.

In addition, the devotee should ask them that he may live as they wish him to. We are without virtues, unwise, uninformed and ignorant. We do not know what to do. Oh Lord! Have mercy, make us sing Your praises so that we may live according to Your Will.

*“Virtueless, unwise, uninformed, ignorant are we, and we know not what to do. Have mercy on Nanak, so that he may sing Your praises.”* (Suhi M5, 748-17)

In addition to this, we should also pray that we may remember Him and be devoted to Him.

*“He who remembers the Formless One, his delusion disappears. He who is dyed in Your hue is freed from transmigration.”* (Gujri War M5, 523-8)

*“Oh Lord! After wandering for many ages, I have taken refuge with You. Oh Lord! Hear Nanak and give him devotion for You.”* (Gauri M5, 289-9)

Also pray to hear the Sound or Shabd, the Lord's Nectar and Name, for they are the principal means of reaching the Lord.

*“We are Your humble devotees; give us the Nectar of the Name Oh Beloved Master! Unite me to the all-wise Lord.”* (Maru M4, 997-5)

*“Forgive the sinner, oh Lord, and unite him to You; You are limitless; no one can discuss Your limits. You are known through the Shabd within the body.”* (Parbhati M3, 1333-6)

*“Oh virtuous Lord and Creator! How can I praise you? Hear the prayers of the devotees and give the Nectar of the Name.”* (Suhi M5, 784-6)

*“We are beggars at Your door, O bountiful One; be pleased to give the Name which will give us bliss.”* (Dhanasri M3, 666-10)

*“Oh Lord! Save us, we pray; we can do nothing of ourselves; have mercy and give us Your Name.”* (Dhanasri M5, 675-11)

In this Kal Yug (Iron Age) singing the praises of the Shabd is very beneficial.

*“In Kalyuga sing the Shabd; by this devotion, pride is removed.”* (Asa M3, 424-1)

By singing the Name, the soul gains strength and pride disappears. One should, therefore, mentally pray for His remembrance and meditate on Him.

*“I wish to make an effort every morning that I may enjoy the ambrosia of singing the praises of the Lord. Oh Lord, bestow this boon on Nanak.”* (Gujri M5, 519-8)

Praying that one may dwell at the feet of the Master and may get the dust of His holy feet (His spiritual love and power) is also enjoined by the Saints.

*“May I get the company of the Master, and be dyed in love of the Name. Oh Lord, have mercy on Nanak and let Thy feet dwell in his heart.”* (Bihagara M5, 545-2)

*“Have compassion, oh Merciful Lord; give to Nanak the company of Saints.”* (Gauri M3, 194-19)

*“Oh Lord, accept us as Your slaves. Give us the dust of the feet of the Saints as long as we live.”*  
(Kalyan M4, 1326-9)

The Gurus give examples of prayers for removing dangers to the devotees, and prayers for fulfilling their needs are also given. They are referred to here so that the reader can derive benefit by reading them.

## Examples of Prayers

Man has a body and a soul. The soul is as valuable in the body as is a beautiful pearl in a shell. Saints recommend prayers of several kinds. There are some who ask the Lord for the necessities of life so that after satisfying these needs they may give devotion to the Lord. The words *“Give us this day our daily bread”* occur in the Lord's Prayer.

Saints consider that everything belongs to the Lord and pray for daily necessities so that after satisfying the needs of the body full devotion may be given to the Lord. The needs of the horse of this body should be satisfied first, and the needs of the soul should be looked after thereafter. Kabir Sahib says that hunger interferes with one's prayers. Therefore one should satisfy one's hunger with a crust of bread and then engage in prayer.

*“Oh Kabir, hunger interferes with prayer; first take a crust of bread, and then engage in remembrance.”*

The Master says that it is proper for a devotee to ask for his needs in the beginning. Kabir prayed, *“Oh Lord! I cannot pray while hungry. I therefore ask for two pounds of flour every day.”* He also prayed for half-a-pound of pulse, so as to provide for both of his daily meals. He also made a request for a cot, a pillow, a bedding and a quilt, so that he could be free to engage, in devotion. But he did not ask for these out of greed, for he loved the Name Only.

