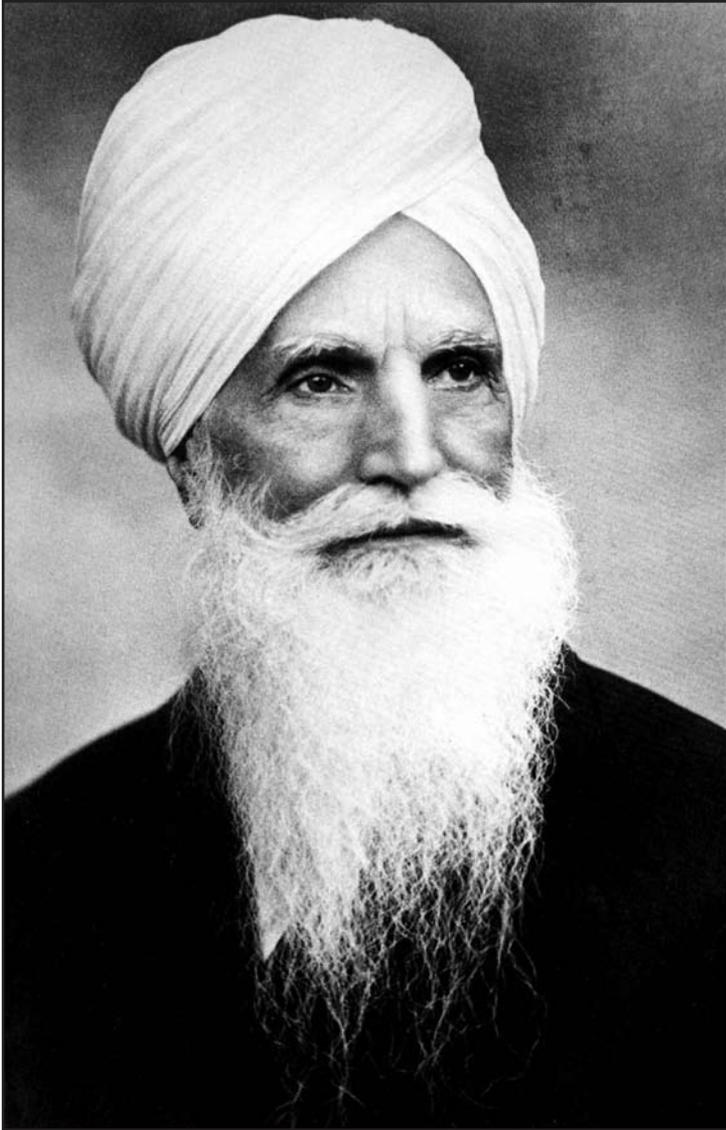


THE WHEEL OF LIFE
&
THE MYSTERY OF DEATH
by
KIRPAL SINGH



Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj
(1858-1948)

Dedicated
to the Almighty God
working through all Masters who have come
and Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj
at whose lotus feet
the writer imbibed sweet elixir of
Holy Naam — the Word

I have written books without any copyright—no rights reserved—because it is a Gift of God, given by God, as much as sunlight; other gifts of God are also free.

—from a talk by Kirpal Singh, with the author of a book after a talk to students of religion at Santa Clara University, San Jose, California on November 16, 1972.

The text of this book is the same as what was published during the lifetime of Master Kirpal Singh. Aside from punctuation and capitalization corrections, no changes have been made to the text. It is exactly the same as what was approved by Master Kirpal Singh.

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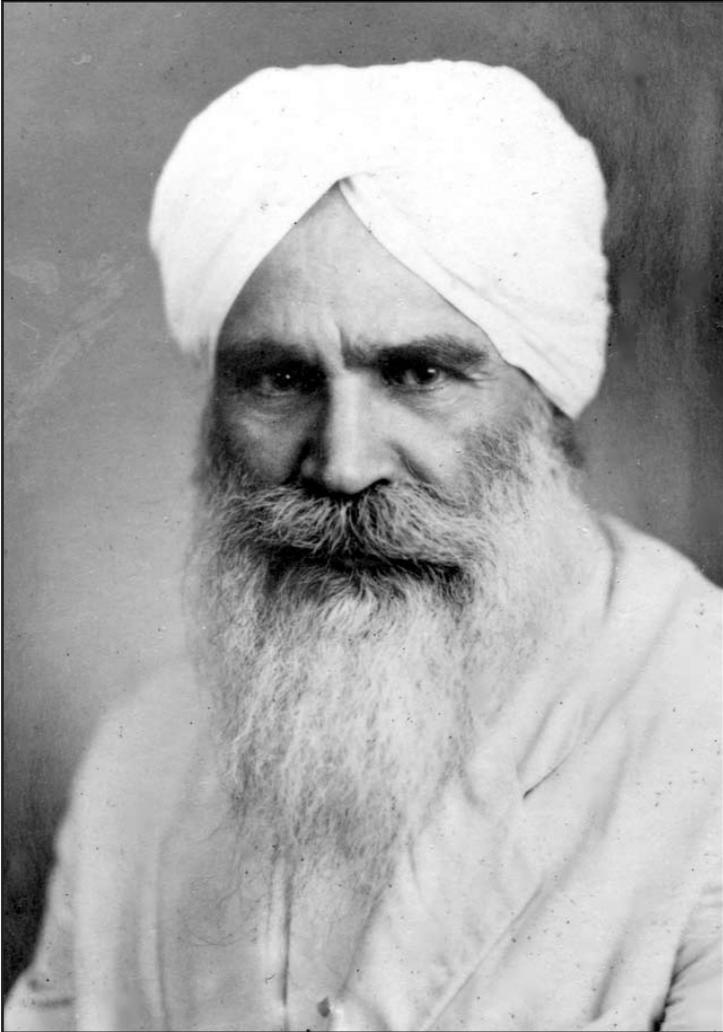
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THE WHEEL OF LIFE

The Law of Action and Reaction

by

KIRPAL SINGH



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

Introduction

Justice and Grace

*a talk given by Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
at Kirpal Ashram, Calais, Vermont, October 12, 1963*

THERE IS a law of justice, and there is a law of grace—both of them: they are both laws. It is just like, when you light a candle, the light is above and the darkness below. If you have a bulb, then the light is below and the darkness above. So both are the laws working in the world.

Sowing a seed—that's a point to be understood: when you sow a seed, it will bring forth similar seeds. There is action-reaction; then again a reaction; and the thing goes on like that. There's no end to it. After sowing the grain, a man cannot stop having the harvest—the fruit will come. So there are many actions. Actions are of one kind, but there are three aspects to them.

There are certain actions which we are doing now, daily—fresh actions; fresh seeds are sown, you might say. Some have already been sown and are bearing fruit. Others have been sown, but are not yet bearing forth fruit. So there are three kinds of karmas or actions.

Our present life depends on those reactions of the past karmas which are bearing fruit. They are called *pralabdha*

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karma. On that karma our length of life is based. According to that, some people get children, some die, some are ugly, some are old, some have a give-and-take. This is based on those karmas or seeds which have grown in the past and are now bearing forth fruit in action. This you cannot change. When a railroad line is laid down, the train will run over it. Before you lay down any railroad line, it is up to you to lay it down this way or that way. But once it is laid down, the train will have to run over it. So, as I told you, some karmas are bearing fruit; some we are doing fresh; and others have not yet borne any fruit—that will come up in due course.

So we are independent within certain limits to do some actions, and we are also bound to some extent. Action, reaction, action, reaction goes on—there's no end to it.

When a Master meets someone, he does not touch the present reactions which are coming up; for our life is based on that. He lets it alone, he lets it go on. But he does two things: for the future, he lays down a line of conduct, beyond which we should not transcend: don't think evil of anybody, even in mind, not to speak of in word or in deed. Be truthful, even in mind. Don't think up anything wrong—acting and posing, scheming, polishing, doing something underground and then aboveboard doing something else.

And further: be chaste, even in mind, word and deed. And have love for all: because all men are alike; they have the same privileges that each one of us has. So love all, because God is in the hearts of all: whether they are rich or poor, whether they are learned or unlearned, they all have the same privileges from God that you have.

Also, do not hate others—even in mind, word or deed. And further, when you are to love God and love all humanity, then you must give selfless service, not selfish service: for

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love knows service and sacrifice. Selfish service will again cause a reaction to come. If you serve selflessly, for the sake of God in others, then that won't bear forth fruit.

As for the present actions which are having reactions, these are also softened down, or polished down, you might say, by the Master. How? By giving some Bread of Life to your soul, so that your soul becomes strong.

Suppose a fight is going on: one man is very weak, and the others are strong. They come to blows and this and that thing. The one poor fellow who is very weak gets one blow and is stunned; he cries out, "I am killed!" And the others who are strong say, "We don't mind. We have had so many blows, but we don't care a fig for it." Why is this? Because they are strong.

Reactions do come up, but for those who have strong souls, who have the Bread of Life, they lose their pinching effect. For the future, Master lays down a line of conduct. For the present which is bearing fruit, he gives food to the soul so that it will become strong and there will not be any pinching effect. And for those which are not yet bearing forth fruit, he gives the disciple a contact with God within. By coming in contact with God within—when his inner eye is opened—he sees that He is the doer of all; that we are mere puppets in His hands. He becomes a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan. The result is that there is no I-hood left. And all those actions which were sown in the past, and are still awaiting fruit, are burned away. Who is there to bear their fruit?

So this is the way in which you can escape from the reactions of the past. If you say, "Oh, I can do this and that"—with a little I-hood in it—so long as you are the doer, you have to bear the reactions of it. When no "doer" is left, then God is the doer. You are absolved.

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There is a story given in the Koran, the scripture of the Mohammedans. There was once a saint who from his very childhood had left the world to reside in a jungle like this.* Here, fortunately, you find enough water, electricity and everything else; but there, there was nothing like that. For miles and miles around there was no water and nothing to eat.

So he used to pray to God, and God made some arrangement to take care of him. One small spring sprouted forth, and from that, very sweet water was flowing; and he used to drink water from that.

And they say there was one pomegranate tree, and each day one pomegranate was borne by the tree. He used to eat that pomegranate and drink that water and pass his days.

It is said there that after long, long years—seventy or eighty years—he died. He was presented to the court of God. God looked at him: “All right, we forgive you as a matter of grace.”

His eyes opened wide: “Well, all through life I’ve been killing myself doing this sort of penance and that sort of penance, and with all that, I’m now being forgiven as a matter of grace—as an act of grace only?” In his heart of hearts, he thought perhaps that a very great injustice was being done.

God read his mind and said, “Well, would you like us to make an account of your own actions?”

“Yes, You may, please.” (At heart he wanted it.)

“All right, look here. In that jungle there was no water for miles and miles altogether. One spring was created there,

* I.e., Kirpal Ashram.

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only for you—specially for you. And there was a pomegranate tree; each day it bore one big pomegranate: no tree can bear forth one fruit daily. So that is in compensation for all you've done. Now let us account for your other actions: you were walking along the way, and some insect died—trampled down under your feet. You must be trampled down as you trample down. Further, you did this, and that . . .”

The saint thought that perhaps matters had gotten worse and said, “All right, please excuse me; forgive me, if You would like to.”

Masters come, not to break the law, but to fulfill the law as a matter of redemption by grace; not as action-reaction. Guru Nanak says, “With actions, you can have reactions. As you sow, so shall you reap. But redemption comes only by grace.” All Masters say so.

Of course, it does not mean we should be vicious. We should restrict ourselves according to the commandments the Masters have given us.

Another thing you might want to know about it is: a father has a child who does not obey him. He commits some offense—something like that. What would the father do? Would he send him to the police? I don't think so. No father would permit his son to be sent to the police. He might slap him once or twice, but he wouldn't send him to the police.

So, similarly, when you come to a Master—the God in him—you are all his children. He doesn't send you on the regular course, to bear the fruit of what you have sown. That's a concession. Otherwise, how long would you continue like that? First there's the seed, and then there's the tree; then there are many seeds and again a tree. Is the egg before the hen or the hen before the egg?—where's the end? So it's a matter of redemption by grace. It is something like

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that—so that you can understand it. Unless you become a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan, there's no escape, no emancipation. "As you sow, so shall you reap": that goes on like that for aeons and aeons of time.

QUESTION: Do we have to work it all off on this physical plane—all the karma that we have—like the "B-type" of karma that we are working off in this life? What about the things that we are doing now or have done in this lifetime—what if we're not all finished up by the time we die?

THE MASTER: I think I have replied to you and you have not followed it. When you become a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan, when you become selfless, who will bear whatever actions you have done? Furthermore, that is why all Masters say: "Be desireless." Master tries to wind up all your reactions of the past, just as I told you, by giving you strength—by giving the Bread of Life to your soul—so that the reactions which are coming up will not be pinching to you. But he doesn't touch them. Otherwise, as soon as a man was initiated, he would die. For that reason they are not touched. For the future, he lays down a line of conduct. For the past, if you become selfless—a conscious co-worker—then nothing will come up. Guru Nanak says, "O Master, what is the use of coming to your feet if, when coming here, we still have to bear the fruit of all the actions which we have done in the past?" He gives an example: "What is the use of going to the feet of a lion if still jackals come and howl at you?"

So that is a great blessing. Now the question may arise: What is a Master? A Master is a man like you. Each one of us has the same privileges. The difference lies only in the fact that although God resides in every heart, in the heart of a Master He is now manifest.

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Master is a conscious co-worker; that is, He is doing it; it is not he who is speaking, but the God in him Who is speaking. He becomes a mouthpiece of God. We can also become the mouthpiece of God. Every Saint has his past, and every sinner a future.

How has he become the mouthpiece of God? The man who has reached that stage can also give you the same thing. On the very first day, when he initiates you, he withdraws and drags your soul above body-consciousness and gives you a contact with the Light and Sound Principle of God. That is the way back to the ultimate, absolute God. When you become quite conscious of all that, you see that, "It is He that is doing it, not I." So when all reactions are finished, it is just like having a few grains of seeds, which have been roasted in the oven: even if you sow them, they won't bear forth fruit; they will not grow. It is something like that.

*Everything in the Universe is the fruit of a
Just Law, the Law of Causality, the Law of Cause
and Effect, the Law of Karma.*

— Gautama Buddha

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Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

I

Be not deceived; God is not mocked:
for whatsoever a man soweth, that
shall he also reap.

Galatians VI:7

CONFRONTED with the complexities of earth-bound life, man struggles for a Way-out. Wherever he turns, he finds his upward flight thwarted by unseen barriers. Why all the seeming inequalities in the world? Why is man's way blocked to his primal Home—the Home of his Heavenly Father? Why cannot man redeem his unknown past? Where should he turn for the saving Light of the “Pure Science of Being?” These queries lead the inquiring mind to an investigation of the universal law of action and reaction.

The term “Karma” frequently appears in various Indian philosophical and religious writings. Indeed, it has been so often bandied about by priests and preachers that many have come to consider it as an imaginary stumbling block in the path of spiritual salvation. Being a term foreign to the West, usually it is passed on without sufficient clarification. All the Masters of the lower reaches or grades of ascent, speak of liberation through performing action without attachment to and desire for the fruit or result thereof. This, however, is but a partial truth and half-way knowledge.

The mind is accustomed to taste the fruit of its actions. How will it give up this habit? *Sadhans* (i.e. mental and physical exercises) may be employed as instruments to

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discipline the mind to a certain extent. But in the long run, the mind's habit of enjoying its experiences will assert itself. The mind can give up worldly pleasures only when it gets some kind of higher pleasure.

The Saints have experienced a far more exquisite pleasure—ecstatic bliss—by contact with *Naam* (the Word of God or the Divine Sound Principle). Once absorbed in this Sound Current or *Naam*, the mind is drawn away from the world. The mind has the habit of running after worldly objects and of jumping from one thing to another. What we have to do, then, is not to stop its flux which is but its natural characteristic, but only to turn its direction from downwards into the world outside to upwards into the world within. This means harnessing the wandering wits and channeling the mental energy into a proper course as would ensure results that are of a lasting and permanent nature. This comes through regular practice or absorption in *Naam*. This is the only method by which the mind may gradually be trained and ultimately rendered innocuous with sublimation of the mental currents; the soul comes to its own and can proceed unencumbered and unhampered on its way to its original source: the Oversoul or the All-soul. Thus the Saints Who have Themselves trodden this Path—the Path of *Surat Shabd Yoga* (absorption in the Holy Word or the Sacred Sound)—can also not only enable us to free ourselves from the karmic cycle of action and reaction but also provide us an access into the Kingdom of God which lies within.

Now the question arises: How can the karmas be wound up or rendered ineffective? In the labyrinth of the laws of Nature, in which we are inextricably involved, there is an outlet provided for those who are really in search of Self-knowledge and God-knowledge. The access to this outlet or the Way-out of the dense jungle of karmas spreading far back to immemorial past is made manifest by the saving

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grace of the True Master. Once He has taken us in His fold and contacted us with the eternal Holy Word or the Sound-Current, we are put out of the reach of *Yama* or the angel of death representing the negative aspect of the Supreme Power and the dispenser of justice in the universe, to each according to his actions.

Every act of a living being done knowingly or unknowingly, irrespective of whether it is yet in the stage of latency or thought form, a mental vibration, or is uttered by words of mouth or is actually done by a physical act, constitutes karma.

Lest the reader get confused by the term “Karma,” it is better to understand this word in its proper context. Originally, the word *Karma* stood for and represented sacrificial rites and rituals, and *yajnas* performed by individuals as prescribed by the sacred texts. Later on, however, it came to include all kinds of virtues, social and self-purifying, like truthfulness, purity, abstinence, continence, *ahimsa*, universal love, selfless service and all deeds of a charitable and philanthropic nature. In short, great stress was laid on the cultivation of *Atam-gunas* which tended to discipline the mind and divert the mental powers in the right direction, so as to serve the higher purpose of liberating *atman* or the spirit in bondage.

Karmas are generally classified as prohibited, permitted and prescribed. All karmas that are degrading and derogatory in nature (*Nashedh*) are classed as prohibited because indulgence in vices is sinful and the wages of sin are death. These are termed *Kukarmas* or *Vikarmas*. Next come karmas that are upgrading and help a person in attaining higher planes like *Swarag*, *Baikunth*, *Bahisht* or paradise. These are *Sukama* karmas or *Sukarmas*, that is karmas performed for fulfillment of one’s benevolent desires and aspirations and as such are permissible and therefore permitted. Finally, we have

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karmas the performance of which is considered obligatory as enjoined by the scriptures for persons belonging to different *varns* or social orders (*Brahmans* or the priestly class engaged in the study and teaching of scriptures, *Kshatriyas* or the warrior race consisting of fighting forces for purposes of defense, *Vaishyas* or the people engaged in commercial or agricultural pursuits, and *Sudras* or the people serving the foregoing three classes); and at different stages in one's life called *Ashrams* (*Brahmcharya*, *Grehastha*, *Vanprastha* and *Sanyas* corresponding roughly to the formative period of one's education, the stage of married family life as a householder, the ascetic stage of a recluse or a hermit engaged in deep meditation in the solitude of a forest and lastly the stage of a spiritual pilgrim giving to the people the fruit of his life-long experience, each portion being of 25 years computing the life-span to be of 100 years duration). These are called *Netya* karmas or karmas the performance of which is a "must" for each from day to day in his vocation and period of life.

As a code of moral conduct, the law of karma makes valuable contributions to man's material and moral well-being on earth and paves the way to a better life in the future. In all the four spheres of human life—secular, material or economic, religious, and spiritual, as denoted by the terms *Kama* (fulfillment of one's desires); *Artha* (economic and material well-being); *Dharma* (moral and religious basis upholding and supporting the Universe); and *Moksha* (salvation)—deeds or karmas play a vital part. It is, of course, the moral purity that figures as a motivating force for attaining success in one's endeavors. In order that the karmas bear the desired fruit, it is necessary that they be performed with single-minded and purposeful attention and loving devotion.

Besides these, there is yet another form of karma—to

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wit, *Nish-Kama Karma*, that is, karma performed without any attachment to, or desire for, the fruit thereof. This is superior to all the other forms of karmas which more or less are the source of bondage, yet this type helps a little to liberate one from karmic bondage but not from karmic effect. It may, however, be noted that karma *per se* has no binding effect whatsoever. It is only karma born of desire or *Kama* that leads to bondage. This is why Moses taught “Desire not” and Buddha and the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, time and again, laid emphasis on the need for desirelessness. Karma thus is at once the means and the end of all human endeavors. It is through karmas that one conquers karmas and transcends karmas. Any attempt to overstep the Law of Karma is as futile as to step over one’s shadow. The highest of all is to be *Neh-Karma* or *Karma-rehat*, that is to say, doing karma in accordance with the Divine Plan, as a conscious co-worker with the power of God. This is being actionless in action like a still point in the ever-revolving wheel of life.

Again, the term “Karma” may be distinguished from the word *Karam*. “Karma” is a Sanskrit term meaning action or deed, including mental vibrations and words of mouth, while *Karam* is a Persian word meaning kindness, mercy, compassion or grace.

Now as to the nature of karma: according to Jain philosophy, karma is of the nature of matter, both physical and psychical, one related to the other as Cause and Effect. Matter in a subtle and psychical form pervades the entire cosmos. It penetrates the soul because of its interplay with the matter without. In this way, a *jiva* builds for itself a nest as does a bird, and gets fettered by what is called *Karman-Srira* or the subtle body and remains bound therein till the empirical self is depersonalized and becomes a pure soul irradiant with its native luminosity.

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The *Karman-Srira* or the karmic shell, enclosing the soul, consists of eight *prakritis* corresponding to the eight types of karmic atoms producing different types of effects. These are of two types: (1) Karmas that obscure the correct vision, as for instance (i) *Darsan-avarna*, hindering right perception or apprehension in general; (ii) *Janan-avarna*, those which obscure right understanding or comprehension; (iii) *Vedaniya*, those which obscure the inherent blissful nature of the soul and thus bring about pleasurable or painful feelings; and (iv) *Mohaniya*, karmas which obscure right belief, right faith and right conduct. All these karmas work as smoke-colored glasses through which we see the world and all that is of the world. Life has poetically been described as “a dome of many-colored glass” that “stains the white radiance of Eternity.”

(2) Then there are karmas which go to make a person what he is, for they determine (i) bodily physique, (ii) age and longevity, (iii) social status, and (iv) spiritual make-up. Each of these types is known as *Naman*, *Ayus*, *Gotra* and *Antraya* respectively.

In addition there are divisions and sub-divisions under these, running into hundreds of ramifications.

The karmic particles spreading in space, are willy nilly attracted by each soul according to the pressure of the activity indulged in. This constant influx of karma can be checked by freeing the self of all types of activity of the body, mind and senses and stabilizing it at its own center; while the accumulated karmas may be curtailed by fasting, *tapas*, *saudhyaya*, *vairagya*, *prashchit*, *dhyana* and the like: that is to say, austerities, reading of scriptural texts, detachment, repentance and meditation etc.

Buddha too laid a great stress on constant endeavor

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and struggle with a view to ultimate victory over the law of karma. The present may be determined by the past; the future is our own, depending on the directive will of each individual. Time is one endless continuity—past irresistibly leading to the present and the present to the future as one may like it to be. Karma ceases to affect only with the attainment of the highest condition of mind which is beyond both good and evil. With the realization of this ideal all struggle comes to an end, for then whatever the liberated one does, he does without attachment. The ever-rotating Wheel of Life gets its momentum from the karmic energy and when that energy itself is exhausted, the giant Wheel of Life comes to a standstill, for then one reaches to the intersection of time and the timeless, a point which is always in action and yet *still* at the core. Karma provides a key to the life processes; and one's consciousness travels from stage to stage until one becomes a really awakened being or Buddha (the enlightened one or the seer of the Holy Light). To Buddha, the universe, far from a mere mechanism, was a *Dharma-Kaya* or body pulsating with *Dharma* or life-principle, serving at once as its main support.

In brief, the Law of Karma is Nature's stubborn and inexorable law from which there is no escape and to which there is no exception. As you sow, so shall you reap, is an ancient axiomatic truth. It is the general rule for earth-life. It also extends to some of the upper physio-spiritual regions, according to the order of density and peculiarity of each. Karma is a supreme principle superior both to gods and men for the former too, sooner or later, come also under its sway. The various gods and goddesses in different realms of Nature take a much longer time to serve in their respective heavenly spheres than human beings, but all the same they have ultimately to reincarnate in flesh before they can aspire to, and win, final emancipation from the karmic round of births.

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All works, acts or deeds form a vital device in the Divine Plan to keep the entire universe in perfect running order. No one can remain without some kind of work (mental or physical activity) even for a single moment. One is always thinking or doing one thing or another. One cannot by nature be mentally vacant or idle, nor can one stop the senses from their automatic functioning: eyes cannot but see and the ears but hear; and the worst is that one cannot, like Penelope, undo what is once done. Repentance though good in itself, cannot cure the past. Whatever one thinks, speaks or acts, good or bad, leaves a deep impression upon the mind and these accumulated impressions go to make or mar an individual. As a man thinks, so he becomes. It is from the abundance of the mind that the tongue speaketh. Every action has a reaction, for that is Nature's law of Cause and Effect. One has, therefore, to bear the fruit of his actions: sweet or bitter, as the case may be, whether one may like it or not.

