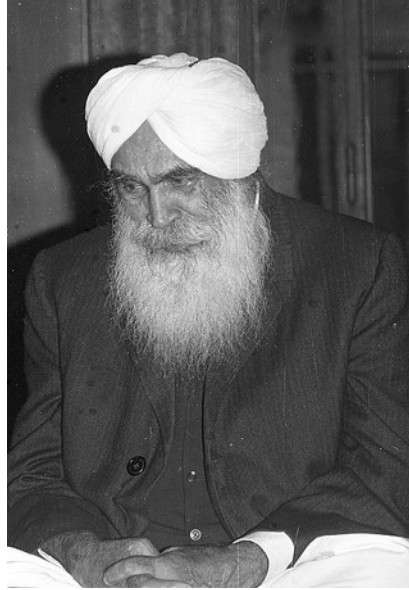


Riddle of Life

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Live to learn and learn to live is an age-old adage. No man is an island unto himself or can shut himself in an ivory tower for any length of time. Each one of us contrives a world of one's own according to his mental make-up.



The human mind works in diverse ways. It is an ever-active instrument. At times, it recalls the past, however distant, from the depth of the unconscious. This is the work of the mnemonic mind, technically called *Chit*. The unconscious is a great reservoir or storehouse of all the impressions that one gathers in one's lifetime and carries with him from life to life. Some of these impressions keep filtering through the subconscious and appear on the surface of the conscious, with or without any effort on the part of an individual. These are the recollections, whether recalled or automatic, as the case may be. As these pop up in one's head from the unknown to the known, one begins to dwell on them. This dwelling process or the association with the past events, incidents, and experiences is called *Manan* or the thinking faculty of the mind. As one takes into consideration the pros and cons of the matter, he begins to reason out and enters into what is called ratiocination (reasoning faculty of the mind), intellect, or *Buddhi*. The individual understanding of the wisdom involved gives one a sense of personality called ego or *Ahankar*.

As we grow from experience to experience, we willy-nilly weave a connected chain of cause and effect, running endlessly from life to life in spite of us. We cannot possibly live without being influenced by or influencing others. But nobody can give out more than what he has received or acquired. Even nature itself cannot give more than what it receives from us. One cannot over reach himself and give what is beyond his own reach. The world, therefore, is but a reflection of one's mind, an image or a shadow without any substance in it.

Once I had an opportunity to attend a seminar on the *Gita*. This memorable sermon, like other scriptures, is full of esoteric teachings which a layman cannot understand so easily on the level of the intellect unless explained by an awakened soul well versed both with the theory and practice of *Paravidya* the knowledge of the Beyond. One who has an actual experience of self-realization and God-realization can explain lucidly things which otherwise baffle human understanding. All the scriptures sing the glory of such an individual Master-soul or Guru who can give an actual demonstration of what he says as *evam brahma* (here is *Brahma*).

In the *Gita* itself (Ch. 4-6), an emphasis is laid on finding a man of realization before one can know of the God-path. It is he who can explain what it is, who actually puts one on the path, and can safely and successfully lead the aspirant to the goal. The *Gita*, for example, tells us that the God-way starts from a point between and behind the eyes. So far so good, now, where exactly that point lies and how one can reach it and penetrate through it is something that cannot be explained and done away with. It is a subject of practical significance, for the spirit is to be led to it so as to have a peep inside. We cannot do this with all our learning and wisdom when, for ages upon ages, we have become accustomed to flow externally into the world of senses.

It is a subject that is abstract and abstruse and requires tapping within. The word images simply convey the sense but cannot give the actual experience. During the course of the discussion, a *Pundit* (learned in scriptural lore) came to the pulpit and asked the audience to get ready for the God-vision that he was going to present. By his sound logic and learning, he kept the audience spellbound; but beyond giving a word picture, however beautiful it might have sounded, he could not actually give a demonstration of Reality. Learning, as you know, is nothing but inferential knowledge. It appeals only to human feelings and emotions. All said and done, we end by saying: "Where there is nothing, there is God." As the great Irish dramatist, W. B. Yeats puts it, or as we read in the scriptures, "God is wondrously wonderful." Both these statements are correct as far as they go, but neither gives us a firsthand experience of nor brings us any the nearer to God.

Thus, we see that one cannot take us further than where he has himself reached. An intellectual giant is as much within the range of his senses and mind as any of us. One who has not crossed the mental zone cannot possibly take us out of that. We have, no doubt, to start with reading, writing, and thinking. This is just an elementary step. The sacred books are our greatest treasure. We need them. We can read them but may not understand them fully. They do contain gems of spiritual value, but we are

not equipped to evaluate them properly and reach their true import. On the other hand, it is the man of experience and realization who is competent to explain what is contained therein, for he speaks from actual experience of his own, similar in broad lines to those ancient writers who traversed the path in days gone by. It is, therefore, said:

*Listen ye to the true testimony of saints.
They speak what they actually perceive within themselves.*

It is perception alone that inspires a person. An inspired song is much more than mere poetry, for it has an essence of his very being in it. Hence, it is said:

*It is an inward eye that makes one sing;
Such a song brings in its own reward.*

We do feel that God is all-pervading. Yes, it is so. But a feelingful reference alone does not convey the real Truth: it is just a blind man's statement. We know the anecdote of four blind men who wanted to know what an elephant was. One who felt the animal's leg thought of him as a pillar. The other whose hand fell upon his ear considered him like an out-stretched fan. The third with his hand on the abdomen thought of him as a big barrel. The fourth who grasped the trunk of the elephant took him for a baton. Thus, each one of them made a mess of the elephant because none of them had seen the animal. As their statements were based on individual feelings, they failed to describe what the animal was actually like. This is how errors creep in when we hear the account of God from those who have not experienced the Spirit and Power of God. Each one talks from his limited knowledge, and thus we get conflicting views of God-knowledge.

A man of realization, on the other hand, knows how to reconcile these apparent contradictions which are just on the surface because of each person's limited knowledge. The basic truth being the same, an awakened soul goes to the root of the matter, explaining the various inconsistencies arising out of individual limitations. Herein lies the great hiatus between the statements based on feelings and emotions, and those arising from actual perception.

Let us consider the matter from another angle. God is one. He works differently on different levels. To some He appears as *Brahman*, the Creator. To others, as Sustainer He assumes the form of *Vishnu*. And to those who look upon His destructive power, He is symbolized *Shiva*. Thus, we see the society split into different sects, each at war with the other. The position may be likened to a great powerhouse generating electricity. It is the same power which at one place works as a heating apparatus, and at

another is used in the manufacture of huge blocks of ice. One who is not conversant with the alpha and omega of electricity cannot possibly understand the opposing functions that the same power performs. The real nature of a thing is hidden in the thing itself like fire in wood, butter in milk, or scent in a rose. We are dealing with the mystery of life. We want to know what life is and how it enlivens the material masks we have put on. What is the source from whence life springs and how it works on different levels of existence on the earth plane? We are all living on the plane of senses and are experiencing life with the help of sense-organs and mind. All these instruments are limited in their nature and do not give us a correct answer to our problems of life.

True knowledge is an essence of the soul and is independent of the mind and senses. Unless we are able to get a mind-out-of-body experience, we cannot have a firsthand experience of the life-impulse working in and around us in its fullness. This is why we find in the *Vedas*: "Truth is one but sages have described It variously." The moment we try to grasp Truth, It eludes and we are left with nothing but mere words to describe Reality. In *Brihadernaik Upanishad*, it is said that to bring God within the ambit of the intellect is as difficult as to quench thirst by liquor or to get fat or tallow out of sand. A saint has put it beautifully: "One cannot comprehend Him through reason, even if one reasoned for ages."

Spirituality is not a subject of thinking mind nor of reasoning intellect. Reasoning is both a help and bar. Reasoning, as said before, brings us to a negative plane when we begin to think of Reality as *neti, neti* — it is not this, not this. What then is it? For this we have no positive answer. And there cannot be any answer at all in any language whatsoever. It can be answered only by a tongue-less tongue or a speechless speech. It is an unwritten law and an unspoken language — to be known by the soul in a flight of the alone, to the alone. How to have this sublime vision of the Invisible? It is possible only when the senses are subdued, the mind is at rest, and the intellect, too, is stabilized. In other words, it is an out-of-body experience. This is something rare. A perfect being can give us a right understanding and a right insight. Without this basic righteousness, there is no way out. All surface differences vanish into airy nothings when we get inner perception.

