

**Selections from *Sat Sandesh*
and Other Writings from
Master Kirpal Singh**

**On the Unity of Man
Sat Sandesh, June 1974**

**The Teachings of Kirpal Singh — Satsang
Volume One, Chapter 8**

**The Wheel of Life
Chapter 4**

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On the Unity of Man

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The Way of the Saints

Man, the highest rung of all creation, is basically the same everywhere. All men are born the same way, receive all the bounties of nature in a similar manner, have the same inner and outer construction, and are controlled in the physical body by the same Power, called differently as "God," "Word," *Naam*, etc. All men are the same as souls, worship the same God, and are conscious entities; being of the same essence as God, they are members of His family, and thus related to each other as brothers and sisters in Him.

2. All awakened and enlightened Gurus and spiritual teachers who came to this world at various points of time and in various parts, have invariably emphasized this Truth in their own language and manner. According to them all men, despite their distinctive social orders and denominational religions, form but one class.

3. Guru Nanak, the great teacher and Messiah of peace, said:

*The highest order is to rise into Universal brotherhood;
Aye, to consider all creation your equal.*

4. India's ancient mantra, *Vasudeva kutumb bukam*, also lays down the same principle that the whole world is one family. However, it is common knowledge that despite long and loud preaching by various religious and social leaders professing the Unity of Man, the world today is torn by strains and tensions of every kind, and presents a sorrowful spectacle indeed. More often than not we see individuals at war with one another and brothers at drawn daggers with their own kith and kin. Similarly, nations are constantly involved in conflicts and clashes with each other, thus spoiling the peace and tranquility. It seems

that the root cause of this present-day situation is, that the Gospel of Unity of Man, however well accepted in theory, has not struck home to humanity at large and is not put into practice. It is only a form of slogan-mongering done with calculated motives.

5. It is universally accepted that the highest purpose of this human body is to achieve union of the soul with the Oversoul or God. It is on this account that the physical body is said to be the True Temple of God wherein He Himself resides. All religions spell out the ways and means of meeting the Oversoul or God; and all the ways and means so suggested, however different looking, lead to the same destination, so that one need not change from one religion to another for this purpose. One has only to steadfastly and genuinely tread upon the lines drawn by the torchbearers for achieving the goal.

6. It is necessary, however, that greater effort should be made toward the realization of Unity of Man. We have to realize that every human being is as much a member of the brotherhood as we are, and is obviously entitled to the same rights and privileges as are available to us. We must therefore make sure that while our own children make merry, our neighbor's son does not go without food; and if we really practice this, much present-day conflict will be eliminated. Each of us will develop mutual recognition, respect and understanding for the other, thus wiping out the gross inequities of life. In this process, as the mutual recognition and understanding develops, it becomes a vital force generating a reservoir of fellow feeling which in turn will bring culture and ultimately humility—the basic need of the hour.

7. The holding of the World Conference on Unity of Man in February 1974 in New Delhi was a clarion call to the world. This conference was perhaps the first of its kind since the time of Ashoka the Great, held at the level of Man with the noble purpose of fostering universal brotherhood leading to universal harmony. This message

of the Unity of Man must reach every human heart irrespective of religious and social labels so that it comes home to every individual, enabling him to actually put it in practice in life and pass it on to others; in this way, the entire human society could be reformed. Truly speaking, Unity already exists: as man—born in the same way, with the same privileges from God; and as soul—a drop of the Ocean of All Consciousness called God, Whom we worship by various names; but we have forgotten this Unity. The lesson has only to be revived.

8. The so-called worldwide campaign for Unity of Man is not intended to affect the existing social and religious orders in any manner. In fact, each one has to continue to work for the upliftment of man in its own way as before. Additionally, however, this campaign has to carry the clarion call of Unity of Man to as large a mass of humanity through its own vehicle as it can, so that the message cuts across the barriers of misunderstanding and mutual distrust and strikes home to every human heart. Further, the said campaign has to be carried out not by intellectual wrestling, but with optimum desire and anxiety to put the Unity of Man into practice so that it becomes real living force. The method of propagation has to be by self-discipline and self-example rather than by declaration and proclamations.

9. It would be prudent to clarify that the campaign of Unity of Man has to be carried out above the level of religions without in any way affecting any religious or social orders. It has to obtain in practice the blessings and support of all those who believe in the Gospel of Unity of Man, and could give it strength by taking this Gospel to every human heart around them and convincing them of the need of its acceptance in daily life. It will neither be tagged with *Ruhani Satsang* nor with any other similar organization. The enthusiasm of its admirers will be the real force working behind the campaign.

