

Sant: The Master

In Sanskrit, the word “Sant” (which is the origin of the English word “Saint”) means “Master of the Highest Order.” Both the word and the concept are unfamiliar in Western thought, which tends to lump all exceptionally pious devotees together as “saints,” regardless of the actual degree of inner attainment. In this essay, dating from the early 1950’s, Master Kirpal Singh clarifies the issue by telling us exactly what a “Sant” is and how we may recognize one. This was published in the October 1970 *Sat Sandesh*.

Perhaps one might ask: “What sort of a person is a *Sant* about whom so much has been said, as distinguished from commonly known grades of Masters, such as *Sanyasis, Rishis, Munis, Tikhishwars, Munishwars, Yogishwars*, past Masters, founders and ministrants of religions, etc.?”

No doubt a Sant (or Sadhu) is an ordinary man to all external appearances. He is, however, a great deal more: a “perfect man” with experience of outer and inner life. Outer living may be different in various countries, but inner experiences wherever known are the same; although they speak of differing phases according to the degree of inner approach. These are not denied, as far as they go, but direct and full phases are announced by Sants who also offer experience along with their theory. What more is needed by man?

Voluminous books recording experiences of Sants in this science of Nature are full of their praises. Still, it is very difficult to know more about a Sant even if he is your nearest neighbor or daily passes on the same road.

History shows that once the Czar of Russia, moved by the fate of certain exiled subjects of his dominion working as shipbuilding laborers on a far-off coast, went in disguise to them, worked with them for a number of years, and persuaded them to return to their homes. The laborers protested that they had been turned out of the dominion and there was no hope for them. The Czar assured them that he had influence with the royal court, including some with the Czar, and that there would be no trouble. Those

who believed him, agreed to accompany him to their homes. On the way their faith in their fellow worker was confirmed when the Czar, disguised as a laborer, was greeted warmly by his men. At last, when all saw in the end that the distinguished laborer was none other than the Czar himself, sitting on the throne before their eyes, they heaved sighs of relief. How could they have known him or believed him before?

The Unseen High One uses a very selected human pole, who, by dint of his continued, untiring and unending endeavors, unequalled in self-sacrifice and boundless love for Him during life, contacts Him within himself, becomes His conscious co-worker, and is utilized and assigned the mission of giving solace to afflicted seekers of Him, to rescue them from the worries of the world, and to unite all such ones to He who owns them.

Man needs man to understand, and so a Sant is the High One in the guise of a man to whom those longing for Him can approach. The Unseen Almighty has His own law in this respect. Thus, Sant is God plus man. He is a mouthpiece of God, or if one is pleased to accept it, he is God in person, "personified God." He is most sacred "personal God"¹ invested with all powers and authority, and is a living altar to pray to, to seek solution of man's problems from birth to death and after; in short, to extricate man from the network of worries, and bestow true salvation.

Thus God moves as ordinary man in disguise. As a man externally no one can recognize him, but only one who contacts a Master Saint within himself according to the science, i.e., the laws that He has laid down for man. Externally, if one takes a Master Saint as an ordinary man, he cannot derive any more benefit from him than he could from anyone of the level that he takes him for. If one takes him as a superman, much more benefit can be derived, and if he is taken as all-in-all, still more. If one contacts a Master within himself, he gets all and everything. It is not

a matter of one's thinking range, which is blind faith. It depends on the extent of understanding of this Divine Science. That which comes from the heart will go to the heart.

A question was once put to Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj: "Bodies of all men are made of the same mud (i.e., material flesh, blood, etc.), what superiority is attached to the personal body of a Sant which makes him superior to any other man?"

Hazur replied: "No doubt, all bodies are composed of mud, but the body of a Sant is made of the purest particles of it available in the universe. Every word, every look, every move, every touch, even the aura of a Sant is endowed with mercy, love and the grace of God. His society is specially electrified and the atmosphere charged. The purer the heart of a man, the more he realizes and feels. Even those who listen to him, accept and absorb what he says, are not left blank. They are benefited.