We have before us the problem of *Grihast/Tyag* — life of a householder versus a renunciate. Some believe that God can be sought and practiced by a householder, while others maintain that a life in the wilderness is a *sine qua non* for God-realization. But the truth is that neither of these two states is of any avail without right understanding and insight. In this connection, the scriptures tell us: "One cannot come by happiness either in one's home or in quitting the home." Real happiness is a state of the mind and does not

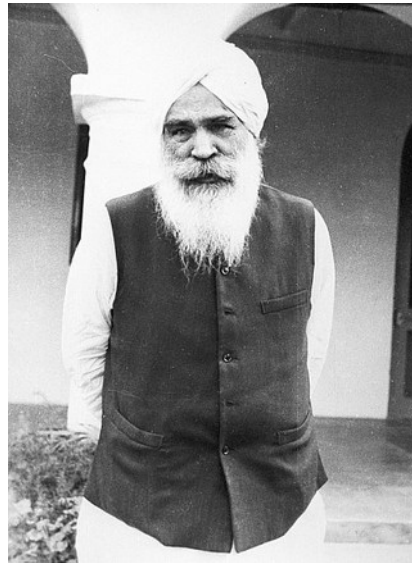
depend upon one's environments. Where then is it to be found? We have to condition our mind into a state that leads to happiness. So it is said:

Happiness lies in correct thinking and the right lead which the Saints give.

Saints, it may be understood, are born and not made. They perceive God with an inward eye and are in conscious contact with the Spirit and Power of God. They speak from actual inner experience and not from the level of the intellect. They do not hesitate to call a spade a spade. When they know Reality directly and immediately, they explain that simply. On the other hand, a person well versed in book knowledge depends only on what is stated in the books, and has nothing to offer anything from within himself. His account is all hearsay and secondary.

The truth of the matter is that there is some Creator who has created the universe. And we call Him and worship Him by so many words: *Ram, Allah, God*, and the like. These are mere names that we have given to that Power. That Power is one and only one, no matter what and how we may call It. To get out of this rigmarole of nomenclature, the ancients began to adore Him as "Adoration to Thee, O Thou the Nameless."

This then is the correct attitude. It is the Nameless Who is to be worshipped and worshipped in spirit. The devotees of the Nameless and the impersonal began to personify the Spirit and Power of God, by giving Him names based on the various attributes of that Power. This was quite an easy approach to God-power. The all-pervading came to be known as *Ram*. The source of all creation was proclaimed as *Vishva-Amber* or *Bishamber*. As an all-absorbing power, He came to be known as *Krishna*. This is how the various cults came into being and social formations sprang up. There is nothing wrong in these social groupings — the object of each being to take persons from the line of least resistance to the pinnacle of Godly glory of the Nameless. But unfortunately, we are caught in the social web and find ourselves as tightly bound to cults and creeds of our own making, forgetting the one Reality:



*Myriads come to the firing range to hit the bull's eye,
Religions may be different and yet all aim at the same Reality.*

Thus, we see that the aim and object of all the cults and creeds are to lead man from the personal to the impersonal; but whether they succeed or not is a different thing. Spirituality, however, is not bound with religious groupings or occupational pursuits. Ravidas, a cobbler, had as much a right to spirituality as Kabir, the weaver; Namdev, the calico printer; or Tulsi Sahib, a Brahmin. The social divisions are all man-made. So are our social religions. God made man after his own fashion. And man in his search for God tried to personify God and to monopolize Him. The Brahmins were the first to lay claim to *Brahma-Vidya* or the Divine Knowledge that would not be imparted to other classes. Thus came into existence different social orders on an artificial basis with formations degenerating into stagnation; and stagnation, in turn, resulting in deterioration.

Now, you can see for yourself what man has made of man. The embodied soul has come to identify itself with body alone. The human body made as the veritable temple of God is now a temple without God. Are not we all children of the same God? We are all fashioned in the same way both internally and externally. We have been provided with a wonderful house to live in. And this house is subject to disease and decay, as any other material thing. We are being driven outward through the senses into the fields of sense enjoyments. This is the greatest ailment, and is common to all of us. Seeing we see but do not perceive. With all our learning and knowledge, we are ignorant of Reality. As we have not developed inner vision, we see things through colored glasses of the mind. This is the crux of the problem. With blinkers on either side, we do not see anything except what comes under our very nose. This is called individual thinking apart from cosmic thought that takes into account the Divine Plan governing the whole universe.

We have, therefore, to pause and ponder as to where we are going. Are we on the right path? If not, how are we to turn aright? The social orders do not come in our way. They, too, have their own purpose. The society, too, is to be run on sound lines. This is the ethical side of the problem. But this is not all. Within us there is the inner man — the soul or spirit. We have to attend to the needs of the spirit as well. Man does not live by bread alone. We look well after our physical and intellectual needs; but what of the spirit? We never had an occasion to look inward nor have time to do so. This is the most important part of our being and yet we ignore it the most. For this we will have to rise above body-consciousness so as to become self-conscious. Self-realization is the first thing and the last in our development. Swami Ji has explained this beautifully:

*If ye wish to rise above the world,
Ye shall have to follow the footsteps of the Saints.*

Saints know the intrinsic worth of the world but we do not. I placed this simple proposition in my talks in the West. Truth is not so difficult as some of us have made it, and most of us have come to believe it so. All this is because of the lack of practical experience on the part of our preachers. Preaching has unfortunately become a profession — a paid profession. We presume and assume many things of which we have no real knowledge. A blind man cannot lead the blind. All their fiery speeches have not a spark of real fire in them. They speak on the level of the mind and intellect, without any real knowledge and firsthand experience of Truth, with the result that they start beating about the bush. Instead of making Reality easily intelligible, they make it more difficult to understand. In their enthusiasm, they begin to interpret the text in so many different ways. Bookish knowledge is all wilderness unless one has known and experienced the hidden Truth which the sacred books pronounce. The Divine wisdom as contained in the scriptures is called *Guptbani*, or the exposition of the hidden truths, to which their writers had an inner access. About this unspoken language or *Guptbani*, it is said:

The Word of the Wordless has been giving out Truth through all the four ages.

This then is the grand truth which we have to understand and practice in our daily life. Who can initiate us into the mysteries of the Holy Word; none but a Word-personified Saint. The Word is the only Truth (*Sat*), while all else in the world is a mere shadow of the Word. And shadow without the substance has no reality in it. We have, therefore, to contact Truth. This contact with Truth is called *Satsang*. Who is to give us this contact? As said above, it is possible to get to it through the instrumentality of one who himself is one with Truth (*Sat Saroop* — Word-made-flesh). This is real *Satsang*.

The wise and the learned may be conversant with sacred texts so far as language goes but cannot dip into the deepest depths lying much below the surface; and, therefore, our association with them does not and cannot give us right understanding nor any contact with the Truth of which they speak. It is nothing but a propaganda work undertaken as a means of livelihood. One may earn his living by ploughing land and another may do so by ploughing books. Light comes from light and life from life. One who himself is living in darkness of the dead material world cannot take us out into the light of God in us no matter whether we are Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, or Christians. God's Light is the life of all and we live by it. We have to apprehend it at a level higher than that of our physical being. We can do so only when we come into contact with a perfect Master who has access to the various mansions of the Lord: astral, mental, and spiritual. These are

the correct teachings of the scriptures that endlessly speak of the glories of Sant Satguru. What does he tell us?

Recognize man as man apart from the social religions to which he may belong.

This then is the first lesson that we get. A man may be a *Brahmchari* (a student of *Brahm-Vidya*) or a *Jatadhari* (one with unkempt long hair) or a recluse living in a forest cave; it makes no difference at all. Man is man, gifted with body, mind, and soul — the all-pervading soul, refulgent in one and all alike. All of us are conscious entities depending upon the Spirit and Power of God within each and every being, human or otherwise. Just consider that we are dwellers in a prison-house with nine portals all flung open. Can we escape from this prison-house if we may choose to do so? No, we cannot however hard we may try. There is a Controlling Power in us which is keeping the body and soul together for an allotted span of time.

