CHAPTER IV

TEACHINGS OF THE RADHA SOAMIS

The teachings of the Radha Soami Faith which were laid down by its founder Seth Shiv Dayal Singh (Soamiji Maharaj), are not entirely new; these have been preached by many earlier Saints such as Kabir, Nanak, Namdev, Paltu, Dadu, Tulsi Sahib, Maulana Rome, Shams-i-Tabriz, etc. Nearly, all ancient religious literature makes reference to the Shabd (sound current) in various names. But the unique service rendered to mankind by Soamiji was the simple and lucid manner in which he taught the practice of Shabd (sound current). He rejected all the ancient Yoga systems and propounded the Surat Shabd Yoga which, according to him, can be practised by one and all and without denouncing their worldly duties. He has given details of his philosophy in plain and simple language in his famous book Sarbachan.¹ The main teachings of the Radha Soami Faith are the following:

CONCEPT OF SHABD OR SOUND CURRENT

The concept of Shabd (sound current) is the central concept of the Radha Soami Movement but it is difficult to

¹ Puri Lekh Raj., Radha Soami Teachings, (Delhi, 1972), P. 20.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Sarbachan was got published in Punjabi for the first time by the first and the second Guru of the Beas Centre. (Radha Soami Setsang Beas, Parmarthi Patar, Part I, Punjabi, (Amritsar, 1960), PP. 226-227).
define it. Possibly one reason why that is so is that the Masters of the Radha Soami Movement have given many names to the sound current. They have called it Shabd (sound); Anhad Shabd (unlimited sound); Anahat Shabd (unstruck sound); Dhunistmak name (inexpressible name of God), etc., in their writings. All these expressions have the same meaning i.e. sound current.

Regarding the Shabd, Soamiji, holds that it is the supreme energy and the prime source of all creation. He says,

"I know thou Shabd as the beginning of all creation; and the end of all to do thou know as Shabd. The three worlds and the fourth realm (dimension), all these things hath Shabd created." 3

Maharaj Saum Singh, the second Guru of the Radha Soamis of Beas Centre holds that the Shabd (sound current) is not a subject matter of speech or writing because it can neither be heard by the outer ears nor can be seen by the outer eyes. It can be experienced only by the soul. 4 It is the soul current of consciousness. It is the celestial melody. It is the life-current which originates from the Lord and prevades everything. 5

---

3. Radha Soami Satsang Beas, Sarbanchan Radha Soami, Chhand Band Yani Nazam, Hindi, (Lucknow, 1976), Bachan-9, Shabad-3, P. 88. For English rendering see - Radha Soami Teachings, P. 47.
TRUE NAME OF GOD

According to Soamiji, there are two kinds of names of the Supreme Being. They are (i) Varnatmak name and (ii) Dhuniatmak name. 6

(i) THE VARNATMAK NAME

The Varnatmak name of God is a word or phrase of some language, which can be spoken and written and conveyed to others by the usual means of utterance by the tongue. 7 All names such as God, Lord, Allah, Mahiguru, Harion, Radha Soami, Parmatma, Parmeshwar and so on are Varnatmak names because all of them can be read, written and spoken. 8 According to Maharaj Charanj Singh, the present Head of Beas Centre, in every language we remember God by a number of names which have been used by saints who lived in the past. 9

Varnatmak names are of four kinds: (i) Baikhri, (ii) Madhyama, (iii) Pashyanti and (iv) Para. The first is spoken by the tongue in the same way that we talk with each other. The second is spoken slowly in the throat. The third is spoken in the heart and the fourth is repeated by Yogis while concentrating

8. Charanj Singh., The Path, (Delhi, 1976), P. 44.
9. Ibid., P. 44.
on their navel. All these words are Varnatmak and none of them is true or eternal. They all vanish in the course of time. 10

Yet, Varnatmak name has its own use. Soamiji holds:

"Name (in language) have I stated as Varnatmak, but the being whose name it is shalt thou find as Dhuniatmak. By Varan cleaseth thou mind and soul; and then ascended thou to the sky and catch hold of the melody." 11

Varnatmak name is our first step towards salvation and God-realization. We concentrate our mind and soul in the third eye by means of repetition of some Varnatmak name; but it does not help us further in our spiritual progress. For lifting the soul upwards from the third eye, we want the Dhuniatmak name, i.e. Shabd. 12

(ii) DHUNIATMAK NAME

Dhuniatmak name is not a word or phrase. It cannot be uttered by the tongue. It is a divine melody or Shabd, which is transcendent. It can be realised only by direct perception of the soul. This Shabd is within all of us and it can be heard and seen by our soul alone at the eye centre or third eye with the help of one who knows the secret of it. Soamiji

11. Sarbeychan Poetry, Bachan - 10, Shabad - 1, P. 95. For English rendering see - Radha Soami Teachings, PP. 32-33.
12. Radha Soami Teachings, P. 32.
13. Ibid., P. 30.
"Shabd Aur Surat Bhaiy Ekaya
Nam Dhuniatmak Daikha." 14

"When Shabd (divine melody) and soul become one, then is Dhuniatmak name seen. 15

Regarding Dhuniatmak name, Maharaj Jagat Singh, the third Guru of Beas Centre said:

"It recognises no caste, creed, colour, race or nation. It resounds in every human being. It is not the design of any man. It is natural, without beginning or end, it was created by God Himself." 16

Maharaj Charan Singh says that different saints of different countries and ages have called Dhuniatmak name with various names. The Hindu saints have called it Ram Nam (God’s Name); Ram Dhun (God’s Inner music); Nirmal Nad (the pure sound); Divya Dhun (divine sound). 17 Guru Nanak called it Nam (God’s Name); Shabd (spiritual sound); Sachi Bani (true inner word); Hukam (God’s command); Akath Katha (unspeakable tale) and Hari Kirtan (God’s music). 18 Muslim saints refer to it as Kalma (inner sound);

18. Charan Singh., The path., P. 43.
Ism-i-Azam (the greatest name); Bang-i-Asmani (the sound from the sky); Kalma-i-Ilahi (the voice of God); or Sultan-ul-Azkar (king of repetitions). Christ called it the word or Logos. In the Rigveda, it is called Vak (word). The Chinese called it Tao (the word). He further says that this true name is imperishable. Hazur Maharaj Ji (S. Savan Singh) used to call it the 'unwritten law' and 'unspoken language'. To attain salvation we need this true name. So long as we do not search for it within ourselves, we cannot get salvation.

