

BOOK THREE

Amrit

Nectar or the Water of Life

Amrit

AMRIT or Aab-i-Hayat or Maha Ras is the elixir of life, for whoever partakes of it gets everlasting life and escapes forever from the otherwise interminable round of births and deaths. The sages and seers wandered in quest of It, but nowhere in the wide world were they able to find It. Is It then a chimera or mirage? The saints in reply have repeatedly said that Amrit is something real and solid. It is the Water of Immortality, which lies hidden and buried within the depths of the soul, encrusted with the dust of ages, and may be delved into even now and rediscovered, if one has the patience to do as he is bidden.

In the scriptures of the various religions we come across references to the sacred Water of Life. The Muslim divines describe It as Aab-i-Haiwan or Aab-i-Hayat and always suggested Its use to the world-weary pilgrims. It is also called Chasma-i-Kausar. The Hindu scriptures call It Mansarover or the Pool of Nectar (Amritsar), which if tasted would grant life everlasting. In the Vedas we read of It as Soma Ras, which granted Cosmic Awareness or Universal Consciousness to the Rishis and the Munis who partook of It in ages long ago. The saints generally call It Amritsar or the pool or the fount of Nectar. Christ often spoke of It as the Water of Life.

And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will,
let him take the Water of Life freely.¹

Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him
shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him

shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.²

CHRIST

In the Holy Bible, it is stated that Christ used to bring the dead to life. At one place, he is said to have administered this Water of Life to a Samaritan lady. From all this it is abundantly clear that Christ freely made use of this Water of Life in treating the ills of mankind. And very often he refers to the Voice of God as well.

For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.³

ST. PAUL

When the dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.⁴

CHRIST

By these means, he is said to have redeemed no less than one hundred forty and four thousand souls.⁵

The Rishis and Munis or the holy men of old and even the saints in comparatively recent times tasted of the Water of Life and made their followers drink from the great fountainhead, and it is possible even today to partake of this Water with the grace and kindness of some Master-saint.

Amrit: What It is

From a careful study of the scriptures, we learn that the Water of Life or the Nectar is nothing but the Word or Logos of Christ; Naam or Shabd of the saints; Kalma of the Muslims; and Nad of the Vedic Rishis.

Amrit is the True Naam (or Word),
But It cannot be described in words.

He who tastes of It by attuning with the Word is
accepted at His Court.⁶

GURU AMAR DAS

O dear self, Amrit is the Hari Naam,
And one gets access to It through a Master-soul.⁷

GURU RAM DAS

The Word of God is the elixir of life and is a panacea
for all the ills of the world;
Bhikhan says, It is with the Grace of the Guru that
one finds a Way to Salvation.⁸

BHIKHAN

Master's Word is pure ambrosia,
A draught of It quenches all thirst.⁹

GURU AMAR DAS

The treasure of the Word is the Water of Life
(Amrit),

Drink ye, my brothers, to your hearts' fill.¹⁰

The Way to the Nectarian treasure of Word (Truth)
one finds through a saint,
Blessed are the saints who are ever devotedly in tune
with It.¹¹

GURU ARJAN

Amrit becomes manifest by devotion to the Master,
O Nanak! Shabd is the Nectar of Life,
And a rare devotee of the Master partakes of It.¹²

GURU RAM DAS

The Limitless Song (*Anhad Bani*) has an ambrosial
effect,

It lulls both the body and the mind to a quiet repose.¹³

GURU ARJAN

O Thou who makes manifest the elixir of Bani within,
I make an offering of myself to Thee,

For thou hast implanted in me the *Amrit Bani*
(Word) and I remain absorbed in the holy Naam.¹⁴

O God! wonderful are Thy ways and means,
The mind in the gyres can hardly understand them.
Thou hast attuned it with the delectable (Amrit)
Bani,

And the immortal ambrosial Word (Shabd) is now
fully manifest.¹⁵

GURU AMAR DAS

Those who are proud of Thy Naam are completely
saturated with it,
O Nanak! there is but one Amrit (Nectar) and none
besides It.¹⁶

GURU ANGAD

The Naam of Hari is the elixir and a draught of It
makes one contented.

O Nanak! he who drinks of It escapes all delusion.¹⁷

GURU AMAR DAS

Whoever deals in the wealth of Naam
Lives on the everlasting manna of life.¹⁹

GURU ARJAN

The Word of the Master is extremely sweet,
Such an elixir one finds within,
Whosoever tastes of It, gets perfected,
O Nanak! such a one remains in perpetual bliss.¹⁸

GURU NANAK

The Word of the Master is the Water of Life,
To drink It is to quench all thirst.
The mind verily gets drenched in Truth,
And always remains absorbed in Truth.²⁰

GURU AMAR DAS

The riches of Word (Truth) one gets through the
grace of a Master,
Blessed are the saints who are ever in tune with It.²¹

GURU ARJAN

Amrit is often used for Hari (God), Hari Kirtan (the Divine Song) and Maha Ras (exhilarating vintage). He alone gets out of desires who engages in the Word. Hari is the fruit of the Tree of Life (Amrit-phal) and is a gift from God.

False are all the designs and colors that we see,
A drop of the Water of Life is a blessing that comes
from a Sadhu.²²

GURU ARJAN

Hari Naam alone is Amrit; commune ye with It
through the grace of a Master,
Hari Naam is All-pure; a contact with It ends pain
and sorrow.²³

GURU RAM DAS

A rare soul drinks the cup of divine vintage (Hari
Ras),
O Nanak, he gets the reward of the Divine Word and
thereafter lives by It.²⁴

GURU ARJAN

I sacrifice my all on Him, who implanted the life-
giving Naam in me,
The ambrosia of Naam is supremely sweet,
One drinks of It by the direction and Will of the
Master.²⁵

GURU AMAR DAS

The scriptures tell us that what we call Amrit or the Water of Life is just the same thing as Naam or the Word. A touch with this divine vintage gives God-intoxication:

Those who wholly depend on Thy Naam, are completely dyed in Thy color,
O Nanak! there is only one exhilarating vintage and no other.²⁶

GURU ANGAD

In this age of Kali Yuga, there is no other Wine but of Amrit.

God's Naam is Amrit in the present Kali age,
This wealth one may get by devotion to a Sadhu.²⁷

GURU ARJAN

Amrit is Sound Principle

Amrit is Divine Harmony, and is reverberating all the time everywhere. It is the Bread of Life (Manna or Heavenly Food) on which the spirit feeds and thrives.

With the meeting of the Satguru, the ever-restless
mind gets steady and one finds the tenth door,
There the Melody divine—the Bread of Life—holds
the universe tight,
Countless are the strains and endless, ever saturated
in Truth,
O Nanak! the contact thereto comes through a God-
man alone,
No more the wild goose chase, for Homeward one is
led.²⁸

GURU AMAR DAS

A disciplined soul makes one self-disciplined and
contented he becomes,
Absorption in the Master awakens the inner Music
of the soul;
By drinking the Nectar divine, one is contented and
rises in His Presence,
Listen ye to the great Music of the harp and taste It
night and day,
A rare soul alone understands It through the Master's
grace.²⁹

GURU NANAK

Amrit is Light Principle

The vision-center behind and between the two eyes, if

and when directed steadily toward Gagan (inner horizon), gradually gets lighted up. It starts with flashes as from lightning and in course of time makes manifest a starry sky, and the Sun and the Moon come to view besides several other lighted scenes. When the spirit transcends all these and enters *Trikuti*, the headquarters of the subtle region, there she beholds the Sun of Brahmand and beyond Brahmand, the Moon of Par Brahmand Region. We come across frequent references to the higher spiritual phenomena in the writings of Sant Tulsi Sahib and many others.

