

**Selections from the
Prakashmani Gita and
Brahm Nirupan**

(Edited by Dr. J. Das)

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Prakashmani Gita (Surat Shabd Yog Sadhana)

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Who was Prakashmani?

Prakashmani was a great scholar of spirituality and was the first acharya (head) in line of Guru Kabir who wrote several great literatures since the first disciple Dharamdas. This Gita is a theological explanation of the inner path to reach God realization in this life.

Chapter I

Mangalacharan: Salutation.

Salutation to Satguru Kabir Saheb who is the ocean of mercy and bliss. We offer humble salutation to get a drop of that bliss. Prakashmani Nam Saheb speaks of the greatness of Kabir. The word Kabir means great. Those people who wish to get salvation and bliss should know, first of all, that bliss is already their true nature. A drop of that bliss can intoxicate others. For it, many munis and rishis gave up worldly pleasures. Kabir Saheb explained the greatness of God, and that we should bow down to Him to realize bliss.

The “Word” (Shabda) is guru, and it removes worldly bondage and confers salvation quickly. It breaks the bondage of worldly existence and removes all the sins. The Word will support all devotees who follow the guru’s teachings and obtain eternal life.

The Satguru imparts knowledge of Surati Shabd Yoga, and control of the mind and senses. When both are controlled, we glimpse the essence of everything. Thus we bow down to Him that reveals this essence.

The Satguru came into the world to remove bondage from the souls. Those who had positive and good thoughts and pure hearts came close to Him. He showered his grace on them and freed them from the worldly bondage. Whenever the devotees called for him, he appeared and, with the power of the Word, alleviated their suffering and taught them the essence of all knowledge. We need to take refuge in the Satguru who is the manifestation of the Word.

All the souls in the world desire to know their real nature. The soul that resides in all of us is called Jiva. But what is Jiva? Jiva is the destination, or the object of meditation. He is Himself the meditator, the act of meditation and the object of meditation, which is a state of non-duality. He is thus the knowledge and the guru. He is immortal and is the Inner Light of every living being, as the Light of Consciousness. I bow down to Him. His Word is like the boat that takes people across this worldly ocean. Who created that boat? Kabir Saheb. Again I bow down to him. I pray to his Light that destroys all the darkness of ignorance. With his power, the water of his washed feet brought life to dry branch of a banyan tree. Again I bow down to him.

When a devotee performs his devotion with pure thoughts, then Satguru bestows on him the gift of God’s name (initiates him into the secret of the Name). The devotee then attains liberation

(moksha). It is, therefore, the duty of the devotee to serve the Satguru and have all his karmic bondage and fear of birth and death removed.

Devotee: O Satguru, ocean of compassion! Please explain to me the significance of Nij Nam, by which the Sar Shabd (Essence of the Word) would manifest in my heart.

Satguru: Nij Nam is that which enlightens a person. It is for the welfare of the soul. It is also called Sar Nam and Adi Nam. It is the means by which the soul obtains liberation. Though there are many names, one does not obtain salvation through them. But when one meditates on Nij Nam and realizes it in the depth of his heart, he is assured of salvation.

What is Nij Nam? Nij means the Self or Atma (Soul). Nam is the reality of the Self. Atma is Sat which means Eternal Existence. Sat also has the attribute of making the devotee realize his own “form” i.e. to know himself. Therefore, those who want salvation must rely on Satnam. The Sat Shabda (Eternal Word) appears by reciting the Name over and over, and when combined with meditation the Word becomes steadfast in his heart. When the name is always in the devotee’s heart, it removes the sins of many births. He then becomes pure and can do perfect devotion to God.

A diamond just taken from the mine is rough and lacks brilliance and beauty when compared to a cut diamond. In the same way the devotee who attains the Name and recites it, is likened to the diamond that is cut and polished. When you wash clothes with soap and clean water all the dirt is removed. In the same way, with the recitation of the Name, the mind of the devotee becomes pure. It then becomes easy for the mind to concentrate on Sat Purush (God) and merge into the Ocean of God Consciousness or Shabda. Just as a drop of water merges into the ocean, in the same way the consciousness, which originated from the Shabda (Word), merges into the Shabda again. When you take a drop out of the ocean, the drop is not the ocean, but has the same qualities as the water of the ocean. The drop by itself is a very small quantity, but when it merges into the ocean, it becomes the ocean. In the same way, the soul feels separated from God and limited in power, but when it merges into God, it becomes one with God, as there is then no separation.

Devotion to the Word is the stairway and destination to the immortal residence. To obtain it, devotion to the Word is the only proper way.

What is necessary in order to get the Sar Shabda?

Disciple: O Satguru! You speak about the Sar Shabda, but please tell me how I can obtain it?

Satguru: First of all you have to go to satsangs, before you obtain it.

Disciple: Please explain the greatness of satsangs?

