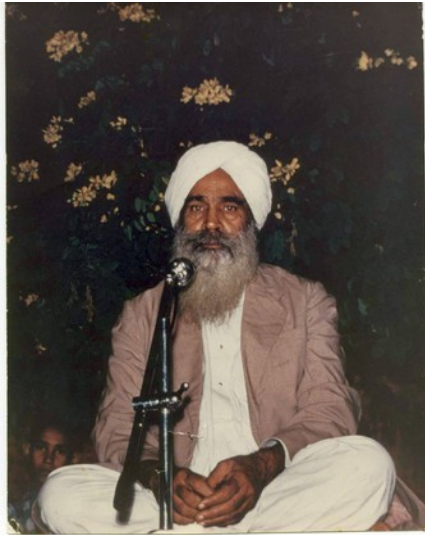


NAAM AND RAMAYANA

[This discourse, by Master Kirpal Singh, on the Hindi Ramayana of Tulsidas was translated from the Hindi by the *Sat Sandesh* staff.
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Take the recorded words of any true Master, and you will find that he cannot praise the Naam enough. The Vedas, the Shastras, and numerous other scriptures declare that man has no hope of salvation without the Naam—*One Naam is the Deliverer in all four yugas.*

During the discourses at Satsang the words of various Masters are quoted, but all on the same subject: salvation through Naam. Although an abundance of information is available on Naam or Word, yet very few people really understand the subject. Today we will see what Tulsidas Ji has said about it in his famous work, the Ramayana, which is a very noble and reliable source of information on moral and righteous living. One can say that it is a type of sacred scripture that can be taken right into our lives and practiced. It is a very wonderful work of great depth. Most of the world reads it as a story—a mighty epic of the lives of Lord Rama and his wife, Queen Sita—but very few people discover the depth of meaning hidden in the words.

The teaching of the Masters is no new thing; it has come to man through all the ages. But man does forget and so the Masters must come from time to time to revive the old old Truth. With the advent of each Master, praise for Naam has been highly lauded, and no

less in this great book Ramayana—of which I do not profess to be a scholar; but we will take a section which covers the subject of Naam.

*Understand that the Name [Naam]
and the Named are one;
The Lord and His Emissary are
intermingled in love.*

There is no difference between the Name and the Named. Name is the word given to denote something, as the word “water” is given to denote that liquid by drinking which one's thirst is satisfied. Similarly, the word *sewak* means one who is a servant of someone, but between them exists a profound love. The Named is He to express Whom we use so many words, while the true Name or Naam is the expression of that. So there is really no difference between the expresser and the expressed, for both are closely intermingled in love.

*Naam and Form are both His attributes—
Ineffable Eternal Quintessence.*

Naam and Form are the Lord's attributes, and attributes are part of illusion. Yet they are indescribable. The whole world speaks of illusion, but what is it? Its nature is not easily understood, but it has three main aspects: *pradhan* or principle, *prakriti* or nature, and *maya* or illusion. Pradhan is that which connects the material with the spiritual, and is the highest aspect.

One should grasp that the Attributable and the attribute are not separate—just as water and its coolness are not separate, or fire and its heat: both are one—and yet heat alone is not fire. Fire burning is something complete, and the heat is its expression. So Naam and Form are illusion, but are at the same time imperishable, permanent, indescribable.

In Vedanta, illusion is described as being that

which is not there, and yet which seems to be there. The Masters agree with this, but qualify the statement by explaining that the Attributable and the attribute are not different things, but are the Expresser and that which He expresses.

So at the higher stage there is *pradhan*, and when it reaches the lower stage, it is called *prakriti—nature*. *Par* means beyond, and *kriti* means natural attributes. The aspect of illusion or *maya* is the means of balancing everything—that is our intellect. Illusion is not separate from God and is sustained by Him, but of itself has no existence; it is nothing and yet it is there. If you can fully understand this, then creation becomes very simple: for the whole of creation is under the influence of illusion, which you can also call forgetfulness. When we forget ourselves and we forget that which lies behind everything, the Creator, then we are lost in illusion. *Illusion is like a huge serpent embracing the world—it eats those who serve it.*

In all three planes—the physical, astral, and causal—illusion is holding everything in its clutches. Its aspects are not separate—they come from the same source—but there is a difference. If a certain mango turns red in color when it is ripe, one cannot say that the color is not part of the fruit; and yet it has no identity, being but the mango's expression. Tulsidas is explaining a very deep subject, which is hard for anything but the advanced intellect to understand. So how does one gain the understanding? *This world you see is the Form of God; His Form is apparent.* The Lord and Sustainer becomes apparent when one's spiritual eye is opened—one sees that He is the very foundation of all illusion and that all expressions of it are His Form.