Blessed indeed is the Ambrosial Sound of God, the contact whereof comes through the grace of the Master;

The darkness is dispelled and one gets enlightenment just as the Sun chases away the darkness of the night;

Then one sees the otherwise Invisible, the Inexpressible and the Unfathomable One, as explained by the Master.³⁰

GURU RAM DAS

Wondrous sweet is the Nectarean Voice of the Master,
Fortune may favor a rare soul to relish It.

Light within, one quaffs the quintessence Divine,
And hears the True Sound at the seat of the soul.³¹

GURU AMAR DAS

Pure is the Light and *Soma* Juice is the Word,
A contact with them grants a selfless life of everlasting bliss.³²

GURU ARJAN

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.³³

ST. PAUL

Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my Path.³⁴

THE PSALMS

Amrit: Its location

The divine ambrosia can be had by inversion and not anywhere in the world outside. One can find It only if one transcends into the spiritual regions above the physical body. A draught of the Water of Immortality is enough to grant life everlasting to the individual. In order to reach the Hauz-i-Kausar or the pool of nectar, one has to dig deep into the human self.

The human body is the temple of God wherein dwell both the soul and the Over-soul. This temple has quite a number of instruments through which the Self within works in the physical plane without. These instruments may be likened to doors and windows through which the soul and the mind go out into the world in search of worldly pleasures. But the soul itself is imprisoned in the body and knows no way to escape therefrom. The body has nine visible portals: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, rectum and the generative organ. So long as the spirit remains absorbed in the sensory pleasures, it cannot have an access to the Heavenly regions and, therefore, cannot taste the elixir of life. Besides these nine outlets there is a hidden spring-door behind the center of the eyes. When the spirit, by means of concentration, is gathered up at this center, it becomes qualified for ingress into higher realms with all the spiritual heritage therein.

A whore of spirit that delights in the nine sense organs does not get to the wondrous Reality,

Kabir therefore saith: all the nine chambers lie deserted—Essence is only in the tenth.³⁵

KABIR

The nine portals lead to naught—nectar may be sipped at the tenth.³⁶

The Master manifests the Water of Life at the tenth gate,

And listening to the Divine Music, one is led to stillness absolute.³⁷

GURU RAM DAS

There is hardly any need now to search without, when the Master has shown the Reality within;

The Unending Music swells in the tenth chamber, there one realizes the ambrosial Word.³⁸

GURU ARJAN

The nectar of Divine Harmony is in the human body, and whoever delves for It, gets It within. All outer activities on the plane of the senses, like pilgrimages, penances and fasts, rites and rituals, forms and formularies, are of no avail. In this Path, one has to lose himself before he can rediscover himself.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.³⁹

CHRIST

It means that one can have life eternal only when one learns and practices the art and science of death-in-life by rising above the body-consciousness at will. This is the only Way to get the Water of Immortality and there is none besides it.

The Naam or the Word is the bestower of all gifts, And It ever abides in the human body.⁴⁰

GURU ARJAN

Everyone is endowed with the Water of Life,
None but the destined one can drink It.¹⁴

KABIR

The fountain of Amrit is bubbling over,
One can have a taste of It through the Word of God.⁴²

Like musk in the deer is hid the nectar within,
And like the deer a mad search is made without.⁴³

GURU AMAR DAS

A Sufi saint says,

Beloved is in the house and I make a search in the
world,

With a spring of crystal water within, I go athirst.

Inside the head, there is an inverted well with an opening behind the eyes. A current of nectar issuing forth from the well is coming into the body; but the unfortunate spirit, ever busy in the outer pursuits of the world, is not destined to have a taste of It and so continues in sorrow.

Everything of any value is in the body and nothing is without. Whoever has, through the grace of the Master, found the treasures within, is indeed blessed and enjoys true happiness both within and without. He drinks the ambrosial showers as they fall and is ever in a state of blissful intoxication. The Way to It, however, lies through some Master-saint, and the spirit, torn away from her source ever since the day of creation, is once again reconciled with her Creator and lives in perpetual peace and beatitude.

Everything is within and nothing without,
He who searches without is yet in ignorance.
He who finds it within himself through a Master-soul,
Ever lives in a state of bliss and beatitude.
The Amrit falls down in a big shower,

And the mind enjoys the Sound Current.
 Night and day he lives in perfect satiety,
 And sings the praises of God.
 The aeons of separation come to an end,
 And the blighted tree once again blossoms forth.
 Gifted with right knowledge, he revels in Naam,
 All hail to the Master! that brought this about.⁴⁴

GURU ARJAN

The pool of nectar lies in the folds of the mind; it is only when the mind grows still that it becomes manifest. A contact with Naam grants eternal life.

O Nanak! drink within the elixir of life as a pure gift
 of the Guru,
 He alone takes in the divine drink, who is destined
 from above.⁴⁵

GURU ANGAD

The mind must first be purged of all ills, before one can receive the life-giving ambrosia.

Through instructions of the Master, the mind becomes
 pure,
 And then the sacred pool comes to view.⁴⁶

GURU AMAR DAS

Who can taste this Nectar

From the writings of the Masters it appears that one cannot taste this nectar until one learns to die while alive. One has, therefore, to "forsake the flesh for the spirit"⁴⁷ for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God."⁴⁸

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself,
 And take up his cross daily and follow me.
 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it,

But whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.⁴⁹

CHRIST

We have been leading a physical existence only. We know how to live on the physical plane and that we do with the help of our physical senses. We have never known that there is anything beyond and that we have senses subtle and causal, apart from the physical, and can make use of them by transcending the physical plane. There are tremendous possibilities in man, fashioned as he is in the image of God, but alas! in the mighty swirl of mind and matter we have lost hold of the lifeline within and are drifting headlong in the stream of life with no anchorage. A Master-saint is the only refuge and a haven where one may for a while have a respite and time to think over his sad plight. And how does the Master help here? He shows one how to leave the body by withdrawing the sensory currents at the seat of the soul. This transcension of the physical body is called "death-in-life." It is the Open Sesame that unlocks the door leading into the Kingdom of God.

If thou wishest to have everlasting life,
Learn thou to die in the body, before death overtakes thee.

MAULANA RUMI

He who knows how to die while living drinks Amrit
(the Water of Life),
My mind is convinced of the need and is devoted to
the Master's instructions.⁵⁰

GURU RAM DAS

Learn to die while alive, for in the end death overtakes all.

BABA FARID

Learn how to die that you may begin to live.

THOMAS A KEMPIS

Remember ye the Naam and love the Lord unceasingly,

Live in constant devotion to God's elect.

Those who live-in-death, drink the Water of Life,
And their minds get absorbed through the instruction
of the Master.⁵¹

GURU RAM DAS

Drink ye the Water of Life—a pure gift from the
Master,

With an easy death, ye shall rise in eternal life.⁵²

GURU NANAK

Spiritual Comfort is God's free gift and not of our own merit. It comes only through the grace of some Godman. He is the "Way, the Truth, and the Life." The absorption in the Master alone helps one to gain the pool of nectar within and this is called a second birth or resurrection.

Amrit: How one gets It

(i) Through the Grace of God:

God's Word is the Water of Life,

One gets It through His grace.

Remember God every moment of your life,

And make this your constant practice.⁵³

GURU ARJAN

Everyone sows his field, but blessed are such as God approves of,

With the help of the Master is sown the seed of divine Nectar,

And then one gets the fruit of the Tree of Life (Amrit).⁵⁴

GURU RAM DAS

- (ii) Through preordination. By one's good deeds one may get Amrit within, if so ordained.