Satguru: O disciple, listen! The company of the saints (satsang) is like a beautiful tree that provides good shade, and people rest there to escape from the heat of the sun. Similarly, people can take ‘rest’ in satsang. Satsang is like the kalp taru, the fabled wishful-filling tree. (A story about kalp taru: Once a poor man went into the forest for firewood to sell. The sun was hot. He

became tired cutting the wood and went under a tree and slept. He did not know that it was a kalp taru tree. He was thirsty and wanted water. As he thought about it, a jar of cold water appeared. He then desired food and food appeared. He was satisfied. He then desired to sleep and wished for a nice bed and it appeared. Seeing all this, he thought that some ghost was doing this, and the ghost will come. As he thought, the ghost appeared. He then thought that the ghost will eat him and the ghost ate him.)

In reality, the kalp taru is really inside you and it gives whatever you want. Kabir Saheb stated: He is dwelling in you and is aware of all your actions. If you have ears to listen to His words then you will get instructions to fulfill your wishes. Satsang is the outer kalp taru. He who wants salvation has to participate in satsangs. It is his spiritual duty. Whoever in this world obtained spiritual knowledge, got it through satsangs. All the great souls took part in it. As a result of satsangs, foolish people can become wise. Just as the fabled touchstone converts iron into gold, just so satsangs can convert a dull person into an intelligent one. Rahim said: “Constantly drawing water from the well makes the soft rope cut the hard stone.” If the rope can cut the stone, why shouldn’t the dull person become intelligent with regular satsangs. Since every person likes to be happy materially and spiritually, once he participates in satsangs he can achieve both. He would also understand the positive ways of life and avoid bad company.

When you look at your face in the mirror you may see some dirt on it. In the same way when you attend satsangs and be attentive, you would see the blemishes in your own life and take corrective action. The company of saints and noble souls removes all the blemishes and doubts of your character, and earn you respect. Satsangs make the heart joyful, and confer fame, congeniality and knowledge. Make satsangs a daily habit and righteousness, good thoughts, happiness and bliss will follow you.

One has to visit a saint even if the latter says anything or not. It would be good if he instructs you, but if he remains silent then you would absorb good vibrations and peace and purity in his presence.

There are two kinds of satsangs. One is called Sadhya which means the destination that we want to know and to reach. The other is Sadhana – the means by which we reach the destination. Sadhya satsang is more important than sadhana, because the former takes you to Truth (God), the essence of Sar Shabda. Others, such as singing, listening to sermons, etc. are the second type that helps us to create interest or intention in ourselves to obtain the first one. Thus the second type of satsang plays a supporting role to the first.

Chapter II

The purpose of Satsang

Devotee: O Satguru! You speak about satsang and that we should take part in it, but what is the reason for us to do so? Who is the saint and why do we have to go to him? Why do we have to serve the sadhus (holy men)? What is the service to the saints and what are its effects?

Satguru: Many people go on pilgrimages where there is water, idols, images to worship, etc. but they do not obtain true benefit at that time. But the company of the saints confers benefit right away. The darshan of sadhus (seeing the saints) is much greater than pilgrimages, so people get greater benefit.

Devotee: How many such saints are there who have these good qualities in them? Who are pure in thoughts, words and actions? How many are there that think of the welfare of the whole universe, and do not negatively criticize others. Can these saints remove the darkness from the hearts of others?

Satguru: Whoever wants good results in life has to serve the saints. This is very important. After performing service and obtaining knowledge, sins are removed, and one gets salvation. What can the devotion of saints not give! It gives everything. If you reach a great lake of pure water, how can you remain thirsty? Everyone can quench his thirst. Sadhus and saints always think about and work for the welfare of others. Thus, they are great and others (devotees) must serve them. They are calm and full of knowledge, and think always of giving to others generously without any distinctions. Since Sadhus are this way we should serve them and earn spiritual merits.

The one who imparts knowledge that removes your ignorance becomes your Satguru. There are many who put on the clothes of sadhus, but they do not have the knowledge. If such a person comes to your home you should treat him respectfully, and offer him food and clothes, and serve him within your means. But the one who reveals the means to reach Sar Shabda and salvation in this life must be served with the highest regard, and with all the means at your disposal.

Prakashmani Nam Saheb stressed this.

Devotee: O Satguru! Please explain to me the greatness of Satguru. I do not see anyone else who is like you in this world who can lovingly lead me on the spiritual path.

Satguru: Satguru is like the doctor who removes the fear of old age, disease and death, and who has the most valuable medicine that confers eternity. That medicine is like nectar. Satguru has that, and he imparts it to the disciple. The soul, slumbering for many births in ignorance, is awakened by the Satguru who imparts knowledge. When the soul is awakened, it sees the Light and obtains liberation. Satguru is the ocean of mercy and compassion, and He measures out the proper medicine that removes the blindness of ignorance and reveals the Truth. Satguru protects the soul of the disciple who is floating on the worldly ocean, rescues him from drowning, and easily takes him to the other shore. I bow down again and again to that Satguru. He is like a boat's captain who can avoid all the obstacles and dangerous places.

