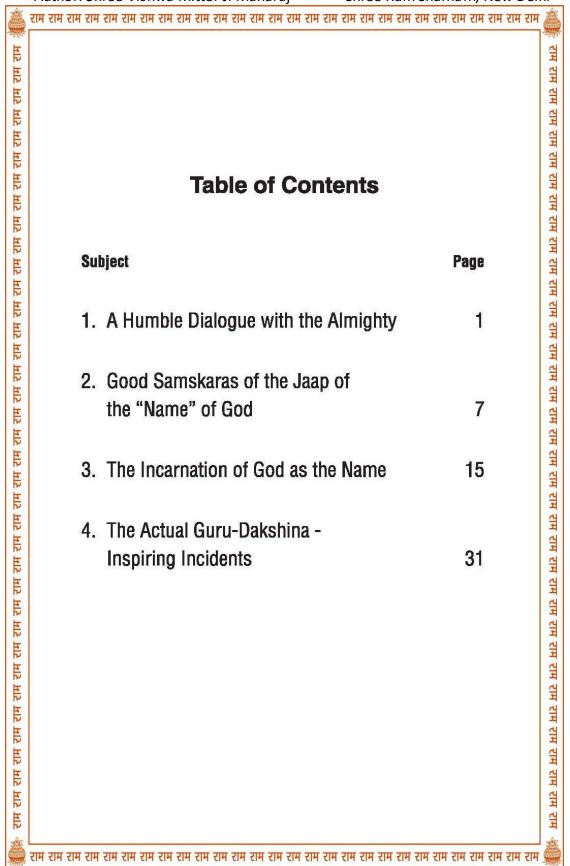
Author: Shree Vishwa Mitter Ji Maharaj Shree Ram Sharnam, New Delhi सम सम सम राम राम राम राम राम राम **INSPIRING EPISODES** सार सम सार सम साम सम राम राम राम राम Swami Dr. Vishwa Mitterji Maharaj Shree Ram Sharnam, International Spiritual Center www.shreeramsharnam.org नार नार सार सार साम

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Shree Ram Sharnam, New Delhi Author: Shree Vishwa Mitter Ji Maharaj

A Humble Dialogue with the Almighty (Prabhu se Vinay vaarata)1

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Swami Dr. Vishwa Mitterji Maharaj²

Oh! Eternal Blissful Consciousness, Immortal, Imperishable Almighty! Oh, Supremely Merciful, Compassionate, Kind Hearted Almighty! We are sitting in Your Divine Court. We prostrate before You - please accept our salutations! Be Merciful, be Compassionate on us. It is true that we are not worthy of showing our faces to You, not worthy of presenting ourselves in Your Presence, but have mustered the courage to come in Your Presence. Oh Almighty! Accept our countless salutations, please accept them.

Oh Almighty, Your Glory is endless which makes the impossible possible. Your Blessings are limitless, Almighty!

¹ Published in Kalyan, (Gita Press, Gorakhpur) June 2004.

²Swami Dr. Vishwa Mitterji Maharaj is Head of Shree Ram Sharnam, an international spiritual organization headquartered in New Delhi. He did his first degree at Hissar and thereafter obtained a doctorate from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi, India. He was then a Faculty Member there and was a leading Ocular Microbiologist in Asia. After twenty two years of teaching at the AIIMS, Swamiji took to the spiritual path and has since devoted himself solely to spiritual pursuits. His background as a teacher enables him to convey the spiritual beliefs of Hinduism with a scientific perspective which makes it very appealing to the younger generation, through discourses in Hindi and English. Swamji believes in strict discipline, punctuality and does not accept any offerings, not even flowers. Even the touching of feet is not allowed. More information about Swamiji and Shree Ram Sharnam is available at www.shreeramsharnam.org

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They are indescribable and incomparable. We are all indebted to You, oh Lord! Oh Almighty, Your servant of servants comes with a humble request with the hope that - as sages and great souls say – Whoever comes to this Divine Door, bows here, the Almighty fills him with bounties. Nobody leaves Your Divine Court empty-handed. We shall also not go empty-handed because giving is in Your Nature. It is said that You do not tire of giving, we keep taking and forgetting You, Almighty! We are ungrateful. We do not even know how to thank You properly.

We are beggars, oh Almighty, at Your Divine Court. We have come to beg. In the eyes of the world, we are wealthy, but in Your Eyes we are absolutely poor and impoverished. Inspite of worldly wealth, we are poor. Oh Almighty, only those are wealthy who have earned Ram Dhan (the Wealth of the Name of Lord Rama) the wealth of contentment, who have built up the capital of good karmas — only they are wealthy in the true sense. We are wealthy only in outward appearance. We eat in excess, drink in excess, sleep in excess and think excessively. Oh, Almighty! There is no discipline in our lives. There is only one routine — to leave the house in the morning and return exhausted at night — to eat before going, to come back home to sleep — such is our life. If only You could be contented with this!

The world appears to be moving along smoothly, oh, Almighty! However, there is no thought about the next life (parlok). We are in this world briefly; in reality we have to return to our real home which is afar, we have to go there. There is no thinking about that oh, Lord! Please send some Saint-Great Soul who can enlighten us, who can explain

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help us intelligently understand Your ways — Where are you wandering, lost? All these grand mansions, so much of everything — all these luxuries and conveniences have been granted by Me, so that you do not feel inadequate of anything, so you perform the Jaap of My Name as much as possible. All this you are taking from Me, but you are forgetting Me. What kind of being are you?' This is the Almighty's admonishment. This is His complaint towards us. Blessed are those who, despite having all these worldly pleasures, are performing Jaap of the Name of God, who are performing adoration of the Name of the Saviour of the Downtrodden (Patit Pavan). Almighty! this servant bows his head at the feet of all those who are earning the Name of the Lord, he is the servant of all of them and Your Servant.

My Almighty! Grant us wisdom. Take away our intoxications, which are more dreadful and worse than alcoholic addictions - the intoxication of fame and honour, of superiority. My house is bigger than another's; I have more cars than others. These intoxications can be ruinous. Almighty! no one except You can do this task. All other things are available in the market, they are available in a shop, but all this is only available at Your Divine Door, no where else. Placing the dust of the Lotus Feet of a Saint -Great Soul on one's forehead can make all this happen, otherwise it cannot happen. Your Devotion (bhakti) is not available in the market place, detachment is not available in the market, love for the Divine is not available in the market. Almighty! You are the Giver for all of us. We beg from You, the Supreme Giver. From today may we never forget Your Name, may we never forget You. Almighty, the manner in which You remember us, it is our ultimate duty to remember You even

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more. Our welfare lies in this and You always think of our welfare. You cannot think of anything except our welfare. How does it matter to You – whether anyone remembers You or not? What difference does it make to You? If You desire that we remember You, then Almighty there is no one as Benevolent as You. No one. That is why I say again and again – my Almighty! Your Deeds and Kindness can never be repaid. You are the Ultimate Benevolence (*Param upkan*) oh, Almighty! Even parents are not so selfless, they too expect something or the other. You are the only one who wants our welfare, our salvation, and expects nothing in return.

Glory be to You, my Lord Ram! Be merciful upon us. We do not know how to do bhakti, do not know how to love, do not know how to perform jaap of Your Name. We have only given unhappiness to others in life. We are repositories of grief. Not about others, but I know about myself and can say with certainty: 'Oh, Almighty! there is no crime in this world, no mistake, no sin which I have not committed. Even then, it is Your Glory that You accept us. How can we forget You? How can we forget our debt to You? How can we forget Your Greatness, Your Compassion, Your Benevolence, Your Forgiveness. Almighty! if there is someone else like me, please accept that person also as You have accepted all others. If there is someone worthless like me, grant him too refuge at Your Lotus Feet, make him chant Your Name, take away his sorrows, bestow upon him virtuousness.

