AMRIT VELA

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Amrit Vela is considered to the beginning of a new day i.e. 12:00AM to 6:00AM or before the dawning of the morning sun. Typically, Sikhs start Amrit Vela as 2:00AM or earlier. The importance of Amrit Vela is found throughout the Guru Granth Sahib.

Article 4 (1) of Sikh Rehat Maryada says a Sikh should wake up in ambrosial hours (three hours before dawn) take bath and concentrating his/her thoughts on one Immortal being, repeat the name Waheguru.

– ਫਰੀਦਾ ਪਿਛਲ ਰਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਗਿਓਹਿ ਜੀਵਦੜੋ ਮੁਇਓਹਿ॥
ਜੇ ਤੈ ਰਬੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿਆ ਤ ਰਬਿ ਨ ਵਿਸਰਿਓਹਿ॥ (੧੩੮੩)

Farid says, If you do not awaken in the early hours before dawn, you are spiritually dead while physically alive. Although you have forgotten God, but God has not forgotten you.

– ਪਿਛਹੁ ਰਾਤੀ ਸਦੜਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਖਸਮ ਕਾ ਲੇਹਿ॥ (੯੮੯)

Those who are blessed by God get the call (Get motivated) to get up early in the morning and remember God.

– ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥ (੨)

Remember and contemplate on God's Glorious Virtues and Greatness during Amrit Vela.

– ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ॥
ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਭਲਕੇ ਪਰਭਾਤੀ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਰਿ ਨਾਵੈ॥
ਉਪਦੇਸਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੁ ਜਾਪੈ ਸਭਿ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਪਾਪ ਦੋਖ ਲਹਿ ਜਾਵੈ॥
ਫਿਰਿ ਚੜੈ ਦਿਵਸੁ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵੈ ਬਹਦਿਆ ਉਠਦਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ॥
ਜੋ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੋ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ॥ (੩੦੫)

Guru gives definition of a Gursikh. Sikh of Guru Shall remember teachings of the Guru upon rising from sleep. That could by anytime. Those who work night shift, sleeping during day and get up in the afternoon. Those who work day shift sleep at night and get up in the morning. Upon arising, one is to bathe to clean the body and then cleanse the mind (mann) in the pool of nectar of Guru's teachings (Read, listen them). Following the instructions of the Guru and living life accordingly, all evils, negativity go away. All the day one is to remember instructions of Guru. Blessed are those who remember God and instructions of the Guru with every breath and every morsel of food. To get the instructions we have to prepare ourselves by controlling our ego. Nanak begs for the company of such a Sikh (Gursikh), who remembers God and inspires others.

Gurbani has been true, is true and will always be true for everyone. If Guru is talking about Amrit Vela early hours of morning, then what about those people who work night shift.

Guru emphasises importance of Kirat Karni (Honest living). One can't shun work to earn honest living for early hours remembering God. We have seen importance of Amrit Vela, let's see what Guru actually means Amrit Vela, Pichal Raat and Bhalke:

Amrit Vela is made of two words, Amrit and Vela. We will discuss both words separately.

AMRIT

- ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਜਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਨਾਹਿ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਮਨੈ ਮਾਹਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ॥(੧੨੩੮)

Nanak says there is only one Ambrosial Nectar (Amrit) there is no other nectar at all. That Amrit is obtained within mind (mann) by Guru's Grace.

- ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਫਲੁ ਹਰਿ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਆਪੇ ਦੇਇ ਖਵਾਇ॥ (੬੬)

The God alone is the Ambrosial Fruit (Amrit), God itself gives it to us to eat.

- ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਚਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ ਕਹਣਾ ਕਛੂ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥ ਪੀਵਤ ਹੂ ਪਰਵਾਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਪੂਰੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਸਮਾਇ॥(੩੩)

Amrit is Virtues of the God (Sacha Naam). One is absorbed in the essence of Gurbani and God by accepting and adopting them.

- ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਸੁਖ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਨਾਮੁ॥ ਭਗਤ ਜਨਾ ਕੈ ਮਨਿ ਬਿਸ੍ਰਾਮ॥ (੨੬੨)

God's virtues (Naam) is Amrit which gives peace of mind (Blissful State) and is Jewel of Happiness (Sukhmani), it reside in the mind (mann) of enlightened ones (Bhagats).

It is clear that Amrit is virtues of the God in Gurbani which gives peace of mind (Blissful State) if we accept, imbibe and live life accordingly.

- ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਏਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪਾਇਆ॥ (੬੪੪)

Nanak says only spiritual teachings of the Guru (Shabd) which explains virtues of the God is Amrit, only those who listen to it (Gurmukhs) obtain it.

- ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀਤੈ ਤਿਖ ਜਾਇ॥ (੩੫)

Spiritual teachings of the Guru (Shabd) which explains virtues of the God is Amrit, accepting, imbibing and living life accordingly (Drinking) quenches all worldly desires.

- ਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਵਿਚਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਹੈ ਸਹਜੇ ਪਾਵੈ ਕੋਇ॥ ਜਿਨਾ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਤਿਨ ਪੀਆ ਹਉਮੈ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਖੋਇ॥(੩੧)

Those who have accepted and adopted virtues of the God, eradicate ego (Haume) from their mind (mann). They live life according to the will (Bhana) of God and imbibe the virtues (Amrit) instinctively.

- ਅੰਦਰਹੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਅਗਨਿ ਬੁਝੀ ਹਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਰਿ ਨਾਤਾ॥ (੫੧੦)

Taking bath in the pool of virtues of the God (Amrit) (Living life accordingly) the fire of worldly desires is quenched.

- ਜਿਨਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਚਾਖਿਆ ਸੇ ਜਨ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਾਤਾ॥ (੫੧੪)

Those who drink (Lives life accordingly Gurmukhs) virtues of the God (Amrit) are always contented.

– ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖਦਾਤਾ ਪੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਭ ਭੁਖ ਲਹਿ ਜਾਵਣਿਆ॥ (੧੧੯)

Nanak says Virtues of the God (Amrit) is forever giver of peace, drinking it (Living life accordingly) one is contented from all worldly desires.

– ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਪੀਵਹੁ ਸਦਾ ਚਿਰੁ ਜੀਵਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਅਨਦ ਅਨੰਤਾ॥ (੪੯੬)

Those who live life according to the virtues of the God (Drink Amrit) live spiritually forever, and are always in a blissful state. As water is essential for physical life on the body so is Amrit (Virtues) for spiritual life.

It is clear that taking Amrit (Living life according to Guru's teachings) quenches thirst of worldly desires, gives peace of mind, contentment and one is always in a blissful state.

– ਹਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਭਗਤਿ ਭੰਡਾਰ ਹੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪਾਸੇ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਜੇ॥ (੪੪੯)

The treasure of Amrit, the giver of spiritual life is with Satguru. Guru gives spiritual knowledge and wisdom how to live a perfect spiritual life.

– ਘਰ ਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਭਰਪੂਰੁ ਹੈ ਮਨਮੁਖਾ ਸਾਦੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ॥ (੬੪੪)

Amrit (Virtues of the God) is within the mind (mann) of everyone. Only those who seek it (Gurmukh) find it others (manmukh) don't.

– ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਰੁ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਨਾਵਹਿ ਆਇ॥ (੪੦)

The True Guru, the Primal Being, is the pool of virtues (Amrit). The very fortunate ones come to bathe in it (Get wisdom from it).

– ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਰੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸਤਿਵਾਦੀ ਜਿਤੁ ਨਾਤੈ ਕਊਆ ਹੰਸੁ ਹੋਹੈ॥ (੪੯੩)

The True Guru (Satguru) is the Pool of Virtues (Amrit). Taking a spiritual dip into this pool (Taking spiritual wisdom) even a person of immoral perverted conduct (Crow) can be converted to a person of good moral conduct (Swan).