We escape from it only when the Controlling Power withdraws from within us. This Power is our mainstay. It is only the knowledge of God-power that makes known to us everything, leaving nothing else to be known. To know the True One truly should be our only aim. This is called right understanding of the human. He who understands rightly would begin to think rightly, speak rightly, and act rightly. Righteousness in living prepares the ground for a higher life — life above the senses and mind. All this and much more can be achieved in the human life which is a rare blessing.

We can solve the riddle of life right now and here. All promises in the future to come will not be of any avail. "Trust no future however pleasant" is what the sages tell us. We have a golden opportunity to come in actual contact with Truth, and we must make the most of the living present with us. All social orders and religious books speak of the value of Satsang. Until we are able to meet a Perfect Master, we must understand the higher values of life and try to live by them. This is the first step in the right direction. The next is to do Satsang, but how?

One who is one with Truth can make us do likewise. You know, in this age there is no dearth of preaching. Everywhere you see platforms and pulpits from which our preachers give tall talks and make loud professions. With all this what is the result? Are we in any way near the basic truths of life or far away from them? "Nearer the Church and farther from God" is what we experience in our daily life. All of us suffer from lack of love, and there is nothing in common to bind together people of different religious denominations. Love is the essence of God, yet we have not known it. Instead of coming nearer to each other we are drifting away from one another. A Perfect Master unites all mankind in the silken bonds of love and

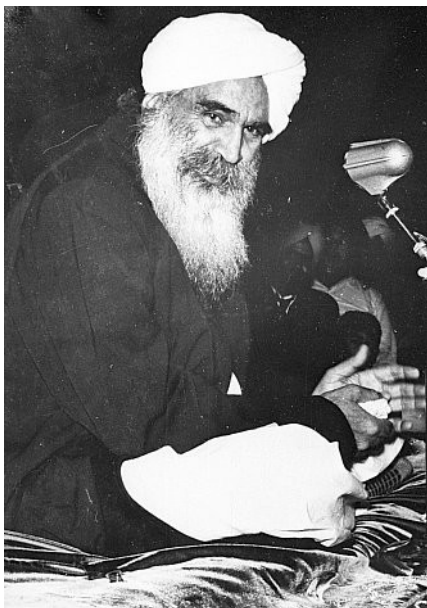
brings them together at one platform. This is the essence of *Sant-mat* or the Path of the Masters. This is the common meeting ground where all humanity can get together. Let us now consider a psalm of Guru Nanak:

A Perfect Master gives us a sage counsel; from Him we learn of universal love.

Who is a Perfect Master? He is a man of realization and sees the hidden hand of God working all around him. He has become a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan. The Gurbani speaking of Satguru tells us: "Know ye that a Perfect Master has an all-embracing catholicity." In his presence all sit together as brothers and sisters in God. His appeal is not to this or that sect but to the entire world. He is not concerned with social and religious labels with which we adorn ourselves. He looks on us from the level of the soul, as ensouled beings, but helpless under the crushing influence of mind, matter, and material things. He pities us in our sad predicament.

As we are entangled in the meshes of the world, he tries to take us out. He tells how to rid ourselves from the forceful pressure of senses and sense organs and how to separate the mind from them; and, last but not least, how we may untie the knot between the spirit and the mind. His is a practical approach to this subject, and his way is one of inversion by means of self-analysis. He demonstrates to us in a scientific way as to how this can be done. Like a master scientist he takes us into the laboratory of the mind and shows us how this can be achieved. Seeing is a basis of all belief and needs no argument. He is keen to make a Saint of us like Himself:

There is a world of difference between a touchstone and a Saint; One may transform base metals into sterling gold, while the other casts us in His own mold.



It is not a subject of mere theorizing. Theory, no doubt, precedes practice; but if it cannot be put into practice, it is of no avail. At present we may find sweet pleasures in sense-enjoyments. We have not yet known higher pleasure than these that are just of ephemeral nature and have a taint of bitterness at the core. "Our sincerest laughter is with some sorrow fraught." Do we really enjoy these pleasures or do the pleasures enjoy us? Again, how long can we enjoy these sensory pleasures? Ultimately either they are snatched away from us or we are forced to leave them.

With all our bitter experiences that follow in the wake of pleasure, we still run after them and in the end fall a prey to them. Wide is the gate and beautiful is the way of the world, and recklessly we plunge headlong to our doom.

The way round to happiness is different from that of worldly pleasures. It is more alluring and more lasting than the other. Each and every one, whatever his calling, can pursue it. A Jat like Dhanna successfully trod this path. A butcher, as Sadna was, could contact the Power of God. Even a prostitute like Ganika turned a new leaf and found the Lord. We are not in any way worse than most of them. Cannot we become the devotees of the Lord? It is just a question of longing and desire. We go the way the mind leads us. Like an astute pointsman, we have to change our course of life. For this purpose, we shall have to find some awakened soul. He would change our angle of vision and make us see things in their proper light. He gives us something sweeter, something more lasting and really beneficial. Once we get a taste of the elixir divine, we lose our appetite for the pleasures of the world.

I had a great longing for God-realization. I was a voracious reader. For days and nights I would read books to find something tangible that would help me in my search. But it was all a wild goose chase. The more I read the books, the more I got determined to get what these preached, emphasizing the all-pervasive nature of God. He was at once immanent and transcendental. But how was I to get to Reality that was said to be omnipresent? The scriptures could not give me any experience of that Power. Howsoever good the books may be, they are yet a mighty bloodless substitute for life. Bulleh Shah, a Muslim divine, says:

*Why carrieth an ass's load of books on thy head?
These shall not give thee anything beyond a headache.*

Thus, we see the fruitlessness of bookish knowledge. The empty words have no substance in them, and they would fail miserably in delivering that of which they speak. Bulleh Shah goes on to explain:

From the words come to the Word, and leave off the endless circles of idle talk.

We can raise a rich harvest of love from the soil of the hearts. Books only speak of love — love of a lower order that is not even skin deep. Love knows no exposition. It neither grows in fields nor is it a marketable commodity. It springs from the heart of one and penetrates into the heart of the other and goes on expanding evermore. Tulsi Das says:

*The reading of scriptures does not make one a pundit;
A pundit is one who only knows the quintessence of love.*

All the scriptures exhort us to love God and to love His creation. But have we learned this simple lesson? No. We have, no doubt, become learned and are able to seek volumes of love; but, unfortunately, our hearts are bereft of love and we stand high and dry as ever before. A loving heart wins over even enemies. But we, on the contrary, find that even our friends are getting estranged from us. Why is there so much unrest in the world as we see today? We are living in a state of perpetual fear of each other. May we know who have sown the seeds of distrust and discord amongst us? You would excuse me if I say that it is all the work of the learned and the wise with no experience of the God-power pervading in all of us. How Pakistan came into being? The power-hungry politicians played upon the ignorance of the masses with the result that lakhs of poor people had to pay with their life-blood in the wake of unprecedented riots and interminable exodus of populace from one side to the other, creating problems which have still to be settled.

At one time, long before the partition of India, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji went to Multan in the wake of serious communal riots. People from all communities came to hear him. After the discourse, the leaders of the various communities approached Hazur saying, "Hazur, you could have avoided all this bloodshed and loss of life and property by coming to the riot-torn town earlier." What I mean is that saints come to unite mankind. Their mission is one of love and not of hatred. Love brings in peace and concord. If we really love the Lord and are in search of Him, there is no other way to find Him except through love. Love is the only cementing force for the children of God. This then is the right lead the saints give:

The Holy Word alone is truth, and truth is the richest merchandise.

The Word is the all-pervading Spirit and Power of God, upholding the entire universe:

Whatever is, is of the Word; there is no place where Word is not.