Oh Lord Ram! The intoxication of liquor goes after some time, but that of pride, wealth and honour does not go so easily and the intoxicated person stumbles, sometimes this

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way and sometimes the other way. This is the reason why we commit sins. Almighty! the intoxication known as ego does not allow us to submit before You. Neither does it allow us to bow before Your devotees. We are men, we are husbands - this intoxication does not allow us to forget all this. If we cannot be rid of this, oh Lord Ram! how will we imbibe humility in this life-time. Oh, Almighty! help us rid these intoxications. All of us are sitting in supplication before You. Grant us the boon. Oh Lord! crush this pride, fame and honour. Protector of the poor (Dina naath) there is none other than You who can do this. Once this pride breaks we will learn to bow both before You and before those who are Your Creatures. This is pride oh, Almighty, due to which we suffer from bouts of anger and anxiety. These are the attacks which pave the way for attacks of the heart. What is the intoxication about? Oh, Almighty! everything is Yours, nothing belongs to me. If we understand this Truth, then with Your Blessings this intoxication will end, no virtue is mine, nothing is mine. Everything belongs to You.

Mera mujh mein kuch nahi, jo kachu hai so tor

Tera tujhko saumpate, kya lagat hai mor

Nothing is mine, whatever there is, is thine

To give all that is Yours to You, what is there for me to loose!

My Almighty! All is Yours. You are the Doer of Everything. You are the one who does everything!' – make us realize this truth. We have asked for a lot. Prabhu! From who else can we ask? Who else will give? Bless us, be merciful upon us oh, Lord, The Supreme Jewel (Daata Shiromani). Be Compassionate, be Merciful. Supreme Giver! Be Merciful upon us. We worthless beings may forget You, but You should

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never forget us, my Lord Ram! There could not be a more unfortunate day, there cannot be a more tragic day than that when You forget us.

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My Almighty! see your children at Your Divine Court are standing with folded hands in supplication, they are standing in front of You. From today, we are no one else's, the world does not belong to us, we do not belong to the world. We are Yours, You are ours. Whatever we may be like, accept us — oh Lord! Never forget us.

Pray forgive us Almighty! Be merciful and compassionate (Kripa karo), be merciful and compassionate (Kripa karo) my Lord!

Glossary

Satchidananda: Eternal blissful consciousness/the infinite Supreme Soul

Dandvat Pranam: Bowing in salutation with hands, legs, knees, chest, head, mind, sight and speech

Patita Pavan: Saviour of the downtrodden

Dina Naath: Protector of the poor

Daata Shiromani: Lord, the Supreme Jewel

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Good Samskaras of the Jaap of the 'Name' of God (Bhagwan Naam Jaapke Susamskara) Enlightening Episodes¹

Swami Dr. Vishwa Mitterji Maharaj

Those persons who, by their own will or on someone else's inspiration, perform any actions (kriya) by hand, feet, mind, or thoughts — good or bad — are known as karta (doer). The means (sadhan) used by the doer to perform this action are known as karan. If the karan is outwardly, it is known as outwardly karan (bahiya karan); if it is within, it is known as anteh karan. Whatever the doer performs through karan whether good or otherwise (shubh-ashubh) — is called karma. Whatever kind of karma is performed by a person, the impact of those karma, are subtly felt on the mind; that is known as Samskara. Good karmas have good samskaras and untoward karmas have untoward samskara that get imprinted upon (chitt) nature. Over time, these samskaras become the inspiration for the karma in the future (agami karmas) as well as the cause of the fruits of karma; for example, as in a movie, the appearances, colour, shape, scenery, sound and lyric, dialogues and instruments featured over time express themselves realistically; in the same way, the feelings with which karma is performed lead to the fruits that emerge from them. The responsibility for one's karma lies upon the

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person performing the karma. In the performance of every karma, the independent will of the doer is existent. The karma which is performed cannot remain without bearing fruits – this principle is fixed. Good karma bears good fruits, untoward karma bears untoward fruits. Some enlightening episodes of these references are presented here.

(I)

Through some lived examples it appears that through the jaap of the name of Lord Ram, a person can through his samskaras ennoble himself and transform his weak destiny (prarabdh); that is a person with bad samskaras (kusamskara) — and through the jaap of the Almighty — can achieve divine samskaras and be transformed from a deplorable (nandniyan) to a respectful position. His thinking, conduct and nature undergo noteworthy transformations, which become directly visible. This is being illustrated through one episode:

Once upon a time Emperor Akbar and Birbal saw a Brahman begging on the road. The Emperor sarcastically enquired from Birbal: 'What is this?' Birbal immediately replied: 'Maharaj! He has lost his way.' Then, bring this Pandit back on the path,' the King instantly replied. Birbal said: 'He will come round! King, it will take time. Kindly grant a grace of three months for this.' The King granted permission. In the evening, Birbal reached the Brahman's home; he enquired the reason behind his begging despite being a scholar and

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said: 'Brahmandevta! From tomorrow please awaken at 4 a.m. and perform jaap on my behalf of the 'Name' of Lord Ram; in the evening one gold coin will be sent to you each day.' At first the Brahman was astonished to hear this, but in his mind he thought what harm could come from this, and agreed to perform the jaap. The family had good samskaras from their previous lives. Thus, he faced no difficulties in waking up and doing jaap at 4 a.m. As a result the gold coins were accumulated and he became wealthy. Through continuous practice the submerged divine samskaras of the 'Name' of Lord Ram within him were awakened. Now he began to think: If the performance of the jaap of the 'Name' of Lord Ram for Birbal has made me wealthy, then why should I not do jaap for myself also?' As a result, he started to perform jaap for four hours every day. Now even his house was built and the family became happy and was endowed with every amenity. Then, slowly he found the 'Name' of God to be sweet and his material desires began to decrease. He then requested Birbal: 'Now I will only perform jaap for myself, kindly do not send me any gold coins. The upasana ('sitting close to') of the name of Lord Ram (Ram Naam) has awakened my true wisdom (vivek) and sense of detachment and quest for the bhakti for the Almighty has arisen.'

On finding an occasion, Brahmandevta asked his wife: Devi, with the grace of God we have everything at home and in abundance; the household's maintenance can be carried out without difficulty; thus if you give permission I would spend

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time in isolation doing jaap and sadhna.' The wife was pious (sadhvi); she joyfully gave her consent. Now Brahmandevta, by constant Ram Naam upasana (sitting close to/ meditating on the Name of Lord Ram), got deeply immersed in the ochre of Lord Ram. His sadhna started to bear fruit. People began to come seeking darshan. The news of his fame even reached the Emperor. Accompanied by Birbal, he went to seek darshan of the Mahatma (great soul)!. Before taking leave, Akbar said: 'Mahatma (great soul)! I, Emperor of India, Akbar, pray to you - if you require any materials please unhesitatingly send me a message; immediately the material will be made available in your service.' Smilingly, Brahmandevta replied: 'King! you do not have anything which I need. Yes, if you need anything, please do not hesitate to ask for it.' Birbal said: 'Emperor, do you recognize him? he is the same Brahman who, three months earlier, was begging. The jaap of the 'Name' of Lord Rama has made a beggar into a donor; it has made him the master of True Wealth. The glory (pratap) of the susamskara of the jaap of the Name of Lord Rama has reformed both his present and after-life (lok parlok). Emperor! you had said 'Reform him' - so I first gave him the incentive of gold coins and made him do jaap of the 'Name' of Lord Ram, and when he started to experience the joy (raas) of the 'Name' of Lord Ram, he stopped taking the gold coins. He became possessed of the Lord's love and began to do jaap and today his samskaras of doing naam jaap has become entrenched.' On hearing this, Akbar was greatly astonished.