Paradoxically, it is the Lord's Form and it is not His Form. His Form is not apparent to one who is deep in forgetfulness and involved in illusion's enjoyments which are a grand play or trap set to ensnare our wandering attention. When the inner eye opens, then

we see everything as it truly is, and the illusion fades away. And this is how the illusion exists but does not exist.

*It is a sin to judge one greater than the other;
Listen to the Master's secret knowledge to understand this.*

We cannot say that the Attributable is greater than the attribute, for the two are of the same. However, the secret of the paradox can be found, for: *The world is a house of Truth in which the Truth resides.* And when one rises above all three planes, one begins to understand what Truth is. But this is not for the worldly man, whose eye is yet closed, and who, through becoming the body's image, has gone deep into forgetfulness. Illusion is like a serpent who, giving birth to its young, promptly eats them! But when rising above the three planes, a Gurumukh can be saved from it.

*You will see that the Form is
supported by Naam;
Knowledge of Form is not separate from Naam.*

One cannot have knowledge of Form without the knowledge of Naam—this is a law. Why is this? Because the Form itself is an expression of Naam and is not separate from it—even though both are in illusion. Although eternal, indescribable, yet of itself it has no existence. You can find reference to this in Vedanta, and all Masters have told us the same. So it is not a matter for conflict in religious thought; it is a matter for understanding.

*Form without Naam cannot be known;
Effort regardless, it cannot be recognized.*

Even if you hold an object before your eyes, how can you recognize it without knowing its name? You can see something before you, but you cannot identify it. The difference arises only in the various ways in which man approaches the subject: that is why the Masters advise the sincere seekers not to

renounce the world and go off to the lonely places. Their advice is to gain salvation while living in the world, by developing that latent or inner eye with which one can see the Truth—the Truth which unfolds itself automatically when our angle of vision changes and we see everything in a truer light. *When the perfect Satguru is met, perfect is his competency; while living in the world, laughing, wearing, one gains salvation.* So it is not necessary to cease living an everyday life, for in the forests and isolated places, the illusion still exists—one must take food and water, there are animals there, one must sleep on some kind of bedding—is this not all part of the illusion? Where can one go, where the illusion does *not* exist? Worldly people suffer and die without ever seeing a glimpse of God's Form—and yet every spot in the whole of creation is God's temple. Each and every man can make any place sacred, by simply bowing his head in love and devotion, for all is holy where devotion kneels. Is there any place where God is not present? He is everywhere, and so is His expression.

*Simran of Naam without seeing the Form
Is susceptible to doubt in the heart.*

There *is* some attraction in an association by words only; one can develop some feeling of love in this way. If one has never seen a mango fruit but hears a description of its appearance and sweetness, one can form some kind of picture of what the mango is really like. Similarly, by hearing about the Truth, or repeating certain word associations, one's interest can be awakened and a feeling of love stirred up in one's heart, for the words which tell of the Truth are related to it somewhat. But to go deeply into the subject, one must see it for oneself, and for that the opening of the inner eye is necessary: to see what is expressed by God and repeated by oneself. Repetition or simran is the first step, and is taught for understanding, and to focus the interest or attention to see that.

*Nature of Naam and Form is an
indescribable story;
Those who know it enjoy indescribable bliss.*

Even the theory is difficult to understand—but if one can grasp it, the knowledge of the theory alone is enough to fill one's being with happiness: a happiness which cannot be expressed in words. If one can receive this joy by merely understanding the subject, what will be the potential bliss of experiencing it?

*With and without attribute is Naam;
Name and Form both go to understand and interpret it.*

Naam is the interpreter of attribute and non-attribute both, for it alone reveals them. To understand the Truth man must experience both Naam and Form—how else can it be possible? We can try to describe such things through the intellect, but this is inaccurate; whereas experiencing Naam and Form gives us accurate knowledge of the Truth. It is clear why Naam and Form are necessary to each other.

*O Tulsi, if you are desirous of seeing
the Light of Naam within and without—
Just keep the lamp of Ram Naam
at the threshold of the mind.*

He has so far described the Naam and the Form, but now he uses God's name in the same reference. Here the Hindi word *Ram* is used for God, and the root of this is *ramma*, which means vibration permeating all. The power which vibrates in every atom, and through which all creation came into being, is called *Ram*, among other terms. So Tulsidas tells us that if we desire to have the Light within and without, we must light the lamp of Ram Naam. Put God's lamp in the doorway of your mind, and with all thought, all attention, do the simran of God's Naam; then, both within and without, the Light will become effulgent.

Once you are connected to Naam, you have only to close your eyes to see Light within—and with advancement you will see it with open eyes also. *Repeat the Naam with devotion and the Light of millions of suns will burst forth.* The practice must be done with full attention.

