CHAPTER-1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter deals with the historical background of Radha Soami Satsang which was one of the socio-religious reform movements of nineteenth century. This chapter is divided in three sections. First section briefly discusses early life of Shiv Dayal, the founder of Radha Soami Satsang and the history of this faith. In the second section, the prominent aspects of the philosophy of Radha Soami Satsang have been discussed. Third section discusses the main centres which emerged out of the centre at Agra.

Radha Soami Satsang was established by Agra saint Shiv Dayal Singh who was inspired by the teachings of the Adi Granth, the holy book of the Sikhs and propounded a doctrine which contained elements of ‘Hinduism’ as well as Sikhism. Shiv Dayal Singh was born in Panni Gali at Agra on 25 August 1818. He belonged to a kshatriya family. The name of his father was Dilwali Singh and mother was Mahamaya. Dilwali Singh was a follower of Guru Nanak and used to recite his bani (writings) such as Japji, Sodar, Rehras and Sukhmani daily, this practice had been prevailing in the family of Shiv Dayal since the time of his grandfather. At the age of

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1 Shiv Dayal writes, ‘सम्य बाळा तोह पर अन्य ! बीड़ सों कों सन जो तोह लगे ! नानक और काबिर प्रसाद हामी ! तुनबेल साहिब निवऽ कर उठा ! उन की अन्य कों यह पद नाहे ! सरस्वती साहिब स्ववे होधे !’ (Beyond Ram and Brahm is that stage; This the fourth realm where saints alone find success. Nanak and Kabir mention it; Tulsi Sahib looketh upon it as his own’. Their utterances sing of that stage and point to Sach Khand or Sat Lok). See, Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Radhasoami-Chhand Band, Hindi, Bachan 24:1, Beas: Radha Soami Satsang Beas, 1963, p.206; Khushwant Singh, History of the Sikhs, 1839-1988, Vol.2, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1977, p.125.

2 Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Prose, Beas: Radha Soami Satsang Beas, 2001, p.v; An event is concerned with the birth of Shiv Dayal. It is believed that before his birth, Tulsi, popularly called Tulsi Saheb, a saint of Hathras came to their house as he did on several occasions; the streets were muddy due to rain at that time. Shiv Dayal’s mother had spread silk and other costly drapery for Tulsi Sahib to sit on. It so happened that when this saint arrived at her home, he was drenched in rain and covered with mud, but with his soiled clothes and muddy feet, he immediately sat on the fine drapery and so to speak, spoiled all the costly pieces. But instead of taking it ill, the mother of Shiv Dayal felt highly pleased, honoured and expressed her gratefulness to Tulsi. Being pleased with her devotion and behavior, Tulsi blessed her to be mother of a perfect saint, subsequently, Mahamaya gave birth to Shiv Dayal. For details see, Lekh Raj Puri, Radha Soami Teachings, Beas: Radha Soami Satsang Beas, 2007, p.5. See also, S. D. Maheshwari, Parm Sant Tulsi Saheb (of Hathras), Agra: Radha Soami Satsang Soami Bagh,1979, p.19.
five, Shiv Dayal started his early education and learnt Sanskrit, Hindi, Arabic, Gurmukhi and Persian. It is believed that he started meditation at the age of six. At an early age, he was married to Narayani Devi, daughter of Izzat Rai of Faridabad (near Delhi), she became popular among the followers of Shiv Dayal as Radha. They had no issue.

Shiv Dayal was selected directly from school to act as a Persian expert to a Government Officer in Banda (Uttar Pradesh), but he gave it up and took another job as a Persian teacher with a *talukdar* of Ballabghar estate. Due to his interests in spirituality, he left this lucrative job and returned home. Dilwali Singh, the father of Shiv Dayal was a money lender by profession, Shiv Dayal did not pursue this business after the death of his father. At that time, the only source of living of his family was the job of his younger brother Bindraban who joined as a clerk in the Post office and became Post Master in Ajmer in January 1847, he was the first Indian to be appointed on this post.

Pratap Singh, the twelve years younger brother of Shiv Dayal (who was known as ‘chachaji’ (paternal uncle) or ‘chachaji sahib’ among his followers) preached Radha Soami philosophy after Shiv Dayal’s death.

Shiv Dayal meditated in a secluded apartment of his house for 17 years. In January 1861, on the day of *basant panchmi*, he laid the foundation of Radha Soami Satsang. He was known by different titles such as *Soamiji, Soamiji Maharaj, Shiv Dayal Sahib and Radha Soami Dayal* among his followers (See Appendix-I). No information is available about the spiritual *guru* of Soami Shiv Dayal, but it is believed that he was closely associated with saint Tulsi, then staying at Hathras near

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2 Radha lived about sixteen years after Soami Shiv Dayal’s death in 1878, she stayed at his home in Panni Gali where the disciples of Shiv Dayal used to meet her. But she spent last years of her life at Jhansi where she died on 1 November 1894. For details see, B. D. Maheshwari, *Biography of Radha Soami Maharaj*, Agra: Radha Soami Satsang Soami Bagh, 1994, p.17; Jaimal Singh, *Spiritual Letters*, Beas: Radha Soami Satsang Beas, 1976, p. ix.
3 Ibid., p.14.
6 Bindraban promulgated his faith at Faizabad, it was called ‘Bindrabani Panth’. It is believed that he was regarded as the incarnation of Jesus Christ among his followers, the reason perhaps being that he was well versed in English and dressed like a European and with a hat on he used to preach his religion. He was addressed as ‘Sarkar Saheb’ by his disciples. After retiring from the service, he came to the service of Shiv Dayal. He passed away in 1876 about two years prior to the death of Shiv Dayal. Bindraban’s *samadhi* was built in Ayodhya by his disciples. For more details see, S. D. Maheshwari, *Bhaktmal of Radhosoami Faith*, Agra: Radha Soami Satsang Soami Bagh, pp.4-6.
Agra. His mother and other members of the family were also keenly devoted to the saint. Tulsi looked upon Shiv Dayal like his son and treated him with love and affection.9