10. It is therefore earnestly requested that all those who believe in the Unity of Man and wish to carry its message must work ceaselessly so that it may reach the lonest corner of the world.

A World Conference on Unity of Man may be arranged in the West as was done at Delhi in the East—both ultimately work as one whole.

The Teachings of Kirpal Singh — Volume One — The Holy Path

Chapter 8, Satsang: To Sit in His Presence

It is a rare privilege to gather together in His name to invoke His gracious mercy and to imbibe the sacred teachings.

Satsang is the central theme of the sacred teachings and I always impress upon the dear ones here and abroad not to miss it, as it is during these precious moments when you are near the fountain-head of bliss and immortality, that you grasp the true import of the teachings and assimilate the rare virtues of Godliness by sitting in the charged atmosphere which is filled with His loving life-impulses.

Satsang is the sacred arena where spiritual stalwarts are built. It is the pool of nectar which grants blissful God-intoxication and all differences of caste, creed, or country sink down to their lowest ebb.

So, your purpose in coming to Satsang is to imbibe the love of God, to sit in His sweet remembrance, to unite with Him. All things past and future, all irrelevant matters can be dealt with in your own place of residence. Come, but come with the very best of intentions. Bring the remembrance of the Lord with you and take it with you when you leave. Do not listen to others' conversation and do not talk to anyone unless it be about the Truth. You will thereby gain full benefit from Satsang—otherwise the years will pass by without any real advancement.

Even though you may not understand what is said, yet if you sit with full attention, you will profit by it. If your thoughts are somewhere else, not only will you lose, but other people will also be affected by the impure atmosphere you are creating, for thoughts are living and

possess great power. Regard the Satsang as a place of purity; do not talk or think of anything but God, and whosoever attends will be blessed by the uplifting atmosphere. We do not go to Satsang to meet our friends or to socialize.

This place is a sanctuary, as you say. Sanctuary means what? — A place of sanctity. That should remain as a place of sanctity, not as a place of mirth and joy. Make it a point that those who come from outside come in all devotion and all inspiration. Don't make it a place of mirth and joy.

Love—love is strong you see. When you enter, enter in obedience to the Master; then what will happen? The atmosphere will be charged. Whenever you'll enter you will have peace of mind; otherwise, the atmosphere will not be charged. This place, as you were told the other day, should be a place where there should be meditation and no sleeping. Also, no mirth or joy, mind that; come in awe and sanctity. If you will do it, in a month or two the place will be charged.

The easiest, the shortest, and the simplest way to get greater benefit is to lose yourself completely in the holy presence of a Sant Satguru. This in fact is the significance of Satsang. Swami Ji says, "O Soul, be fully absorbed in Satsang at least this day."

What then is 'full or complete absorption' is the question. It means that while in the company of a Saint, one should forget not only the place where he is sitting but become wholly oblivious of the very surrounding in which he is and dissolve his very being, losing all consciousness except of the holy presence of the Master. This blanking of oneself is called 'absorption'. The more one empties himself of his worldliness and pettiness, the more he will be filled with the divine grace emanating from the divine presence before him. This is the secret of a successful Satsang.

Excuse me when I say that it is seldom that we get a Satsang or company of a truly perfect Master, for such highly advanced souls—souls one with the Lord—are very rare indeed. They are not easily available and recognizable; and if, by some mighty good luck, we do come across a Godman, we do not know how to derive the fullest benefit from his company or Satsang.

The way to make the most of such a rare opportunity and derive the maximum benefit is that one should try to come to the place of Satsang as early as possible and sit silently in a prayerful mood, blanking the mind of all the worldly thoughts in the august presence of the Master, inwardly absorbing his words of wisdom. If by sitting close to fire we feel warmth, and the proximity of a glacier gives a cold shiver, there is no reason why one should not be affected by the divine aura of a Master-saint whose radiation has an unimaginably long range.

At Satsang there is a great charging, but you must be connected to it; it is no good just sitting there. Furthermore, your attention should be on the Master alone; even if you are thousands of miles from him physically, you can still enjoy Satsang. Naturally, there is more benefit in being completely attentive when near his physical presence, for you will get a direct charging; but no matter where you are, you will still have help if you are receptive.