Human birth is a great blessing. It is in the human body that we can think of and practice the Word. This is the *summum bonum* of life and can be achieved in the company of saints. If you are really a seeker after Truth, you shall have to go to a Master of Truth. He will explain Truth in very clear terms and, wherever necessary, support his statements by apt quotations from the scriptures to which we are so closely attached, emphasizing at the same time that the books by themselves would not give the actual experience. Tulsi Sahib has said in this context:

We may read the Vedas, the Puranas, and master the Viyakrans and to what end? Far from gaining anything, we get lost in the wilderness of the words, losing our very soul; a parrot-like repetition would never draw the spirit out of body consciousness and contact it with the Word.

We are living on the plane of the senses, and the spirit attached to the mind is flowing out into the world. We have to apply a reverse gear and turn our attention upward within us. This is what all the sacred books proclaim. And yet they cannot help us in the process of withdrawal from the world without to the world within. So it is said:

Ever since we are reveling in the world on the sensual plane, bound to the scriptures inextricably, we know not the way out to happiness.

The holy books are valuable treasures coming down to us from our ancestors. We have a very rich heritage worthy of our respect and reverence. But mere reading of the scriptures without understanding their true import is just like irrigating a sandy desert. Guru Nanak gives a beautiful pen-picture of this helpless situation:

One may read a cartload of books and carry a heavy load on his head; all such studies forge but strong fetters and keep one bound therein. One may read endlessly from year to year and from month to month, nay every moment of his life. O Nanak! only one thing counts, and all the rest but make one self-conceited.

There is nothing wrong about learning where there is something good. It is something that one must develop in the first instance. It is an additional embellishment with a man of practical wisdom, who has access to inner regions. With the ready aid that the learning provides, He can present the subject beautifully like a great artist. Even if a Saint does not have any literary degrees, he would still do full justice in his own simple language and in a style all his own, inimitable and homely. On the contrary, a purely learned person, however literary he may be, if he has no inner access, will not be able to impart right understanding to his audience. Sheikh Saadi of Shiraz likens such a person to an ass with a merchandise of learning on his head. Similarly, Guru Amar Das compares such a one to a ladle that goes to prepare the pudding but does not get any taste of it; hence the need of a God-man to lead on the Godway. Godway is something very precious and inestimable.

How to get on to the Godway and to tread it safely and securely is what the Godman indicates and helps us to move along the boulevard. All this and much more is the work of the Guru or the living Master. But for this, one

has to completely surrender to the will of the Guru and follow his commandments without rhyme or reason. One must empty himself of his ego personality so as to absorb in self the holier and the healthier influences of the higher order coming down in the form of radiation from the Master. It is only the empty vessel that can be filled with the life-giving rainwater coming down from the heavenly heights from which the Master speaks.

It is said that when Daya Nand (later on Swami and Maha Rishi) went to his Guru, Virja Nand, in the garb of a great scholar with books on ancient wisdom, the Guru said: "Daya Nand, I would give you something which is not in the books that you are carrying. If you want to learn anything from me, you shall have to throw all these books into the river Yamuna." As Daya Nand was keenly desirous of gaining God-knowledge, he just bowed his head and did as he was commanded by his preceptor. This is called *Gurbhakti* or unstinted devotion to the Master. Daya Nand was greatly proud of his Guru and acknowledged his debt to him. Later on, when he came across so many self-styled Gurus, he could not but decry them vehemently. I remember to have read in his biography that on one or two occasions, when the young scholar failed to understand the implications of his preceptor's teachings, he was subjected to corporal punishment. Do you know how the pupil submitted himself even to such harsh treatment? Upon getting a beating from the Guru, he would begin massaging the Guru's hands saying: "Master, my skin is rough; your tender hands would get hurt and I must rub them." Extreme love is the essence of devotion or *Gurbhakti*.

It is therefore necessary, that when you find a Godman, you must go to him in all humility and do not begin talking of your personal attainments. These have to be set aside for the time being. What you are, you are. No one is going to take away your attainments. Here, one has to blank out his mind so as to draw in what comes from the higher level of the Master beyond the range of the mind and the intellect. The trouble with us is that we would not like to go to a person with superior knowledge and understanding, especially divine-knowledge. If at all we do go, we carry our pride with us — pride of wealth, possessions or learning. Pride, as you know, goeth before a fall. Do you know that a Godly person cannot be purchased by all the riches and power you may have? It is said:

He is too shrewd to enter in but may come if he so wishes; he cannot be forced to step in either by force or by riches or by supplications.

It is a question of harmonizing our level with the Master's. As he talks to us at our level, we should try to rise up to him. It is only when we come to a common alignment that we can benefit the most. At cross purposes, we

cannot gain anything. This is the only way to understand his teachings that are of a higher order. The truths that he inculcates are the most ancient, and with attention we can easily understand them. By unnecessary trying and comparing notes on our own level, we confuse the issues and at times make confusion worst confounded. Whatever he says is to be taken in the context in which it is said. He is, after all, presenting an old wine in new bottles. And moreover to convince us, he produces old bottles as well to show that they too contained the same wine that he is doling out. The old scriptures in this way come as handy aids to him. This renders his task a little easy. But mind that, he uses them for our sake only because we are in one way or another scripture-bound. All that we need to do is to attend to his talk whole-souledly. For this, we shall have to surrender our heart, mind, and intellect:

He who sells his heart and mind to the Guru, all things shape themselves to his benefit.

You may know the story of Raja Janak and Rishi Ashtavakar (the gnarled sage). Do you remember what fee the Master demanded for imparting divine wisdom? — body, riches, and mind. Do you realize that body and riches too, are the reflections of the mind? Again, where the mind goes, the shadows also go away along with it. When you have thus blanked yourself, you become a befitting receptacle to imbibe the life impulses coming from the Master:

The Master is charged with God-radiation; in his presence, one feels uplifted.

I may add that even the Master's language does not count much. When you are free from the preoccupation of the mind, you are automatically influenced by the charged atmosphere in which you are sitting, no matter even if you do not understand his language. His powerful spiritual rays coming from the depths of his being cannot but affect you.

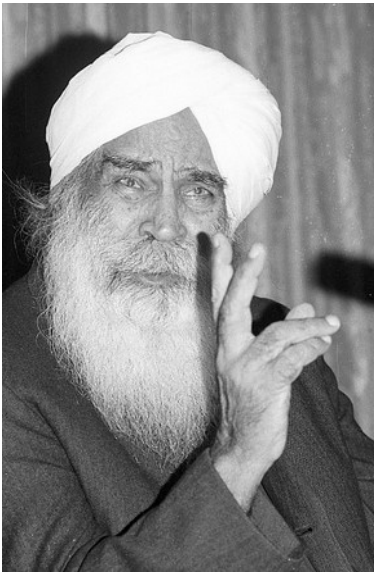
While in Berlin, an interpreter had to be engaged for translating my English talk to the German audience. For about a quarter of an hour, the audience, out of courtesy, listened to the interpreter. But as they found that he could not correctly convey to them my ideas, they asked the gentleman to stop with the remarks: "Brother, we can understand the import of what he is saying through the light in his eyes."

By "selling the mind," I do not mean that you should go out of mind. It means only vacating the mind and attending to the discourse with your heart and soul without any mental chattering. A vacant mind easily takes in

and quickly understands than when it is preoccupied with extraneous thoughts. Kabir has beautifully explained this:

A mere physical presence before a Master with no mind therein will avail thee naught; how can an unfinished cloth catch the colors of the dyer's pot?

Swami Ji, too, tells us likewise. *"Attend ye the Satsang with heart and soul in it."*



We have to create receptivity in us. We must be in a frame of mind to receive the on-coming influence from the higher source. Receptivity consists in becoming all-attention. We should learn to sit at ease and try to understand the essence of the Master's talk. If we do so, our whole being will be flooded with love. Know ye not that God is Love and Godman is love-personified, and emits loving impulses which cannot but take hold of us? When the mind is filled with love, it grows still.

So the question resolves itself: how are we to get the maximum benefit from he who has the power to subdue the wandering mind? As said above, you have to do nothing but sit still and listen. The rest is the Master's job. He knows how to still the mind. And when the mind is stilled, you begin to understand what he is saying. Even a stone remains cool so long as it is in the water. The life-giving waters flowing from the Master cannot but keep us cool if only we remain all-attention. Kabir even goes further than this; and it is a solid fact that the Master's radiation is not only confined to the place where he is actually presiding, but travels far across the seven seas and hits the disciple, provided he is keenly receptive to the Master's influence. It is only an undivided individual, no matter where he is, who can attract to himself the Master's grace and his bounteous attention. If a television set can receive and project what is happening elsewhere thousands of miles away, the thought waves, too, can do much more than what the sound-waves can do. It is but a question of adjustment only. The needle has got to be adjusted to a particular point so as to be able to attract the sound-waves and transmit them at the receiving station.