Is there no remedy then? Is man a mere plaything of fate or destiny who works his way in a purely predetermined order? There are two sides of the matter. One has, to a certain extent, a free will, wherewith one, if he so chooses, can direct his course and make or mar his future and to a great extent even mould the living present to his own advantage. Armed with the living soul in him of the same essence as his Creator, he is mightier than karma. The infinite in him can help him to transcend the limitations of the finite. The freedom to act and the karmic bondage are but two aspects of the real in him. It is only the mechanical and the material part in him that is subject to karmic restraint, while the real and vital spirit in him transcends all and is hardly affected by the karmic load, if established in his native God-head. How to get established in one's own real *saroop*, the *Atman*? This is what we have perforce to learn if we aspire for a way out of the endless karmic web.

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The trouble with most of us is that we do not give thought to our actions. We, at every step, heedlessly go on collecting the load of karmic particles without realizing that there is a power within that keeps a count of all we think, say or do. Thomas Carlyle, a famous thinker, says: "Fool, thinkest thou that because no Boswell is there to note thy jargon, it therefore dies and is buried? Nothing dies, nothing can die. The idlest word thou speakest is a seed cast into time, which brings fruit to all eternity." Similarly, Aeschylus, the father of Greek drama in the pre-Christian era, tells us:

Deep in the nether sky,
Death rules the ways of man,
With stern and strong control;
And there is none who can,
By any force or act,
Elude Death's watchful eye
Or his recording heart.

From *The Eumenides*



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

II

Karmas have been classified by Saints into three distinct categories:

- (i) *Sanchit* or the gathered and stored karmas, going far back into incarnations running into the unknown past.
- (ii) *Pralabdha*: Luck, fate or destiny, or that portion out of the Sanchit (store-house) which constitutes a person's living present, which none can escape howsoever one may wish and try.
- (iii) *Kriyaman*: The karmas which one is free to perform as a free agent in his present earthly span or existence, and thereby make or mar his future.

(i) *Sanchit* (the stored deeds): Good or bad deeds that stand to man's credit as earned in all the previous existences in the order of creation, counting from the day of the first appearance of life on earth. Man knows nothing about them, or of their extent and their great potential power. King Dharitrashta, the blind progenitor of the *Kshatriya* princes, the *Kurvas* of the Epic Age, when endowed by Lord Krishna with his yogic power, was able to trace the cause of his blindness to an act done in the unknown past, extending back to over 100 incarnations or embodiments. In Chapter 20:5 of the Book of Exodus, Moses, while giving the Ten Commandments of God, speaks of God as having commanded: "I the Lord thy God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation . . ." Even the medical science today

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affirms the significant part that heredity plays and traces the origin of certain diseases coming down from progenitors and appearing in succeeding generations. So does modern psychology connect problematic behaviors in certain individuals with mental peculiarities in their parents and ancestors.

(ii) *Pralabdha*: These are just that part of the Sanchit Karmas which constitute a person's fate, destiny or luck; which determines one's present existence on earth. A person has no control over them. The effect of these, good or ill, has to be tolerated, as best one may — with smiles or with tears. The present life is just an unfoldment or revelation of the predestined karmas with which one comes fully loaded into the world. It is, however, possible that one may so mould and develop his inner self, through the guidance of some Master-Soul, that he may not feel their bitter and poignant sting, just as the kernel in a ripe almond or walnut does not feel the prick of a needle by getting detached from the shell without, which as a consequence gets shriveled and hardened, and serves henceforth as a protecting armor.

In this way, each one of us, willingly or unwillingly, wittingly or unwittingly, is forging chains for himself, no matter whether they be of gold or of iron. Still chains are chains and they are equally efficacious in their application; to wit, to keep a person in perpetual bondage. Like a poor silk-worm imprisoned in its own cocoon or like a spider caught in its own web, or a bird in its nest, one remains bound in hoops of steel of his own making, with no way of escape therefrom. Thus the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth is ceaselessly set in motion. It is only when one transcends the body-consciousness and becomes *Neh-Karma*, i.e. actionless in action like the still point at the centre of the ever-revolving wheel of life, that a stop is put to the motion of the Giant Wheel of Karmas; for then

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one becomes a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan. This is why Buddha, the prince among ascetics, emphatically said: “Be ye desireless,” for desires are the root-cause of human sufferings as they motivate actions, right from subtle vibrations in the sub-conscious, to mental thinking in the conscious, leading to the vast and limitless harvest of variegated deeds of different hues and forms, springing from the imbalance of the mind. The spirit, sitting in the chariot of the body is thus driven blindly and head-long into the fields of sensual pleasures by the five powerful steeds of the senses, uncontrolled by the power-intoxicated charioteer of the mind (helplessly imbalanced as it is) with the reins of intellect dangling loosely about him. *Self-discipline* then is of prime importance and chastity in thought, word and deed, is the essential requisite that helps a person on the path of self-knowledge and God-knowledge, for ethical life is a stepping-stone to spirituality.

(iii) *Kriyaman*: It is the current account of one’s willful actions and deeds in the present existence. This type of karma is quite distinct from the other two. In spite of the limitations imposed by *Pralabdh* or unchangeable destiny, each one is gifted with a free will and is free to sow what seeds he may. Endowed with the gift of discriminative faculty peculiar to his constitution alone, he can judge for himself what is right and what is wrong and as such it would be vainly presumptuous on his part if he were to expect a bed of roses when he sows thorns and thistles. It is up to him to make or mar his future, as he may. A Master-soul can give him a correct lead by putting before him the true values of life—life which is more than the bodily raiment and all that is connected therewith: the sense-dominated existence. Under His guidance, one develops an easy detachment from the world and worldly affairs and once the magic spell is broken, the blinkers fall off and the stark reality stares him squarely in the face, providing

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him with an opportunity to escape unscathed. Ordinarily, however, some of the *Kriyaman* Karmas bear fruit in this very life; while others—the unfructified ones—are transferred to the General Account of the *Sanchit* Karmas, which go on accumulating from age to age. Thus, it is given to each one to think ahead of time, and weigh well the consequences of the acts and deeds intended before taking an irretrievable step—a leap in the dark and a head-long plunge in a fit of impetuosity which is regretted for ever and cannot be undone by blaming the stars for their supposed malignant influence. A railway engineer, for instance, is to plan beforehand the railway track, for once the lines are laid the train is to run on blindly. A little error in laying the lines, a loose fish-plate or a wrong angle may lead to calamitous results. Even when everything is done properly, one has to keep a constant and strict watch, day and night, lest anything get out of joint or the track is otherwise tampered with by hostile elements.

According to Nature's law of life, a man (the embodied or incarnate soul) is like a precious jewel clothed in three caskets or bodies—the physical, the astral or mental, and the causal or the seed-body—all of which, more or less, partake of the terrestrial character, with varying degrees of density.

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial:
but the glory of the celestial is one and the glory
of the terrestrial is another.

I Cor. 15:40

These are like outer robes of coat, vest under it, and then shirt. When a man casts off the physical body, his spirit still is wearing the astral or the mental body. He has also the causal or the ethereal seed body or thin veil under the astral raiment. Until one is able to cast off the physical body, he cannot reach the first heaven, the astral kingdom within:

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Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption . . .

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

I Cor. 15:50, 53-55

This casting off or change may occur either through the final dissolution, the disintegrating process commonly known as death, or be brought about by the method of voluntary withdrawal of the sensory currents from the body technically known as “rising above body consciousness” by a process of inversion and self-analysis. The Gospels refer to this withdrawal as “to be born anew” or “resurrection.” The Hindu scriptures speak of it as “twice-born” or *do-janma*. It is a birth of the spirit as distinct from that of the water—the latter being from “seed corruptible” as distinguished from the former, “seed incorruptible,” unchangeable and abiding (of the spirit). The Muslim *darveshs* (mystics) call this death-in-life as death before death. One can learn how to withdraw not only from one’s physical body but from the other two bodies (the astral and the causal) as well, through the kindly assistance of a Master-Saint, Who has Himself transcended into the beyond and can help others to do likewise. One has,

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therefore, to “forsake the flesh for the spirit” if one is anxious to escape from the perpetual wheel of life on this sublunary planet (earth).

In the ordinary natural course of things, the *jiva* (the embodied soul or the incarnate spirit) has, after physical death, no option but in time to return to the physical plane in some physical form, the nature of which is determined by his life-long propensities and inclinations, the intensity of his longings and long-cherished unfulfilled desires enshrined in his mental make-up and predominantly uppermost at the time of death, the over-bearing influence of which irresistibly shapes a course for him.

So kind and generous is the Father Divine,
He grants unto His children what they desire.

But, if one, under the guidance of a perfect Master (*Sant-Satguru*) learns the practical process of self-analysis, i.e. self-withdrawal from the physical body at will, and develops it by a regular practice, he, while living, gets an experience of the Beyond (Death-in-life), with the result that gradually the age-old scales of his make-believe begin to fall away from his eyes and the world and worldly things lose their hypnotic charm, and he, while seeing things in their true colors, and understanding the intrinsic worth of each, grows desireless and free—a master of himself, a liberated soul (*jivan mukat*) and thereafter continues to live on just to complete his allotted span of life without attachment. This is called a new birth (or the second advent of the soul)—life eternal. But how can one attain it? Christ tells us:

He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is
not worthy of me.
He that findeth his life shall lose it:

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And he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Matthew 10:38-39

In the Gospel of Luke, we have:

And he (Jesus) said to them all: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Luke 9:23

And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:27

Thus we see that *death-in-Christ* is the way to *live* with Christ eternally. Learn to die so that you may begin to live, is the exordium of all the saints. Among the Muslims, this is known as *fana-fi-sheikh* or self-effacement in the *Murshid* or the Master. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that one should first seek a living Master competent enough to wind up once for all the otherwise endless cycle of karmas and then seek refuge at His Holy Feet and thereby free oneself from the baneful influence of one's deeds which continue to haunt a person in the form of eumenides and furies.

Of the power of the *Jagat-guru*, it is said:

A *Jagat-guru* can annihilate karmas by his look and Word,

In his presence, the karmas fly like autumn leaves before a wind.

Again, we have in the scripture:

Great is the power of the retributive angel, and none can escape its fury,

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But it doth fly in fear of death, before the sounding
blast of the Word.

Now as to the working of the Karmic Law, the following example may help us to understand the position more explicitly.

Take two kinds of grape-seeds—yellow and brown. Suppose yellow seeds represent good deeds and brown seeds represent bad deeds. A room is full to the roof in which heaps of both kinds of seeds are lying. This forms man's storehouse of *Sanchit* Karmas.

Now there is a person "A" (physical body plus mind plus soul) who has long cherished a desire during his lifetime to become a king. He falls ill and his unfulfilled desire to be a king all the time remains uppermost in his mind. He, in due course, is compelled by nature to surrender his physical body, but according to the Law of life after death he is still clothed in the astral (mental) and causal (ethereal) bodies. He now functions as a disembodied or disincarnate spirit in his other raiment, the mind-stuff both astral and causal. Since mind is the storehouse of all impressions, "A" still remembers his desire to be a king. "A," now a disembodied spirit (*jiva*), disrobed of the physical body, is faced with a difficulty. He cannot function as a king until, once again, he puts on a physical vesture as may enable him to be a king, at one stage or another in his earthly career. Propelled by the unerring motor-power behind all activity, his mind-stuff, he is led on to pick up some of the unfructified karmas, sufficient enough to bring about a new set of circumstances as may help him to have the long cherished and deeply engraved desire fulfilled.

The great motor power referred to above has two aspects: positive as well as negative; the former leading to the journey

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homeward and the latter controlling and guiding life on the earth-plane. Nature, or the negative aspect of the Power that is One, is concerned solely with the administration of life as it exists on the physical planet; its chief function being to keep the world going, fully peopled, and people engaged in various pursuits of life, according to the earned merit in each case, called in common parlance as *Pralabdha* which fashions the earthly life for each individual with an absolute precision and an unfailing art.

To the extent described above, one is in a sort of “closed trap” and cannot but unfold what comes with him in a folded state. It is a revelation of the unrevealed past in the seed or the essence lying dormant at the back of the essential mind-stuff and is projected on the canvas of life with its multifarious patterns and diverse colors, taking on different lines, as life emerges out of the pristine unalloyed and eternal radiance of which we generally lose sight as we get absorbed in the “dome of many-colored glass” that encloses us and presses us from all sides with the passage of time. Dame Nature now takes charge of her foster-child and lavishes in plenitude all her gifts, so much so that unknowingly one enjoys in fullness and to surfeit that for which he hankered in the past. Dazzled by the glamour of the gifts, one forgets the Great Benefactor, the Bestower of the Gifts, and is inextricably caught in the meshes of death.

This is but one part of the life that “A” leads, as a predestined game. Along with this, there is yet another, a very vital counterpart depending on the freedom of action and volitional independence that is given to each. It is in correctly understanding the higher values of life and making the most of the opportunities given to him that his salvation lies, right here and now. Paradoxically then, man is not only a creature of his destiny (past), but a creator of his destiny (future) as well. What we bring, must come to pass; and

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what we do now shall shape the things to come. Wisdom, therefore, lies in making the choice. The mindpower is a single entity and if harnessed correctly, can, like an obedient servant, render a good account of itself; but if allowed to over-power the life-giving spirit, it proves a treacherous parasite that saps the vitality and shrivels up the host-plant on which it thrives and from which it derives its very life and sustenance. Thus, one must pay all his attention to proper sowing and cultivating, while playing his destined part in the human drama, on the stage of life, in the light of the eternal radiance that shines through thick and thin, whether we know it or not. The Supreme Will is already wrought in the pattern of our being, for without it there can be no existence; and in knowing that Will and by working in unison with that Will, one can escape from the Wheel of Life. Guru Nanak in *Jap Ji* speaks of it thus:

How may one know the Truth and break through the
cloud of falsehood?

There is a Way, O Nanak, to make His Will our own,
His Will which is already wrought in our existence.

We thus see that karmas and desires are responsible for the interminable cycle of births and re-births. How then can one end this ceaseless cycle? There are only two ways to exhaust or finish up the vast and limitless storehouse of karmas—the impenetrable granite wall between a person and the High One, with the blindingly thick veil of the ignorant mind ever covering the eyes. The two ways to solve this ever-eluding and baffling problem are:

- (a) To leave it to Nature to exhaust the storehouse in due course of time, should that be at all possible.
- (b) To obtain from a Master-soul a practical knowledge and experience of the Science of

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Life, on the earthly as well as the spiritual planes, and to work right now for transcension from one to the other, while there is still a chance and an opportunity.

The first course is not only endlessly long but tortuous in the extreme, tricky at every step and full of dangers and pitfalls. It will take myriads of ages to reach the goal if one is fortunate enough to do so. Besides, Nature by herself hardly helps one to disentangle himself from the inexorable karmic Order, for that spells self-extinction for her and her brood.

Human birth is a rare privilege indeed and this privilege one gets after passing through a long evolutionary process in creation extending through innumerable forms or embodiments that the Life Principle takes on the physical plane. Once this golden opportunity is lost, the *jiva* or the embodied spirit has to continue on the Wheel of Life, according to the usually predominant world traits during his life-time and particularly those which forcefully project themselves at the time of his passing away from this world, the law being: "Where the mind is, there the spirit goes irresistibly." This being the case, it is well-nigh impossible for an average embodied spirit to get over the sensory plane and keep the mind stilled and self-absorbed by his own unguided and unaided efforts, howsoever herculean they may be. It is only some Godman or Master-power that may, in compassion, help a *jiva* in regaining the lost kingdom—the realm spiritual—from which each one has been driven out by his disobedience to the behests of God. This course then is fraught with untold dangers, lurking at every step, even in the very nature of each individual; and hence no sane person will ever think of attempting to tread the lonesome and weary path, which more often than not leads into a cul-de-sac or blind alley.

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By adopting the second course, one seeks a competent spiritual Master who wields influence over all the subordinate powers in this and higher planes of existence. He can wind up the karmic accounts of the bankrupt spirit. The moment He accepts an individual as His Own, He takes in His own Hand the process of liquidating the endless process of karma coming down from the unknown past. He calls a halt to the mad and reckless career in which one is engaged. "So far and no further" is His command, and then He puts an individual on the High-road Godward. He does not usually interfere with the *Pralabdh* or destiny, for it has of necessity to be worked off as well as possible, so as to complete the allotted span of life and to reap the fruit; while the *Sanchit* or the vast storehouse, He, by being a conscious co-worker with the Divine Plan, singes by contacting the spirit with the spark of *Naam*. Contact with *Naam* or the Holy Word at once reduces to ashes the storehouse of *Sanchit* karmas as well as the unfructified *Kriyaman* karmas done hitherto, just as a spark of fire reduces to ashes the entire forest or the heap of fuel that may be lying on the ground. Guru Nanak beautifully tells us in *Pauri XX* of *Jap Ji*, the morning prayer of the Sikhs:

When the hands, feet and the body are besmeared
(with dust), they are washed clean with water;

When the clothes get dirty and polluted, they are
cleansed by soap;

When one's mind gets defiled by sin, it can be
purified only by communion with the Word;

Men do not become saints and sinners merely by
words,

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But they carry deeds with them wherever they go.
As one sows, so does one reap;

O Nanak, men come and go by the wheel of birth and
death as ordained by His Will.

It is now clear that mind is the main magnet that attracts karmas with all their concomitants. Mind maintains a mighty sway over man. It utilizes our *surat* (attention, the outward expression of the soul within) as its means, which is the most precious of man's inherited faculties—the priceless jewel of immense virtue.

The Master-Saints come into the world with a divine purpose and a mission. They are commissioned from above to liberate man from the karmic bondage. When one is fortunate to find such a Holy Man and surrenders himself to His will, the latter takes charge of the spirit. His first and foremost task is to break the magic spell of the karmic tentacles that hold one in their deadly grasp. He advises each one to lead a well-regulated and highly disciplined ethical life, so as to escape from contracting any more evil influences or karmic impressions. He tells us that all the bounties of Nature, including sense-objects, are for a legitimate and fair use only and not for indulgence and enjoyment. All our troubles arise from the fact that we ravenously indulge sense pleasures to surfeit with the result that instead of our enjoying the worldly pleasures, the pleasures enjoy us to the full and leave us a total wreck, physically and mentally. We forget that true happiness is an attitude of the mind and springs from within, when we consciously awaken the Life-Current (the Holy Word) lying dormant and feed our “self” on the “Life Principle” immanent in all things, visible and invisible, the sole motor-force creating and sustaining the entire universe. The past, the present and the future, the Godman holds in His mighty grasp; and like a compassionate father, guides His children

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in the Path of righteousness and rectitude, leading gradually to Self-knowledge and God-knowledge and attaining in the end the prize of God-head. Just as a child does not know what his father provides for him, from time to time, so does a neophyte not know what his Heavenly Father does for him. It is by following in His ways that one may gradually learn the esoteric mysteries as these unfold themselves to him at each step.

Poor soul in this, the flesh, what dost thou know?
Thou art too narrow, wretch, to comprehend even thy
self.

—J. Donne

III

THE way in which the Master tackles the intricate and baffling problem of karmas, may briefly be stated as under:

Sanchit or the seed Karmas: These are latencies lying in the store-house to one's account from endless ages, ever since the world began. No one escapes from them unless the same are worked off (without making any more addition thereto, which of course in the nature of things, is an impossibility), in innumerable lives that lie ahead. It is, therefore, not possible to exhaust this tremendous credit balance in one's account. Is there then no way to cross over the great chasm that lies between the conscious and the sub-conscious and again the gulf that separates the sub-conscious from the unconscious? Every wrong has a remedy; it may be a spiritual or a secular wrong. If one fries seed-grains in a pan so that they get puffed up, they lose their fecundity or power of fructification, that is to say the power to germinate and to bear fruit. Exactly in the same way, the *Sanchit* karmas can be seared and scorched with the fire of *Naam* or Word and rendered harmless for the future, for then one becomes a conscious co-worker with the Divine Plan losing all contact with the unknown past.

Pralabdh Karmas: These constitute one's present fate, his stock-in-trade or destiny as it is called. The fruit of these has got to be borne, no matter how bitter or sweet, for one cannot avoid reaping the harvest already sown. The Master, therefore, leaves them untouched for man to endure with loving sweetness and to finish up during his present

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lifetime. If these karmas were to be wiped out or tampered with in any way, the body itself would dissolve. In grappling with these, a disciple is, however, not left alone. As soon as the Master initiates, the Master-power takes charge of the disciple. He is helped a good deal at every step. By gradual spiritual discipline, he learns the process of self-analysis and withdrawal and grows strong in spirit with the result that the otherwise painful effect of these karmas just blows over as a gentle breeze, leaving him unscathed. Even in serious and incurable cases, the Master-power brings into operation His Laws of Sympathy and Mercy. All the troubles of the devoted disciples are greatly mitigated and softened. Sometimes the intensity of bodily and mental troubles is increased a little to shorten the duration of the suffering involved, while at others the intensity is greatly reduced and the duration is prolonged as may be considered appropriate. But this is not all. The sufferings, troubles and diseases of the physical body accrue from sense-pleasures. Bodily troubles are, of course, to be borne by the physical body. The Master, as Word-personified or Polarized God, knows all about disciples, wherever they may be, either at a distance or near at hand. He may even take over by the law of sympathy the burden of the karmas of His devoted disciples on His own shoulders to bear Himself, for the Law of Nature has got to be compensated in one form or another. This happens in very rare cases as the Master may think fit. Besides, no disciple would like to adopt a course, in which the Holy Master should suffer for his wrongs. On the contrary, a disciple must learn to pray to his Master sincerely and if he does so, all feasible help is sure to come to relieve him or to soften the situation and to minimize the resultant suffering; the soul itself becoming strong by feeding on the bread of life and by drawing sustenance from the water of life.

There are, however, things over which a man has no

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appreciable control: (i) the sweets and bitters of life with comforts and discomforts, physical as well as mental; (ii) riches, opulence and power or destitution, penury and abjectness; (iii) name and fame or notoriety and downright oblivion. All these are the usual adjuncts of life on earth and come and go as predestined. All human endeavors are directed to gaining one or more of the sweets of life and in avoiding what is bitter, without realizing that life itself is as evanescent as a cloud, a shadow without a substance, a mere mirage and will-o'-the-wisp; ever flitting and eluding the unwary pilgrim on the scorching desert-sands of time. The Master-Saints by precept and practice bring home to the *jiva* the illusory nature of the world and all that is worldly, and manifest in him the perennial fountain of life; finding which one gets saturated to the very marrow of his bones and the fibers of his being and becomes fully satisfied, able to sing away life itself.

Kriyaman Karmas: These are the karmas that we daily do during our present sojourn on the earth-plane. In this respect, every disciple is enjoined to lead a strictly chaste and pure life hereafter in thoughts, words and deeds and to abstain from all that is evil, for any violation or disregard in this behalf is bound to bring trouble in its wake and the price of sin is nothing short of death, death at the very roots of life.

The question here arises as to how Master-Saints take over some of the burden of karmas of the *jivas* under special or rare circumstances and manage to rid them of the unpalatable effect. The karmas connected with the physical body, as said above, are to be borne on the physical body.

God cloth'd Himself in vile man's flesh, that so
He might be weak enough to suffer woe.

—J. Donne

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We have in history an incident that occurred in the life story of Baber, the first *Mughal* king in India. His son Humayun fell seriously ill and every one despaired of his life. The king in silent sympathy prayed to God that he might be permitted to take over his son's illness and strange as it may seem, from that very moment the tables were turned; the prince began gradually to recover while the king languished and died. This is just a single instance of vicarious suffering on the human plane.

The Master is of the Lord of Compassion. In His kingdom which is boundless, there is no count of the deeds. Embedded in the divine, He grants contact to each individual with the saving life lines within, which serve as a sheet-anchor in times of distress. The ship may toss on the stormy waters of life, but being moored to the floating buoy it keeps steady on its keel, in spite of the stormy winds and waters around.

Man is irresistibly forced to come on to the stage of the world blind-fold just to reap the fruit of his *Pralabdh* Karma of which he has no knowledge whatsoever. He is not even aware of the working of the physical plane, not to speak of higher regions. With all his professions and protestations, he renders a lip-service to God having no access to the inner Divine Links, the saving life-lines: the Light and the Voice of God. He does not even know the nature of his own real Self and spends all his time in sense-pleasures. He takes himself to be but a creature of chance and lives by chance, a mere puppet on the stage of life.

