

Think of Death

This is the English translation of a talk by Master Kirpal Singh given in Hindi at Sawan Ashram, Delhi, India. It was originally published in the June-July, 1969 edition of *Sat Sandesh*.

*None is thy true companion among worldly relations,
Why sleep ye among these cheats?*

— Swami Ji

We have before us a psalm of Swami Ji Maharaj. You may go through the writings or devotional songs of any of the great souls. You will find that all have stressed the same point — "know thyself." It is said: "Recognize that thou art a sentient being." At present we are unaware of our real Self as we are completely identified with the body. We look at the world from the physical level only. As such, it does not appear to us in its true colors.

Matter is changing. The body and the world, which are composed of matter, are also changing. If two things are under-going a relative change, that is not perceptible. Many a time I have tried to explain this phenomenon through an example. Suppose a boat is sailing in a river with the speed of the water-current. The occupant of the boat would feel as if the boat is at rest. But, one who is standing outside can clearly apprehend that the boat as well as the river is flowing with the same speed. In other words, an awakened soul, out of sheer compassion, draws our attention towards our sad plight. But, caught up in the mighty maze of matter, we pay no heed to his clarion calls. We have taken the physical mold as something real and think that we have to live permanently in this world. All great souls, however, tell us that the world is unreal while the soul is real — something eternal, unchangeable, and permanent.

There is an allusion in the epic *Mahabharata* that a question was once asked of King Yudhishtira by Yaksha: "What is the most amazing thing in the world?" The King

replied: "Every day we see the people dying around us. Near and dear ones carry the dead body to the cremation ground or burial places. They even light the funeral pyre with their own hands. And yet men think they will never die." It is, indeed, quite strange and ironical. Learned or illiterate, rich or poor, high or low — all suffer from the same delusion.

What do the saints teach us? Learn how to transcend the tabernacle of flesh, and you will be able to perceive everything in a proper perspective. Then you can clearly apprehend the ever-changing panorama of life and will realize the truth of scriptural precepts — the world is impermanent and the soul is eternal. All great souls who came to this world of ours, from time to time, endeavored to draw our attention to these truths. Whether they expressed themselves through the Vedic *mantras* in Sanskrit or spoke in Persian or Arabic, the essence of their teachings was the same — the world is not a permanent dwelling place for us.

We dwell in the body and are not the body itself. In other words, we are an ensouled entity. Soul is essentially divine. We are all children of God. These have been the teachings of all enlightened souls. We should not take the language of the scriptures literally, but should try to follow the spirit of what is stated. One may spend one's lifetime in the study of the Vedas or scriptures. Of course, it is not a child's play. For one thing, it is really difficult to acquire mastery over Sanskrit — the language of the Vedas. One will have to exert a lot to learn it. Secondly, even if you master all the scriptures, you would arrive at the same conclusion — the physical world is unreal and the spirit is real.

We should search for Reality. The Vedas proclaim: "O Lord! lead us from untruth to truth, and from darkness to light." We may state this reality in any language. It would not make any difference. What is required is that we should proceed towards Truth. Discriminate right from

wrong and adopt the former. This would help us in achieving our goal. Whatever is mentioned in the scriptures is primarily a revelation of the various aspects of the human body that we possess. This is the greatest *Veda, Granth, Quran, or Bible* in which we are dwelling. Unless we make an exhaustive study of this book (body), all other knowledge is of no avail.

All evolved souls exhort us to tap inside and focus our attention between and behind the two eyebrows. Further, they tell us to seek the association of a Master-soul. Great souls actually traverse in the cave of human body. It is not necessary that we should exclusively depend on scriptural knowledge for the practical spiritual experiences. This can be accomplished easily and quickly under the guidance of some adept in the science of spirituality. Our main object is the practical achievement of what is recorded in religious books.

Swami Ji, therefore, emphasizes that, in reality, we are a spirit clothed by the body. This (body) is our first companion when we come into the world. All our earthly relations are because of this body developed after its advent. At the time of death, this clayey mold is left behind and all worldly possessions cease to have any significance. Now tell me as to who is your true friend among all these? Saints have given the following answer:

They are our real friends in whose company we may develop right understanding.

The very sight of them should dispel the veil of ignorance cast upon us. We treat the unreal as real. This is called ignorance. But when we meet an enlightened soul, he removes the veil of darkness and thus enables us to distinguish between real and unreal. Such persons alone are fit to be called true companions. They are very, very rare; but the world is not without one. As the physical body does not accompany us, we require the association of one who may abide by us at all times —

both here and in the hereafter. Who can be such a one? — Obviously, God alone. He is the Soul of our soul. He is our life principle. We live, move, and have our very being in Him. Other than God, such persons, in whom He is manifest, are our everlasting friends. They are verily a human-pole on which the Power of God works.

Wherever a disciple may be — on the snow-capped mountains, in the depths of oceans, in trackless jungles, or on burning sands — the Master ever remains with him to guide him at every step, for that is his eternal promise. And again, when one leaves the body at the time of death, or withdraws his sensory currents to the seat of the soul, the radiant form of the Master appears to escort the soul into the beyond. One who possesses this competency is called a Guru. He is not the physical body. Kabir goes to the extent of saying:

*Those who take the Master on the human level
Will have to go in the lower forms of creation.*

This is a great deception engulfing the entire world. Truly speaking, the term Guru is not an appellation of any person. It signifies and stands for the God-power manifestly working on a chosen human-pole. In the Gurbani, we have:

*God speaks through a human frame;
Without such a frame, how can He speak?*

Again says Nanak:
O Lalo! I simply speak out what God makes me speak.

Such a one alone is called a Sadhu, Saint, or Mahatma. We are all embodied spirits. Man alone can be the teacher of man. As such, God-power must adopt some human-pole in order to contact us at our level. Only a manifested God-in-man can direct our attention God-wards. On the physical plane, he acts as a teacher or a Guru, and gives spiritual instructions to the aspirants. He

says: "Neither you are a body nor am I. Let us leave the body and rise above it." There you would find him in his luminous form. He alone is a true preceptor. He is a never-failing friend, both here and hereafter:

God Himself dwells in Godman, although the latter may look like a human being.

The words sher (tiger) and sheer (milk) may have identical appearance but possess quite different meaning.