The Eternal Truth (Eternal Word) is hidden in every being. Without Satguru it does not become known. One thus needs the compassion and grace of the Satguru. Therefore, O devotee! If you want salvation, go to the Satguru's refuge. Surrender yourself body, mind and speech completely, and serve Him. Only complete dedication and acceptance of the true teachings taken to heart would be of real value. Crossing the worldly ocean then becomes effortless.

Who is Satguru? The Satguru is one whose nectar-like words remove the troubles of old age, death, fear, ignorance and doubts, and implants divine knowledge. He will shower compassion on you and protect you in the boat of God's Name, and remove you from the cycle of births and deaths.

In this Chapter spiritual knowledge (para vidya) is imparted. It is also adhyatma yoga shastra which means the scripture of the knowledge of the Spirit. It deals with the importance of Satguru and how the devotee has to obtain him. When a devotee receives the grace of Satguru and obeys His instructions, then he has to put them into practice.

Devotee: O Satguru! Please tell me what is my duty in devotion. How am I to prepare myself for meditation?

Satguru: Attend satsangs and meet sadhus and saints. In their company you will be able to meet Satguru. When you meet him you will get knowledge that gives salvation. All devotees perform righteous duties and avoid bad actions. If an unrighteous person claims to have higher knowledge, he is false and should be avoided. Righteousness with knowledge is called Kriya Yoga or the discrimination between righteous and unrighteous actions. The devotee who desires salvation must perform righteous duties, and give up violence of every kind, in thought, word, and deed. He must accept non-violence and truthfulness as commands in his life. He must also practice non-stealing. He must have the highest character and the best conduct. The best conduct is the control of all the senses, the mind and one's self. Control over the senses gives power and one becomes spiritually and devotionally stronger. He also enjoys long a life, freedom from disease, enthusiasm, devotion, dedication, and other good attributes. The great souls and deities conquered death because of brahmcharya, which is the control of sensual desires.

Satguru: The devotee must live without possessing too many things. He should have only what is necessary for his use. (Story in Hitopadesh of Jackal wanting to collect many things and got killed with an arrow. A Hunter shot an arrow to kill a wild boar. The boar, wounded with the arrow, attacked the hunter with his strong teeth and killed him, and the boar died with the arrow. A snake got crushed in the struggle. The hunter's arrow and bow lay there. A Jackal arrived and was pleased to see so much food (a dead man, boar and a snake) that would last him for many days. He thought of only eating a small bit and hoarding the rest. He started eating the bowstring made of animal tissues. When the jackal cut the string the end of the bow sprang violently and cut the jackal's throat and he died). This is just a parable to show that it is not good to hoard things. He who hoards things will always have a restless mind, and he would not be able to meditate or accomplish important duties in his life.

Cleanliness is a duty of a devotee. It is of two kinds, inner and outer. Outer cleanliness is to wash the body and wear clean clothes, and keep a clean environment. Inner cleanliness is to replace all bad thoughts with good thoughts. Saints give greater importance to the inner cleanliness.

The devotee has to be contented. He should accept what is available and necessary and not to give in to cravings. Contentment makes a person happy, whereas cravings make him unhappy. Craving is like a mirage that you try to reach, and it keeps on vanishing. A thirsty deer pursuing a mirage to get water is called mrig trishna or the burning thirst of the deer. Cravings do the same thing, and the person finds that he cannot always get what he really wants. He will never be satisfied. So contentment is the best for happiness.

After contentment, you have to have Titiksha or the courage to endure hardships such as hunger and thirst, heat and cold, and to control desires. The wise people say that whoever in the world got something of value got it because of austerity. Good conduct and character are also austerity. To live simply and truthfully is also austerity. Keeping a fast is also austerity.

How does the soul merge into God?

Devotee: O Satguru, please tell me how does the union of surati and shabda come to a person? How can the surati be pure and how can it love the shabda? (Surati has different meanings – mind, soul, and consciousness). When the soul merges into the universal Word, Sat Purush (God), then how do all the differences become abolished?

Satguru: When all the thought waves merge into the Divine Sound, they become sound. There are no more thoughts. Only Word remains. The surati and shabda cannot then be differentiated. When the surati unites with shabda, it is just as when water mixes with milk and become one. Surati gives up its own identity and merges into the Word. Although surati and shabda appear different, they are not really separate. Once the union has occurred, and the thought waves are silenced, bliss is experienced. When the waters of two rivers such as the Ganges and the Yamuna unite at Prayag, one cannot differentiate the waters, just so, when surati and shabda unite, they are indistinguishable. However, for this to occur one has to meditate before that Oneness can be realized. The Yamuna merges into the Ganges and loses itself, and only the Ganges remains. In the same way, when surati merges into shabda, then only shabda remains. No one can then identify any separation or differences. When one attains unity with shabda, his surati becomes pure. All the passions of lust, anger, attachment, greed and ego are removed. He becomes a true devotee. Kabir Saheb said that the person who has lust, anger and greed couldn't do devotion. When there are water droplets in the air, sunlight can produce a rainbow, such as you can see in the mist near a waterfall. Though the water has no color, it reflects the various colors of light. The light does not color the water. In the same way, when surati merges into God (Word) then all the "colors" of passions cannot color the pure Word. All emotions become powerless.