A Saint, on the other hand, comes with a commission and a purpose. He is God's elect, His Messiah and His Prophet. He works in His Name and by the Power of His Word. He has no independent will of His own, apart from the Will of God; and being a conscious co-worker with Him on the Divine Plan, He sees the hidden hand of God in all the affairs

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of life. Living in time, He really belongs to the Timeless. He is Master of life and death but is full of love and compassion for the suffering humanity. His mission is to link such human souls with God as may be yearning for re-union and may be in earnest quest. His sphere of action is quite distinct from and independent of *Avtaras* or incarnations, for the latter work only on the human plane. Their job is to keep the world in proper shape and order. Lord Krishna has declared in no ambiguous words that He comes into the world whenever there is an imbalance in the forces of good and evil; the object being to restore the lost equilibrium, to help the righteous and to penalize the unrighteous. Similarly we read of Lord Rama in the *Ram Chritra Mansa*. He reincarnated himself when the evil in the world was in the ascendant. The *Avtaras* come to re-establish righteousness. They cannot, however, throw open the prison gates of the world and take the *jivas* out into the spiritual planes. This work falls purely within the domain of the Saints, who consciously act as co-workers with the Power of God on the Divine Plan and teach the worship of the Divine alone; for that alone puts an end to the effects of karma. A Muslim divine says:

At last it came to light, that in the Kingdom of
Darveshs, karmas count for naught.

Again, it is said:

A Master-Saint chases away the karmas which fly as
jackals do in the presence of a lion.

No one can escape from the fruits of his actions—not even the ghosts and spirits; nor the giants, demons, *kinnars*, *yakshas*, *gandharvas*, *devas* and the gods. Those with luminous, astral and ethereal bodies enjoy the fruits of their actions in the region of *Brahmand*, the third grand division, above the first two, *Pind* and *And*. They, too, aspire for and

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await a human birth to get out of the clutches of karmic reactions; for in human birth alone there is the chance of contacting some Godman who may reveal to them the secret of the Divine Path, the Sound Current or the Holy Word.

It would require many years of patient meditation for a man to be able to understand in some measure the arrangement of God's mighty administration, and very little can be said to the inquiring seeker at this stage. It is also equally difficult to understand a genuine spiritual Master. But with all this, a *Sant* ordinarily plays the normal part of man while on this earth and He always speaks of Himself as a slave, a bondsman and a servant of God and His people.

In taking over the burden of the karmas of the devoted souls on His shoulders, a Master-Saint does not overlook or eliminate the "Highest Law." His position may be likened to that of a king in disguise, who for ameliorating the condition of his subjects freely mixes with them to understand their difficulties and at times even shares with them their joys and sorrows. So far as the human body is concerned, a Master-Saint makes use of the special Divine Concession. He may, in brief, reduce death by guillotine to a thorn-prick. At times, He allows His body to suffer in some slight measure which for an ordinary individual might have been a great travail. In this way, He shows man that all bodies do suffer, for this is Nature's law for all the embodied creatures. "Physical life is all misery," declared the *Sakya Muni*, Lord Buddha. *Sant Kabir* also declared that he had not seen a single human being who was happy for each one whom he happened to come upon was in misery. *Guru Nanak* graphically draws a pen picture of the world as full of sorrow and suffering humanity except rare individuals who had taken refuge in *Naam*. It is because of this sad experience all around that we take the Godman for an ordinary being, like ourselves. In suffering bodily "pain" He plays the part of a man to all

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appearances, but internally He is always separate from the physical body. The constant contact with the divinity within Him enables Him to escape what may otherwise have been an unbearable sting for the disciple.

Every one who has been put on this path and is engaged in the process of inversion, can withdraw his sensory currents from the body by concentrating them at the center at the back of the eyes. There may be differences in the time required by different individuals to achieve this, but the results are sure to follow, and are actually verifiable in each case. The devoted disciples on the Path, even when on the operation-table, voluntarily dispense with the usual administration to patients of anesthetics. They withdraw their consciousness from the body and do not feel the effect of the surgeon's knife or lancet. Of Bhai Mani Singh, who was sentenced to death by cutting off each joint, it is said that he not only smilingly submitted to the process but even remonstrated with the executioner to stick to the letter of the order when the latter tried to get rid of the nefarious job and wanted to make short work by cutting down the body part by part, instead of joint by joint, as ordered.

The *Satsangis* who study things with open eyes, very frequently come across several such cases. The souls that have an inner access remain absorbed in the great Self within, and do not make a show of their capabilities. This rule holds good for the simple reason that feats like these are calculated to pass for miracles and hence are to be avoided scrupulously. Saints do not display miracles nor do they allow any of their disciples to indulge in such vainglorious and empty baubles.

Saints, when seemingly ill, are generally seen taking medicinal doses as may be prescribed by the physicians, but actually They do not need such treatment. This They do just

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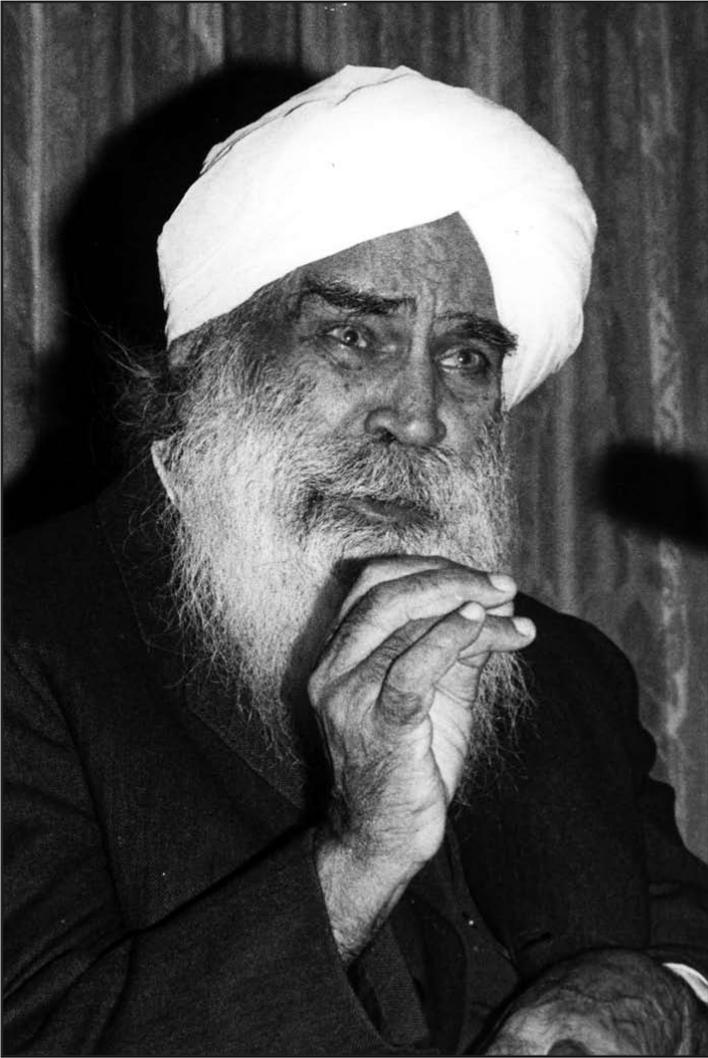
to keep up the worldly order of things. In this way, They set an example to man to continue his worldly routine wisely and resort to proper treatment whenever necessary. It is, of course, expected of the disciples to resort to such medicines as do not contain products of or substances from animal sources; but some of the disciples who have an unshakeable faith in the benign power of the Master-healer within, usually avoid the so-called remedial measures, and allow nature to work on its own, for the healing power within is a part and parcel of the human system. The bodily disorders as they come should be accepted and borne cheerfully for they are generally the result of our own dietetic errors and can be set right by resort to proper hygienic measures and selective foods. Hippocrates, the father of the medical system, emphasized that food should be taken as medicine. Even serious illness, resulting from karmic reactions, has to be tolerated with patience without grumbling or bitterness, because all karmic debts are to be paid and their accounts squared here and now, and the speedier it is done, the better, instead of keeping any outstanding balances to be paid hereafter. In the time of Hazrat Mian Mir, a great Muslim devout and mystic, it is said that one of his disciples Abdullah, when down with an ailment, withdrew his sensory currents to the eye-focus and closed himself safely in the citadel of peace. His Master Mian Mir when He visited him, pulled Abdullah down to the body consciousness and ordered him to pay what was due from him for he could not indefinitely evade the payment by such tactics.

Unlike most of us, the Master Saints do not devote much time to their bodily needs and cares. They consider the physical raiment as a mere rag to be cast off one day. They take to hard physical and mental labor as need be, seeking no rest and repose, not sleeping for nights on end. Such prodigious acts present a riddle to modern science, though

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it is common practice with Saints for They are conversant with, and make use of, the higher laws of nature of which we are quite ignorant.

Deeds or karmas may be grouped under the heads of individual karmas and group karmas. The latter are karmas performed by a society or a nation as a whole and these are termed as *Dharma*. As an individual bears the fruits of his own karmas (actions), so does a society, for it has to bear the fruits of the general policies it pursues with the result that innocent individuals have also to suffer for the wrongs arising from the wrongly conceived *dharmas* of the society to which they belong. When Nadir Shah of Persia invaded India and ordered a general massacre of the people of Delhi, there was a general consternation among the populace and it was believed that the social wrongs of the nation had assumed the form of Nadir. A just retribution for the sins of commission or omission is the very essence of the law of nature and it visits in one form or another, call it what you may like; furies, eumenides or anything else.



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

IV

IN the scriptural texts, we have an apt story of Raja Prikshat who had heard that whosoever heard the *Bhagwat* recited by a *Pandit* became *jivan mukat*—a man freed from all bondage. One day he called his court-priest and asked him to recite to him the elevating text of the *Bhagwat* so that he might escape from the bondage of mind and matter, and commanded that if his recitation did not prove the truth of the sacred teachings, the priest would be put to the gallows. The priest was no better than any one of us. He felt dismayed for he saw death staring him in the face, as he knew full well that he could not help the king in attaining salvation. When he reached his home, he was down cast and extremely worried over his impending doom. On the eve of the day fixed for the recitation of the *Bhagwat*, the priest was half-dead with fear. Fortunately for him he had a talented daughter. On her solicitations, he revealed to her the cause of his miserable plight. The daughter consoled him and assured him that she would save him from the gallows, if he permitted her to accompany him on the following day to the king's presence. The next day she went to the royal court along with her father. She enquired if the king wanted freedom from bondage of the world and the king replied in the affirmative. She told the king that she could help him in his much-cherished desire if he followed her advice and permitted her to do what she liked. She took the king and her father to the jungle with two stout ropes, and she tightly tied each one of them to a separate tree. She then asked the king to untie and free his priest. The king expressed his helplessness to do so as he was tied down himself. Thereupon the girl explained to him that one who was himself in the bondage of *maya* (illusion), could not

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

This in a way also illustrates that mere study of scriptures does not help much in giving *Moksha* or salvation; which is purely a practical theme and can be learned correctly from and perfected by practice under the able guidance of an adept in the line. The *Murshid-i-Kamal* or the perfect Master has first of all to piece together the broken tablet of the mind torn by countless desires and aspirations, and make it into a perfect whole and then to burnish it clean through and through so as to make it capable of reflecting the light and glory of God which no amount of book-learning would do.

One cannot, of course, know and understand the true import of the scriptures unless the same are explained by some Master-soul who has Himself experienced within the laboratory of his own mind what the scriptures say. Thus, He can, from personal experience of His own, teach and guide the disciple in the highly esoteric teachings contained in terse epigrams which baffle the intellect, limited as it is in its scope and instruments of learning. This is why it is said: "God comes handy in the company of a *Sadh*" (or a disciplined soul). One who is a freed soul can free another and none else can. In this context it is said:

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

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

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

No one, however, tries to peer through the why and wherefore of things, happenings and events for we take everything complacently as it comes along the current of time. We do not try to delve deep into them in order to trace out the links of the chain leading up to what we see and experience. Everyone in his dealings with others forgets that he has to pay for everything in this world. Even nature’s gifts like space, light, air, etc. are not free to all alike to any appreciable extent. But each man thinks himself the sole custodian of the free gifts of God. He attempts to be as liberal as possible, comes across several ill-set diamonds (men) and is affected by the “Law of give and take.” It is after hard buffeting that we learn that scales make no distinction between gold and lead but are concerned with the dead weight only. Every man knows that fog cannot be dispelled

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with a fan, and yet tries to do so, and thereby makes the confusion worse confounded. A person, bound hand and foot in the endless chain of cause and effect, cannot free others. When every one in the world is fast asleep, who is there to waken and whom? It is only a freed man who can free others if he so chooses, for the sins of commission and omission are of the very essence of the law of Nature and sooner or later visit the doer in one form or another.

In caging birds and keeping pets collared, chained, and imprisoned, one wrongly takes it for granted that these poor dumb creatures have no court of law where they can lodge their complaint. He thinks that he has a right to deal with them as he pleases. He neither dreads to kill nor pays any heed to the common Truth: "As you sow, so shall you reap." Ignorance of the law is no excuse. Every wrong has to be avenged. He that slays, shall be slain. He who lives by the sword, perishes by the sword. One has to pay with "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" which is as true today as it was in the time of Moses. Merry, no doubt, is the feast-making until comes the dreadful reckoning. We may shut our eyes to the laws of Nature, may repose trust in the efficacy of the priest-craft, but it will never do any good. One has to pay a very heavy toll for killing, blood-sucking, and the like. Those who live and thrive on the blood of others cannot have a pure heart, much less access to the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

Saints say that man occupies the highest place in God's creation and is endowed with superb intellect and must not, therefore, pass his limited span of time blindfolded like other creatures. The golden opportunity, thus provided, of returning and reverting to God's embrace and to his original Home should not be lost. Such a sublime opportunity comes only after one has completely seen through the "World Exhibition" and has successfully concluded his part in the

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Grand Drama of life. Man is usually lost in the attractions here below. In doing so, he loses the solitary chance given to him under the overbearing influence of karmic reaction, after myriads of incarnations, for his return to the abiding region of the pure spirit. He is given one body after another in an endless series. He begins to feel the weight of all kinds of laws—social, physical, natural—which like heavy blocks bar his way at every step. He has no alternative left but to wait for his next turn as man, and who knows when it may come?

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

Most of the sins, whether coarse or fine, are purely the invention of man under the sway of the mind. Finer ones are regarded as “pardonable weaknesses” by Saints Who are the living and moving images of God’s law of love and mercy on this earth. So long as a person acts as a selfwilled creature, he subjects himself to all the laws and their rigors. But when he surrenders his self-will to that of a Godman, he comes under the sway of God’s mercy and love. This is the true aspect of sin in every day life.*

Karmas are the most contagious form of invisible diseases to which a man is ever exposed. They are even more galloping, wasting and destructive than the deadliest and most poisonous germs transmitted into the innermost

* For details, refer to Appendix II at the end.

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

To crown all such difficulties, one has to share unwittingly the karmic reactions, even in his own family where he is born and brought up. Thus virtues and vices play an integral role in the formation of culture. In this way, we daily and hourly contract karmas from our surroundings. The only way to escape the karmic influence is to stick to the path of God through godly Saints Who being embedded in the Most High, are far above the reach of karmas and are in fact *Neh-Karma* and *Jivan-Mukat*. It is said that in the kingdom of a real *Darvesh* (Godman), one has not to render account of one's karmas. A person takes a turn for the better when he takes to the company of a *sadhu*. However, man is naturally prone to accept evil easily rather than the illimitable goodness of Saints. The company of a Saint has marvelous effect in removing all traces of evil. The atmospheric range of a Master-Saint is a vast immensity which man can hardly imagine. The Saints come not for the good of human beings only but for the benefit of all active and inactive creation in the world at all levels, visible and invisible as well. The poor creature called man has no true friend. Even the mind with the three *gunas* (qualities of *Satva* or purity, *Rajas* or activity, and *Tamas* or inertia) ever working as man's accomplice, looks on him just as a cat casts a restless glance over a rat. Those who follow the dictates of the mind are invariably

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

In the company of a *sadh*, one has nothing to rue;

In his company, one knows the Lord and follows Him true;

In his company, one attains the highest gift of God-head.

This is why Guru Nanak emphatically declared:

O Nanak! Snap asunder all thy ephemeral ties of the world and go in search of the true ones.

While all shall forsake thee in thy life-time, the True One shall accompany thee even up to the beyond.

Again, —

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

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

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

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Again, —

The ever restless mind cannot find rest until it rests in some Godman.

In *Gurbani*, we have:

The wandering wits come to a halt in the company of
a *sadh*,

The stilled mind alone reflects the Light of the Lord.

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

The Saint is acceptable at His Court, and is the Chief
Elect therein:

The Saint adorns the threshold of God and is honored
even by Kings.

Again, —

Satguru has given me the gift of insight and I see all
doubts dispelled,

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The angel of death can do unto me no more wrong
when the very account of my deeds has been
blotted out.

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

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

Everyman

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

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

The common saying goes: “The walls and mansions of the mighty are built with the sweat and tears of the poor.” Unless one has sown good in the past, he cannot reap a rich harvest in the living present. He may also be carrying imperceptibly the burden of some guilt right under his

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sleeves. If he does not sow good seeds now, how can he expect to enjoy seemingly good fruits in the future and for how long?

Moreover, good deeds by themselves cannot absolve a person from the reaction of bad deeds, just as dirty water cannot and does not wash clean. With all our righteousnesses we are but filthy rags, says a Christian saint. None is clean, no, not one. Man is always subject to the law of give and take or compensation and retribution. Following the path of good works is decidedly something desirable and better than the path of evil deeds, but it is not all. A high ethical living may secure a paradise for a person for a lengthy sojourn, where he may comfortably enjoy heavenly bliss; but he is still interned therein in the astral or causal body and he has not freed himself from the cycle of births and deaths. So long as one feels that he is the doer, he cannot escape from the wheel of births and has to bear the fruit of seeds. It is the contact with the Holy Ghost, sacred *Naam* or Word that alone helps a person in his upward ascent to higher spiritual regions, far removed from the shadows of repeated births and deaths that ceaselessly move up and down in endless gyres with no way of escape therefrom.

Hell and Heaven are the regions where the disincarnate spirits have to remain for a relatively long period according to their actions on earth, bad or good, as the case may be. The stay here, however long, is not everlasting and it does not take them out of the inexorable cycle of births and deaths. Paradise (Heaven or Eden) is the El Dorado of certain faiths. It is also termed salvation by many. But the fact of the matter is that after enjoying the paradisiacal bounties for as long as is determined by good deeds, one is given a human body once again for it alone provides an opportunity to gain merit leading ultimately to liberation. Even the ministering angels of God aspire to human birth when they feel that they have

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done their job. Thus, in following the almost universally acknowledged, widely believed, and generally accepted path of good deeds, one ultimately finds himself, once more, caught in the web of insatiable desires and ambitions and with this glittering and ever-elusive firefly in front of him, he still remains an unwitting captive in the iron grip of karmas. To achieve his objective, he performs *Tapas* (various kinds of ascetic austerities) which may bring him better lives. Even when he attains the sovereignty of a kingdom, his mind runs riot, he gives himself free reins and commits mighty deeds of valor and prowess, most of which are evil enough to earn him Hell. Again, after taking a bitter lesson from the hell-fires in which he is plunged, he tries to seek solace in *Tapas*. Thus he is ever caught and moves entangled in the vicious circle of temptations and lures from Hell to contrition and from contrition to sovereignty and from sovereignty to Hell again—one after the other—in an endless cyclic order, up and down the Wheel of Life. Thus, everyone for himself makes his own Heaven and Hell and remains through his own volitional deeds entangled in the gossamer web of life prepared by him.

These regions of Hell and Paradise do not come in the way of one who follows the path of the Saints, the middle course, right between the two eye-brows, for he bypasses the path of a Karma Yogi. Even if a soul under the protection of a Master Saint may, for a while, go astray, it is sure to be rescued. Though Saints are living models of humility and do not speak of the great authority that is Theirs, yet at times They do indirectly refer to the saving power of the Saints gone before them. The scriptures reveal that Sant Satguru Nanak rescued one of His disciples who somehow wandered astray hell-ward. The Holy One had to visit hell for a lost sheep, and dip His thumb in the molten fires of hell, thereby cooling down the entire hell-furnace, giving relief not only

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

Those who are devoted to the practice of the Holy
Word, all their labors end,

Their faces, O Nanak! shine with glory and many
souls are saved along with them.

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

I have my dealings with the Saints and my only
concern is with them,

With the stock-in-trade provided by the Saints, I am
freed from all hallucinations,

The angel-of-death cannot now touch a single hair of
my head

When the entire record of my deeds has been
consigned to the flames.

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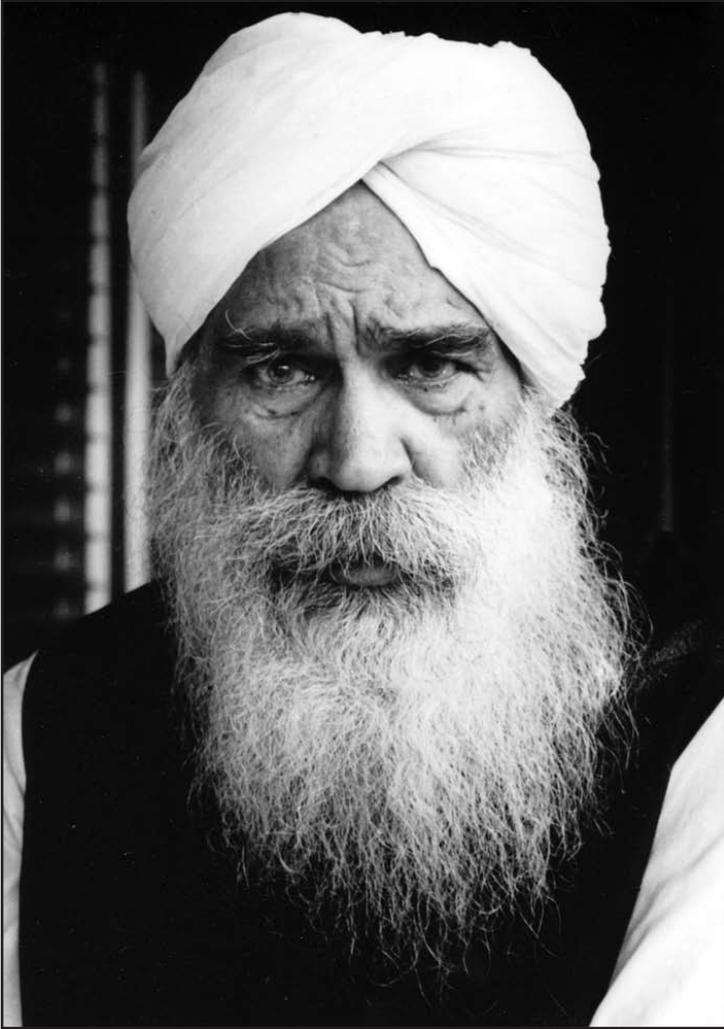
Again, it is said:

Invincible indeed is the Angel-of-death and none can
subdue him.

But he is powerless in the presence of the Sound-
Current of the Master,

The very sound of His Word strikes him with terror
and he flees therefrom,

For he fears lest the Lord of Hosts may strike him
dead.



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

V

NO ONE can be said to have been born for himself alone, for none can be an island unto himself. To serve the needy, sick, and starving, is also a sideline, more effective than mere preaching. "Service before self" stirs and kindles the embers of sympathy, kindness, and love. These virtues have a great purifying effect, and clean a person of all his dross, and entitle him to the highest knowledge of divinity. "Pleasure tastes well after service," is a well known adage.

Ahimsa or non-injury refers to man's abstaining not merely from killing, violence and injury but includes also evil thought and ill word. While it may not be so with brutes and beasts, *ahimsa* infuses strength in man which not only excels many virtues but is the highest virtue above all others. Service done to sincere seekers of the divine path is of far greater value than any other service. Helpful ways include, *inter alia*, distribution of alms to the really indigent and the needy, giving sweets to those engaged in extraordinarily arduous pursuits in inaccessible places, nursing the sick, and helping the afflicted ones. All these qualities are great aids in the Path and should be encouraged and cultivated by assiduous practice by all means possible. One should not, however, rest content with them alone, but one must push ahead with the help of these purificatory processes, on the way to freedom as enjoined by the Master.

Love is the panacea for most of the ills of the world. It is the core of all other virtues. Where there is love, there is peace. Love, and all the blessings shall be added unto thee, is the central idea of the teachings of Christ. The entire edifice

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of Christianity is founded on the twin principles of “Love thy God with all thy soul, with all thy mind and with all thy might,” and “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” God is love and so is the human soul, being a spark from the same essence. St. John says: “He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love,” and he, who loveth God, loveth his brothers also. Guru Gobind Singh likewise laid emphasis on the prime need of love: “Verily I say unto thee that God reveals Himself only to those who love.” A Muslim Saint says:

God created man an embodiment of love.

For His glorification, His angels were quite enough.

To crown all these virtues, comes truth and good living.* One should in the first instance be true to one’s self. The trouble with most of us is that our mind, tongue, and actions do not move in unison. We have one thing in the mind, another on our tongue and still another on our hands. “To thine own self be true, and it must follow as night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man” (Shakespeare). You are in the body; God, the controlling power, is also in the body. If you are true to your own self, you have to fear none. Before you attempt to deceive any one, you first deceive your own self. “Rama cannot cheat Rama” were the words of Swami Ram Tirath when someone tried to warn him of the deceptive ways of the world. Truth is the greatest of all virtues; true living is greater still. We must try to lead a neat and clean life in the temple of the Holy Ghost and not defile it by falsehood and lusts of the flesh thus turning it into a money changer’s den of the devil.