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The collection of good samkaras suppresses the effects of poor samskaras, dims them and ultimately destroys them. In this context an example is presented here -

In a king's palace, an employee's wife was the favoured lady-in-waiting (daasi) of the Queen. Both developed very close relations and complete affinity. The lady-in-waiting was so trustworthy that the Queen never hid anything from her and the lady, on her part, too confided her innermost thoughts to the Queen without fear. Much time passed like this. One day when the lady's husband saw the Princess, a strong desire to have her arose in his mind and many evil thoughts about fulfilling his temptation engulfed him. When his devoted wife came to know of the state of her husband's mind, she was very hurt and started to remain sad. Here the Queen felt that her lady-in-waiting was hiding something from her.

One day the Queen enquired about the reason behind her sadness. On being asked repeatedly, the lady fearfully told her everything. She was convinced that not only would she and her husband be dismissed from their jobs, but they would be severely punished; however, the devotion-filled Queen was very wise. After thinking and contemplating she said: You do not worry. I am willing to present the Princess but on one condition - your husband must live in our garden, which is on the edge of the city. At all times he must perform

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jaap of Ram Ram, he must eat whatever we send; after six months I will give the Princess' hand to him in marriage.' Upon returning, the lady told her husband all this and he agreed. He left for the garden. He was prepared to do anything to win the Princess. He started doing jaap of 'Ram Ram.' Satvic food (pure food/ strong in the sattvaguna, (pure qualities), leads to clarity and equanimity of mind), milk and fruits were sent to him from the palace regularly. For a few days his mind could not focus on the 'Name' of Lord Rama, because his attention was focused on the Princess; but he knew that without doing jaap on the 'Name' of God, getting the Princess was impossible. Thus, under compulsion, he started to do 'jaap' on the 'Name.' The result was that he began to experience exhilaration in bhakti (devotion); the more jaap he did on the 'Name,' the sweeter he found it. With the ceaseless jaap of the Name of Ram, the dust which had accumulated on his mind and intelligence through bad samskaras was washed off. Bad thoughts were converted into pure thoughts. His nature became saint-like; his mind was purified. Six months passed and the Queen accompanied by the princess reached the garden. The lady's husband's inner self (anteh karan) had become purified; his infatuation had ended. He stood up with astonishment and placed his forehead upon both their feet and said: 'Queen! Please marry this devi to a prince; the 'Name' of Lord Ram has changed my evil eye and awakened my motherly instincts. The good samskaras from the jaap on the 'Name' of Lord Ram have burnt my desire-filled samskaras. Please forgive me. You have opened my eyes.'

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In this way, appropriate examples prove that the good samskaras from the 'Name' of the Almighty extinguish our poor samskaras and save us from the attraction of temptations. Such a rescue on one occasion makes us stronger and this when it is repeated it ensures that we do not fall prey to temptations and gradually the seeds of poor samskaras are destroyed. It is imperative upon individuals not to give an opportunity to poor samsakaras to revive themselves.

(3)

The samskaras of the purifying (pavan) 'Name' of Lord Ram are also pure; which eradicate the impurity of the inner self and make the self of the upasak (practitioner of 'upasana') also pure and impart the strength to lead a pure and honest life. One such incident is presented here -

Paper for making currency notes is produced in Horshangabad. However, though most of it is from overseas, but is inspected here. An *upasak* (one who does *upasana*) of the 'Name' of Lord Ram was holding the post of inspection officer. His decision in the process of inspection was final. On inspection, one entire lot of paper was found to be defective (not of satisfactory quality). As a result, the *sadhak* did not accept the lot. His senior officials counseled him not to enter into disputes but to approve the consignment of paper as it was. The *sadhak* did not agree. The foreign officials also pressurized him and even tried to tempt him; however, as the *sadhak* was influenced by good *samskaras* of

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the jaap of the 'Name' of Lord Ram, he was neither afraid and nor was he tempted by greed. As a result the entire lot was rejected. On returning home from the office, the sadhak discussed the matter with his father. His father advised - If such high officials were saying, you should have heeded their advice.' The Sadhak submitted - 'No father! If the upasak of the 'Name' of Lord Ram does not have the courage to point out a wrong-doing, does not have the strength to stand by honesty then who will? Other individuals can be inspired by poor samskaras of dishonesty, but an upasak is endowed with the highest purifying, beautiful (shuchita) samskaras and he can never leave the correct path. The 'Name' of Lord Ram teaches you honesty; therefore, a sadhak does not commit any wrong-doing on his own and on anyone else's bidding.' The fruits of such good samskaras and of taking refuge in the 'Name' of Lord Ram was that, due to his honesty, he was promoted, superceding twenty officials, his salary was raised and he received many other benefits. In this way, it becomes certain that good samskaras yield fruits in both this life and after-life. The divine (divya) samskara of the 'Name' of Lord Ram make the one who does jaap (jaapak) also divine as well as makes the practitioner capable of distributing divinity (divyata) amongst others.

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The Incarnation of God as the Name (Prabhu Ka Naamavatar)¹

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Swami Dr. Vishwa Mitterji Maharaj

In the age of Satya Yuga (divine age/age of perfect morality), Bhagwan Narsingha was incarnated; in the age of Treta (threequarters virtue and one quarter sin), Bhagwan Ramchandraji took incarnation, in the Dvapara (age of one-half virtue and one-half sin), Bhagwan Krishnamurari incarnated and in the Kali Yuga (one-quarter virtue and three-quarters sin), God has been incarnated as the 'Name' (God's name which symbolizes supreme sanctity and divinity). In reality, Naam Avatar (God incarnated as the Name) is ancient, constant and eternal. In every age, alongside every incarnation, It always remains existent (vidyamaan). Bhagwan Narsingha, the Perfect Being Ramchandra, Bhagwan Shri Krishna, on completing their divine play returned to their heavenly abodes; however, Naam Bhagwan (God as the Name) remains present even now. In Satya Yuga meditation was the chief concern; in Treta Yuga, traditional offerings (Yagya) and in the Dvapar, temple-worship emerged as the chief features, but in other ages, the goal which was reached through prayer, Yagyas or meditation -- the same goal in this Kaliyuga -- can be attained by the Name of the Almighty. Thus declares Shri Kak Bhusundi:

¹Published in Kalyan, (Gita Press, Gorakhpur) January 2007.

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In Kritayuga, Treta, Dvapara humans are able to attain the Almighty through worship, sacrifice and Yoga,

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In the Kali age the same goal is reached through the Name of Hari (the Almighty)

(Ramcharit Manas, 7/102)

Compassionate God moved by the concern for the well-being of His disciples displayed His powers by taking the incarnation of the Name. All the purposes for which the *Para Brahma* (Supreme Brahman/supreme cosmic spirit) incarnated in physical form, those purposes are being fulfilled through the Grace of *Naam Avatar*. As Tulsidasji states:

The Name of Rama is the Lord manifested as a man-lion and the demon is Hiranyakashupa in Kaliyuga. Crushing the demon, the Name will protect the devotees repeating it; as the Man-lion protected Prahlad, Those who do jaap are Prahlad

(Ramcharitmanas, 1/27)

That is - the Name of Lord Rama is Lord Narsingha Bhagwan personified. In this age, Kali is Hiranyakashyap and those who do *jaap* (meditation of the name of God) of Ram-Naam are Prahlad. Just as in Satya Yuga the atrocities of Hiranyakashyap over Prahlad were removed by the Almighty in the form of Narsingha; similarly in the present Kaliyuga, through Naam Bhagwan (God as the Name) all our problems and our crisis are overcome. Prahland's own father tortures him; burns him in fire; he is stung by snakes, thrown off mountain cliffs and starved of



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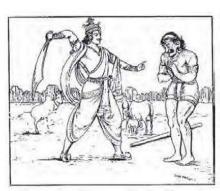
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food. If you think carefully, the spiritual aspirant experiences the same. Even if there may not be an external snake, an external mountain, or physical fire; are spiritual aspirants (sadhaks) not troubled by jealousy, anger and malice? Are all people not burning in the fires of worry?