We now know that Amrit is virtue of the God within the mind (mann) of everyone. Those who seek those virtues (Gurmukhs), get them through the spiritual knowledge and wisdom from the Guru.

VELA

– ਜੇ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੀਐ ਤਾ ਕਿਤੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਭਗਤਿ ਹੋਇ॥ ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਨਾਮੇ ਰਤਿਆ ਸਚੇ ਸਚੀ ਸੋਇ॥
ਇਕੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਿਨੇਹੀ ਹੋਇ॥ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਸੀਤਲੁ ਸਾਚ ਸਿਉ ਸਾਸੁ ਨ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਕੋਇ॥(੩੫)

If we continue looking for a specific perfect time and moment (Vela) to worship the God, then we will never be able to do so, because we will never find such a time. We should be attuned with the God every moment of our life. We should not forget God even for an instant. If we don't forget God even for a single breath, then our mind (mann) and body is peaceful (Blissful). Then we will be spending every moment, every single breath of our life according to the virtues of the God.

– ਹਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਭੋਜਨੁ ਨਿਤ ਭੁੰਚਹੁ ਸਰਬ ਵੇਲਾ ਮੁਖਿ ਪਾਵਹੁ॥
ਜਰਾ ਮਰਾ ਤਾਪੁ ਸਭੁ ਨਾਠਾ ਗੁਣ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨਿਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ॥ (੬੧੧)

Amrit, (Virtues of the God) is such a spiritual food which should be eaten all the time. One should always be attuned to this spiritual wisdom. With that, one will be able to cope with all problems and pains of life happily and have a Blissful State.

– ਸੁਰਿ ਨਰ ਮੁਨਿ ਜਨ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਖੋਜਦੇ ਸੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਪਾਇਆ॥
ਪਾਇਆ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਗੁਰਿ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੀਨੀ ਸਚਾ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਾਇਆ॥
ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਤੁਧੁ ਉਪਾਏ ਇਕਿ ਵੇਖਿ ਪਰਸਣਿ ਆਇਆ॥
ਲਬੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ ਚੂਕਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਭਲਾ ਭਾਇਆ॥
ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਆਪਿ ਤੁਠਾ ਤਿਨਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਪਾਇਆ॥ (੯੧੮)

All Angelic beings, sages and others (Everyone) are searching for Amrit (Virtues of the God), to obtain Blissful State, but this Amrit is obtained only from the Guru. This Amrit is obtained when one imbibes and adopts virtues of the God in the mind (mann) through the spiritual knowledge and wisdom from the Guru (Grace). All living beings and creatures were created by you God, only some come to seek the spiritual knowledge and wisdom from the Guru. They love spiritual teachings of the True Guru and their greed, avarice and egotism are dispelled. Says Nanak, those who prepare themselves to receive spiritual knowledge and wisdom from the Guru, obtain the Amrit.

So Amrit Vela is when we prepare ourselves to receive spiritual knowledge and wisdom from the Guru.

Conclusion

There is no specific time to get spiritual knowledge and wisdom from the Guru. Though, early hours of morning are considered to be best time of the day, but it is not possible for those who do shift duties. If Amrit Vela is only early hours then people doing shift duties will never get salvation. God can't punish people for working which is essential part of life. For people doing shift duty early hours is when they wake up from sleep. Upon arising, they should be able to clean the body, and then cleanse the mind (mann) in the pool of nectar of Guru's teachings (Read, listen them). Otherwise spiritual wisdom can be obtained from Gurbani and from discussions anytime of the day, at any place and through any means. The time (Vela) when spiritual wisdom about virtues of the God (Amrit) is obtained is Amrit Vela. Once we have adopted and assimilated the spiritual knowledge, wisdom and virtues of the God then they should be in our mind (mann) every breath and every moment of our life.