

29. SEMRAN VAYLA

Semran can be resorted to at any time. Remembrance of the Lord should in fact remain in our minds throughout. Guru Arjan Dev says that *semran* can be done at any time - *sagli bayla*.

Har semran ki sagli bayla.

P.150

ਹਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਕੀ ਸਗਲੀ ਬੇਲਾ ॥

Guru Ji goes on to say that any time, be it a *moorat* or a *ghari* / *ghari*, is fruitful when the tongue utters the name of the Lord. *Moorat* and *ghari* are units of time.

Safal moorat safal oh ghari. Jet rasna ucrai Har Hari.

P.191

ਸਫਲ ਮੂਰਤੁ ਸਫਲ ਓਹ ਘਰੀ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਰਸਨਾ ਉਚਰੈ ਹਰਿ ਹਰੀ ॥

According to Guru Ji, the time, when one resorts to *semran*, is regarded as very fortunate in one's life. It is a time of *vaday bhaag* - *sa-ee ghari sulakhni*.

Sa-ee ghari sulakhni semrat Har naam.

P.819

ਸਾਈ ਘੜੀ ਸੁਲਖਣੀ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ ॥

Guru Ji regards that day as beautiful - *dens suhaavra*, when the Lord is remembered - *prabh aavai cet*. The day the Lord is forgotten - *vesrai*, is regarded as a bad time - *bhalayri rut*. Such wasteful moments are to be condemned - *fet bhalayri rut*.

Nanak soi dens suhaavra jet Prabh aavai cet. Jet den vesrai Paarbrahm fet

bhalayri rut.

P.318

ਨਾਨਕ ਸੋਈ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਸੁਹਾਵੜਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਆਵੈ ਚਿਤਿ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਦਿਨਿ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਫਿਟੁ ਭਲੇਰੀ ਰੁਤਿ॥

Guru Amar Das points out that if we keep on considering the time - *vakht vicaari-ai*, as to which time is to be regarded as the best time for *semran*, we might end up not doing any *bhagti*. What is required is that love for the Lord's *naam* should be in our minds always, night and day - *anden naamay ratea*. In this way one attains the everlasting Lord's *roop*. This enables one to earn everlasting praise - *saci soe*. Guru Ji questions as to what sort of *bhagti* is it - *bhagt(i) kenayhi hoe*, if the Lord is forgotten even for a moment.

Jay vayla vakht vicaari-ai ta(n) ket vayla bhagt(i) hoe. Anden naamay ratea

sacay saci soe. Ek tel pyara vesrai bhagt(i) kenayhi hoe.

P.35

ਜੇ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੀਐ ਤਾ ਕਿਤੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਭਗਤਿ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਨਾਮੇ ਰਤਿਆ ਸਚੇ ਸਚੀ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਇਕੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਿਨੇਹੀ ਹੋਇ ॥

Guru Ji says, "The time, when the Lord's remembrance is liked by my mind, is beautiful."

Vayla vakht sabh suhaea. Jet saca mayray man bhaa-ea.

P.115

ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤ ਸਭਿ ਸੁਹਾਇਆ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਸਚਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਇਆ ॥

Although the *Gurbani* quotations given above are eternal truths and cannot be disputed we must bear in mind that the best time to resort to *semran* is what is termed as *amret vayla* - early hours of the morning. *Amret vayla* is regarded as very appropriate as the world is as yet asleep and hence there are no distractions to disturb the *semran* activity, thus enabling one to focus one's thoughts on the Lord and prevent the mind from wandering.

Guru Nanak Dev says that only those people are to be regarded as really wealthy - *pooray shah*, who resort to the Lord's *sefat salaah* with concentration - *ek man* - in the early hours of the morning - *sbaahi* / *sbaah*. They are the ones who battle with their minds at the appropriate time - *vakhtai upar lar mu-ay*, and resort

to *semran*. The time, after sun rise, is not that suitable for *semran* as the mind then begins to wander - *man kia(n) mati khendia*. By the time of the second *pehar* - *dooja pehar* - of the day, i.e. 9a.m. to 12 noon, every one is fully engrossed with worldly chores and the mind begins to wander hither and thither. People's minds sink in the sea - *asgaah* - of worldly activity from which they cannot extricate themselves. It is like getting caught in strong waves from which one cannot get out - *gotay khahe na nekleh*. *Pehar* consists of three hours and *doojai* here refers to the second *pehar* of the day. In this *doojai pehar* the mind goes many ways - *bahutay raah*.