Some people ask, what is the actual effect of Satsang? Well, if you tie a wild horse to a stake, he will naturally make a run for it, but when he reaches the end of the tether he will be brought up with a jerk. He may try to run away several times but will always be pulled up by the tether. Satsang has some effect like this on the mind, and after repeating a few times the inclination to run away grows less, until it eventually learns to still itself. Satsang also cleanses the bad smells which come from the habits of lust, anger, greed, etc., that is, if the person is receptive. He becomes something different.

In Satsang the flow of mercy is pouring into you, so get the fullest benefit from it. Weed out all imperfections, one by one; that is why I have told you to keep a diary. When the soil is weeded, it is ready for the seed to be sown, then the true growth can begin. If small pebbles and rocks are not removed, the seed may sprout, but it will not bear fruit.

When you go to a realized soul to get right understanding, go with all humility, put aside your views. What you know, you know. While you are with him, try to understand what he is saying. Consider the level he is speaking from, and then compare your own knowledge. Many would hesitate to go to him for pride of their own knowledge. The man of prominent worldly position will not go, for he is intoxicated with his own power; and a rich man will not go, for he is lost in pride of wealth.

Remember, a God-realized person cannot be bought with money, impressed by power, pushed by force. When you go to him, put aside your own ideas— after all, no one can rob you of them! We make the mistake of measuring what he is trying to say with what we already know: “We have heard that before”; “So and so said that”—etc. Brothers, he will say all this and more, for he must speak on man’s level for fuller comprehension, and will quote many truths that others have said, that the seeker may find his way more easily. But the fact remains, if the seeker wants to receive, he must still his intellect for a while, and sit in all humility.

I am glad you have a better appreciation of the value of the Satsang meetings, which are always inspiring, helpful and beneficial, as Master’s love and grace is radiated in abundance therein, and all those present receive the life impulses from the Master Power working overhead. In group meetings the entire congregation assimilates the overflowing grace of the Master, and occasionally the Radiant Presence of the Master is experienced by the

audience. Such meetings have a deep inspiring significance and, therefore, should be cherished in all loving devotion.

Satsang is the name we give to the company of an awakened soul. A Satguru makes a Satsang.

Where would you go to realize God? Into a Satsang, where the Teacher, Sant or Master has himself realized the Truth and is competent to impart this wisdom to those present. Actually, Satsang is the medicine for that disease and pain which comes from ignorance of the truth, from searching for the answer to: Is there a God and how does one realize Him?

Hazur Sawan Singh Ji used to say that Satsangs served a very useful purpose as a protective hedge around the field of Simran and Bhajan, so that these vital and life-giving processes continue to develop and thrive, in spite of the otherwise busy life in the family, in society, in your respective avocations, and the like.

The first thing the Negative Power does when he wants to keep control over a soul is to stop him doing Bhajan and Simran. The individual finds that there is always something to lure him away from his meditation. This is his first method, and secondly, he slips that question into the mind: "Why go to the Guru or the Satsang? What is the use of it?" Satsang is the very place where a turning point can be affected and an awareness of wrongdoing and wrong living is achieved, so he will try to persuade us not to go there. If you have the strength to ignore him, he will then suggest that you just go and bow down and then leave. He will place all kinds of doubts in the mind, and instead of the fullest benefit from the Satsang, the person returns home with nothing but dissatisfaction or the bad effects of gossiping and back biting from other wavering individuals. These are two very powerful weapons that the Negative Power is constantly wielding.

Similar is the case with attending Satsang regularly. We can develop this habit by regularly going to see the Master and attending his discourses full of Divine Knowledge. It is often noticed that persons with very poor spiritual background tend to grow spiritually by benefitting from the radiation of the Master-Power in the charged atmosphere.

O brothers, keep connection with the Satsang, and all your wrongs will be righted. Even your earthly life will be a success. The very physical body is blessed when one sits in the Satsang.

Satsang serves as a protective hedge around the holy seed of spirituality where one enjoys divine radiation and gets clarity of vision. Missing of Satsang for devoting time for meditations is not advisable.

Question: *Would you discuss the handling of small children at Satsang and meditation gatherings?*

Master: I think for that you can detail somebody who can sit outside with two or three of the children. They should sacrifice their time for the good of others or mothers should keep them quiet—any of the two things.

Satsang is of the Master and every initiate is also part of the Satsang and can contribute to the general atmosphere of the Satsang by setting an example in living up to the teachings of the Master. Christ said, “Let my words abide in you, and you abide in me.” The words of the Master are the Master, and the Master cannot be separated from His words.