It is commonly believed that prosperity is the source of peace, but it deceives the fools like a will-o’-the-wisp and endangers the rich. It lets go the bridle from off the mind.

* For details, refer to Appendix I at the end.

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When once the mind gets off the right track; it recklessly contracts sins which entail dire consequences. To absorb the “self” whole-heartedly in the soil of worldly uncleanness in mind, word, or deed is a heinous sin and death is the reward thereof. The paths leading to worldly enrichment and to God lie far apart. One can take either of the two, as one may like. The mind is a single entity linking the body with the soul at one end, and the body with the world and worldly riches at the other. Thus one has of necessity to choose between the two alternatives. Once the die is cast, one has to perform to apply oneself steadily to reach the goal whatever it be. Riches *per se* are no obstacle in the way of “spirituality,” for it is the common heritage of all, the rich and the poor alike, and neither of them can claim it as a special gift for himself. All that is required for success on the Path is genuine desire, honesty of purpose, a pure living, and a steadfast devotion to the cause. A rich man has, of course, to see that he does not use unfair means in amassing his wealth and that he uses his honestly acquired treasures in fruitful pursuits and not on wasteful and ephemeral gains. He should always look upon his riches as a sacred trust from God, wherewith to help the needy and the poor, the hungry and the thirsty, the sick and the ailing, for all such people have a claim on him as human beings and children of the same Father. This was the advice given by the sage Ashtavakra to Raja Janak, when after granting him a practical experience in the Science of Soul, he returned to him his kingdom which the king had dedicated to his Master preceptor before initiation into the sacred path of practical spiritual experience. He was advised to consider it as a gift from Him (the *Rishi* or Godman) and to use it for ameliorating the condition of his people and his country which were consigned to his care by God. Unless the riches secured by fair means are utilized wisely and well, one is likely to go astray and become egocentric and a slave to his ill-gotten wealth and is unknowingly caught in the

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golden chains that keep him in bondage. To warn against this, Christ in no uncertain terms declared that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. T. S. Eliot, a Nobel prize winner, says, "Take no thought of the harvest; but only of proper sowing."

The sowing then is of prime importance for quality of the harvest depends on the quality of the seeds sown. Next comes the proper tending, the humanizing process which usually takes quite a long time covering a few incarnations depending upon the past make-up of each individual. But with the right type of steadfast devotion and the grace of the Master-power, one can easily traverse the otherwise hard and tortuous path. "A perfect Master, conversant with the turns and twists of the road," says Kabir, "can, however, take the disciple through in no time." The pilgrim-soul with a competent Guide and honest endeavor, can easily swim over the ocean of the world even in the midst of worldly life.

Those who do not daily engage in *Bhajan* and *Simran* are always in trouble. They float endlessly on the stream of lustful pleasures. Practice of *vairagya* does help one in the process of self-purification and gradually a disciple is enabled to cut the *Upas* tree of multitudinous desires first by cutting the branches and then striking at the root.

No one is faultless. Man is the child of error; and error is always his creed. Though to fall in sin is human, yet to persist in it is villainous. It is not profitable to stock bad merchandise. It is good to be born in a temple but to die in it is a sin, for we have gradually to rise above all forms and formalities of the kindergarten class which all social religions provide and to grow into the sunshine of spirituality. We must study the Path, if we wish to divine the future and awaken in the Reality beyond. One who takes no thought

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of the future will soon have to rue the present. The sins and sorrows are our constant companions and go cheek by jowl. The small foibles gradually let in greater ones, while those confessed are half-redressed. True repentance followed by good actions goes a long way in assuaging suffering. Man would do little for God if the devil were dead. A man living under the shadow of an impending calamity lives at his best for he strives the hardest. To find faults in others is quite easy but to reform one's self is the most difficult, for we see not the beam in our own eyes. Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and a danger foreseen is half-avoided. One who is fore-warned, is fore-armed.

Persons who are bound to the physical plane, must obey the commandments of some "Freed" Master-Saint, if they want to free themselves from the delusion of mind and matter. Cast off the burden of your entire responsibilities at the feet of your spiritual Master and the deadly grip of sins will gradually but surely loosen its hold on you. "Leave all else and follow Me," was the exhortation of Lord Krishna. "Come unto Me all ye that labor and I shall give you peace," said Christ. The devoted disciple actually feels that even the chamber of sickness is a temple of devotion for him. A Master who is Himself well-versed in the practice of the Holy Word and is competent to initiate others into it, is the real Master and a perfect Guide (*Murshid-i-Kamil*). He would, like an able and efficient administrator, wind up all deeds and square the account and Jesus-like advises: "Sin no more." Similarly Hazur Sawan Singh Ji would, when a disciple in open congregation confessed a lapse on his part and craved indulgence, gently raise His right hand and say — "Thus far and no further."

Should we then do nothing? How can that be? The reply is simple. So long as the mind rules, a person cannot but act and must act though he may restrain himself in his

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acts, according to the behest of his Master, and side by side cultivate the highest virtues. By doing nothing, man gradually learns to do ill and Pandora-like unlocks the evils lying buried in him. If one wishes to lie upon roses, he must strive to cultivate and grow roses for himself. But we always act haphazardly and for selfish ends. We do not know what we should do and what we should abstain from. The Master-Saint is the Divine Emperor of His time. By love, guidance, instruction, and example, He leads men to acts of devotion and reverence and love for the Divine Links (*Naam*, Word, the Inner Voice of God, *Kalma* or *Kalm-i-Qadim*, *Akashbani*, or *Bang-i-Asmani*) which He makes manifest in them.

A Master cannot be respected by reason of His mansion but His mansion because of Him. So the Holy One is the most respectable, lovable, and worthy of all reverence. He gives the Divine contact and an experience of forgetting for the moment our physical self. Then we have visible glimpses of the Divine Links within us and by degrees gain more and more of the mystic experience. In His *Satsangs* or spiritual discourses, many past sins are given a quick shrift. In His company, maybe in thought, in correspondence, or in meditation, much benefit is derived so far as the karmas and the sinful associations are concerned. Though there is no end to man's sins, yet at the same time there is no end to the immeasurable mercy in the vast treasure-house of God. In the journey of life, in whatever place, sect, country or society one may find himself, one's chief bag and baggage consists of *Naam* (the Holy Word) ; a contact with the living lie-lines within; the Light of God and the Voice of God. The various names of God, that we usually know and frequently repeat, are mere words of our own mintage for the Nameless Reality which is one indivisible whole, indescribable, and ineffable.

Sant Satguru or the Master Saint is the Holy Father. He

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comes from afar and for the benefit of all, the sinners and the virtuous alike, for both are equally bound in the worldly fetters, may be of steel or of gold. He loves all and love leads to forgiveness. Never fear to approach Him simply because you are a sinner. He would not allow or hand over any of His children to the reformatory or the prison-house for correction nor submit him to any of the third-degree methods. A loving and kindly father would never do this. The Master would Himself scold or give a little of bodily suffering to correct his erring child and would yet ever remain with him, although unseen, upholding him from within until the short period of trouble is over. He acts just like a master-potter who while gently striking the pitcher-on-the-wheel from without with a mallet to give proper shape to it, keeps the other hand inside to save it from breaking. The Master's love is unbounded. The kingdom of a *Darvesh* is one of grace.

The duty of a superintendent in a jail is to keep the prisoners in prison, to chasten, and to reform them. Similarly, the aim of the deities and divine incarnates (*Avtaras*) has always been to keep men tied to themselves by showering the gifts of various *ridhis* and *sidhis* on them. (This refers to the granting of gifts, boons, favors, wealth, ease, and comfort in worldly vocations and giving super-human powers for doing good or ill.) These limited salvations and comforts they grant to their devotees are only up to the stage which they themselves have attained and they may ever permit nearness of sojourn in the various regions wherein they preside. They cannot help in the bringing about of union with the Almighty because these subordinate powers are themselves deprived of this highest privilege.

The *sidhis*, or extraordinary powers referred to above, are yogic powers which of themselves come to aspirants after Truth with a little *sadhan* (practice) but these are positive hindrances in the way to God-realization, for one is generally

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tempted to indulge in miracles like thought-reading, foretelling, trans-visions, trans-penetrations, wish-fulfilling, spiritual healing, hypnotic trances, magnetic influences and the like. These *sidhis* are of eight kinds:

Anima: To become invisible to all external eyes.

Mahima: To extend body to any size.

Garima: To make body as heavy as one wishes.

Laghima: To make body as light as one may like.

Prapti: To get anything one likes by mere wishing.

Ishtwa: To attain all glories for the self.

Prakayma: To be able to fulfill the wishes of others.

Vashitwa: To bring others under influence and control.

A practical *Mahatma*, on the other hand, having access to the highest domain, forgives, liberates, and grants admittance to the Kingdom of God during one's lifetime, provided, of course, one is completely determined to surrender one's self to Him and do His bidding with a loving and a sincere heart.* This is rather a difficult task for those who are in the habit of obeying the dictates of their own minds. It is the fluctuating nature of the uncultured and uncontrolled mind to accept one thing at one time and to revolt against the same at another time. The Saints like Maulana Rumi even go so far as to say:

Come, come again, and still again, even if thou hast
broken thy troth a thousand times;

* For details, refer to Appendix II at the end.

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For there is always a place for thee in the saving
grace of a Master-Saint.

Once you have become Master's own, He will never abandon you although you may succumb to weakness in a moment of trial and tribulation and leave Him or go astray from the Path. The Christ-power has declared: "I shall never leave thee nor forsake thee till the end of the world." He has His own law of love and mercy to deal with every one at every moment, even though one may prolong one's course of self-discipline by spurning the Master's love. The source of all peace and glory lies above the physical body and inside man. One who has no inner peace, should give proper nourishment to the self, the mind and the soul. The Word or *Naam* is the true "Comforter," the peace-giver and the bestower of tranquility and salvation. The common dictionary meaning of the word "salvation" may not be taken as mere release from sin. It is freeing oneself from the cycle of births and deaths and union of the spirit with the Lord, and spiritual life in Eternity.

The average man makes a hoax of salvation. So also do various sectarian circles. The founders of the various religious orders have related their own spiritual experiences of the inner regions to which they had had an access, and described them as the climax or the ultimate goal of salvation and life-everlasting. The Master-Saint is a visitor of all the heavenly regions and describes His actual position sometimes in the form of parables. He, in no ambiguous words, declares: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me, shall not walk in darkness but shall have the Light of Life." The Saints, then, stand for eternal salvation during one's present life, and not after death, for who knows what may happen then. Salvation after death may prove a mere mirage in the long run, and it is no good living one's life in a state of perpetual

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and continuous suspense. If death is a pre-condition, then salvation is but a figment of one's imagination. A real Saint releases the soul from all bondage of births and deaths right here and now. He trusts in the "death-in-life" or liberation in one's lifetime, which is technically called "*Jivan-Mukti*". The soul then can commune with the Ineffable One while in the body and ultimately merges in the Almighty God at the time of final snapping of the chords within.

It is generally thought that one gets salvation after physical death. The term "death," however, means and includes temporary and volitional withdrawal of spirit-current from the physical body and not only final disintegration and decomposition of the component parts of the physical body as is accepted in common parlance. It is absurd to think that one who has been worldly-minded during his lifetime, will instantly become a freed soul at death. The morally disciplined spiritual devotees do attain to salvation while alive and thus conquer death, the last enemy of mankind, in life. "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," declared St. Paul. A *Pandit* in life remains a *Pandit* after death also, my Master used to say.

To wind up Karmas and to relieve the soul of all its shackles, is not the portfolio of any politician, diplomat, statesman or minister or even of any government. Even the *Avtaras* (incarnations of the higher power) are helpless in this behalf. The gods and goddesses representing the lower powers of the Supreme Being also have, as stated before, to wait for human birth before they can attain to the highest.

Those souls which have not come under the protection of a genuine Master or a *Sant-Satguru*, still carry the heavy load of the *Sanchit*, *Kriyaman* and *Pralabdha* karmas on them. As for the destiny or the *Pralabdha*, the uninitiated into the *Science of the Beyond* get but a scant relief, for they have to

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tolerate these in full intensity with no relieving feature. As for the *Kriyaman* or deeds done during one's present lifetime by following the dictates of the mind, they will, without fail, have to reap in full measure the fruit thereof. This is a stringent and inexorable law, whether you believe in it or not. There is no exception to the law of karma and relentlessly it works, grinding all alike in the treadmill of time.

Our actions: good or evil, will be brought before His Court,

And by our own deeds, shall we move higher or be cast into the depths.

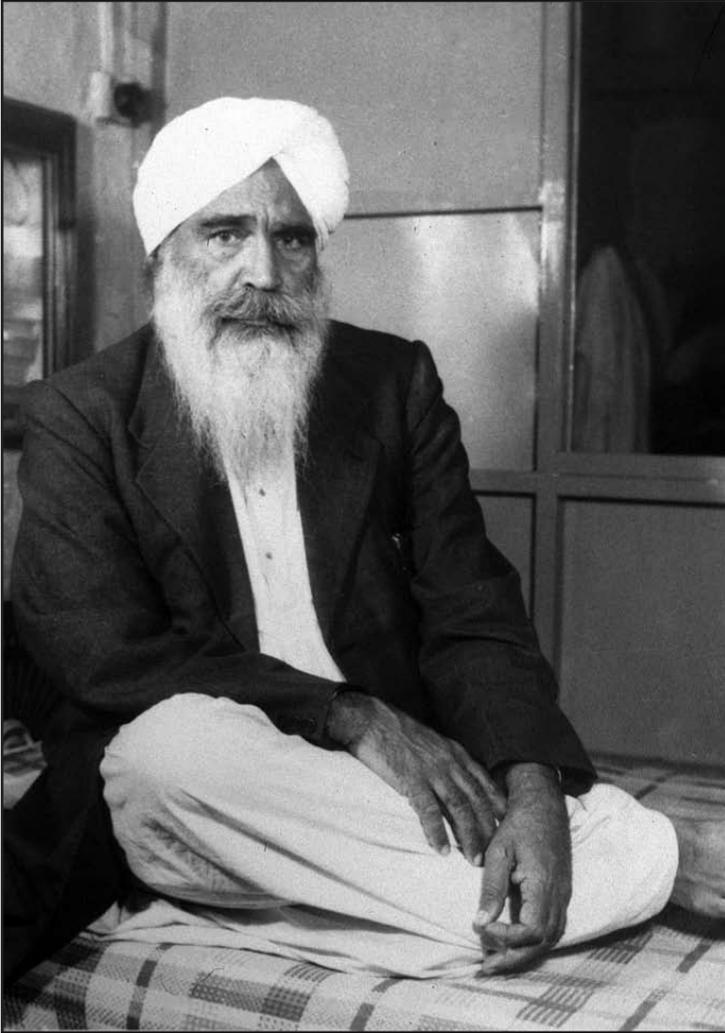
Those who have communed with the Word, their toils shall end;

And their faces shall flame with glory,

Not only shall they have salvation, O Nanak!

But many more shall find freedom with them.

It is, therefore, of paramount importance that we should seek a Master competent to wind up the otherwise endless cycle of karmas, and seek refuge at His Lotus Feet and free ourselves of the bewitching influence of our deeds.



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

APPENDIXES

THE WHEEL OF LIFE

Appendix I

TRUE LIVING

LIFE on earth, as we have it, has a tremendous bearing in building the body and the mind. We must, therefore, strive to simplify life and learn to live truly. It is true living on which everything else depends, even the search for the self and the Over-self. The importance of true living cannot be over-emphasized. It is rightly said:

Truth is higher than everything,
But higher still is true living.

Simple living and high thinking has ever been an ideal with the ancients and they always strove for it. We, in the modern age, have seldom paid much thought to it though we profess it at times and pay lip-homage to it. Though it may appear hard to achieve the highest type of life, yet it is worth our while to see what it connotes, the ways and means that may be conducive to attaining it and to adopting it for ourselves. In whatever we do; we always place some objective before us, ascertain the principles involved therein, study the methods that may lead to the desired goal, and finally make a periodical survey, a thorough check-up, to find how much nearer we have come to the end in view. In this connection, one has, of course, to devote single-minded attention and make an honest endeavor from day to day before one can note an appreciable improvement in his life and conduct, both toward himself and toward others around him.

What constitutes the life of man?—one might naturally ask. The aged one with a lot of experience in life and fed

TRUE LIVING

up with what he has seen and experienced of the world, turns to self-analysis of life. Does life consist only in eating, drinking, sleeping, having children; fearing, fretting, and fighting; snatching, hoarding and hating; in imprisoning and subordinating those that are inferior to us in strength, physical or mental, and in killing others and grabbing other people's possessions? Must we pass our days in enjoying the ill-gotten earthly gains with no other achievement in the end but to die a miserable death, with sorrow to self and to those around us, the near and dear ones who helplessly stand by and mourn? Again, what about the worldly attractions—lands, buildings, money, pets and other countless possessions which, perforce are to be left behind much against our will? In the face of all these hard facts of experience, should the hoarding of worldly riches then be our sole aim—the be-all and end-all of our existence—or should we strive for something higher and nobler, permanent and lasting that may abide with us here and hereafter? The reply is simple: the one Almighty Power, the original source and fountain-head of all life, our home of happiness, peace eternal, and the means of our liberation from fearful bondage of births, deaths, and karmas should be the main objective and the only thing worth craving and achieving, for it is the *summum bonum* of life.

The highest goal, as enunciated above, cannot be had for the mere asking or just by wishful thinking. For attaining the highest goal, we must first search out and find someone who can help us practically to achieve it; one who has himself achieved and gained the Kingdom of God for himself and can help us to do likewise. As light comes from light, so does life from life. He will constantly remind us of our long forgotten home, the Garden of Eden, now the lost province to us, and then show us our short-comings in our every day life, and finally, help us to lead a super-active life of real

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purity instead of the superficial and purposeless existence which we have at present. This world is a house full of smoke and soot, where one cannot but get a smudge on his person here and there even if he keeps all his wits about him and despite all his endeavors to escape therefrom. Now these smudges and stains, deep, thick, and numberless as they are and permeating the very pattern of our life, cannot be washed off by our own unguided and unaided efforts. Each man is compelled by the propelling force of his nature to play his part on the stage of life, and to participate in vain acts which lead nowhere unless there is the guiding hand of some Master-soul, to steer our barks clear through sandbanks and sea-shoals. Such a divine helper is a holy Saint, one may call Him a *Guru* (or a torchbearer), a teacher, a *Satguru* (a holy Divine who is one with Truth), a *Murshid-i-Kamil* (a perfect Master), a *Hadi* (or guide), a brother, a friend, an elder, or by any other appellation one may like.

Further analysis would show that the life of man depends mostly on two main things: *Ahar* (his diet) and *Vihar* (his dealings with his fellow beings and others). These cover the life-program of a person. In both these spheres, one acts either on tradition or by the limited information gathered from books or from hearsay. These form the base from which he gathers his design of culture and civilization, which gets ingrained in him and occupies his mind and intellect.

There hardly exists any common-sense course to guide a man systematically in his physical, mental or spiritual life. To escape from his chaotic state, one has to thrash out and analyze the subject to its barest component parts. A thorough analysis is needed for molding life in its three-fold aspect: physical, mental and spiritual.

AHAR OR DIET

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Diet naturally plays a major role in the problem of life. We need food for the upkeep of our physical being. We are compelled by nature to exist in this world so long as our allotted span of life is determined by destiny, or karmas do not run out. For our very existence we have to subsist on one thing or another. Man is quite helpless in this respect. The law of karma is nature's unseen method of keeping the world in its iron grip, so as to keep it peopled and going. It, therefore, becomes all the more necessary that man should guard against contracting eating habits thoughtlessly, heedlessly, and indiscriminately. As we cannot do without food, we must select at least such articles of diet as may prove the least harmful in our spiritual pursuit. Our diet should not contract for us unnecessary karmic debts which it may be possible to avoid by a little care. With this end in view, let us study nature.

Man's diet comes mainly from earth, i.e. land, air and water. We also see that life exists in all that is moving and static. The moving creatures live upon each other, as well as on static creation—to wit, vegetables, plants, shrubs, herbs, trees and the like. Man, however, makes friends with and loves creatures (birds and animals) as live upon the life in nature and makes them his pets. The ancients knew well that man, bird, and animal were all bound up with the same karmic bond. Man with the thought of common brotherhood worked hard both for himself and for his pets. He tilled the land, grew fruits, and produced food both for himself, his bird friends, and his kine and oxen. But in course of time, he grew ease-loving, with the result that he first preyed upon the animals' milk and then upon their flesh as well.

According to the moral, social, and spiritual codes of conduct, one must not interfere with the lives of any animal in

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God's creation. In India, this standard of living is enunciated as *Ahimsa* or non-injury to all living creatures. This led to the vegetarian diet as contradistinguished from the non-vegetarian diet. As we think deeply over the natural and unnatural phases of diet, we come to a better understanding of the problem of *Gunas* or the innate propensities, natural inclinations and latent tendencies that are inborn in all sentient beings.

Diet must be classified into grains, cereals, vegetables and fruits which are classed as *Satvic* or *Satoguni* diet that is pure and produces serenity and equipoise, befitting sages and seers. The saints and hermits who retired to secluded caves and huts for meditation always preferred *Kand* (potatoes), sweet potatoes, *zamikund* or artichoke etc. which grow and develop under the ground. They also took *mool* and *phal*: the edible roots of which also grow under ground like radish, turnips, and beet root. The *phal* (fruits) provided them with sufficient vitamins and organic salts in their original form to keep them fit for a life of concentration and meditation. Some of the foods naturally grow in abundance while others are produced with some effort. The grains and cereals were meant for the general public.

Satvic, or pure diet of *mool*, *kand*, *phal* and cow's milk etc., prolongs life and cures a number of diseases and ailments. Its utility has come to be realized even by the medical science. Now-a-days many medicines are prepared from herbs, fruits, and grains and these have been found to be very efficacious. Again, all natural curative methods of sun-bathing, sea-bathing, mud-bathing, water-bathing, massage, physiotherapy, nature-therapy, chromotherapy are producing wonderful results. The *Satvic* foods and simple living are conducive to the development of highest culture or civilization. We must remember that food is made for man and not man for food. Eat to live and not live to eat, should

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be our maxim in life. By following this course, we create receptivity for higher things in life, ethical and spiritual, leading gradually to self-knowledge and God-knowledge.

Rajsic or energy producing diet includes besides vegetarian foods, products like milk, cream, butter and ghee, etc., from animals other than cows, if taken in moderation. In ancient India, the use of milk was restricted mainly to the princely order as the princes needed extra energy for keeping under their control rough, turbulent and barbarous people not living up to any set principles of life. The milking of dairy cattle was permissible only after the cows were bred and treated with extra care, and sufficient milk was left in their udders for feeding their own off-spring, the calf. The residue of milk was allowed to man under special circumstances. This special rule was intended to prevent degeneration of the early civilization. The limited use of milk was also made by *rishis* in ancient times, who lived in comparative isolation, all by themselves, and devoted most of their time to meditation in seclusion and they left a lot of milk for the use and growth of the animal progeny.

The traditional custom of using only the residue of milk is still prevalent in some of the villages in India. But today, man in his lust for unbridled power is violating all the laws of nature under the pretext of the so-called freedom that he claims for himself. Man has unfortunately come to believe in the principle of the “survival of the fittest” and has, therefore, to pay dearly for his unwise choice in the matter.

The only consideration of man, today, is to obtain as much milk as possible even at the cost of the calves themselves. In some places, he throws them in boiling water immediately after they are born, and applies milking machines to the udders to draw out the last drop of milk to keep pace with trade competition and profit-making. This is what some

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proudly call high technical skill and civilization. Our budding reformers of today thrust such trades and practices on man instead of improving agriculture and rearing and developing livestock, both of which are harmless pursuits and could relieve the pressure of want so much talked of these days.

Tamsic or stupefying diet consists of meat and liquors, garlic, etc., or, in fact, any other diet, natural or unnatural, stale or fresh. Those who resort to free and uncontrolled eating, live to eat and not eat to live. Their aim in life is hedonistic and their slogan is “eat, drink and be merry.” They indulge headlong in what they call the sweet pleasures of life. When blessed with small powers of concentration, they direct all their energies (mental and physical) towards glory of the little self in them, the egoistic mind. Man is pleased to term this course of action as higher reaction of civilization. This sort of living is strictly prohibited, by the Masters of the highest order, to those seeking the knowledge of the spirit in man and the final liberation of the soul from the shackles of mind and matter.

Will thinking persons just stop a while to cogitate on and realize the true position of man? Why is he so proud to call himself, or to be called, the noblest of creatures, the roof and crown of the creation? Whither is man moving headlong? Is he not standing on the brink of a terrific precipice with an extremely sharp declivity, ready to topple down any moment? He has, by his conduct, exposed himself recklessly to chance winds of Nature’s vengeance. Hourly he stands in danger of being swept to the deepest depths of physical and moral annihilation.