When a Sant walks on the ground, the land becomes pure and sacred. When he walks over the grass or, in walking, crushes any worms or insects, they get a man's body direct, irrespective of the cyclic order and stages of evolution of creation of life on earth in Nature's science.² The fruit trees and plants from which the cereal comes, which a Sant uses in his diet, also get human bodies directly. The tree, a portion of a branch of which the Sant uses as his *datan* (toothbrush), and the cows who provide milk for the Sants also get man's body direct. Similarly the mares, etc., Sants ride, the ants or worms whose bodies touch the flowing water in which a Sant bathes, or any flying bird who happens to see the naked portion of the body of a Sant also get the same advantage."

An ordinary man would take this as an enigma or joke, and would hardly be prepared to believe because his testing stone is his intellect, and he knows nothing of the Power of God, or such powers delegated to or concessions inherent in the bodies of Sants, unless he acquires

experience in the noble science that has been designed by God Himself for man. It is true that God is unseen to external eyes, but He has not left man all forlorn on earth, so far as approach to Him is concerned. The door of approach, the starting point, for any search or research in this connection lies within man. The Sant is the means.

Man therefore must adopt a course different from that upon which he is attempting to make headway; but proud of his “learning” in many fields, he goes astray; just as one examining a bowl found in the ruins of a far-off country begins to ponder, speculate and concentrate his imaginings on the potter who made it ages ago. He draws a sketch of the potter in his mind, makes images of him and his implements, and in so doing writes books, one after the other, trying to impress others and prove that his findings are true and deserve praise. Alas, man is far from the right track.

Simple is Truth and still simpler the language of Truth spoken by the Sants, whose simple and brief words uttered from the heart satisfy, pacify and console the most bewildered and troubled souls. They speak involuntarily and unaffectedly.

A Sant is the mouthpiece of God, and God Himself speaks through the human throat.

Maulana Rumi

As a man, a Sant is always submissive to His Will in happenings in life. Bear and forbear is a Sant’s creed. He is like a sandalwood tree on which a feller’s axe strikes its blows, but the tree continues to give forth its fragrance, even to the edge of the blade which cuts it.

In the company of a Sant the agitated mind becomes still. He stands for the good of man and does his work as a friend or brother, if one’s mind is not prepared to accept him as a guide. He remains concealed, but by his very concealment is added fame to fame and glory to glory.³ He

does not see who a person is, what position he holds, or to what school of thought or race he belongs. He simply sees that one coming to him is an ensouled human being – man. The Sant is so watchful and alert a merchant of his precious goods (i.e., the spiritual science) that anybody who thinks himself the most clever, the wisest, the most highly educated, a performer of miracles, etc., cannot get even the scent of what he has, though one may try his very best. The Sant loves theists as well as atheists, or even the worst sinners or those who are drowned in sensual pleasures of the world, just as a loving mother will not throw away her child completely covered in dirt and filth.

It takes a Sant to know a Sant. A Sant alone can describe a Sant. His presence in the midst of any society or social group is its most precious adornment. He may be seen going from one place to another, but he does not go there for any propaganda or selfish motive, but is attracted by the strong silken ties of love in certain hearts. He is the uplifting leader of moral cleanliness and spirituality. Whether a metal be gold or iron, it is mere metal to a Sant. He is not affected by offers of position of dignity or indignity, honor or dishonor, nor moved by joys and sorrows, praise or censure. Sovereignty, wealth, and beauty of women are no attractions for a Sant. He is far above the influences of lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. He is unaffected.

Sants or Sadhus⁴ are above the three gunas. They are selfless and reveal the Truth only. They are “Children of Light” – beacons of the world. It is very seldom that one comes across them – real ones. Like wrestlers, they are not made in one day, nor are they from any school of academic learning. They have had the experience of several past lives. Every Saint has a past and every sinner a future. They are common assets of humanity. They are experienced personalities who have analyzed themselves and realized God, and can help to put us on the same path. Whatever one has, he can give it to another.