In the initial years of the foundation of Radha Soami Satsang, when Soami Shiv Dayal started preaching his philosophy, there were a few people only but the number reached up to hundreds with the passage of time. He continued his *satsang* for nearly seventeen years. During this period, Soami Shiv Dayal initiated about 4,000 men and women in Radha Soami Faith, the noteworthy point is that he initiated Hindus, Muslims, Jains and even some Christians. There were about 300 *sadhus* among his followers and rest of them were householders.10

In the beginning, Shiv Dayal addressed *satsangs* from his house at Panni Gali, Agra, but later he purchased a specific place for religious gatherings, a few years before his death. the place is known as Swami Bagh or Soami Bagh.11 In his daily *satsangs*, he used to recite the poems of Nanak, Kabir and other saints, especially those which had been included in the Adi Granth, known as Guru Granth Sahib. It is believed that some of his prominent disciples requested him to explain his teachings in simple language as they were unable to understand the meaning of a number of

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11 White Paper on Religion of Saints and Radhasoami Faith, Agra: Radhasoami Satsang Sabha Dayalbagh, 2011, p.24. I visited to Panni Gali and Soami Bagh in December 2011. The house of Shiv Dayal is situated in a very narrow street in an old area of Agra. The place is now known as the *Gurdwara Radha Soamis* and is being looked after by the administrative committee of Soami Bagh. This house has been reconstructed with marble stones. On a special place Shiv Dayal’s large picture has been kept for the followers to have *darshan* of the founder of this faith (which is called *Bhajan Ghar*) whereas the pictures of different *gurus* of Radha Soami Satsang of Soami Bagh have been fixed on different walls.
words taken from Adi Granth. Therefore, Soami Shiv Dayal dictated his own poems called *Sar Bachan* meaning *Essential Utterance* three years before his death.\(^{12}\)

On 15 June 1878, this saint of Agra breathed his last, the *samadh* of Soami Shiv Dayal has been constructed at *Soami Bagh*, about 3 miles from Agra, the *samadh* is still under construction.

\[\text{Samadh of Shiv Dayal (Soami Ji) at Soami Bagh, Agra}\]

Before we discuss the prominent aspects of the philosophy of Radha Soami Satsang, it is essential to have a brief look on the views of Soami Shiv Dayal towards social evils. He attacked the blind faith prevailing in the contemporary society. He condemned the idol worship and other beliefs like fasts, penances, austerities, charities, visits to holy places, reading of holy books etc. to attain God:

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\begin{align*}
\text{सिंहूत मस्तुसल केे बेर पुराना} & \text{। इन में सब जिव अय फांसा} \text{।} \\
\text{लते पंक्त का तारा छूटा} & \text{। तीरथ जाने ते नेम कर सुटा} \text{।} \\
\text{वहृत पुजारह पत्थर फानी} & \text{। करम भरम में फँज लिपटनी} \text{।}
\end{align*}
\]

(In *smritis*, *shastras*, *vedas* and *puranas*, all get entrapped. The way to the path of saints is left out, and by going on pilgrimages, keeping fasts, and performing other religious rites they have been looted, the people who worship stones and waters for a long time, and entangled them in various *karmas*, remain all in delusion.)\(^{13}\)

Soami Shiv Dayal attacked caste distinction, social differentiation and supremacy of priests; he attacked the people claiming high caste but ignoring their responsibilities in such words: *वाजाण और शाक्तिय ने चप्पर करे और धर्म तो छोड़ दिया पर यहाकर*


\(^{13}\) Shiv Dayal, *Sar Bachan Radhaswami-Chhand Band*, Bachan 24:1, pp.201-02; See also, Puri, *Radha Soami Teachings*, p.204.
Brahmans and Kshatriyas have given up their mode of life and dharmas (duties), but not their pride. He initiated people without any difference of sex, creed, caste and religion.

Soami Shiv Dayal firmly criticized the construction or worship of structures on the burial of dead:

Like people of other faiths, some followers of saints too have taken to the worship of images, holy places, books and scriptures, shrines, flags, etc. They do not know the nij roop of the saints, the mysteries of their region, the description of the way and the method of practice. Like other external worshippers, they have blind faith in shrines and scriptures, and miss redemption.

Interestingly, his own followers at Agra have constructed his samadh and started worshiping it. But they tried to justify themselves in such words:

The charge of man worship brought against the Radhasoami Faith is baseless, so are the charges of samadh worship and worship of the Holy Family absurd. As the samadh contains the Holy ashes and remains of the body of the Sant Satguru, it is held in great reverence. Similarly, the members of the holy family are the Satguru. But it is never believed that service to the members of the Holy family or placing one’s forehead at the Holy samadh alone would bring about salvation.