There are numerous types of simran. One is to repeat with the tongue, one through the throat, one at the heart's level, etc., etc. If the repetition is not done in the mind—with the tongue of thought—there is no penetration and, therefore, no success. One can begin at word-level, but it must soon develop to mind-level; for when the mind is stilled, only then will contact be made and the Light revealed. This is the Science of the Masters.

What does the Guru do? *He puts the true collyrium of Naam in the eye by withdrawing the attention behind the eyes, which banishes the darkness to give you Light.* The presence of Light within is proof of contact with the Naam. Christ said: *If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.* If the single or spiritual eye is opened, you will see for yourself that your whole being is filled with Light—the Light of God. The Muslim brothers speak of *Kohitoor*—the mountain peak—the place behind the two physical eyes where the Prophet Moses saw the radiance of the Lord. All Masters tell us to rise above the body; the attention must rise above body consciousness to the still silent point behind and between the eyes, which is the seat of the soul, the focus-point where the Light becomes effulgent. Seeing the Light within is the assurance of contact with Naam. God is Light, and Naam is the power of that Ever-Existent Lord; one can call it the God-in-action Power.

*Repeating Naam with his tongue while alive,
The yogi enjoys renunciation by cutting off all attention
from outside.*

By devoting oneself to Naam, with full attention,

one can achieve the same state of awakenedness that the yogis reach when they arise from the deep sleep of illusion. At this, all illusionary attachment ceases, and this culminates the true renunciation of the world and its environments. True renunciation really means freedom from all attachment—and you can achieve this if you so desire, for this is the power and the greatness of Naam. Guru Nanak was once discussing the Naam with some yogis, and he told them: *Like the lotus flower above the water, and the duck which shakes herself dry: Swim the Ocean of Life through the Surat Shabd: O Nanak, this is the greatness of Naam.* One can swim this ocean of life untouched by the taints of the world. At present, mind and attention are like one; but they can be separated by rising above the senses and repeating Naam with the mind. The true awakening occurs when the mind is stilled and one rises above the body. We live in a very sad condition—*The whole world sleeps in attachment and forgetfulness—How can this illusion go?* Only with the aid of Naam Power can one overcome this state of sleep, and accomplish that which the Masters advocate: to live in the world but to be not of the world.

*Complete happiness comes by the
incomparable realization
Through the indescribable, formless Naam.*

This is the stage of the Nameless Naam, which has no form and is free from all impurity, and through which one can reach the height of an inestimable bliss. Tulsidas has first described the Naam and the Form, and now he indicates that beyond this lies a stage of complete bliss where Naam is formless, where Naam is no longer in expression, and no longer uses Name and Form. So we begin to see the difference between the expression and the background of that expression.

*If you wish that concealed knowledge revealed,
Repeat the Naam with your life's breath.*

By repeating Naam with full attention, all the mysteries are revealed; but it must be repetition at the highest level—with all the heart, mind, and spirit. The Muslim Fakirs also say that simran done with the attention is the teaching of the fully realized Fakir. Fakirs or Masters are the only ones who know this secret teaching; you will not find the worldly doing this kind of simran.

*Repeat the Naam with devotion and love;
Become mystically adept, gaining all great powers.*

Those connected to Naam, who daily repeat Naam with all attention, gradually master the supernatural powers, because: *The supernatural powers are the servants of Naam.* The disciple of Naam learns to control these powers, but the Masters have forbidden them to be used; for there is the danger thereby of the student going into outward expression and receding further and further from the Truth. But it is a fact that gaining control of these powers is an automatic part of progress on the path of Naam.

*Repeating Naam, the afflicted are freed from all misery
and gain happiness.*

When Guru Nanak said that the whole world was unhappy, he was asked if there were not a single soul who enjoyed happiness, and he said: “They are happy who are sustained by Naam.” Even the most miserable of people have transformed their lives into an expression of joy by being connected to the Naam. *Naam is the panacea for all ills.* It is the only real means to happiness. But I will repeat that very few people understand the subject of Naam.

When one speaks of Naam it is but a word; so, one must be connected to the Naam which is a Power, and not merely a word. Outer connection with a mere word

will not give contact with the Truth, and will not banish one's miseries. Swami Ji has also spoken on this subject. He says: *O attention (or soul), we know that you are unhappy . . .* He says that he can see the misery of the soul, and since when has it been miserable? He then answers this: *Since the day you were separated from the Shabd, and developed a friendship with the mind.* Through this friendship with the mind, the soul became involved with the senses, and has ever since remained at that level. This is how it got imprisoned in the worldly name and form, and the misery started from there. Now, how can the soul be released from all this? The natural corollary is that one should leave this mind-involvement by the only means powerful enough, and that is connection to the Shabd or Naam. Each Master has his own terms of expression, but the subject is the same. Furthermore, he who is in conscious contact with the Naam becomes fearless.