Thus according to the teachings of the Radha Soamis, both names are of great importance. Through the Varnatmak name or the spoken and written word one can retrace one's attention inside and connect it with the Dhuniatmak name which provides one with salvation. The Varnatmak names are our means while the Dhuniatmak name is our end and object.

19. Charan Singh., The Path., p. 43; Charan Singh., Satsang No. 14; Apu Vanjhaey Ta Sab Kachhu Paey, Hindi, (Jullundur, 1980), P. 10; Also see Rasala Sari Duniya, Monthly, Urdu, August, 1957, (Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, Beas), P. 11.

20. Charan Singh., The Path., p. 43.


CONCEPT OF HUMAN BODY

According to the Radha Soamis, human body is made of three things: the first is solid matter of which the body is made. The second is astral matter of which mind is made and the third is the soul which is the life of man and is the support of both mind and body. They emphasise that the human body is the temple of living God. The Hindu sages and seers call it Nar-Narayani Deh (the body that is the creation of God and in which He abides). Sometimes this body is referred to as 'house of ten gates'. Nine gates open outward, through which our energies are dissipated. The tenth gate opens the way to the Palace of the Lord within. The nine doors comprise our two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth and the two lower outlets. The tenth is in the centre behind the two eyes. It is called by different names: Til; Jisra Till; Shiv Netra or the third eye. The Mohammedan Saints call it Nukta-i-Swaide (third eye).

According to the teachings of the Radha Soamis, human body has two parts. The first is below the eyes and it is called

Pinda. The second is above the eyes corresponding with the frontal part of the brain. This is called Anda or Brahmanda meaning the seat of Brahma.

(A) PINDA (region of lower mind and matter)

There are six Chakras (wheels) in the Pinda and these are called Khat Chakras or lower Chakras in the books of Yoga by the Hindu Saints and Yogis while the Muslim Saints called them Darjat Sifli. Khat means six and Chakras are wheels or centres corresponding to the six ganglions in the body. They are generally reckoned from below upward. These six Chakras of Pinda are below the eyes and within the body. They are headquarters of material forces. These six Chakras are the following:

(i) Guda Chakra or Muladhar
(ii) Indri Chakra or Sivadhishthana
(iii) Nabhi Chakra or Manipura
(iv) Hirday Chakra or Anahat
(v) Kanth Chakra or Vishush- Chakra
(vi) Agya Chakra or Ajana Chakra

The Radha Soamis do not believe in various exercises of these Chakras. Maharaj Jagat Singh says,

"In the body, the Lord is not realised in the Khat Chakras (six lower centres) as believed by the yogis. He is to be realised above the eye centre." 31

The Radha Soamis start the practice of Surat Shabd Yoga (spiritual practice) from Tisra Tīlī (third eye), the conjunctive point of the pind and the Brahmand. 32 In this context, Maharaj Charan Singh often explains,

"If you are already half way up a hill and you wish to go to the top, there is no need to go down to the bottom first and then laboriously work your way up again. You should simply start from your present position and go up. The same applies to God-realization, the lower Chakras play no part in our spiritual progress, they are merely a reflection of the light planes, Shabd Yoga is only concerned with the inner centres above the eyes." 33

---


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Saharsdal Kanwal</td>
<td>The Thousand Petalled Lotus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Musalsi OR TIRIKUTI</td>
<td>Aum or OM (II) From here the Creation began</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sunn</td>
<td>Brahm without Maya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nirala (Maha Sunn)</td>
<td>Though descended much, still not engulfed in Matter (IV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bhanwar GUPHA</td>
<td>Drop separated from the Ocean (V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sach Khand OR SAT LOK</td>
<td>Upper Spiritual Lotuses above the Eye Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chart illustrates the progression from the Ocean of Spirituality through various stages to the ultimate realization of Brahm without Maya.
(B) ANDA OR BRAHMANDA OR HIGHER PLANES

According to the Radha Soami teachings, the higher planes (stages) are above the eyes, in the brain. The Masters of this Faith consider eight planes. The description of higher planes is as follows:

(i) FIRST STAGE

The name of the first stage is Sahansdal Kanwal (a thousand petalled lotus). It is the place of Alakh Niranjan (the indescribable Lord) of the Yogis and Mugam-i-Allah (the first spiritual region) of the Muslim spiritual men. The entrance to this plane from below i.e. the physical world is through the aperture above and between the two eyes. It is a vast plane with three chief parts viz., (i) Jhanjari Dip, (ii) Shyam Kanj, (iii) Set Sunn.

(ii) JHANJARI DIP (the lower part of the astral world)

Going up from below and after crossing a five coloured orchard (the colours of the five Tattwas or elements) and the Nil Chakra (the blue centre which denotes the veil or curtain of the mind), we come to Jhanjari Dip where from the light of Jyoti the heavenly light or plane appears as if seen through a sieve.

---

34. For a clear understanding, see the diagram showing their relative position in the Chart-3 facing page 131.
35. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan - 21, Hidyatnamah, P. 172. For English rendering see - Radha Soami Teachings, pp. 189-190.
36. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan - 20, Shabad -11, P. 161; Radha Soami Teachings, P. 189.
(ii) SHYAM KANJ (the middle portion of the astral world)

Then piercing the sieve, we reach the seat of Jyoti
the light or flame, with its one thousand tongues (for which
reason it is called Sahansdal Kanwal, a thousand petalled lotus),
with the main and biggest tongue in the middle. Anhad Shabd
here is like the sound of a big resounding bell. 37

(iii) SET SUNN (the upper part of the astral world)

This is the third main part of the astral world. Here
the Anhad Shabd appears like the sound of a conch, which is
heard coming from the tunnel above, called Bank Mal (crooked
tunnel) situated between the astral and the casual planes.