Soami Shiv Dayal’s book Sar Bachan is the base of Radha Soami Philosophy which was published by Salig Ram at Agra a few years after his death. He prepared the text of Sar Bachan in two parts: prose and poetry. This work was published later by Beas centre of Radha Soami Satsang also. Shiv Dayal wrote this book in kharrhi.

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boli, his scholarship in Persian and Urdu is reflected in his writings. After the publication of Sar Bachan, a number of books were published by his successors to explain different aspects of Radha Soami’s philosophy, in the following pages, some prominent aspects of the philosophy of Radha Soami Satsang have been discussed.

Soami Shiv Dayal was the founder and organizer of Radha Soami Satsang, but it was one of his disciples Salig Ram who propounded the name Radha Soami to this movement in the honour of his guru Shiv Dayal, known as Soamiji and his guru’s wife Narayani Devi, known as Radha. In fact, Shiv Dayal had started his movement with the name of ‘Satnam Anami; but he approved the Radha Soami name given by Salig Ram. Soami Shiv Dayal’s last commandments given to his brother Partap Singh at the time of his death prove it:

(My teachings were of Satnam and Anami. Radha Soami teachings were started by Salig Ram. Let this also go on. Satsang should continue, and satsang will flourish more than before).

One thing is clear that he blessed Salig Ram to let his philosophy go on with the name of Radha Soami. Even in his own writings, the word Radha Soami can be noticed, every hymn of his writings ends with the word Radha Soami whereas the word Satnam Anami is used rarely. It can be said that he had whole heartedly given permission to use the word Radha Soami for his movement.

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19 Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Prose, p. xxvii; Spiritual Link, RSSB Magazine, 28, Summer 1986, p.27.

The symbolic meaning of this word has been described differently, but the actual meaning of Radha Soami is the union of soul; Radha is described as the soul which aimed to meet Soami, the supreme soul. Therefore, Radha Soami name is suggested as one among the different names used in different religions for God such as Allah, Ram, Rahim, Wahiguru, Akal Purush, Parmatma, Bhagwan and Hari etc.²¹

II

The philosophy of Radha Soamis is known as Surat Shabd Yoga. The word ‘surat’ is made up of the words ‘sva’ i.e. ‘apne mein’ (within oneself) and ‘rat’ i.e. ‘magan’ (absorbed). The literal meaning of ‘surat’ means attention, consciousness, meditation or human soul.²² Shabd is believed as the life current that originates with the creator and pervades in everything, it is a string that connects everyone and everything with the Lord. It is a melody that resounds throughout the creation.²³ The term Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit yuj which means meeting, union, communion, consummation, realization, absorption or metaphysical philosophy of highest type that promises to bring close proximity between the soul and over soul (jiva-atma and parmatma).²⁴ Meeting of a human soul with the Supreme Soul through meditation is called Jivit Marna meaning Dying while Living in this philosophy.

The basic theory of Radha Soami Satsang is to explain the value of human birth. It is preached that the human soul is drop of the ocean of bliss and energy (God

²¹ Soami Shiv Dayal clears the meaning of Radha Soami as: राधा सोमी नाम सोमी बृह निर्माता गुरु राधा तह प्रथम गुरु राधा सोमी: राधा is the name of the prime soul; Soami, of prime Shabd in his own realm. Surat Shabd and Radha Soami: know thou both the names as one.² Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Radhaswami, Chhand Band, Bachan 2:4, p.8; Spiritual Link, RSSB Magazine, 27 July 1967, p.1; Jatmal Singh, Spiritual Letters, p.1; Salig Ram, Radhasoami Mat Sandesa. Agra: Radha Soami Satsang Sabha Dayalbagh, 1986, p.3. See also, Kulwinder Singh, Surata Sabda Yoga with Special Reference to Radha Soami Teachings, p.89.

²² Soami Shiv Dayal says, ‘जीवत्मा और सुर जो यह नाम है और यह यह उपन्यास स्थान की तत्त्वभूत और सत्ता गुरुवार पर से उत्सर्ग कर इस तरह में आकर दाशिए हैं’ (Jivatma and surat are other names for soul. It has descended into the body from the highest planes of satnam and Radha Soami). See, Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Radhaswami- Nasar yani Vartik, Bachan 1; p.1; See (tr.) Sar Bachan Prose, p.3 ; Anand Sarup, Yatharth Prakasa, Part II, Agra: Radha Soami Satsang Sabha Dayal Bagh,1957, p.307; Sawan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters, Series-I, Beas: Radha Soami Satsang Beas, 1977, p.52.

²³ Soami Shiv Dayal writes: प्रथम बृह निर्माता गुरु राधा तह प्रथम गुरु राधा सोमी नाम सोमी बृह निर्माता गुरु राधा तह प्रथाम गुरु राधा सोमी: राधा is the name of the prime soul; Soami, of prime Shabd in his own realm. Surat Shabd and Radha Soami: know thou both the names as one.²¹ Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Radhaswami, Chhand Band, Bachan 2:4, p.86; See also, Spiritual Link, RSSB Magazine, January 2006, p.29.

²⁴ Kirpal Singh, The Crown of Life: A Study in Yoga, New Delhi: Ruhani Satsang, 1970, p.4. The different forms of yoga include Patanjali yoga, known also as ashtanga yoga (eight-limbed yoga), gyan yoga (the yoga of knowledge or wisdom), karma yoga (the practice of disinterested action), upasana or bhakti yoga (the yoga of love and devotion to God), hatha yoga (yoga consisting of physical postures) and surat shabd yoga (the yoga of bringing the soul (surat) into contact with the shabd or word. See, Pur, Radha Soami Teachings, p.318.
or Supreme Being), from which it had separated long ago. All the miseries and ills to which human race is subjected are due to this separation from the Lord. Unless and until the soul returns to its home and meets its lord, its woes and miseries will continue. 