*There are four kinds of true devotees of God;
All of them are full of love and
compassion, and are broad minded.
All four are sustained by Naam;
But the realized one is the Lord's
beloved above all.*

There is nothing higher than Naam—it is something which cannot be understood by the common man. It is the giver of all phases of life: those who are seeking get the connection by the grace of Naam; the lamenting souls are heard, by the grace of Naam; those who so desire find fulfillment in Naam. So righteousness, ethics, good actions, and salvation are all possible because of Naam. All four types of devotees are devoted to Naam, but the Lord loves those the most who have realized the Naam.

*Naam was the ruling means for
emancipation in all four ages;
In Kalyug especially, there is no other means.*

Naam has sustained every age. Its praises are sung in all scriptures: *One Naam gave salvation in all four ages*. However, in this Kali Yuga or Kalyug, particularly, Naam is imperative. One cannot maintain an iota of righteousness without it. In Kalyug, the age of man is short, his intellect reduced, his health is poor. The long practices and austerities, like prana yoga, hatha yoga, and others, were suitable for other ages in the past.

It is stated that in the Sat Yuga or Satyug, man's age averaged one hundred thousand years, which may or may not be so; but in Kalyug we are concerned with present conditions and have to work with them. It is highly probable that man did live for long periods of time in the past, for scriptures have recorded it so: a certain Rishi, for example, is stated to have done eighty-eight thousand years of rigid austerities, and others did similar feats, etc. Then in Tretayug it is written that man's age was reduced to an average of ten thousand years, and in Dwaparyug reduced again to one thousand years. In Kalyug it is rare for a man to live up to or beyond one hundred years, and the average is nearer to fifty years. In India, for instance, the average age is recorded at 22 years. Just tell me, how can man accomplish such long practices?

So Tulsidas tells us that in this age, nothing but Naam is effective. Gurbani also states: *Kalyug has come, Kalyug has come, sow the Naam, sow the Naam; this opportunity will not return—never—do not forget in illusion, sow the Naam*. It clearly states the situation; so brothers, there is no way out but through Naam. People desire many different things—cure for their ills, riches, name and fame—and a few desire salvation. But one Master says that he who is free from all desires is the one who enjoys the real sweetness of Naam—its true Nectar. Such a devotee would be like a fish without water, without the Naam: Naam is his very life; he cannot live without it. Guru Nanak puts it

this way: *With It he lives; without It he dies.* He also says: *The more I remember, I am enlivened; otherwise, I die.* This gives us an inkling about the Naam, but Naam is not to be merely talked about; it is to be contacted, experienced, and enjoyed.

*Attribute and Non-attribute, both
are forms of Brahm;
They are inexpressible, unfathomable,
eternal, incomparable.
I think that Naam is higher than both,
For they are controlled by Naam.*

What is the manifestation that comes from both Attribute and Non-attribute? Naam. Naam is the controlling power of everything, and to be connected to it one needs a very fortunate destiny. It is a deep and subtle subject, but Tulsidas is unfolding it beautifully.

*The Competent People know all-
I speak of this knowledge from the love in my heart.*

The Masters are the knowledgeable people who know everything—he tells us this from the wisdom of his own experience, from the depths of love he has in his heart.

*We see the wood but the fire is
hidden within it;
Only the awakened have the true concept.*

Now he is speaking metaphorically. For example, fire is hidden in wood, and yet no one can see it; just like this, both attribute and non-attribute are parts of God's nature. If man truly understood this great truth, the knowledge would be salvation to him; but as he stands he is bound to the cycle of births and deaths.

*Practice of Attribute and Non-Attribute are both more
difficult than Naam;
Naam is greater than Brahm and Ram.*

All practices in the spheres of Attribute and Non-Attribute are very exacting, but the practice of Naam is not at all difficult—why is this? Because, only through Naam can the Attribute and Non-Attribute phases of God be understood. Without Naam these aspects of the Lord cannot be grasped or absorbed, and this includes the outer expressions of creation.

Naam is something contacted from within—spiritually—when one rises above the senses, and this is made possible only by a competent Master. True understanding starts after this contact is made. For instance, to explain the workings of a powerhouse is one thing; but if a person actually visits the building, a deeper understanding of its functions begins to form.

*The permeating Lord is imperishable;
He is Awakened Truth, the source of all bliss.*

The Omnipotent and the Omnipresent vibrates in every atom—there is no place where Naam does not exist—and it offers a veritable treasure house of happiness. *Whatever is created is created through Naam; there is no place without Naam.*

*This flawless Lord is in each heart,
And yet the world is drowned in misery.*

One might well wonder or ponder the ironical fact that God resides in every being, and yet everyone is unhappy! We are swimming in Him, just as fish swim in the water—we are living in that life-giving Nectar, but are dying of thirst. What is the reason for this sad situation?