The words *sher* and *sheer* are written in the same way (in Urdu), but vastly differ in sense. The former stands for a wild beast, while the latter connotes a thing that gives strength and stamina. Likewise, there is a world of difference between an ordinary person and a Godman. The Master-soul is Word-made-flesh. He can transcend the physical body at will, and can traverse into higher spiritual realms. In the garb of a man, he is, in reality, much more than what he seems to be. He is a *Sadhu* (a disciplined soul) or *Satguru* (Master of Truth). Unless one contacts such a saint, real spiritual advancement is impossible. The God-power is manifested in the form remembered by an aspirant:

*The Nameless has many names;
He doth attend by whatever name He is addressed.*

Thus, there is no distinction between a realized soul and God. When placed in fire, an iron ball assumes the very form of fire. Similarly, Master-souls are verily one with God, but come down into the material world at His behest to fulfill His divine purpose. Enlightened souls who have experienced Reality within are rare indeed — maybe one in millions. But the rest who claim this status, and pose and act as real Masters not only deceive themselves, but misguide people. It is because of such impostors that Guru-ship is being looked down upon. But here the word *Guru* is not being used for false teachers who deceive simple-minded seekers after truth. Their teachings are confined to *Apravidya*. They neither have

above-body experience themselves, nor can they help others. We are least concerned with such fake Masters.

Nowadays, the words *Sadhu* and *Sant* have been defamed so much that people have lost all faith even in genuine Masters. Let us leave aside these words and replace them by more appropriate ones. But, the fact remains that the guidance of an adept well-versed in the science and art of spirituality is indispensable for those who want to make progress. There is no other way out. He should be able to give a firsthand inner experience to the aspiring souls, however little it may be. The great souls have stressed that worldly relations are of ephemeral nature; none is your real friend. We are a living soul but are identified with the body, which would not accompany us. Then what is the significance of bodily relations? A real friend is he who stands by us through thick and thin. He can either be God or a saint. It is, therefore, said:

*O Nanak! snap all ephemeral ties of worldly relations and find the company of a true saint;
The former shall break away in this very life, while the latter shall abide with thee even after death.*

The great teacher emphasizes that we should sever all our earthly connections, and search for the eternal friendship of some enlightened soul. The friends and relations do not stand by us in all the vicissitudes of life. Some of them desert us in poverty and indigence, some in prolonged illness and disease, and yet some in adversity and misfortune. At best a few of them may help you to the funeral pyre and that is all. Even the most sincere stand by as silent spectators when one struggles for life, but ultimately loses the battle against death.

As such, you should seek the spiritual guidance of one who may reveal to you the mysteries of the beyond and give out-of-body experience which one normally gets at the time of death. Further, he should abide with us when we shake off this mortal coil. This is the definition of a

true saint. But alas! Now-a-days the term given is being used for those who believe in external posing and are able to deliver sermons or preach scriptural texts. My Master used to say that bookish knowledge is all wilderness — no way out. This is the condition of the world. Poor and innocent people are being exploited by the so-called gurus for their own ends. One who revels at the plane of senses is sure to fall. Spirituality is not a subject of verbal talk:

*This is a practical subject beyond the grasp of intellect and thinking;
Leave off all lip-service and be doer of the Word;
Then alone you would enjoy the quintessence of true knowledge.*

It is a question of leading a well-disciplined and regulated life. When people suffer the worst experiences at the hands of false teachers, they say: "It is all gurudom." This does not mean that one should abandon his search for a perfect Master. Without him the goal cannot be reached.

We bestow all our love on the world and all that is of the world — wife and children, friends and relations, riches and possessions. All these worldly objects are subject to death and decay. They betray us some time or the other. As such, we should not idle away our precious moments in their company. The expression of enlightened souls is always frank and fearless. Swami Ji, a great teacher, calls all relations as cheats because they rob us of our valuable human life. Cheats are soft spoken. You only come to know when they have played their trick and deprived you of your belongings. But then it is too late.

The worldly delusion starts from the body. Having been identified with the fleshy mold, we take it as something eternal. All our life we are engaged in the care and maintenance of the body. Is it not a deception? So are bodily relations. Suppose a man steals something from

your house. No doubt you have suffered a loss, but at least in person you are safe. Again, suppose another individual comes and takes away your clothes. Although you are left without clothes, you remain safe. Likewise, let us assume that a third man comes, hits you and fractures a limb, but you survive. Your body may have been hurt, but at least your life has been saved. And yet another comes and captures your very attention (soul). Is not he your worst enemy?

A child at play would naturally attract the attention of those around him. All material attractions are dangerous and prove a stumbling block on the path Godward. Appearances are deceptive because they keep our attention diverted in a wrong direction. Truly speaking, we were to unite our soul with God but, alas! are getting lost in the mundane things. These worldly charms may be compared to broad-daylight dacoits that keep us far removed from reality. You can imagine the plight of those who are sleeping among them.

Just as a father is moved by the pitiable condition of his son, and advises him out of sheer compassion, similar is the case with our heavenly Father. He assumes the garb of a saint and awakens the sleeping humanity out of the deep slumber. Then he tells us that every moment of our precious human birth is being wasted in the transitory charms of the world. We should safeguard ourselves from this grand delusion. None is our foremost companion in this world. Everyone shall forsake us in due course of time, "This swan (soul) will depart alone."

Here a question arises as to what preparation have we made for the last journey? This is a subject that is before all social orders and religions. Seek the association of an evolved soul who is a human being like us but has attained Godhood. You may call him what you like. Call him a man of intuition, who may open your inner eye. Then there would be no question of any deception. Even if the aspirant is illiterate, he would get inner perception.

In Peshawar (now in Pakistan), there was one Baba Bhoj Singh. He was a truly devoted soul. He was once asked to explain the difference between "saying" and "doing." He replied, saying is *kehna*, while doing is *karna*. In Punjabi, the word *kehna* stands for a contagious disease. One who develops this always feels a scratching sensation on the body and feels relieved by scratching. As the sick person rubs himself, the disease goes on intensifying until it covers the whole body. Similarly, mere talking and professing without practicing is of no avail and leads us nowhere. The word *karna* means an orange flower that spreads its fragrance far and wide. Identical is the condition of those who engage themselves in regular spiritual practices. What a brief exposition in two words. But a learned man would explain the same in an elaborate way.

We are only concerned with the kernel and not the shell. Christ said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Again: "Let my words abide in you and you abide in me." Expressions may differ, but the sense is the same. In the association of a Godman or a man of realization, you would experience that the physical body is a mere casement. By constant practice, when you transcend the fleshy mold as a matter of routine, you can see the cosmic order from the level of the spirit. This is our goal. Self-realization precedes God-realization. Having experienced Godhood and after tasting the divine elixir, you will live in the world and yet out of it.