Man has taken his lessons in diet from the beasts of the jungle and acts like a wild creature. He delights in taking the flesh not only of the harmless creatures like kine and goats, deer and sheep, the innocent fowls of the air and fish of the

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water, but actually partakes of the human flesh and the human blood to satisfy his insatiate hunger for gold and riches. He has not yet finished his course of self-aggrandizement which he proudly calls progress. He might well ponder over the basic principles on which the Masters advise, and prescribe vegetable diet. Vegetables, too, contain life in a latent form, as has now been proved by scientists all the world over. Still, as we have to play our part in this panorama of life on the stage of the world and have therefore to maintain ourselves, to keep body and soul together, we have to depend on produce of the soil.

Yes, of course, there is life in vegetables, fruits and grains. The essential element of life is growth and decay. The truth of this can be traced from the earliest times. It is not a new verdict, though some of the scientific minds have rediscovered this truth and lay claim to it as their own.

Now let us come to the point. In the entire creation, the law of nature holds that life depends on life. Like creatures in other grades of creation, man also maintains himself by eating something containing life. Outwardly it appears that with regard to contracting karmas, man is in the same boat with other creatures in the lower strata of life, animals, reptiles, and the like.

Nature has one other propelling wheel working in this material world; the law of Evolution. It provides that all living beings pass from one position to another. As they travel from one order of creation to the next higher, each being has a separate value from the lower one. The basis of determining the face value as well as the intrinsic value is matter and intellect, the more valuable the constituents of matter, present in a being in prominent form, the more the intellect and more the value of the being. Saints apply this law in the solution of the problem of diet for man. Whether

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he heeds it or not, Saints place this law before man, so that he may reform his diet, and avoid, as much as possible, a heavy load of karmic chains in which he is inextricably held fast.

Each kind of diet has its own inherent effect on man, detrimental to the acquisition of the highest aim: self-knowledge and God-knowledge. This law coincides with what man generally accepts although he is unaware of the reason for his actions. Comparing the following data in everyday life will confirm, to man's surprise, that what he takes as acceptable in social living remains in total agreement with the law of nature here explained.

The man's body, with all the five *tatwas* (or creative and component elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether) in full activity is valued the most. This is why he tops the list of beings in the creation and is considered next to God—his Creator. Man's killing of fellow-creatures is considered as the most heinous of crimes, which merits capital punishment or the death penalty. Next value is placed on quadrupeds and beasts having four *tatwas* in active operation in them, the fifth, ether, being almost absent or forming a negligible portion. The wanton killing of another's animal, therefore, entails a penalty equivalent to the price of the animal in question. Then comes the place of birds, with three active elements in them, viz. water, fire and air and hence are considered of a nominal value. Lesser still is the value placed on creatures who have two elements active—viz. earth and fire—and the other three existing in a dormant or latent form, as in reptiles, worms and insects, which are killed and trampled without the least compunction as no penalty attaches in their case. Least value is placed on roots, vegetables, and fruits in which the element of water alone is active and predominates, while the remaining four elements are altogether in a dormant state. Thus, karmically considered, vegetarian and fruitarian diet,

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in fact, constitutes the least pain-producing diet, and man by partaking of these, contracts the least karmic debt. He is, therefore, to be content with this type of food so long as he cannot dispense with it and take to something which may involve no consequence at all.

Now let us see what the *Essene Gospel of St. John* says in this context:

But they (the disciples) answered him: “Whither should we go, Master, for with you are the words of eternal life? Tell us, what are the sins we must shun, that we may never more see disease?”

Jesus answered: “Be it so according to your faith,” and he sat down among them, saying: XXI

“It was said to them of old time, ‘Honor thy Heavenly Father and thy earthly mother, and do their commandments, that thy days may be long upon the earth.’ And next afterwards was given this commandment: ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ for life is given to all by God, and that which God has given, let not man take away. For I tell you truly, from one Mother proceeds all that lives upon the earth. Therefore, he who kills, kills his brother. And from him will the Earthly Mother turn away, and will pluck from him her quickening breasts. And he will be shunned by her angels, and Satan will have his dwelling in his body. And the flesh of slain beasts in his body will become his own tomb. For I tell you truly, he who kills, kills himself, and who so eats the flesh of slain beasts, eats of the body of death . . . And their death will become his death . . . For the wages of sin is death. Kill not, neither eat the flesh of your innocent prey, lest you become the slaves of Satan. For that is the path of suffering, and it leads unto death. But do the Will of God that His angels may serve

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you on the way of life. Obey, therefore, the words of God: "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat; and to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is breath of life, I give every green herb for meat. Also the milk of everything that moveth and that liveth upon each shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given unto them, so I give their milk unto you. But flesh, and the blood which quickens it, shall ye not eat..."

XXII

Then another (disciple) said, "Moses, the greatest in Israel, suffered our forefathers to eat the flesh of clean beasts, and forbade the flesh of unclean beasts. Why, therefore, do you forbid us the flesh of all beasts? Which law comes from God? That of Moses or your law?"

XXIII

. . . And Jesus continued, "God commanded your forefathers: 'Thou shalt not kill.' But their heart was hardened and they killed. Then Moses desired that at least they should not kill men, and he suffered them to kill beasts. And then the heart of your forefathers was hardened yet more, and they killed men and beasts likewise. But I say to you: Kill neither men, nor beasts, nor yet the food which goes into your mouth. For if you eat living food, the same will quicken you, but if you kill your food, the dead food will kill you also. For life comes only from life, and death comes always from death. For everything which kills your food, kills your bodies also. And everything which kills your bodies kills your souls also. And your bodies become what your foods are, even as your spirits, likewise, become what your thoughts are . . ."

XXIV

VIHAR OR SOCIAL CONDUCT

“So eat always from the table of God: the fruits of the trees, the grain and grasses of the field, the milk of beasts, and the honey of bees. For everything beyond these is Satan, and leads by the way of sins and of diseases unto death. But the foods which you eat from the abundant table of God give strength and youth to your body, and you will never see disease . . .”

XXV

VIHAR OR SOCIAL CONDUCT

Man-making is another portfolio of a Saint. To make man fully entitled to the highest knowledge of soul and All-soul, is His first and foremost mission. From seekers after Truth, the Saint requires complete purification of the body, mind, and intellect since this makes a man complete and whole before undertaking the untying of the Gordian knot between body and spirit. A mutilated and a truncated man can neither know himself nor can he know God. What line of action then should the aspiring man follow? This is the most vital question and yet mostly ignored, and passed over, with not much thought. The scanty information that is available to the average man is derived either from society or from the stray hints dropped by the religiously minded, or from the study of the sacred books. No attempt is, however, made by man to take up any definite course or formula even on the intellectual level. In fact he never had time enough to pay heed to this problem. Perhaps religious bigotry or fear does not allow the clergy to draw the attention of the masses to this problem. They may find it a hopeless task to draw up a code of dietetics because of the energetic materialism prevalent everywhere. Still there are a few who have no biased views, and study the literature of the East with an open mind. But they have to face many difficulties because of the peculiar terminology foreign to them. The words are

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not explicit enough in themselves or hardly convey with exactness the intentions of the writers.

The wise ancients—the *Rishis* and the *Munis* of yore—have thoroughly thrashed out the problem of human life. They exhaustively analyzed its various aspects to arrive at a feasible culture-program for man in search of perfection. In this way an acceptable standard of universal civilization or reform was evolved, which comprehended knowledge of self or soul and the attainment of the highest ultimate Reality—the great Truth. They began by methodically investigating *Gunas* (qualities)—the spinal back-bone and the primal source of all the activities of karma on the fulcrum of which the mind swings. Next they dissected *Gunas* and divided them into three distinct groups, each being quite unlike the other.

- (1) *Satogun*—The most superior way of acting. It can be described as pure living with a mental equipoise.
- (2) *Rajogun*—It is interpreted as the middle course of acting in a business-like fashion of give and take.
- (3) *Tamogun*—It is the most inferior way of acting and may be called living purely for one's selfish ends, with no thought whatsoever of others.

This subject can be easily understood by taking a couple of examples:

(a) Consider, for example, the problem of service and help.

(i) "X" has made it the principle of his life to serve others but does not expect any service or help from others in return for what he has done. Do good and cast it on the water, is his rule in life.

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(ii) “Y” serves and helps and expects the same in return. This may be likened to an exchange in service as in commercial establishments on the principle of give and take or barter—do unto others as you would like others to do unto you.

(iii) “Z” neither serves nor helps others, but considers that he has a right to help and service from others for which he is not bound to give anything whatsoever in return.

(b) Now consider the question of charity:

(i) “X” gives and forgets and does not like to accept anything in return—his principle being to render selfless service to the helpless and the needy.

(ii) “Y” gives and expects a return for the good service rendered in one form or another.

(iii) “Z” only takes help and service whenever in need but never gives any in return, even when another may be in dire distress under his very nose.

It will be seen that (1) the conduct of “X” is the best and is *Satogun*. His good deeds earn merit for him in the eyes of every one in this and even his Creator’s world. (2) “Y” earns no credit for his good acts because he almost balances them by his business-like living of give and take, with no credit balance in his favor. (3) “Z” on the contrary loads himself with debt or liability for which he will have to undergo the karmic process, perhaps spreading endlessly from generation to generation.

The Masters, therefore, advise men to adopt course No. 1 and in no case to go lower than No. 2, if at all there be any need. Similarly, any one can chalk out his or her own program of life and determine the course of action. So

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much then for the dealings of man in life as a member of the social order to which he belongs. This, however, is not an end in itself but only a means to the end—the end being to become *neh-karma*, that is to say, doing karma not only without any attachment or desire for the fruit thereof but as a *swadharm* (an action in inaction) and then heading on toward unfoldment of the self within and experiencing the source of all Love, Life and Light; in which we actually live and have our very being just like a fish in water that knows not what water is.

LIFE OF SELF-SURRENDER

Appendix II

LIFE OF SELF-SURRENDER

THE problem of *Achar* or personal conduct of man as an individual is one of prime importance for success on the spiritual path. A loving faith in, and a complete surrender to, the Will of God or to that of His Elect, the Godman, constitute the basic principles for the life of the seeker after Truth.

The sages and the scriptures alike all tell us that while living in the world, we should not conduct ourselves as if we are of the world, but maintain an attitude of self-abnegation or total detachment from the world and all that is of the world. We should, therefore, live like a lotus-leaf which has its roots in the mire below but raises its head far above in the light of the glorious sun shining over the murky water, or like a royal swan (a water-fowl) that sails majestically on the surface of the water which is its native habitat, and yet can fly high and dry if and when it chooses, or feels the necessity, to do so.

This kind of disinterested isolation or separation from one's surroundings and above all from his lower self, the body, the mind and the mental world, comes only when one dissolves his ego or the individual will into the Will of God or the Will of his Guru, the Godman, for then he acts like a mere pantomime in a dumb show which dances and plays at the will of the wire-puller behind the screen. This is called complete surrender, which silently craves for "Not my but Thy will, O Lord," Such an attitude easily helps to make a person *Neh-Karma*. While apparently doing one thing or another, he is now not doing anything on his own

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but is carrying out the Will of his Father-God or his Divine Preceptor for he verily sees within Him the Divine Plan as it is and he is just drifting along the Great Current of Life and finds himself a conscious instrument in the invisible hands directing all his movements.

Self-surrender then means surrendering one's everything to God or His Elect, the Preceptor (God-in-man), including one's body, riches and his very self (the thinking mind). It does not mean a state of total bankruptcy for an individual, as some might be prone to think. The great God and His Elect are the giver of all these things and do not stand in need of those very gifts which they have already given freely and in abundance to their children for their best and legitimate use. We in ignorance think of these as our own and adopt an attitude of aggressive possessiveness and try to grab them by all means fair or foul and then guard them jealously, with all our might and main. Attached to these gifts and clutching them fast, we forget the Great Giver Himself and herein creeps imperceptibly the great delusion, the root cause of all our sufferings. No doubt these things, having come to us, are ours but they have been given to us temporarily as a sacred trust to be utilized according to the Will of the Donor which, of course, is all perfect and immaculately clean with no flaw in it. But as we live in the realm of matter, we, with all our worldly wits about us, cannot escape attracting to us the gross impressions and allowing them to accumulate freely from day to day until they form a granite wall around us and we, losing clarity of perception, become blind to the reality and come to identify the self in us with the *pinda* and *pindi-manas* (the body and the bodily mind). With these smoke-colored glasses and blinkers added to them, we dwarf our vision and see not the white radiance of Reality as it is now covered by a dome of many-colored glass. The Saints tell us of the Reality and help us to break these false glasses, tear down the vision-limiting blinkers, and see the manifested

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world as a beautiful handicraft of God. They tell us that the world we see is a reflection of God and God dwells therein. This being the case, we must keep God's gifts of body, mind and riches, neat and clean as when they were given to us and use them wisely in His service and the service of His creation, according to His Divine Will which is already wrought in the pattern of our being (or else how could we exist?) ; but we have, by a continuous sense of separation from the Reality, lost sight of it in the mighty swirl of the world and also lost our hold on the vital Life-lines within: the Light and Sound of God. The Saints tell us to reverse the process from projection outside to the reality inside by understanding the true values of life, for "life" is much more precious than the flesh (body) and flesh more than the raiments (worldly riches) with which we clothe our little selves of the body and of the mind, wrongly thinking them as ours and making use of them recklessly and egoistically for sensual pleasures and earthly shows. If once we rise above body-consciousness, then we know what we are, how best to utilize our gifts in the service of God and God's plan and not in sinful activities born of carnal appetites, self aggrandizement, or as means for acquiring temporal power or for personal benefit and gain. This was the great lesson which the sage Ashtavakra gave to Raja Janak after giving him a practical experience of the Reality. We have in fact to part with nothing but egoistic attachment to the treasure-house of the heart and this makes us none the poorer for it but attracts more of the love-laden gifts from the Supreme Father when He sees the wisdom of His child, a prodigal son before but now grown wiser. This is called surrendering the little self with all its adjuncts of body, mind and riches for the sake of the higher self (soul) according to the Divine Will and becoming *Neh-Karma*, the very goal of life.

Now we will take an illustration to make the point

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more explicit. In the time of Guru Arjan, the fifth in line of succession to Guru Nanak, we have an account of a model sikh, Bhai Bhikari by name. A disciple once asked the Guru to introduce him to a *Gurbhakta* or a devoted disciple. The Guru directed him, with a letter, to Bhai Bhikari and asked him to stay with the Bhai Sahib for a few days. Bhikari received his brother-in-faith very warmly and entertained him to the best of his means. The day he arrived, his host was calmly sewing a piece of cloth which looked like a coffin-covering. The disciple, after spending a few days happily in his company, proposed to go back, but Bhikari requested him to stay on for some time more and to attend his son's wedding which was due shortly. At the loving insistence of the host, he agreed to do so. The wedding day came. There were festivities in the house but Bhikari was as serene as ever. The disciple like all the rest accompanied the wedding procession, witnessed the merry nuptials, and escorted the bride's procession back to Bhikari's house. The following day, as ill-luck would have it, Bhikari's only son, the newly-wedded youth, took ill suddenly and died. Bhikari quietly took out the cloth that he had prepared on purpose a few days earlier, wrapped the dead body of his son in it, took it to the cremation ground, and performed the last rites with his usual equanimity. Bhikari's steadfast attitude of composure all through this varying panorama of life, struck the disciple dumb with astonishment, for in Bhikari there was no trace of joy and sorrow, but perfect resignation to the Will of the Lord, which he knew right from the beginning; and he had acted accordingly, without exhibiting any personal feelings or emotions in the least.

Guru Nanak used to pray: "O Lord! Do nothing of what I say, but administer Thy Will." Similarly, Sant Kabir used to call himself a dog with Moti as his name and described all his doings, as those of his Lord who held the leash in

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His hands and dragged him wherever he liked. Christ always prayed: "Let Thy Will prevail on earth as it is in heaven." "May Thy Will be done" has ever been the concluding part in the daily prayer of the Hindu monks, Muslim *darveshs* and Christian priests, followed by the words "*Tatha Astu*" or "*Amen*" all of which mean "may it be so."

From the above, it should be clear how truly sincere disciples of the Masters and the Masters themselves always consider that they have no individual existence of their own apart from that of the Godman or of God. Such people read the past, the present and the future as an open book and do things in conformity with the Divine Plan. This leads one to the irresistible conclusion that God helps those souls who do His Will. But this is only for men of firm faith and is not to be taken as a means of escape by ordinary individuals living always on the plane of the senses, for they are governed by the law that God helps those who help themselves. The quality of self-surrender, with whatever degree of faith, does bear its own fruit, and quickly, according to the level at which it is practiced. By gradual experience one learns of its full value as he advances on the path until he reaches a stage when he altogether loses his own ego in the Divine Will and thus himself becomes *Neh-Karma*, the crown and glory of all human existence. A loving faith in the inherent goodness of God and complete self-surrender to the Divine Will lead one on the high-road to spirituality without any great continuing effort on the part of an aspirant. These two things constitute the secret "Sesame" and the magic key that flings wide open the portals of the Kingdom of God that lies within the temple of the human body which we all are: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and God verily resides therein?" say all the Scriptures.



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(1894-1974)

GLOSSARY AND INDEX
OF FOREIGN TERMS AND NAMES

- ABDULLAH Disciple of Hazrat Mian Mir,
a great saint 32
- ACHAR Personal conduct 77
- AHAR Diet 64, 65
- AHIMSA Non-violence; non-injury 3, 49, 66
- AKASHBANI Heavenly Music; *Naam*; Word 54
- ANIMA The power to become invisible to external eyes;
one of the eight *sidhis* 56
- ARTHA Economic or material well-being; one of the four
spheres of human activity 4
- ASHRAMS The four stages in life, as envisioned by the
ancients 4
- ASHTAVAKRA A great *rishi* of old 51, 79
- ATAM GUNAS Attributes of soul 3
- ATMAN Spirit 3
- AVTARAS Incarnations 29, 55, 58
- BABA FARID (1173-1265) A Muslim Divine 41
- BABER The first Mughal King of India 28
- BAHISHT Paradise 3
- BAIKUNTH Paradise 3
- BANG-I-ASMANI Heavenly Sound; Word 54
- BHAGWAT One of the eighteen Hindu Puranas 35, 36
- BHAI BHIKARI A devotee of the Sikh Gurus 80
- BHAI MANI SINGH A devotee of the Sikh Gurus 31
- BHAJAN Listening to Heavenly Music within 52
- BRAHMAND A Grand Division of Creation, involving
three planes 29

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- BRAHMANS** Priests; the highest of the four Hindu castes 4
- BRAHMCHARYA** The practice of celibacy; also, first of the four *ashrams*, the stage of education 4
- BUDDHA** The Awakened or Enlightened One; Seer of the Inner Light. Title given to Prince Siddhartha Gautama (583-463 B.C.), founder of the Buddhist religion 5, 7, 13, 30
- DARVESH** Muslim term for mystic or Godman 15, 29, 40, 55
- DEVAS** Gods, divine beings 29
- DHARITRASHTRA, KING** Blind ruler of the *Mahabharata* age 11
- DHARMA** Moral or religious basis upholding and supporting the Universe; life-principle; group karmas of society or nation 4, 7, 33
- DHARMA-KAYA** Essence of the Universe; body pulsating with Life Principle 7
- DHYAN** Meditation; contemplation 7
- DO JANMA** Twice born 15
- ERAF** Purgatory 46
- FANA-FI-SHEIKH** Self-effacement in the *Murshid* or Master 14
- GANDHARVAS** A class of angels 29
- GARIMA** The power to make the body heavy as one wishes; one of the eight *sidhis* 56
- GREHASTHA** Householder; one of the four *ashrams* 4
- GUNAS** The three qualities: *Satva* (purity), *Rajas* (activity), and *Tamas* (inertia) 40, 66, 74, 75
- GURBANI** Writings of the Sikh Masters or *Adi Granth*; esoterically, *Shabd* or Word 42
- GURBHAKTA** A devotee of the Guru 9
- GURU** Spiritual teacher or Master; literally, dispeller of darkness or torchbearer 64, 77, 80

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- GURU ARJAN (1563-1606) Fifth Guru of the Sikhs 80
- GURU GOBIND SINGH (1666-1708) Tenth Guru of the Sikhs 5, 50
- GURU NANAK (1469-1539) First Guru of the Sikhs 20, 30, 39, 42, 45, 80
- HADI Guide 64
- HAZRAT MIAN MIR A Muslim mystic, contemporary with Guru Arjan 32
- HAZUR BABA SAWAN SINGH JI (1858-1948) The Master of Master Kirpal Singh x, xi, 46, 53
- HUMAYUN King Baber's son 28
- ISHTWA The power to attain all glories for the self 56
- JAGAT GURU Spiritual Master of the world; universal Master 17
- JAP JI An epitome of the Sikh Scriptures 20, 42
- JIVA Soul when encased by any or all of the three bodies: physical, astral, or causal 5-6, 16, 18, 21, 27, 29
- JIVAN MUKAT Liberated soul 16, 35, 40
- JIVAN MUKTI Liberation from the cycle of births and deaths while living in the physical body; true Salvation 57
- KABIR (1398-1518) A great poet-saint; contemporary with Guru Nanak 30, 52, 80
- KALMA or KALM-I-QADIM Audible Life Stream; Sound Current; Word 54
- KAMA Passion; desire; one of the four spheres of human activity 4, 5
- KARAM Kindness, mercy, compassion, grace 5
- Karma-REHAT Doing Karma in accordance with the Divine Plan; being actionless in action 5
- KarmaN-SRIRA Karmic shell or subtle body 6
- KSHATRIYAS Warriors and rulers; the second of the four Hindu castes 4
- KINNARS A class of angels 29

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- KRISHNA, LORD A great Hindu Incarnate of ancient times, whose teachings are expounded in the *Bhagavad Gita* 11, 29, 53
- KRIYAMAN Karmas one performs freely in present earth life, which will make or mar the future; willful actions 11, 13, 14, 22, 27, 59
- KUKarmas Evil deeds 3
- KURVAS One of the parties in the great battle of *Mahabharata* 11
- LAGHIMA The power to make one's body as light as one wishes; one of the eight *sidhis* 56
- MAHATMA A Great Soul ix, 56-57
- MAHIMA The power to extend one's body to any size; one of the eight *sidhis* 56
- MAULANA RUMI (1207-1273) A Persian Saint, author of *Masnavi* 56
- MAYA Illusion x, 35
- MOKSHA Salvation; liberation from the cycle of births and deaths; one of the four spheres of human activity 4, 36
- MUNI Sage or holy man 74
- MURSHID or MURSHID-I-KAMIL Muslim term for Spiritual Master or perfect guide 17, 36, 53, 63
- NAAM Word; *Logos*; Sound Current; the creative aspect of God; God in action xi, xii, 2, 22, 30, 44, 54, 57
- NADIR SHAH A King of Persia who massacred Delhi 33
- NASHEDH Degrading, derogatory karmas 3
- NEH-Karma Doing Karma in accordance with the Divine Plan, as a conscious co-worker with the Power of God; actionless in action 5, 12, 35, 40, 76, 79, 81
- NETYA Required Karmas 4
- NISH-KAMA Karma Karma performed without any attachment to or desire for the fruits thereof 5

GLOSSARY

- PANDIT One learned in Hindu Scriptures 35, 58
- PIND Physical universe; physical body; the lowest and least spiritual division of Creation 29, 79
- PINDI MANAS Bodily mind 65, 78
- PRAKAYMA The ability to fulfill wishes of others; one of the eight *sidhis* 56
- PRAKRITIS Twenty-five manifestations of nature 5
- PRALABDHA Luck, fate, destiny; that Karma which caused our present life, and which has to be worked off before death 11, 13, 19, 22, 25, 28, 58
- PRAPTI The power to get anything one likes by mere wishing; one of the eight *sidhis* 56
- PRASHCHIT Repentance 7
- PURANAS Hindu Scriptures 36
- RAJA JANAK A great saintly king of ancient India 46, 51, 79
- RAJA PRIKSHAT A Hindu king of old 35
- RAJAS GUNA or RAJOGUN One of the three *gunas*; the quality of activity; middle course, businesslike fashion, give and take 40, 74
- RAJSIC Pertaining to *Rajas guna*; as applied to diet, energy-producing 67
- RAMA God 50
- RAMA, LORD A great Hindu Incarnate and hero of the *Ramayana* 29
- RAM CHARITRA MANS A Hindi *Ramayana* by Tulsi Das (sixteenth century) 29
- RIDHIS Supernatural powers 56
- RISHI Sage or seer; usually refers to God-men of ancient times, such as those who compiled the Hindu Scriptures 51, 67, 74
- SADH or SADHU Disciplined soul; saint; popularly, wandering ascetic 36, 42
- SADHANS Spiritual, mental and physical exercises 1, 56