Therefore, this philosophy emphasizes that the prominent purpose of human life is the attainment of God, it is a privilege to be a human being only among the 84 lac species living on this earth, therefore, human being is considered at the top of the creation. According to Radha Soamis, all the creatures of this world fall into five categories - about 30 lac kinds of plants, about 27 lac kinds of insects and reptiles, about 14 lac varieties of birds, about 9 lac types of creatures living in water, and about 4 lac kinds of animals, gods, goddesses, jinns, ghosts as well as human beings. 

It is believed that the vegetables have one active tattwa (element) of water; the insects have two viz. air and fire; the birds have three viz. water, air and fire; in the higher animals there are four of them viz. earth, water, air and ether(sky) are active. Therefore, the human is highest among all the five kinds of creatures. 

The attaining of Supreme Being is accepted as the most important work of human being and is called usually as 'parmartha', compound of two words, 'parama' means highest and 'artha' means object or end of life.

Three important pillars have been suggested in Radha Soami Satsang to follow the Surat Shabd Yoga to achieve success on the way of spirituality, these are: 

satsang (true association), satguru (true spiritual Master or Mentor) and satnam (true name of God) or shabd (sound current of God).

The word satsang suggests the association (sang) with sat or truth or association with God. The word 'sat' is originated from Sanskrit means truth and sang.
is getting together or association. Satsang or spiritual discourse is taken as the
encounter between disciple and spiritual Master which is so necessary for spiritual
awakening and inner growth according to Radha Soami Faith. Therefore, the purpose
of satsang or holding meetings is believed to strengthen one’s faith and to create an
atmosphere in which one can do meditation. Two types of satsangs have been
mentioned-outer satsang and inner satsang. Outer satsang is the meeting of the
devotees to hear true Master to speak about the path which leads a devotee to inner
satsang in which the soul unites and merges with the Lord. A person who attends
satsang of a true spiritual Master is known as the satsangi.31

The second pillar of Surat Shabd Yoga is the true spiritual Master or saint who
encourages followers to worship and meditate God. These saints are to be believed as
essence of God as well as manifestations of the Supreme Being. Therefore, it is
believed that one who loves these saints and has faith in them becomes one with the
Supreme Being.32 In this philosophy, a guru or Master is not an ordinary man but a
ture saint called saiguru or true Master who is believed to be always in conscious
contact with God.33 The Master or saiguru is known as awakened one in this world

30 Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Prose, p.37; Kirpal Singh, Spirituality—What It Is?, Delhi: Ruhani Satsang,
1965, p.115; Salig Ram, Holy Epistles, Part 5, Agra: Radha Soami Satsang Swami Bagh, 1991,
p.215; Colin Garbett, The Ringing Radiance, Beas: Radha Soami Satsang Beas, 1968, p.2. See also,
M. G. Gupta, Modern Indian Mysticism: Commentary on Western Response to Radhasoami Faith,
31 Shiv Dayal writes, “ contemplate on the form of the Master, dear soul, for without this there will be no
32 Shiv Dayal asserts: “serve thou him, and him do thou worship; Him do thou know as Guru Nanak. Kabir is he and
Sat Nam is he; consider all saints to be in him. Thy salvation lieth in his hands; O do not thou wander about, but give up thou thy vanity.” See Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Poetry, Bachan 18:12,
pp.188-89; Glimpses of the Great Master, Pictorial Biography of Savan Singh, Beas: Radha Soami
and is called chaitanya whereas all other lifeless or objects known as jar are considered as useless.  

The satguru is believed to have control over kām (lust), krodh (anger), lobh (greed), moh (worldly attachment) and ahankar (pride or ego) and is free from enmity, is above pain and pleasure, good and evil. The true Master or satguru is believed as the helper and supporter of the seekers of God and tells them the way to meet God and accompanies them to their inward and upward journey. The main belief towards the true guru in Radha Soami philosophy is that in the case of a disciple who practices according to his Master’s directions, the Master or satguru comes at the time of the disciple’s death and takes charge of him.  

In the Radha Soami philosophy, the physical form of satguru or true Master is not his real form, but is his radiant form. As a person progresses in meditation, he/she meets with the radiant form of satguru. But it is also accepted that his physical sight called darshan bends a person towards his inner sight or darshan which is his radiant form. Therefore, Radha Soami philosophy emphasizes that a seeker must implicitly obey the satguru or true Master of his own time and must follow his instructions which will lead him/her to success.

To purify the human mind or antah karan, it is essential for a human being to serve the satguru. Four type of services towards true guru have been suggested in Radha Soami philosophy- service with wealth (offering to satguru who spends it for poor and needy), service with body (physical work assigned by satguru as a support to be humble by giving up the idea of worldly status, rank, position and ego), service with mind (in the form of using his/her mind to understand the teachings of guru) and service with soul (Surat Shabd Yoga). But it is noteworthy that the service of Surat Shabd Yoga is believed as the top most service of satguru whereas others support to make the atmosphere for this service.