One with earned merit in the past ages may by pre-ordination find Nectar within,

Highly blessed is God's Word; one may taste of It through the instructions of the Master.⁵⁵

GURU RAM DAS

- (iii) Through devotion to Satguru. Amrit is all pervading in Its fullness, but we can hardly taste It on the plane of the senses.

Water, water everywhere,
But not a drop to drink.

Amrit is much sought after; even the gods and goddesses are in search of It, but one can partake of It only through the grace of the Master.

Amrit, which is sought after by Rishis, Munis and gods, that I have found with the aid of the Master, I have got Amrit through the Master's grace and Truth is now implanted within me.⁵⁶

GURU AMAR DAS

One cannot by his own unaided efforts get to the Hauz-i-Kausar or the Fountain of Life. For this purpose we have of necessity to seek the aid of a living Master who has for himself found this Fountainhead and is competent to lead others to it.

And he showed me a pure river of Water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.⁵⁷

ST. JOHN

The sovereign remedy of Naam lies in the pool of the crystal clear Waters of Life which one gets by the grace of the Master,

Nanak therefore saith: one preordained to get It meets
a Master and thereby says goodbye to his ills.⁵⁸

The elixir of life (Amrit) one gets from a Master,
And thereafter he lives by the bread of the holy Word,
All patterns, all colors and all designs are from Him,
A rare soul, O Nanak! lives by this Amrit.⁵⁹

O my Master! I would like to be a sacrifice unto Thee,
Thy very sight is a great bliss, for Thou out of com-
passion hast given me the elixir of Naam.⁶⁰

GURU ARJAN

God Himself directs and grants communion with His
holy Word,
By His grace one meets the Master and drinks of the
ambrosia (Amrit).⁶¹

Shabd is Amrit and Bani, the Voice of God, as well;
By devotion to the Master, It has become audible.⁶²

GURU AMAR DAS

(iv) By acceptance of Master's Will and command-
ments.

If ye love me keep my commandments.⁶³

CHRIST

O mind! lead a life acceptable to the Master,
For He shall lead thee to thy Native Home,
And grant thee the Water of Life to quench thy thirst,
And all comforts and blessings shall be thine.⁶⁴

The gift of elixir depends on the sweet Will and
Pleasure of the Master,
A rare soul may get It without much effort.⁶⁵

GURU AMAR DAS

In the company of the saints ye partake of the pre-
cious Amrit.⁶⁶

GURU RAM DAS

A drop of the divine vintage is a great blessing,
You can drink of It through some *Sadh*.⁶⁷

O Nanak! he alone lives who practices the Naam,
And partakes of the Water of Life with saints.⁶⁸

GURU ARJAN

Amrit in Its fullness abides in a saint, and His glance of
grace is enough to transform a person.

Satguru is Amrit incarnate for He is one with Hari
(God),

O Nanak! one remembers God through grace and
finds Him through the Master.⁶⁹

GURU AMAR DAS

Satguru is the pool of nectar and a blessed soul dips
into It,

And gets cleansed of the dirt of ages and communes
with the pure Naam.⁷⁰

GURU RAM DAS

Man comes into the world just to find the river of the
Water of Life and this he can do through a Master-soul.
But all orders and sects based on outer observances are a
source of sorrow, duality and affliction, and one cannot
reach the Fountain of Life through such practices. With-
out the Amrit of Naam, nothing is of any avail, and who-
ever gets entangled in them cannot find a way out.

The precious Water of Life for which you came into
the world you can get from a Master-saint,

Rise above all thoughts of distinctive labels of various
religious and clerical orders,

Cast aside all raiments and rituals as also all cunning
and cleverness and mental oscillations,

These shall avail thee not on this Path.⁷¹

GURU NANAK

Amrit: who can get It

Out of millions of devotees, only a rare one who sits at the feet of a living Master gets contact with the elixir of life.

God alone grants the heavenly ambrosia,
A rare soul out of myriads may get It.⁷²

Verily, verily the Amrit showers from above,
But a rare devotee partakes of It,
The mind blossoms forth and sings of His glory.⁷³

GURU AMAR DAS

A devotee of the Master engages in the pursuit,
And finds the Amrit and becomes truly blessed,
O Man! commune with the Naam day and night,
Thou shalt lose all impurities and become sanctified.⁷⁴

GURU NANAK

The divine Amrit falls down in showers,
A devotee through the grace of the All-pervading gets
It.⁷⁵

The enlivening story of God is truly sublime; we have
had a taste of it through the words of the Master;
Heaven's light dawned, dispelling all darkness, just
as sun chases away the night,
The Invisible, the Indescribable, and the Unknowable,
became manifest through the instructions of the
Master.⁷⁶

GURU RAM DAS

It is bubbling over in its fullness in the temple of the human body, but a man of the world cannot get access to it.

In the body lies the Fount of the Water of Life,
But a sensual person cannot have a taste of It.⁷⁷

GURU AMAR DAS

I would make an offering of myself at the feet of my
Master, who unraveled to me the great mystery,

The world without the Water of Life is but a wasteland, and a worldly-wise man does not even know of It.⁷⁸

GURU NANAK

Amrit: Its merits

The merits of Amrit are countless indeed. A contact with It renders all other joys and pleasures insipid and makes one a true renunciate.

No longer does he hunger and thirst for things of the world,
He sees Him as All-pervading, in the core of his heart;
Dyed in the color of Amrit, he renounces all and
revels in his Master and his teachings.⁷⁹

GURU NANAK

The Water of Life abides in each heart in Its richness. He who tastes of It knows Its exhilarating influence. Communion with the Power of God is union with God, and one becomes fearless even of death, the last enemy of man. Not only do they achieve freedom but many another along with them gets freed.

Those who relish It become fearless by saturating
themselves in the sweet elixir of Naam.
This one gets through the grace of God, and transcends
the realm of *Kal*.⁸⁰

GURU AMAR DAS

Amrit in Its fullness lies within,
Ye may relish It by an actual contact,
Thou hast cheated the whole world which is going
round and round;
He who follows the Master derives the greatest
benefit,
He who tastes of the true ambrosia is not molested by
death;
Not only does he achieve freedom,

But many another he puts on the Path.⁸¹

GURU RAM DAS

The wondrous gift of Amrit confers many supernatural powers on him who partakes of it, and grants peace and ecstasy. Through It one is rid of all pain and sorrow, doubt and skepticism, lusts and passions, and is freed from the most ancient malady of egotism; and all desires and cravings fall off like dry leaves as if by an enchanter driven. The mind too gets steady and rarefied. Ultimately one gains salvation and attains to the state of Sehaj, and is honored in the Presence of God.

From the teachings of the Masters, who laid great emphasis on communion with Him, it is clear that Amrit is nothing but Naam, Shabd or Word, and this Pool of Nectar lies within each one of us but becomes manifest only through a glance of grace from some true Saint who enables us to partake of It.

Amongst the Sikhs there is the practice of preparing "amrit" with the help of a sword. By a careful study of the matter we realize that this too is in fact prepared with the help of Naam or Bani. The consciousness is first turned inward so as to contact the Inner Sound Principle, and then as it comes down saturated in the divine it is turned without, converting the preparation into an Amrit. It is only a competent Master (a true Khalsa with full refulgent light in him) who can, by his glance of grace, prepare the Amrit, and whoever partakes of It becomes truly intuned. A saint with eyes bubbling over with divine intoxication can in an instant take one to the mount of transfiguration and make him into a saint.

A glance of grace from a saint makes thee a saint.⁸²

GURU ARJAN

One can drink of the divine Nectar through the grace of a Satguru, and truly blessed are they who get an access thereto: they rise into the light of Universal Consciousness and gain salvation from the endless wheel of births and deaths, and live in perpetual ecstasy enjoying His beatitude.