Swami Ji says:

*In Satsang, sit with receptivity and loving devotion,
Then the Master would dye you in the fast color of Naam.*

Great souls have always invited our attention towards vital things of life. They have endeavored to explain the axiomatic truths through examples:

*Know ye, O friend, that the world creation is wholly unreal;
O Nanak! it is unstable like a sand-wall.*

By unreal is meant what is not eternal and hence impermanent. Whatever we see around is just like a sand-wall, having a very short life. It crumbles as soon as the water dries up. It is said: "World is a mere dream and a juggler's play." This magic show, with no reality, lasts only for a while:

*Open thy eyes and see that nowhere is thy brother or friend;
Some are ready to depart while others would follow;
Everyone has to quit in his own turn.*

Again it is said:

*Kings, subjects, householders, divines, and incarnations come and go;
Likewise each of one of us has to depart one day or the other.*

Great personalities appear on the world scene, and then vanish forever. None could stay for an indefinite period. Enlightened souls like Guru Nanak, Hazrat Mohammed, and Lord Krishna took up human garb and abandoned it. There is no exception to this rule. So we must know about the thing that disappears from the body. That is our own Self. Awakened souls have always stressed this point. Knowing that the fleshy mold is not everlasting, what should we do? Let us see what Guru Arjan says:

*We are so much engrossed with perishable things that we have forgotten even the Creator;
Whom should we love when all are to part with?*

Every one of us is attached to the ephemeral things of the world. God is immortal; we have ignored Him. The entire world is subject to death and decay. The physical body is a heap of dust. It is said: "Dust thou art and unto dust returnest."

One day we will be separated from the mortal frame. In such a predicament, what must we do? We are building houses on sandy foundations. We are sailing in paper boats (body). We have to understand this. He who has understood that life on the earth plane is short-lived and has to pack up one day would not tell lies, cheat anyone, slander, or think ill of others. But alas! — we never, for a moment, think about death. We do not see the world in its true colors. That is why we treat it as something real and eternal: "So long as we are trapped by worldly delusion and blind infatuation, this mirage cannot disappear."

Maya means delusion. Having been identified with the body, we forgot our real Self and also Overself. Body is the root cause of all delusions. When we see our fellow beings from the body level, attachment is natural. The moment the inner eye opens, self-awareness would dawn upon us. Then this tabernacle of flesh would appear to be a heap of dust. It is quite surprising that we see the changing panorama of life with our own eyes and yet do not believe. Like an oily surface where water does not stick, our hearts have become so much saturated with the glamour of the external world that no amount of *Jnana* or knowledge produces any effect. We read and never go deep into the meaning.

All great souls have given a clarion call. "O man, thou has to depart." Does it appeal to us? We have been completely dyed in the color of the world so much so that even the heart-rending appeals of enlightened souls prove futile. In such a condition, self-awakening is the only alternative. The Vedas state: "Awake, arise, and stop not till the goal reached." Guru Arjan in this context says: "Awake thou, O traveler of the way." All saints have virtually said the same thing. We are not concerned with the expressions but should concentrate on the essence of the subject. Hence the exhortation: "Attend ye the Satsang with loving devotion." By the term "Satsang,"

we understand any lecture or discourse on the scriptures — generally a tall talk. This is a misnomer. Awakened souls do not call such discourse or congregation a Satsang. They have defined it as:

*No congregation can be called a Satsang,
Unless it is presided over a Master-saint.*

Satsang denotes the company or discourse of a Truth-personified saint alone. There is no question of gurudom here. Huge gatherings without the presence of a man of realization or enlightenment cannot be called a Satsang. It is a question of self-awakening and self-analysis first. Then only one can pass it on to others. He who is identified with the body at the plane of mind and senses, although well-versed in the scriptures, has no inner experience or contact with Reality. Association with such a person is not Satsang. He has neither inner perception himself nor can impart it to others.

What is the greatness of an evolved soul? He transcends the body limitations at will and can make others do likewise. He gives inner vision to the spiritually blind, and one experiences some glimpses of divine Light within. Further, his ears are in tune with the divine Melody. We are dead to the Music of the Spheres. One who is competent to do this is called a Guru. The *Holy Quran* also states likewise: "Our eyes and ears have been sealed. Catch hold of a Master who may unseal them."

In the teachings of the Masters, physical senses are not of much avail. Nanak says:

*One sees without eyes, hears without ears, walks without feet, acts without hands, and talks without tongue, provided one learns to die while living.
O Nanak! it is then alone that one can know the cosmic Will and meet the Beloved.*

Again, he says:

*Different are the eyes, O Nanak,
That behold the Vision of God.*

When one is able to understand the Lord's Will, one would establish contact with Naam or the Power-of-God. Elementary steps at the body level are not enough. Real help would come from a spiritual adept. A learned man can give you knowledge. An engineer can teach engineering. A doctor can teach anatomy. Likewise, an enlightened soul can give you a firsthand contact with Truth. Lord Krishna has stated in the *Gita*: "If you are desirous of having *Jnana* or true knowledge (practical inner experience), you should go to an evolved soul." This is not the job of scholars. Maulana Rumi says:

If you intend going for a pilgrimage, take with you one who has already been on a pilgrimage no matter whether he is a Hindu, a Turk, or an Arab.

Denomination, caste, or creed is no bar to spirituality. Should you be anxious to become a doctor, you should go to an expert in a medical science. Similarly, for self-realization one should seek the guidance of an adept in the science of soul. He may belong to any social order. What does it matter? Saint Ravidas was a cobbler by profession. Kabir was a weaver. Namdev was a calico-printer. Saina was a barber. Those who have realized God can dye one in the color of Godhood. Life comes from life, and light from light. Everyone transmits his own color to others.

Maulana Rumi explains this phenomenon through an anecdote. One day he found in his bathroom some clay that was fragrant. Maulana asked the clay: "How is that you are so much perfumed?" Then he himself answers on behalf of the clay: "I am the same humble dust but had spent sometime in the proximity of fragrant flowers. It is this vicinity which has filled me with fragrance." Kabir says likewise. All great souls have expressed the same

thing, but in their own language. But we are only concerned with the spirit of what they have said. The company of a disciplined soul is just like going to the shop of a scent dealer. If he gives you a scent-bottle, it is well and good. If not, at least you would enjoy the sweet fragrance. A charged atmosphere has its effect. We should bestow our love and reverence on an awakened soul and not on the so-called mahatmas with whom the world abounds. A really enlightened soul is a rarity. The *Gurbani* says:

*There is none in millions;
There may be one in billions.*

India had many sages and seers in ancient times. But Janak, the royal sage, could find only Ashtavakar to get a practical inner experience of divine Light. If it was so in those days, how could the number (of awakened souls) run into thousands today? — The more the better. But without the active guidance of a living Master, one cannot proceed on the spiritual path. Always sit in the company of a realized soul. He would be able to trans-humanize the human in you. This task cannot be accomplished by those who believe in acting and posing. They cheat and exploit the innocent folk by issuing blank checks on spirituality. Who will honor them?

*One who has not enough for himself,
What can he spare for those who depend on him?*

Great teachers are always outspoken. If you have accepted a Master who himself is wanting in spiritual riches, how could he give others inner perception? It is, therefore, said: "By meeting the perfect Master, one sees the holy Light with his own eyes." You would then see Reality yourself and affirm it. After initiating Janak, Ashtavakar asked him if he got inner experience. The latter confirmed it in a humble and respectful way. The charm lies in the receiver of spiritual wealth acknowledging it in unequivocal terms.