Soamiji is of the opinion that all Avatars (incarnations)
of the second degree, prophets, Auliya and Yogis of a high
order come from this region and return to it. Saints call it
Nij-Mana (real mind). The reflection or shadow of this region
first appears in the Nunta-i-Swaida (black point) or Til behind
the eyes, and again in the two eyes, themselves. The Jivatma
(soul) dwells in this very Til during the waking state. 39

37. Radha Soami Teachings, p. 190; Krishak, Gopi Lal.,
Sant Mat Lalkhmal, Part II, Hindi, (Koshiarpur, n.d.), p. 60.
38. Radha Soami Teachings, p. 190.
39. Radha Soami Satsang Beas., The Sarbachan, Prose,
(Delhi, 1974), pp. 33, 34.
SECOND STAGE

The second stage is the casual world. It is called Musalsi or Trikuti because it is triangular in shape. The Muslim Saints call it Arsh-i-Azeem (the great heaven) or Alam-i-Lahoot. This is the region of Onkar or Brahm. The Radha Soamis also call this place Gurpad (the seat of Guru). Anhad Shabd here is like the reverberating sound of Om, Om and Hu, Hu, coming out of thunder of clouds and the sound of the beating of big drums. The light here is reddish like that of rising sun, but a thousand times brighter and more splendid than the sun.

At the head-quarters of this Casual Plane is a four-petalled lotus, out of which come four heavenly utterances that give rise to the four Vedas; first in their subtle essence and later in the form of books. The great mountain Kailash is also here, along with the other well known two mountains viz., Mer and Sumer. In this place are seen big forests and gardens, which the soul passes by on its way to purely spiritual realms.

40. Sarbachan Prose, P. 33.
42. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan - 26, Shabad - 2, PP. 226-227. For English rendering see - Radha Soami Teachings, P. 187.
Soamiji says that the seed of all Karmas (actions) is here in this casual plane and when the soul crosses over, it goes beyond the sphere of Karmas and the chain of cause-effect series. In short, it can be said that in this plane is the root of all knowledge that spreads in this world through the senses and intellect.

(iii) THIRD STAGE

According to Soamiji, the third stage is Daswan Dwar which is also called Farbrahm or Sunn. This region is divided into two parts or two stages i.e. (i) Sunn and (ii) Maha Sunn.

(i) SUNN It is purely spiritual, for no trace of matter, gross or subtle, visible or invisible, is found here. When the soul reaches this realm, coming up from below, it gets rid of all covers of matter and mind, and shines forth in its naked glory with the radiance of twelve suns. Then alone does it become fit for true love and devotion for the Absolute Lord. Here the soul is called Hansa (phoenix) because it gives up eating the dirt and filth of worldly desires and begins taking the pearls of God's Name or Anhad Shabd. 44

43. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan -26, Shabad -2, pp. 226, 227. For English rendering see - Radha Soami Teachings, p. 189.

Here is a lake of nectar, called Mansarover; fountains and streams of nectar are found all around along with beautiful gardens and orchards - all of course purely spiritual. Moreover, it is a place of extreme bliss. The light here is like that of the full moon in a clear sky, but twelve thousand times brighter. The melody of Anhad Shabd of this place is like that of a guitar, lute, lyre or harp, and it enraptures the soul with intense divine ecstasy.

(ii) Maha Sunn Above Sunn is a vast expanse of utter darkness called Maha Sunn (the great void) where some hidden spiritual secrets are revealed to the soul. Five Andas (universes) exist in this vast plane, with their separate Brahms and those universes are more glorious and far bigger than our universe.

(iv) Fourth Stage

According to Soamiji the technical name of the fourth stage is Bhanwar Gupha; here a rotating cave like a merry-go-round is always in motion. Muslim Saints have called it Hatal Hut. All around it are beautiful places, of course, purely spiritual where souls of that plane dwell. A sound like Sohag and Anahy meaning "What Thou art, the same am I", is ever heard there.

46. Ibid., pp. 183-184.
47. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan -26, Shabad -4, p. 228. For English rendering see - Radha Soami Teachings, pp.181, 182. Also see Rasala Sari Duniya, Monthly, Urdu, July 1957, (Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, Beas), p. 5.
The light of this place is like the bright sun of midsummer; but a thousand times brighter than the sun. Of course, there is no scorching heat there as we find in this world. It is all sweet and pleasant, blissful in the extreme and ever bewitching the soul by its melody.

(v) FIFTH STAGE

The technical name of the fifth stage is Sach Khand or Sat Lok. It is our true eternal home. The Saints enjoy absolute bliss there. Soamiji holds that in Sat Lok, Anhad Shabd (limitless sound) manifests itself as the music of a bagpipe. In this place, the sound of Sat, Sat or Haq, Haq comes out of the music of the transcendent bagpipe. On hearing it, the soul is electrified with celestial bliss and is drawn towards the Absolute Lord or Sat Purush, with intense attraction of spiritual love.

The radiance of the soul here is equal to the light of sixteen suns; only then can it behold that Absolute Lord or Sat Purush, whose brilliance of one hair puts to shame the light of ten million suns and moons. Total brilliance is so immense and intense that it staggers the imagination and is beyond description.

48. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan -26, Shabad -4, P. 228. For English Rendering see - Radha Soami Teachings, P. 182.
49. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan - 21, P. 176. For English rendering see - Radha Soami Teachings, pp. 177-178.
50. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan - 21, P. 176 and Bachan - 26, P. 229. For English rendering see - Radha Soami Teachings, p. 178; Julian P. Johnson., op. cit., P. 263.
All those souls that reach Sat Lok are technically called Saints. The extent of Sat Lok is millions of times bigger and vaster than our world. After reaching there, the soul goes forever beyond birth and death. There is no such thing as pain or pleasure, but only eternal spiritual bliss and beatitude.

