

## FINDING PEACE AND HAPPINESS AT LAST

The pursuit of happiness is universal and valid. In one way or another, we are all seeking peace and happiness. We search for it in relationships, work, food, alcohol, movies, sex, shopping, money, and what not. But, although these things, if we achieve them, give us some type of happiness, it is only a second-class type of happiness, which doesn't last and usually ends in frustration or sorrow. That is because all things of the world are perishable; they have a beginning and an end.

Human beings have physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects with which they search for peace and happiness. Our physical, mental and emotional selves are only capable of connecting with these things of the world that change and die. Because they are impermanent, the happiness they provide is impermanent. Only by developing our spiritual nature can we find a source of peace and happiness that is permanent. People refer to this fountainhead of permanent joy and peace by many names, such as God, Universal Consciousness, Tao, Shabd, Word, and so on. One way to make conscious contact with this infinite source of peace and happiness is taught by the masters who teach Surat Shabd Yoga, the method of uniting our spiritual self with the inner sound current. Their teachings are known as Sant Mat, an Indian phrase meaning the teachings of the saints. These masters teach a practical way of developing our spiritual nature so that we can achieve lasting peace and happiness.

As we begin to put the teachings into practice, we start to develop our spiritual nature and come to understand more and more that our suffering is rooted in our distorted or unclear way of perceiving the world and ourselves. But when we achieve peace through the practice of meditation, our minds become settled and clear. We then begin to see life as it really is. We see events and people for what they are, rather than for what we have always projected on them. The resulting light-heartedness we experience enables us to go deeper into our meditation practice. The deeper we go, the more clearly we understand the true nature of the mind. We are able to watch how the mind creates infinite scenarios and then dissolves them again. We start to recognize that the source of our problems lies in the deceptive nature of our mental creations, and in our yearning for permanent or lasting solutions in an ever-changing world. As we continue with our meditation practice, our mind becomes still until eventually our soul is left unencumbered and we can contact directly the Source of all peace and happiness: the Tao, the Shabd, Buddha Nature, or God.

These teaching don't belong to any race, nation or community. Sant Mat cannot be considered a religion, because it does not have any of the elements common to religions, such as rituals, holy books, churches, holy images, clergy, and sacraments. Yet the fundamental concern of Sant Mat is the same as all the world religions--reuniting the soul with the ultimate Source of everlasting peace and happiness.

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