The fires of worry engulf the entire world

Only those saints escape who make God's name their prop!

The snakes of vices are ever-waiting to bite the spiritual aspirant. The poison of material interests does not loosen its grip. The fire of worry is always lit. The mountain of pride is ever-ready to collapse.



There is an event from the reign of Raja Parikshit, son of Abhumanyu. Raja Parikshit learnt of the coming of Kali Yuga into his kingdom, so he took his army to attain supreme victory. At one place they saw that *Dharma* has

taken the form of a bull and was roaming around on one leg. At another place they encountered the earth in the form of a cow; she had tears falling from her eyes. *Dharma* asked the earth: 'Why are you unhappy?' The earth explained: 'Dharma, Bhagwan Shri Krishna has, at this time, withdrawn his divine play from this world and the world has fallen prey to the evil eye of the sinfilled Kaliyug. Seeing all this I am deeply saddened.' Raja Parikshit again saw a *shudra* dressed in royal robes holding a stick and

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violently beating cows and bulls. The Raja asked: 'Hey, cruel one, who are you? Why are you beating them?' He replied: 'King, I am Kali. I am doing my work.' The King responded angrily: 'I will not allow you to remain here.' Kali replied: 'King, at least listen to my merits and flaws and only then pronounce your judgment. In my age brothers will fight over wealth and worldly possessions. Men and women will break the boundaries of decorum. Few women will live within the bounds of dignity. Violence will be dominant. Humans will be unintelligent and have short life spans. On hearing Kali's declaration, the King spoke tremblingly: 'Enough, enough, the limits have been reached. Under your influence humanity will be extinct. I will kill you.'

Kali further said: 'Maharaja, I have a very strong virtue; listen to that. In Satya Yuga long performance of japa (meditative repetition of a mantra or name of Divine Power); ascetic practices (tapas), fasting, meditation; in Treta Yuga performing elaborate rituals, in Dvapara, Service to Lord (Bhagwat Seva) - all the merits could thus be accumulated; all that merit is now achievable in my age by lovingly chanting Jaap of the Name of Rama.' This is what Shri Shukdevji tells Parikshit: 'King, ordinarily Kaliyuga is the treasure chest of flaws (dosh); but there is one very big positive virtue (guna) in it. That virtue is just this: that in Kali Yuga the only requirement is the mere worship of the Name of God (Naam Sankirtan) - all worldly attachments are left behind and one is thus able to attain the Almighty.

> Although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: simply by chanting or repeating krshna-katha, one is liberated from the material bondage

> > (Shrimadbhagwat12/3/5)

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सार सम It is thus implied that in Kaliyuga, God incarnated as the Name provides human beings with salvation. Thus, those spiritual aspirants who take refuge in the Name of God for their protection, in the end the Almighty, with His Perfect Energy appears in seen or in unseen form and shall slay the Hiranyashakyaparupi Kaliyuga. In this way an aspirant's spiritual endeavor becomes successful.

To depend on the Name, to seek proximity to the Name (Naam Upasana)- despite the obstacles and difficulties placed by Kaliyuga is the direct proof of God's Grace. Living examples are: Goswami Tulsidasji and Bhakta Shiromani Surdasji. They worshipped the Name. The Almighty was compassionate and purified their beings and made them worthy of respect and also immortalized their compositions. The worship of the Name (Naam-upasana) is devotion-centered. The path of Bhakti is of those who do not have their own strength. If a follower of this path of Bhakti (devotion) feels his own strength in any way, or even has minimal pride in his own strength - then, he is not a true follower of the path of Bhakti; his supreme strength is God Himself. In the weakness of the devotee's self, lies strength and it is this quality which attracts the Almighty. This path is for those who have purged their pride. They know that -

> The 'Name' and pride cannot exist, in one mind, at the same time

> Light and darkness at one place, cannot be seen anywhere

> > (Bhaktiprakash)

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Whoever asked the Saint Kankandas: 'Will I go to heaven?,' he would reply 'No, if I don't go, you will not go.' To some he would respond: 'When I go, you will go.' Those asking thought that his answers were prideful. Again he was asked: 'Will you go to heaven?' 'Yes, when 'I' go, then I will go.' Now it was understood what the 'I' was which the Saint was referring to. When you read the word Maan (pride) backwards, it reads as Naam (the Name). These two cannot co-exist. That Naam (the Name) is the best medicine for ending Maan (pride). The Name is what makes a human being bow down. On the one hand, the Name teaches human beings to bow down. On the other, it makes God bow. When both bow, the human spirit meets the Supreme, Cosmic Spirit. The Name even makes the incarnation of the Name bow down. Love for God removes attachments of this life and previous births. The 'Name' gives you the wherewithal (Samarth) to experience Shri Ram always within you, within every part of you (ang sang); that is always remaining drowned in Divine Love and always remembering the Grace of Shri Ram. Such a Jaapak (practitioner of japa) on learning the art of bowing and becoming humble becomes the object of God's Divine Love and accepts all circumstance as God-given and maintains equanimity.

Once, in the garb of a Brahmin, Kaliyug appeared before a saint, introduced himself and directed as follows: 'Do not discuss atma-paramatma and put emphasis on 'sitting close' to the Name of Lord Rama (Upasana). This increases morale and mental strength, strengthens the faith. Then, I cannot influence people; they get out of my sphere of influence.' The Saint replies respectfully: 'Brother, my aim is not to assemble a crowd. That

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devotional-ism increases, people become aware of their 'trueself' (sat swarup) - that is the aim of Satsang.' Kaliyuga said: 'At this time, it is my reign. Intelligence lies in remaining subservient to the side that is sovereign.' 'Brother, I live not in your reign, I believe in the Reign of Rama (Ram Rajya) who is my King, not you. Reigns come and go.' 'Your disobedience will cost you dearly,' with this warning Kaliyuga departed. The very next day a person came and said: 'Maharaj! you had ordered liquor but the payment has not yet been received.' The Saint understood: 'This is a game of Kali.' All his devotees turned into critics. Soon the ashram was empty. Kali appeared again and enquired: 'How is the ashram? How is devotion? It is all quiet. Those who regarded you as God, now consider you as the devil. Thus, I would again say, in my realm do not go against me by preaching Naam Upasana (meditation upon the Name).' If you agree, then from tomorrow itself, double the number of disciples will start coming. The Saint asked, 'How?' Kali said: 'I will show you tomorrow itself.'

A leper was lying on the road and lamenting: 'Hey! Someone please takes me to the Saint. If he is compassionate enough to sprinkle water on me, then my leprosy will disappear - this God has revealed to me in my dreams.' People said: 'No, he is a drunkard, not a Saint.' 'Oh, no he is a Saint of a high order.' People took him to the Saint. The Saint sprinkled water and the ailment was cured; from an elderly state, he became a handsome youth. All the disciples were shamed and started to beg forgiveness. The Satsang again began to overflow with people.