THREE STAGES ABOVE SAT LOK

Like Kabir, Nanak, Tulsī Sahib of Hathras, Soamiji is also of the opinion that above Sat Lok or Sach Khand there are three regions viz., (i) Alakh Lok, (ii) Anam Lok and (iii) Anami Lok or Radha Swami Dham. Regarding these realms, Soamiji says, "They are so wonderful and bewitching that I cannot describe them". However, Maharaj Charan Singh believes that these three stages are the sub-divisions of Sach Khand.


52. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan - 21, Hidyatnamah, p. 177.

53. Charan Singh. The Master Answers, (Dehi, 1966), p. 353. Regarding these three regions, Maharaj Charan Singh holds that the fifth region Sach Khand is the last stage. Those who argue that above it there are more three regions such as, alakh, anam, anami or Radha Swami, are wrong. They are the sub-divisions of the same region Sach Khand. One can call the whole fifth region Sach Khand. It makes no difference.
SURAT SHABD YOGA

According to the Radha Soamis the Surat Shabd Yoga means the 'union of the soul with the sound current'. It was also called by various names such as Sahaj Yog, Shabd Yog, Anhad Yog, Anand Yog, Bhajan Yog, etc. Soamiji held, "If we want to go to our original home, i.e. Sat Lok and be one with our Heavenly Father, we should practise Surat Shabd Yoga, Shabd is the way to reach our true home; and this divine melody is ever ringing within us." Laying stress on this point, he says that this Yoga is the only method for realizing God; other efforts are useless. People try other methods but all in vain.

Maharaj Jagat Singh, the third Guru of the Radha Soamis of Beas Centre held that the Surat Shabd Yoga is the path of the saints. This is the most natural and harmless method. It is so easy that all can follow it. One does not need change one's religion or renounce the world. There are no rites, rituals or ceremonies to be observed. Only one has to devote three hours daily to practise the Surat Shabd Yoga which enables to hear the voice of God.

According to Maharaj Sawan Singh of Beas Centre,

"It is very simple and can be practised by men and women of all countries and creeds. Even a child of six can practise it. In this method we simply close our outer openings*, and attach our mind to the sound current that sweetly reverberates in our forehead behind our ears. This celestial life current in the form of beautiful harmonies proceeds from the highest place of the Lord and enlivening and energizing all the lower regions on its way, settles down in the brain of man, making its headquarters in the centre behind the eyes. This is the straight link between man and the Lord. Following this current, we can rise directly to our original home." 57

Thus, the object of Surat Shabd Yoga is to free the soul from its bondage to the body and to the objects of the world.

According to the teachings of the Radha Soamis, this practice is divided into three parts. They are the following: 58

(i) Simran (repetition of Nam)
(ii) Dhyān (contemplation of Guru)
(iii) Bhajan (listening of Shabd)

---

* Outer openings means nine apertures of human body are: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth and two lower apertures. Our thought currents follow out into the whole world through these apertures (Charan Singh., The Path , P. 52; Charan Singh., Satguru No. 26: Namae Hi Te Sabh Kichhu Hoa, Punjabi, (Jullundur, 1987), P. 13).


(i) SIMRAN

The repetition of some word or phrase is called Simran. In the practice of Surat Shabd Yoga, Simran is the first step. Some do it with the help of the fingers, others with their tongue and many others with their throat, heart or even the navel. Among these methods, the Simran done unconsciously by counting the beads of a rosary is considered inferior type of Simran. But Simran by tongue, by the throat, heart or from the navel centre, is considered superior. The Radha Soamis opine that Simran is highly beneficial if it is done with the attention of the Surat or soul. Soamiji holds that the best type of Simran is of repeating the five names. We should repeat it by concentrating our whole attention in the centre between and slightly above the eyes and then it naturally moves inward and upward to the third eye. This process of concentration is successfully completed by persistent effort of strong will. In fact, Simran is a ladder which takes us to the higher regions where we may have communion with the Lord.

60. Sawan Singh., My Submission, PP. 113, 114.
61. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan - 26, Shabad - 1, P. 226 and Bachan - 26, Question No. 4, P. 222. For English rendering see - Radha Soami Teachings, P. 253.
According to the Masters of the Radha Soami Faith, the second step in Surat Shabd Yoga is Dhyan (contemplation). When we collect our mind in the third eye by Simran, it gets scattered again. To keep it collected there, we should contemplate the radiant astral form of our own Guru, which is already there in the third eye. There the form of the Guru is like human figure we see outside in the world and when we see him in Sat lok again it is like the human form.

Without contemplating the form of our Guru, we cannot catch hold of Shabd nor go up towards spiritual realms. The radiant astral form of the Guru is the focus of Anhad Shabd (limitless music), and his external physical body is its reflection or shadow. Therefore, we should contemplate the form of our Guru for inner realisation.

The third step is Bhajan i.e. listening to Anhad Shabd. Soamiji says that two things are essential for spiritual enlightenment and inner realization: (i) devotion to one's Guru, and (ii) listening to Anhad Shabd.


65. Sarbakan Poetry, Bachan - 19, Shabad - 2, P. 144.
Soamiji says that all efforts must be made in these two directions. By devotion to Guru, our egoism is killed and we are enabled to listen to the transcendent melody of Anhad Shabd, and eventually merge our being in it. It is called Bhajan.

DYING WHILE LIVING

Some people fear that during Shabd practice, when the soul goes into the third eye the person may die but it is not so. No doubt, this is the process of death. But, when death comes, the soul severs its connection with the body and all its faculties are also withdrawn. However, when the soul goes up by Shabd Yoga, the Pranas (vital force) go on doing their work, and breathing is not stopped. Only the conscious current is drawn up into the third eye and beyond. After enjoying the bliss, the knowledge of higher planes for sometimes the soul comes back into the body, because the connection between the two is not cut off. Maharaj Savan Singh calls it 'dying while living'. Such a practice must be done under the guidance of a perfect living Guru or master.