The importance of attending Satsangs or spiritual gatherings cannot be over emphasized.

To attend Satsang is like having a protective hedge around your meditation; it also increases the incentive to meditate. Attend the Satsang even if your time is limited.

Cancel some other appointment in order to do so, if necessary, for the benefits of Satsang are invaluable. . . .

Attend the Satsang and have the advantage of a protective hedge around your meditation. I once asked Hazur Maharaj, “What are your orders regarding Satsang?” He told me, “If you are very sick in your bed but you can move, then attend Satsang.” Just note that he did not say that if you have the strength to walk, then attend Satsang. From this single instance, one can see how important it is.

Leave hundreds of urgent works to attend the Satsangs.

The Wheel of Life by Kirpal Singh

Chapter Four

In the scriptural texts, we have an apt story of Raja Prikshat who had heard that whosoever heard the *Bhagwat* recited by a *Pandit* became *jivan mukat*—a man freed from all bondage.

One day he called his court-priest and asked him to recite to him the elevating text of the *Bhagwat* so that he might escape from the bondage of mind and matter, and commanded that if his recitation did not prove the truth of the sacred teachings, the priest would be put to the gallows.

The priest was no better than any one of us. He felt dismayed for he saw death staring him in the face, as he knew full well that he could not help the king in attaining salvation.

When he reached his home, he was down cast and extremely worried over his impending doom. On the eve of the day fixed for the recitation of the *Bhagwat*, the priest was half-dead with fear.

Fortunately for him he had a talented daughter. On her solicitations, he revealed to her the cause of his miserable plight. The daughter consoled him and assured him that she would save him from the gallows, if he permitted her to accompany him on the following day to the king's presence.

The next day she went to the royal court along with her father. She enquired if the king wanted freedom from bondage of the world and the king replied in the affirmative. She told the king that she could help him in his much-cherished desire if he followed her advice and permitted her to do what she liked.

She took the king and her father to the jungle with two stout ropes, and she tightly tied each one of them to a separate tree. She then asked the king to untie and free his priest. The king expressed his helplessness to do so as he was tied down himself. Thereupon the girl explained to him that one who was himself in the bondage of *maya* (illusion), could not take another out of the similar bondage.

The recitation of the *Bhagwat* could certainly break the magic shell of delusion if it were done by a freed person, who had for himself broken through the delusion, and as such the king should not expect salvation from his royal priest who was as much in fetters as the king, himself. It is only *Neh-Karma* or one not in the cobweb of karmas, who is competent to make others like himself and extricate them from the deadly karmic cycle.

This in a way also illustrates that mere study of scriptures does not help much in giving *Moksha* or salvation; which is purely a practical theme and can be learned correctly from and perfected by practice under the able guidance of an adept in the line.

The *Murshid-i-Kamal* or the perfect Master has first of all to piece together the broken tablet of the mind torn by countless desires and aspirations, and make it into a perfect whole and then to burnish it clean through and through so as to make it capable of reflecting the light and glory of God which no amount of book-learning would do.

One cannot, of course, know and understand the true import of the scriptures unless the same are explained by some Master-soul who has Himself experienced within the laboratory of his own mind what the scriptures say. Thus, He can, from personal experience of His own, teach and guide the disciple in the highly esoteric teachings contained in terse epigrams which baffle the intellect, limited as it is in its scope and instruments of

learning. This is why it is said: “God comes handy in the company of a *Sadh*” (or a disciplined soul). One who is a freed soul can free another and none else can. In this context it is said:

The study of the *Vedas*, the *Puranas* and *Etymology* leads to naught,
Without the practice of the Holy Word, one ever remains in utter darkness.

A practical man of realization is at once all the scriptures combined besides something much more than the scriptures, which, at best, contain the theory side in subtle language but are incapable of explaining the theory itself by word of mouth, and cannot vouchsafe an actual experience of the same as the Master does.

Every one, these days, tries to put the blame or fault for his ills on the “times,” and this complaint is the greatest complaint of all times.

The present time as well as the time to come is no more ours than the time past. This world is a huge magnetic field and the more we strive to get out of it, the more are we caught and entangled in its meshes. Man dances in the net and thinks that nobody sees him. The wise feel the net but do not know where to sit easy. Thus, silently and ceaselessly revolves the huge fly-wheel of the karmic mill, the giant Wheel of Life slowly but unmistakably pounding to pieces all alike. This mill of Nature grinds all slowly but surely. Some feel and say: “It appears that Nature made man and then broke the mold.”