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सार साम Kali visited again and said: 'So you have seen my power. Therefore, be on my side.' The Saint immediately responded: 'No, we shall remain one with Lord Shree Ram. The satsang will continue, so that people do not become slaves of material subjects, but become disciples of Rama.' Kali threatened: 'It will cost you dearly; you have already seen my influence.' 'Yes, I have witnessed it. I have been both criticized and praised. You have also seen the Splendour of Ram Rajya? In every circumstance I remained equanimous; in both I remained unmoved and calm-this is the effect of the Almighty's divine favour. The worship of the Name (Naam Bhakti) makes God favourable to the disciple and equanimity (samta) is the highest state which the disciple gains by the Compassion of Lord Rama.

The Upanishads declare the Name of God as the highest of all truths and the worship of the Name as the highest form of worship. Verbal, mental and in low tone- these three types of worship (upasana) bring all joys and bestow compassion. In all four ages the influence of the Name (Naam) is manifest; but in Kaliyuga its special significance has been emphasized. Since ancient times it has been given the highest place. This form of meditation ('sitting close' upasana) has been described as the fulfiller of all desires and remover of fear and disease. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christian and Jews - all, in some form or the other, accept the ...importance of Naam Upasana ('sitting close to'/ meditation on the name of God) The main parts of this are: Naam Smaran (remembering and repeating the name of God), Dhyana (meditation; contemplation; the seventh rung in the eightfold ladder of Yoga) and Sankirtan (singing in the praise of God).

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1. Naam Smaran: Taking the Pure and Holy Name of the Almighty, by verbal recital or in the mind, is called smaran, while repeating the Lord's name, remembering His virtues with love and emotion is called smaran (simran). Singing in praise of Simran, the Saints do not tire:

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All happiness lies in simran, the Almighty resides in simran...

(Bhaktiprakash)

Feeling the Presence of God everywhere, always feeling the Presence within you, besides you at all times, conversing with Him in your mind is called sweet remembrance yoga (*smaran yoga*).

Remembrance yoga is easy; other Yogas are difficult Simran gives darshan of the Almighty, is the abode of the Almighty and the cure of illnesses

(Bhaktiprakash)

Everyone has the equal right to do jaap (meditative repetition) of the Name of Rama - whether the person is illiterate or literate, poor or rich, of high or low caste, woman or man, pure or impure, sinful or virtuous, vegetarian or non-vegetarian, happy or sad. The jaap (meditative repetition) may be performed at all times and at all places- in jail, in washroom, at cremation sites, fields, hospitals, anywhere. The Name God (Naam Bhagwan) is King among Gods which acts as a watchman for the devotee and protects piety and virtues and saves them from vices. The sound of the Name is the Garuda (mythical bird, usually the mount of



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Vishnu, has a golden body of a strong man, red wings, eagle's beak, a crown on his head; is known as the eternal enemy of the Naga serpent race) warning to vice-like snakes.

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As the snake encircles a sandalwood tree, evil attributes encircle the self
The 'Name of the Almighty is like the sound of Garuda upon hearing which the snake flees
(Bhaktiprakash)

Through the echo of Ram Ram, all fears and doubts disappear.

(Bhaktiprakash)

Even birds and animals have achieved the Almighty's Protection by calling out His Name.

The elephant had no virtue and no knowledge; what religious rituals has he performed?

Oh Nanak, behold the way of the Lord, who bestowed the gift of fearlessness

'Ram' is the favored loving, sweet name of *Para Brahma* (the Supreme Cosmic Spirit, the Highest *Brahma*) and is also a two-letter Mantra. Utterance (*ucharan*) of the word yields the fruits of both the Name and of a *Mantra Jaap*. It is said that once *Dharam Raj* (celestial judge) Yudhistra enquired from Bhishma Pitamah: 'Which state of after-life do the devotees of the *Mantra* attain?' Bhishamji replied with the help of an anecdote: 'Near the

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सार सम Himalayas one ascetic Brahmin performed the Jaap of Ram Naam for many years. The Lord Himself appeared and said: 'Brahamrishi (one who has attained the highest divine knowledge)! I am pleased with you; ask for a boon!' The Brahmin replied: 'Oh Almighty! may my desire for even more recitation of the mantra grow and may my mental focus progress continuously.' 'May your wish come true. Now you repeat the Name lovingly.' The Brahman continued the Jaap for many years; he obtained full control over his self and his mental faculties, he gained victory over passions, greed, anger and attachment. He never saw faults of others. Now Dharma Raj appeared and said 'Maharaj, I have come to seek your darshan. With the fruits of meditation on the Name (Naam Mantra) you can cross the abodes of the Gods and enter an even higher abode. Such is the Glory of Ram Naam and devotion of Ram Mantra.

The Name God (Naam Bhagwan) has rendered respectful even those who are condemnable. It even makes ordinary humans receptacles of God's Grace. Once upon a time, a servant of a king went to an abode in the Himalayas to become the Servant of God. While initiating him in the Name of Lord Ram, his Guru explained: 'Disciple, Ram Mantra may be chanted while walking, roaming, eating, drinking, playing, bathing, working, while awake and in sleep, while inhaling and exhaling, travelling -- at all times, at all places -- this Jaap may be performed. While cooking, cutting wood, also keep taking Ram's Name.' The yearning commenced and his ceaseless chanting began. It was quiet and he used his time well. Gossip, criticism, lies, cunning - all were left behind. This servant got immersed and colored in the ochre colors of God. The God of Naam showed compassion and his mind was

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purified, his conduct and behavior reformed and his temperament changed. His hunger and sleep lessened considerably; his yearning for union with Lord Ram awakened. His self became peaceful; he could feel the ultimate peace and experience the ultimate spiritual ecstasy. A divine radiance appeared under his face. With the blessings of the Name (Naam), he became a saint. One day the saint organized a gathering. The well-to-do and the king provided monetary help. Subsequently, the saint explained the glory of the Name (Naam) to everyone and Bhajan Kirtan was performed. As they were leaving, everyone bowed to the saint. The king also came and said: 'Mahatma! you have not shown any miracle.' Smiling, the saint responded with respect: 'King, a miracle has occurred. I am your old servant who a few years back bowed to both you and your officers. Today, along with you, all others are prostrating respectfully before me. What bigger miracle can there be?' Everyone was astonished upon hearing this. How easily the Name God (Naam Bhagwan) upon being pleased, makes manifest among the devotees the Miracle of His glory.

2) Naam Dhyaan: concentrated jaap (repetitive meditation) of the Name (Naam), even if selfish, awakens soul-power (atmashakti). If it is mental or chanted alongwith the breath and in a loving manner by focusing the mind on the Name, ceaseless jaap (Shabd Brahma) and limitless sound (Naad Brahma) appear on their own accord. Naam Dhayaan is an easy and excellent means for cleansing the mind, burning old misdeeds and realizing the true self. This is the ultimate means for Union with the Endless.

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Naam is the essence of all means, the essence of all Yoga

It is the essence of all karma and its dhyaan bestows happiness

(Bhaktiprakash)

It is an extremely powerful means for the divinification of life or imbibing the qualities of Shri Ram in one's inner being.