Sbaahi salaah jeni dheaea ek man. Sayee pooray shah vakhtai upar lar mu-ay. Doojai bahutay raah man kia(n) mati khendia. Bahut pa-ay asgaah gotay khahe na nekleh. P.145

ਸਬਾਹੀ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਜਿਨੀ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਇਕ ਮਨਿ ॥ ਸੇਈ ਪੂਰੇ ਸਾਹ ਵਖਤੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਲੜਿ ਮੁਏ
॥ ਦੂਜੈ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਰਾਹ ਮਨ ਕੀਆ ਮਤੀ ਖਿੰਡੀਆ ॥ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਪਾਏ ਅਸਗਾਹ ਗੋਤੇ ਖਾਹਿ ਨ ਨਿਕਲਹਿ ॥

Guru Ji in *Japji* mentions that the *dataar* Lord keeps on giving gifts - *daat* - in response to our repeated requests - *aakheh mangeh dayhe dayhe*. Guru Ji then asks (a) What should we offer the Lord to attain Him such that one could see His abode - *darbaar*? (b) What should we utter so that He would bestow His love on us - *muho ke bolan boli-ai jet sun dharay pyar*? In reply Guru Ji says that we should resort to *naam semran* and dwell on His praises during the *amret vayla* hours in the morning.

Aakheh mangeh dayhe dayhe daat karay dataar. Fayr ke agai rakhi-ai jet desai darbaar. Muho ke bolan boli-ai jet sun dharay pyar. Amret vayla sac nau vadya-ee vicaar. P.2

ਆਖਹਿ ਮੰਗਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦਾਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਦਾਤਾਰੁ ॥ ਫੇਰਿ ਕਿ ਅਗੈ ਰਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਦਿਸੈ
ਦਰਬਾਰੁ ॥ ਮੁਹੋ ਕਿ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਬੋਲੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਸੁਣਿ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ ਵਡਿਆਈ
ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

Guru Angad Dev mentions that the *amret vayla*, referred to as *cautha pehar*, 3 a.m. to 6 a.m., is the time when the desire for the *naam* surfaces in the minds of devotees.

Cauthai pehar sbaah kai surtea upjai cau. P.146

ਚਉਥੈ ਪਹਰਿ ਸਬਾਹ ਕੈ ਸੁਰਤਿਆ ਉਪਜੈ ਚਾਉ ॥

Guru Amar Das asks the question as to whose lovely name should be uttered in the early hours - *vadrai jhaal*, when it is still not bright - *jhalumblai*. Guru Ji then gives the reply that one should utter the name of the Lord who is capable of creating and destroying - *bhanan gharan samrath*.

Vadrai jhaal jhalumblai naavra la-i-ai kes. Nau la-i-ai Parmaysarai bhanan gharan samrath. P.1420

ਵਡਰੈ ਝਾਲਿ ਝਲੁੰਭਲੈ ਨਾਵੜਾ ਲਈਐ ਕਿਸੁ ॥ ਨਾਉ ਲਈਐ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੈ ਭੰਨਣ ਘੜਣ
ਸਮਰਥੁ ॥

Guru Ji likens a *jeev-estari* with love for the Guru and the Lord, as a *babeeha* / *papeeha*, or what is known as a *catrek* bird, which has a yearning for a drop of rain water. When such a *jeev babeeha* makes a humble plea to the Lord for His *mehar* or for some other boon at *amret vayla* time - *babeeha amret vaylai bolea*, his plea, in the form of *ardaas*, is heard in the Lord's *dargaah* - *ta(n) dar suni pukaar*. The Lord then instructs the Guru, who is regarded as a cloud - *mayghai no furmaan hoa*, to bless the petitioner with a shower of *naam* - *varsuh kerpa dhaar*.