You might have heard about Swami Vivekananda. He was a great scholar but could not come to believe in God. He would go about challenging people to show him God, if there was any. He heard of the sage of

Dakshineswar, Ramakrishna Paramhans, and went to see him. The Paramhans won him over within a few minutes, and later on he became his devoted disciple and went to America as an Indian representative in the Chicago World Conference of Religions. When his turn came, he rose to address the august assembly. A young graduate, he started his oration; but after a few minutes felt he could not proceed further. He called for a glass of water, and in the meantime closed his eyes and thought of his Master. The moment he did so, thoughts came rushing to him and he continued his talk with full force well over five hours. The representatives of various religions were greatly impressed with his scathing criticism of the existing religions which had, in fact, in the missionary zeal gone far beyond the mark, and were no more than a bundle of dogmas and institutionalized beliefs. Thus, we see that there is a great difference between one who is receptive and receives direct impulses from the Master, and the other who is in the why and wherefore of philosophical disputations.

Let us take the case of a lodestone or iron ore having the power of attraction and used as a magnet. It would not attract an iron filing, howsoever near it may be, if it is covered with dust. But in case the dust is removed and the filing is taken a little further than before, the magnetic power of the lodestone would pull it quickly to itself.

Mind, as you know, is something material. The human spirit is yet covered with mental dust that the mind is raising every moment. This is why we, as a general rule, are not attracted by the magnetic power of the Master. It is, therefore, necessary to put aside our mind when attending any spiritual discourse. God is Love and the human soul, too, is a spark of that Love. The element of Love in the human soul is every moment flowing out into the world through the senses. If we could, for a moment, sit in full attention before the Master, we would irresistibly be drawn up by the love-currents coming out of the Master's being.

Surrender thou thy mind to the Master and take in exchange his love; all thy failings shall disappear and he shall qualify thee for salvation.

This is the only way to escape from the cycle of births and deaths. With a mind torn and lacerated, one can do nothing. It has got to be made whole and wholly applied to absorb the sacred teachings so that the same become a part and parcel of our being. It is the influence of the Master-power that counts more than anything else. Listen to Master with care and attention and you shall get purified and will have some experience of rising above body and mind-consciousness. This, indeed, is what is actually required.

It is aptly said: "A full-hearted view of the Master with rapt attention does the miracle." There is another way of looking at the Master — a mere glimpse or sight. This is looking at him as so many of us often do. But this is not sufficient. We have to make way into his heart, forgetting all about our own self. Such a pointed attention wells up our feelings of love for him, and his life-currents begin to flow towards us.

Christ compares this state with the branches that are embedded in the vine and draw their sustenance from the vine, and those that are cut off soon get dry. This means establishing an inner contact between the individual soul and the all-pervading Master-soul. Where there is love, there is implicit obedience to the commandments of the Master. Mere salutations or even prostrations before the Master will not do. "Those who dance about me and call me Master, Master," says Christ, "do not and will not gain anything." The secret of success lies in accepting the Master's word as Gospel truth, and in carrying out his behests. He tells us: "You are not simply a body nor I am. You are a living spirit and so I am. We both live by the Power of God in us. It is the Oversoul that is sustaining you as well as me. My spirit is firmly rooted in the God-power in me. I would very much like you to do the same as I have done."

The Master then proceeds to establish an inner contact of the individual soul with the universal soul, and then guides by instructions as well as by personal example and inner help. A burning desire for a real guide brings about the seeker to the feet of a Master-soul. "When a disciple is ready, the Master does appear," is an axiomatic truth.

What then do we get from the Master; the way to emancipation from mind and matter. He takes our wandering wits from outside to the eye-focus within and gives us some experience of the inner quietude. It is from this point that the path leading to the Kingdom of God starts. Once the mind gets a little experience of the inner peace, it craves for more and more of it. The angle of vision is changed. The glamour of the outside world begins to fade away and the sense-objects lose their charm. This is the greatest change a Master-soul brings about in us.

Without a Guru, one can never come by God-knowledge; all the sages — Brahma, Narad, and Ved Vayas — do testify so.

In the *Shrimad Bhagwad* it is stated that even the authors of the *Vedas* were not satisfied with their great achievement. Even Sukhdev, the son of the illustrious Ved Vayas, who is said to have acquired God-knowledge in his mother's womb, could not gain the Kingdom of God without proper initiation from a Godman and had to be directed by his father to Raja Janak, the then living Master-soul.

You cannot have an out-of-mind experience without a Godman to help you. He does not give you anything from without. All that he does is to stabilize your mind for the time being. The mind thus stilled begins to reflect the Light of God in you. In fact, the Power of God is ever anxious to embrace all the children of Light, as we are; but, we in our ignorance ever prefer to remain in darkness. "The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not." The Guru, as the name indicates, makes us see the Light in the enshrouding darkness, and then this experience can be developed by daily practice. Nanak has given a forthright decision in this respect:

Without a Godman, none has reached God, and not one has done so through the ages.

Now we have to see what is real knowledge. It is something apart from knowledge that the books impart. The scriptures define true knowledge as the "Sound-current that makes the unmanifest manifest." So our very life depends on the Sound-current ever reverberating in us and calling us back home. This is the only real thing in the world and all else is unreal. A knowledge of it gives us not only cosmic knowledge, but knowledge of the Beyond. Hence it is called *Udgit* or Music of the Spheres. It is a vibratory force that produces its own symphony and is, therefore, called *Naad*. To come into contact with this Life-Force — *Udgit* or *Naad* is the only real knowledge and food for the soul (*Manna* coming down from Heaven).

The rest is all empirical knowledge that we experience on the level of the senses, and is vague, uncertain, undependable, and illusory. The intellect only helps us in the material world but fails, and fails badly, in the immaterial or spiritual world. And since these two worlds are poles apart, we have, of necessity, to transcend all that is human in us including the mind and the intellect. It is only then and then alone that the unmanifested Spirit and Power of God becomes manifest through the grace of the Master-soul. The scriptures define a Master-soul as, "One who brings down the ethereal music to us at a super-conscious level." This is what Paltu Sahib says about his Guru. It is the Master who opens the Single Eye and unstops the inner faculty of hearing. How sad it is that you live by the two life currents — Light and Sound of God (*Jyoti* and *Sruti*) — but are wholly unaware of them by being too much with the world.

A disciple of the Master cannot but pray for the gift of the Light emanating from the Master-power. This is an eternal prayer even after one gets settled in that Light. And at this stage it comes more or less as a tribute to the munificence of the Master, as we have in the *Gurbani* when the Guru

himself prays to his Master for the continuance of that bounteous Light. So what is required is that we should get that Light manifested within us.

Swami Ji also refers to the Light of the Sun within and exhorts us to make it manifest. Even the *Gayatri Mantra*, the root *Mantra* of the Vedas, refers to the Light of God as would be clear from the word *Savitur* the all-absorbing Light towards which one is to fix his attention so as to be drawn by it.

Again, we come to the initial problem as to who can give us a firsthand experience of that Light? Only he who himself has an experience of it and is competent enough to give us a similar experience. In fact, the real Master is *Jyoti Swaroop* and *Sruti Swaroop* and guides us to himself within after having elucidated everything on the physical level in his *deh Swaroop*. We have, therefore, to search for a Master of such a caliber — gifted with the capacity to pull us upward from the plane of the senses; the physical being in which we are so much engrossed all the time. We are completely lost to ourselves, each one of us, whether young or old. We do not know what we are and who we are, beyond knowing the name arbitrarily given to our physical mold by our parents at the time of our birth. Nanak goes on to explain:

What if hundreds of moons and thousands of suns rise in the sky; For all this radiant light cannot dispel the inner darkness.