For meditation, the devotee has to observe the rules of Yama and Niyama. He also has to sit in a proper and comfortable posture for a certain length of time. The sahaj asan or easy posture is practical, and it should be perfected by regular practice.

The yamas are: non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, non-hoarding of possessions, and control of all the senses and passions. The niyamas are: cleanliness of mind and body, contentment, austerity, study of scriptures, and intense desire for God realization. The devotee must control his mind and then meditate on the Word. This is called Surati Dharana or Surati Shabda Dharana which means to control the mind with the Anahad Nad or the Internal Mystical Sound Current. This is the way for the beginner to get control of the mind. When the mind is fixed on the Word (the Inner Sound) and does not waver from it, then it comes under proper control. After control of the mind, the devotee has to meditate. In meditation the meditator realizes 'oneness' with the object of meditation. Meditation is just like pouring honey from a bottle: the stickiness of the honey makes every drop stick to the others. In the same way the thought waves maintain a continuous flow towards a single object. The devotee will then attain samadhi or Self-realization. Though there are different kinds of samadhi, he will try to reach Nirvikalpa Samadhi. There is the Savikalpa Samadhi in which the devotee retains a sense of differences. He cannot stay in Savikalpa Samadhi for a long time. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, all differences disappear and the devotee can remain in it for a long time. In this state there is a constant realization of Oneness. The meditator, the meditation and the object of meditation merge into unity. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi the soul, God and the meditator become one. By achieving this state the devotee obtains immense bliss. The attainment of this state of Samadhi (Sahaj Samadhi) is also called Jivan-Mukti (liberation during this lifetime). The meditator realizes oneness with God during his lifetime. His actions, words and thoughts become harmonious, and he enjoys bliss.

Without devotion to the Satguru none attains true meditation.

Devotee: O Satguru, please tell me, how am I to do devotion to Satguru who gives me the true Name?

Satguru: The devotee has to serve his Guru with pure mind and good intentions. The Guru will then impart knowledge. This knowledge helps the devotee to realize the Eternal State Of Being. It is just like a person digging a deep well to find pure water. In the same way if someone performs devotion to Satguru, he obtains true knowledge that helps him to obtain salvation.

There are three ways to obtain this knowledge:

1st— To serve the Guru

2nd— To give wealth to get knowledge

3rd— To give knowledge in exchange for other knowledge.

Among these three ways, service to the Guru is the best. The devotee should worship his Guru, as all other kinds of worship are included in it. It is like watering the root of a plant and the whole plant becomes watered. The devotee must give up pride and ego before he worships his Guru. A special "electric current" resides in the body of Satguru and it is passed on to the devotee's mind. This is a direct benefit to the devotee. When a person has bad thoughts, another person meeting him will be influenced by those thoughts. Similarly if one meets a person who always has good thoughts then he will be influenced by the good thoughts. Satguru always has

pure thoughts, so the devotee gets pure thoughts in his company. When you feed a cow she can give you milk, just so when you serve your Guru you get knowledge. If the devotee has good thoughts, they will influence the Guru to impart true spiritual knowledge.

(A parable) One day an old lady wanted to visit her daughter who was living outside the city gates. She was walking and carrying a bundle of presents. She got tired, so she asked a rider on a horse to give the bundle to her daughter, and directed him to her daughter's house. The rider refused to do it and left. After having gone some distance he thought that the lady's bundle must contain some valuables. If he had taken it and rode away no one could have caught him. He returned to take the bundle. Now the lady thought how foolish she was to offer the bundle to him, that he could have taken it for himself. Now, the man politely said, "O mother, give me the bundle and I will give it to your daughter."

The lady then said: "No my son! I will carry it myself." The man said, "You wanted to give me. Why are you refusing now?" The lady then said: "The same one who told you to take this bundle now, also told me not to give the bundle to you." What really happened here: The thought of the rider influenced the thought of the lady. Just so good thoughts of one person, induces good thoughts in another. Therefore always perform devotion with good thoughts.

When an eagle builds a nest on a tree, all the other birds residing on that tree will fly away, in order to protect themselves. In the same way, when meditation and Satguru's knowledge are in the heart, all the evils vanish.

Devotee: O Satguru! Tell me how I should recite nij nam? How can I obtain the sar shabd (essence of the Word) by recitation?