*Naam's True Form is got only by right endeavor,
When it then manifests within.*

The reason for all our sorrows is that Naam is not manifested within us. The potential of experiencing

Naam *is* within us, just as the fire is in the wood, but it must be made manifest. *Manifest the hidden Naam*. Also, *Manifest the hidden Sound*. To make all this possible, the seeker must be ready to put in a little effort—in order to gain something of a value that cannot be estimated. A precious gem must be selected from other stones and examined separately before its properties can be appreciated; otherwise, it remains just another stone.

So all our misery is through lack of the contact with God. *Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink*. The Lord is everywhere—where is He not? But men are not fortunate enough to have even the briefest experience of Him—so we are dying of thirst. *It is in us, but we know it not—oh, cursed be this life, this living; O Tulsi, the whole world suffers from this cataract*. Bheek Sahib says similarly: *O Bheek, no one need be hungry, for each has tied to him a Ruby; but no one cares to untie it*. That ruby is Naam, the knot which binds matter and consciousness together; and if that knot is not untied by rising above body consciousness and establishing connection with Naam, we will remain hungry—all through life. We may have material wealth, but spiritually we live like paupers.

*Then, Naam Power is limitless—
beyond even Non-Attribute;
I say Naam is greater than Rama—
according to my understanding.*

Naam's power goes beyond the stage of Non-Attribute, and therefore is the greater power. Having already solved this mystery of Life in all its aspects, Tulsidas is an authority on the subject. Further on he tells us how Naam is also greater than Rama, by comparison.

Coming to the aid of the devotees of that era, Rama took the physical form and washed away all the unhappiness that the sages, the Rishis and the Munis were suffering at the hands of the evil forces running

rife at that time. This is the work of the Avatar. Whenever the maintenance of moral righteousness is threatened, the Avatar takes birth in the world to set the disorder right. When any country is badly run and riots begin, control is put into the military's charge and the trouble is corrected, after which the rule returns to the civil administration. So it is, on a larger scale, when the world retrogresses to a state beyond its own control, God's Power manifests in the form of the Avatar, who settles the chaos and misery and restores righteousness.

The Avatar Ramchanda, or Lord Rama, who is stated to have been the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, was born the son of King Dashrath, and was an Avatar competent in all the fourteen supernatural powers. Tulsidas, author of this great epic, tells us of the two manifestations of the same Power, which are superimposed upon each other. However, there is a vast difference between these two: the Master's Ram and the world's Ram.

*One Ram was the son of Dashrath,
One Ram is vibrating in each being,
One Ram is all creation's play,
One Ram is different from all.*

The main comparison is between the Ram which manifested in the Avatar Ramchanda, and the Ram which is different from or above all other powers.

*God's Devotee took human form, taking the world's
burden and bringing peace to the devout;
Repeating Naam with love is easy and is competent to
enable the devotee to reach the stage of bliss.*

If the devotee repeats the simran of Naam with full love and devotion, then without any difficulty he will reach the stage of all bliss. Now he begins to go into the detail of the comparison:

*Ramchanda freed one doomed woman called Ahlia;
Naam gives salvation to unlimited numbers.*

There is an anecdote in Lord Rama's life about the soul of a certain woman who, for committing a certain sin, was petrified like a rock for thousands of years. Lord Rama released that soul from its imprisonment in that lower expression by touching the rock with his foot. But Tulsidas is explaining how Naam by comparison gives freedom to all—to any soul that has retrogressed. This is a clear indication of Naam's greatness. It is even clearer when one understands that Naam is the Maker of both Avatars and Masters. Electricity, for instance, can be used to create both heat and cold—both very useful but different demonstrations of the same power. So somewhere, this great Naam Power is working in the Avatar, like a commander-in-chief of an army, and somewhere it is working in the Master like a viceroy. Both are expressions of the same power, but with different functions.

As Kabir has said: *God has made Negative and Positive, for He wanted to enact the play of creation.* Both are God's great Power, which He uses in His own design of creation. That Power is the Sustainer of everything—it is the background behind everything; its methods of working are varied, that's all. Avatars punish the sinners and reward the righteous people; Masters free the attention from the prison of mind and senses, and rejoin that attention or soul to its Source. The Avatar's job is to restore and maintain order in the world, that it may remain inhabited by the souls. The Master's job is to uproot the souls from the worldly habitation, and they pull the soul above mind and senses and connect it to Naam Itself. So Negative and Positive both draw their Power from the one Lord.