How can the ordinary man know that a Master Saint (*Guru* or *Satguru*) visits the heavens daily, takes charge of his disciples' karma, winding it up and liquidating it under his care and supervision? There are thousands of disciples and how can the Master manage it? Man hears of these things only occasionally. Sit by a Sant and you will feel mental composure, calmness, and a tranquility never experienced before, and much more too. The minds of those who have the least spark of love of God in them, experience an awakening even when they just hear that there is a Master who can really guide them to the threshold.

In going to a Master we acquire:

1. Reciprocity of heart;
2. Staying still behind the eyes;
3. Contact with the "Divine Link."

In the places of pilgrimage, the holy ones of olden times bestowed at least these three boons which are stepping stones direct to spirituality. Words and theories have now been substituted for these prerequisites of the Divine Science.

The teachings of the Sants are, in brief:

Man has valuable treasures of Divinity hidden within him. Acquire the knowledge and experience that made the Masters so high and holy, and unlock the doors giving entrance into the Divine in practice – not intellectually – right now, during your present lifetime. Purity of heart and the simple request is all that is needed. You have to pay nothing for this Science of Nature.

Into the society of Sants come men of all characters, including those proud of their ideas, good or bad. Sants however do not employ police to keep away those who, in the eyes of the public, are undesirable; and the strange

thing is that their own censure is the only doorkeeper that automatically keeps them away.

The problem now before man is how to recognize and identify a true Master from among so many he meets, hears and reads about. We are used to seeing outwardly.

There are hardly any universal or common marks on the person of a Sant. Still, we need some clues, some key. We may point out, “Rishis and Munis are defined as those who possess knowledge of the past, present and future. Yogis, in addition to that, have miraculous powers to exhibit and attract. Of gods, it is said they do not cast a shadow. At least something must be said about genuine Sants and Sadhus by either the ancients or moderns.”

The reply is that for the ordinary layman and the negative-minded man, there can hardly be any indications that a man may be a Sant. For the slightly advanced on the path of love of God, and for those of astute observation, there can be given some hints and clues. Much patience is needed, however, to discover them:

1. *Sants say that God is within man.*

(This is emphasized and repeated everywhere today, so it is not a convincing clue for modern man.)

2. *The eyes and forehead of one genuine Master bear a strange contrast and striking resemblance to another.*

(This is realized by very few of those who have lived during the lifetimes of two such Masters, and who have minutely observed these features or signs in their faces. It is, in fact, the one Benign Power working through two different human poles one after the other, or even side by side, which is also the case occasionally.)

3. *They make visible or invisible three vertical veins on their foreheads at will.⁵*

(This remarkable sign by which a Sant can be recognized is mentioned by the ancients and is not discernible by many until they learn of it and desire confirmation by this means.)

4. *When sitting in the presence of a real Sant, even with open eyes, the sensory current of the body begins to convene, gather up, and rise involuntarily and unknowingly until felt.*⁵

(This experience is given by a Sant to a very few of the selected ones. Ancient seekers, aware of this “test of self”, have corroborated this.)

5. *Sincere aspirants are given the experience of withdrawal of the spirit current at the very first sitting at the time of initiation.*

(This is open to all coming under the protective fold of the Master. He may be a new disciple or an old one who comes to the Master to realize and correct any mistake under which he may be laboring. This experience is also open to those who received instructions from a self-styled master in whom he has had faith, but from whom he has had no experience.)

As a matter of fact, no one can know or find a true Master, unless and until the Master is pleased to reveal his own identity himself, to the innermost satisfaction of one desiring to confirm his faith in the Master. This is done according to the extent of one’s receptivity, and to the degree that his capacity to understand, and his love entitle him. It depends wholly on the kindness and sweet mercy of God through a Master. Some are given clues according to their desires. The faith of some in their Master is confirmed when a disciple is saved miraculously from some danger. A favorable response to the prayers made to the Master confirms faith in others. There are others who have book-knowledge and are satisfied by the examples of others; so they get confirmation that way. Masters have the knowledge of measuring the capacity and range of everyone’s intellect, and bestow faith accordingly. Sants

know the merits and evils of everyone but they never disclose them.

