

## The Royal Vein

After passing through the third eye, the soul enters a fine vein, which has been called *Sushmana* or *Sukhmana* by saints and mystics in Hindi and Punjabi. Bulleh Shah and many other Sufi saints have given it the name *Shah Rag* (The Royal Vein). It should not be confused with the main blood vessel, aorta. In mystic terminology it is a fine path for the soul to travel on its spiritual journey from the eye center, upwards. Bulleh Shah says that those who are able to reach and enter the Royal Vein do not find their destination, the court of the Lord, very far.

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1. Kumbh Karan, a character in the epic *Ramayan*, who used to sleep for six months at a stretch. Here, it signifies the long inactivity of man in doing his meditation.
  2. Ravan, the ten-headed villain, in *Ramayan*. Here he stands for the ten-senses, which have to be tamed to realize God.
  3. Muslim mystics have called it 'Hauz-i-Kausar' (the Tank of Paradise) and 'Chashma-i-Abihayat' (the Fountain of Ambrosia). Other saints and mystics have given it various other names, such as Amritsar (the Pool of Nectar) and Mansarover (the Lake of Honor). The mystics say that by bathing in this pool, the soul is rid of all coverings and impurities, and man truly comes to know himself. This self-realization is a necessary pre-condition for God-realization.

Through the Royal Vein God is not far.  
People have for nothing raised a turmoil.

In confirmation of this point, Bulleh Shah has quoted verses from the *Qura'n* in many of his poems. In these verses God says to man:

1. You have written, "From the Royal Vein I am near you."  
You have given the lesson, "I am with you."  
You have ordained, "Know me within yourself."  
Then, why have You put on this veil?
2. You played the tune on the flute: "From the Royal Vein, I am near you."  
"Know me within yourself." You made us hear this cry.

Sultan Bahu conveys the same truth in his own words thus: "Those who understood the essence of God correctly, they moved towards progress. O Bahu know that 'From the Royal Vein I am near you,' and end all disputes."

In some other poems Bulleh Shah says that through spiritual practice the soul can travel in the fourteen worlds, and man's crow-like attitude (of carnal desires) would change into the swan-like attitude (of drinking the nectar of the Lord's Name):

1. I walk freely in the fourteen worlds,  
I am not constrained anywhere.
2. The Beloved himself displays His beauty,  
And makes the drinkers intoxicated!  
Seeing the graceful pace of swans,  
Bullah has forgotten the gait of crows.

3. In the rapture of Your love I have lost my senses;  
I have now found how close You and I are.  
You, O Lord, are near the Royal Vein within me.

Tulsi Sahib of Hathras, revealing the same secret to Sheikh Taqi, a Muslim divine, says in one of his famous ghazals:

Why do you wander in quest of the Beloved?  
The path to the Beloved lies through the Royal Vein.