*“I cannot engage in devotion while hungry, Oh Lord. Please take back your rosary.”*  
(Kabir Sorath 656-12)

*“Pray give me two pounds of flour, and a little butter and salt. I ask for half-a-pound of pulse, so that I may have both of my daily meals. Give a cot, a pillow and also a quilt to cover myself, so that I may be free to remember You. I am not avaricious; I love Your Name alone.”*  
(Kabir Sorath 656-15)

Dhanna Bhagat similarly prays, *“Oh Lord! I adore You. You do all the work of Your devotees. I ask for pulse, flour and butter, so that I may be happy after taking them. I also ask for good clothes and shoes, as well as cereals. I also wish for a milk-giving cow and a buffalo. There should be a good mare to ride, and an obedient and sympathetic wife.”*

*“Oh Lord! I adore Thee. You see to it that all the actions of Your devotees are successful. Give pulses, salt and butter, so that I may be happy every day; give good shoes to wear, and seven kinds of cereals; a cow and a buffalo to give milk, and a mare to ride. Dhanna also asks for a good wife.”* (Dhanna, Dhanasri, 695-16)

Saints and Adepts, while knowing fully well that the Lord knows one's needs, have given us some examples of prayers so that we may act in accordance with them.

The Tenth Guru (Gobind Singh Sahib) prayed for Grace for His family and His disciples. He prayed, *“Oh Lord! Give us Your hand and protect us. Fulfill our desires, so that our mind may rest at Your feet. Consider us Your own, and look after us. Destroy all our enemies. Save me, Oh Creator. I pray that my family, servants and disciples should be happy. Take my servants and disciples across the ocean of this universe, and destroy our foes.”*

*“How should I pray? Protect us by giving us Your hand. Let our desires be fulfilled. May our minds rest at Your feet. Consider us as Your servants and protect us. Drive away all our enemies. Save me by Your own hand. Oh Creator! May my family live happily and also all my servants and disciples. Give salvation to my servants and disciples, and destroy each one of my foes.”*

## Lord's Prayer

Jesus Christ prayed:

*“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive as our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever.”*

The followers of Mahatma Buddha do not believe in prayers, but if their religion is examined closely, it will be found that they have also accepted the reality behind prayer. When they sit after bathing and cleaning themselves in the morning and evening, they send out good wishes of the following kind: *“I wish the good of all the universe. May all living beings, whether below or above, whether on the left or the right, prosper. May all living beings in heaven, earth, the nether worlds and hell, have peace and goodwill.”* They do not ask for anything but simply send out their good wishes for the good and welfare of the entire universe, and the good of all is wished for. Real prayer, consists in wishing for the good of all.

Hindus also pray. There are prayers in the Vedas which ask for physical and daily necessities. One of these is:

*“Oh Sustainer, Lord of the paths, we have yoked Thee to our chariot through our prayers so that we may attain success and salvation. Bestow upon us that wealth that men yearn for. Grant us the company of the courageous, the philanthropic and the compassionate Giver of food. Oh powerful Deity, throw open the path that we may obtain food, that we may destroy our foes, that we may fulfill our desires. Oh Wise Deity, pierce the hearts of the avaricious with Your armour and make them subject to us.”* (Rig Veda, Mandal 6, Sukt 53)

In their daily ritual, the Hindus pray as follows:

*“Brahm (the Lord) who is the eye of the entire universe and the well-wisher of all, and who is pure and free from worldly blemish, is before us. May we see Him (His Light) for a hundred years. May we live for Him a hundred years. May we hear Him (the Shabd) for a hundred years. May we sing His glories and through His Mercy be free a hundred years, and may this state last for over a hundred years.”*

The Gayatri Mantra is nothing but a prayer. The Muslims pray:

*“God is one. God is detached from all. He gave birth to none. Of none is He born. He has no equal. Show us the right path.”*

Similarly, the Jains also pray. In all these prayers we are reminded of the ideal and of our ultimate destination, which is to realize the Lord. In the Vedanta, prayer consists in hearing and meditating and contemplating on the great saying (maha vakyas). Hafiz Sahib prays to his Master in the ecstasy of his devotion:

*“Oh Master, I am poor while You are the helper of the poor. I have been separated from the Original Home for a very long time. Have pity on my condition and take me back to the Original Home. Your intention was to show the miracle of Thy wonderful beauty; otherwise, in all his glory and wealth, what need had Sultan Mahmud for the tresses of (his slave) Aiyaz?”*

Oh Master! I am poor, and You are the helper. I have been separated from my Original Home for many ages. Have mercy and take me with You to the Original Home. I am drawn to You because of Your incomparable beauty; without You I am nothing. This is the reason why Sultan Mahmud was so kind to his slave (Aiyaz). Hafiz further says:

*“I have only the desire to serve at Your door; oh Lord, have mercy on Your slave, and give him a kindly glance.”*

Shamas-i-Tabrez prays to the Master:

*“Oh Master, by bestowing the wine of homelessness which leads to the indescribable, You have turned the travelers into wine servers, (transformed them into adepts). Close my fault-finding eyes and give the Inner Eyes which can see the Reality.”*

He again says:

*“You are as Mount Caucasus is to the eagle; You are as light is to the moth; open the fountain of life-giving elixir all around me, and recreate the old legends. Intoxicate me with the wine of love and put my wandering and faithless mind in Thy service. For a while enter the mosque of my heart. Come and adorn this humble abode.”*

Oh Lord and Master! Just as Mount Caucasus is the home of the king eagle, You are the resting place of the bird of my soul. Were I a moth, You would be the candle in the flame of which I would sacrifice myself. Oh Merciful One, shower Thy Elixir all round about me, so that the stories about the Pool of Nectar, the Rain or the Water of Life, and the Fountain of Life-giving Water may come true. Give me the intoxication of love, and bridle the unruly intellect in the service of the Lord. My last prayer is that You should appear in the mosque of my body, so that my humble cottage may feel honored and become pure.

### Kabir's Prayer

*I pray with folded hands, listen to me, oh Merciful Master. Give me peace and the company of Saints; also humility, poverty and knowledge.*

*Kabir makes this prayer while thinking of your holy feet. Show me the true path of the Saints, oh Master. How can I utter a word of prayer? I am ashamed of myself. I sin before your eyes. How can You love me? I am full of faults and You are faultless; You are virtuous and I am a sinner.*

*Even if I forget You, pray, forget me not. Oh Lord, forget me not, though You can have thousands of others. You can get many like me; but I cannot get any other like You. How can I forget You? I have nowhere else to go.*

*My mind cares not for Shiva or Muni Narad. If I forget You by mistake, pray, do not take it to heart. The Master should love the poor. A man errs daily. Oh Kabir, why have you foolishly made yourself wretched by thinking of your faults?*

*A man is helpless and dependent, and it is only the Lord who looks to his good. Sins I have committed many within no time at all. And You may pardon me or punish me as You like.*

*Oh forgive me, pardon me, spare me, oh helper of the poor. I am an undutiful son, but my father is jealous of my honor.*

*Oh Lord, You are full of virtues and have no faults. When I searched my heart I found there every fault. I have not a single virtue; listen, oh King of Saints, by the Grace of Your Name I will have a place of honor. I am false, while the Lord is true: I am full of sins. I am a born sinner, full of all defects. I am a sinful soul, oh Lord; pray, save me. You, the bountiful remover of sufferings, pray, look after me.*

*Help me, oh Lord, I am in deep waters. By myself I would be carried away; hold me by the hand. I believe I have no love in my mind, and I do not have a beautiful body. I do not know how I could survive without the Lord. If I meet the Lord in this life, I will tell Him all my troubles while I weep. I will place my head on His feet, and say what I have to say.*

*You know the inner thoughts of all, and are the support of the universe. If You let go my hand, who would take me across? The ocean of the universe is very deep, unknowable and unfathomable. Oh Merciful Lord, if You have compassion, can I feel its depth?*

*I am a great sinner, and am very hard of heart. Oh powerful Master, You alone can take me to my resting place. You are all-powerful, my Lord, pray hold me firmly by the arm. Take me to my destination, and leave me not by the wayside.*

*Give me the boon of devotion, oh Master and God of gods, I wish for nothing else except Thy daily service. I am drowning in the middle of the stream; hold me and take me across.*