False prophets always try to put off an aspirant with lame excuses because they are incompetent to demonstrate Reality within. They advise their followers in outer pursuits like developing blind faith, idol worship, drinking holy water etc. Some of them tell their disciples that they have not matured enough for the spiritual gift, and that inner development takes place automatically in due course of time. But what is the guarantee that there would be inner awakening? It is, therefore, imperative that we should only rely on a firsthand inner experience of the Light of Life. With the revelation of the Power of God within, the illusion of mind disappears.

“By infusing his own life impulse, a perfect Master puts us on the spiritual path and then unites us with the Power of God.” It is a question of giving the Bread of Life and Water of Life before we are engaged in *Bhakti*. It has been defined as:

A Gurumukh Bhakti is one in which the sound-current is made manifest spontaneously;

Then alone, one communes with the Word.

Further, it is said:

Some Godly person may link us with God.

These are the utterings of great souls. They are true today as in the bygone days. A spiritual luminary capable of giving inner contact with the saving lifelines is called a Sadhu, Sant, or Mahatma. The need for such Master-souls was felt in the past and will always be felt in the future. They are the saviors of humanity. One dyed in the color of Naam remains immune from the glamour of the outside world. From where do the worldly lusts attack us? — From the body level and the plane of senses. Only by transcending body-consciousness, one contacts the Light of Life. Naam is not subject to external vision. It cannot be experienced at the level of the senses. It is the knowledge of the beyond. "The elixir of the divine Word

is too sweet. If you partake of it, the mundane pleasures would become insipid and valueless."

In the association of an awakened soul, you would experience the spiritual ecstasy of Naam and lose all charm for sensual pleasures. This is the difference between an ordinary man and a man of realization. Both of them discharge their mundane obligations in more or less the same way. While one is completely engrossed in the world, the other (Godman) leads a detached life. He who remains *neh-karma*, or actionless in action in all his doings, is a liberated soul. Actions, good or bad, keep us in bondage. Even the incarnations are not free from the cycle of transmigration. Only by becoming a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan, one is released from the karmic web. What is the criterion of such a great soul? In this context Nanak says:

*One attuned with His Will, O Nanak,
is wholly freed from ego.*

The knowledge of the Divine Will means the destruction of ego. He sees the invisible hand of God working around him. A perfected being never claims any credit for himself. He would always say: "It is the grace of my revered Master." This is because he witnesses within and around him the play of the Supreme Power.

*All thy riches and wealth avail thee naught;
You will be separated from them in a fraction of a
second.*

All the earthly possessions become of no consequence the moment the soul leaves the body. Money mania has become the be-all and end-all of our life. People would like to know your bank balance or about your properties and possessions. We generally care least for the higher values of life. At the time of my retirement, I was at Lahore (now in West Pakistan). Some of my colleagues asked me how much I had saved during my working life.

I told them that I had only some provident fund amount to my credit. At this some of them remarked that I was a fool not to have saved anything for the rainy day. One who shared his income with others would not be able to create a bank balance, I told them. Then they inquired whether I had built a house. When I replied in the negative, I was told that I had not acted wisely. From their point of view, they were correct. Some friends had purchased lands and were busy constructing their houses. Some of them had their pensions commuted for the purpose. In the meantime, the partition of India took place. All their properties and possessions were left in Pakistan. When they met me again, they admitted that it was I who had acted with foresight and wisdom.

Likewise, we have to vacate this mortal frame one day. Then what is the significance of our riches and possessions? When one is about to breathe his last, one's relations immediately take charge of the keys and other things. Many a time there are quarrels over the division of property. I had seen such incidents. Once a lady obstructed the funeral of her husband on the plea that her case should be decided first. What a deplorable condition of the world!

Money is the root cause of most domestic quarrels. Husbands and wives cannot live in harmony. Once I saw a husband rebuking his ailing wife. He wanted her to go to her parents until she recovered. What a pity! People are mostly after money and have lost all regard for the higher values of life. There are persons who lead a life of austerity, but their number is small. I definitely have regard for them. But the majority behaves otherwise. We have reached the climax of deterioration. There is hardly any regard for the old, sick, and destitute. They are given the worst possible treatment with all sorts of humiliations and indignations. This is the true picture of the world.

One who remembers God and cultivates chastity while still young would ever remain happy. This work cannot

be accomplished in old age. Who knows what will be our physical condition then. By excessive indulgence, one loses one's balance of mind, and life is shortened; while those who observe continence lead a cheerful and long life. But, on the whole, moral and ethical values are on the decline. In this world nothing is our own. Everything belongs to the Almighty. What is there to accompany us? Tulsi Sahib goes to the extent of saying that you may accumulate all the wealth of the world and own the entire land from the place of sunrise to sunset as your property. Though impossible, let us assume for a moment that it can be done. What is the outcome?

*When death is thy ultimate destination,
What is the value of earthly possessions?*

All material things would be left behind on doomsday, but the evil of ill-gotten gains would accompany you. Therefore, earn your livelihood by the sweat of your brow and spend in a right way. This would help you on the Godward path. Help the poor, hungry, thirsty, and downtrodden to mitigate their sufferings. This is the correct way to utilize one's earnings. Tulsi Sahib says that if water enters a boat, you should leave it immediately or else you would lose your life. Similarly, if there is excess of wealth, it should be utilized for a noble cause.

Keeping this in view, the tenth Sikh Guru (Guru Gobind Singh) started the practice of *Vand Shakna* or sharing things with others. If we cultivate this virtue, our homes would become a heaven. Most of the domestic strife is because those who have are not ready to share with have-nots. If we only learn how to feed the hungry and help the needy, there would be peace and harmony everywhere.

Keep the company of awakened souls. Serve them as best as you can. Provide whatever facilities you can to those who want to visit such great souls for higher knowledge.

A heart longing for gold can never be clean. We should engage ourselves in the pursuits that may benefit our soul in the long run. We can solve the enigma of life only in the association of enlightened persons.

By transcending the tabernacle of flesh, we can establish contact with Naam or God-in-action Power, and know the Divine Will. By experiencing higher bliss within, we would be rid of all worldly attachments and thus attain life eternal. Thus, Swami Ji exhorts us that wealth and possessions would not be of any avail for a higher purpose. Guru Arjan also says likewise:

*By a great good fortune thou has got a human birth;
This is the only opportunity for thee to contact the Lord;
All else in the world will avail thee naught;
Seek ye the company of the saints and learn to commune
with the Word.*

Human birth is a rare privilege. It is our turn to meet God. Man is a rational being and can discriminate right from wrong. By self-analysis and inversion, he can seek reunion with the Lord. This task cannot be accomplished by the lower species in the creation. All outer pursuits in which we are presently engaged would not help us in achieving the goal. A *Sadh*, disciplined soul, is *Trigunatit* (beyond the three Gunas: *Satav*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* in which all human beings work according to their natural instincts). It is said:

*The greatness of a Sadh lies beyond the three Gunas.
There is no distinction between a Sadh and God.
God verily appears in the form of a Sadh.*

You may call him a polarized God. He has liberated his Self or Spirit from the shackles of mind and body, and can make others likewise. We cannot tread the path of Reality without the active guidance of such a one. He never claims any perfection for himself. He always talks in the third person and exhorts the spiritual aspirants to

unite with the God-power within. In all humility he says that he is the servant of all.