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- SAKYA MUNI One of the titles of Lord Buddha 30
- SANCHIT Stored Karmas 11, 12, 14, 18, 22, 25, 58
- SANT Saint; one in whom God is manifested 30
- SANT SATGURU or SATGURU Master of the Highest Order; Perfect Master; Godman; 40, 42, 46, 54, 58
- SANYAS One of the four *ashrams*; the stage of a spiritual pilgrim 4
- SAROOP Form 9
- SATSANG Discourse of a perfect Master; congregation presided over by such a Master or His representative; contact with a Master, on the outer or inner planes; literally, association with Truth 54
- SATSANGIS Disciples of a perfect Master 31
- SATVA GUNA or SATOGUN One of the three *gunas* or qualities; pure living with mental equipoise 40, 74, 75
- SATVIC Pertaining to *Satva guna*; harmonious, tranquil; as applied to diet, those foods which produce harmony and tranquility, i.e., strictly vegetarian foods 66
- SAUDHYAYA Reading of scriptural texts 7
- SIDHIS The eight extraordinary yogic powers 56
- SIMRAN Remembrance; esoterically, repetition of the Names of God 52
- SUDRAS The lowest of the four Hindu castes; manual laborers and servants of the upper three 4
- SUKAMA Good desires 3
- SUKarmas Upgrading karmas 3-4
- SURAT Attention; the expression of the Soul 23
- SURAT SHABD YOGA Absorption in Holy Word or Sacred Sound; the esoteric spiritual practice of merging with the Absolute by uniting (Yoga) the expression of the soul (*surat*) with the expression of God (*Shabd, Naam, or Word*) x, 2
- SWADHARM Action in inaction 76

GLOSSARY

- SWAMI RAM TIRATH God-realized person of recent times 50
- SWARAG Paradise 3
- TAMAS GUNA or TAMOGUN One of the three *gunas* or qualities; inertia or dullness; inferior way; living purely for one's selfish ends with no thought of others 40, 74
- TAMSIC Pertaining to *Tamas guna*; inert, dull; as applied to diet, those foods which promote inertia and weigh down the soul, such as meat, fish, eggs, liquor 68
- TAPAS Austerities 7, 45
- TATHA ASTU "May it be so," Amen; said at close of prayer in India 81
- TATWAS Creative and component elements; earth, water, fire, air, ether 70
- UND The second division of Creation, just above the physical; the astral plane 29
- UPAS Legendary tree of multitudinous desires 52
- VAIRAGYA Detachment 7, 50
- VAISHYAS Those engaged in commerce or agriculture; third of the four Hindu castes 4
- VANPRASTHA Ascetic, hermit; one of four *ashrams* 4
- YARNS Social orders; the four Hindu castes 4
- VASHITWA The power to bring others under one's influence and control; one of the eight *sidhis* 56
- VEDAS The four most holy Hindu Scriptures 36
- VIHAR Dealings, social conduct 64, 73, 75
- VIKarmas Prohibited actions 3
- YAJNAS Sacrifices 3
- YAKSHAS A class of angels 29
- YAMA Angel of Death 3



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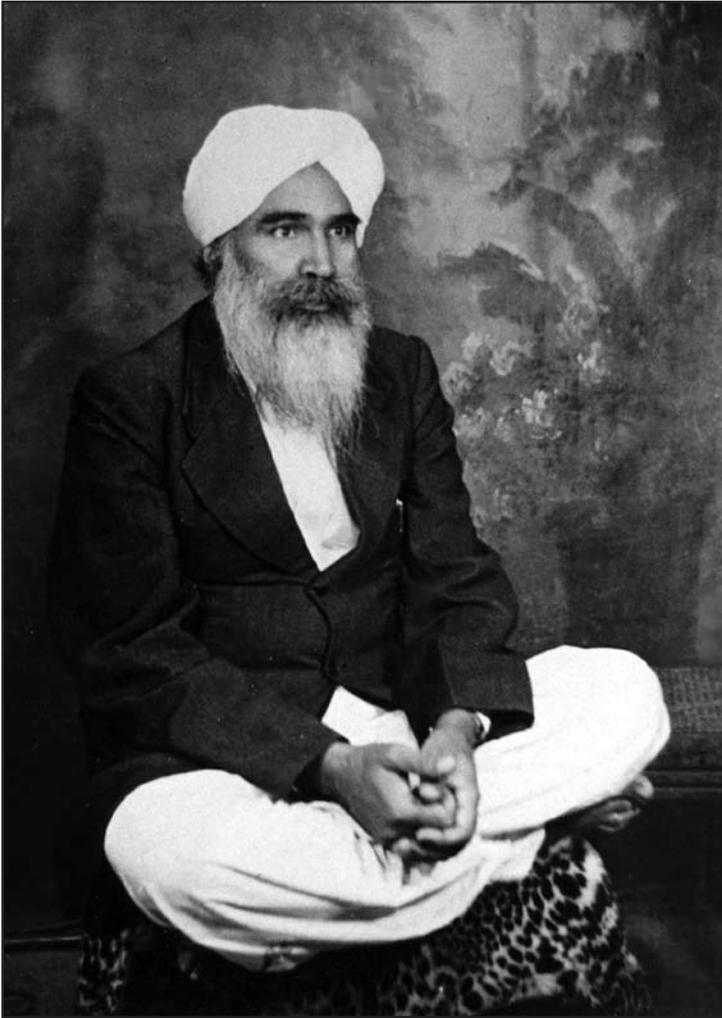
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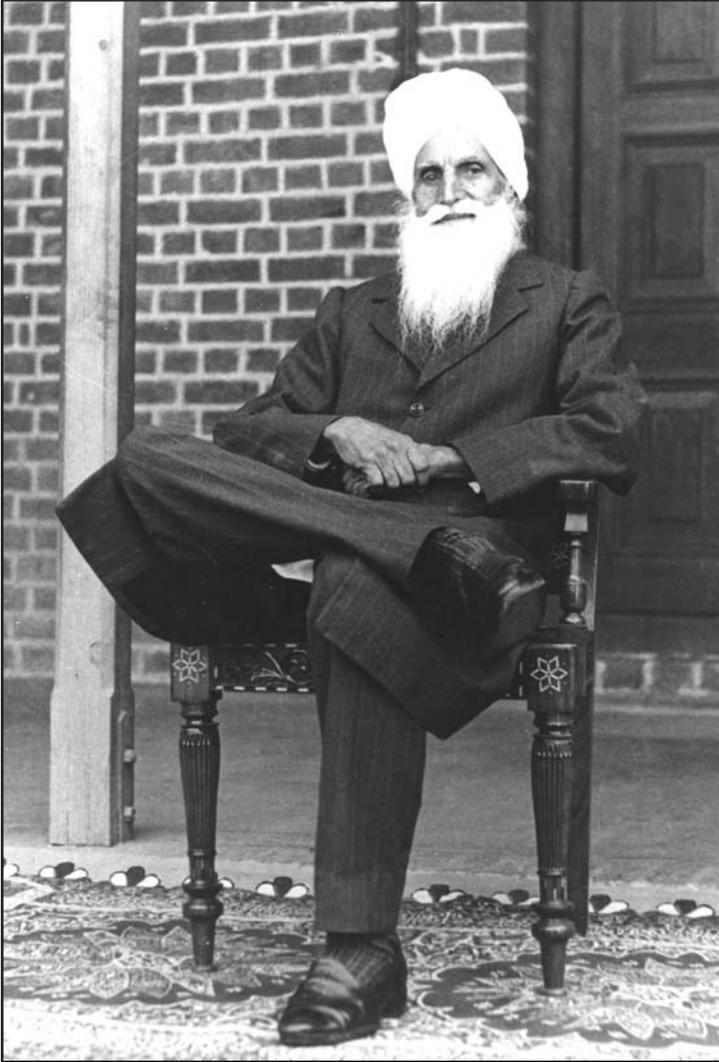


Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

THE MYSTERY
OF DEATH

by

KIRPAL SINGH



Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj
(1858-1948)

Dedicated
to the Almighty God
working through all Masters who have come
and Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj
at whose lotus feet
the writer imbibed sweet elixir of
Holy Naam — the Word

I have written books without any copyright—no rights reserved—because it is a Gift of God, given by God, as much as sunlight; other gifts of God are also free.

—from a talk by Kirpal Singh, with the author of a book after a talk to students of religion at Santa Clara University, San Jose, California on November 16, 1972.

The text of this book is the same as what was published during the lifetime of Master Kirpal Singh. Aside from punctuation and capitalization corrections, no changes have been made to the text. It is exactly the same as what was approved by Master Kirpal Singh.

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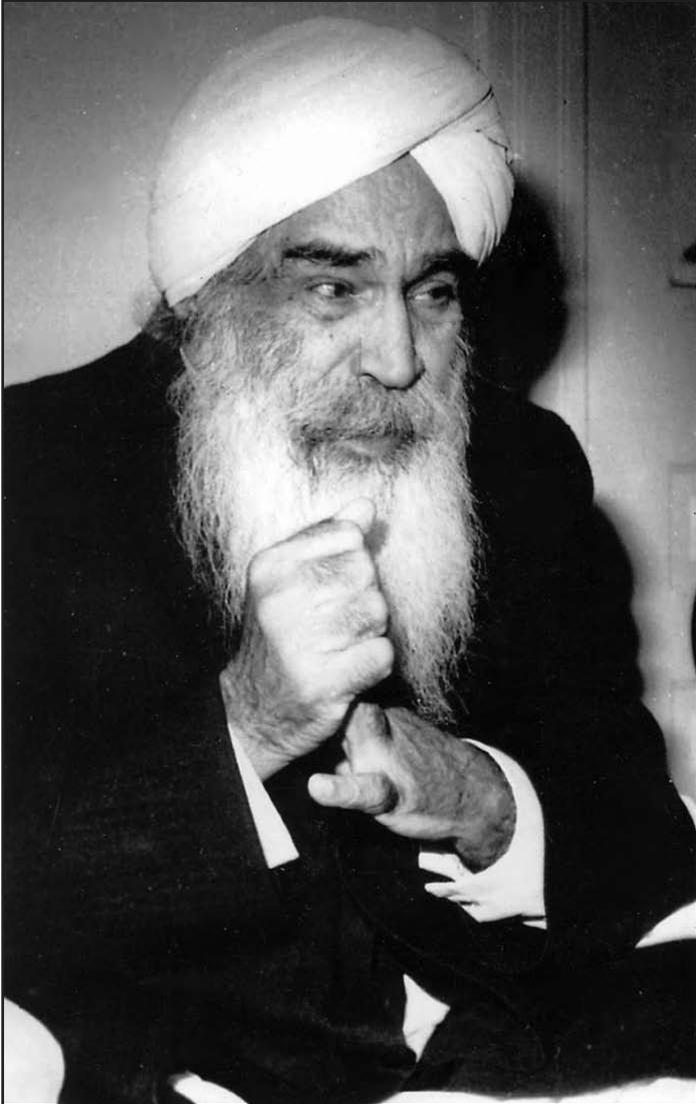
KIRPAL SINGH



*Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)*

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Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

‘Death’ is the greatest enigma in life. It has baffled humankind from times out of mind. And yet despite all attempts to solve the mystery, it has remained as mysterious as ever before.

The Saints of the highest order—Sant Satgurus, or the Perfect Masters—who come down from the region of deathlessness and are ever in tune with the Infinite, know the shadowy character of death. They teach us that death is not what it seems. It is a joyous birth (born again) into a life more beatific than we ever dreamed of here. It is just as sun sets on this side of the globe and rises in the other part. They point out and demonstrate to us the way to conquer the seemingly invincible and terrifying death and thus become fear-free. This is the grand lesson that we can get from the Saints. They assure us that we do not die—we simply shake off physical vesture of body to work in other bodies: physical or astral or causal; and ultimately rise to realize our divine nature and see oneness in God—the All-consciousness and bliss.

In the pages that follow, an attempt has been made to suggest the way to the solution of tangled riddle in succinct and lucid language which may be easily intelligible to the reader. The study offers a somewhat simplified approach to the abstruse and esoteric doctrines pertaining to the body and the soul, the relation between the two. It also offers the methods to control the mind so as to make it a willing and obedient instrument for transcending body-consciousness, which can be a foretaste of the actual death experience which all of us have to undergo ultimately.

The glory of a Perfect Master lies not only in teaching merely on the level of intellect but in encompassing a direct, immediate and first-hand experience of what he teaches. The science of the Masters is the only spiritual science which is demonstrable in the laboratory of the mind. It yields out-of-body experiences, opening up vast vistas of spiritual awakening into unearthly realms of indescribable splendour; and all this while living in the flesh. Salvation to be real must be gained right now and here.

The way to the Spirit, and Power-of-God, is always open to the sincere seekers after Truth, but success on the Path depends on the divine grace mediated through some God-man. One who is fired with the love of God is sure to find the means to reach God. It is just a question of the intensity of yearning. Where there is sincere and genuine love of God, He comes in the garb of a Saint to lead the aspirants to Himself. May His Light be a lamp unto the feet of those who aspire for the Life of the Spirit, and lead the aspirants to a human pole where that Light shines.

My heartfelt thanks go to Shri Bhadra Sena specially, and to other dedicated souls like him who in one form or another helped in bringing out this work; and spent long hours over the manuscript in a spirit of loving devotion.

August 25, 1968

Kirpal Singh

INTRODUCTION

‘Life’ and ‘Death’ are correlative terms. In the realm of relativity we cannot think, speak and act except by putting one thing in juxtaposition to another. This is the way to understand what is phenomenal. In multiplicity, we are confronted at every step with complex jigsaw puzzles, and have, therefore, to follow an analytical process of sorting out the component parts in each case, to name them individually and to put one in relation to the other, so as to comprehend something of it on the plane of the senses and the intellect. Thus by the very nature of things, and by the nature of the cognizing faculties with which nature has endowed us, we live by the knowledge of the parts only, and never get a true picture of anything in its totality. Since we have no knowledge and experience of the noumenon, we are content all the while with forms and colours of the things we see, their attributes and characteristics which may be apparent on the surface, without penetrating into the depth, the central life-principle, which is the self-same in all in spite of the differences in the mass, the density, the volume, the weight and the shape of what we see and observe. Like the Lady of Shallot, we live all the time in the world of shadows as reflected in the reflecting mirror (of mind and intellect), with our back turned, as it were, even upon the objective world around us, what to speak of the subjective world in each one of us—the world of reality with wonders greater, vaster, more gorgeous and more glorious than anything in the physical.

With the dawn of first flicker in man, of Divinity, the All-controlling and All-sustaining Power behind everything organic or inorganic, developed the consciousness of some

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principle which was the life and soul of the universe. This gradually led to the founding of various religions, each according to the insight that its founder had, regard being to the needs of the time and the people and the level of racial understanding and capacity to accept, digest, and assimilate the teachings of the Apostles, Messiahs and Prophets who came from time to time for the material, mental, moral, social and economic upliftment of the multitudes.

All religions spring from the best of motives. The leaders of religious thought are as much the product of the time as the conditions they create for the amelioration of the masses among whom they preach. This being the case, it may not be far amiss to say that for the majority of the people, the superb teachings of the enlightened teachers formed what may be said socio-religions, codes of social and moral precepts so as to make people live in peace with one another, rather than in a state of perpetual unrest, and fear of war—war of one against all and all against one.

All good and virtuous thoughts; like other thoughts, proceed from the mind. In the case of world teachers such thoughts had their origin in the life of the spirit they lived. It is, however, very few who rise to their level, and profit by their intrinsic teachings, the practical aspect in each religion—mysticism—constituting the core of what they taught. Thus the practical central theme was imparted to the chosen few—the elect—while the masses were given the theoretical aspect of the teachings in the form of parables as might, in course of time, enable them to grasp and understand the true import of what they actually taught. Thus as one probes the bottom of all religions, one gets glimpses of the reality no matter how faint and vague at times they appear, because we have not yet developed the eyes which their founders had. For the common man, religion remained, for the most part, a theory, a rationalised theory at the most, to improve his lot

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in life and make him a better man, a better member of the social order to which he belonged, a true citizen of the state, clothed with civic rights and obligations, social and family responsibilities, for the healthy discharge of which he was thus equipped.

All virtues, all acts, all arts, all sciences and all crafts including statecraft, priest-craft, the gentlecraft have their basis in the lowest common multiple in varying degrees, of the underlying universal truth, as conceived by their progenitors; hence we see an amalgam of religion with social and moral trappings to make it presentable and acceptable to the generality of mankind. This is the aspect of religion that provides a firm basis to the social order of the race.

If we move a step further, we come to other stratum in religion. It is one of moral virtues, arising at different levels, as rites and rituals, forms and formularies, austerities and penances, humanities and charities, incantations to tame and reconcile irreconcilable powers that be, and invocations to friendly powers for aid and succour in times of need.

Last, but not the least, come the yogis and yogishweras well-versed in yogic disciplines as we shall presently see.

At the apex of the hierarchy, are Master-saints, Perfected-beings or God-men who not only speak of the Power and Spirit of God, but make It manifest in their initiates and consciously link individual souls with it. It must be said to their credit that theirs is the true religion, truly religious, etymologically and practically, binding men back to the Creator.

The teachings of Masters do not form an institutional religion as it is ordinarily understood to be. It is a regular species of science—the Science of Soul. Whosoever faithfully practises this science as enjoined by the

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Masters, gets the same experiences and arrives at the same conclusions; irrespective of the social religion to which he belongs and the Church; High or Low, Papal or Anglican, Episcopal or Presbyterian, to which he owes allegiance.

The Science of Soul is the kernel and the core of all religions. It is the foundation on which all religions rest. The Masters teach that there are seven planes—Pind, Und, Brahmand, Par Brahmand, Sach Khand, Alakh and Agam. And above all the cosmos, there is the eighth plane, called differently by the Saints as Anami (Nameless), Maha Dayal (Lord of compassion), Nirala (the most wonderful) or Swami (the Lord of all). The initiates of the Masters are given an account in brief of the distinguishing features of each of the first five planes and the characteristic sounds and lights prevailing in each; and the names of the presiding powers.

The initiate who successfully crosses the first plane is called a sadhak (disciple). And the one who traverses the second is known a Sadh (a disciplined soul). He who is washed clean in the Par Brahmand of the lingerings and longings in him is called a Hansa (a purified soul) and he who goes further up is called a Param-Hansa (an immaculate soul). He who reaches the fifth plane (Sach Khand) is called a Sant or a Saint. And a Saint who is commissioned by the Supreme Being to teach Truth (Shiksha) and to demonstrate Truth (Diksha) is called a Sant Satguru (or a Perfect Master) having authority to guide jivas (human souls) into the realms beyond, to their ultimate Home (the Kingdom of God).

Yoga means union of soul with the Oversoul or God-power. There are so many forms of yoga—Mantra yoga, Hatha yoga, Ashtang yoga, Karam yoga, Bhakti yoga, Jnana yoga, Raja yoga, Laya yoga and the like. These yogic disciplines, more or less, deal with the training of the physical body, the outgoing faculties, the mind and the

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intellect. They aim at securing a healthy mind in a healthy body, so as to achieve health, physical fitness and longevity. Each has its own scope and purpose. But all these different yogic forms do not constitute watertight compartments, but together they serve to integrate man to make him whole or an undivided individual. (For a detailed account in this behalf, reference may profitably be made to the study of "*Crown of Life*" wherein the subject has been dealt with at some length).

There is yet another form of yoga—the Surat Shabd Yoga or Communion with the Holy Word (Sound Current). It is at the root of all religions and yet it is not properly understood by the theologians. It takes one to the ultimate goal—Anami or the Nameless Absolute who is at the back of the entire creation both as its material and efficient Causeless Cause. As the Ocean of Pure Consciousness heaved, the Formless and Nameless Absolute came into expression, in many different forms with many different names by the Power of Its own heaving vibrations; the Sound whereof came to be called the Holy Word. How to get into direct touch with the Spirit and Power of God, the Primal Creative Principle (the Light of Life) is the subject of mysticism. While all philosophies deal with the manifested aspect of the Unmanifest and the creation of the Uncreate; mysticism, on the other hand, deals with the first Creative Principle itself, the vibratory force characterised by Sound and Light (Sruti and Jyoti).

The process of Communion with the Word starts with a conscious contact with the God-into-expression-Power (the Naam or the Holy Ghost) and it grants one an actual experience of ineffable bliss of the higher planes, not on credit to be experienced in the hereafter (after death); but right here and now, while yet living in flesh in the material physical world.

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

These vibrations, resulting into various types of sounds, guide the initiate through the different planes of varying densities, material and spiritual, and ultimately lead the spirit into a purely spiritual world of Sat Naam (the Kingdom of God), from where the Divine Harmony emanates which becomes the means of leading back the world-weary souls to the True Home of the loving Father—the heaven of bliss. Tulsi Sahib says: “A Sound from afar is coming down to call you back to God”. Similarly, we have the testimony of Shamas Tabrez when he, addressing himself, says: ‘O Shamas! Harken thou to the Voice of God, calling thee unto Him’. Guru Arjan likewise says:

He Who sent you into the world below, is now calling
you back.

In the Quran we have: “O thou soul! return to the Lord,
well pleased and pleasing Him.”

A Perfect living Master is a ‘must’ on the path Godward. In the Gospel of St. John, we have: “No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” (14:6). All the Masters say that there is always in the world a Master or a ‘Murshid’ who functions as a Qibla Numa, or a pointer to the Qibla or the holiest of the holy, sanctum sanctorum, worthy of our adoration and worship. In the Sikh scriptures we have: “The teachers come in succession from age to age.” St. Luke likewise tells us: “As He, spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began.” (1:70).

The law of Demand and Supply is always working in nature. There is food for the hungry and water for the thirsty. Where there is fire, oxygen of its own comes to its aid. But each Prophet and a Messiah works out his mission for the time he is sent into the world. Jesus said: “As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.” (John 9:5). But when

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one fulfils his commission, he is recalled, gathered up and passes away from the scene of his activity on the earth-plane. In nature, there is no such thing as vacuum. The Power-of-God cannot but continue the work of the regeneration for it is a ceaseless task. While withdrawing from one human pole, the said Power chooses another human pole for its manifestation and work in the world. Such a human pole may be said to be the viceregent of God. He steps into the breach, fills in the gap and carries on the work. It is just like replacing a fused bulb with the new one, to ensure continuity of Light. The Christ Power or the Power-of-God continues to shine undiminished from one pole or another; may be in the likeness of Zoroaster, Confucius, Jesus, Mohammed, Kabir, Nanak, Tulsi Sahib or Soami Ji.

As stated before, the world is never without a Master. After Soami Ji, Baba Jaimal Singh Ji carried on his Master's mission in the Punjab and then his illustrious spiritual son and successor, Hazur Sawan Singh Ji whose grace continues to shine, even now, more than ever before, all over the world through 'Ruhani Satsang' with its Headquarters in Delhi—a common forum where religious heads of the country and from abroad meet, from time to time, and work in cementing mankind into one brotherhood as children of God, irrespective of the social religious orders and the countries to which they belong.

When the Saints leave the world, accounts of their valuable experiences in the course of their search for Truth are compiled and they add to the sacerdotal literature of the world, as extant today. In the twentieth century we are fortunate to have several scriptures coming down from ages gone by. We have Zend Avesta, the Vedas, the Upanishadas, the great epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the Bhagwad Gita, the old and new Testaments, the Al-Quran, the Ad

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

Granth and many other books like Sar Bachan and Gurmat Sidhant. All of them deal with the self-same Truth which is one and only one, but approach to Truth is in a variety of ways, each having its peculiar terminology and mode of expression. But most of us sticking to the teachings of the one or the other of the sages, find it hard to comprehend their import for lack of knowledge of the inner meaning of key-words employed and the language or dialect pressed into service. Unless a man of realisation, who has himself experienced the truths propounded by the writers, comes to our aid and explains them to us and in a way intelligible to us, we cannot get at the real meanings. In the hands of such a competent Master, the past records come alive and become a source of inspiration for the aspiring souls. It is, therefore, said:

The scriptures are tools in the hands of a Master, and do help in ferrying across the sea of life,

But the scriptures become intelligible only when some God-man comes to interpret them.

At initiation, the seeker after Truth is consciously linked with the Holy Word, the God-into-expression Power in the form of Light and Sound emanating from the vibratory motion in the depth of the Ocean of Love, as God is. He is given a direct demonstration of the Power and Spirit of God and begins to see the Light of God and to hear the Music of Spheres, vibrating unceasingly everywhere, in space and out of space, for there is no place where It is not. Of Guru Nanak, fully dyed in the colour of the All-pervading Naam and always living in a state of continuous ecstasy, it is said that once in his travels he, while in Mecca (in Arabia), was one day found lying in the sacred precincts with his feet towards the sacred shrine '*Qaaba*'. The attendants of the shrine could not tolerate this apparently sacrilegious act.

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They rebuked him for the affront saying, “How, is it that you are lying with your feet towards the House of God?” Guru Nanak, who was conscious of the Spirit of God surging everywhere and in every direction, meekly asked, “Please tell me where God is not, so that I may turn my feet in that direction.” This is how God-centred Saints look at things. They see God everywhere and in all directions as an All-pervading Life-principle pulsating in all that is.

Similarly, in Al-Quran, the Prophet has declared: “The Kingdom of God extends from east to west, and the faithful can find Him in whatsoever direction they may turn their face towards Him, for God is sure to meet them in that very direction; as He is not confined to any particular space and is All-knowing, knowing the heart of each.”

Al-nisai, a Muslim darvesh, elaborating this point goes on to explain: “For me the whole earth is but a tabernacle of God and a holy place for offering prayers. My followers are free to say their prayers wherever they may happen to be, when the time of prayer dawns.”

In the Acts of Apostles (17:24), we have: “God is the Creator of heaven and earth and He dwelleth not in temples made by (human) hands.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes, therefore, lays more emphasis on devotion than on anything else; for loving devotion sanctifies the place, the time and mode of prayer. He says: “All is holy where one kneels in devotion.”