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34 Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Poetry, Beas, p.63.  
35 Charan Singh, Quest for Light, p.10.  
36 Shiv Dayal says: तुम सब ज्ञात तो मेरा नया तरीका । और कारण तथा याता ज्ञान ॥ (Cultivate love for the Shabd form of the Master and shake off all rituals and ceremonies). See, Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Poetry, Bachan 9:4, pp.86-87; Kehar Singh, Question Answers, Tarn Taran: Association of Radha Swami Dera Baba Bagga Singh, 2011, p.149.  
37 Shiv Dayal writes: हूंक नोदेज ओ माला ला रखो । तब तिन गुरु शब्द नहीं लोइ ॥ (Guru is one who cherisheth shabd. Save such a shabd guru, none other do thou serve.). See, Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Radhaswami-Chhand Band, Bachan 13:1, p.105; Spiritual Link, RSSB Magazine, 93, Spring 2003. p.11.  
38 Puri, Radha Soami Teachings, p.86.

39 Shiv Dayal clarifies the need of the service of wealth: फूक नहीं सूचना तो दान कर। उन देने दान ने प्रकृत तत्त्व का ॥ यद देनेन कराय कराएल। पूरे पावन की डिवाकर के (Guru is not hungry for thy wealth of devotion and the
The third pillar of the Radha Soami philosophy is *satnam* or Name of God.

Two kinds of names have been suggested in this philosophy: *varnatmak* (expressable) as well as *dhunatmak* (inexpressable or primal sound). The first kind of name is given to a seeker by a spiritual *guru* when he initiates him/her in this philosophy. *Varnatmak* Name of God is believed to be as any word or phrase of some language which therefore can be spoken and written and conveyed to others by the usual means of utterance by the tongue, for example Ram, Hari, Gobind, Madho, Waheguru, Khuda, Allah, Maula, God, Om, Brahm, Parbrahm, Sat Nam, Anami and Radha Soami. The latter i.e., *dhunatmak* name is not a word or phrase. A seeker experiences *dhunatmak* name when his/her soul comes in contact with *shabd* and merges within after meditation. It is accepted as having greater value than the former.40

According to the mystic philosophy of Radha Soami Satsang, the whole creation is divided into three grand divisions such as: the highest and perfectly pure region, known as *sat desh* or *sat lok* - the abode of God or supreme creator. It is marked as the realm of absolutely pure spirit, unmixed with any sort of matter. The primary attributes of this part of creation are believed to be wisdom, love, and power; or as some of the orientals prefer to name them as intelligence, joy and energy. This region is practically boundless or limitless, beyond time and eternally constant. The supreme lord of that region is the creator and preserver of every life on earth even to the remotest bounds of creation.

The next grand division of creation is known as *Brahmand*, most of the part of this region is spiritual but mixed with a certain amount of refined matter, therefore, it is called the spiritual material region. Its inhabitants are happy beyond one’s conception, but they are not immortal, as many believe. It is the region of paradise—the heaven. It is vast in extent beyond one’s power to think but is very small in comparison with the first grand division.

*Pind* is the third grand division, it is the region of gross physical matter with a limited admixture of spirit, necessary to its life. For all life depends upon spirit. Matter is dominant here. It is called the material spiritual region. The entire region is

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40 Soami Shiv Dayal asserts: "That which can be uttered by the tongue (mayest thou call it a word), That which can be written or read is said to be *varnatmak*.", Shiv Dayal, *Sar Bachan Poerty*. Bachan 10:1, pp.96-97. See also, Puri, *Radha Soami Teachings*, pp.31-32.
known as *Pind* but little more than a speck floating in the sky of the *Brahmand* region which is called *And*. These physical universes move in endless procession around the larger region of *Brahmand*, and are sustained by it, even as *Brahmand* is sustained by the higher region.  

The need of meditation for a human being according to the Radha Soami philosophy has already been discussed. The whole spiritual journey of a practitioner who does meditation and goes inward is being underlined. It is believed that one’s spiritual journey begins from the soles of his/her feet and ends at the top of the head. This journey has two stages: one up to the eyes and the other above the eyes. The seat of the soul and human mind in one’s body lies behind the two eyes.

In the beginning of the spiritual journey, first of all a practitioner of *Surat Shabd Yoga* crosses the six lower physical regions of *Pind* or human body. These regions are believed as the reflections of heavenly regions known as *khat chakras* or ganglions which are as follows:

1. *Guda Chakra*, the first ganglion of human body is on the place of rectum and is the seat of Ganesha. It is believed that in former times, when practicing *pranayam* or *ashtang yog*, the start was ordinarily made from this center. It was for this reason that the worship of Ganesha, the deity of the sixth region was enjoined before undertaking anything.

2. *Indri Chakra*, the second ganglion is to be identified at the organ of reproduction which is to be believed as the seat of Brahma and Savitri. This region of human body is the source of the physical frame, its energy and carnal desires.

3. *Nabhi Chakra*, the third ganglion is believed to be located at navel with Vishnu as the presiding God. This centre supplies nourishment to the body. The store of gross vital force (*pran*) or gross (*pawan air*) is also here.

4. *Hriday Chakra*, the fourth ganglion is believed to be at the heart with Shiva as the ruling power, *pindi* mind is located there, it regulates the economy of the entire human body or *pind*. All the feelings, desires, effects of grief, pleasure, fear, hope, pain, and peace are felt at this region or ganglian.