NEED OF A TRUE LIVING MASTER

The Radha Soamis consider a true living master an absolute necessity in God-realization. They strictly believe

---

that without contacting a living Guru, one cannot get Bhakti (devotion) and without devotion one cannot cross the ocean of this universe. As Shabd is a transcendent entity, we cannot have it from books. Soami ji says that after a thorough search, you should adopt your Guru because without Guru no one can find the inner path nor can get salvation. In this context, Maharaj Jagat Singh held that Gurut Shabd Yoga is a highly


70. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan - 8, Shabad - 1 and 3, pp. 133, 134, respectively.
technical process. It cannot be attained by merely reading the scriptures. Just as we have to seek the help of a teacher for learning worldly arts, we have to take refuge of a true living master to attain perfection in *Surat Shabd Yoga* also.\(^1\)

According to Maharaj Charan Singh, the present Master of Beas Centre,

> "The saints of the past were doubtless perfect Masters. But we cannot benefit from them now. We need a living Master of the present day. He alone can help us to cross the ocean of the universe." \(^2\)

There are many *Guru* in this world, but a true and perfect *Guru* is rare. Soamiji says that in a *Guru* we have only to see if he himself is joined to *Shabd*, for only then he can connect us also with it. We have not to see whether he is a Hindu or Muslim, educated or uneducated, rich or poor, nor judge any other trait.\(^3\) He further says that if a *Guru* does not follow the

---


path of Shabd, he is not a perfect Guru. The true Guru teaches us the method of Shabd practice and no other. He guides us in concentrating our consciousness within ourselves and listening to the divine melody.

Finally, Soamiji says that, he is a true living Guru who tells us all about the five stages up to Sat Lok, their distinctive melodies and transcendent entities, their ruling spirits or manifestations of God; all within our body.

VIEWS ON HOLY BOOKS

Regarding the study of the scriptures, Maharaj Sawan Singh of Beas held that it is impossible to obtain Shabd by reading scriptures. The books contain only its description. One may read or hear the four Vedas, the eighteen Puranas and the six Darshanas but by studying them one cannot get salvation.


76. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan - 20, Shabad - 10, P. 161 and Bachan - 10, Shabad - 1, P. 96. Also see Rasala Sari Duniya, Monthly, Urdu, November 1957; (Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, Beas), P. 10.

Regarding a true living Guru, Nanak Dev also holds the same opinion. For details, see The Adi Granth, Var Mahal Mohalla - 1, P. 1290, (published by Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar).
So long as the soul does not contact the sound within, it remains bereft of the reality. It is like a bird that imitates the songs of others but does not understand their meaning.77

Similarly, Maharaj Charan Singh dispels all doubts regarding the study of holy books by saying:

"If we were to read the scriptures throughout the whole day, the whole month, the whole year, nay, the whole of our life, there would be only one thing that would be credited to our account and that would be whether or not our surat (soul) is united with the Shabd. Otherwise all our reading would be absolutely futile. Such reading is like churning water from which no butter can ever be produced. Saints take us out of the maze of such false hopes and foolish consolations. They describe the glory of Nam in holy books. By studying them, we come to know why it is necessary for us to practise Nam and how this is to be done. But the scriptures do not contain Nam. They only reveal the method of obtaining it. Salvation does not come by reading them. It becomes a reality only when we practise whatever we have read." 78

Thus, the Radha Soamis do not merely depend on the perusal of the scriptures, neither do they take them as Guru nor do they worship them in any form, because they believe that no one can realize

Kabir Sahib and Guru Nanak are also of the same opinion. For Details, see Chhabra, G.S., Advanced History of the Punjab, Volume I, (Jullundur, 1968), pp. 84, 85; Kahan Singh., Ham Hindi Nahin, Punjabi, (Nabha, 1997), p. 60; Kirpal Sandesh, Weekly, Hindi, May 7, 1978, (Delhi), pp. 1, 2; Rasala Sari Duniya, Monthly, Urdu, February 1957, (Baba Jaimal Singh, Best), pp. 13, 14.

God with their help. According to them, God-realization is only possible by practising the Surat Shabd Yoga under the proper guidance of a perfect living master and serving him wholeheartedly.

FOUR KINDS OF SERVICE

Four kinds of service have been recognised for spirit's uplift by the followers of this Faith:

(i) SERVICE WITH WEALTH

Soamiji holds that master does not want our wealth but by accepting our offerings he helps to make us less selfish and less attached to money and property. Moreover, he with our offerings helps the poor and needy. This service is more practicable in the case of rich people than others.

(ii) SERVICE WITH BODY

For the beloved master, the disciple should render manual service which may be easy or difficult or of any nature. The disciple should give up all idea of his worldly status, rank and position in doing such a service.


(iii) SERVICE WITH MIND

The disciple should serve his Guru with his mind and intellect. He should remember him during all hours of day and night. He should obey his master abandoning his mind's reasoning habit; he should look upon his Guru as the embodiment of all Saints, of all gods and goddesses, and one with the Almighty. He should use his intelligence in trying to understand the discourses and teachings of his Guru and by grasping the fundamental points of Sant-Mat.

(iv) SERVICE WITH SOUL

According to Soami ji, the disciple should serve his master with his soul. Guru's real being is Shabd and disciple's real being is soul. So service of the soul to Shabd is the highest service to Guru. This means that the disciple should sit in a quiet corner and concentrate for the inner Anhad Shabd. Gradually, his soul will be collected in the eye centre and will rise up to the sky of the astral plane. By and by, through daily practice, his soul will ascend with this divine melody to subtle spiritual heights and eventually reach Sat-Lok.

82. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan - 13, Shabad -1, P. 108. For English rendering see - Sachi Soami Teachings, P. 110.
For this service, discourses of the Guru are considered necessary, for these help the disciple to concentrate his attention inside and take the soul to higher zones. The SatSang is of two kinds. Before describing the SatSang of two kinds, it is interesting to know how well the ordinary followers of the Radha Soami Movement carry out the service to their master.

Undoubtedly, service with wealth is easy to perform but only the rich can do it. The ordinary followers, however, serve their master with body. During their visits to Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, Beas, on the occasions of monthly and Bhandara SatSangs, they perform various kinds of manual service such as Mitti-Ki-Seva (service of removing and carrying earth to level ground); Kei-Ki-Seva (service of cutting grass for fuel), etc. All the followers are expected to serve their master with body and soul but it is difficult to find their number. Those who render such service, however, do it with enthusiasm.