The Power and Spirit of God is All-pervading. It is ever-present and ever-vibrating. By attuning to the Divine Melody, the soul is spontaneously lifted, as it were in an electric lift, to higher and higher regions, and one proceeds on and on in the wake of the tuneful Music which gradually

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

becomes more and more subtle until it gets absorbed into the Source whence it proceeds—the Absolute, the Anami or the Nameless and the Wordless.

We all are in search of God according to our own lights. The souls after passing through a long and wearisome evolutionary process of self-discipline and self-purification, are ultimately led by the God-power to the feet of a Master-saint for journey back to God. “No man can come to me except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him at the last day.” (John 5:44). The ‘last day’ here means the day when one leaves the dross of the body, may be voluntarily in one’s lifetime by rising above body-consciousness by the practical process of self-analysis; or involuntarily at the time of death when the sensory currents are wrenched out of the body by the Angel of Death. Guru Arjan says: “He that sent you into the world is now calling you back. Turn ye Homeward with ease and comfort.”

The inventions of radio and radar have now proved, beyond doubt, that the atmosphere around us is full of vibrating sounds which can be picked up and drawn down to be heard from any distance whatsoever, provided there is an instrument well-equipped, well-adjusted and well-attuned to catch them. This is exactly what a competent Master does at the time of initiation, when he tunes in individual souls and makes the Sound principle audible to them.

The outer earthly music has great impact on man. The soldiers on the march are roused by the material strains of bugles and trumpets. The highlanders, in their tartan kilts, march triumphantly with the sound of pibrochs or the bag-pipes. The sailors and seamen tug and pull at the sails and work at the oars with rhythmic shouts. The muffled drums play the funeral march to the sorrowing mourners accompanying a bier. The dancers dance in unison with the

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accompanying music and the jingling of their bracelets and anklets. Even the animals like the chiming of the bells tied to their horns. The fleet-footed antelope is enticed from the hiding thickets by the beating of drums. The deadly cobras are charmed by the snake-charmer by the music of vina. The outer music takes the soul to the end of the material plane and raises emotions which otherwise lie too deep for tears. Such indeed is the power of music. John Dryden, an eminent English poet of the seventeenth century, speaks of it eloquently:

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell,
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

When such is the power of the earthly music, one may well imagine what would be the power of the celestial Music? How inebriating and exhilarating it would be when one would begin to rise above body-consciousness and be in tune with the heavenly Harmony. The Word is the God-power come into expression. God is Symphonic Love, all bubbling out and brimming over. He is the Source at once of Love, Light and Life.

The way to the Absolute leads through many mansions (planes and sub-planes) lying on the way from the physical to the Father's Home. The journey is fraught with danger. The mental planes are altogether impassable without a guide fully conversant with the turns and twists of the path. Hence the imperative need for a Guru (torch-bearer) or a competent

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Master, a regular traveller on the way, fully cognizant of the difficulties and hazards that beset the path. He alone who is conversant with the way Godward, can safely take the spirit through slippery regions of blinding light and bewildering shadows and through delusive siren-charms and the terrors of the unknown. Maulana Rumi therefore exhorts us:

Find thou a traveller of the path, for without such a
traveller,

The path is full of untold pitfalls and inconceivable
dangers.

We, on the other hand, are deeply engrossed in the world. Kabir gives us a vivid description of our helplessness in the fearsome sea of the world. He tells us that the way to real happiness is long and dreary; and we are snoring deeply on the plane of the senses. He asks us to wake-up and start on the tortuous uphill journey. We all are in the deadly grip of the steely tentacles of life, carrying a heavy load of delusions on our head. Our so-called friends and relations are mostly our creditors and debtors, and they are mercilessly pulling us to pieces in devious ways. The wonder is that we lovingly hold on to them and hug them to our bosom, little knowing that they are bleeding us white. What we consider as our very own is just a mirage and is very often taken away from us in the twinkling of an eye. Again, the poor soul has, after death, to tread the solitary path to the judgement seat of God (Dharam Raj, the Divine Dispensing Power) all alone. With the worn-out boat of the body, we are floating rudderless like weeds in the treacherous streams, continuous prey to chance winds and stormy waters. How then are we going to cross over to the other shore? For a mere pittance we are constantly engaged in a losing game; and in the end pass out like a hunted quarry, and know not whither we go. We have no knowledge of the life beyond the grave. How can we be

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saved? This defies our understanding, and we feel baffled and helpless.

The Master promises to be with us all the time, both here and in the hereafter into the beyond. He gives a demonstration of it to the initiate by manifesting his Radiant Form within each one of the initiates. And he assures us in no uncertain terms: “Where I am, there shall ye be also.”

The initiate is taught the esoteric way to rise into the Kingdom of Heaven which lies within him. The inner journey starts with the opening of the single eye or ‘shiv netra’. It opens when the sensory currents are withdrawn and gathered up to the seat of the soul at the eye focus behind and between the two eyebrows. On entering into the beyond, the initiate can talk to the Master within and come back with a fully conscious recollection of the experiences gained on the inner planes. In the Kingdom of Heaven there is neither the chain of endless cause and effect, nor is there space nor time. There is nothing but one continuous present in which one lives in a world of his own. The communication between soul and soul is through etheric thought-waves or vibrations.

All this, and much more, can be achieved by daily and prolonged loving devotion to the spiritual sadhanas or practices. In this way, an initiate attains conscious contact with the Master on the higher planes and by degrees gets absorbed in Him, so much so that he becomes one with Him; and Paul-like begins to say:

I am crucified in Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son-of-God, who loved me.

—(Gal. 2:20)

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The Master is 'Word-made-flesh', he is all the time in direct and constant communion with the Divine Word in him, nay, he actually revels in It and often proclaims "I and my Father are one", or as we read in Gurbani, "I and my Father are dyed in the self-same colour", or "I and my Father are in working partnership with each other" (so as to run together the spiritual administration of the world). In short, it may be said that the Master is a conscious co-worker with God of the Divine Plan.

At times, the Master takes the initiate 'under cover' far beyond certain planes which are bewitchingly beautiful, so that he may not get entangled therein and be lost in the wonders of the way. Maulana Rumi therefore says:

If you intend going on a pilgrimage (into the beyond),
then take thou a pilgrim for thy companion,

It matters not whether the said pilgrim is a Hindu, a
Turk or an Arab; but see that He is a real pilgrim.

A living Master is such a pilgrim. "Type of the wise who soar but never roam; True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home". To have a living Master is a great blessing. He never leaves nor forsakes the initiates even unto the end of the world. When one is initiated, the Master lives in him in His astral or luciform body and ever remains with him till the end of journey to Sat Naam or Sat Purush; and absorbs himself in Him and also makes the initiate-soul get absorbed in Him —the two becoming one in Him. Even if at any time the disciple goes astray or is led astray, he is brought back to the path of rectitude either in this very life or in succeeding ones.

Again, Christ and other Masters have, in course of time, to pass away from the earth-plane and yet they live in Shabd

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form within, but out of space and out of time. Bound as we are with one or the other of them, we naturally wish to live and die for them. But little do we know how to contact them within our own self. Such a contact is possible and well within our reach, if we but find a Shabd swaroop or Word personified teacher competent to link us with the Word, nay transform us into the Word in which all Masters of ages gone by eternally live.

I am reminded of a lady who met me in America during 1955. She used to greet Christ within herself and was thus self-satisfied and did not like to make further attempt to advance further on the spiritual path. One day I casually suggested to her to ask Christ as to what further steps He would prescribe for inner progress. The following day she came and warmly pressed for initiation, remarking that Christ had directed her to seek the guidance of the living Perfect Master, if she desired to further advance.

The Powers within never obstruct the seekers after God; and if one is in contact with an ancient Master, he readily and gladly tells his devotees what to do for the next steps on the spiritual path.

A few of the initiates are taken up by the Master and shown the glory of the fifth region (Sach Khand), and most of the initiates are guided on to that plane. But as said before, there are in all eight regions, and the eighth is the ultimate goal, which is reached by those who attain complete perfection.

It is after transcending Sat Lok that one gets to know the ineffable and incomprehensible,

It is in the region beyond all these that Saints reside and Nanak, the lowly one, also rests there.

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St. John, the Divine, in the Revelations, gives us an exposition of his inner experiences:

I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind
me a great voice as of a trumpet,
Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last;
And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.
He was one like unto the Son of man.
His eyes were as a flame of fire;
His voice as the sound of many waters;
His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength,
And when I saw him, I fell at his feet dead
and he laid his right hand upon me saying
unto me—Fear not, I am the first and the last;
He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith:
To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the fruit
of life.

He shall not be hurt of the second death,
To him will I give to eat the hidden manna, and will
give him a white stone and in the stone a new name
written, which no man knoweth saving he that
receiveth.

And he shall be clothed in white raiment and I will not
blot his name out of the Book of Life,
And I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.
I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that
thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou
mayest be clothed;

And anoint thine eyes with eye salve that mayest see.

—Ch. 1, 2 & 3.

In Ch. 12 of the second book of Corinthians, St. Paul, speaking of his visions and revelations, tells us of the third heaven when he says: "I knew a man caught in the third heaven (Brahmand), whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth.

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“How that he was caught up into the paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which is not lawful for me to utter.”

All the Masters stop short when it comes to revealing the innermost secrets. Shamas Tabrez says: “When it comes to telling the tale of the Beloved, my pen falters and the page is torn”. Maulana Rumi also forbids the giving out of the inner secrets: “Thou mayest tell thy vision, not a jot this or that even. Else He will blot out all that thou hast seen, as it had never been.” So does Kabir emphatically declare:

I beseech thee with all the force at my command,
Be careful that the inner secrets do not go out.

We may as well close this with the memorable words from the famous *Masnavi*, wherein the great Rumi says:

It is not fitting that I tell thee more,
For the stream's bed cannot hold the sea.

This, then, is the way that the Masters of yore kept hidden to themselves the Secret Doctrine of Divinity, as a sacred trust, and imparted something of it only to their trusted and tested disciples (gurmukhs). Indeed it is not a subject that can adequately be discussed in mere words. The proof of the pudding, however, lies in its eating. It is a practical process of self-analysis, tapping and inversion; and whosoever by the grace of a Perfect Master, gains an access into himself and delves deep within, is sure of find the pearl of inestimable value. A touch of reality makes one real beyond all relativity; and the mortal man is at once transmuted into an immortal spirit, dissolving the Gordian knot between the inert matter and the living soul. Thus is solved the mystery of ‘life’ and ‘death’, for life alone exists through the passing shadows of all that is transitory, swallowing death in victory at every step.

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

In the following pages, an attempt has been made to tell something of the Secret Doctrine in the three dimensional language at our disposal, which is highly inadequate to express the ineffable. May the Power and Spirit of God help the readers to a better understanding of the subject at the feet of some Competent Master, capable of delivering the spiritual riches here and now in this life, for who knows whether the Truth will dawn or not in the hereafter, as it is so solemnly and seriously held out and promised by so-called teachers with whom the world abounds. In this context, Christ has given a solemn warning: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves”. (Math. 7:15). If a blind leads the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

It is, therefore, of paramount importance that one must make a thorough search for a Competent and Perfect Master, and satisfy oneself of the genuineness before accepting and adopting him as an unerring guide and an unfailing friend on the God-way. It does not matter if one may have to spend his entire life-span in this momentous quest, rather than be taken in by pseudo Masters and lose one’s only chance in life. A quest like this will not go in vain. ‘Seek and ye shall find’.

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*I died as mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was a man.
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet, once more, I shall die as man, to soar—
With angels blessed, but even from angelhood
I must pass on; all except God doth perish.
When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
I shall become what no mind e'er conceived,
Oh! let me not exist, for non-existence
Proclaims in organ-tones, "To Him we shall return".*

Maulana Rumi



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

I

NOTHING DIES IN NATURE

DEATH and deathlessness both inhere in the nature of all that is — all that combines in itself both matter and spirit. Matter is but a projecting screen for the spirit — the all-pervading spirit that attracts matter in varying degrees of densities and vibrations to manifest itself in various patterns of forms and colours, at different levels of existence. Spirit by itself, without material mantle to manifest itself on the earth-plane, is void, for spirit without the covering of matter cannot be seen with the eyes of flesh, just as the power of spring makes itself felt only when it acts on flowers and fruits making them bloom and blossom with juicy fragrance and luscious flavour.

Man represents in him the doctrine of trinity on earth, as he combines in himself body, mind and soul, the last being of the essence of God, the life-breath enlivening both the body and the mind making one a living man, with the breath of God surging in him from top to toe.

The human body is individualised matter in as much as spirit enshrouded therein seems to be an individualised spirit, like the sun reflected in so many water pots. At death, the body, composed as it is of different elements, dissolves and returns to the cosmic reservoir of substances, ultimately merging in one primal substance; and the soul returns to God: “As soon as the silver cord is loosened, the golden bowl is broken, like a pitcher at the fountain or the wheel at the cistern. Then the dust returns unto the earth as it was, and the spirit returns unto God who gave it.” (Ecc1.12:6-7).

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A living man is not something independent of, and apart from the Supreme Power, that flows in him. He is a product of the Supreme Power acting on material plane through an organised body of waves which produce a state of consciousness in him. Man exists when the Supreme Power runs in and through his bodily mould, but when that Power withdraws unto Itself, he is no more a living entity for all functional activity in him ceases, and what remains?—nothing but a mass of inert matter, the same as before in shape and substance, but without the living life-impulse that was pulsating in him moments before.

Like man, the entire universe is a manifestation of the one life-principle, the principle of living consciousness in varying degrees, right from Logos down to the atoms of the material elements, perpetually moving in rhythmic motion, forming and reforming in quick succession many patterns by the Supreme Power acting in and upon them. In short, the intelligence of the universe abides, and abides forever and anon, in the heart of each atom which is dancing to its tune like the eternal dance of Siva, the living embodiment of Shakti, the Mother of the universe. In the esoteric cosmogony, the theory of 'dead' matter does not find any place whatsoever, for matter cannot exist by itself without the cohesive power inherent therein. Matter in fact is energy in congealed form.

In ancient philosophy, a sharp distinction was drawn between 'being' and 'existence'. The Logos, the Archetypal world is that of true being, changeless and eternal; while 'existence' is an expression and expansion or a moving forward and outward into the world of becoming, a world of ceaseless change and transformation from moment to moment.

Physiologists and physicians, like botanists, horticultu-

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rists, floriculturists, tell us a lot of the mechanical and chemical processes going on in the human metabolism or, in fact, in any living organism, be it a tree, a flower, a fruit, an ant, or an elephant; but cannot tell us why they live, how they live, what for they live, what is life itself, and above all, what is consciousness that characterises the life impulse on any and every plane of existence.

The cosmic cycle proves that life is eternal. It is an endless process. It continues on and on, assuming one form after another in endless series, appearing, disappearing and reappearing like waves and bubbles on the stream of time—time rolling down from eternity to eternity. Nature is but one vast reservoir of life and matter, in which nothing is lost and nothing dies, no matter how forms may change, and change kaleidoscopically in less than the twinkling of an eye. It is this changing process that is commonly called death—death of one form at one place, and birth in another form at another place or on another plane. Invisible vapour arising from the sea dies so as to change into visible solid snow on the mountaintop, and the visible snow in its turn taking once again the reverse process—the process of death, melts into liquid water, and water changes back into invisible gaseous aeriform or vapour again, making a continuous chain of cause and effect. Similarly, man becomes a visible entity when spirit puts on a human form and then, in a course of time, that very man of so many parts on the stage of life (at once son, brother, husband and father; now an infant, then a young man and lastly a dotard), ultimately becomes invisible when the spirit in him withdraws causing, to the consternation of those around, a void in the vast web of relationships that he wove around him during his existence on the earth-plane. This is what actually happens at the time of the final change when the physical body disintegrates and resolves into the cosmic order of things, and life currents merge into the great

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cosmic life-principle which is vitally organic in nature; and not chemically inorganic and mechanical.

Death is not what it seems to be, and what it is taken for in common parlance. Death and life are correlative terms on the earth-plane only, but in reality there is no difference between the two, and in fact, one cannot be contradistinguished from the other; for death cannot swallow life nor can death put an end to life. It is just an interchangeable process as two sides of a coin rotating on its axis. Do we not see day and night, light and darkness, alternately coming and going, as the rotating earth spins and revolves round the sun casting shadows of varying lengths at different places while the sun itself continues to shine all the time. Death does not mean total extinction or annihilation as, at times, it is believed to be. It is nothing but a change of consciousness from one place of existence to another place of existence. Life, on the contrary, is one continuous process which knows no end, for the so-called death that follows life is not lifelessness but life in another form at another place, here on earth or elsewhere, and in a different form with a different name, and under different set of circumstances as is adjudged by Divine Dispensation working on the inexorable law of action 'as ye sow, so shall ye reap.' Life, being a positive expression of the Supreme Being, is not subject to the negativity of death, and the latter cannot, therefore, extinguish the former—the eternal flame of life.

We have the testimony of an unbroken line of Masters who taught that life and death are mere words in the world of duality, meant to describe the surface effect or the circumferential shifting of the state of consciousness of the Inner Being dwelling at the centre. These are merely visible and invisible stages in the cosmic cycle through which the inner man passes. The lamentable, horrifying and much-dreaded death is, in reality, a rebirth (being born again of the

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inner man) into a life which may be more joyous and more beautiful than known hitherto. "Death, the awe-inspiring and heart-rending death," says Kabir, "is to me a harbinger of joyous life, and I welcome it fully." The Gospels also tell of the Kingdom of God that awaits one beyond the death-door:

Except a man be born again, he cannot see
the Kingdom of God.....

Except a man be born of water and of spirit;
he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh;
and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.....

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the
sound thereof, but cans't not tell whence it cometh
and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of
the spirit.

—John 3:3-8

Thus with each successive death or dissolution of form, the spirit freed from the solid mould, renews from strength to strength and from power to power, growing in greater and wider consciousness than ever before. In this context, Maulana Rumi tells us:

I died as mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was a man.
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet, once more, I shall die as man, to soar—
With angels blessed, but even from angelhood
I must pass on; all except God doth perish.
When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
I shall become what no mind e'er conceived.

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Oh ! let me not exist, for non-existence
Proclaims in organ-tones, "To Him we shall return."

Death then is another name for a change in the central life-principle, the pivot round which the organised life-monad moves and functions. It is a change from one set of circumstances to another set of circumstances, in different forms and under different conditions as most suited to the ultimate unfoldment into full efflorescence of the Self or the living-monad, leading to greater and greater awareness of, and arising into the higher spiritual values of life:

Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not sleep (in death), but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye..... raised incorruptible...putting on incorruption..... and immortality..... swallowing Death in victory..... (defying) the sting (both) of death and (the fear of) grace. —(Cor. 15:51-55)

In '*Man the Unknown*' Alex Carel says: "Man is made up of a procession of phantoms, in the midst of which strides the unknowable Reality." Nanak, likewise, speaks of himself, in much the same strain: "In the midst of the outer physical mould called Nanak, plays the invisible Power of the Supreme Being."

In Bhagwad Gita, the Song of the Adorable One, Bhagwan Krishna, the seventh avtar of Vishnu, one of the famous triad in the Hindu mythology, tells us:

Know thou, O Prince of Pandu, that there was never a time, when I, nor thou, nor any of these princes of earth was not; nor shall there ever come a time, hereafter, when any of us shall cease to be. As the soul, wearing this material body, experienceth the stages of infancy, youth, manhood and old age, even so shall it, in due course of time, pass on to another body, and in other incarnations shall it again live, and move

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and play its part. Those who have attained the wisdom of the Inner Doctrine, know these things, and fail to be moved by aught that cometh to pass in this world of change—to such, Life and Death are but words; and both are but surface aspects of the deeper Being (within).

Thus it is clear that under the cosmic cyclic law, all things move in a circle and all things are eternal. The dance of Siva, at once the god of death, and death leading to rebirth, not unoften at a higher level of existence, goes on forever and forever. Under this ever-revolving wheel of life, man, by a process of evolution or growth, keeps changing from a mere physical to an astral, then to causal and finally to a spiritual being, on various planes of existence until he rightly comes to his own; knows and realises the ever-evolving principle of consciousness in him in its fullness, which he potentially is, and embraces the totality of his being. “All the same, we live, move and have our individual being in God (the Universal Being), for we are His offspring and He is the very being of our being and without His Power working in us, we cannot exist and function.” —(Acts 17:23-24)

‘Like begets like.’ Each thing, be it a plant, an animal or a man, grows from the seed after its own kind, though according to a set pattern of life determined by the quality inherent in the seed. “God giveth it (the seed) a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body.” (1 Cor. 15:38-40). Man, at the highest rung in the ladder of life on earth, is not fragmented from his Maker. The Father is in the son in a potential form and the son is firmly rooted in the Father, though he may, circumstanced as he is, not know it owing to limitations of the fleshly raiments in which he lives all the time functioning on the earth-plane. Because of the power of God working him, he verily but unwittingly lives in the temple of God: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of the holy God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you” (and

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therefore is you). The term. ‘man’ is merely a name applied to the incarnated God-spirit on the earth-plane. This then is the famous doctrine of holy trinity: A whole consisting of three parts—the Father (the Universal Spirit), the son (the individualised spirit clothed in body, mind and intellect) and the Holy Ghost (the saving links or life-lines between the two by following which the human-spirit transhumanises the human trappings)—all combined in man. Hence the exhortation of the Prophet of Galilee: “Be ye Perfect as your Father in heaven is Perfect.” Perfection comes from the Perfect One.

‘Perfection’ then is the goal of human life, which consists in self-unfoldment or evolution of the individual spirit by transcending the limitations of body, mind and intellect, and by tapping the deep-rooted latencies in the depths of the great sea of unconsciousness yet unexplored and unknown. It is indeed a difficult task but not impossible to achieve, if one is lucky enough to contact a Master-soul, well-versed both in the science and art of Pra Vidya or the knowledge of the worlds that are heavenly and lie beyond the senses, which help us only in the realm of Apra Vidya or the knowledge of the empirical world of observation and experimentation. “The Kingdom of God cometh not by observation—the Kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17: 21). The Kingdom of God is not to descend from the clouds above. It is already there in man, and one can witness its glory by the process of inversion (akin to death), a voluntary process of course while living, as was taught by the Masters to their chosen disciples, from times immemorial. What a man has done, man can do if there is proper help and guidance from some Godman. Every Saint had a past and every sinner has a future.

II

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

WE all have come down to the distant land called earth, like so many prodigal children of God, carrying with us the potential of our Father, which we are frittering away, day by day and moment by moment, in exploring the ephemeral beauties and glories of this region, losing all recollection of our divine origin and the blissful parental home, and of our ancestry together with the great heritage that is ours. ‘Born of the flesh’, and living in the flesh, we have lost our touch with the saving lifelines within, and as such are spiritually dead—dead in spite of the hectic life on physical and mental levels and the wondrous achievements in the fields of art, science and technology. With all the comforts of life that Dame Nature has provided to her foster-child, man, we yet live in a state of perpetual fear and distrust, not only of others but of our own self, for we find ourselves helplessly and hopelessly adrift on the sea of life without any moorings to hold on and keep our barque on a steady and even keel on the tumultuous waters.

Man is a microcosm, a replica of the macrocosm (universe). The two—the individual and the universal—are intimately inter-related, part to part. All that is without is also within and the spirit in man, despite the heavy load of physical and mental trammels, has the capacity to break through the thick enshrouding veils and peep into what lies beyond—the perpetual sway of the Supreme God, the eternal self-existing Truth, perennially the same from the beginning of time.

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We have, in this respect, the testimony of a number of mystics:

Thou while living in space, hath thy roots out of space,
Learn thou to shutter down this side, and soar into
fields infinite,
For so long as one does not rise above the world
of senses,
One remains an utter stranger to the world of God,
Strive on and on, till thou art completely out of the cage,
And then shalt thou know the vanity of the realms
below,
Once thou art above the body and the bodily adjuncts,
Thy spirit shall bear testimony to the glory of God;
Thy seat is verily the throne of God,
Fie on thee that thou chooseth to live in a hovel.
Thou hath a body even when out of the body,
Why then art thou afraid to get out of the body?

O friend! bypass the life of the flesh
That thou mayst experience the Light of Life,
Thou verily art the life of all that exists here.
Nay, both the worlds, here and hereafter art in thee,

It is from thee that all wisdom hath descended,
And it is to thee that God reveals His mysteries,
In short, though thou appeareth but so small,
And yet the entire universe resideth in thee.

Equipped as thou art with a human body and
an angelic sprite,
Thou canst at will roam the world over or soar in the sky
What a great fun it would be to leave the body here
below,
And wing thy way to the highest heaven above,
Quit thou thy elemental house of flesh and blood,

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And take with thee thy mind and spirit far above.

If you could but come out of the tabernacle of the flesh;
It may enable you to go to the place where flesh is not;
The life of the flesh is from water and food alone;
For on earth you are clothed in the raiment of self-same
stuff;

Why not go you nightly out of the charnel-house?
For you possess hands and feet that are not of this earth;
It may suffice you to know,
That there is in you an ingress leading to thy Beloved
When once you get out of the prison-house of the body,
You shall without any effort land into a new world.