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41 Shiv Dayal, *Sur Bachon Prose*, pp. xvi-xvii; See also, Sawan Singh, *Philosophy of the Masters (Abridged)*, Beas: Radha Soami Satsang Beas, 1973, pp.7-8
5. Kanth Chakra, the fifth ganglion is situated in the throat, Devi or Shakti is believed as the ruling power there. It is sometimes called by yogis as atma pad (seat of the soul). It is accepted as the region of the pran or vital force of the body.

6. Do-dal kamal, i.e. two petalled lotus, the sixth ganglion is believed to be just behind the human eyes in between the forehead which is believed as the abode of the human soul (surat or rooh). From this center, the human soul spreads by degrees into the whole human body, through the five lower centres. This centre or ganglion is the parmatma or the brahma, or bhagwan, according to different religions.

It is believed that these six chakras are traversed by yogis by means of pranayama, etc. They start from the first centre at the bottom, the guda chakra, and go upwards to the do-dal kamal in the eyes, traversing the centres of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti. Soami Shiv Dayal explained about these ganglions of human body in his writings as:

(In the first lotus doth Ganesh enjoy; in the second lotus resideth Brahma; in the third lotus is the light of Vishnu; in the fourth lotus Shiva and Shakti do reside; the fifth lotus is the seat of atma (soul) and the sixth the place of parmatma (God)).

But in the Radha Soami philosophy, the journey of a practitioner continues after reaching the sixth region or ganglion do-dal kamal (kanwal) and human soul reaches the next eight regions as it progresses in his/her meditation. The first region, the lowest region is called sahasdal kamal (kanwal). The entrance to this region from below is through the aperture in the subtle body above and between the two eyes called the third eye or tisra til. This plane has three parts, viz.: jhanjari deep, shyam kanj and set sunn.
The second spiritual region is the causal world known as trikuti because it has three elevated peaks. It is also called gagan or heaven and maha akash or Great Heaven. This region is believed to be the abode of Brahmn. From this region emanated Ishwari-Maya or Shakti, the subtle material of the whole of the creation, the three attributes or gunas (rajo guna, tamo guna, sato guna), and the five tattwas (air, water, fire, earth and sky), in their high subtle form. The chaitanya pran (conscious life force) also originated from this region. It is also called brahmandi mind as discussed earlier.46

The third region is that of parbrahm, called sunn or daswan dwar. It is purely spiritual having no trace of matter, gross or subtle, visible or invisible. This region is known as the place where human surat or soul made its first stop in its descent from Sat Lok, its upper stage and then came down into brahmand and pind. Daswan Dwar or tenth gate is the atm pad of the saints. When human soul reaches this region after freeing itself from the five tattwas, the three gunas (qualities or attributes), and the three bodies: physical (sathul), astral (suksham) and casual (karan) after meditation then it becomes fit for bhakti or devotion to God, from here soul proceeds to next spiritual regions.47

Fourth spiritual region is called sohang or soham which means, ‘O God, I am that what you are. The only difference between you and me is that you are a store house, an ocean and I am a drop’. The technical name of this place is bhanwar gupha, because here is a whirling cave like a merry go round perpetually revolving, and the souls enjoy the bliss of the spiritual plane and the whirling motion of the cave.48

The fifth spiritual region is Sach Khand or Sat Lok; it is the true eternal home of human soul. It is beyond the three worlds and is also called the chauntha pad meaning fourth realm (fourth plane). Only perfect saints are believed to find access there.49 After reaching this stage, human soul crosses two more stages as Alakh Lok meaning the inconceivable region and Agam Lok meaning inaccessible region and

46 Puri, Radha Soami Teachings, p.185; Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Prose, p.11.
48 Puri, Radha Soami Teachings, p.180; See also, Kehar Singh, Keeta Pasao Eko Kawao, pp.57-58.
49 Puri, Radha Soami Teachings, p.175.
finally reaches the Radha Soami Dham, the highest stage. It is also called as Radha Soami Pad, Anami Pad and Anami Lok which is the place of God. It is believed that one who reaches Sat Lok automatically reaches the Anami Stage. It is believed that the true Masters are responsible to take their disciples to Sat Lok or Sach Khand where their responsibility ends and the disciple’s soul reaches to his/her final destination at Anami Lok or Radha Soami Dham and merges with the lord.\(^50\)

In the Radha Soami Satsang, it is essential for a practitioner to control his mind which is the chief source of his/her attachment towards outer world as well as material things. To clarify this point, two kinds of mind have been accepted—brahmandi or universal mind and pindi or individual mind. The former kind of mind has its seat in trikuti and sahasdal kanwal (spiritual stages or regions discussed above). The second type of mind is behind the eyes and in the heart of human being which is responsible for carrying on business of the world with the help of the soul and has acquired downward tendency towards materialistic things. Therefore, it is preached that when one meditates and his/her soul or surat or jivatma gets back beyond the brahmandi mind, the knot between the jar (unconsciousness) and the chaitanya (conscious) will not be undone. Human mind, the senses, body, worldly actions, enjoyments, etc. constitute the ‘unconscious’ or jar whereas human soul is considered as subtle and conscious, and the connection of the soul with the ‘unconscious’ is the knot which ends after meditation.\(^51\) Therefore, it is essential for a spiritual seeker of God to control the chief adversaries of mind such as kam (sex), krodh (anger), lobb (greed), moh (affection) and ahankar (pride), which are responsible to take his/her attention towards mundane things. In addition, there are nine portals in the human body which take human being towards sex, anger, greed, affection and pride. These nine portals of human body are the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth, the sex organ, and the rectum.\(^52\) Therefore to start a spiritual journey or to find success in the practice of Surat shabd yoga, it is mandatory for a practitioner called abyasi to pull out his/her attention from these nine portals of human body.