With concentration on the sound of Ram Ram, auspicious forces for all round well-being emerge (Amritvani)

3) Naam Sankirtan (singing in praise of God's Name) - Kamini (lust), Kanchan (lucre) and Kirti (fame) make the human into an inhuman; these are cured by the fourth alliteration - Kirtan (singing in praise of God). Of all the Kirtans, singing in praise of the Name of God (Naam Sankirtan) is the most significant. In relation to the singing in praise of the Name of God (Naam Sankirtan) it has been said - it is like a thunderbolt (Vajra) in grinding the mountain of sin into dust. In happiness and sorrow, respect and disrespect and conflicts resolution, it is a sure remedy to as well as the dawn which destroys the deep darkness of ignorance. Excessively beautiful, full of devotion, hymns with loving devotional songs, fully immersed one should dedicate oneself to the feet of the Almighty - that is the true character of Sankritan (singing in praise of God). Shree Ram is Himself present at such places where his devotees come together to sing in praise of His Glory. The Kirtan (singing in praise of God) which is electrified;



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where loving tears well up and passion emerges - such a *Kirtan* affects the mind, the body and the marrow itself. The soul easily becomes peaceful through this. The Saints have truly pronounced that the worship of the Name is a very easy and the highest means of attaining the Lord's Love. Just as birds perched on a tree flee on hearing the clapping of hands, thus the birds of sin flee on clapping while singing the praise of God (*Sankirtan*). Elucidating the glory of singing the virtues of Lord Ram, Shri Tulsidasji states:

In the Kali age, however, men reach the end of mundane existence simply by singing the Almights's (Hari's) praises. In the age of Kali neither Yoga, nor the performance of sacrifices nor spiritual wisdom is of any avail; one's only hope lies in singing Lord Rama's praises.

(Ramcharit Manas, 7/ 103/4-5)

He further elaborates - one who loves Ram Naam (the Name of Lord Ram) more dearly than Shri Ramji is destined to attain salvation in this dire age of Kaliyug. On being asked by someone, Goswamiji explains the method of the worship of the Name:

Repeat Ram Ram, memorize Ram Ram, do jaap of Ram Ram, oh, tongue!

(Vinay-Patrika 65)

The mind has three states. It is sometimes calm, sometimes sad and sometimes happy. Tulsidasji explains: 'When the mind is peaceful, do *jaap* of Ram Ram is such a manner that you attain

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the state of meditation; if the mind is unhappy, then repeatedly chant Ram Ram - repeat my sweet song Ram Ram Ram (rat meri rasna Ram Ram Ram); in illness or crisis, when the mind is not stable, even then continue reciting Ram Ram. When the mind is in a happy state, then play with the joyful 'Ram.' Tulsidasji explains that when we perform Sankirtan with music and musical instruments clapping also takes place, hands are raised and dance is performed - all these acts are the act of playing joyfully with the Name God (Naam Bhagwan) and getting immersed in Him. Thus, Shri Tulsidasji also describes and acknowledges the above three parts of the worship of the incarnation of the Name. Swami Satyananadji reassures firmly and confidently as follow:

Ram Mantra is the redeemer and savior which delivers our soul from mortal bondage (captivity in the perishable human body). Be sure that remembrance of His Maha-Mantra leads to salvation as well as provides all round bliss, good fortune, God-realization and oneness with the Supreme Being (May our faith in the Maha Mantra of Ram Naam be resolute and unshakeable.

(Amritvamni)

Guru Nanak says speaks in a similar voice -

Says Nanak only that person is at peace who sings the virtues of Ram All other worldly persons are possessed by temptations of the world and therefore do not attain the state of fearlessness.

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Once a person enquired from Swami Akhandanandji: 'Maharaj ! Please explain any way which is simple, brief, does not require prayer objects, is easily accessible to everyone and fructifies early.' Maharajji replied: 'The Upasana (sitting close to) of the Name of God.' The other person enquired: 'How can one purge attachment to materialism?' Maharajji replied. 'When the simran of Shri Ram Naam grew strong hold, Kabir noted that all material subjects fled'

History is witness.

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The holy 'Ram-Naam' ensured ultimate salvation even to those who were atheistic and irreligious, and who led a life of wickedness, immorality, crime, promiscuity, deceit and treachery. This was the result of remembering Shri Ram's Name only.

> The Graciousness of 'Shri Ram-Naam' saves the souls of even those who lack steadfastness, faith, self-restraint and are irreligious and overly indulgent. The holiest of the holy 'Ram-Ram' helped and sustained the worst offenders and criminals who were absolutely cleansed and purified without any traces of past sinfulness.

> > (Amiritvani)

The other incarnations became manifest for one, or for a few, or to carry out a specific mission, but the Name as Incarnation (Naam Avatar) is for everyone, for fulfilling all purposes, universally available and at all times.

Endless salutations to such a Shri Naam Bhagwan!

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The Actual Guru-Dakshina – Inspiring Incidents (Vaastvik Guru-Dakshina Ke Prerak Prasang)¹

Swami Dr. Vishwa Mitterji Maharaj

Jagatguru (the Guru of the world) is only the all virtuous formless Supreme Almighty (sagun nirakar). Saints and great persons born in the form of Satguru (true spiritual guru) are diverse forms of Him. Param Guru, the Almighty, through their medium imparts 'naam daan' (the 'daan' of the Name of the Almighty) to disciples, imparts diksha of Guru Mantra to them, imparts a higher position to them that even His own. In His own words, He instructs: 'Know that the saints are greater than Me' (Ramcharit Manas, 3/ 35/2). That is - saints should be considered higher than Me. Why? Not imparting 'Naam daan' Himself, but imparting it through Guru's in human form and disciples take diksha and give offering in gratitude which is known as Guru-dakshina. These materials are in the form of wealth, clothes, eatables and other items of daily use. What kind of dakshina (offering) is desired by the Satguru and the Supreme Guru, the Almighty from disciples is presented here through some illustrations -

(I)

At the completion of his spiritual learning (vidyadhyana), Shri Krishna prayed at the divine feet of Guru Sandipani (sage of Gurus) — 'Gurudev! Please instruct me, what Guru-dakshina (offering in gratitude to the Guru) may I present at your holy feet? How may I serve you?' Gurudev said — 'I do not want anything, there are no needs.' 'Gurudev! You may have no needs, but I need to give some Guru-dakshina and do some seva (service).'

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'Ok, then ask your Guru Ma what she wants.' Shri Krishna enquired from the Guru's wife — 'In what way may I serve you?' "Krishna, you are our most capable student. My son has departed to the abode of Yama, bring him back for me.' Shri Krishna brought the son of the Guru back from the abode of Yama and placed him in the lap of the Mother. What significance Guru-dakshina has; the relations between Guru and disciple have! For the completeness of this pure relationship, upon receiving 'naam-daan' (the gift of the "Name"), Guru-mantra or knowledge, it is essential that the disciple give the Guru, in some form or another, Guru-dakshina.

(2)

Mahatma Shukdev grew atma-gyani (knowledgeable one who has received the stage of self realization) while in the womb itself. Refusing to emerge from there he started to say - I want to remain unattached from worldly illusion (maya). The Almighty stopped the momentum of maya for five split seconds, then Shuk emerged from the womb. Detachment (vairagya) was so powerful that on birth itself he left for the forests. His father Maharishi Vyas Devji wanted to send his detached son to King Janak but Shukdevji had many doubtful questions in his mind - for instance- he is a king, I am a rishi (sage); he is a householder; I am a renunciate; he is kshtariya, I am Brahmin; he is a materialist (bhogi), I am a yogi, a sanyasi. How can I make such a king Janak my guru? He went to him many times, but returned. In the criticism of a saint mahatma, in seeking their faults, one's virtuous earnings are lost. Devrishi Narad, in order to teach him, took the form of an old person and was pouring mud into a drain of water. In so much water, mud would not stand. On seeing this Shuk asked - What are you doing?' The elderly person replied- I am making a dam.' 'Foolish person - does a dam get built just by throwing mud like this?' The old person promptly turned his face and said - I am not

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foolish. Foolish is that Shukdev, see his foolishness; prideful he has abandoned his feelings for Guru and wasted his accumulated knowledge (gyan rashi).' Shuk fainted on hearing this; on gaining consciousness he got up and went straight to Raja Janak

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Respectfully, devotionally, lovingly, came close to Janak,

Who was in the cosmic world, the island of dharma. Message was sent through the gate-keeper-

King! Shuk has come here, with the thirst of love, Grant darshan, be merciful, enable crossing of the worldly oceans.

