

## **A Shortcut on the Spiritual Journey**

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The path of the Masters is the shortest cut to spirituality in this age of science and technology. This is an age of shortcuts. In every house wherever we go, we see the books of our children. There are so many books expounding shortcuts to success, shortcuts to perfection, shortcuts to attainment of working knowledge of economics. In our time, we didn't have these shortcuts, and we had to go the long way, because for each subject we had to first read all the standard books which involved a lot of time and labor. After we had mastered some eight to twelve standard books on a subject, then we answered a few specialized questions which covered the quintessence of the information contained in all the books which were available at that time. But now it is an age of shortcuts. I had the occasion to go to a friend of mine today; there I found some books on the table: *Shortcuts to Success in Economics*, and *Shortcuts to Success in History*. So I thought, that for our benefit, the great Masters starting from Guru Nanak and Kabir Sahib and all the Masters who blessed this earth before them, came to bless us with a shortcut in spirituality also. And that shortcut is the Surat Shabd Yoga.

We read in our scriptures that our rishis and munis of old put in eighty years practice in meditation. They would put in sixty-five or seventy-five years in penance, and yet when they were put to a test they could not always pass it. Moses said, "God, kindly please do not put us to any more tests." So taking into account our vulnerability and weaknesses, in this modern age, the pioneers of Sant Mat relieved us of the trials and tribulations involved in the yogic exercises which were prevalent up to that time and which entailed an intensively long period of meditation before anybody could achieve the goal of his spiritual life. It is a coincidence that the advent of the great Masters Guru Nanak and Kabir Sahib almost coincided with the beginning of the Renaissance movement and the modern era in history. Before these great Masters, devotees were following various forms of repetition or simran of the holy Names. Some started their simran with the kundalini at the juncture between the legs and the upper portion of the body. Others repeated mantras at the navel center, others in the heart region, others in the gullet, and many by the tongue. But the objective of repeating the holy mantras was to concentrate the soul at the focus of the spirit in man. That focus is between the two eyebrows, a little behind the eyes. We are all aiming at learning the art of how to die while living. When we see someone leaving the earthly coil, we find that first his sensory currents start leaving the body and his legs become numb. Then the kundalini ceases to function. Thereafter, his navel center stops functioning, and after that, the heart. Then the gullet also stops functioning, but the man is still alive. Afterwards the tongue would stop functioning, but still we find that the man has not yet left the body. It is only when the soul leaves through the eyes - the pupils turn upwards, then downwards - that we come to the conclusion that the soul has finally left the body.

All these exercises involved the use of breath control. The seers and yogis who were practicing kundalini yoga or other forms of yoga, were involved in practicing breath control. But the great pioneers of Sant Mat realized that when in our day to day dealings we can afford to

forget all about our breathing as we attend to our daily schedules, then why can't we extend this to the domain of meditation also. They dispense with consciously controlling the breath, or even thinking about the breath while meditating. They started their meditation from the center of the soul behind the two eyes and between the two eyebrows. This is the real heart of a seeker after truth. This is the real eye which is known to be the third eye or the single eye of the soul. This is the *shiv netra*, as it is called in the Hindu scriptures. So the Masters of Sant Mat have enjoined us to start our journey to our Eternal Home, Sach Khand, from the center of the soul which is that point where all world philosophies end and where true religion starts.

All artists, the masters of fine arts, musicians, poets, painters, sculptors and dancers - if their arts are devoted to the attainment of spiritual heights - take a dip at this point and produce what we call intuitive art, art blessed with intuition.

So this boon from the pioneers of Sant Mat provides us with a shortcut in the field of religion. And religion, as our Beloved Master Sant Kirpal Singh would often explain in his unique and immaculate way, is that "re" means "back" and "ligio" means "to bind". So religion really means the way which binds us back to our Creator, to Almighty God.

We are grateful to these great pioneers, and now as we have so many concessions from the Masters of the modern times who have introduced a shortcut on the long spiritual journey, we should all try our best to attain our objective. This can be done by surrendering ourselves completely at the lotus feet of a living Satguru who can bring us above body-consciousness, and who can arrange for the ultimate merger in our Master, communion with the Almighty, and thus enable us to achieve salvation.