No one, however, tries to peer through the why and wherefore of things, happenings and events for we take everything complacently as it comes along the current of time. We do not try to delve deep into them in order to trace out the links of the chain leading up to what we see and experience. Everyone in his dealings with others forgets that he has to pay for everything in this world.

Even nature's gifts like space, light, air, etc. are not free to all alike to any appreciable extent. But each man thinks himself the sole custodian of the free gifts of God. He attempts to be as liberal as possible, comes across several ill-set diamonds (men) and is affected by the "Law of give and take." It is after hard buffeting that we learn that scales make no distinction between gold and lead but are concerned with the dead weight only. Every man knows that fog cannot be dispelled with a fan, and yet tries to do so, and thereby makes the confusion worse confounded. A person, bound hand and foot in the endless chain of cause and effect, cannot free others.

When every one in the world is fast asleep, who is there to waken and whom? It is only a freed man who can free others if he so chooses, for the sins of commission and omission are of the very essence of the law of Nature and sooner or later visit the doer in one form or another.

In caging birds and keeping pets collared, chained, and imprisoned, one wrongly takes it for granted that these poor dumb creatures have no court of law where they can lodge their complaint. He thinks that he has a right to deal with them as he pleases. He neither dreads to kill nor pays any heed to the common Truth: "As you sow, so shall you reap."

Ignorance of the law is no excuse. Every wrong has to be avenged. He that slays, shall be slain. He who lives by the sword, perishes by the sword. One has to pay with "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" which is as true today as it was in the time of Moses. Merry, no doubt, is the feast-making until comes the dreadful reckoning. We may shut our eyes to the laws of Nature, may repose trust in the efficacy of the priest-craft, but it will never do any good. One has to pay a very heavy toll for killing, blood-sucking, and the like. Those who live and thrive on the blood of others cannot have a pure heart, much less access to the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

Saints say that man occupies the highest place in God's creation and is endowed with superb intellect and must not, therefore, pass his limited span of time blindfolded like other creatures.

The golden opportunity, thus provided, of returning and reverting to God's embrace and to his original Home should not be lost. Such a sublime opportunity comes only after one has completely seen through the "World Exhibition" and has successfully concluded his part in the Grand Drama of life. Man is usually lost in the attractions here below. In doing so, he loses the solitary chance given to him under the overbearing influence of karmic reaction, after myriads of incarnations, for his return to the abiding region of the pure spirit. He is given one body after another in an endless series. He begins to feel the weight of all kinds of laws—social, physical, natural—which like heavy blocks bar his way at every step. He has no alternative left but to wait for his next turn as man, and who knows when it may come?

Saints give a very simple definition of sin as "forgetting one's origin" (or God-head). Every thought, word, or deed that keeps a man away from God is a veritable sin, and on the other hand whatever brings man nearer to Him, is pious and holy. A Persian divine, while self-commenting on the nature of the world, said, "World comes into play only when one forgets the Lord. By constant remembrance of God, one while living in the world among friends and relations is yet not of the world."

Most of the sins, whether coarse or fine, are purely the invention of man under the sway of the mind. Finer ones are regarded as "pardonable weaknesses" by Saints Who are the living and moving images of God's law of love and mercy on this earth. So long as a person acts as a self-willed creature, he subjects himself to all the laws and their rigors. But when he surrenders his self-will to

that of a Godman, he comes under the sway of God's mercy and love. This is the true aspect of sin in every day life.

Karmas are the most contagious form of invisible diseases to which a man is ever exposed. They are even more galloping, wasting and destructive than the deadliest and most poisonous germs transmitted into the innermost cells of the human system and worm their way most surreptitiously into the blood-system.

In society, karmas take a firm hold first in the shape of a change in view and thought of the so-called molders of public opinion. Then they affect the disposition and temper, and afterwards take deep roots in the shape of habits which become "second nature" in man. The ancients and the elders were, therefore, always on the alert to advise us to refrain from bad company. "A good company breeds goodness, while the bad one breeds ill." A man is certainly known by the company he keeps.

To crown all such difficulties, one has to share unwittingly the karmic reactions, even in his own family where he is born and brought up. Thus, virtues and vices play an integral role in the formation of culture. In this way, we daily and hourly contract karmas from our surroundings.