It is expected in the Radha Soami faith that one must mould his/her life in accordance with the principles of this faith, so every thought, word and deed is


\(^{52}\) Shiv Dayal, *Sar Buchan Prose*, Beas. p.61. See also, Johnson, *The Path of the Masters*, p.528.
preached to confirm this. In following this mode of devotion, a number of restrictions have been imposed with regard to diet and mode of living. No intoxicating drink and animal food is to be taken, immoderate indulgence in any desire is to be avoided. Animal food is forbidden on account of its producing a material tendency in human nature, and intoxicating drink is detrimental to a calm and natural state of the brain and the nervous system. In this philosophy, satvik food is preferred upon rajsik and tamsik food, the list of food items is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satvik Food</th>
<th>Rajsik Food</th>
<th>Tamsik Food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>Food served with Pungent spices</td>
<td>Stale, raw, over ripe food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Meat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Wine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any other food, including satvik food, taken in excess</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Radha Soamis believe in the karma theory and emphasize to do good karmas in one’s life which helps a person in the progress of meditation. The karmas are divided in three parts such as sinchit karmas, pralabdh karmas and kriyaman karmas. Sinchit karmas are the result of one’s actions of previous lives, which have not yet been repaid or assigned. Pralabdh karmas constitute that portion of the result of actions of past lives which have been allotted to our present life, and on account of which this human body has been given to a person, that is, for undergoing the result of good and bad karmas according to one’s fate. Kriyaman constitutes the new karmas resulting from actions which one performs in this life. In other words, while undergoing one’s destiny (fate karmas), we are daily incurring new karmas as well, the result of which will be undergone in the next life as pralabdh and sinchit.

In the Radha Soami Faith, Prayer is considered to be necessary to obtain blessings and mercy of God and plays an important part to create love and affection.

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53 In the Footsteps of the Master, Pictorial Biography of Baba Jagat Singh, America: Radha Soami Satsang Beas, 1993, p.29.
55 See, Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India, p.162.
56 Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality, p.131.
57 Sawan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters (Abridged), p.279.
for him. Therefore, in this faith, a prayer is generally sung by the devotees of Radha Soami Satsang taken from Soami Shiv Dayal’s *Sar Bachan*, called as *Benti* or *Binti*. The Prayer is written as follows:

**Karan khande bhand kar aarti | aarzai Sume Radhasvami aarti
(With hands joined in prayer I beseech you, Radha Soami, to listen to my supplication)**

सत्संतु तुम सत्संतु बलता | साह जीवन के पितु और माता
(You are the true Lord, my benevolent Master! You are the father, you are mother, you are the creator of all beings)

वय धार अपना कर चीजों | काल जाल से न्यास कीजो
(Be merciful to me, accept me and set me free from the snare of Kal)

सत्संतु तेरे बाप जीता | काहू न जानी शाब्द की रीता
(The three ages of gold, silver and copper have passed without any of us knowing the method of Shabd practice.)

कसतशु में सबसी वश विद्वारी | परमाट कराओ शाब्द चुकारी
(In the Iron Age, Radha Soami by his mercy has openly made known the secret of Shabd.)

जीव काज़ स्वामी जन्म में आए | भौसमार से पार लगाए
(Radha Soami has come to this world for the benefit of the souls to carry them across the ocean of existence.)

तीन छोटे प्राणे अपने बीजाता | सत्संतु सत गुरु मन जीता
(He passes by the first three planes (physical, astral and causal) of the universe and takes them to the fourth, where they realize that the status of the Master is that of the true Lord, Satnam.)

उम्मत जाते होते उदिताता | मन्न सोंत पर तम्बन निहाता
(At first a resplendent flame appears within, then a moon is seen in Daswan Dwar)

तेह संहसन छात्र बिराजें | अनहद शाब्द मेघ घुम बजाजें
(Further on, a magnificent white throne is set up under an elegant canopy where the hidden melody of the boundless Shabd resounds)

यह अबर चे अबर पाए | बिन्नी करे जाता बास लूहारा
(Beyond the regions of Trikut, Sunn and Maha Sunn your devotee stands in humble supplication)

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(Give me protection at your feet, O Lord, So that I may find peace in this world, and in the world beyond)

There are some statements in this Benti or prayer which seem to contradict the teachings of Shiv Dayal. But Lekh Raj Puri in his book Radha Soami Teachings tried to clear these contradictory statements; for instance, in this prayer it is said that the first three yugas (ages-Sat, Treta and Dwapar Yugas) passed, but nobody knew of the path of Shabd though saints have been coming into the world in all ages and that it is only Soami Ji (Shiv Dayal) who showed mercy in kaliyug and taught the method of Shabd. To defend this statement, the author says that these words are put in the mouth of the disciple. The meaning of the words of this saint Soami Ji, here, is that people at large did not know it, and that especially he (i.e. the disciple) did not come to know of it. Therefore, this hymn or Benti is accepted as the address of a devoted disciple to his Master and so it is personal. Hence, the disciple says that in the previous three yugas, no one told him of this method of shabd, and it is only now in kaliyug, that he has found a perfect Guru or Master who is one with the Absolute God Radha Soami, and has revealed the path of shabd to him. It is considered as saying that the disciple has met a perfect guru now and had not done so in the previous three yugas.