Divine Grace is never slow. A good mother says not, “Will you?” but gives. From among the aspirants, they are given the lion’s share of Divine Faith in the Master who come with downcast heads, heavy hearts and the shuddering anguish of a lost soul, speechless with anxieties, to unburden their worries. Meekness is no weakness. It is a strong, cemented road of humility which leads to the Benign Reality.

Experience is the only criterion. If a Master is able to give us experience, we can accept him as one who knows the Divine Science. One who is connected and can contact, can give us contact. If one is in the first or second grade, and someone else sits by him for a whole lifetime, he will never attain a high degree of education.

Man hesitates and fears to approach a Master Saint because his living is tarnished, maybe less in one and more in another. Never fear to go to a Master Saint because you are a sinner. He is meant more for sinners than for others. He has a remedy for every wound. Approach him and through him will be found a way to become rid of sin. If one is far away, he can be contacted through correspondence. He has means and methods to meet every case. He is competent.

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It will be easy now to realize that *Para-Vidya* has a scientific basis, though it differs a bit from the ordinary system. It is not a scholastic system of philosophy based on intellectual cleverness, much less is it a new code of social or moral conduct, which are elementary steps. It is no blind faith, but a to-the-point digest and clear-cut practical science dealing with self-analysis, i.e., knowledge of self in man, for the one who observes minutely. All authority is, of course, vested in the practical Master Saint.

When a man is in one crowd, he will talk as the crowd talks. If he joins another crowd he will talk as it does, and so on. But if he takes his seat on a high mound he is able to see and hear all, and to judge the actions of man better. A Sant is like such a person. He looks down from on high upon the world. He speaks of the state of man, struggling for existence pretending that he knows all when in reality he knows little. Man does not know how to live, what to do, what to eat, how to act in life nor why. He has to depend upon his parents and teachers from childhood to youth, for all of his physical troubles he has to depend upon his doctor, for earning his livelihood upon his employer, and employers in turn upon their subordinates. For instruction in all mundane affairs he is dependent upon society; when faced with unforeseen dangers and surrounded by suffering, and when not comforted by anything, he depends upon the words of his minister or priest; and finally he finds that all he can do is submit to Nature and her laws. In vain he puts his trust in bodily strength and in the stability of the future; at the same time he makes his own way by heedlessly pushing others down the ladder. Little does he know that he can stand still in a flowing stream, but not in the world of mankind.

Sants pity man. They care not for their own personal comfort, and day and night advise man that his life is short, very short; but the worth of holy Masters has been underrated ever since wealth and pleasure have been overrated. Repeatedly Sants have warned man that in this Kali Yuga (Iron Age) man has been allotted a limited number of breaths in one lifetime. He has been given roughly 26,000 breaths a day (the amount varies from person to person and is determined by the *prarabdhi* or fate karma). While sitting he spends 12 a minute; when walking, he spends 18 a minute; when sleeping, 30; and in sexual intercourse, 64. These breaths are his entire legacy and wealth in bodily life. Thus the common saying goes, “A man is known to be mortal by two things – sleep and

lust.” Sants advise man to put this wealth in a secure bank of proper adjustment in order to lengthen life and derive the utmost from it. They emphasize that there is no other way; but man will not listen. Sants further say that man is subjected to the law of evolution in 8,400,000 kinds of embodied creation and gets one body after the other; and in each body is further chained with iron fetters of the inexorable law of Nature, Karma: first “work and act” and then “cause and effect;” and he must rid himself of this cycle of repeated births and deaths in order to attain peace. With open eyes, man watches living beings, even man, suffering, dying with untold pain and agony; but he smiles away the Truth as revealed by Sants, saying, “We know better. We have our own solid science based on facts; we have our inventions, our atomic energy, etc.”