By drinking of the ambrosia one lives forever,
 By communion with the Lord, one is ever in a state
 of bliss;
 While in the world one remains in contentment without any cares and anxieties;
 Let the mind and soul be intoxicated by the sweet fragrance of the lotus feet of God,
 Nanak says: O Lord! I am ever devoted to such as
Chatrak feels exhilarated by the rain drop.⁸⁸

GURU ARJAN

BOOK FOUR

Kirtan

Celestial Music or Divine Harmony

Kirtan

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

DRYDEN

ORDINARILY, when the hymns of the saints are sung with accompaniment by musical instruments, it is called "Kirtan." This music—vocal or instrumental—has a great appeal to the mind because of its power of attraction. It does for a while produce stillness in the mind and the subtle faculties.

Instrumental or vocal music plays an important part in almost all religious congregations of Yogins, Hindus, Sufis, Christians and Sikhs.

Each one of us is attracted by one or the other of two things: beautiful forms or patterns, or sweet music; and the latter is far more magnetic than the former. It has a gripping influence on all living creatures. Take for instance the fleet-footed stag, the antlered monarch; no steed can compete with him in speed. But he is entrapped and captured by huntsmen by the power of music. The hunter blows his horn and the stag attracted by it, quickly surrenders himself before the power of music. Similarly, the poisonous snake, for the time being, forgets his nature under the influence of the snake charmer's vina, and spends the rest of his life shut up in a basket. The effect of music on human beings is also tremendous, but one feels enraptured only as long as the music lasts; one does not get beyond the emotional influence and remains in the elemental sphere.

From the study of the sacred lore and the teachings of the Masters, we learn that the Inner Music of the Soul or the Sound Current or Harmony is ceaselessly going on in each individual and can, if contacted and listened to attentively, lead to ultimate salvation. This Dhun is described in the Granth Sahib as Akhand Kirtan or Unending Harmony.

In this age know ye that Shabd is the Kirtan;
Devotion to Shabd dispels all egotism.¹

GURU AMAR DAS

The blessed Naam is the veritable Kirtan of the Lord
in the *Kali Yuga* (the Iron Age) and is the essence
of all devotion,
One can engage in Kirtan of Hari Naam through the
teachings of the Master.²

GURU RAM DAS

The Kirtan or Naam or Shabd is the only means to spiritual advancement. The reverberation of this Kirtan is all-pervading and all-embracing, but It becomes manifest only when one, by a process of practical self-analysis and inversion, rises above body-consciousness. It is characterized by a "Dhun" (Musical Sound), the experience whereof one gets in the Sukhman or Shahrag, the central chord in the forehead.

The Music of *Sehaj* playing at Thy door doth become
manifest in my forehead.³

KABIR

In this Iron Age, the last in the series of cyclic ages, there is no other spiritual practice as fruitful and effective as Kirtan or Naam or Hari Kirtan, and this is the be-all and end-all of all types of religious and meritorious deeds.

In the Fourth Age, O Man! Naam is a priceless treasure;
 Repetition, strict disciplines and pilgrimages suited
 the earlier ages,
 In this age, Kirtan of Hari Naam is the sovereign
 remedy.⁴

GURU AMAR DAS

This is the season of *Hari Kirtan*
 And Hari Naam is the highest devotion,
 O, sow thy farm with the seeds of Hari Naam,
 The sowing of all other seeds will be of no avail,
 A sheer waste of time and of labor.⁵

GURU RAM DAS

One can get a living contact or touch with this Kirtan
 through the grace of some Master-soul.

The crest-jewel of Ram Naam Kirtan (the Divine
 Melody) is with the Master,
 And he who follows the Master's teachings, the
 Master makes that manifest to him.⁶

GURU RAM DAS

In the scriptures, it is stated that those alone can practice
 and commune with Hari Kirtan who come in close contact
 with some Master-soul. It is by devotion to the Master that
 one can contact the Grand Harmony.

He who is devoted to a Satguru,
 Is ever engaged in Hari Kirtan.⁷

GURU AMAR DAS

From the day a person comes in close touch with a
Sadhu, he takes a turn for the better,
 Ever in bliss, he engages in Kirtan and comes close
 to the Creator and Designer of destinies.⁸

GURU ARJAN

In this age Hari Kirtan is the highest discipline, for
 one meets Hari through the Satguru;

I shall offer myself as a sacrifice to my Master, for it
is He who has manifested in me the hidden Word.⁹

GURU RAM DAS

He gets the Food of Unending Kirtan,
Whoever, O Nanak! meets a competent Master.¹⁰

Blessed is he who serves the saints,
Through saints one engages in Hari Kirtan.¹¹

Through a saint one gets into touch with the Naam,
Through a saint one sings the Hari Kirtan.¹²

Through a Sadh one sings the Hari Kirtan;
Nanak saith—blessed soul gets It.¹³

Through a Sadh, I have got the merit of Kirtan,
The Path of death has faded away from my ken.¹⁴

GURU ARJAN

I have got love for the lotus feet of the Lord,
Through a saint, the mind has become purified,
And I am ever engaged in the Kirtan (Song) of
Hari.¹⁵

KABIR

The mind is dyed in the elixir of Naam and is fully
satiated,
And through the grace of a saint, sings the Song
Divine (Kirtan),
And the Imperishable dwells therein.¹⁶

Through a Sadh, one delights in the holy Music, in
this age,
O Nanak! hereafter, he does not return to this world.¹⁷

GURU ARJAN

They who follow the Satguru ever listen to the holy
Harmony,
The elixir of the Word abides in them and they get
absorbed in the True Sound.¹⁸

GURU AMAR DAS

The holy Music comes from a Sadhu and communion
 with It is the highest virtue,
 Nanak saith: he who is preordained alone gets this
 gift.¹⁹

GURU ARJAN

The Hari Kirtan is a pure gift from the Master and one cannot merit It until one transcends the body. Just as a lodestone attracts a piece of iron, similarly the Dhun or the Word emanating from Godhead attracts the soul and pulls her up to the feet of the Lord. The human mind is always hankering after pleasures of one sort or another, but no worldly pleasure can secure for it any degree of salvation. The only remedy for stilling and subduing the mind is Hari Kirtan or Naam, hearing which this hydra-headed serpent gets intoxicated as it were by some magic potion, and lies still as if in a death-trance, unmindful of the sensory organs through which it usually works. Whoever has subjugated his mind has had to do so by means of Hari Kirtan or Naam. With It soul is roused from age-long slumber and rises into cosmic and super-cosmic awareness. This is a new birth, the birth of spirit, called regeneration or resurrection. Henceforth the spirit escapes from the network of Karmic impressions, which get singed and are rendered infructuous. It restores the Kingdom of God to the spirit and grants her everlasting peace and salvation.

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will
 I put within you.²⁰

EZEKIEL

The manifestation of the Sound Current then depends upon the sweet Will and Pleasure of a Master-saint, and one cannot contact It until one transcends the sensory

plane of the physical body. This is the only Way to salvation from the bondage of mind and matter; there is no other Way.

All ecstatic gesticulations and chanting of songs are of
no avail to one blind and deaf,
Full of greed and scepticism within, he cannot have
Heaven's Light to guide him on the Path.²¹

GURU AMAR DAS

While engaged in sinful pursuits one sings Ragas
(songs)

And bears testimony to the truth of what they say,
Little knowing that without the Word all is a farce.²²

GURU NANAK

The merits of Kirtan

Kirtan is highly efficacious both here and hereafter.

O dear self, engage in such a Kirtan,
That may be of use to thee here and hereafter.²³

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan purifies one of all feelings of envy, hatred and enmity.