Seeing his young age, King of Mithila gave the command,

Stay at the hallway, for three nights remain. Hearing the commandment, Shukdev obeyed immediately,

Stood for three days, without a wrinkly on his brow! (Bhakti Prakash)

In the same way a message was sent to stay for three days and three nights more. There, fasting in winter, Shukdevji stayed on. There ladies came and went by their own will but Shukdevji remained happily engrossed in *bhakti*. Seeing this the ruler asked for the reason of his arrival?

With folded hands to Janak said
Shuk Muniraj,
Path of self-realization, devotion, grant me today!
(Bhakti Prakash)

On considering Shukdev worthy and a pure receptacle, Sadguru Maharaj Janak gave him *diksha* of the 'Name' of the Almighty. Shukdevji spent a few days at the feet of his Guru doing *sadhana*,

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all doubts were dispelled. The disciple wanted to give his Guru, Guru-dakshina. 'Son! (Vatsya) I don't want anything.' On his insistence and to show the vital-ness of Guru-dakshina, Raja Janak said: 'Give me whatever may be of no use in your view.' After thinking and contemplating, the disciple picked up some earth. The earth immediately said - To rivers, oceans, mountains, palaces and houses I give the gift of myself. To every human, I give food, flowers, fruits, myself. How am I useless?' Throwing the earth, he picked up a stone which said - From me houses, palaces, forts are designed; I am not a waste.' Shukdevji's mind was alerted pride in oneself is at fault; this is useless and due to this there are bondages in the world. Thus each disciple should place his duty (kartavya) that is the pride of his doing, his ego at the holy feet of the Guru in the form of Guru-dakshina. Gurudevs ask only for this from their disciples.

(3)

Saint Tukaram narrates in his own words mysteries, secret things about himself - Listening to religious stories, I fell in love with the Almighty. I became a disciple of Lord Vithal, started to perform incessant jaap of his 'Name'. The Lord felt merciful and in my dreams, Satguru met me. I was returning from a dip in the Ganges, the meeting was on the way. He said - 'On the inspiration of God Vithalnath, I have come to give you instructions.' I said - I have never even done any service towards God, how merciful He is.' He gave the Divine 'Name' of Ram-Krishna-Hari and asked for a one-fourth kilo (pav) of toop (gheeclarified butter) as guru-dakshina. Tukaram clearly says - the true meaning of toop is the feeling of - T' - mine, that is ahenta mamta not ghee. He explained - You are neither man nor woman, you are the soul, a part of that imperishable God. Surrender to me all your feelings of the body, that is your doer-ship (your ego), give that to me.'

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On his travels, Guru Nanak reached a town. Its king came to have his darshan and was much influenced. Thus, expressing a great desire to present something he said- Baba! I want to give something.' 'King, whatever is yours, you may give.' Gold, silver, diamonds, jewels all were kept in front - Please accept them.' 'All this is not yours, before they were your father's, before him your grand-father's and after you, they will be your son's. On your demise, they will be left behind here, then how are they yours? Your physical body will also be left. That is also not your's. Mind is also not your's- why? You are sitting here but your mind is wandering elsewhere. One has control over one's possessions, the mind wanders day and night. You are sitting for bhajan path, that is your physical body is sitting in the company of Lord, the satsang (satsangati), but the mind is with the family or somewhere else. King, even the intellect is not yours, if it were then you would not take the wrong decisions. It is full of ignorance that is why it makes truth into falsity and grief giving objects into pleasurable ones. This is maya.' Baba, then you tell me - what to give.' 'King, when the same situation was before King Janak, prayers were performed to Maharishi Yagyavalk to give instructions, by which the mind and intellect stay in control -

With folded hands, a major prayer was made, grant knowledge I am worthy of,
Rishi said, fortunate King, detached one, you are the renouncer!
Dhyaan, yagya now you perform, give dakshina and steady yourself.

While giving *Guru-dakshina*, the king prayed- 'Maharishi, take the entire kingdom.' 'This is not yours, it was your ancestors and will not remain yours. Give me such an object that is yours.' Please

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take the wealth.' Even that is not yours King, much of it is your father's and the rest belongs to the people. How is it yours? Horses, elephants, vehicles – are also not yours; today, they are with you, tomorrow with someone else. King, even the body is not yours; on death it will be left here. Give your mind in dakshina? Making this even more explicit, Guru Nanak says: 'This which you are saying - I give wealth, kingdom, body, mind, intellect, keep all this with yourself. Give T' to me. If you give T', all is gained and if T is not given, then even on giving everything, nothing is given.' Maharishi Yajyavalka asks Raja Janak for his mind -

In auspicious bhakti, Janakji said, may my mind belong to the sage,

Rishi said, my consent is there, your offering is accepted.

Self-knowledge has been realized, consider your yagya successful Oh, King!

He said listen beloved guru, may desires fly with wings.

Equanimity has not come to my mind, there is excessive restlessness.

Muni said - Offering is incomplete, with this the mind cannot focus fully.'

After giving the offering of the mind, do not waver, do not work with my mind,

Consider your mind as mine now, perform the work of the kingdom.

Intentional silence, steadfastness werem achieved, peace came after losing all doubts,

Calm, quiet mind, immovable body, the maya of the mind was fully removed.

(Bhakti Prakash)

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Giving his blessings, the Rishi said – 'Oh, King! I return your mind in the form of *prasad*. Do not think it your own, consider it mine and rule and also perform 'Shri Ram' bhajan.' Raja Janak was overwhelmed with joy, lost body-consciousness.

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(5)

There is a true incident about Tibet; one disciple went to his Gurudev and requested for diksha (initiation). The Guru said -'There are thousands of disciples here, there is no place for you.' 'Gurudev, be merciful. I can stay quietly here or there.' 'Fine, you pound the rice for everyone's meals.' The disciple made the Guru's instructions paramount, as a crown on the head (shirodhari) and day and night did this work. Neither did the disciple ever go to the Guru, nor did the Guru ever approach the disciple. Many years passed, the time for the Gurus' nirvana arrived. He wanted to bestow the Guru's position, thus asked his disciples - 'What you may have learnt here all these years, write its essence and give.' Almost everyone wrote this - 'The mind is a mirror, the Guru cleanses the dirt which accumulates on it.' The Guru was dissatisfied and unpleased. Thus, he said - 'Ask the person who pounds the rice once.' Everyone went, on being asked he replied - Brothers, I am uneducated, I cannot write but what did you all write?' What the majority had written, they told him. Then he said-Brothers, when the Guru has been found, then how is the mind with oneself? The Guru is the looter of the mind, we use his mind, thus for everything Satguru is responsible.' On hearing this, for the first and last time Guru Maharaj went to the disciple and bestowed the guru's position to him and himself achieved nirvana.