Satguru: The form of sat (Existence) is the "form" of the soul as is accepted by all the great spiritual masters. Thus nij nam is sat nam or the Eternal, Self Existent Name of God. The recitation of sat nam leads the devotee to salvation. But before the devotee recites sat nam, he has to develop the emotional state or feeling of devotion in his heart, and not merely utter the words. Sat nam is the Eternal Name that has always existed, exists now, and will always continue to exist. It is not bound by time. Sat is the ocean of perfect bliss. Sat nam or nij nam is itself the Eternal State or Being, which is really the final destination. The devotee must thus recite sat nam with this feeling that sat nam is his final destination. Japa or recitation is the process used to control the mind. When the mind is involved in meaningful recitation, then the process is known as japa yoga. The devotee who wishes salvation must practice japa with love for a long time as the first step. Then the sat dhvani (anahad nad) or mystical sound appears automatically inside him. His japa then becomes ajapa japa or recitation without uttering or thinking of words. The devotee must have a deep love for this recitation and he will easily obtain bliss.

Whatever we do in this life goes with us. If we perform good actions, then they help us in this and the next life. Nothing but our righteousness is helpful after death. All of our material possessions are of no use. It is the devotional and the spiritual life now that will help the soul's onward progress.

(Parable: A person had three friends and he used to visit two of them regularly, as he loved them very much. He loved the third one a lot less and visited him only occasionally. One day the man committed a criminal offence. The injured party filed a criminal lawsuit, and the person had to go to court. If he could produce witnesses he could perhaps avoid a penalty or imprisonment. He went to his first friend whom he loved a great deal and asked him to be a witness and to speak in his favour. The friend refused. He tried to persuade him, but he still refused. He then went to the other friend whom he also loved a great deal. He asked this friend also to testify in court in his favour. This friend said that he can go to the court but will not testify on his behalf, because he limits himself to the outside of the court house, and will not go inside. The man then thought what was the use if the friend would go to the court but would not go inside. He then thought of how much he loved these two friends and now they were not helping him. He then thought of his third friend whom he did not love much. But when a person is in trouble he will seek help from anybody. So he went to this friend who welcomed him. He related his problem and said that if his friend could testify on his behalf, perhaps, he will be forgiven and set free. On hearing the problem this friend agreed, and told him that if he had some trouble, that he will bear most of the trouble for him. This friend went to court and testified. Though the man did not love this friend much, he got help from him).

This simple story illustrates that in life we have three types of friends. The first friend is all the material possessions. But these do not go to the 'court'. At death all the possessions remain right where they are. The other friend is all the relatives. They can go with you to the grave but not in it with you, nor will they be cremated with you. The third friend is dharma, righteousness, which will go with the soul. Dharma breaks all of the soul's bondage. Thus you can see that material things and relationships are attractive but not helpful for liberation. Spiritual life is the only means for liberation.

All the saints state that when someone ties the knot with God using the Sat Shabda (Eternal Word), then death does not break that knot. Nothing else crosses that boundary of death. The Bhagavad Gita also states that what we have achieved, spiritually, in this life will go with us. If liberation is not achieved in this life, then the soul will be reborn in such a state that it will have greater opportunity to perform righteousness and obtain liberation. He who merges in the Eternal Word, in God, goes beyond worldly things and dwells eternally in the Word i.e. attains eternal life.

What is Ni-akshar? Kshar means all that is perishable or impermanent. And what is not destructible is akshar. Thus the soul is akshar. Ni-akshar refers to the Supreme Soul. When the soul merges into that Being which is beyond kshar and akshar, it is said to be one with Ni-akshar and is beyond the limits of time and space. This is attained in meditation. The Divine Melody (Anahad Nad) is heard inside with the Grace of Satguru. When one merges with that Melody, he does not return to the cycle of birth and death. The devotee must have deep love for God and sing the glories of that Divine Sound which will lead him to the immortal abode. When the moon rises, its light is pleasant and we enjoy it and feel happy. In the same way, when we experience the Shabda inside, it creates permanent happiness and enthusiasm in us. When someone obtains

the Anahad Nad, (the limitless and unstruck music), and his mind becomes attached to it at all times, then he attains salvation.

As a magnet attracts iron filings, just so Shabda, the Divine Melody, attracts the soul that then comes close to it. The soul then unites with the Word that is immortal and omnipresent. The devotee realizes this omnipresence by the grace of Satguru.

The Ganges started from the Himalayas with pure water, and as it reaches the ocean the water becomes polluted. The soul is from God and is pure, but coming into the world it becomes polluted. If we reverse the process, and withdraw from the polluting influences of the world, we will find the purity from where we started. That purity is Divinity itself – Sat Purush – with whom we have to unite. The light of the soul is indescribable as it falls in the realm of Para Vani (Divine

Word). Apara Vani is worldly speech.

There are two kinds of Vidya (knowledge) – Para Vidya and Apara Vidya. All the worldly knowledge is Apara. Knowledge about the soul is Para. There are four kinds of Vani (speech)- Vaikhari, Madhyma, Pashyanti and Para. Vaikhari is our ordinary speech. Madhyma is speech that occurs silently within. Pashyanti is subtler form (thought) of speech. Para is the Anahad Nad or Divine Sound that the advanced devotee enjoys inside. It is a state of bliss. This sound is connected with the light of the soul. When the devotee gets such realization, then the cycles of births and deaths vanish. But before he attains that, he has to be perfectly righteous. With the Grace of Satguru, the devotee is able to overcome all difficulties and obtain bliss. Even many yogis cannot obtain this bliss. They meditate and try to attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi (cosmic consciousness) but they do not attain the Para Vani. Those who follow the instructions of Satguru, and recite the Name inside, will attain the Para Vani and salvation.