*Babeeha amret vaylai bolea ta(n) dar suni pukaar. Mayghai no furmaan hoa
varsuh kerpa dhaar.* P.1285

ਬਾਬੀਹਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲੈ ਬੋਲਿਆ ਤ ਦਰਿ ਸੁਣੀ ਪੁਕਾਰ ॥ ਮੇਘੈ ਨੋ ਫੁਰਮਾਨੁ ਹੋਆ ਵਰਸਹੁ
ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰਿ ॥

Guru Ram Das says that the person who regards himself as the true Sikh of the guru does *naam semran* every morning – *bhalkay*. Every morning - *parbhaati* - he makes this effort – *uddam*, bathes and takes a dip in the *amret* pool – *amret sar* – of *naam* within him.

*Gur satgur ka jo sekh akhaa-ay su bhalkay uth Har naam dheavai. Uddam
karay bhalkay parbhaati esnaan karay amret sar naavai.* P.305

ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥ ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ
ਭਲਕੇ ਪਰਭਾਤੀ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਰ ਨਾਵੈ ॥

Guru Arjan Dev mentions that one should get up at *amret vayla* – *jhaalaghay* – time and resort to *naam semran*. In fact one should remember the *naam* always, night and day - *nes baasar araadh*. In this way no worries - *kaara* – will bother a person. Enmity, antagonism, quarrels and other *upaadh* will all disappear.

*Jhaalaghay uth naam jap nes baasar araadh. Kaara tujhai na beapa-i. Nanak
metai upaadh.* P.255

ਝਾਲਾਘੇ ਉਠਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਨਿਸਿ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਆਰਾਧਿ ॥ ਕਾਰਾ ਤੁਝੈ ਨ ਬਿਆਪਈ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਿਟੈ
ਉਪਾਧਿ ॥

Guru Ji says that one who gets up at *amret vayla* time – *parbhaatay* - and bathes in the waters of *naam jal* via *naam semran* retains the remembrance of the Lord whilst asleep too – *so-ay Har araadhay*. The beloved guru helps such a person in the difficult struggle – *bekhray dau* - against the *kaamadak vekaars*. Such a person enjoys the *sukh anand* resulting from the *sehaj* state by remaining in the presence of the lotus feet of the Lord.

*Uth esnaan karuh parbhaatay so-ay Har araadhay. Bekhray dau langhaavai
mayra satgur sukh sehaj saytee ghar jaatay.* P.1185

ਉਠਿ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰਹੁ ਪਰਭਾਤੇ ਸੋਏ ਹਰਿ ਆਰਾਧੇ ॥ ਬਿਖੜੇ ਦਾਉ ਲੰਘਾਵੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ
ਸੁਖ ਸਹਜ ਸੇਤੀ ਘਰਿ ਜਾਤੇ ॥

In another place Guru Ji requests man to wake up early morning and do *naam semran* by thinking of his guru – *gur kay carn dheae*. In this way, by singing the praises of the Lord – *sacay kay gun gae*, the filth of *vekaars*, which leads to repeated births and deaths, will disappear. It is this filth – *mal / mail* – which leads to repeated *janm marn*

*Parbhaatay prabh naam jap gur kay carn dheae. Janm marn mal utrai sacay
kay gun gae.* P.1099

ਪਰਭਾਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਚਰਣ ਧਿਆਇ ॥ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਮਲੁ ਉਤਰੈ ਸਚੇ ਕੇ ਗੁਣ
ਗਾਇ ॥

Guru Nanak Dev also urges that one should resort to *naam semran* at *parbhaat* time by focussing on the *sabad*, i.e. by reading *Gurbani* – *nau parbhaatai sabad dheae-ee-ai*. Guru Ji further requests us to forget our love for worldly things – *choduh duni preeta*. It is this *preet* which results in *maya moh*, which makes us forget the Lord.