Thus the less man thinks, the more he talks, and things not understood are admired. Notwithstanding all this, the Sants continue pushing on with their mission with perseverance; and offering experience in the Divine Science, *Para Vidya*, to those who come to them. The Name of the Lord is a very strong tower. The sting of reproach is the truth of it. Self-evident Truth requires no proof. The sun can be seen by nothing but his own light. **You cannot be lost on a straight road.**

AUTHOR’S NOTES

1. One might feel aversion at this expression, but if one thinks deeply he will realize that holy personalities in every religion were men in physical bodies duly contacted with the High Lord, and advised, healed or talked of the Holy Father only as savior from sin and giver of salvation. God has no co-sharer is the general belief, and as such God, through the selected human pole, spoke each time and not man. The Divine Science brings to light this important fact and has more respect for all such personalities and their teachings than any religious circles today.

Sant Tulsi Sahib of Hathras (U. P., India) once, accompanied by some of his devoted disciples, visited a fair in the locality there. Among some visitors who gathered as inquirers and seekers around him happened to be a queen, Tara Mati by name, who leaving her state carriage at a distance, came for darshan of holy Tulsi Sahib.

Casting a glance over the thousands of people in the fair, Tulsi Sahib uttered a few words: "If anyone or the whole multitude comes to me and says that they want to see the True Lord on High, I will take them to Him just now." Queen Tara Mati, who heard him, stepped forward with folded hands and said, "Please take me to Him, O Holy One." She sat with eyes closed on the ground and was given the experience right there on the spot. When she came back into the physical body from the high regions and opened her eyes, she said, "You were on the high seat of the Great Lord. Why did you not tell me so before?" Tulsi Sahib replied, "You would not have believed me then."

2. As a description of this subject, as revealed by the Sants, would take too much space, it is omitted here.

Swami Ji (Sant Shiv Dayal Singh Ji of Agra) when casting off his physical body at will, which Sants do, said as his last words: "In the phenomena of life on earth each variety of embodied creation has been lifted to the next grade of category. Selected ones (among men) with high virtuous living will be inclined to this side (the inner science)." (*Life of Swamiji Maharaj*, fourth edition, 1938, p. 117)

(Sant) Maulana Shamas Tabrez once said: "When I die and my body is burnt and my ashes are used as manure in a wheat field, and that wheat is made into flour, and bread is made of it, and that bread is served to be eaten, then not only the eater but the server of the bread will be intoxicated (with the love of Him) to an extent beyond expression."

3. A Sant will never say that he is a Sant. Hazur, when he was told that he was true Guru Nanak, used to say openly before thousands in Satsang that he did not bear any likeness even to the dogs of Guru Nanak. This humility places Sants above the level of the highest cultivated human beings, who are often prey to egotism. It is the summit of merits of Sants as men.

Concealment is the essential attribute of Sants. It is inherent in their character. God is concealed, and prefers to remain so, from the external view of man. This Law is from the High One for those bodies in which the Lord is pleased to work. Disregard of this Divine Law results in bodily punishment. For this reason also, a Master Saint never shows any miracle for attracting souls from mundane life for purposes of initiation. A student or disciple, however, sees any number of miracles at each move in this world or next after initiation. Sants neither dress themselves distinctly nor bear nor keep any mark, sign or symbol with them. They do not say they are high of self, but mention their own Masters. When told they are great, they reply that it is none of their doing; it is the kindness and mercy of their Master.

4. *Sadhu* is another common name for a Sant, and there exists a great deal of misconception about this term. The word as used here is not meant to refer to the millions of people who wear the colored robes found in India, and generally known as sadhus. A distinctive dress is not necessarily proof that a man has made inner progress.

5. For (3) and (4) cf. *Yog Vashisht*.



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