The goal of life is liberation from all the troubles of life. If we get everything in life, but fail to get liberation, then it means that we have not finished our duty in this life. There are four goals in the life of everyone. They are dharma (religious duties), artha (wealth), kama (fulfillment of desires) and moksha (liberation). Everyone wants money and enjoyment, but without righteousness, they are dangerous. They will lead a person to live like a demon. There must be righteousness with money and desires. With righteous living one reaches the last goal of moksha (liberation). It is better to have salvation during one's life (jivan mukti). Kabir Saheb said that if you cannot obtain salvation in life, how can you obtain it in death? Who can bear witness that someone got salvation after death? Salvation is worthwhile only if it is realized in one's life. This salvation is obtained through devotion, meditation and attunement with the Divine Word inside.

What is the yoga of sar shabda or surat shabda? This is the mystical teaching containing the "hidden treasure." Whoever is able to understand it, and wants to, will get to know it.

Devotee: O Satguru! You spoke of surat shabda yoga, but I do not know what it means. Please explain it to me. O Satguru! You are full of compassion. Please tell me about the yoga of surati and shabda, and also about sar shabda. What is the essence of all of them?

Satguru: Surati and shabda are two things, but when they unite, they become one and lead the soul across this ocean of life to salvation, just as a boat takes a person across the ocean. All the saints say that in this universe, which is endless, the sat shabda (Divine Word – Melody) is itself the soul and God, and is itself the support of the soul to reach its destination. That Word is like a magnet that attracts the soul. Surati (Soham Surati) which, in reality, is the same as the soul, is reached when the mind is concentrated on ajapa (unuttered sound or Word). This becomes soham surati. When the surati rides on the boat of the Word, then it reaches the eternal abode of God. There then remains nothing more for the soul to attain. With the Word one can be what he wants. He can fulfill his wishes with the power of the Word.

Without the knowledge of Sar Shabd, the soul does not escape from the cycle of birth and death. The Sar Shabd is so important that it manifests eternally inside the person in a hidden or mystical way. That sound is going on all the time and has many “signs” if the person knows how to recognize them. That eternal Sound is in everyone, but dormant. One has to “awaken” it with love, devotion, recitation of the Name and meditation. That Sound is unceasing and unfathomable, and is full of bliss. It may take many lifetimes to achieve it depending upon one’s spiritual development. We must understand first of all that many of us have the opportunity in this world to achieve our goal. Many people do not get this opportunity. Those who do must have done many good deeds in their past lives.

So ends the Prakashmani Gita with a brief explanation of the inner path to reach our ultimate goal of God Realization and freedom from karmic bondage.

Brahm Nirupan (a selection)

(The Necessity of Liberation)

By Dr. Jagessar Das

The Brahm Nirupan is another spiritual classic of the Sant tradition, and represents more Dharamdasi Kabir Panth literature quite compatible with other Kabirian “dialogue gospels”, these Q and A sessions between Guru Kabir and Sant Dharam Dass, such as the Anurag Sagar (Ocean of Love), Sukh Nidhan (Abode of Bliss), and Amar Mul (Source of Eternity).

The Brahm Nirupan of Guru Kabir and Sant Dharam Dass

Introduction

In the book, Brahm Nirupan, Satguru Kabir explained the inner meaning of spiritual life to Dharam Dass, his foremost disciple.

The Brahm Nirupan is a matchless text that discusses the essence of the Word or Sar Shabda.....

The Brahm Nirupan contains the teachings of Satguru Kabir and deals with the reality of God and the soul. My rendering in English will be based on two sources:

1. Brahm Nirupan published by Mahant Shri Ramsaroop Dasji of the Kabir Ashram, Jamnagar, Gujarat, India in 1955. This book contains the Sanskrit text and a Hindi translation and commentary. The Sanskrit text was corrected by the late Hazur Prakash Mani Naam Saheb who preceded Hazur Udit Mani Naam Saheb. The Hindi translation was done by Mahant Shri Bichar Dasji Shastri and Shri Hazur Prakash Mani Naam Saheb of the Kabir Ashram in Kharsia. The book was printed by Chandrakant Bhushan Dasji Sadhu of Chetan Prakashan Mandir Press in Baroda.

2. A series of lectures on Brahm Nirupan given by Mahant Shri Jagdish Das Shastri during his visit to Canada in the latter part of the 1980’s.

The theme of the book is based on the fact that we are spiritual beings and as Spirit we have an affinity with the Supreme Spirit that is God. There is an inner longing to understand the Reality of ourselves as related to God.....