The only way to escape the karmic influence is to stick to the path of God through godly Saints Who being embedded in the Most High, are far above the reach of karmas and are in fact, *Neh-Karma* and *Jivan-Mukat*.

It is said that in the kingdom of a real *Darvesh* (Godman), one has not to render account of one's karmas. A person takes a turn for the better when he takes to the company of a *sadhu*. However, man is naturally prone to accept evil easily rather than the illimitable goodness of Saints. The company of a Saint has marvelous effect in removing all traces of evil. The

atmospheric range of a Master-Saint is a vast immensity which man can hardly imagine.

The Saints come not for the good of human beings only but for the benefit of all active and inactive creation in the world at all levels, visible and invisible as well.

The poor creature called man has no true friend. Even the mind with the three *gunas* (qualities of *Satva* or purity, *Rajas* or activity, and *Tamas* or inertia) ever working as man's accomplice, looks on him just as a cat casts a restless glance over a rat.

Those who follow the dictates of the mind are invariably caught in its wiles, and are subjected to untold misery and harrowing terrors. "Mind," however, fears those to whom God is kind through His medium, the *Satguru* (Godman). Mind dares not intrude on the privileges and rights accorded to His Own loved ones and rather helps them as an obedient assistant does under orders from his superior. Like fire, it is a good servant but a bad master:

In the company of a *sadh*, one has nothing to rue;
In his company, one knows the Lord and follows Him true;
In his company, one attains the highest gift of God-head.

This is why Guru Nanak emphatically declared:
O Nanak! Snap asunder all thy ephemeral ties of the world and go in search of the true ones.
While all shall forsake thee in thy life-time, the True One shall accompany thee even up to the beyond.

Again, —Be sure, O soul, that a Godman shall stand by thee before the judgment seat of God.

Baba Farid, a Muslim Divine, said in almost the same strain:

O Farid! Hie in search of a freed-man for such a one
would free thee (from the bondage of the world).

Again, —The ever-restless mind cannot find rest until it
rests in some Godman.

In *Gurbani*, we have:

The wandering wits come to a halt in the company of
a *sadh*,
The stilled mind alone reflects the Light of the Lord.

Every man is tied physically and mentally in the invisible
bonds of karmas. So long as one is under the sway of
mind and matter, and has not sought the protection of a
Saint, he is governed by all the laws of the various planes
and is meted out justice pure and simple, un-tempered
with mercy. He is liable to punishment for all his sins—
unheeded, unnamed, and subtle. A friend, in a court of
law, may be able to curtail the long and tortuous legal
process, but before the judgment seat of the Most-High, a
Master-Saint alone is the true friend at the time of trial.

In *Jap Ji*, Guru Nanak declares, —The Saint is
acceptable at His Court, and is the Chief Elect therein:
The Saint adorns the threshold of God and is honored
even by Kings.

Again, — *Satguru* has given me the gift of insight and I
see all doubts dispelled,
The angel of death can do unto me no more wrong when
the very account of my deeds has been blotted out.

The path of the Saints leads in quite another direction.
There is no court of trial for the initiated ones. The Saint
is present everywhere and His sway extends to realms
undreamed of. He never leaves nor forsakes His disciples
till the end of the World. His solemn assurance is:

Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide in thy
most need to go by thy side. Everyman

Like a kindly and gracious father, He Himself may administer a remonstrance to the erring child but would never send him to the police for correction.

No one is in more bondage than the one who wrongly thinks himself to be free. The trap of the high-born spirit is ambition. Those who are well-to-do, in the worldly sense of the word, appear to us in comfort. They may have sown some good seeds in the past and are apparently reaping a rich harvest in the present; or they may now be acting upon the policy of “snatch, grab and hoard” and are thus building for themselves a hornet’s nest for the future. All such people in affluence, unfortunately, forget that they, in either case, are wearing the “unseen fetters of gold,” and are unknowingly heading for trouble.

The common saying goes: “The walls and mansions of the mighty are built with the sweat and tears of the poor.” Unless one has sown good in the past, he cannot reap a rich harvest in the living present. He may also be carrying imperceptibly the burden of some guilt right under his sleeves. If he does not sow good seeds now, how can he expect to enjoy seemingly good fruits in the future and for how long?

Moreover, good deeds by themselves cannot absolve a person from the reaction of bad deeds, just as dirty water cannot and does not wash clean. With all our righteousnesses we are but filthy rags, says a Christian saint. None is clean, no, not one. Man is always subject to the law of give and take or compensation and retribution.