Upon closing our eyes we are in complete darkness within us. How can this bewildering darkness be dispelled? The outer light cannot help us. But every cloud, however dark and thick it may be, has a silver lining, because of the sun behind it. The dark clouds may come and go, but the sun is there all the time. We have, therefore, to develop the faculty to see the sun by piercing through the veil of darkness. All this is to be attained and accomplished by the Inner Eye that the Master alone can develop. This is called Third Eye or Single Eye — "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

This Light of the Self in us becomes manifest if we are able to control our mind and senses. Nanak tells us: "One who can control his ten senses, he is sure to see the Light of heaven."

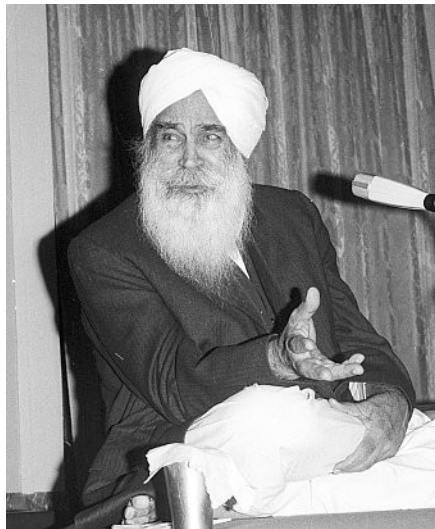
We have to go beyond the plane of senses that gives us knowledge of the material world. So far so good, because with the help of the senses we have to work in the work-a-day world. The transcendental knowledge comes only by transcending the senses. Where the world philosophies end, there the religion starts. By religion we mean not any of the man-made

religions, but the religion or knowledge that binds the soul and leads it back to its source.

The experience in transcension is given by the Master at the time of initiation. "It is the Master who gives the experience of inversion." It is from him that we learn how to gather in our outgoing faculties, collect them at one center, the eye-focus, and then turn them inwards, so much so that the inner eye begins to see the Light of heaven.

"This mystery can be solved only when one learns to die while living." It is a process akin to death. Those who are initiated into the Mysteries of the Beyond have to pass through a process similar to that of death. As we transcend the bodily sensations, we leave the physical world behind and get an out-of-mind experience of the astral world at its lowest level. We are, in a sense, transported from one plane to another with vast vistas opening into the unknown beyond. This is an intuitive experience quite distinct from the sensual one. As one grows from level to level on the planes, one outstrips all nightmarish shadows of the astral and mental worlds. Here the self stands as the Self in its own effulgence, more than sixteen suns in the outer world if put together.

Now, one sees and realizes that everything is being done by the invisible hand of God and that he himself is but a mere instrument in His hands. Guru Nanak, speaking of himself, informed Bhai Lalo by saying: "I open my mouth just to say what comes to me from behind." To gain knowledge of the Sound-principle is real knowledge (*vijnana*). It is not story-telling from the epics or lecturing from the pulpits or singing psalms in praise of God (*kirtan*), all of



which can hardly be called Satsang. "It is the *vijnana* and contemplation of the Word that give contact with the unmanifest. Blessed indeed is the outspreading fragrant tree that gives sheltering shade from the scorching sun." The Master is likened to a great banyan tree with thick foliage under which travelers from far and near come to take shelter from sun and rain. Maulana Rumi, a great Persian mystic, says:

Sit thou near one who knows how to control the mind; sit under the tree that is laden with flowers and fruits; do not go about visiting shops with big signs; it will pay thee only to go where thou canst get honey; extend not thy bowl at seeing a cauldron on fire, for the cauldron may contain something obnoxious.

This is a warning from the great divine against the so-called teachers and preachers. We see black-marketing and money-making all around us in these days. But in religious matters it is even greater than what we see in ordinary human affairs. Religion, like any other thing, has become marketable.

When Christ saw money changers doing business in the synagogues, he exclaimed: *Be ye out of the temple of my Father which ye have converted into a robber's den.*

Similarly, Bulleh Shah could not help raising a voice against cheats and swindlers who were corrupting the sanctity of temples and shrines, mosques and other religious places, which he said were not fit places for the lovers of God.

It is really a pity that our socio-religious places have come down to a very low level. Instead of being presided over by awakened souls, they are being run by poor preachers — paid preachers on a paltry pittance. They are working for their belly's sake and know not how to feed the hungry sheep that look up to them for spiritual food. Those who pay the piper have a right to the tune. The noble edifices raised with the best of motives are being used for collecting donations in one way or another. The credulous people fall an easy prey to the machinations and maneuvering of unscrupulous pundits and purists and are satisfied with mere prostrations before the idols and getting in return a mark of saffron on their forehead and *Charan-Amrit* and *Prasad* believed to have been sanctified by the deity. All this we take in good faith without any intrinsic merit in it.

My Master, Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, used to say: "I have given you something genuine and of sterling value. You may go the world over and try where so ever you may for anything better than this. If you find something superior, accept it by all means and tell me also, and I would be glad to follow suit." This is plain speaking, and who can do so? Only one who is not dependent for his living on anybody else. A Guru has spiritual riches of his own and is not in need of any worldly wealth. People tossed by the turns of fortune would come to him in despair, narrate their tales of woe; but in a few moments, the healing words of the Master would soothe

their ruffled nerves, and they would gain courage and depart. This is the difference between meeting a real Godman and a common priest.

A Sadhu has a healing touch for all and sundry. His kindly words serve as a balm to the lacerated hearts. "In his company one feels as if he is in close proximity with God." But the moment we depart and go out of his personal aura, we become the same as before. "Guru from the rich store of God's Name injects us with the love of the Lord." He has with him a fund of spiritual riches and shares the same with us. "The result is that we begin to acquire a love for the God-power that shines forth through Him. This is the Power that is responsible for the entire creation. The world is nothing but a manifestation of that power. This manifested Power is known as *Naam* in the terminology of saints.

Naam is not a word but the Controlling Power that is keeping everything in its proper place. It is the "Name" of the Nameless. The Rishis, Munis and the Mahatmas called this Power variously as *Ram*, *Allah*, *Wah-i-guru*, or God. These are mere word-names while *Naam* is something original and primordial, free from all attributes. This is a heritage of the saints, in whom it works in fullness; and it is he who can give a contact to us. The word-name you can have from anywhere, and you may go on repeating the same all your life. But that would not be enough. These word-names, too, have a value; and it is better to do something than not to do anything. We have a respect even for the word-names of God because they signify something, some attribute of the Attributeless. "O God! we worship Thee in all Thy names."

Again the question arises as to what name is most proficient and most effective in leading us to the God Power. "What name in the world is worthy of being contemplated and would enable us to ferry across the sea of life?" The real name, as said before, is the *Naam*-power that comes as a gift from the Godman. The very knowledge of this subject only comes from Him. Without the Master-soul we cannot contact *Naam* and attain salvation.

Where do we get contact with the *Naam*-power is the next question. The Name (*Naam*) is the precious Waters of Life. The fountain of the life-giving water lies within the body. The saving lifelines are not to come from anywhere without. These are already in the body sustaining and enlivening us as they are doing so in many solar systems in the vast universe. Now, the question is — where it is in the bodily mold? It is said: "The *Naam* is invisible, ineffable as being incomprehensible. But it may be said that it has an immense loving sweetness in it." This attractive *Naam* is more than candy-sweet. We cannot have an approach to *Naam* by our own unaided efforts. By mere repetition of Vedic formulas and formularies, Yajnas and

pilgrimages, fasts and vigils, and performances of rites and rituals, we cannot have a contact with Naam.

Our social teachers who, too, aim at inculcating the love of God among their followers have not been able even to make us love one another. With all their best efforts based on scriptural knowledge, they cannot deliver us the goods except in the form of raising our emotions and feelings for the time being. They themselves are groping in the dark and cannot take us out of the darkness. When the leaders of various faiths and creeds are quarrelling amongst themselves, they cannot give us a lesson in universal love and social well-being. These are the very persons who become the worst enemies of the awakened souls. It was the Jewish priestcraft that sent Jesus to the cross and called Guru Nanak and Socrates as perverted beings. You can see for yourself what evil names they give to a Godman.