---

83. Sawan Singh., Philosophy of the Master, Volume I, (Delhi, 1977), P. 5.
84. Where Masters Walk, Volume III, P. 42; The Illustrated Weekly of India, November 16, 1969, P. 73.
Sat Guru is an embodiment of Shabdi. So his
company is the external Sat sang. Soamiji holds that the
only way to remove the impurities of the mind is through
Sat sang. However, dirty the clothes, they become
clean when you wash them with soap. When you apply
a spark of fire to a heap of straw, it is reduced to
ashes in a moment. Sat sang acts in the same way. It
destroyes the bad Karma and changes the Sanskars (good
and bad impressions) from day to day. In short, the
Sat sang purify our mind and lessen the worldly desires.
Moreover, the external Sat sang is essential for
attaining the internal Sat sang; through it, the disciple
comes to know the secrets of Nam and true Guru.

85. Sarbachan Prose, Para No. 148, P. 110;
Sawan Singh., Satsang : Kahan Lag Kahan Kutilta Man
Ki, Punjabi, (Jullundur, 1979), P. 11.

86. Sarbachan Poetry, Bachan - 11, Shabad - 1,
PP. 97-100; Sawan Singh., Philosiphy of the
Masters, Volume I, PP. 114, 115.
(ii) **INTERNAL SATSANG**

By *internal Satsang*, the soul contacts *Nan* and goes into the higher zones. This can be obtained only if one is fortunate enough to be initiated into the secrets of spirituality by a perfect master.

**THE LAW OF KARMA**

There are three kinds of *karma* (actions) recognised by the masters of the Radha Soami Movement:

(i) *Pralabdh Karma* (destiny or fate *karmas*)

(ii) *Kriyaman Karma* (actions performed in this life)

(iii) *Sinchit Karma* (the store of *karmas*)

(i) **PRA LABDH KAR MA**

That portion of our *karma* which is allotted to this life and is responsible for our present existence. It is also called fate or destiny.

(ii) **KRIYAMAN KARMA**

The result or fruit of new actions performed during the present life.

---

(iii) SINGHIT KARMA

These Karmas which still remain to be taken out of our own stored-up lot and are to bear fruit in future incarnations. Sages and seers have called this world the 'field of actions'. Maharaj Charan Singh says:

"In this world all our pains are due to our evil karmas in past lives, the consequences of which we are bearing now. And whatever moments we have of pleasure are due to our good karmas." 89

The Radha Soamis are of the opinion that there are two types of people in the world: the Gurmukh or the one who is devoted to the Guru and hence a devotee of Lord. To the second category belong the Mannukh or the one who is the devotee of the mind and senses. The Mannukh is dominated by mind and senses and believes in sensual pleasures. But on the other hand the Gurmukh, the devotee of the Lord always remains devoted to his master and gradually becomes free from all karmas by performing the spiritual practice as directed by him. 90

Maharaj Charan Singh tells the method of liquidating the

---

90. J. Stanley White., Liberation of the Soul, (Delhi, 1975), P. 86.
Karmas of all types.

"All our Karmas are destroyed by Simran and Bhajan. The Pralabdha Karmas we undergo here; when our mind becomes attached to the Shabd, we perform no bad deeds, so we no longer produce Kriyaman Karmas and the Sinchit Karmas are destroyed by spiritual practice after we reach Trikuti." 91

Thus it is clear that our bad Karmas lead us to the cycle of Chaursai, 92 and keep us away from salvation.

91. Charan Singh., Quest for Light, P. 52.

92. CHAURASI means eighty four lakh species of life that exist on this earth. They are: 30 lakh kinds of trees and plants, 27 lakh kinds of insects and reptiles; 14 lakh kinds of birds; 9 lakh kinds of creatures living in water; 4 lakh kinds of animals, gods, goddesses, ghosts and human beings. (Charan Singh., The Path, P. 113; Sawan Singh., Satsang : Sant Jiv Ki Bipt Chhuraven, Hindi, (Jullundur, 1980), P. 26; Krishan Murari (compiler)., Satsang Param Sant Manager Sahib, Satsang No. 2, Hindi, (Ganganagar, n.d.), P. 1; Radha Soami Satsang Beas., Sant Mat Parkash, Part IV, Punjabi, (Delhi, 1982), PP. 2, 3).
The masters of the Radha Soami Faith like other saints of the past such as Lord Christ, Saint Nandev, Kabir, Tuka Ram, Guru Nanak Dev, Paltu Sahib and Tulsi Sahib of Hathras believe that God is within the body. In this context,

Maharaj Charan Singh says:

"The concepts of all saints about God's abode are the same. The Lord is one, and He is within every one of us. Every body is seeking and wants to merge back into Him. Everyone is to seek the Lord within his own body. The path leading to the Lord is the same in the Christians as in the Muslims, in the Hindus and all others. When our human structure is the same, the path leading to Him is necessarily also the same."

The masters of the Radha Soami Faith believe that the search for the Lord should be carried out within oneself; seeking for Him elsewhere will result in failure.

THE MIND, ITS NATURE AND PEOPLE'S EFFORTS TO CONTROL IT

Regarding the mind, the Radha Soami hold that as soul is essence of the Lord, mind is the essence of Brahm. Mind's origin is in Trifuti and it is the agent of Kal (the negative power). However, it is caught in the network of illusion and
it has forgotten its place of origin. The soul has become its hand-maid and both are tied together, as it were in a knot. So long as the soul does not free itself from mind, it can never know itself. The Masters of the Radha Soami Faith advise that the disciple's efforts should be directed towards undoing the knot of the mind and the soul.

In the context of mind's nature they make it clear that mind is slave of senses and is in the grip of five passions. It is fond of pleasures and it tries to find happiness in material things composed of five elements - earth, water, fire, air and space.

