

## Gurbani inspired Meditation Techniques

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### Why should we meditate?

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Can a bulb glow without electricity? Problem with humans is that right from birth, our minds are mostly untrained system which on their own can't grow. Somebody has to teach children how to walk, talk and solve increasingly difficult problems of life.

We have heard stories of people who were raised in jungles, away from civilisations. What became of them? Hardly any difference between such adults and surrounding animals.

In the same way, we need teachers to train our minds. Humans have to acquire knowledge, both from without and later from within. So, comes the role of parents, school teachers, and ultimately a Guru. Guru or Master is the one who can enrich the human minds with Divine wisdom and lead

him/her from marshes of this world to Kingdom of Joy and Bliss of God.

Now, how does Guru train? By giving his living flesh and blood. Which means transferring his own realisation into receptive minds.

So, how to become receptive to a Guru. That is where meditation comes in. Meditation is just single-pointed concentration on Divine.

In meditation, Guru pours his Self into barren minds of disciples.

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### **What exactly is meditation?**

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Meditation is a highly interiorised state of awareness that happens after we intensely concentrate our mind on Guru or God to the exclusion of all other thoughts. It is a systematic process and involves several preparatory steps.

Truth is we can't do or force meditation. Meditation happens. We can only prepare the ground of our mind to enable onset of meditative experience.

In Sikh parlance, concentration on God or Guru is termed as 'Simran', which means remembrance of Divine. Simran is an interior thought-level phenomenon and no outer human faculties are really required for that. However, it is generally observed that unaided by outer support, it is very difficult to focus mind on a particular subject. Here comes the role of chanting of some mantra, or only a line of hymn or a complete hymn or even just intently listening to a hymn with feeling.

The mantra or hymn should be such, which resonates deeply with the heart of meditator and generates intense feeling of love and yearning for Divine.

**Saint Raghbir Singh Bir**<sup>1</sup> explains a very simple method for followers of Guru Nanak and terms the process as Naam Simran.

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<sup>1</sup> author of ***Bandgi-Nama*** and a series of spiritually enrapturing Sikh books

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## Naam Simran

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Naam or Name of God can be any like Ram, Allah etc. but Guru Nanak has specifically reserved the sacred Name of Wah-e-Guru for Sikhs. Uttering Name of God or even just thinking about Name of God, naturally invokes the memory of all the attributes of Divine. So, this is an effective way to put the mind in a devotional frame of mind.

Raghubir Singhji recommends a very simple approach to Naam Simran:

1. Sit comfortably in a quiet place
2. Chant mentally 'Wahe' while inhaling
3. Chant mentally 'Guru' while exhaling

The breath should be kept to flow completely naturally without forcing inhalation/exhalation. Idea is to just quietly, watch the flowing breath while chanting the sacred mantra in the mind.

Chanting is best done in synchronisation with breath but in the beginning meditator can forget about breath and just practice slow chanting. Gradually, with practice, synchronisation with breath will come.

While chanting one can visualise some aspect of Divine, whatever is dear to him. For instance, he can imagine he is sitting in front of Guru Nanak and Guru Nanak is conducting a Satsang in a divine atmosphere. Idea is to immerse mind in love and devotion for Divine. However, focus should be on watching the breath and chanting the mantra. It is to be noted that mind should not be allowed to wander into any other worldly thoughts. If mind wanders, just patiently bring it back to the job of chanting and thinking about Divine.

Also, it is a good practice to keep the eyes closed and to keep them gazing at and through the point between the eyebrows, without straining. This third-eye centre is actually the seat of Tenth Gate (Dasam Dwar) mentioned so often in Gurbani. This third-eye

centre has huge spiritual significance and is in fact the doorway to higher heavenly realms.

One can do this practice starting from 15 minutes to as long as one can comfortably concentrate. Once mind is interiorised, one can let go of chanting and just keep mind immersed in feeling of love and yearning for Divine - for as long as possible.

One will experience steadily increasing feeling of calmness, peace and joy while meditating. This is the real experience of higher consciousness or what we may call God. This is the experience which really bestows on us lasting happiness and which will break the bonds of Maya which keeps our mind so extroverted all the time.