From the above narrated example, *Guru-dakshina's* essentialness, greatness and superiority become apparent. With giving *guru-dakshina*, according to the way of the *Shastras*, the Guru-disciple

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relationship becomes strong. Disciples have placed at the feet of the guru as *guru-dakshina* their self-pride, their ego, that is their mind in all its principal, but what is the practical form of this? On this theme, some examples are presented –

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(I)

Once Mahatma Buddha told his disciples – Bhikshus, four months from today I will achieve complete nirvana, then this body will not be in your midst; thus whatever is worthy of being done, do it soon; there is now no time for delay.' The entire sangha (congregation) drowned in great sorrow. Crying woefully, beating their chests, blubbering, the disciples started deep thought - 'What will happen now?' All were worried about how the set-up would run. A disciple named Tishya, on hearing the news, did not cry nor scream but entered intentional silence (Maun). His companions started to think, he is so deeply hurt that he has even stopped talking. They feared that he may go mad. Due to his good behaviour Tishya was extremely loved; the new of his quietude reached Gurudev, Tishya has, like a turtle, withdrawn himself internally. The disciple was called, he bowed at the holy feet. Buddha said, 'Son (Vatsya)! These bhikshus want to know about your feelings, your mental state.' Tishya replied with respectful humility - 'God! Your instructions - what is worth following - follow, do not delay. I am trying to follow those instructions, trying to make them possible. Be merciful, may my determination be fulfilled.' With tearful eyes, Trishya respectfully requested- 'My Lord! Oh, merciful Gurudev! Before nirvana may my 'I' die - for this grant me strength and also blessings. Now neither will I speak, nor move, nor waver. I have to use all my strength for this. Oh, merciful! Be kind so that these four months, I use for a revolution in my life – this way or that way may I be.' Listening to the disciple, the pleased Guru said - 'Oh, bhikshus! Become like Tishya. What will come of crying and blabbering?

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Prayer through flower garland offerings is not my prayer; those who offer flower, garlands of *dhyaan* everyday- that is the true prayer. Make your lives *sadhnamay*, making it enlightened is my true prayer. What has happened to Tishya let that happen in you.' The Guru's permission, his command, his teachings, his tradition to the letter, obedience, to be strongly resolute for a pure life journey, earning the wealth of the Lords 'name', to earn and accumulate the capital of good *karma* and to see the Lord in all humans and to serve them in the manner of serving the Guru; behave with them lovingly, to continue self study and to broadcast and spread the Guru's teachings and to motivate them for *satsang* and to encourage them for *sadhana* — is real Guru puja. To continue to offer such prayer like flowers that is to stay committed to maintain the above yows is in a real sense *Guru-dakshina*

(2)

At a Rishi's ashram on the banks of the Ganges, many disciples gained spiritual knowledge. On completing their education, they returned to their respective homes. While leaving, they would ask the Acharya - 'Gurudev! What may we give in Guru-dakshina? The guru would reply - What you have gained, when you are in society, implement it, bring your knowledge into your behaviour, stand on your own feet, earn truthfully and then after one year whatever your heart desires, you may give.' Upon leaving the ashram whatever was earned in their work, the disciples gave a portion with devotion to the Guru Maharaj. Once a simple, ordinary disciple came to the Gurukul; he was an ordinary householder, worked hard all day to maintain his family. Extremely keen to learn, his exemplary behaviour won the hearts of everyone. The Rishi taught him lovingly; whatever he learnt he would aspire to implement in his mind; whatever task was given to him, he completed by the next day. When his education was completed he too enquired -'Gurudev! What may I give in guru-dakshina?'

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The Rishi told him what he used to tell all his other disciples. He returned after a year, prostrated at the holy feet and said – 'Gurudev! I have come to present guru-dakshina.' Pleased to see him, the Guru asked – 'Son! What have you brought?' He brought forth ten people, they were from his village. He said – 'I have brought them in Guru-dakshina.'

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'For what?' Lord, what learning you had imparted to me, I took to them, in just that their lives have been reformed; now make them your disciples, so that so many more people tread the correct path.' Joyfully, the Rishi said — You have given me whole precious, most superior *Guru-dakshina*. Son, you have gained most superior things here, distributed the most superior and also presented me with the most superior.'

Frequently people go to the holy feet of the Guru to resolve worldly problems, the reason for coming to the satsang is the same that the darshan of the Saint Guru fulfills desires. They take diksha of the 'Name with the same hope that their worldly problems are resolved. For a while they perform jaap of the 'Name', do different types of prayers, disappointed by one they appeal to another. Today Vrindavan, tomorrow Rishikesh, day after they submit attendance at the holy feet of Balaji Bhagwan. Life is spent in tarrying. For such a person Bhakt Kabir Sahib says—

See the world's intoxication and madness, no one heeds devotionalism (Bhakti bhava)

Some come to ask for a son, give a rupee as offering,

Some come stricken by sorrow, be merciful on us please

Some celebrate weddings, engagements, anxious to please Saints-priests,

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Truth has no customers, the false world that glitters is what all want Says Kabir, 'Listen Oh, brothers (sadho)! What can one give such blind seekers!'

True saints upon seeing such a state of worldly person's comment-Brother! Our situation is akin to that of a shopkeeper in the midst of blind customers selling mirrors.' Such persons do not know the worth of a spiritual guru, nor that of Guru-dakshina. Such disciples have similar behaviour before the Guru or the Almighty; as they trade with each other. The Saint inspires to do the jaap of the Almighty's name, to perform bhakti, do sadhana to achieve moksha - such is the path they show, but there is no one willing to obey or to follow. Blessings are asked for, jaapdhyaan, seva-simran not performed.

The experience of the Saints shows us that becoming a disciple is very toilsome. A rare person understands the position of the Guru in spiritual life, few recognize its capabilities, and few have the selfrealization of what may be gained from the Guru, what should be asked for, what should be dedicated in his service? One youthful, curious person in his wanderings reached a valley in the mountains of Nepal where here he saw an elderly saint sitting on a cliff. He was engrossed in meditation; the youth waited, prostrated himself before him, introduced himself. It was sunset, the Saint asked the youth - 'Son (Vatsya)! My feet do not have the strength that could enable me to climb the mountain and go to my cave; assist me, take the trouble to make me sit on your shoulders and take me there.' A difficult climb, the youth carried him, they reached at 11 at night. Alighting the elder, the youth respectfully asked -'Mahatman! Any more service?' The Saint was extremely pleased; he was a great Yogi, he was a Swami of many Sidhis (spiritual powers), with his Yog shakti a lot of wealth appeared and he told the youth- 'As much as you want, take.' The

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youth said – 'Almighty! All this I have left behind and come. Will this teach me the essence of life? Will I understand death? Mahatma! All this is impermanent (perishable); if even from saints one gets the impermanent, then from where may one get the everlasting?' On hearing the youth's reply the Saint was overjoyed.

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'I am the body!' the death of this egoistic feeling is the real end this is the essence of death's mystery. This could be submitted as Guru-dakshina at the holy feet of the Guru and killed or by any other means. Only after the death of the ego can a disciple become worthy of true Guru-seva, otherwise without serving the world the disciple will serve his own ego and ruin his life. Those who obliterate themselves and are oriented to the Guru, never allow their Guru to die, through following his purposes and through spreading his message they keep him alive. Such disciples continue to give Guru Maharaj- life long, real Guru-dakshina and themselves too become immortal. Thus is why saints-mahatma's by their experiences have uttered the truism - "Those who have embraced Ram, obliterated their selves, have achieved Ram.' Where you will obliterate yourself, there the One responsible for becoming, will make you thus that you will always remain being; that is, you will become one who can never be obliterated. Such Satguru and disciples are both spiritually great (dhanya)!

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