Speaking of his own descent on the earth plane, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, says: "Having merged in the Lord, I did not like to come down again into this mundane world, but was made to do so for the regeneration of mankind." What does it mean? Saviors are God-sent. Strictly speaking, God does not have any relationship in the earthly sense. We will have to say that He Himself manifests in the garb of a man. In other words, the God-power works on a chosen human-pole for the spiritual welfare of humanity. He would invariably suggest the association of an awakened soul and communion with the holy Word. These two would help us in attaining the goal; hence the exhortation:

*Those who have communed with the Word,
Their toils shall end,
And their faces shall flame with glory;
Not only shall they have salvation,
O Nanak! but many more shall find freedom with them.*

Again:
Naam alone has been the saving life-line in all ages.

Naam has been the basis of spiritual emancipation of *jivas* ever since the world began. What is Naam? It is not just a syllable, but the great Power which it signifies. It has two aspects: One is the "name" and the other the "named." But Truth or Reality is one. An Indian saint, therefore, says:

*Each one in his own way talks to us of his own Beloved;
O Rajab! the target is one but the archers are countless.*

Further, it is said:
*There are myriads of lovers, but the Beloved is one;
Religious orders or sects may be different, but all have
the same purpose to fulfill.*

One may belong to any social order. One chief object is God-realization. Drunkards, irrespective of their religious allegiance, caste, or creed, sit together in a tavern and enjoy themselves. Similarly, spiritual aspirants of different religions, too, should go to the tavern of Divine Bliss. When a drunkard can revel in the company of drunkards, then why cannot lovers of God of various denominational hallmarks sit together and embrace each other? If they are truly devoted, they must.

The highest and the holiest in all religions in the past had great love and fraternal feeling among themselves. Guru Arjan, while compiling the sacred scripture of the Sikhs, the Granth Sahib, collected therein the sayings or writings of all the enlightened souls he could lay his hand upon, irrespective of their religious labels. It is verily a banquet hall of spirituality. This shows the catholicity of mind of the great author as Guru Arjan was.

In contrast, what do we find today? — small, water-tight compartments; each trying to run down the other. The narration of the sayings of a great soul of one religion are forbidden in others — why so? When the same Reality has been glorified there, it must be read without any hesitation. It would inspire you with the love of God. Simultaneously, it would bring enhanced glory to your Master.

Our aim is to get to Reality. We are all afflicted with the same ailment. Our soul is under the influence of mind that is influenced by the senses. One who has risen above these two can liberate your spirit from the flesh and unite with the Naam-power within. He (Godman) is the connecting link between the individual soul and the Oversoul. However, from the point of *Apravidya*, you may follow the rites and rituals as enjoined by your social religion. This is just a preparation of the ground or means towards an end. It would help you in stilling the

mind to some extent. But the end can only be achieved by contacting the Naam-power within.

*Dark and dreadful night lies ahead;
Do something worthwhile during the day.*

Night follows day. Human life is the only opportunity at our disposal for higher awakening. We are totally ignorant about the life after death. Therefore, make hay while the sun shines. Know thyself and Overself. One who is enlightened while alive would be so after death. A learned man would remain learned after he shakes off his mortal frame. An illiterate person would not become a pundit after death. Salvation during one's lifetime has been the supreme ideal of all saints. Promise of salvation after death is of no value. It is said:

*O Lord, if thou art to give us salvation after death,
What is value thereof? O, none.*

It is a matter of common-sense. But if someone can demonstrate Reality within, right here and now, he is great beyond any shadow of doubt. That credit goes to the God-power working on that human-pole. Evolved souls always glorify the Power-of-God and call themselves as His slaves. "The humble Nanak speaks as inspired by the Lord." They do not have even the slightest tint of egoism in them. Light would only come from an illuminated pole. He who has not solved the mystery of life for himself would not be able to impart a practical touch with the saving life-lines within, irrespective of his learnings and academic qualifications. He can only give you theoretical knowledge. Knowledge does adorn a spiritual person. But spirituality is a practical subject of inner awakening. It has nothing to do with book learning. It is quite possible that a great scholar may be blank from the inner experience of soul.

Knowledge springs when your attention gets attuned to the brain-center. When the same attention or conscious

power communes with the All-pervading Spirit (*Naam* or *Shabd*) within, it is called spirituality. What a great difference between the two. One draws us away from Truth, while the other helps us in regaining the lost paradise. The *Upanishads* state that self-knowledge dawns only when the senses are subdued, the mind is stilled, and the intellect, too, is equipoised.

At present, we are trapped by the intellectual wranglings. Intellect is required to comprehend something. Having done that; try to get to Reality. That alone would give you ecstasy and soothing effect. Otherwise, you would draw inferences and revel at the level of the intellect. You must rise above this. Great souls, therefore, emphasize: "For once we lose this opportunity and let it slip away, we are lost in the cycle of transmigration." Again: "Once we slip from the top rung of the ladder of life, the life goes in vain."

Human life is given to us for a specific purpose — self-realization and God-realization. If we do not do this here and now, we will have to repent in the long run. Weeping we come, and weeping we go. But if we are able to solve the riddle of life while in the flesh, we would depart happily.

*Serve the Master and please him;
Adopt your life on these lines.*

What should be the pattern of one's life? Swami Ji says that we should sit at the feet of an awakened person and serve him with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength. We should live up to his satisfaction. Thus we would get to the crest-jewel of life. Guru is the name of a realized soul. Cast yourself in his mold. Keep his commandments:

*Unless the Master is perfectly convinced,
One cannot witness the glory of the Lord within.*

Take the life-sketch of any great soul. Implicit obedience to the Master has been an essential attribute of his character. In *Gurbhakti* (loving devotion to the Master) lies the secret of greatness of all sages and seers: "Such is the Will of the Lord: He cannot be known except through a living Satguru."

Without the enlivening touch from a Truth-personified saint, the soul cannot awaken from its slumber and contact the God-power within. There is no exception to the rule. Since supreme souls and incarnations in the past had to observe this decorum, we are in no way greater to be an exception. If we want to learn something worldly, we need the guidance of an adept in that art or science. Then we must act according to his instructions; he would devote maximum attention on us. Similarly, we cannot tread the path of divinity which lies beyond the range of senses without guidance and active assistance of a spiritual preceptor. The resurrection of soul cannot come without such a guide.