The Brahm Nirupan consists on three hundred and seventy-five Sanskrit Slokas or couplets along with Hindi translations. Since I am not a Sanskrit scholar, I will depend on the Hindi translations in the book, and on the English commentaries

referred to above. The nature of this subject requires us to have an open mind, free from the limitations of religious dogmas, and to delve into the nature of ourselves and God in as earnest a way as we possible. It is only by freeing our minds from limiting barriers that we will be able to have a glimpse of the reality. We need to understand that the reality cannot be described, and all writings are essentially to give a hint of what reality is. Ultimately, reality has to be experienced within. God speaks to the heart, and when our heart is open to God, then we gain intuitive

knowledge of God's omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence. I recognize my limitations in dealing with such a transcendental subject, and I will endeavour to maintain the essential spirit of the teaching. It is possible that knowledgeable people may find inaccuracies or omissions, but these are not intentional if they do occur, and I thus ask their indulgence.

Text (Verses 1-45)

1. The writer, for the welfare of the world, offers salutations to Sat Purush and to Satguru Kabir by whose nectar-like words the karmas are abolished, and the fear of old age and death are removed.
2. The person who always meditates on the feet of Satguru, will not have sufferings and fear. Similarly, birth and death are also abolished.
3. The world is like a forest in which doubt exists, just as a lion is in the forest with its mouth open to grab a prey. Doubt is thus eating up the world. For the destruction of doubts, only Satguru's name is effective. There is definitely no other method, other than God's name.
4. The essence of the Word imparted by Satguru needs no support except its own self-existent power. The Word cannot be affected by Maya. That Eternal Name (Word) cannot be known by those choosing to remain ignorant. But he who serves the Guru, and learns from him, will realize the Word.
5. O Knowledgeable Master (Satguru Kabir), from you I have learned of the glory of Satguru's Name. But O Lord, the Eternal Name, that is the cause of all existence, please explain its nature to me!

Satguru Kabir Responds

6. Dharam Dass, the Imperishable Name is the essence of all mantras, therefore carefully remember it. It is indeed the name that gives liberation. It is above all other names and is really the Eternal Name of God himself.
7. It is said that the five gross elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether are perishable, and that the soul is imperishable. But the Imperishable Name is different from these. Therefore listen attentively to its nature.
8. From beginless time there was the sound of A (ah), then the sound of U (oo), and lastly the sound M (ma). First, you must understand the secret meaning of these, O Dharam Dass!
9. Above these three is the secret and Imperishable Being that gives light to them. Then beyond this secret and Imperishable Being there is the most refined and Eternal Essence. You must contemplate on this. Give up criticisms and worldly talk and seek the knowledge of your inner Self.
10. That Eternal Essence resides in the imperishable dwelling place that is separate from all others. It is beyond the beyond. It will be known only through spiritual knowledge imparted by a realized guru. All people realize that It dwells in the Eternal Abode.

11. As said before, Nirakshar cannot be written about. It is eternal and can only be experienced. Thus the person, who, with a concentrated mind and devotion and love, recites it continuously with understanding” is wise. All doubts and illusion are removed from him, and he overcomes death. He indeed realizes Soham Shabd.

12. O Dharam Dass! The essence of the four Vedas and six philosophies is Soham. Soham is the eternal essence expressing “I am That”. But it is an idea and not Reality Itself. With the power of knowledge and yoga (samadhi), give up even the SA (S) and HA (H). The Self is beyond Soham. Realize the Self.

13. When with the power of knowledge and yoga the SA and HA are removed, then O and M (AM) remain. (In Sanskrit, these are AUM written as OM). Then these must also be removed.

14. The combination of AUM has three parts. Now these three must be separated as A-U-M.

15. The A then must be dissolved into the U, and the U must be dissolved into the M. Then M then merges into the bindu or dot (O).

16. When the bindu or the dot of the Om sign merges in to the half sign that is moon shaped, and when this half sign also dissolves, then you reach the state of nirakshar. This is the state beyond all letters and language. It is a state of existence itself This is a state of super consciousness and the Self then dissolves into the Eternal Being.

17. Nirakshar Purush is the Absolute Being whose dwelling place is a vast region called Pushpdweep. The devotee who contemplates regularly with a concentrated mind on the nirakshar shabd, which is the essence of the Absolute Being, will, by the grace of Satguru, reach that abode.

18. The nirakshar is the root mantra, the true Word and the essence of the Word as realized by the great sages. For this reason, whoever knows the essence of nirakshar will quickly attain all the benefits that can ever be attained from yajnas, giving, pilgrimages, and observance of fasts.

19. Contemplating on the Sar Shabd gives much more spiritual merit than doing the Shraddh ceremony at Gaya in Bihar, or bathing in the Ganges, or at Prayag at the Makar Sankranti. Such contemplation gives much more spiritual merit than even making offerings of cows, and giving of other types of gifts. (Gaya is a place of pilgrimage in the state of Bihar. The Shraddh ceremony is offering of food and

water to the departed souls).

20. Contemplating on the Sat Shabd, even for half of a moment, confers much more spiritual merit than living in the holy city of Kashi for millions of years.