## Prayer Before the Master in Sar Bachan

*O Master, open the door of the heart. The mind has tried and tried and failed; not once has it succeeded. You are all-powerful and lacking nothing, why do You delay?*

*I am tossed between pain and pleasure; why have I not yet had a chance? Have mercy, O Bountiful One! Take my mind and attention to the skies.*

*The mind is evil and does not long for You; give me the boon of love. The mind asks for false comforts, and does not know the reality.*

*It hankers after worldly pleasures, and does not taste the Nectar of the Sound. What should I tell the mind, and how should I persuade it? It does not take to heart the words of the Master.*

*The mind is strangely made; it does not love and care for the Shabd. How can it escape the cycle of eighty-four? It does not repeat the Name of the Master. I will be buffeted in this world, and will be dragged headlong to the regions of death.*

*I have borne these sufferings for a long time. The mind does not heed and has forgotten. You are the moving spirit in all hearts, O Master, why do You not call this sufferer to You?*

*Except for You I have no other; You alone can take me to the Eternal Abode. Have mercy, O Radha Soami, and take me to the other shore.*

*I may now commit an unwise action, I am a stranger in a strange land. Set me on the right path in this life, I bow at Your feet every day.*

*I repeat and feel remorse in my mind, how am I to join my Lord? I live on earth while my Lord is in the skies, without my Beloved I remain depressed.*

*O Master, hear my prayer, Kal has entangled me in his meshes. I am helpless and wretched and cry to You, O Master, hear my prayer. You are merciful and provide for everyone. I am the only unfortunate one who is full of sufferings.*

*What can I say about my pains? It is as if I were pierced by the point of an arrow. You, O Master, have now given me hope that I may fly in the sky with the wings of love. By Your mercy I have met my Lord, all pain is gone and my heart is free of troubles.*

*O Master, hear my prayer, I pray again and again. Remove my evil thoughts. Give me shelter at Your feet.*

*Take me across the ocean of this universe, my boat is in the middle of the stream. There is no support but You. Make me Your own and support me.*

*I am cunning and a hypocrite but Yours. You are the limitless Bountiful Lord. I am helpless and extremely wretched, pray, free me whenever You please.*

*I kneel and beg before You, I surrender my mind and body and soul to You, and have now found a great support. I am lowly, uninformed and unskilled.*

*You have placed the secret of the Sound in the heart. The immoral mind did not find it tasteful. I have been deluded by pleasure and pain. I hanker after worldly honor.*

*How can I reverse the actions of the mind without help given by You, my Master? O Radha Soami, draw up the mind, I make this earnest plea to You.*

*I ask a boon of the Master. Pray, let the Shabd manifest itself in my heart. The mind always leads to delusion. Pray, rid my mind of all actions, that the soul may rise and hear the Melody.*

*Control the mind and make it actionless, so that all actions, good and bad, may cease. That I may hear the Shabd at the proper place, pray, make me mad after the Name, that I may reach the goal of Shabd, that none may cause me injury, that I may die for You.*

*Pray, do not let me drift with the current of Kal, but give me the honor of the Shabd. The mind is very unruly; I take shelter at the feet of Radha Soami.*

*O Lord, pray, take me to Your Home for I am idle and deluded. O Merciful One! pray, hold me, I do not know what sins I have committed.*

*My soul does not yet love the Name; what am I to do? The mind does not remain at rest, O Merciful One, have compassion on me, I am wretched all the time.*

*The soul does not rise, and the mind is not calm. I do not get the benefit of Shabd. The path of the Master is said to be high; so I follow it. Why do the Saints not help me?*

*The path of the Saints will be put to shame if I do not succeed in full. I make this prayer according to my own will, for I am not aware of what Your wish may be.*

*I cry again and again, hear me, and give me Your own Name. When Radha Soami gives His own Name, a sufferer may take rest.*

*“How am I to be freed from the mind?” says the soul to the mind. It has cast the net of pleasures. It has separated me from the Original Home.*

*I am in the bondage of the ten senses, and they have all deceived me. I am surrounded by the nine desires; I have been cast out of the tenth door.*

*Now I am attached to the sense pleasures, how can I escape from this snare? I see no one but the Master who can take me out of this jungle.*