There are those who argue and debate that Positive is greater, that Negative is greater, etc. Brothers, understand quite clearly that both are most necessary in this world. The Negative Power upholds all the laws of creation. The police force of any country does not bother the people who obey the laws, but rather they are a protection for good citizens. The task of the Negative Power is a very important one, just as that of the Positive Power; and we must respect both. The Masters' aim is for man to cease coming and going in creation, for the soul to be freed from matter and senses, ultimately and without any undue waste of time, reaching its true and permanent home. The Masters tell us that this world is full of negativity and is a bad place in which to remain; and while living out our obligations here, we should join up with positivity and then learn to transcend them both and realize the Sustainer of all.

*Ram himself worked for the Rishis' peace;
He himself went to war for righteousness.*

Lord Rama killed the powerful ogress Tarka, who was disturbing the great sage Vishvamitra and other Rishis in their meditations, and for the same reason killed her son Marich. Now what does Naam do?

*Naam erases the devotees' sins and miseries;
It gives a contact of Itself which dispels the darkness,
like night fleeing before a sunrise.*

Just as the darkness of night disperses with the coming of the dawn, so is the darkness of ignorance and sin banished with the contact and practice of the Naam. You can say that all lower actions are consumed in the fire of knowledge, which is the Power of the Naam.

*Ram himself broke Shiva's bow;
And by the grace of Naam all the*

world's fear is cast asunder.

Lord Rama was the only one who could break the powerful bow of Lord Shiva, and, in doing so, won the right of marriage to Princess Sita, daughter of the famous King Janak. Naam, on the other hand, has the power to banish all fear—with regular contact with Naam a man becomes fearless.

*Ram made the Petrified Forest flourish with life;
Naam enlivens the minds of men.
Ram destroyed the line of evil;
Naam in Kalyug destroys all sin.*

Lord Rama destroyed the Rakshasas and all their kin (“the line of evil”); but in this Iron or Negative Age (Kalyug), those under Naam gain freedom from their sins.

*Ram gave salvation to the devoted vulture;
Naam gives salvation to millions, as stated in the Vedas.*

When King Ravan abducted Rama's wife, Sita, a vulture named Jitayu, who was deeply devoted to Rama, fought Ravan in an attempt to rescue Sita, but was mortally wounded in the combat. The narrative tells also of another great devotee named Bilni, who had been preparing for Lord Rama's coming for many years, removing the thorns from the forest pathways, keeping them clear and clean, etc. When at last Rama arrived in that place, on his journey to rescue Sita from Ravan, she fed him with wild berries, diligently tasting each one for sweetness before offering it to the Lord, which he graciously accepted. Rama gave salvation to both these devoted souls, but Naam gives salvation to limitless sinners.

You will find the highest praise of Naam in many sacred scriptures, including the Vedas and the Shastras. Tulsidas himself gave many examples of Naam's greatness in his narrative of the Ramayana epic. For

instance, Rama gave salvation to Vibhishan, Ravan's brother, and Hanuman by giving them special commissions in his service; whereas Naam gives salvation through service to many unknown and poor people. Also, Rama erected a bridge across the ocean; whereas Naam spans the Ocean of Life and carries the souls safely to the shore of freedom. Then, Rama killed Ravan and every member of his huge and evil family; Naam destroys all attachment and illusion—when the devotee practices it with all love and sincerity. What other extraordinary achievement of Naam has Tulsidas mentioned?

*Through Naam's great blessing,
Shiva enriched the inauspicious.*

Lord Shiva frequented the most inauspicious places, like cremation grounds. His company was inauspicious—that of snakes and so on. Even his appearance savored of the inauspicious, his naked body smeared with ashes; and yet, because he had the blessing of Naam, those very sinister places began to flourish wherever he went, and they have since been glorified. And, as we all know, snakes and ashes have become most auspicious symbols. Such extraordinary things are made possible with the grace of Naam.

*The Rishis, Munis, Yogis, who gained the bliss of Brahm
Did so with the blessing of Naam.*

The ancient sages gained their spiritual elevation—up to the point of their inner progress—all by the grace of Naam.

*Narad also realized the blessing of Naam
And became the beloved of the Lord.*

Narad was a great devotee who realized the Naam's power, and through it became the beloved of the world's Beloved Vishnu [one of the Hindu trinity, who

sustains the universe]. Naam is not a new power; it has ever been in existence. Each spiritual exponent gives out however much of its understanding that he gains, and no more. How many can know Naam in its entirety? Whomsoever was fortunate enough to gain salvation did so only through Naam's blessing and nothing else; and each one gained freedom up to the point or level of their progress.