Lekh Raj Puri accepts that if one takes such sayings literally, one would go against the very teachings of Shiv Dayal and of all other saints. Similarly, at some other places in this Benti, Soami Shiv Dayal says that no one knew of this path, but this only means that people at large or the general public did not know of it. To defend this point, the comments of Puri are also noteworthy that Soami Shiv Dayal himself accepts in his writings that the previous saints preached the same thing and he is continuing the same.

## III

After the death of Radha Soami guru Soami Shiv Dayal, his six prominent successors took forward Radha Soami philosophy, four of them were his disciples- Saligram in Peepal Mandi (Agra); Sanmukh Das initiated sadhus at Soami Bagh (Agra); Garib Das settled at Sarai Rohilla (Delhi); Jaimal Singh brought his philosophy to Beas

59 Shiv Dayal, Sar Bachan Poetry, Bachan 7, Shabd 1, p.56.
59 Puri, Radha Soami Teachings, pp.290-91.
(Punjab), Shiv Dayal’s brother Partap Singh held satsangs in Soami Bagh at Agra and Shiv Dayal’s wife Narayani Devi alias Radha initiated women at her home in Panni Gali at Agra.60 Though Pratap Singh and Narayani Devi also preached the Radha Soami philosophy but they did not get the tag of guru, they gained respect as the relatives of Soami Shiv Dayal by his successors.61 With the passage of time, two main places - Agra and Beas emerged as major centres of Radha Soami Satsang. In the following chapter, the growth of centre at Beas has been discussed in detail.

At Agra, three main centres of Radha Soami Satsang as Soami Bagh, Dayal Bagh and Peepal Mandi came into light as the time passed. Interestingly, all three centres accepted Salig Ram as the successor of Soami Shiv Dayal in Agra.62 But after the death of Salig Ram on 6 December 1898, some of his disciples followed his son, Ajudhia Prasad alias Lalaji Maharaj at his residence Peepal Mandi in Agra.63 Since then, the Masters of this centre are selected from the same family. After the death of Ajudhia Prasad on 26 November 1926, his son Guru Prasad alias Kunwarji Maharaj succeeded him as the guru till his death on 27 February 1959. After that his grandson Agam Prasad Mathur alias Dadaji Maharaj became guru of this centre and is continuing till date.64

In 1898, Brahm Shanker Misra, the disciple of Salig Ram became the next guru at Soami Bagh, he is called as Maharaj Sahib. After his death in 1907, his sister Maheshwari Devi alias Buaji Saheba became the spiritual head of this centre, she remained on this position till her death in 1913.65 But some of the followers followed one of Brahm Shanker Misra’s disciples Kamta Prasad Sinha alias Sarkar Saheb who preached Radha Soami Philosophy at Ghazipur from 1907 to 1913. But his successor Anand Swarup alias Sahabji Maharaj founded his centre at Agra as opposite of the

61 Lane, The Radha Soami Tradition, p.82
63 Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality, p.44. See, Mathur, Radhasoami Faith-A Historical Study, p.57.
Soami Bagh on 20 January 1915 which is called as Dayal Bagh. After his death in 1937, three more gurus—Gurcharan Das Mehta alias Mehtaji Sahib (1938-1975), M. B. Lal alias Lal Sahib (1975 to 2002) and Prem Saran Satsangi called as Satsangi Sahib (2002-present) have presided over this centre.66 At Soami Bagh, Madhav Prasad Sinha better known Babuji Maharaj, the disciple of Brahm Shanker Misra became the successor of Maheshwari Devi and remained on this position till his death in 1949. But after the death of Madhav Prasad Sinha, no any guru has been installed at Soami Bagh. Thereafter, the satsang is being by the Council which also looks after the administration of Soami Bagh. In addition, the residence of Shiv Dayal at Panni Gali is also looking after by the same Council. The leaders have declared interregnum after the death of Madhav Prasad Sinha. They await the coming of the next with a certain degree of impatience and rumours around that the secret current has descended into a new master whose identity has been kept secret.67

In retrospect, it can be said that Shiv Dayal propounded not a new doctrine but preached the philosophy of past saints, however he did not relate it with a specific religion. The only difference is that he gave new name to God, that is Radha Soami according to the wish of his disciple. Though the philosophy of Radha Soami Satsang revolves around the concept of true spiritual Master called guru and satguru, yet the chief focus is on the meditation of God through the help of guru. Since the God of Radha Soamis is formless, this philosophy is undoubtedly ranked in the nirgun school of bhakti. The number of the followers remained few thousands during the life time of Soami Ji but his successors took it forward by establishing new centres. However, they could not keep themselves united, and established centres at different places in Agra, Delhi, Ghazipur and Punjab.


67 S. D. Maheshwari, Holy Epistles, Part-4, Agra: Radha Soami Satsang Soami Bagh, p.iii; Lane, The Radha Soami Tradition, p.82. See also, Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality, p.65; Personal visit to Soami Bagh and Panni Gali in November-December 2011.
SPIRITUAL MASTERS OF BEAS CENTRE OF RADHA SOAMI SATSANG

Sawan Singh (1903-1948)  
(born on 1858)

Jagat Singh (1948-1951)  
(born on 1886)

Charan Singh (1951-1990)  
(born on 1916)

Gurinder Singh (1990-Present)  
(born on 1954)