*I tremble because of death; who can free me from this fear? From a human being I have become a beast. I have not loved the Master.*

*Like a broken branch from a tree, I am lying far from my Original Home. I humbly beg the Master with all earnestness, keep me at Your feet.*

*Cleanse me of dirt by Your company, so that I may feel separate from the body. I may then unite with the Melody of Sunn (spiritual region). I may get the Nectar from the jar.*

*When the Master unites me with the Shabd, suffering is removed and no fear remains. I am connected to the Sound Current. I may love the Lord. O Radha Soami, make me Your own, I have taken refuge with You.*

## Prayer of Mira Bai

You redeemed Ajamil, the sinner, You redeemed Sadna, You saved the elephant from drowning, the courtesan rode the air chariot, and You redeemed many other sinners, the wise Saints say this is so.

You redeemed the lowly forest woman and Kubja, this is known to all the world. How can I mention all? They are a legion. Even the Vedas and Purans have failed to accomplish this. Oh Lord! Mira has taken shelter with You; hear this with both Thy ears.

I have suffered greatly in this world, doubt and sorrow have tortured me. Now have compassion on me, remove my suffering and take me across.

All this world is drifting in the current of the eighty-four; oh Merciful Lord of Mira, pray, end the transmigration.

I feel no rest without meeting You, my heart feels it so. I rise high and see the Path, by weeping all through the night.

This world is all illusion, family and relations are all false. I pray with folded hands, oh hear my prayer!

This mind of mine is very unruly, like a wild elephant running amok; the Master has placed His hand on its head, and is trying to persuade it by force.

Mira's Lord is merciful, she has united her heart to His feet. I look at Your Form every moment, on seeing You, I feel happy.

My intellect is robbing me, however hard I try to direct my mind; I try to control the mind, oh Lord, but I am helpless and dying; oh, come soon to me, my Lord,

Each day I hear religious discourses, but still I am afraid of the evil mind. Without fail I always serve the Holy Men, and I busy myself in remembrance and contemplation. Pray, show Thy slave the path of devotion, oh Lord, make Mira Your true devoted slave.

My friends have turned into foes, I am disliked by all. I have no friend but You, my boat is tossing in the sea. I have no rest all day or sleep at night, I stand alone and wither.

My heart is pierced by the arrows of separation, I cannot forget this even for a moment.

You redeemed Ahilya who had turned into stone and was lying in the forest. Mira is overburdened with sorrows. I have met the Perfect Master, Ravi Das. He came from our Original Home in the heavens. When the Master showed me the world within, Light merged into Light.

I am drifting on the ocean of this world, take me out of it, I beg You. There is no friend in this ocean, the only true friend is the Lord. Father, mother and family members, all have their own ends to serve. Oh Lord! Hear the prayer of Mira, be pleased to give her a place at Your feet.

### Prayer of Dharam Das

Oh Master, Lord of Lords, give me the boon of devotion; may I never forget to serve the feet of the Master while I live. I do not fast, or go on pilgrimage, or worship in a temple; I am controlling my mind, my speech and my actions.

The eight kinds of Sidhis, the nine kinds of Ridhis (occult powers) or dwelling place in heaven, these I ask not, oh my powerful and bountiful Lord. Articles of comfort, family, wealth and a beautiful wife in my home, these I do not desire even in dream, I swear by You, my Master.

Hear the prayer of Dharam Das, oh powerful Lord; free him from transmigration and make him Your own.

### Prayer of Surdas

Oh save me, my Lord; I am sitting unprotected on the branch of a tree. The hunter (Karm Dev) has his arrow pointed at me. I want to escape him, but a falcon is hovering over me. I am between two dangers, oh Merciful Lord, who is to save me?

As soon as I remembered You, a serpent stung the hunter and the arrow struck the falcon. How can Surdas praise Your virtues? All glory to You, oh Merciful Lord.

Save my honor, oh Lord; You know all. I have earned no merit. I cannot give up evil deeds even for a moment, what to say of hours; I bear on my head the burden of hypocrisy. To wife, son and wealth am I attached, and I have lost my senses. Redeem Surdas the sinner, my boat is full to the brim.



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