Nanak, therefore, says: "The meditation of the true Name comes to the fortunate few. The scriptures have their value, but not much." A Godman simply and directly leads you to the God-power, and contact once established does everything in progress Godward. Without the Word, we are hopelessly and helplessly moving up and down in the giant wheel of life. It is said: "The fearsome sea of life is limitless with no holds to hold on, with no boat and no boatman to steer, we endlessly float on and on." In such a situation, we have no other aids except of the *Chit, Manas*, intellect, and our personal ego; and these are the very things that keep us away from the saving life-lines and help us to drift indefinitely. Is there then no other remedy? We have one. "The Word is the ship and the Word-personified is the captain who may, if he likes, take us across." Naam, then, is the only means whereby we can have a safe landing on the other side. In the Ramayana, the greatness of Naam is stated thus:

The impersonal and the personal are the two forms of Brahman, but above them both is the Naam, as I understand it; how long can one describe the greatness of Naam? Even Lord Rama cannot sing adequately the value of Naam.

The famous author of the Ramayana has drawn a sharp distinction between Lord Rama and Ram-Narain, the All-pervading power. In the same strain, Nanak has said:

O Nanak! one may read all the books of the world with devotion; One may write of His greatness with the speed of the rushing wind; With all this, none can do any justice to His greatness.

Naam, after all, is the Name of God, the first and foremost manifestation of the Nameless. "All of us are repeating His Name, one or the other; but

none knows the Name; as none has found his way to Naam, all are ignorant of the significance of the Name." The Name is something very subtle. It is the vibratory sound-force of Truth (the Holy Word), and can neither be written nor spoken of in so many words. It can be contacted by the grace of a Godman. The Guru or Godman is called in the scriptures as *Sacha Padshah*. Why? Because he has with him true riches which are eternal and not subject to decay as worldly riches are.

"A momentary severance from the Word brings in untold sufferings and a good-bye to happiness." This is what Guru Nanak feels, like all others who are in constant communion with the Word. And this, too, is the fate of all of us at all times. Why are we eternally miserable? Simply because we have not established any contact whatsoever with the name of God — His Power and Spirit:

O Nanak! the entire world is in the throes of sorrows and sufferings; he alone is happy who is established in His Holy Name.

The Spirit of Truth is our very life. We have never known it and much less contacted it. We are far away from it, drifting along the current of time downward and outward. And the result? — all misery and all sorrow. Swami Ji Maharaj also gives the same explanation for all our troubles:

I know thou are in extreme tribulation; ever since thou turned away from the Sound Current, and sold thyself to mind and matter.

Nanak goes on to explain: "The tongue that delights not in gratitude to the Name has no right to exist." He even goes to the extent of saying that an ungrateful tongue need be severed and cut into pieces. To forget the benefits coming down from God through the Godly Power is criminally heinous. When we are living by the Spirit and Power of God in us, we must one time or another turn our attention to the very life impulse that is sustaining and upholding us. Instead of this, we are going the other way round. "We are enamored of the gifts of God and have forgotten God, and the wonder



is that we are unaware of what we are doing." We have, after all, to leave the world. We have been respited for a while and have been bought with a

ransom. We must be thankful to Him for the human birth for us. The realization of this truth is the be-all and end-all of human existence. If we do realize it, it will be well and good. If we do not, then the purpose of life is wasted. "The physical body is subject to decay and death; and when death comes, we rue."

As we sow, so do we reap. All our good and bad actions keep us in eternal bondage. Once we rise above the plane of the senses, we get in touch with the Power of God and then all of our wandering ends. This is a path that leads upwards and our senses cannot help us to gain it. It is a pure presentation from the spiritual treasurers of the Guru. King Janak got it from Ashtavakar, and Sukdev Swami from King Janak. One was a king who got these riches from a poor (in the worldly sense) recluse, and the other, a born hermit and son of a sage (Ved Vyas) had the good fortune to come by this spiritual wealth from a mighty king (Janak). So, it does not matter whether a Godman lives in a forest hut or in a royal palace. But he must be a Godman and not pose as such. It is all a gift of the Perfect Master; and without him, we can have no access to spirituality in the true sense of the word.

With a Perfect Master to guide us on the God-way, and perfect devotion unto Him, one can reveal God easily in his own home and escape bondage while here.

No one asks you to leave your hearth and home and be a forest dweller. While living in your house, you can set apart some time — two to four hours a day — for your own self. This, too, is your own work and the most important work, I would say, but badly neglected. A true horseman rides well with both his feet set in the stirrup on either side. One must keep his balance between the world without and the world within. Be wherever you are. Remain in the social order to which you belong. There is no need to change your religion. Mind that Spirituality is no religion in the ordinary accepted sense of the term. It is something real and earnest. It is a process of practical self-analysis. Everyone is welcome to have an experience of it in the laboratory of his mind. Everyone — a Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, high or low, young or old — can benefit from the science of soul. It is a common heritage and not a reserved right of one or another country, one or another nation, or a class of persons. One has, of course, to lead a pure life and earn his own living — which are the prerequisites for this Path. Nanak says:

*He who earns his living with the sweat of his brow and shares his earnings with others (poor and the needy);
O Nanak! such a one is fit to know the secret path and shall surely have an access thereto.*

This is a condition *sine qua non* for an aspirant. For the teacher also, emphasis is laid on right living and right livelihood. "He who calls himself a Guru or a Pir and depends upon others for his living, beware of such a one and bow not unto him." Excuse me when I say that Spirituality, too, has been degenerated into a business and is being exploited by unscrupulous persons for selfish ends. This is why the generality of humankind has come to hate it and given it the nickname of Gurudom. And to a great extent they are right. Their bitter experiences lead them to decry Gurudom, and they prefer to take refuge with the scriptures that, as said before, are quite helpless in giving any actual experience.

We need a demonstrator to demonstrate Truth as any other demonstrator would do in a scientific experiment, of course, by carrying out from either of them until some awakened soul opens our inner eye and we begin to see Reality.

In certain respects, an ignorant person is much better than a learned one. He at least accepts things on faith and starts doing what he is asked to do. He does not waste his time in the why and wherefore of what he is told. He is asked to climb up and he begins to do it. On the contrary, one who is learned would inquire why he should do so, the extent to which he is to climb, and where is the guarantee that he would not fall down? It does not mean that we should blindly accept things. All that I mean to say is that one should understand the elementary principles; and with an experimental faith, start with the experiment and see for himself the results.

"The True One is to be served, and only a worthy disciple can know the unknowable." This then is our duty. We must try to become a *Gurumukh* (a worthy disciple). If we want to take the fullest advantage of the company of the Master, we must surrender our all to him. But do we do so? It is said:

The seekers after God, far from finding God, lose Him outright; They lose Him in the storm the mind raises.

The thinking mind and the reasoning intellect raise such a tempestuous storm that clouds our very vision. We are unable to peer through the dust of our own raising. To have a correct idea of the goal and the way leading to the goal, we have to go to some theocentric Saint. What does he tell us?

We come into and go from the world according to our deeds, and harvest what we sow; the invisible writ of the Lord canst not be washed off and better it is to abide in His Will.

Our deeds, good or bad, bring their reward and consequences, as the case may be. As soon as their momentum runs out, we have to come back to the earth plane. Whatever our deeds, they are done on the plane of the senses, and we are inextricably drawn by them.

A touch with the Divine Power makes us karma-free (*neh-karma*); and with no strings, we fly upwards to the Home of our Father. But unfortunately we are earthbound, and the law of gravitation pulls us down. We have to rise beyond the gravitational pull of mind and matter so as to escape from the bondage of all the material and mental zones. This is the right understanding that the Master gives. He takes us out of the ever-revolving gyres of the material world. An experience of the life of the spirit takes us out of the material and mental worlds. So it is said:

Without a touch with the Lord's Name, there is no escape; and a contact with the Name comes through the Master. The Name of the Lord is par excellent; it is the Name that upholdeth all.

So we know what is Naam. It is not something vague or imaginary. It is the real Power responsible for creating and sustaining the universe. It is the same Power that is enlivening us as well. But we have lost touch with it. The lost Word can only be regained through the help of some Word-personified Saint. He takes us out of religious rites and rituals that constitute *Apravidya* and keep us entrenched on the sense-plane.