96. Charan Singh., The Path, P. 33; Charan Singh., Sant Mat Darshan, Part III, Urdu, (Delhi, 1979), P. 16.
98. FIVE PASSIONS : The five senses work through the ten organs - five of perception, known as Gyan Indriyas, are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and the skin (the senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling or touch). The five organs of action through which these senses function are known as Karm Indriyas and are the hands, feet, mouth and the organ of reproduction and the anus. The desires for the gratification of the senses are the chief source of our bondage, for through these senses we contact the objects of the world and become their slave. (Charan Singh., Divine Light, P. 185).
It never sticks to one thing permanently. As soon as it sees something better, sweeter or prettier than what it has, it runs after that and throws away what it had in hand. However, it is never satiated. The more it gets, the more it desires.

The people of different faiths try to control the mind by various ways. They turn for help to recitals of holy books and to undergo penances, to worship and baths in holy rivers, to the reading of scriptures, to giving alms, etc. Moreover, some people leave their homes and go into solitude of forests and mountain caves to control the mind. According to the Radha Soamis the aforesaid efforts to control the mind in various ways are futile. They opine that through discipline we try to detach our mind from the objects of the world, but because our thoughts do not become attached to something superior, something beyond, our mind reacts and rebounds and comes back into the world with as much strength and cunning as ever.

RIGHT WAY TO CONTROL THE MIND

Regarding the right way to control the mind, Maharaj Charan Singh says that there is only one method of subduing the mind and that is the sweet and enchanting taste of Nam, the word or Logos. As it gets the taste of Nam, it begins to shed its love for and attachment to the world. The sweetness and the magnetic pull of the Nam (word) will detach it completely from worldly attachments. Thus it is only the attachment to the Sound or Nam that creates detachment within us. After that the mind goes back to its own origin and the soul gets released from the mind's grip.

VIEWS ON HUMILITY, DEVOTION AND LOVE

The Radha Soamis hold that humility, devotion and love are essential for God-realization. Soamiji held that in our search for truth and reality, we should be tolerant and humble. If we are proud, we shall not learn from others. Humility leads to success but vanity obstructs our way.

Among the Radha Soamis, devotion and love are considered the primary factors in developing spirituality. Maharaj Sawan Singh held that devotion and love are different names but they have the same meaning. Devotion is a spontaneous current of attraction which draws one towards the Lord. Love is another name for union with the Lord and for enjoying the bliss of being one with Him. In reality, love is true prayer to the Lord. All austerities, worship, knowledge and contemplation are useless without love.

The path of love and devotion is the easiest and superior to almost all other paths such as path of *Karma* (action), the path of *Gyan* (knowledge), the path of *Yoga* (one of the six systems of Indian philosophy), the path of repetition, austerity, etc. When a Gurmukh or *Satsangi* (follower) leaves everything to the will of the Lord and worships Him with love and devotion, *Kaal* and *Maya* (the negative power and illusion) cannot obstruct his path.

**Vegetarian Diet**

Among the followers of the Radha Soami Faith, the use of flesh foods including meat, fish, fowl, eggs and food...

---

containing their essence and the use of intoxicants like alcohol, psychedelics, marijuana, etc., are strictly prohibited. All these things are considered filthy and poisonous for the body, mind and soul. Maharaj Charan Singh has stated that spiritual progress is not possible so long as one consumes afore-mentioned articles.

He further says that all that we see in this world is made up of one or more of the five Tattvas (elements) which we call earth, water, fire, air and ether or Akash. Human body is the top of creation because it has all the five elements active within it. We must remember that punishment for killing is sure. But there is a difference in the degree of punishment. If we kill a being of one element for our food, we will be punished less, but if we kill a being of more than one element we will be punished more. Therefore, we must live on vegetables.


only because fruits and vegetables have only one element. If we are meditating and living on vegetables, the load of \textit{Karma} (actions) will be very insignificant.

Similarly, Maharaj Jagat Singh held that much of our spiritual progress depends upon our food. As we eat, so our mind becomes. He suggests that the \textit{Satsangis} (followers) should always take \textit{Satvik} food. According to him, Rajasik

110. \textit{Radha Soami Satsang Beas, Thus Saith the Master} (Delhi, 1974), pp. 134, 312, 313. Also see Kirpal Singh, \textit{Seven Paths to Perfection} (U.S.A., 1970), pp. 11, 12; Alfonso Caycedo, \textit{India of Yogis} (Delhi, 1966), pp. 125, 126.

The Radha Soamis divide all the creation of this universe into five classes in accordance with the number of \textit{Tattvas} (elements).

(i) The plant kingdom, which includes vegetables, flowers and fruits. They all have life, but water is the only active element in them, the other four being dormant.

(ii) Insects: They have two elements active in them namely fire and earth.

(iii) Birds: They have three elements active in them namely water, fire and air.

(iv) Mammals have four elements active in them. They lack only the other element, which is the power of discrimination.

(v) Human beings have all five elements active in them and are therefore called 'the top of creation'.

and Tamsik foods are a hindrance in spiritual progress.  

**VIEWS ON PRAYER**

Regarding prayer, the Saints have different opinion.  
Some feel that when God knows even the innermost secrets of our mind, there is no need for prayer. Some others think that when God is to grant a gift for the asking, we may in ignorance ask for things that may ultimately be harmful to us and we may have to repent of our folly. Still others believe that God, who is more than our earthly father, knowing what is good for His children would provide without our asking and keep

According to the Radha Soamis, foods are of three kinds:  

(i) **Satvik** (pure food): This food produces tranquillity and pure thoughts. This consists of vegetables, milk, butter, cheese, dairy products, honey, almonds, oats, wheat, pulse, rice, etc. It includes all simple light food in small quantities.

(ii) **Rajasik** (energizing food): This food makes the mind crave for worldly activity. It consists of eggs (fertile and infertile), fish, saffron, pastry, pepper and all stimulating articles, including tea, coffee and hot milk or any food in large quantities.

(iii) **Tamsik** (enervating food): This food produces sluggishness, anger, etc. It consists of meat, wine, tobacco and heavy and stale food or too much of anything, and, of course all alcoholic drinks.

back that which may be detrimental to our interest. The Radha Sromis are of the opinion that the prayer may be done only for spiritual gains and to pray for worldly gains is useless.