The devotees of the Master who listen to the divine
Song (Kirtan),
Their minds get purified of ill-will and envy.²⁴

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan is a potent remedy for removing all ills and afflictions—physical, mental and accidental.

The Merciful God has in His mercy removed all
doubts and distrust,
O Nanak! through the holy Song I am in bliss, freed
from all sorrow.²⁵

One who sings the celestial strains,
He is never in pain, sorrow and affliction.²⁶

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan frees one from all the deadly sins and lusts of the flesh.

Sing the perfect Melody, the bestower of all bliss and
destroyer of ills,
The Melody is sharper than the two-edged sword,
And kills the deadly sins of lust, passion, greed,
attachment and egotism.²⁷

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan awakens one from a long-drawn sleep of ages upon
ages.

Engaged in devotion one takes to the Divine Song,
And is awakened from the long-drawn slumber of
ages.²⁸

One discards the lust for other's wealth, flesh and
blood,
When through the grace of the Master, he awakens by
the holy Sound.²⁹

Do such actions as would not contaminate thee,
The mind will awaken to Reality by listening to the
divine Melody (*Harkirtan*).³⁰

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan gives immunity from the grip of death.

"Approach not," says *Yama* (the Lord of Death) to
his messengers,
"The place where a Sadhu dwells or the Holy Word
reverberates, or else we shall all be doomed."³¹

He in whom the Lord's Song abides,
He is freed from all sorrows, ills and afflictions,
And the fear of death.³²

He who sings the Song Divine,
The angel of death affects him not.³³

The minions of death cannot come near him,
Who sings the Song Divine in company of the
Master.³⁴

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan grants perfect peace, satiety and bliss.

The devotee is ever in a state of intoxication,
The Lord had mercy and I got dyed in the color of
His Song.³⁵

O Nanak! God has made a slave of me,
I now live and enjoy the divine glory.³⁶

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan is acceptable to God, and man has his wishes fulfilled.

Absorption in the sweet melodies of Music Divine
(Kirtan, Rag, Nag and Dhun) is the goal of my life.
O Nanak, It is acceptable to God and one gets his
desires fulfilled.³⁷

Communion with God ends the cycle of transmigra-
tion,
One becomes acceptable even while living,
And engages in the Divine Music of the Lord.³⁸

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan holds priority over all religious practices.

O Nanak! engage in Hari Kirtan, for that verily is the
true religion.³⁹

GURU ARJAN

In infinite compassion, the saints gave out,

One gets the merit of all religions by listening to the
divine Melody.⁴⁰

GURU TEG BAHADUR

Kirtan is the True Yoga.

Thy Word is the cause of all this creation,
Listening to the Kirtan is a veritable yoga.⁴¹

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan is the Saving Lifeline for all.

The mind gets disciplined through Hari Kirtan (the
Song of the Lord);
Whoever sings of the Lord, hears or repeats His
praises, is surely saved.⁴²

As the Master taught me so do I declare,
Listen ye to what Nanak saith:
It is by Kirtan alone that one is saved.⁴³

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan steadies and stills the mind.

What the Word that keeps one spellbound?
What the Way that takes one above pleasure and pain?
What the Path that leads into the Beyond (Par
Brahm)?
What the Discipline that contacts the holy Harmony?
The devotee of the Master leads a life that may help
him to reach the Beyond (Par Brahm),
And he constantly recites the Divine Song.⁴⁴

GURU RAM DAS

The seeker asks for but one gift,
If it so pleases the Lord, He may have mercy,
Grant me Thy glance of grace that may quell the
mind and fill it with Song Divine.⁴⁵

GURU ARJAN

BOOK FIVE

Bani and Gurbani
Scriptures and Inner Music

Bani and Gurbani

THE term Bani is rather difficult to define and to understand; its significance goes far deeper than is commonly supposed. In common parlance it means words that we read, write or speak. But saints have used it with an altogether different meaning. Ordinarily there is not much difference in the terms Bani, Shabd and Naam, for the three are used interchangeably to denote one and the same thing.

Bani or Naam is of two kinds: Varan Atmak and Dhun Atmak. The former is an outward expression of inner feelings by means of words through reading, writing or speaking; and the other is the Inner Sound Principle or Sound Current.

Varan Atmak Bani

Varan Atmak Bani can be classified into four subdivisions: Baikhri, Madhma, Pashyanti and Pra.

Baikhri: These are labial sounds or sounds which are uttered with the aid of tongue and lips.

Madhma: These are guttural sounds which are produced in the throat or at the back or root of the tongue and palate.

Pashyanti: These are sounds which originate from the heart center.

Pra: These are sounds which arise through vibrations from the navel center.

These four types of sounds or words are related in one or another form with the six physical ganglionic centers, and have nothing to do with Naam or the Word or Logos, which is contacted above the six ganglions, is capable of granting salvation, and is technically called Dhun Atmak Bani or the Eternal Sound Current, the source of God's Light and Life Principles. It is, in fact, the Eternal and Unchangeable Voice of God.

The Water of Life is given by the Saiguru,
It is made manifest at the tenth door,
There the *Dhun Bani* reverberates without an end,
And leads one to the state of *Sehaj*.¹

GURU RAM DAS

The five strains commingling forth produce sweet
Harmony.

The Bani flows in unending streams all the time.²

GURU ARJAN

There are four different forms* of Thy creation and
four various modes of speech;
But apart from Naam, one wanders without a lead.

GURU AMAR DAS

The entire creation expresses itself in one or another kind of Varan Atmak sound and not in the Dhun Atmak and as such wanders about restlessly in the giant wheel of life.

The Varan Atmak language is also known as the language of the Pranas or the vital airs for it depends on different types of vibrations in the air; but as said above, it leads to a wilderness with no way out.

* According to the Hindu scriptures, there are four types of created beings, classified according to the manner of birth: *Setaj*, or moisture-born; *Uttbhuj*, or seed-born; *Andaj*, or egg-born; and *Jeraj*, or womb-born. The Masters make frequent use of such concepts and doctrines from ancient Hindu lore, but they refer to them not necessarily in a spirit of scientific truth, but as divine poets, who employ allusion and mythology to drive the point home.

We speak and hear the airy language,
And the mind gets entangled in oblivion.³

GURU NANAK

Dhun Atmak Bani

This is the Eternal Sound Current reverberating endlessly in every living thing. It is an Unwritten Law and an Unspoken Language. It is above the ken of elements and the six chakras. It becomes audible, however, when a spirit rises above body-consciousness. In Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scriptures of the Sikhs, this Sound Principle is generally referred to as Naam down to Trikuti; and below Daswan Dwar, where the causal region extends, It is called the Trigun Bani, or Sound within the regions of the three gunas. It is also described as Brahm Janjalla, the network of Brahm, the God of creation. This Trigun Bani or Brahm Janjalla is still within the domain of Kal or Dissolution and hence must disintegrate. Kabir Sahib says:

Japa (oral), *Ajapa* (soundless) and *Anhad* (the limitless Sound), all have an end,
The Surat when absorbed in Shabd alone escapes.

Guru Amar Das says,

The Bani that is within the three gunas is a great network of the Creator (Brahma);
It keeps on talking, reasoning and thinking within the realm of *Kal*.⁴

The Sound Current beyond the reach of Kal is known as Sar Shabd, described as Sachi Bani or True Word, and it alone is the real Life Current or Life Chord capable of linking the spirit or soul with the Oversoul.