21. Sar Shabd is secret, thus it was difficult for Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and other gods to realize it. Just as an unfortunate pauper has difficulty in getting wealth, just so the ordinary person, without doing a great deal of devotion, will find it difficult to realize the Sar Shabd.

22. The devotee who, with love and a pure heart, does devotion to the guru, who is a personification of the Eternal, will make his guru happy with such devotion. He realizes the Eternal, and abolishes all previous and future karmas. He obtains liberation.
23. Knowledge of the Sar Shabd (essence of reality) has such power that it can quickly destroy the karmas of the present life. This is indeed very desirable fruit of such knowledge that needs to be thoughtfully considered and understood. Knowledge of the essence of reality dawns within and gives enlightenment.
24. The self realized person (knowing the essence of reality) incurs no karmas even if he kills thousands of cow and millions of Brahmins. Just so even if he performs many noble deeds still the karmas do not attach to him. (Karmas attach to people because of identification with the physical self and with the ego and the senses. With self-realization a person rises above these and thus incurs no karmas. This is explained well by Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagwat Gita).
25. He who realizes this essence of reality has no need to observe religious fasts, bathing in holy rivers, daily religious rituals, prayers in the morning and evening and of going on pilgrimages. Such a realized person is indeed in direct contact with god and has risen above all the daily religious observances.
26. The knowledge of reality has such a power that it destroys all the karmas from previous and the present births. All the karmas and doubts in life are burned just like the pile of dried grass.
27. Even if you perform a thousand horse sacrifices as explained in the Vedas, or you give a gift of gold equal to the Mount Meru, still any benefits derived from these never equal the benefit derived from the knowledge of reality.
28. The knowledge of the essence of reality is indeed the meditation of meditation and the austerity of all austerities. The keen devotee who attains this knowledge definitely attains the eternal abode rewards.
29. In the service of the guru and by his grace, the devotee who performs Pranayama yoga, and practices restraint of the breath in what is called kumbhak, then he reaches the tenth door. The tenth door is above the thousand-petalled lotus and reaching there the devotee hears the unstruck melody in meditation.
30. A devotee who controls the mind and practices hearing the divine melody, reaches the difficult to obtain state of union of the right and left nerve currents in the central channel in meditation. These three meet at the third eye. In deep silence the devotee sees the intense eternal light of reality.
31. Above the trikuti (third eye) there are three states of silences — the beginning, middle and end. These three states of silence merge or dissolve into the eternal light. He who does not know the secret of these cannot be said to be a Vaishanava.

32. When consciousness in meditation reaches the thousand-petalled lotus, it then rises to the eight lotus of above. This is called unmani chakra. In this state the devotee sees the divine light without there being a lamp and hears the divine melody without musical instruments.
33. Sat Guru Kabir said that the yogi who practices meditation will rise above all of these (the chakras) and going above the eighth chakra, reaches a region where the lotus has countless petals. The yogi then sees the light of millions of moons and suns, and becomes silent.
34. When the yogi reaches this state of realization, he becomes aware that the Self is free of the support of the body, space, heaven and earth. His consciousness rises above the physical and astral forms, and then even death becomes his servant. This state of consciousness is one of unity with God.
35. The gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva who are the creator, sustainer and dissolver aspects of god, and who are responsible for the seven heavens and the seven nether worlds, even they pay obeisance to such an enlightened yogi.
36. The devotee who serves such an enlightened Satguru with his body, mind and wealth, conquers old age and death, and definitely goes to dwell in the eternal abode. The eternal abode is Truth. Truth is the only religion. Truth is the name of God. Truth is the true guru. Truth is Enlightenment.
37. When one, through realization, reaches the eternal abode, he hears beautiful music that is played without hands, and sees elegant dancing performed without feet. This is a transcendental state in which bliss is experienced.
38. In this transcendental state one hears heavenly speech and heavenly singing without the use of ears and mouth. The divine melody is always resounding when one becomes attuned to it through diligent practice.
39. In that state one sees countless, beautiful, divine forms but without the use of eyes. And there one sees and feels soothing waves rising constantly when there is no water.
40. In that state one sees countless pure and resplendent gems. Their glittering light is infinite and eternal. This is an inner state of Enlightenment.
41. In that state there is celestial humming of bees, and it is sweet melody to the ears. There the bees fly without wings, and resplendent pictures are painted without hands, and lightning flashes dazzle the eyes even when there are no clouds.
42. In that state one hears the beautiful sounds of the peacock even when there is no mountain verdure. There one also hears the beautiful melody of the nightingale even when there is no garden of flowers.
43. There one sees a beautiful white Lotus without a stem shining as polished marble. This elegant Lotus has seven petals and its heavenly form and brilliance surpass the light of the sun and the moon. It is indeed the mine of heavenly forms.

44. In that state the heavenly pearl forms without any oyster. Its brilliance surpasses that of millions of suns. It is there that you find nectar serving as food.

45. In that state there is no earth, fire, air or space. There is also no sun or moon. There the beautiful form is beyond the five elements and the five senses.