A teacher is pleased most with the disciple who follows his instructions and abides by his words. All great souls are worthy of respect and adoration. Swami Daya Nand, in his early life, went to Swami Virja Nanad to learn Sanskrit. The latter was well versed in the Vedas. Daya Nand had some books with him. I did not have the opportunity to see him in person. I am only telling you what is recorded in books. Swami Virja Nanad ordered Daya Nand to throw these books in the river Yamuna. Do you know what the latter did? He carried out the instructions of his teacher without any hesitation or argument. Then it is stated that at times Swami Virja Nanad used to cane his disciple for his acts of omission or commission. This is not a surprise in the Master-disciple relationship. Whosoever has risen to the pinnacle of spiritual eminence had to surrender himself at the feet of the Master. You may address him as Guru or teacher. One cannot win the favor of such a one even by spending

millions. The Master may be pleased over an ordinary thing.

*If it pleaseth Him, the Lord may manifest on His own;
He cannot be lured by wealth, clamor, and power.*

Who knows His Will and pleasure? Kabir went to the residence of Dharam Das, who was a man of millions and a great devout. He was taking meals at that time. Kabir called for Dharam Das. His wife told him to wait. After sometime, Kabir again gave a call. Dharam Das's wife lashed at the saint by calling him a sinner. But Kabir retorted: "I am not a sinner. It is you, because in your oven live ants are being burnt." He said so and went off. When they saw their oven, ants were really being burnt in the fuel. Dharam Das felt sorry for the act of his wife and told her: "To our good fortune, a perfect soul had come at our door. But you have committed a great sin by insulting the Divine." But she took it very lightly and said to her husband: "A wealthy man like you can attract anybody just like flies gather round a sweet thing."

After this Dharam Das performed a number of Yajnas at all places of pilgrimages in search of the saint who had visited them. Large numbers of sages and seers came from far and wide, except Kabir, to participate in the Yajna. Thus he spent all his wealth on the charitable deeds but could not attract the saint in whom he saw the Light of God. At last he thought of committing suicide by jumping into the river. He did not consider his life worth living. He neither had any money left, nor could achieve the desired aim. He no longer enjoyed the old prestige, and felt degraded in the eyes of others. It is customary for the people to look down upon the penniless. When he was about to finish his life, Kabir appeared and caught him by the arm. Dharam Das was overjoyed and inquired the reason for so much delay. Kabir replied: "I did not come earlier because I had no lust for your wealth." You cannot purchase an awakened person by money. He can only be won over by selfless service and loving devotion.

Lead a chaste and ethical life, cultivate simplicity, be regular in your meditation, and withdraw your spirit from the body as directed by the preceptor. Make him the supreme ideal of your life. All these things would satisfy him most.

A teacher develops a great liking for a brilliant student, and devotes maximum time and energy on him. During my school career, I was very good at studies. All the teachers, including the headmaster, were much pleased with me. They used to call me for extra coaching at their homes. I always served them as best as I could.

I remember an incident which took place in later years while I was at Lahore. Once I fell seriously ill. One of my teachers came to know about it. He straight away came to my residence to see me. Although bedridden, I paid him obeisance by touching his feet. He placed my head on his lap and said that he was proud of me. "You have taken a step in the right direction by choosing the path of Reality. I feel I have been rewarded for my labors," he observed. What I mean to say is that it is highly imperative for a disciple to be dutiful. Without receptivity, one would not be able to gain the desired end; hence the exhortation.

*We must remember God in the closet of our heart;
God by whose grace we are happily living in the temple
of our body.*

If you constantly think of someone, his life-impulse would automatically be infused into you. Then you shall have everything that you ask for. *Gurbhakti* alone is the secret of success on the path of Truth. This is the eternal law. Bhai Nand Lal says: "A glance of his grace is sufficient to emancipate us."

One can enjoy the divine bliss in the holy presence of the Master.

O ye, take it for certain without the least shadow of doubt, None is thy true friend save the Master.

Swami Ji says that Guru alone is your real benefactor and everlasting companion. Who else can be? Worldly people, howsoever sympathetic and sincere, may help us, at the most, to the funeral pyre. At the time of death, when all earthly relationship is terminated, Guru manifests in his radiant form to take charge of the departing soul. "The Master receives on death those who have done their best to follow him." You can well imagine how happy one would be to contact the Master within. My Master, Hazur Sawan Singh Ji, used to say that a chosen vessel of the Guru feels more exhilarating in one's last moments than at the time of marriage.

An ordinary man and a devout both meet the same end. But the former dies a painful and agonizing death, while the latter quits his body in perfect peace and ecstasy, as if sleeping in his beloved's lap. If someone intends to verify the truth of this, let him go and sit by the side of a departing initiate having inner access. He would actually witness his Master's shining form and declare to that effect. He sees the divine Light and hears the intrinsic music of the holy Word. All holy men declare that those who are without the protecting hand of the perfect Master would suffer the misery and pangs of death. But he who learns to tap inside, according to Master's instructions, and has tasted the elixir of Naam is overjoyed at the time of death. So there is a great difference between one kind of death and the other. Kabir, in this context, says:

*Death, from which the whole world shrinks, is welcome unto me;
I rejoice it as a harbinger of perfect peace and joy.*

Learned and illiterate, rich and poor, governor and governed, all are struck with terror as soon as they hear the name of death. But for enlightened persons, it is a matter of overwhelming joy. With the breaking of the

silver chord, one merges oneself in the Lord once and for all. There is a world of difference between a man of intuition and man in the street. One who revels at the plane of senses and has not contacted a living Master does not see anything beyond the mire of sense-pleasures. He considers the Epicurean way of life — eat, drink, and be merry — as the summum bonum of life. But mind that none can escape the iron hand of death. Ignorance of law is no excuse. Therefore, act with foresight. Death is not a bugbear, nor a monster. It is just a change from physical to the astral plane. It is also a necessary end. If one can practice death in life with the help of a Guru, he has nothing to fear.

*The beloved of the Master comes and goes fearlessly.
O ye, seeker after Truth, do not get entangled in the
mighty maze of the world.
Be ye engaged in meditation, day in and day out.*

On crossing the sensual level, we contact the holy Word. This is the essence of *Gurumat* (philosophy of the Masters). Where the world philosophies end, there the religion starts. The Master always exhorts us to withdraw our scattered attention from outside. During the 24 hours, we should do something of abiding interest to our soul. He does not forbid us from discharging our essential obligations like preservation and maintenance of the body, looking after children, and earning livelihood. It is necessary to look after the body, but for what purpose?

*O Nanak, attend ye to the affairs of thy body so that ye
may make God-power manifest in thee, and ye be
engaged in singing the praises of the Lord.*

Body is the temple of God. Protect it from heat and cold. Keep it neat and tidy. When we can maintain so much cleanliness in outside temples, why ignore this (body) where the Lord actually dwells? External temples are made on the model of the human body. We may also square up our accounts with those around us. God-power

is present in all of us. All are embodied souls; as such, we should love everyone. You are endowed with intellect; as such, you should develop intellectually.