According to Maharaj Sawan Singh, for complete success in spiritual practice, it is necessary to pray for the help of some saint or Satguru (spiritual adept). We should not beg before lower powers such as gods, goddesses, angels, etc. as they can grant us only that which is within their sphere. They cannot give us salvation. It is within the reach of God and the Guru. Guru and God both are same, as the divine spark of the Lord is present in the Guru. Therefore, to beg of the Master is to beg of God. He is working through the Master.

We can pray with three different methods: the first is to repeat the prayers written in religious scriptures or given in any other form by means of speech. So long as every word of our prayer does not raise all our feelings from the core of our hearts, we can derive very little benefit. The second method is repeating the prayer mentally. In this method speech is not

115. Ibid., p. 166; Sawan Singh., Gurmat Sishant: Chaurasi Vishan Waal, p. 7.
required. The third method is prayer by the soul. Besides, the prayer does not require any religious place like temple, mosque, gurdwara, etc. Human body is the best place for prayer to God, because He resides within everybody.

Similarly, Maharaj Charan Singh explains his views on prayer in one of the letters to his disciple:

"Prayer creates humility and meekness. We may pray to the Lord for help, mercy, guidance and that He may give us the strength to face willingly and gracefully whatever is in store for us. This will make our will-power strong and will enable us to pay off our account of Karmas (actions), in a happy mood. But one should not pray for worldly things or anything connected with this world or even connected with any of the lower spiritual regions, for that only depends on our attachment and we have to be born here again and again to fulfill those desires." 117

Thus it is clear that the Radha Soamis do not believe in offering prayers for worldly gains. They depend upon the Raza (will) of the Almighty. 118

We may sum up that the Radha Soami Movement endorses the message of Saints and presents its own unique method of achieving the ultimate goal of human life i.e., salvation through meditation of Surat Shabd Yoga. It opposes the external paraphernalia of religious life such as caste distinctions, idolatry, pilgrimages, vows, Sanyas (renunciation of the world), etc. It emphasizes that Surat Shabd Yoga is the best and the easiest of all modes of Yoga for God-realization. It can be practiced by all alike irrespective of any difference of age, caste, creed, sex, nationality and social status. A person leading a family life, can also practise it easily. It condemns the idea of mere reading and reciting the scriptures for salvation. For salvation, it strongly recommends that one must search within human body which is the real laboratory for this purpose. It emphasizes vegetarianism, total abstinence from alcohol and other intoxicants, honest living and daily meditation. It revives firm faith in perfect living Guru and Guru Bhakti (devotion to the Guru).

After a brief survey of the teachings of the Radha Soami Movement, it may be said that the Movement took its origin

from the hoary past of Hindu thought and philosophy. Since time immemorial, salvation has been declared to be the ultimate goal of human life and for its attainment the sages and seers laid down three paths of karma, gyana, and bhakti. These three ways conformed to the three aspects of personality: action, cognition and affection which are, in fact, complementary and supplementary to each other. The three paths elaborated by the gurus of the Radha Soami Movement bear close similarity to the one or the other of the paths suggested by Kabir, Nanak and Maulana Rumi. Kabir, in his teachings laid special emphasis upon the formless Supreme Being, the concepts of guru and shabd. The Surat Shabd Yoga of the Radha Soamis resembles Kabir's Sahaj Yoga. Their emphasis on guru bhakti conforms to the Kabirian tradition. Their criticism of superfluous and superstitious socio-religious practices and their anti-traditional and anti-ritualistic approach show definite Kabirian impact. The Radha Soami preceptors have themselves admitted that their Faith is testified in the teachings of kabir sahib. The ideas of naam and satguru, the theory of succession of the gurus and the sangat of guru Nanak present striking similarities to the teachings of the Radha Soami Faith. Many practices in the Radha Soami Faith

also appear similar to the practices of the Muslim mystics. Some of these are: total surrender to the worship of the perfect adept; the idea of the beloved (Supreme Being) and the lover (devotee); the intensity of pure love; the ideas of ever-absorption in thought of the Highest Reality and the singing of emotional hymns.  

The founder of the Radha Soami Movement, in keeping with the spirit of the age, established such principles and practices as might suit the requirements of the common man and also might guide the true seekers after the highest truth. The birth of the Movement in 1861, appears to be the final stage in the development of traditions of Sant Mat.

All new religious sects or movements are, essentially a revolt against and break from the useless, superficial and superfluous rites and rituals of the prevailing religion. The Radha Soami Movement seems to be no exception so far as its origin is concerned. The latter nineteenth century in India, has been a period of fervent resurgence in other walks of life. The Radha Soami Movement presents the essence of complex religious heritage. It borrows nothing directly from any particular religion — Hinduism, Islam or Sikhism — and yet contains the kernel and presents it to the common people in a simplified form shorn of all superficialities. It will be wrong

122. It is wrong to say that the Radha Soami Movement came primarily out of Sikhism. For more details see also above, pp. 64-69.
to say that it bears lineage to any particular religion, past or present. It is appropriate to say that it is markedly close to the teachings and traditions of the Sant Mat with its particular emphasis on the belief in the Supreme Being, the need of the true living Guru and concentration on Surat Shabd Yoga as the means for the realization of ultimate goal of human life.
MAHMAN SINGH
FOUNDER OF
VILLAGE-
(MAHMAN SINGH WALS)

MAHMAN SINGH

GURDIT SINGH

DARIYA SINGH

SANGAT SINGH

BHATN SINGH

SHER SINGH

KABUL SINGH

SAWAN SINGH

MAHMAN SINGH

MACHA SINGH

HARCARRAN SINGH

(SHARAN SINGH)

BASANT SINGH

PARSHOTAM SINGH

MARAN SINGH

MARAN SINGH

MAHMAN SINGH

THAMAN SINGH

BISHTAN SINGH

SANGAT SINGH

SATNAM SINGH

MARCH ARAN SINGH

(CHAR FINS/NGH)

PARSH SINGH

- O.P. OAL.