The Word of the Master is an elixir True,
O Nanak! through the Word, one can cross over.⁵

The True Word bursts asunder the three-fold egg,
O Nanak! It is the Saviour that saves all.⁶

GURU NANAK

He Himself draws in and absorbs, making the spirit
neat and clean,
He is Truth, True is His Sound that effects the Union
True.⁷

Wonderful indeed is the Bani that unites one with
Truth,
Nanak saturated in that wondrous wonder, has met
the Lord;
One gets to it only through great good fortune.⁸

He alone meets God whom God so ordains,
And in him the True Bani manifests as Shabd,
O Nanak! then one ever sings of the virtues of the
True One,
And so singing gets truly absorbed in them.⁹

The fearless Donor comes to reside in the mind,
And the True Bani descends in the heart of a rare
fortunate soul.¹⁰

The fortunate with a virtuous past alone meets a
Master-soul,
And the Word of the Master makes the True Bani
manifest.¹¹

The elixir of *Guru's Bani* is delectably sweet,
A rare disciple of the Master may taste of It.¹²

GURU AMAR DAS

The endless Bani may be manifested by a Master.
He who listens to It is perpetually blessed,
And all comforts come unto him as a pure gift.¹³

GURU ARJAN

Rare souls alone get absorbed in the Bani through the
grace of a Master,

The Bani of the Lord takes one to the Eternal Home
of the Father.¹⁴

GURU NANAK

True is the Shabd and True the Bani,
A devotee of the Master reaches It, and sings of It
in every age.¹⁵

GURU AMAR DAS

This does not mean that whatever the Saints utter by word of mouth has no value and is ineffectual. On the contrary, it means that of all the Varan Atmak words and sounds, these occupy the highest place, for the flow of their words comes from out of the inexhaustible fund or reservoir at the back of all Fuqra-i-Kamil or Master-souls, and they speak of nothing but what they actually see and experience in the depth of their soul. Their words are worth tons of gold and emeralds for the seekers after Truth. They do not speak at the intellectual level, but their words well out of themselves and are charged with inner inspiration, and carry in them the weight of conviction.

Whatever comes to me from the Father,
That do I utter, O Lalo.¹⁶

GURU NANAK

When a Sadh opens his mouth,
A veritable nectar-spring burst forth.¹⁷

GURU ARJAN

The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His Word
was in my tongue.¹⁸

KING DAVID

Holy men of God spake as They were moved by the
Holy Ghost.¹⁹

ST. PETER

Lowly Nanak speaks out only when he is bidden to do so.²⁰

GURU ARJAN

The writings of the saints are wonderful and valuable records of their spiritual experiences and serve the pilgrims as guide-posts on the Path of spirituality.

Except the words of the Master, nothing is up to the mark,

All the writings and sayings are verily imperfect,
Imperfect is the speaker and imperfect will remain the listener as the words come out of the imperfect.²¹

GURU AMAR DAS

O ye the disciples of the Master, sing the Naam eternally, for God Himself makes It manifest through a Godman,

Believe ye the words (*Bani*) of the Master as really true,

It is only God who speaks through the human pole.²²

Blessed is the devotee of the Lord and blessed are the words (*Bani*) he utters for the good of mankind, He who attends to His discourse in all sincerity, God Himself helps him through.²³

GURU RAM DAS

The words (*Bani*) of the Sadh are ambrosial,
Whoever puts them into practice, reaches the goal and always speaks of the Word.²⁴

GURU ARJAN

The words (*Bani*) of the devotee are divine,
He presents the Eternal Truth in varied forms,
Blessed is such a life, for not only does he attain salvation but many another through him.²⁵

GURU RAM DAS

The writings and discourses of the Saints point out to us the True *Bani*, which is the very life of the creation and

grants Nirvana or salvation. It is the actual Truth, the Formless and Absolute, *Sehaj Katha* (the Perennial Language), *Akath Katha* (the Unspoken Language). It is the Voice of God, self-flowing Nectar, call it Naam or Shabd, Word, Amrit or Logos, Kalma or *Bang-i-Illahi*, or *Sruti*. It is the source and spirit of the creation; It is the very life and light, self-luminous, shadowless and eternally radiant.

The Word of the Master is a sweet Harmony (Bani)
And sings of Hari Naam day and night,
The True Lord abides in the core of the heart,
A heart like this is pure indeed.²⁶

Bani or Shabd is verily the Great Truth, O! love them
with all your heart;
With the Word or Naam dwelling inside, one is rid of
anger and egotism.²⁷

Shabd or Bani (Divine Music) is the Water of Life
(Amrit),
And comes to reside in one's soul when one follows
the instruction of the Master.²⁸

Engage ye in the True Bani, the True Melody and the
True Sound,
To live always in Truth is fortunate indeed and
blessed is the one who does so.²⁹

GURU AMAR DAS

The *Jnana*, the meditation and the *Dhun Bani* (Inner
Music) are all one and describe the Indescribable,
The Word (Shabd) speaks of the True One but the
Word can be experienced through the Master.³⁰

GURU NANAK

Take mercy on me and accept me as Thy bondsman,
And snap all my bonds and take me out of the net,
Let me live always in the sweet remembrance of Thy
Word (Naam) or Thy Sound Principle (Bani),

Nanak Thy slave would gladly offer himself as a sacrifice unto Thee.³¹

The untold tale of the Voice of God (*Prabh Bani*) is the true Water of Life (Amrit);

Nanak says: a truly wise man lives in communion with Him (Bani).³²

How great His glory and life-giving His Bani (Sound Principle),

Let His Word (Naam) alone abide in my heart.³³

Listen ye the blessed one, to the sweet Music of the *Amrit Bani* (life-giving Sound Principle),

He who is so destined, in his heart alone It becomes manifest.³⁴

GURU ARJAN

In the Vedas we have a wonderful account of It. Vak Devi (the Divine Voice or Word) says:

All *Devas* (gods) have their abode in me, and I look after each one of them. I am the efficient and the material cause of the very creation and I am sustaining the same. I am Knowledge and Enlightenment.³⁵

RIG VEDA

Again,

I am the Creator of all regions and the demons and I am all-pervading like the Pranas or vital airs in all forms and bodies. I occupy all space and girdle the Universe in the form of ether. In fullness I exist here, there and everywhere, beyond the earth and sky with hosts of solar systems; and by the power of my inherent nature, they have assumed all forms and all colors.³⁶

ATHARVA VEDA

This Vak Devi or Bani is characterized by Dhun or Har-

mony, for It is Sound Principle, the primal manifestation of the Formless God (Kutastha).

The unstruck self-existing Sound (*Anhat Bani*) pours forth symphonies from the wondrous throne of God,

The Melody of that Sound bewitches me, O Lord.³⁷

Naam, Dhun or Bani is the manifestation of God, So say the Smritis, the Shastras and the Vedas.³⁸

GURU ARJAN

What is the signpost of the Abode of God?

There springs forth the perennial Harmony.³⁹

BENI JI

It is an Eternal Sound Principle not bound by time and space.

Everything rests in and is sustained by Sound;
In the four divisions of time,
This Sound Principle was ever heard;
Emanating from Truth, It speaks of Truth.⁴⁰

Sterling true is the Word (Sound Principle),
Godmen have manifested It in every age.⁴¹

GURU AMAR DAS

The True Sound (Bani) has been adored in all the four ages.

