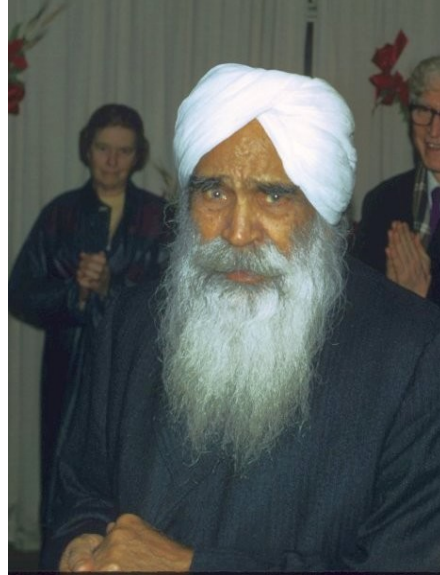


The Cage of the Soul

This description of the pitiable state of man and explanation of some of the difficulties in the way out of that state is taken from a letter of the Master's, and was originally published by the New York Satsang.

Man has got himself so enmeshed in mind and the outgoing faculties that his release from them can only be brought about by struggle and perseverance. His plight is, in a way, similar to that of a bird that has been kept in a cage for so many years. Even if you should open the door of the cage, the bird will be loath to fly out. Instead, it will fly from one side of the cage to the other, clinging with its talons to the wire mesh, but it does not wish to be free and fly out through the open door of the cage.



Similarly, the soul has become so attached to the body and the outgoing faculties that it clings to outside things and does not wish to let go of them. It does not wish to fly through the door that has been opened by the Master at the time of holy initiation, at the threshold of which the radiant form of the Master is patiently waiting to receive the child disciple. True discipleship does not start until one has risen above body consciousness.

It is from this point that the disciple will feel not only comfort, but will begin to experience the joy and bliss that awaits him in the Beyond. He will have as his companion the charming radiant form of the Master, who is ever at hand to impart the guidance that is so necessary in order to avoid the pitfalls on the way. Until this point is reached, the disciple is, as it were, on probation, but such probation that cannot be severed. It is during this probationary period that the soul will feel some discomfort. It has become so besmeared with the dirt of the senses that it has lost its original purity of heart and is not fit to be raised up out of the prison house of the body.

Even though the door has been opened, it is so attached to the things of the outside world that it does not wish to be free. It is only when the soul begins to regain its original purity of heart and mind that it can at last want to be free of the desires of the flesh and outward attachments. The loving Master tries to avoid all possible discomfort to the child disciple by explaining what are the vices to be avoided, and the virtues to be

developed, in order to regain this purity.

Unfortunately, more often than not the words of the Master do not sink in, and little or no action is taken by the disciple to amend his ways. Therefore, the Master Power must take firmer measures to bring home to the disciple the importance of the truths that have been explained in words. Hence the discomfort that is sometimes felt by the dear ones in their day-to-day living. If implicit obedience would be given to the commandments of the Master, all difficulties and discomforts would vanish. If a child gets itself so dirty that the only way the mother can wash it clean is by using a scrubbing brush, can it be said that the child will feel comfortable during the scrubbing process? It will only feel comfortable after the scrubbing has ceased and it is shining clean and pure.

Help and protection is always extended by the Master to his followers. He looks after their comforts in every way, both outer and inner. Even the effects of the reactions of the past — from the gallows to an ordinary pin prick — so much concession is given. As the mother sacrifices everything for the sake of her child, even so does the Master sacrifice everything for the sake of his children. The follower, in fact, does not dream of what the Master does for him. He fills his followers with his own thought, with his own life impulses. When we remember him, he remembers us with all his heart and soul. He is not the body. He is the Word personified, the Word made flesh. To get the full benefit of the Master Power, the disciple must develop receptivity. It is impossible to develop receptivity until implicit obedience is given to the commandments of the Master. When you pay heed to the Master's commandments then that is a sign that you are growing in love for him, and the more you grow in love for him, the more receptivity you will develop.

When you begin to develop this receptivity, all discomfort will vanish, and you will truly begin to tread the Path in the firm assurance that you are on the right way, together with the loving companionship of One who will demonstrate more and more his greatness and his power on each step of the way until you find that it is the very God Himself who is your Guide and Mentor, who will never leave you until He has safely escorted you back to the true home of the Father.

While on the way, one of the main functions of the Master is to wind up the back karmas of the disciple. It is through conscious contact with the Sound Current only that the karmas of back lives can be burnt away. This process is started at the time of holy initiation, at which time the disciple is given a contact with the Light and Sound Principle, or God-into-Expression Power. To avoid opening a new account of bad deeds, the disciple is enjoined to lead a clean life and weed out all imperfections in

him by self-introspection from day to day. This is the sublime principle behind keeping the diary, which the disciple is asked to maintain in order to become aware of the shortcomings which stand in his way to God.

Ego is the self-assertive principle in man that makes him feel that "I do this" or "I do that." When one rises above body consciousness and knows himself and he becomes a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan, he sees that he is not the "doer", but is a mere puppet in the hands of God, he will cease to be responsible for his actions and will become *jivan mukta*, or a free soul. The ego in man is part of the grand delusion that he is laboring under. It will cease to act or will be nullified only when a great degree of purity has been attained by the disciple, in which all of his actions will reflect the Master in him. Like Christ, he will proclaim, "I and my Father are One."

All service that one does seemingly to others is to your own self. When you develop this attitude, you will develop a "state of selflessness"

Kirpal Singh