Consider the whole proposition coolly and dispassionately. If you can, on your own, escape, there is nothing like it. If not, there is no harm in seeking help from someone who knows the way. Life comes from life, as light from light. Godman is a must for the Godway. Nanak says: "Godman is my all; He is the very life of my life." The *Atman* is a universal power and is as much our own life-impulse as of Nanak. The only difference is that Nanak as an awakened soul sees the Power, but we are ignorant of its working and do not know what it is and how it works. Nanak, being conscious of that Power, says:

O God! let Thy Will prevail regardless of what I may think and wish for.

Again it is said: "A person connected within always speaks from inspiration and not on his own." Similarly, a Muslim divine observes: "Whatever a Godman says, it is from God Himself, even though the words may seem to be coming from his servant. What they utter is all true from the level of the spirit. We, on the other hand, are being consumed in the fires of egotism and infatuation. And we are being tossed by greed and egoism. This is the

case with each one of us. An awakened soul takes a correct view of the whole situation and prays:

O God! have mercy on the world which is being consumed; save it as best as you may for there is no other help.

Next comes an exhortation from Nanak: "O Nanak! it is by communion with the Word that we come to possess all virtues." In the Gurbani the term *Naam* and *Shabd* are used to denote the same thing — the Power of God. Speaking of *Shabd*, it is said:

It is from Shabd that the creation comes into being and dissolves; Again, it is from Shabd that it is created anew and thus goes on.

Shabd is of two kinds: One is the Voice of God and the other is the voice of man. We get our contact with the Voice of God only through a Master-saint. "The Word is the essence and has to be practiced. And this is to be communed with, in the company of some Saint."

Let us take another small piece from Dharam Das, a celebrated disciple of Kabir:

*All the books, including the Vedas, speak of the same thing;
Without Name all else is false and is of no consequence.*

It is not something only to be talked of, but one that has got to be practiced and communed with. The Master establishes your contact with the Sound Current that is already within you and gives an actual experience of it. He makes manifest in you what he has in fullness in himself.

Dharam Das bewails his lot in life in the material world and says:

O Lord! to what an awful place Thou hast hurled me down; thy domain is eternal and fit for Hansas, while this world is under the sway of Kal.

Hansas are purified spirits who can discriminate between Truth and untruth. I belong to your spiritual Kingdom, but I wonder why you have sent me into this prison-house of the world. Similarly, a Muslim divine speaks:

*O Spirit! thy abode is in the high heaven;
Woe unto thee that thou art stuck up in an elemental mold.*

We have the testimony of Swami Ji in this context:

Thy place, O soul! is in the ethereal world; fie on thee that thou are earthbound.

You may take any other Godman and you would find the same thing. Nanak at one place has said:

*O Lord! Thou liveth in Heaven,
While my abode is in the dust of the earth.*

If we want to go to higher regions, we shall have to bid good-bye to mind and matter. "Learn to die so that you may begin to live," say the Gospels. Maulana Rumi also lays great stress on this point:

O friend! learn to die before death overtakes thee; for this is the only way to gain life eternal. This is the path of the Masters and all of them speak in the same way.

Dharam Das, therefore, prays:

O God! grant me that eternal Word which thou hath given to Hansas, by communion with which, I may not have to come again into the material world.

Dharam Das further explains the two aspects of God — personal and impersonal:

The world is the interplay of the personal and the impersonal, and we are helplessly drifting along the current of time.

We are living in the duality of personal and impersonal God. We do not realize that these are both attributive qualities of the Supreme Being — our only goal. We have to rise above the *Gunās* (qualities), *Nirgun* (attributeless), and *Surgun* (with attribute). We are needlessly quarrelling about these two aspects of the great Power behind both of them.

Now about *Sat Purush*, the primal causeless cause. Our final goal is the spiritual realm that is beyond the sway of time, and hence not subject to dissolution and grand dissolution. The Satguru never rests contented until he leads his *jivas* to *Sat Purush*, whose Power works in Him fully and completely:

One who has apprehended and is one with Sat Purush is Satguru; O Nanak, in the company of such a one, the disciple gains the other side and begins to sing His praises.

It is Satguru who makes the disciple see the Power of God within him. After seeing the Spirit and Power of God, one begins to commune with the same (the Holy Word). Every teacher has his own access and reach in the Kingdom of God, and can lead us to that extent only. But Satguru, being one with *Sat Purush*, can take us to the highest spiritual region called *Sat Desh* which is eternal and everlasting.

With due deference to all the teachers, we have to see what extent they can take the soul out of the self (mind) on our journey to God (Oversoul). One who has not transcended himself cannot take us beyond our self. We have with us very little personal testimony of the great souls. Whatever they said was collected subsequently by their followers, and hence cannot be depended upon with any degree of certainty.

It can also be possible that the subsequent admirers may have missed something, some references to higher regions as may have been made by the Mahatmas in their talks. So we have no right to comment on the extent of their reach, in the absence of direct evidence from them. Hence, a note of warning has been sounded by Nanak:

Say not that the Vedas and the scriptures are wrong; he who does not give due weight to them may himself be in the wrong.

Let us learn to dip inside and meet the Mahatmas themselves in the astral world. As the spirit rises above the body, it gets into the astral realms and meets the denizens of those planes and sees for itself where they are. Once there in spirit, one can talk face to face with the disembodied spirits of the great souls already over there. There is no need to make guesses on the physical plane and to make uncharitable remarks. Dharam Das now makes a supplication unto the Lord in the following words:

O Lord! I pray unto Thee with folded hands; O, take me to my own original abode.

In this world we come again and again and die again and again. It is a realm of mortality where nothing is stable. Our True Home is somewhere else. We want to go back to our own Home from whence we came. This possibility is in the hands of a Perfect Master. He, being perfect, can take us to the land of perfection. Though we live by the same Power that is working in the Master, we are not yet aware of it and hence our ceaseless wanderings in the physical world.

Entangled in delusion, we are enamoured of the delusion; we remain all the time in the midst of mental hallucinations.

We are caught like a spider in the web of attachment of our own making. "We go where the heart is." This love of the world brings us again and again into the world. How to escape from the delusive attractions of the world?

The Master explains to us the channels through which the mind stealthily flows out; he tells us to blockade these outlets so as to hear the unending Music of the soul.

We have, therefore, to enter into the stream of this Music — the Divine Music — coming from above so as to be carried upward to Divinity. We have to invert and go back from the senses leading outward. It is in this way that we make a short shrift of mental delusions. This is why we pray:

O God! cut asunder all my doubts and delusions that may reach a state of perfect and reposeful rest.

We can reach this state only when we get out of the reach of the three *gunas* (*Tri-gun-attit*). So long as we are in the realm of mind and matter, we go into expansion. The Master extricates us from the existentialism, and with that the merry-go-round of births and deaths comes to an end.

Now we come to the finale of the composition of Dharam Das:

O God, take me to Thy Realm; the Realm that is eternal, blissful, and ecstatic, for Dharam Das wants to put an end to the wheel of life.

All that is needed is to get out of the cycles of births and deaths. That should be the aim of all human endeavor. Dharam Das in these few lyrics has placed before us the same position and proposition which Nanak dealt in his psalm. All the great sages tell us of this very thing, and we, too, wish for it.

The social orders are immaterial, and so are the religious beliefs and creeds. There is no need to change your affiliations and allegiances. There is no need to adopt any new modes of greetings. All these are good things as far as they go.

We have, however, to forge ahead; and this is possible only when we cease to go into expansion. Reality is within us. It is our very life. It can be contacted with the help of some awakened soul. It is the most ancient science. It admits of no modifications. The only difference is that of the approach one may have. A person can take us up to the level where he is.



The saints are the Masters of the highest level. If you want to have right understanding, you will have to go to Him. His talk would be from the level of the soul, and not from that of mind and intellect. While talking of God and hearing of Him, you must have experienced a kind of serenity. If we were to get to Him, you can well imagine the great beatitude that you would feel.

You have just to lead a pious life and adopt a conduct that should be an example for others. With an all-round balanced living, you can easily transcend the physical zone. In brief, a contact with the saving lifelines is very necessary if you want to salvage your

own soul. "What does it profit a man to gain the possession of the whole world and to lose his own soul."