Everything is from that Truth and there is nothing besides Him.⁴²

The True Sound (Bani) has in all the four ages been described as the Water of Life,
With great good fortune, one preordained is taken to and rests in the Word (Naam).⁴³

I sing of the Lord, should the Lord be so pleased,
With the fragrant Word (Naam) and the Sound (Shabd) beating the core of my heart;

Gurbani (the Word of the Master) is heard reverberating on all sides,
Springing right from Truth, It ends in Truth.⁴⁴

Gurbani is Naad, Vedas and still more, and
The mind when saturated in It gets fully absorbed,
like Sarang in Water.⁴⁵

The wondrous Bani is from the Formless One,
And nothing outshines the glorious Bani.
Its extent and Its depth surpass all imagination,
For It is Truth Himself and naught else.⁴⁶

GURU AMAR DAS

Now the question is, where is this Sound Principle which has been reverberating throughout the four Yugas (divisions of time), and how can It be found out? Guru Nanak tells us,

The True Bani (Sound) is reverberating in the body,
Should the True One so ordain, one can know himself,
It is with the knowledge of the Self that the True One
becomes known, and Truth manifests Itself.⁴⁷

GURU AMAR DAS

The sweet Nectar of Thy Voice (Bani)
Abides in the heart of Thy devotees.⁴⁸

GURU NANAK

The tuneful trumpet of Thy doorway,
Sounds in the middle of my forehead.⁴⁹

KABIR

It is all-pervading both within and without for there is no place where It is not in Its fullness.

Thy Voice is both within and without,
Thou speakest and makest It manifest.⁵⁰

The Word of the Master (*Gur-ki-Bani*) resides in every heart,
He Himself manifests It and he does hear It.

Whoever communes with It is freed from bondage,
And goes to an Everlasting and Eternal region.⁵¹

GURU ARJAN

The Voice of God springs forth from the Light of God.
True devotion, therefore, lies in the worship of the Sound
Current, for It links man with God. Paltu Sahib says,

In the inverted well of the head there burns a lamp,
The lamp burns, but without any wick or oil.
Through six seasons and twelve months it burns night
and day,
But none may himself see the Light, except with the
Master's grace.

A Voice springs forth from within the lamp's flame,
In the stillness of the soul, one may hear the Voice,
O Paltu! blessed is the one that hears this Voice,
For in the inverted well of the head, there burns a
lamp.

PALTU SAHIB

The disenchanting mind is freed from illusions,
When it gets disciplined through communion with
Shabd;
From Heaven's Light within, there springs forth
Harmony,
Which keeps one absorbed in the True One.⁵²

GURU NANAK

The famous Decalogue or Ten Commandments that constitute the core of Mosaic Law was delivered to Moses in the midst of thunder and flame. The very creation lives by the Power of Naam or the Light and Sound of God.

Oh! the one life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motions and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere.

S. T. COLERIDGE

Saints tell us that the Sound Current is reverberating within Sukhman, the central channel between Ida and Pingla, the two side nerves in the middle of the forehead.

The True Voice of the Master adept,
Is heard in the Sukhman with mind at rest.⁵³

GURU AMAR DAS

It resides in each one of us, but only a Saint or a Master-soul can make It manifest to us:

Wonderful is the Voice of the perfect Master,
Manifested by the Master, It merges one in Truth.⁵⁴

By Practice of the True Word (*Sachi Bani*), one is
rid of all pains, sorrows and afflictions,
The devotees are ever in bliss through the favor of the
perfect Master.⁵⁵

GURU AMAR DAS

Through the instructions of the Master, the Bani is
made manifest within,
The True Word (*Sachi Bani*) sings the glory of
God.⁵⁶

GURU NANAK

Ambrosial is the Bani of the perfect Master,
In His mercy, He may make It manifest within,
No more doth one remain in the gyres,
But gets eternal peace and rest.⁵⁷

GURU ARJAN

When one gets It, he knows of It,
Without true *Jnana*, one knows naught,
Master's gift ever abides in the heart,
Bani then remains eternally manifested.⁵⁸

The Voice of God (*Bani*) arises from and leads back
unto Him,
His untold tale can be listened to in the Word made
manifest by the Master.⁵⁹

GURU AMAR DAS

One can know of the Voice of God through the grace of a perfect Master. It comes as a pure gift from the Master, and we cannot have It by any other means. Truly speaking, Guru is Word Personified, and each revels in abundance in the other. Guru Arjan addressed his Guru, "Glorious art Thou with Thy melodious Harmony."

The Word is the Master and the Master the Word
(Bani) personified.

In the Word lies the Pool of Nectar (Amritsar);
The devotee of the Master practices the Word,
And the living Master rescues him.⁶⁰

GURU RAM DAS

The above is clearly borne out by Bhai Gurdas when he says,

The Vedas and the scriptures are but handy aids to
the Master,
The Way to true salvation lies in His hands; and
Unless the Guru appears, one cannot see God.⁶¹

BHAI GURDAS

In Guru Granth Sahib, It is spoken of as Gupti Bani or the Hidden Voice, the Anhad Bani or the Limitless Voice, the Aghur Bani or the unspoken (unmanifest) Word.

The Hidden Voice becomes manifest.
O Nanak! only the True One knows of It.⁶²

GURU NANAK

Limitless is the treasure of Sound,
Godman holds the key to the Sound.⁶³

GURU ARJAN

With a true love for the Lord,
The unmanifest Word becomes manifest.⁶⁴

GURU NANAK

Bani: Its merits

1. It grants eternal peace and repose leading to salvation.

O Lord! Thy Word (Bani) is ambrosia or the Water of Life,

And by attuning to It, I am wafted Heavenward.⁶⁵

GURU ARJAN

2. It destroys the canker of egotism or I-ness.

A touch with the Unending Sound (Anhad Bani) destroys all I-ness,

Let me scrupulously obey my Master and be a sacrifice unto Him.⁶⁶

The Virtuous Word (*Nirmal Bani*) ever resides with the Formless One (*Nij Ghar*),

O Nanak! It destroys all thoughts of I-ness, and rids one of all illusion.⁶⁷

GURU AMAR DAS

3. It helps in acquiring self-knowledge and takes one beyond the Trigunatmac regions.

By losing oneself (in the Bani) one becomes all-knowing,

By attuning with the Word (Bani), one gets absorbed in Truth.⁶⁸

GURU NANAK

By devotion to the Master, one experiences the three worlds.

He becomes the knower of the Self and merges in the Lord.⁶⁹

GURU AMAR DAS

4. It washes off all sin and sorrow.

Pure is Bani and pure the Shabd,
And pure light resides in all.

The pure Bani sings of the glory of God,
And the practice of It washes off all sins.⁷⁰

GURU AMAR DAS

5. It vanquishes the deadly sins.

Oh! I have vanquished the deadly sins,
How delectably sweet is the Savior Word (Bani)!
Nanak says: the mind gets enlightened,
And one reaches the region of Pure Silence (Bliss).⁷¹

GURU ARJAN

6. It helps in all possible ways, sets everything in order
and grants bliss to body and mind.

By listening to the Voice of the All-pervading God
(*Bani Ram Naam*),
One's endeavors are crowned with success,
From the very pores of the Master's devotees spring
forth the Melodies of the Divine Harmony.⁷²

GURU RAM DAS

Without the aid of Bani, one remains in ignorance and
wanders in the wilderness of life, ever a prey to fears and
mental distress.

He does not know the Shabd nor apprehend the Bani,
A slave to the mind and the senses, he remains in
affliction and sorrow.⁷³

GURU AMAR DAS

This is why in the Guru Granth Sahib great stress is laid
on practice of the Bani.

Come ye the beloved disciples of the Master, sing the
True Bani,
Sing the Bani of the Master, a Bani which is the
crest jewel of all sounds.⁷⁴

GURU AMAR DAS

The Bani springs into being under the Command (Hukam) of the Most High and one can listen to the same under His Will.

Only if Thou will it, can I sing the Bani,
Only if Thou will it, can I express the Truth.⁷⁵

GURU ARJAN

Gurbani

Gurbani is not something separate from Bani. In fact, the two terms are synonyms. Since Bani is made manifest by the Guru, it is very often spoken of as Gurbani.

Gurbani is Heaven's Light for the entire world and serves as a beacon or lighthouse to the people in distress.