This is just the beginning. Saint Raghbir Singh describes many advanced states of experiences which he had realised through his extended intense practice of Naam Simran.

My Guruji, **Paramahansa Yogananda**<sup>2</sup> had vowed that he will not talk of God, unless first he realises Him

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<sup>2</sup> author of spiritual classic, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, SRF/YSS publications

within. I take inspiration from Guruji and I am writing this article only after experiencing definite aspects of Divine. My only wish is to see my fellow brothers also enjoying the True Happiness that I found through meditation and Grace of my Guruji, while going through tragedies and traumas of life.

In meditation, one can hear *Anhad Shabd*, the unstruck Cosmic Melody or see *Astral Light* at third-eye centre, along with ever-deepening feeling of Joy and Contentment, as definite proof that God is responding to your soul call. All such experiences are vividly described in Gurbani.

This is the only way to rise above the painful duality of worldly existence where every fleeting joy is accompanied by pain and sorrow.

This is the only way to gain a state of stable happiness and become immune to outer disturbances.

As an initial step, I highly recommend that reader should deeply study books of **Saint Raghbir Singh**. That will make the mind fertile for the seeds of Divine Love to germinate through Naam Simran.

This reminds me of a Sakhi of Guru Nanak as recounted in his biography by Bhai Bala<sup>3</sup>. One day Bala and Mardana requested Guru Nanak to take them to Lanka in time-travel to see how it was during the reign of Ravan. Well, to cut matter short, Guru Nanak instructed Bala and Mardana to chant “WaheGuru” mantra and follow him as they all started walking on water from India to Lanka. Midway, Mardana noticed that though they were chanting WaheGuru, their leader was humming something else. He realised Nanak was actually chanting “Soham”<sup>4</sup> instead! Bala and Mardana immediately decided to follow Nanak and started chanting Soham and instantly they started sinking in water!

### *Morals of the story:*

1. Don't go by the doing of Guru, but go by the Teachings of the Guru. What Guru does himself is

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<sup>3</sup> Bhai Bala Vali Sri Guru Nanak Devji Janam Sakhi, <https://archive.org/details/BhaiBaleWaliJanamSakhi>

<sup>4</sup> Soham (meaning I am He) is a sacred Sanskrit mantra from Vedic times and is also mentioned multiple times in Sri Guru Granth Sahib



beyond our limited comprehension. That should not be our focus.

2. Follow the instructions of Master, lamb-like with full faith.
3. WaheGuru is a sacred mantra coined by Guru Nanak for Sikhs, which should be uttered only with deep reverence and in meditative frame of mind. Vain, loud and loose mention of this mantra will not yield any results and should be avoided.

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## Alternate Naam Simran Technique

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Repetition of WaheGuru mantra may not sound very exciting for some, especially because results in meditation do require perseverance.

Another way, which I have personally used with amazing results is to take just one line of any hymn from Gurbani, such as Guru Ramdasji's love-drenched Shabad:

“Bin dekhe Preetma, hau reh na saka, mein neer vahe veh chale jiyo”<sup>5</sup>

Just take one such ‘tuk’ of Bani and continuously listen and/or repeat over and over with ever-increasing love. This can even be done whole day long, along with doing other worldly activities. Keep on repeating for a day or two or week or even more. And suddenly you will see Guru Nanak's Grace come shining through the grey clouds of your restless mind and before you know, you will be in deep meditation.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRI3QMFMYYQ>

Once in meditation, let go of yourself and just dive deep into the ocean of Love for Guru and God.

In this context, it will be incomplete without mentioning **Sri Shivpreet Singh**<sup>6</sup> who is an exceptional lover of house of Guru Nanak and is totally absorbed in sprinkling his inner blessings all around. He is promoting similar concept of meditative singing and listening to go within; while maintaining perfect balance with worldly responsibilities. Please refer to his YouTube channel and you can also join his meditation circle.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKwaFIdGnEyuPVzuL3oO3BA>