Then you are a living soul. Therefore, you should develop spiritually. In a nutshell, man must make an all-around progress. What is the quintessence of all knowledge? That one should know the real worth of one's soul or Self. A Muslim divine in this context pronounces:

Thou knowest the value of everything else, but what a pity! thou knowest not thine own value and worth.

We have taken long strides in all walks of life, but woefully lack self-knowledge in the light and life of which we actually live, move, and have our being. Christ also spoke of the same thing: "What does it profit a man to gain the possession of the whole world and to lose one's own soul?" A conference of leading scientists was held in Europe. The president of the conference in his inaugural speech said: "We have conquered the forces of nature."

But the fact remains that, in the absence of self-knowledge, scientific inventions are becoming a source of constant misery and destruction for the entire universe. Had we made these inventions after self-realization, the same would have brought peace and happiness unto all. As such, self-knowledge is the first step. It precedes God-knowledge. All great souls have stressed this point. The *Upanishads* state: "Know thyself." Nanak says: "Without self-analysis and inversion, delusion of the world does not disappear." Swami Ji also says so. After attaining self-awareness, one sees everything in its true perspective. Simultaneously, there is realization of God, for soul alone can experience the Oversoul.

Knower of the Brahm remains unattached in all his undertakings; he can direct his attention at will.

Enlightened souls always advise us to remain detached and perform all our actions in a spirit of selflessness. In his worldly duties, a man of intuition works many times more than an ordinary person. But the difference is that the former remains unattached, while the latter desires fruit, which keeps him in bondage. Control your mind so that you can channelize your spirit in the desired direction. Otherwise, it (mind) would drag your attention in the evanescent charms of the world.

*Religiously abide by the words of the Sadh-Guru,
And live a detached life on earth.*

A real Sadhu is the mouthpiece of God. Keep his commandments in letter and spirit. While living in the world, be out of it. Remember death at all times. Such a person remains actionless in action. This world is not a permanent dwelling place for us. These nations are not our nations and countries not our countries. They are only connected with our body which itself is mortal.

*O mind! be not totally unaware,
That thou has to quit the world eventually.*

If we treat the question of death seriously, our selves would be transformed. All objects of luxury would cease to have their hold upon us. Of course, their appropriate use is not forbidden. You would be saved from the poison of animal passions and other vices. Make your routine of life strictly according to the scriptural injunctions as prescribed by Rishis, Munis, and Mahatmas. You would be happy and prosperous both here and in the hereafter. Communion with Naam alone would burn away all attachments. Consequently, one would achieve success in all his undertakings through His grace. You will have to sacrifice the world for the sake of the Word. Through controlled attention, in the company of spiritually great, you can develop all aspects of your life — physical, mental, and spiritual.

Bulleh Shah, a seeker after Truth, went to Shah Inayat, a Muslim divine, and questioned him as to how one could find God. The latter replied:

*What is there in the quest of God?
Transplant the mind and see it all.*

We have simply to change the direction of our attention from one side to the other — from the world to God. Stay wherever you may be. Husbands and wives should love each other as Christ loved the Church. Both should strive to realize God. Married life is no bar to spirituality. We must lead a life with continence in thought, word, and deed, and endeavor to seek eternal happiness with the eternal Lord. That can be attained when our soul merges with the Oversoul. Thus, we would derive full benefit of our earthly sojourn and achieve the goal.

Theocentric saints never advise us to leave our hearths and homes and go into the wilderness. Contrarily, they want that we should lead an ideal family life. In this context Nanak says: "Follow strictly the injunctions of a perfect Master to put you on the right Path. You shall then gain salvation while living the life of a householder in the midst of your family and friends."

*Leave off all fraud and cunningness.
Why adopteth thou this way of life?*

See how forceful are Swami Ji's words in his appeal to the erring humanity. What is the attitude of a common man? He would employ cunning ways to conceal and justify his wrong actions. These two evils (fraud and hypocrisy) are not acceptable to him. One should keep away from them. False prophets deceive the people through tall talks and empty promises. What would be their fate? The great teacher, therefore, guards us against all such traps. A brother should be sincere to his brother and a friend to his friend. We may throw dust into

peoples' eyes, but does not God watch all our actions? A cunning fellow remains far removed from Reality. His inner vision is covered by a thick veil of darkness. It is only by renouncing these evils that one can glimpse the Truth.

Hazur Sawan Singh Ji used to narrate the story of a Mahatma, who was a really awakened soul and used to get up early for meditation. He had a mare that he used to chain in an open stable. One night a thief entered the stable with the intention of taking away the mare. When he untied her from the front, he found her tied from the rear. Again, when he untied the animal from the rear, she was found tied from the front and vice versa. Throughout the night he was busy but was not successful in his evil design. As usual, the Mahatma got up at about 4 a.m. and saw a man standing by the side of the mare. "Who are you?" asked the Divine. "I am a thief," was the straight answer. "What are you doing here?" was the next question. The thief replied: "I want to steal your mare, but find a curious phenomenon. When I loosen her from one side, I find her tied from the other. This is quite perplexing." The Mahatma was pleased at his frankness and open confession. He told the thief that he can have the mare in the morning.

The next day, some villagers came to the saint as they had lost their priest. They requested him to suggest a suitable person to act a priest who could inspire people God-wards. Finding that none among the village folk was fit for the sacred mission, the Divine selected the thief for the purpose. He asked him to ride the mare and accompany those people as priest. Enlightened persons have always a great regard for the clear-minded persons. If you commit a sin, go and confess before him. There is a remedy for it. But if you conceal things from him, you will have to suffer the consequences. They alone can tread the path of spirituality who have a crystal-clear heart and a candid vision. They appeal to the saints most and are honored at His Court. Hafiz, in this context says:

"Reality is meant for those who are dyed in one and the same color externally as well as internally."

Self-realization and God-realization cannot come through cunningness and hypocrisy. Such people have to wait until they sweep clean the closet of their heart. Who is not a sinner? All those who are playing at the pale of senses are, in the terminology of saints, sinners. Even to rise above body-consciousness, one requires a clean heart.

Hazur used to say: "We hesitate to commit an impious act before a child of five. How dare we ever do so if we realize that God-power within is all-seeing. One should always feel Him omnipresent. This is what is required for the attainment of a goal.

*Repeat the charged words and worship the perfect Master;
By doing this you would rise into cosmic awareness.*

Swami Ji advises us to engage in *Simran* and resign at the will of the Master. What will happen? You would transcend into the *Gagan* behind the eyebrows, which is the seat of the soul. Have you ever seen a dying person? The death process begins when the lower *Chakras* (ganglions) give way because of withdrawal of the soul-currents therefrom. Beginning from below, this process continues until the throat center is involved. It is then that the eyeballs turn upwards. This happens when the spirit-currents get collected at the eye-focus. If you call a blind man, he would press his forehead as he feels his presence there. Practice death in life. Saint Paul says: "Those who are initiated into the mysteries of the beyond, their souls have the same experiences as they have at the time of death."