Following the path of good works is decidedly something desirable and better than the path of evil deeds, but it is not all. A high ethical living may secure a paradise for a person for a lengthy sojourn, where he may comfortably enjoy heavenly bliss; but he is still interned therein in the

astral or causal body and he has not freed himself from the cycle of births and deaths.

So long as one feels that he is the doer, he cannot escape from the wheel of births and has to bear the fruit of seeds. It is the contact with the Holy Ghost, sacred *Naam* or Word that alone helps a person in his upward ascent to higher spiritual regions, far removed from the shadows of repeated births and deaths that ceaselessly move up and down in endless gyres with no way of escape therefrom.

Hell and Heaven are the regions where the disincarnate spirits have to remain for a relatively long period according to their actions on earth, bad or good, as the case may be. The stay here, however long, is not everlasting and it does not take them out of the inexorable cycle of births and deaths.

Paradise (Heaven or Eden) is the El Dorado of certain faiths. It is also termed salvation by many. But the fact of the matter is that after enjoying the paradisiacal bounties for as long as is determined by good deeds, one is given a human body once again for it alone provides an opportunity to gain merit leading ultimately to liberation. Even the ministering angels of God aspire to human birth when they feel that they have done their job.

Thus, in following the almost universally acknowledged, widely believed, and generally accepted path of good deeds, one ultimately finds himself, once more, caught in the web of insatiable desires and ambitions and with this glittering and ever-elusive firefly in front of him, he still remains an unwitting captive in the iron grip of karmas.

To achieve his objective, he performs *Tapas* (various kinds of ascetic austerities) which may bring him better lives. Even when he attains the sovereignty of a kingdom, his mind runs riot, he gives himself free reins and commits mighty deeds of valor and prowess, most of which are evil enough to earn him Hell.

Again, after taking a bitter lesson from the hell-fires in which he is plunged, he tries to seek solace in *Tapas*.

Thus, he is ever caught and moves entangled in the vicious circle of temptations and lures from Hell to contrition and from contrition to sovereignty and from sovereignty to Hell again—one after the other—in an endless cyclic order, up and down the Wheel of Life.

Thus, everyone for himself makes his own Heaven and Hell and remains through his own volitional deeds entangled in the gossamer web of life prepared by him.

These regions of Hell and Paradise do not come in the way of one who follows the path of the Saints, the middle course, right between the two eye-brows, for he bypasses the path of a Karma Yogi. Even if a soul under the protection of a Master Saint may, for a while, go astray, it is sure to be rescued.

Though Saints are living models of humility and do not speak of the great authority that is Theirs, yet at times They do indirectly refer to the saving power of the Saints gone before them.

The scriptures reveal that Sant Satguru Nanak rescued one of His disciples who somehow wandered astray hellward. The Holy One had to visit hell for a lost sheep, and dip His thumb in the molten fires of hell, thereby cooling down the entire hell-furnace, giving relief not only to one but to many sinner souls howling piteously in great distress.

Similar instances occurred in the time of Raja Janak and others as well. Once Hazur, my Master, too, had to pull out one of His disciples who was straying downwards. How then can there be redemption from Hell for the common man?

Those who are devoted to the practice of the Holy Word,
all their labors end,
Their faces, O Nanak! shine with glory and many souls
are saved along with them.

Another region, named *Eraf* (or purgatory) by the Muslim Saints, exists and has both joys and terrors in varying degrees. Experiences of various kinds of fears and agonies of hell have been described by various Masters of different grades. This subject is not an imaginary mapped-out scheme but a serious one for reflection. Whether one believes it or not, the disciple of a Saint is not concerned with any of them. And so long as one is true to his Master Saint (*Sant Satguru*), no power on earth can injure a single hair of his head. A true disciple of a *Sant Satguru* verily says:

I have my dealings with the Saints and my only concern
is with them,
With the stock-in-trade provided by the Saints,
I am freed from all hallucinations,
The angel-of-death cannot now touch a single hair of my
head
When the entire record of my deeds has been consigned
to the flames.

Again, it is said:
Invincible indeed is the Angel-of-death and none can
subdue him.
But he is powerless in the presence of the Sound-Current
of the Master,
The very sound of His Word strikes him with terror and
he flees therefrom,
For he fears lest the Lord of Hosts may strike him dead.