Nau parbhaatai sabad dheae-ee-ai choduh duni preeta. P.1329

ਨਾਉ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਛੋਡਹੁ ਦੁਨੀ ਪਰੀਤਾ ॥

Shaykh Farid mentions that one who does not wake up at *amret vayla* time and does not resort to *naam semran* is dead even though alive. He says, “ Oh Farid, if you don’t wake up at *amret vayla* time which is the later part of the night – *pechal raat*,

you are dead even whilst alive - *jeevadro mueohe*. If you have forgotten the Lord *Rab* He has not forgotten you."

Farida pechal raat na jaageohe jeevadro mueohe. Jay tai(n) rab vesaarea ta(n) rab na vesreohe. P.1383

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਪਿਛਲ ਰਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਗਿਓਹਿ ਜੀਵਦੜੋ ਮੁਇਓਹਿ ॥ ਜੇ ਤੈ ਰਬੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿਆ ਤ ਰਬਿ ਨ ਵਿਸਰਿਓਹਿ॥

Guru Arjan Dev elaborates on the above *salok* of Baba Farid Ji. Guru Ji says, "Oh Farid, the Lord husband is lovely – *kant rangaavla*, and he has no cares or worries in the least – *vada vaymuhtaaj*. If by waking up at *amret vayla* time one can get coloured with the Lord's love – *Aleh saytee ratea*, through *semran*, one can acquire the attributes of being *rangaavla* and *vaymuhtaaj*. Thus his mind becomes beautiful and free from worries."

Farida kant rangaavla vada vaymuhtaaj. Aleh saytee ratea ayh sacaava(n) saaj. P.1383

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕੰਤੁ ਰੰਗਾਵਲਾ ਵਡਾ ਵੇਮੁਹਤਾਜ ॥ ਅਲਹ ਸੇਤੀ ਰਤਿਆ ਏਹ ਸਚਾਵਾਂ ਸਾਜੁ ॥

In another *salok* Baba Farid Ji says that *semran* done earlier in the night during the first *pehar* from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. is like a flower – *fulra*, whereas *semran* done later in the night at *amret vayla* time is like a fruit – *fal*. Those people who wake up – *jaagann* - early morning at *amret vayla* time are the ones who obtain – *lahann* – benefit. They are the ones who receive gifts - *daat* - from the Lord.

Pehlay pehrai fulra fal bhi pacha raat. Jo jaagann lahann say sa-ee kanno daat.. P.1384

ਪਹਿਲੇ ਪਹਰੈ ਫੁਲੜਾ ਫਲੁ ਭੀ ਪਛਾ ਰਾਤਿ ॥ ਜੋ ਜਾਗੰਨਿ ਲਹੰਨਿ ਸੇ ਸਾਈ ਕੰਨੋ ਦਾਤਿ ॥

Regarding the foregoing *salok* by Baba Farid Ji Guru Nanak Dev clarifies that *bandgi* in the early hours of the morning is in no way a condition for one to receive something in return from the Lord as an inherent right. Thus one should not, in any way, feel proud about resorting to *semran* in the early morning hours. We are in no position to make such demands – *kea calai tes naal*. Whatever He gives us are His gifts – *daati(n) saheb sandia(n)*. Many fail to receive such gifts, even though they wake up early – *ek jaaganday na lahan*. Some are blessed by Him and He awakens them from their slumber – *ekna sutea(n) day-e uthaal*.

Daati(n) sahib sandia(n) kea calai tes naal. Ek jaaganday na lahan ekna sutea(n) day-e uthaal. P.1384

ਦਾਤੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸੰਦੀਆ ਕਿਆ ਚਲੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਜਾਗੰਦੇ ਨਾ ਲਹੰਨਿ ਇਕਨਾ ਸੁਤਿਆ ਦੇਇ ਉਠਾਲਿ ॥

Thus *semran* can be done at any time of the day, but *semran* done in the early hours of the morning is far more beneficial because of the peaceful nature of the time in that there are no distractions. Moreover after a good night's rest the mind is fresh and hence it can concentrate on *semran* better.