There are many ways of withdrawing and collecting the sensory-currents at the eye-focus. One involves the control of vital airs and spirit-currents through *Kumbak*

(a yogic exercise). Then one contacts the Divine Harmony. Finding that the present day people are not physically fit to undertake arduous yogic practices, and in view of the short life span, saints have eliminated the lengthy process of *pranas* (the vital airs). They now stress upon the concentration of attention and leave the vital airs untouched on the basis that blood circulation is going on, food is digesting, breathing is going on, and nails and hair are growing. All this is going on automatically without our knowledge. By self-analysis and inversion, one should withdraw one's soul to the eye-focus and see the Light of God.

*Unless one transcends the tabernacle of flesh,
One cannot have the glimpses of the invisible Lord.*

So long as we are functioning at the body-level, we are away from Reality. Suppose a house has 100 stairs to reach its roof. Can one see the roof by climbing twenty, thirty, or fifty stairs? Not the least. Until you ascend to the highest step of the stairs, you cannot get to the roof. Similarly, it is only by rising above the body limitations that one can see the divine Light and hear the inner music. This can be accomplished through *Simran* or constant remembrance of God. Nanak says:

*Let one tongue grow into a hundred thousand, maybe
even twenty times more,
And each of them endlessly chant His holy name;
This way lie the steps that lead God-wards, by ascending
which, one becomes one with Him.*

Through *Simran* the sensory-currents are collected at the center of our being without any attention on the physical body. You will then be awakened into higher consciousness. Practice this today, right here and now. Do not put off till tomorrow what you can do today. "Except ye be born anew, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of God." All saints and sages have said the same thing.

Maulana Rumi says: "Die, O friend, before you are dead, if you want everlasting life."

Learn to die so that you may begin to live. Make use of the golden opportunity at your disposal. This task can only be accomplished in human life. All outer pursuits are only a means to an end — the end being God-realization. The guidance of a spiritual mentor is a must for the attainment of the crest-jewel of life. If you undertake regular spiritual practices, you can leave the body at will, even a hundred times a day.

*Without solving the riddle of life, one will have to face the judgment of Kaal after death;
And then you would be consumed in the fire of hell.*

Without self-realization, our future lies in the hands of the Negative Power. Then we will have to shed tears of repentance and suffer miseries. True renunciation comes through communion with the holy Word within. After partaking the elixir of Naam, you would be liberated from the cycle of transmigration. Procrastination is the thief of time. In this, we have wasted most of our life. Even those who are initiated into the mysteries of the beyond are not free from this malady. Time and tide wait for no man.

Hazur used to narrate the story of a Bengali clerk who worked in his office. He was regular in his spiritual practices. He would never take his food unless he had his quota of meditation. What is the purpose of such anecdotes? It is to tell us that we should emulate them. It is good to make it a principle not to give food to the body until the soul gets the Bread of Life and Water of Life. But, alas! we only hear such things and never try to understand their true import.

When Jesus Christ was about to depart from the physical plane, some of his followers came and requested for a sage counsel. He said: "Leave aside all other things and

complete the task which I have allotted you." This is a practical subject that is most important and mostly ignored. We simply do not pay any heed to it. We are either ignorant or foolish. Human birth is a rare privilege. If we do not awaken even now, then when will there be another opportunity for us? Only the Self can realize the Overself. No pundit, mullah, or priest can do this for us. It is not simply a question of offering prayers for others and giving blessings for a pecuniary gain.

Unless we experience a physical death, we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is an opportunity for thee to awaken without any loss of time.

Who knows what would happen the next moment?

Swami Ji says that if you want to adopt the path of Reality, do not waste even a single moment of your precious human life. Make full use of it. Do not wait for tomorrow, nay not even for today. It is a subject that is most important and indispensable. What a strong appeal! We think that chanting of Ram Ram (holy names symbolic of the All-pervading spirit) for half an hour is enough to serve the purpose; but this is a misconception. We will have to transform our lives. It is not merely a question of white-washing which removes only external blots. A sinful mind cannot be cleansed by external washings; inner purity is essential.

Work while you work, and meditate at the time of meditation. Never keep the mind vacant. Always remember the Master and keep his ideal before you. It would give you inspiration. Alternatively, repeat the charged words (*Simran*) given by the Guru or listen to the divine Music within. In a nutshell, we should keep the mind engaged in one of the three pursuits whenever idle. We can be free from the glamour of the outside world only by reforming the mind. This is the way-out.

Such is the Will of the Lord says Godman,

That we should follow the Master.

The God-power, working on a chosen human-pole, stresses that we should abide by the injunctions of the Master through and through. What do the awakened souls enjoin upon the sincere seekers after Truth? — Simran and worship of the Master; that would help our soul to rise into cosmic awareness. Then we would lose all fright of death. The radiant form of the Master would escort us from plane to plane until we merge with the Absolute. This was the psalm of Swami Ji Maharaj. His teachings are meant for all those who are desirous of, and are genuinely concerned with, the attainment of Godhood.

What is the *sine qua non* on the path of Divinity? — The company of awakened souls and implicit obedience to their commands. Then comes the ethical life and receptivity towards Satguru. That would infuse his divine power into us. The Master transcends the body at will and traverses into the higher planes. Your soul, too, will begin to leave the body of itself. He is Word-made-flesh and would manifest the same within you. He, being the abode of all virtues, would transform you into his likeness. As you think, so you become.

Jesus has beautifully described the need of developing love of the Master so as to receive his grace in abundance: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abides in the vine. No more can ye, except ye abide in me." This is like a grafting process. Christ has said: "I am the vine; thou art the branches. So long thou will remain embedded in me, you will bear ample fruit. So you cannot do without me." Hafiz, a Muslim saint, spoke in the same terms:

*Since I am embedded in the Beloved,
I have lost all sense of fear;
One who has sunk deep into the
Water of Life can have no fear of death.*

He who is united with the Lord is not affected by the vicissitudes of life. He can fearlessly walk through the shadow of the valley of death. Once Swami Vivekananda came to his Master Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Pointing to a plate of honey, Ramakrishna told Vivekananda: "Suppose this is a pool of nectar. If you are a bee, how will you eat it?" The latter replied: "I shall start from one side so that I do not sink into it and get lost." But Ramakrishna said: "It is the sea of immortality. Plunge head-long into it." This is how we can realize Him.

Unless we experience the Light and Life of God within, we will have to proceed according to the directions of those who are a living embodiment of the creative life-principle. All awakened souls stressed upon this in the past and will do so in the future.