*The Lord's blessing overflows upon he who
repeats the Naam —
Prahlad became a shining example.*

Prince Prahlad was so devoted to the Lord that he gained a large share of His pleasure, which made Prahlad shine among devotees. Naam's glory is ageless. In every age man has no memory of its glories, so the Masters must come again and again to re-enliven the old old truth.

Kabir Sahib tells his own story when he says: *I came in all four ages—in Satyug my name was Sukrat; in Tretayug my name was Karunamae; when I came in Dvarparyug my name was Maninder; in Kalyug my name is Kabir.* In all four ages he told the people of Naam's greatness. Many are under the impression that this teaching is something new; but it is, in fact, the oldest thing there is. Sometimes it appears somewhat different outwardly, due to the slight variance of presentation or description by each Master. But contact with Naam remains the same, and all other inner aspects remain constant. The world talks about *Naam, Naam*, but in actual fact is oblivious of it. When the Master comes to revive the understanding, he gives the connection which enlivens the teaching.

*Dhruv, being disgusted with his father,
repeated God's Name,
And realized the incomparable tranquility.*

Through the world's injustice, Prince Dhruv left

his kingdom in anger, and started meditating in the forest, ultimately realizing the state of utter tranquility. He turned to God out of hatred for the world; but when he rose above the material level, he entered into tranquil bliss—again through the blessing of the Lord's Naam.

*When through Simran, Hanuman,
“the son of the wind,” realized Naam,
He brought Ram into his control.*

Hanuman was called the son of the wind, and Tulsidas says that by doing Simran he gained knowledge of Naam, which took him to the stage of having his every wish fulfilled by Lord Rama. These anecdotes are being given to demonstrate how every spiritual aspirant must rely on the Naam Power to achieve success. Today it is not different; if salvation is to be gained, it will be through the Naam. The important thing is to get connected to that which is the background of Naam and Form—that which is the sustainer of both.

*Ajamil and the singer Ganika
Got salvation through the Lord's Naam.*

Even a great sinner like Ajamil and Ganika, the prostitute, were redeemed by Naam; so why should we not also stand the chance of getting salvation if we get connected to Naam? Guru Ramdas explains that if one puts a small spark of fire among a huge pile of logs, they will be consumed to ashes in a very short space of time. So for a large accumulation of sins, one needs but a small spark of Naam from the true Master to incinerate them. He is giving so many examples, all in praise of Naam. And finally, what does he say?

*To what extent can Naam be praised?
Even Ramchanda could not sing its praises.*

This emphasizes the impossibility of describing Naam's greatness. One can only say that there is a place where it is manifested and that is the human pole.

There is also a very big powerhouse, which supplies according to the extent of power the pole is fit to bear; and from there it is distributed.

Naam is a deep subject which cannot be explained in words; it is beyond any language. Tulsidas does not belittle Lord Rama when he says that he could not sing the praises of Naam, because as all realized souls have discovered, Naam is inexpressible. Whatever power the human pole can receive, so that much will be expressed. Guru Nanak went so far as to say that if whatever the Rishis, Munis, and Mahatmas have sung in praise of Naam were doubled, even that would be a poor attempt at describing the greatness of Naam.

*God's Naam is eternal, but it resides in this Kalyug;
Those who do its simran are fortunate
—Tulsi became Tulsidas.*

The eternal Naam vibrates perpetually everywhere, and in this Kalyug, salvation is not possible without its contact. Tulsidas says that through devotion to Naam he became Tulsidas instead of just poor Tulsi [i.e., he became a respected person addressed by his full name]. He was the author of this great epic of the Ramayana, from which this hymn has been taken. It is one of the most sacred of Hindu scriptures, and is a complete and comprehensive magnum opus on moral and righteous living, a work which is highly respected all over the world. In this sacred scripture you will find the Naam extolled in no uncertain terms.

Do not waste time in small matters, brothers—the different outer phases of religion and religious learning—progress on from that. Blessed are you that you belong to some religion, and I congratulate you on this. Remain in that religion, follow its tenets, and live up to them—but receive the knowledge of Naam.

When Guru Arjan collected the writings of the

Masters for the compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib, what type of yardstick or criterion did he use to select that which was suitable from among the vast amount of writings? He selected that which had been spoken or written by those who had realized the Naam—the true devotees of Naam. You will find therein the words of Kabir, the weaver; those of Ravidas, the cobbler; Trilochan, the brahmin; Dhanna, the farmer; Saina, the barber; and Saints born in many other varied castes. Always remember that it is man who has made the different castes and classes. God did not send man to earth with a brand on him. God made *man*—a name which is given to the soul when in the human form. The soul is an entity of God and, as such, its caste is the same as God's.

