

Pranayama & Surat Shabad Yoga – Sant Harjit Singh

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Excerpt from Pillars of Spiritual Progress: The Maha Mantra by James Chagula ~ An Interview With Sant Harjit Singh.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Faqir_Chand_Legacy/message/39
<http://www.babafaqirchand.com>

~ Pranayama (Breathing Practices) In Relation To Surat Shabad Yoga ~

JC: First of all, will you explain the meaning of the Maha Mantra?

HS: Maha means Great and then the mantra, there is no translation for mantra. The nearest translation could be a vibration.

JC: I remember you mentioning that it's also known as the 'manifested mantra'

HS: It's called the tarik mantra. Tarik is a word which means a vehicle that helps you swim (across) the ocean of life; the world or samsara. In the Shaivite tradition "Om Namo Shiva" (salutations to Lord Shiva) is the tarik mantra. So in the Sikh Sant Tradition, Wahe-guru is the tarik mantra for Kali Yuga. It doesn't produce tamas (inertia, delusions); it's a peace giving, illumination giving mantra.

JC: Maharaj, the mantra is the vehicle to Liberation. So do mantras affect the mind only? Does one discard the mantra after crossing the ocean...?

HS: No, no, the mantra doesn't remain. Once you reach your destination the mantra drops off, like a booster. You see, you have a three or a four stage rocket. First when you start off you have a booster to escape the greatest pull of gravity. You see it on TV haven't you? And then they drop off. The rocket escapes so many miles up into the atmosphere, then you use the second stage of the motor and then the third stage; until it floats by itself. Similarly with the surat (awareness), think of it like that.

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However, when you enter into your own Self, nothing remains. Mantras, vibrations, sounds and sights all drop away.

Using The Maha Mantra CD

(Noticing that Sant Harjit Singh frequently listens to the Maha Mantra himself, prompted me to pose the next question...)

JC: So, for example if you yourself listen to the Maha Mantra, would it be for completely different reasons?

HS: Yes. For a complete beginner, then he will just have to sit and listen to it through the ears. Gradually, he will relate it with his breath. Starting from the dhuni center which is the navel center; the first word will go

1. 'Wah' to your heart center.
2. 'He' from the heart center to the throat center
3. And then 'Gu' will take you to the talu which is where the tongue touches the upper part (palate).
4. And then 'ru' will take you up to the middle of the forehead or whatever. And then you complete a circuit like that.

This is how you regulate it with your breath. Obviously when you do this, your breathing will slow down. As a result of that your metabolism, your body chemistry will slow down. So your mind will gradually settle down. But it takes years and years of practice.

Now the next stage is; when you've done that for a number of hours, days, years or what have you; then you do it with your surat. So with the second stage, with your surat, you don't do anything. You don't regulate it with your breath; you just listen to it through your right ear and focus on Trikuti, the second (higher) center which is in the middle of your forehead. And gradually take it higher and higher and higher. It will find it's own hole. It will penetrate into a certain center, like a mouse finds a little hole (laughter). It will find it's own hole in your brain and you will merge into that. It will take you into Sunn samadhi.

For beginners it's best just to listen to it and regulate it with your breath. In the Radhasoami Mat that has been negated very, very much. But in the yoga tradition, breath is very, very important. If you study the Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh Holy Scriptures) Guru Nanak has also attached a lot of importance to the breath. You don't have life

without breath. So one of the techniques and a very powerful technique is: every breath you take you remember. So the Sohang mantra...

JC: Sohang?

HJ: So–hang. It's called the Sohang mantra... is automatically regulated with your breath. All the traditional sants, yogis have gone through this. Then they move over to higher things. They haven't negated the lower things, no. This is a very big mistake.

JC: A mistake? In modern Sant Mat?

HS: Oh, definitely. Because what they wanted to do was... they made an 'ism' you see. Without the foundations you can't have a building. So this is why you've got those people who just take Naam and they don't do anything (practical sadhana). But they start criticizing and demolishing everything.

So breath is very, very important. If your breathing is wrong, your mind won't be stable.

The Art of Listening

HS: With any mantra, any shabad, you have to learn how to listen to it with full attention; externally first. Like we're talking on the phone. I won't be able to understand anything if I do not listen to you with full attention. You won't be able to understand anything if you cannot hear me, or you can hear me just talk blah, blah, blah, blah. But if you don't pay attention, then you won't grasp the full meaning. So this is surat shabad yoga, to begin with. And this is a very important principle: if you don't pay attention; you don't catch (laughter).

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