In the stormy sea of life, Gurbani (Master's Word)
is a powerful Lighthouse,
But one is guided by this Light only if so ordained.⁷⁶

GURU AMAR DAS

A contact with the Master's Word (Gurbani) purifies the mind and body of all impurities, mental and physical, and leads to the union of the little self with the Overself. Whoever practices the Word is saved from the clutches of death and regains the Kingdom of God.

In the treasurehouse of devotional practices, Gurbani
is a peerless gem,
By listening, singing and practicing (Gurbani), one
lives in a state of perpetual bliss.⁷⁷

GURU ARJAN

Gurbani is Naad, the Anhad Dhun or the Sound Principle.

Only if it please Thee, my Lord, may I sing of Thy
glory,
And within me shall dwell Thy Word, the fragrant
Naam,

And the reverberations of the Gurbani (Shabd) be
 heard in the four corners of the Universe,
 And thus all be absorbed in the True Naam.⁷⁸

GURU AMAR DAS

Gurbani is Naad, Vedas and still more,
 Mind absorbed in It gets full satiation.⁷⁹

GURU NANAK

O ye the beloved of the Lord, learn to know the Word
 of the Master (Satgur Bani),
 Evanescent as the fleeting clouds are both the bloom-
 ing youth and the aging body,
 Death may come like a thief in the night; engage ye
 in the Inner Music of the Soul.⁸⁰

GURU NANAK

BOOK SIX

Guru-Mantra

The Master's Word

Guru-Mantra

IN THE SIKH Scriptures we often come across terms like Gurbani, Bani, Shabd or Naam, all of which are synonyms. The Masters of the Highest Order are always concerned with Naam or Shabd, and they initiate seekers after Truth into Its significance, for It puts them on the Path Godward. Christ calls It Word or Logos, Holy Spirit or the Comforter through which we rediscover God in man and attain salvation.

Listen ye, O friend! the devotee of the Lord
Has given me the Word "Truth" as *Guru-Mantra*.¹

The Master has given me the Mantra of Hari Naam,
With this boon all my desires are fulfilled.²

GURU ARJAN

This Mantra of the Guru one may get by great good fortune.

The Word of the Master becomes manifest,
O Nanak! if it is so ordained by God.³

GURU ARJAN

This Word or Naam is characterized by Light and Sound. In fact, through the grace of the Master, It manifests Itself in each individual in the form of Heaven's Light, the Shadowless Light, Light that never is on sea or land, self-luminous and radiant Light that shines in darkness, Light that is more lustrous than that of thousands of suns put together. It is Heaven's Sovereign Light.

In utter darkness, the Master's Word (*Guru-Mantra*)
shines forth into Light,

In the company of the Master, all are rescued and saved.⁴

GURU ARJAN

I am the Light of the world; He that followeth Me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life.⁵

CHRIST

That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.⁶

ST. PETER

The seat of Naam or Word is in the deepest recesses of the human soul.

The precious crest jewel of Naam (the Word of God) is implanted by the devotee of the Lord in the heart of man.⁷

GURU RAM DAS

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own.⁸

ST. PAUL

The manifestation of Naam or Word is possible only through the grace of the living Master, for It is simply his gift and comes from him; It cannot be earned.

The Master has given me the perfect Word or Mantra.⁹

GURU ARJAN

By grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God.¹⁰

ST. PAUL

We are all as unclean things, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.¹¹

ISAIAH

For the grace of God bringeth salvation.¹²

Neither is their salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we shall be saved.¹³

ST. PETER

It is not possible to describe in words the greatness of the Master's Word (Guru-Mantra) or the Holy Spirit. It affords a key to the Kingdom of God. From man-making, It gradually leads to becoming God. Man regains the Lost Paradise. As he comes to his own, he understands the true values of life, the essential unity of his own soul with the Oversoul (pervading everywhere and permeating in all) and culminating in the union of the two. He is now no longer a separate entity but a conscious co-worker in the Divine Plan, sharing in His glory and greatness.

He is a man of all virtues and honored among all,
To whomsoever the Master gives the Mantra of the Word.¹⁴

GURU ARJAN

Jesus Christ describes the work of the Holy Spirit in this way:

. . . I will send him (the Comforter) unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: . . . when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth . . .¹⁵

CHRIST

The Word of the Master is purely a gift of the Master. It can neither be earned nor learned. It comes when it comes and works by grace alone. Spiritual insight can neither be taught nor bought, but it may be caught like an infection from one infected with it. As light comes from light, so does life from Life; and truly blessed is one who gets it.

God can be worshiped in the company of a *Sadh*
 (disciplined soul or saint),
 The Guru just gives the Mantra of the Word which
 he makes manifest.¹⁶

GURU ARJAN

Guru-Mantra has a great and powerful saving grace in It.
 At death It comes forth in the Radiant Form of the Mas-
 ter to lead the spirit back to the mansion of the Lord, and
 the spirit thus escorted passes unhindered from plane to
 plane and is honorably received everywhere. In life's so-
 journ on this earth also, one passes his days far above the
 turmoil of life.

Take ye the lesson in the Word (Mantra) from a
 Master and practice the same,
 Those who love the Lord are ultimately saved at the
 time of death,
 O Nanak! Those who practice the Word (Mantra)
 of the Master, day and night,
 They shall certainly be saved.¹⁷

GURU RAM DAS

With the Word of the Master (Guru-Mantra) in the
 heart, one becomes fearless and can have no sor-
 row or affliction,
 None without the aid of a Master has ever been able
 to cross over the stormy sea of life with all his wits
 about him.¹⁸

GURU ARJAN

Whosoever receives the Word of the Lord (Hari
 Mantra) from a Master,
 He escapes unscathed from the hell-fires of the
 world.¹⁹

GURU ARJAN

Four things remain eternally true: Naam, *Sadhu*, *Guru*
 and *Gobind*;

Nanak says: a rare soul in this world practices the
Word of the Master (Guru-Mantra).²⁰

GURU TEG BAHADUR

What is the life of one without contact with the Word,
Nothing better than that of a dog or a swine, an ass
or a snake.²¹

GURU ARJAN

BOOK SEVEN

Vakhar

A True Deal in True Wares

Vakhar

IN THE scriptures it is stated that the purpose of the human birth is to gather the merchandise of "Vakhar," the wares of Naam or the Word; for It unlocks the Kingdom of God and makes one accepted at and honored in His Court. "Vakhar," then, consists of the practice of and communion with the Holy Word.

The Master makes with thee the true deal,
He who gathers in the True Wares (*Sacha Vakhar*),
he revels in the True Word.¹

GURU NANAK

Serve One, collect One, ask for and pray God for
One thing,
Gather ye the riches of Naam (*Vakhar Dhan*), O
Nanak, that is the true capital.²

GURU ARJAN

We trade in the True Word (*Sacha Vakhar*),
O Nanak! a devotee of the Master gets through.³

GURU NANAK

Vakhar, or the merchandise of Naam, is in abundance with the Saints and one can have It from them alone.

The Vakhar (stock in trade) for which ye have come
into the world
Is the all-pervading Word (*Ram Naam*), which ye
can get from Saints.⁴

The pilgrim soul has been able to contact the Master,
The stock in trade (*Vakhar*) that ye desireth, ye can
have through communion with the Word.⁵

GURU ARJAN

Just as we have emporiums and centers for collecting and distributing commercial goods, in the same way we have in the human body a center where Vakhar can be gathered in, collected and distributed. It has of course to be mined out of the recesses of the soul with the help and guidance of the Master.

This body is the merchant's storehouse and has in it
the precious Vakhar as wares,
A rare buyer may get It through following the instructions of the Master.^o

GURU ARJAN