Someone once asked Hazur [Baba Sawan Singh Ji]: “Maharaj, who are you?” Hazur replied: “If God is a Hindu, then I am a Hindu; if He is a Sikh, then I am a Sikh; if He is a Christian, then I am also a Christian; the soul's caste is that of God; but according to the outer aspect, I am a Sikh.”

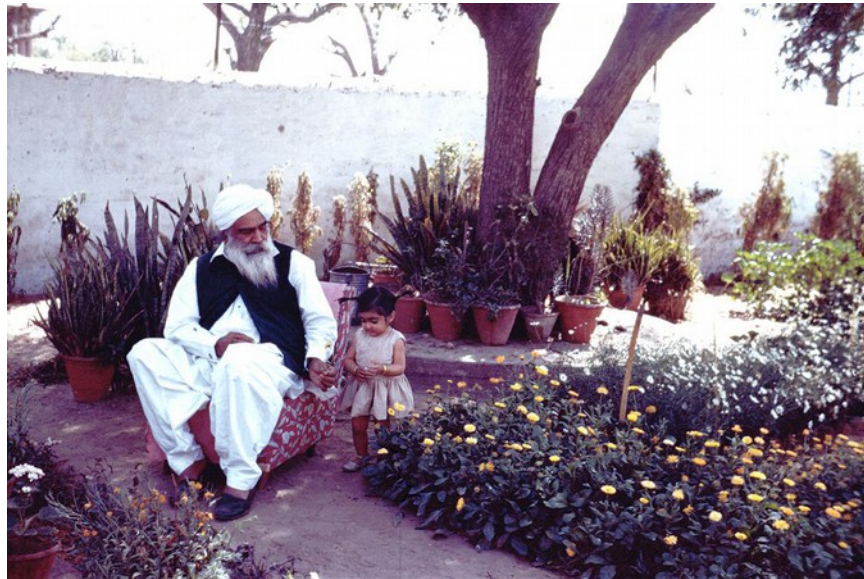
We must live in some social form; or if we don't, then we must design a new one in which to live, which is a mere waste of time when the Lord Himself has given one birth within the particular religion appropriate to fulfill the individual's karmas. Live a life of righteousness—be ethical; and while living such a life, release your soul from the mind and the senses by getting connected to Naam. That particular social body will be praiseworthy wherein any man achieves this. When a person approaches a competent Master, there is no consideration of religion, for he knows that the person is an embodied soul, and each soul is equal; there is no high or low; there is no question of East, West, North or South. *Know that the caste of all men is one.* Man is purely an embodied soul, but unfortunately he has forgotten himself. He does not know that he is

not the body, but is the indweller of the body—actually its controller. All Masters have advocated that one should know oneself in truth—and this is the science of Naam. It is the *Kalma* of the Muslim prophets, who say that fourteen *tabaqs* or regions were made from the Kalma. What is Kalma? Is it only a word? *O God, tell me of that place from whence Your Word is coming, without words.* This clearly indicates that worldly language has nothing to do with the subject. Fourteen *tabaqs* were made from the Kalma!

In the Hindu scriptures it says that through the Sound, fourteen stages were made. In Gurbani it states: *Through the Naam, the entire Khand and Brahmam were made, and also, Through the Sound, the earth and the sky were created.* The New Testament says: *In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made.* Guru Nanak states: *The entire creation came after the Shabd; O Nanak, the Sound vibrates in each being.* You can call it Sound, or Shabd, or Kalma, or Naam, or other names: the Untold Story, *Sruti*, or in the Upanishads it is called *Udgit*. The Masters have all sung its praises, each in his own way. If the words of the Masters are all read with completely open hearts, men will come closer to each other; it is only narrow-mindedness and bigotry that separates us all.

This place [Sawan Ashram, Delhi] is a common ground, where you are all at present sitting together hearing the words of the Ramayana. Here we take all kinds of scriptures, for the teaching of the Masters has always been one. It is a science of the soul, just as medicine is a science of the physical body. Stay in whatever religion or sect you are following, but also learn to rise above—to the extent of realizing that the whole world really belongs to but one religion. Judge the true Satguru by this same criterion—*Know the Satguru for one who brings everyone together.*

There is no special place for Muslims only, or Hindus only, or any other particular sect here [at Sawan Ashram]. The Masters do not regard individuals as representatives of certain religions. They simply make them sit down together, for they see the world through the spiritual eye. Their work is geared to one aim: to bring the soul above the senses, connect it to Naam, and ultimately reunite it with the Ultimate, Nameless and Formless God. For the purpose of this great work, there is no controversy of high and low; there is no recommendation to leave one's religion; and no advocacy of making new sects. They do advise the seekers to lead a pure and chaste life—within their own castes and customs. And this above all: for perpetual happiness, get connected to the Naam, and keep its regular contact.



Ajmeer Garden