The Perfect Master, time and again, tells us of our lost Kingdom lying within, neglected since long and altogether forgotten in the mighty swirl of the world of mind and matter, in which we have been drifting all the time. This is the God-given opportunity for us to tread the untrodden path and to explore the unexplored, and to rediscover within us what is already our own, the real inner being in us.

Human birth is a rare privilege indeed. It comes at the end of a long evolutionary process, beginning from rocks and minerals, then passing through vegetable kingdom, then the world of insects, reptiles and rodents, next the feathery fraternity of birds and fowls and penultimately beasts and quardrupeds. Man has in him an element which all other creatures lack, or have just in infinitesimal measure—the skyey or ethereal element that gives him the power of ratiocination and discrimination, enabling him to distinguish right from wrong, virtue from vice, and to understand and to practise the higher and nobler values of life, with freedom of will to choose and adopt the same for further progress, so as to be ‘born of the spirit’, adding new dimensions to his consciousness by arising into supra-mental awareness—

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first cosmic and then of the Beyond. All this is a certain possibility, though we may not know of it at the moment.

“Our self,” says Jung, the philosopher, “as the container of our whole living system, includes not only all the deposits and the sum of all that has been lived in the past, but is also the starting point, the pregnant mother earth from which all future life will spring; the presentiment of things to come is known to our inner feeling as clearly as is the historical past. The idea of immortality which arises from these psychological fundamentals is quite legitimate.”

Imprisoned in the clayey mould and domineered by the mind, man is yet a puny child of clay in the vast creation, insignificant in stature and strength. But he is limitless and all-pervading in soul; the seemingly individualised spirit in him is a priceless crest-jewel of inestimable value. So says Bheek, a mystic sage:

O Bheek! none in the world is poor for each one has
tucked in his girdle a precious ruby;
But alas! he knows not how to untie the knot to get at
the ruby, and hence goes abegging.

“God,” says the sage of Dakshneshwar (Ramakrishna Paramhans), “is in all, but all are not in Him.” Guru Nanak tells us of the way out—way to unravel the great mystery and to acquire mastery over everything else—“By conquering the mind, you conquer the world” is his simple device. The mind as at present is torn between countless desires of diverse nature, pulling in different directions. It has, by degrees, to be reintegrated and made whole—an undivided whole—with the love of God surging in every fibre of its being; for then alone it would become a willing instrument to serve the spirit instead of dragging It down and without, as it does now, into tight bottleneck corners, here, there and everywhere and at

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all times. Unless this hydra-headed monster is trained and tamed, it, like the sea-god Proteus, continues playing wild antics, under different guises and various shapes, putting on, chameleon-like, the varying ground-colours of its own choosing. So long as it keeps attached to the earth and all that is earthly, it keeps waxing in power and strength derived from the mother-earth. It has, therefore, to be lifted high into the air and held aloft, as Hercules did with Antaeus, to get rid of the giant, who was invincible as long as he maintained his contact with the mother-earth from whom he derived his strength.

Once the mind gets in touch with the Divine Melody that comes wafting from above, it is lifted up, losing for good all interest in the down-pulling sense-pleasures of the world. This gradually leads to a virtual death of the body that is now left far below, as well as of the mind that goes up some way to merge in chit-akash—its native habitat, the great storehouse of memories from times immemorial, and from where it descended with the blowing down of the vital airs (pranas) on the pure consciousness, wrapping it with a two-fold covering (mano-mai and pran-mai koshas), constituting the mental apparatus befitting the soul for functioning on the earth-plane, through yet another covering—the physical covering (ann-mai kosh) of the body fitted with gross sense-organs, so very necessary in the world of sensations.

While confined, cabined and cramped in the magic box of the body, we are not chained to it though all the time we think and act as fettered prisoners, for we do not know how to unhook the indwelling spirit in the body and how to rise above it. All the Masters from ages past have been telling us with one voice ‘to go within and look inwards’ for the beacon light, the ‘Light of Life’ uncreated and shadowless, All-luminous in Its own luminosity, the only ray of hope and deliverance in the enveloping darkness of the murky prison-

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house in which we dwell. Of this it is said:

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness
comprehendeth it not. —St. John

Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness.
—St. Luke

It is this light which is acclaimed as the ‘day-star’ that serves as ‘a lamp unto the feet’ of the faithful, enrapturing both the mind and the spirit, which alike are unwittingly attracted and begin drifting upward into realms of higher consciousness, super-consciousness, along the lighted current of life, the Audible Life Stream (Shabd), carried as it were on the wings of the Divine Music springing from the holy Light, metaphorically described as Pegasus, the white winged horse of the gods or barq (the lightning) that is said to have carried the Prophet to heaven (almiraj).

The great Masters in all times, and in all climes, speak of this unique and wonderful house, the human body, the veritable temple of God in which dwell the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Unless the Son (the human spirit) is, by the grace of some God-man, baptised with the Holy Ghost (the Power-of-God made manifest in the flesh by a God-man), the prodigal Son, wandering among the wonders of the wondrous world without, cannot by himself find his way out of the labyrinth, to the Home of his Father (God), for the eternal and fundamental law is: “It is in flesh (clayey mould) and through flesh (Word-made-flesh) that we come to Him who is beyond the flesh.” (St. Augustine). Within us is the Light of Life. Day and night burneth eternally this celestial lamp in the dome of the bodily shrine. ‘Whosoever comes by this Light of lights, to higher realms, he soars unfettered.’ This is the truth and leads unto Truth. “He that knows the Truth knows where that light is, and he who knows

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that light, knows eternity” (St. Augustine), “knowing which (Truth) shall make you free” (free from all the impregnable bondages, regrets of the past, fears of the present and terrors of death in which we constantly live). (John 8:12). The Word or the Holy Ghost is the great Truth at the bottom of all creation: “All things were made by him (the Word), and without him was not anything made that was made,” says St. John. “The entire world sprang from Shabd,” is what Nanak tells us. Again, “With one Word of His, this vast creation blossomed into being; and a thousand streams of life sprang into existence.” In *Upnishads*, it is said ‘*Ekoaham, Bahu syaam*’ meaning, ‘I am one and wish to become many.’

The Mohammedans speak of the Word as ‘*Kun-fa-kun*’—He willed, and lo, all the universe sprang up. Thus it is God-in-action Power (Light and Life—The Melody of God), All-pervading and All-powerful, immanent in all that is visible and invisible, creating and sustaining countless creations. Speaking of creation, Nanak tells us: “And countless Thy planes; unapproachable and inaccessible Thy innumerable heavenly plateaux.” Even by the word countless, we fail to describe Him. The words count and countless are indeed of little consequence for the Almighty. He who is immanent in everything and is the very life of the creation itself, knows every particle thereof.

To come to a better understanding of the higher life, the life of the spirit, one has to actually cross the trans-frontiers of the earth life and pass through the gates of what is called death, and be reborn in the ethereal unearthly world beyond. “That which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.” (John 3:6-7). It is this contact with the ‘Light of Life’ as manifested within by a God-man that brings to an end the peregrinations of the soul in the ever-revolving wheel of births and rebirths.

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The entire creation is believed to be divided into eight million and four hundred thousand species (84 lakhs); (i) water creatures—9,00,000 (9 lakhs), (ii) air creatures—14,00,000 (14 lakhs), (iii) insects, rodents and reptiles etc.—27,00,000 (27 lakhs), (iv) trees, shrubs, herbs and other vegetables and creepers etc.—30,00,000 (30 lakhs), and (v) all kinds of quadrupeds and animals, human beings including gods and goddesses, demi-gods and godly powers, demons and wandering spirits etc.—4,00,000 (4 lakhs). A jiva-atman or an individual soul unless liberated (becomes an atman), keeps revolving in one or other material body by the compulsive force of karmas and impressions gathered from life to life.

This then is a prelude to real life and life eternal, coming as it does from contact with the ‘Voice of the Son of God (i.e. inner Music made manifest by Him) and they that hear (though dead to It now) shall live (and live eternally by us)’—John 5: 25—for it is said: “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness (of the human heart) shall waters (of life) break out and streams in the desert.” (Isiah 35:5-6). “For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face: Now I see part; but then shall I know even as I am known. (1 Cor. 13-12). “The spirit, when attuned to the Sound Current” says Nanak likewise, “begins to see (the Light of God) without eyes (of flesh), to hear (the Voice of God) without ears, clings on (to the Divine Music) without hands and moves forward (Godwards) without feet.” Again, the great teacher goes on to explain: “The seeing eyes, see not (the reality) but by the grace of the Guru, one begins to discern (the Power of God) face to face. It is why a worthy and worshipful disciple can perceive God everywhere.”

Our sense-organs are so formed as may help us in the physical world alone and that too imperfectly, but they fail us

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when we come to the supra-physical level. 'By seeing we see but do not perceive, by hearing we hear but do not understand, and we have a heart that has neither feeling nor understanding.' But a complete change, a marvellous change comes about only when one learns how to invert and undergo practically a process of voluntary death while living. So the exhortation: Learn how to die (die to the earth life) that you begin to live (live freely and fearlessly in the living spirit, free from the limiting adjuncts of the bodily sheaths). One has, therefore, to 'forsake the flesh for the spirit.' Love not the flesh more than the spirit, is the age-old advice of the Prophet of Galilee.

As long as we are 'at home in the body' we are absent from God. And, 'the more one withdraws from himself, the nearer one gets to God.' Nothing in creation compares with the Creator, for what is not God is nothing. With the transference of consciousness from the earthplane (death as is commonly known) to the spiritual plane (rebirth or second birth—birth of the spirit, as it is called through contact with the Master-power flowing in the body, one never perishes. 'When all others desert (you), I will not abandon you, nor allow you to perish the last.' "He that overcometh (transcendeth the physical in him by transhumanising the human), shall not be hurt of the second death" because 'if ye are led by the spirit ye are not under the law (the law of action and reaction or cause and effect leading to repeated incarnations).')

All this is not a mere theory but a fact—the 'fact of life' for 'the flame of life' cometh with every individual from the moment of one's birth, and it is given unto every man to know the secret of the flaming Sound and "the mysteries of heaven (the Kingdom of God)." (Matt. 13:11). In this science of the Beyond, logic and reasoning have no place. Actual seeing alone brings in faith and belief. The Light of light, the Father of lights 'swayom jyoti swarup Parmatma' (self-effulgent

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God), nooran-ala noor (the great celestial Light), and the spirit in man (the spark from the divine light of the universal spirit, a drop of consciousness from the ocean of consciousness, appearing as individualised spirit clothed in various mantles), are all within the human body (narnaraini deh); but strange as it may seem that though living in so close proximity to each other, one has not seen the face of the other; because we have mistaken the arid wilderness of the world as our real abode.

The Master-souls not only apprise us of the reality and the rich heritage to which we are entitled, but Christ-like proclaim: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 16:9). Nanak also tells us: "The Master has the key for the mobile house of soul chained to the body and the mind; O Nanak! without a Perfect Master, there is no way of escape from the prison-house." But how many of us have put faith in their solemn assurances, and how many of us are prepared to take and accept the keys of the Kingdom and more so to unlock the steely portals, behind the eyes? And much less to hear the Word (the Holy Word) of which Christ says: "He that heareth my Word.. is passed from death unto life" (John 5: 24), in spite of our vehement daily prayers for being led from untruth to Truth, from darkness to Light, and from death to Immortality.

It is indeed a strange paradox, more paradoxical than the riddles ever propounded by Sphinx, the monster of Thebe to the Thebans or enigmas of life put by Yaksha, the demon-guardian of the pool of refreshing water, to the Pandva princes who went, one by one, to stake their thirst but could not do so (except Yudhishtira, the prince of dharma) and were turned into stones for their inability to solve the same.

Are we not, in fact, leading a stark and stiff life, stiff in death as it were, like many insensate things, awaiting the advent of the Prince of Peace, to raise us once more into life

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(life everlasting) by conquering the Sphinx and the Yaksha of old—keeping a dragon-like strict watch over us lest we, lured by the legendary Golden Fleece, escape, Jason-like, with the much coveted prize, from his domineering sway. This then is the great enigma of life which has got to be solved, for without solving it, our brief existence here is dwarfed and stunted.

The majority of us simply lead an animal existence—living like them a blind life in the brain. We have never risen above the emotional and mental worlds which we ourselves have cast around us and which now hold us in their iron grip. The ‘heaven’s light,’ is to most of us a figment of human imagination and not a reality:

While with us in the body, we see Him not,
Fie on a lifeless like this,
O Tulsi! everyone is stark blind.

Kabir tells us:

The entire world is groping in darkness,
If it were a question of one or two, they could
be set right.

Nanak also speaks likewise:

To the Enlightened One all are purblind,
For none knows the inner secret.

Nanak then goes on to define blindness:

They who lack eyes are not blind,
Blind are such as see not the Lord.
And eyes that see the Lord are quite different.

Again, it is said:

The eyes of flesh see Him not, but when the Master
illuminates the eyes within,

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A worthy disciple begins to witness the Power and
glory of God within himself.

How is it that we do not see Him with all our earnest and
well-meant endeavours?

Enveloped in darkness we strive darkly for God
by deeds not less dark;
Without a Perfect Master none has found the way
nor can one do so;
But when one comes across a Perfect Master,
one begins to see Him with an eye opened
in the closet of his heart.

It is only by direct Communion with the Name (the Holy
Word) that one comes to know that by knowing It nothing
else remains to be known. In *Jap Ji*, the great teacher recounts
the innumerable benefits which spontaneously begin to flow
and one becomes the abode of all virtues:

By Communion with the Word, one can attain the
status of a Sidha¹, a Pir², a Sura³, or a Nath⁴;
By Communion with the Word, one can understand
the mysteries of the earth, the supporting bull⁵ and
the heavens;
By Communion with the Word, the earthly regions,
the heavenly plateaux and the nether worlds stand
revealed;
By Communion with the Word, we can escape
unscathed through the portals of death;
O Nanak! His devotees live in perpetual ecstasy,
for the Word washes away all sin and sorrow.

1. Sidha: A man endowed with supernatural powers.

2. Pir: A Muslim divine or a spiritual teacher.

3. Sura: A god.

4. Nath: Yogin, an adept in yoga.

5. Dhaur: It is the fabled bull, supposed to be supporting the earths
and heavens.

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By Communion with the Word, one can attain the powers of Siva, Brahma and Indra;
By Communion with the Word, one can win esteem from all, irrespective of one's past;
By Communion with the Word, one can have yogic insight, with the mysteries of life and self all revealed;
By Communion with the Word, one can acquire the true import of the Sastras⁶, Smritis⁷ and Vedas⁸;
O Nanak! His devotees live in perpetual ecstasy, for the Word washes away all sin and sorrow.
By Communion with the Word, one becomes the abode of Truth, contentment and true knowledge;
By Communion with the Word, one gets the fruit of ablution at sixty-eight pilgrimages⁹;
By Communion with the Word, one wins the honour of the learned;
By Communion with the Word, one attains the stage of Sehaj¹⁰;
O Nanak! His devotees live in perpetual ecstasy for the Word washes away all sin and sorrow,

By Communion with the Word, one becomes the abode of all virtues;
By Communion with the Word, one becomes a Sheikh, a Pir, and a true spiritual king;
By Communion with the Word, the spiritually blind find their way to Realisation;

6. Sastras: The philosophical treaties of the Hindus.
7. Smritis: The ancient scriptures of the Hindus.
8. Vedas: The earliest books of human and divine.
9. Ath-sath: Literally, these two words mean eight and sixty, i.e. sixty-eight. Nanak is once again making use of the Hindu belief that ablutions at 68 places of pilgrimage purify all sinful acts.
10. Sehaj: This term refers to the state when the turmoil of the physical, astral and causal worlds with all their enchanted panorama, are transcended and the great principle of life is seen within.

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By Communion with the Word, one crosses beyond
the Limitless Ocean of illusory matter;
O Nanak! His devotees live in perpetual ecstasy,
for the Word washes away all sin and sorrow.

Thus we see that the secret of success both here and
hereafter lies in attuning the 'self' within to the
Overself or the Sound Current which is the be-all and
end-all of all existence. Nanak, therefore, exhorts:

It is by a great good fortune that one takes a human
birth and one must make the most of it,

But one goes down in the scale of creation by
deliberately breaking away from the saving
life-lines in him.

It is, indeed, a sad plight for one who gains the posses-
sions of the whole world but loses his own soul. Far from
having any profit, he incurs a dead loss, irreparable and
irretrievable, whereby he suffers for ages before he comes
again to the human level. Once the opportunity is allowed to
slip through the fingers, the gains made so far go overboard,
and one hopelessly flounders on the shoals and sand-banks
of the stream of life. The fall from the top rung of the ladder
of life is a terrible fall indeed!

III

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THIS earth, the arena of so many struggles and strifes, full of sharp antinomies and contrarities, presenting, as it does, a vast panorama of life in its variegated forms and colours, is but a speck in the boundless creation of the great Creator:

There is no end to the creation;
There are countless forms of life with varied names,
species and colours;
Writ on the objective world by the ever-flowing pen
of the Creator.

—Nanak

With all its seeming imperfections, this world serves a useful purpose in the divine plan, just like an apparently insignificant cog in the machinery of a great powerhouse. Nature, the handiwork of God, is not the least extravagant in its design and plan. This world is a penitentiary, a house of correction, a sort of purgatory, a plan of expiation, a training ground where souls get chastened by experience. It is a half-way house between physical planes and spiritual realms. The powers that be of the earth are hard taskmasters, believing still in the ancient Mosaic Law of ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’. Here all kinds of third degree methods are employed and hard knocks are administered; rendering less than justice, untempered by compassion and mercy, so that one should take his lessons seriously, and by degrees turn away from the way of the world to the Way of God. Life on the earth-plane then is a dreadful thing ‘dark with

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horror and fear', and we are long lost children of God in the labyrinthine wilderness of the world.

Evolution is in the nature of living monads and consists in moving towards its source and becoming one with it, for true happiness lies in 'fellowship divine; fellowship with Essence; till we shine; fully alchemised and free of space'. But the tragedy of life on earth is that 'we do not know what we are, and much less of what we may become' for 'what we are we do not see; what we see is our shadow'. The 'inner being' in us is so constituted after the fashion of God that it knows no rest until he rests in Him. "A truly religious experience", says Plotinus, "consists in the finding of the true Home by the soul exiled from heaven". And this experience can be ours if only we know how to unhook the 'self' from the trammels and trappings of body and mind.

Self-realisation and God-realisation are the highest objects of mundane existence. Self-realisation precedes God-realisation. 'Know Thyself' has ever been an article of faith with the ancients. First the Greeks and then the Romans in their turn laid great stress on '*gnothie seauton*' and '*nosce teipsum*' as they called it respectively, and both these terms stand for 'self-knowledge' or knowledge of the 'self' in us. The knowledge of the self or 'Atam Jnana' of the Hindu Rishis and 'Khud Shanasi' of the Muslim darveshes comes first. Next comes the realisation and experience of the Overself or God—Parmatman or Rabul-almeen and this is called Khuda Shanasi or Knowledge of God.

The process of self-realisation whereby the self can be separated from the mighty maze of mind and matter, begins with introversion—receding of attention, the outward expression of spirit in the world outside. It is an art of inversion from the world of senses to the world within, and beyond the physical senses, technically called

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Para Vidya. Real life or Reality is something that is cognised only in a deathlike state, a state that intervenes on conscious withdrawal of the sensory currents from the body to the eye-focus. Life is ‘an active principle, however removed; from senses and observation’.

In the workaday world, we are prone to all kinds of lusts—lust of the flesh, eyes, ears and other sense-organs—and we are being constantly swayed by countless attachments, myriads of aspirations and desires, springing from the diverse longings of the heart and unknown latencies lying hidden in the folds of the mind. All types of likes and dislikes, prides and prejudices, loves and hatreds and many other things unwittingly keep creeping into our consciousness, personal consciousness, frittering our energy, and keeping us away from the ultimate goal and purpose of life; to wit, self-realisation.

This ignorance of the aim of life is a serious malady we are afflicted with, and it is the cause of bondage—bondage of the soul to a world ‘bursting with sin and sorrow’. Yet, there is a Power within us that resurrects the soul. We have, therefore, to take a turn from this drama of hectic activity and find the still-centre of our being within the human body where the All-pervading and All-free Power resides.

This body is verily the temple of God, and the Holy Ghost dwells therein. So all this present activity has got to be reversed and geared back into the opposite direction. This is termed by Emerson as ‘tapping inside’ and ‘going into the fox-hole in the brain’, as once remarked by President Truman, for it was into this fox-hole that he repaired whenever he wanted peace and relaxation from the burden of his high office. The Vedas call it ‘Brahmrendra’ or the hole through which Brahman could be contacted.

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“Knock and it shall be opened unto you,” St. Matthew says significantly enough. It shows that a door within the body leads into the realm beyond—the Kingdom of God. And of this inlet it is said: ‘Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.’ To locate this gate and to have an experience of the ingress makes for personal conviction, for nothing becomes real till it is experienced. Intellect is finite and so is reasoning based on intellect. Scriptural texts speak of Truth but do not demonstrate It, much less give a contact with Truth. Logical knowledge is all inferential and cannot be depended upon with certainty. Certitude comes only when ‘the eternal Word speaks.’

The shortest, the swiftest and the surest way to plumb Truth is through a mortal leap (into the Unknown), says Henri Bergson, the great philosopher. Perception, intuition and reasoning just help in understanding the Reality to a certain extent at the level of the intellect; but seeing is believing, seeing within with one’s own eye, the ‘Single Eye’ as it is called. Of this inlet or ingress little is known to the people at large. Nanak emphatically declares: “The blind find not the door.” In order to find the ‘strait gate’ and the ‘narrow way’ leading unto life—life eternal—the life of spirit as distinguished from the life of the flesh, we have of necessity to recoil from the present downward and outward expansion, gather in the outgoing faculties of the mind at the seat of the soul, behind and between the eyes. In other words, we have to change the centre of our being from the heart-centre, as at present, to the eye-centre (Tisra Til or Nukta-i-sweda) and develop the ‘Single’ Eye’ of which Jesus speaks: “If, therefore, thine eye be ‘Single’ the whole body shall be full of light.”

This ‘Single’ or ‘Third Eye’ variously called by the sages as Shiv Netra, Divya chakshu or Chashm-i-batin provides an

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ingress into the spiritual world—the Kingdom of God—now a lost realm to most of us. It is here that one has to tap within, and to knock and knock hard with fully concentrated and single-minded attention, as an undivided individual, in order to find the way-in and gain an entry into the astral world. Hence the exhortation: ‘Now is the time to awaken and lovingly remember the Lord.’ But how? We have not seen Him. And one cannot concentrate on and contemplate the formless void as He is. In the same breath comes the sage’s counsel as well. ‘Learn of this (approach to the Absolute) from some God-man.’ What does the God-man say? ‘Fix thou thy attention at the eye-focus, the seat of the Lord Siva (the Shiva-netra), for then everything will follow of itself in due course, as you will gain experience of the ‘self’ in you.

The Masters tell us that the entire world is blindly groping in the dark, chasing the fleeting shadows, ever eluding and ever fading away into airy nothings as we draw nigh to them; while the fountain-head of all bliss and harmony lies untapped within at the eye-centre which is the seat of the soul in the body in the waking state. This centre, when located, gives an access to, and provides a supra-conscious contact with, the realms that lie beyond the farthest ken of the human mind. Equipped with the sense-organs, our only means of knowledge is through them. The soul is perfect without the senses, for its action is direct and immediate, and not indirect and mediate—depending upon outer aids—as knowledge of the world is.

After obtaining this contact, one is led, step by step, to the true Home of the Father. This is life in fullness. Thrice blessed is man, for it is given unto him the power to traverse the regions, both astral and causal, and to go into the Beyond (Brahm and Par Brahm), the region of eternal bliss outside the pale of repetitive creation, dissolution and grand dissolution.

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But so long as one does not withdraw himself from the world and from himself as well, from his body, mind and intellect, he does not draw any the nearer to God. "It is only when the outward man perisheth (the human in the body is transhumanised), that the inward man (spirit) is renewed, and the dizzy heights of the Mount of Transfiguration are gained, and one becomes a living spirit, freed from the body and its impediments; capable of getting inner experience of meeting the ancient Masters like Moses and Elijah" (Matt. Ch. 17), "and joining the Lord in the feast of Passover." (Matt. Ch. 26 and Mark Ch. 14). It is at this place that the Lord awaits his disciples: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock, if any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:20).

All this experience that St. John reveals to us, he had when he was transformed into 'spirit', and he speaks of the coming in of the Lord 'as a thief in the night' (in the darkness of the soul). Hafiz, a Persian mystic of great repute, also testifies: 'The Murshid comes in the darkness with a lantern in his hands.'

"The way Godward," says Prophet Mohammed, "is narrower than hair and sharper than the razor's edge." It is described by Nanak as 'khande-di-dhar' (sword's edge) and thinner than a hair; and one has actually to pass through a death-like experience. In this context St. Plutarch says: "At the moment of death, the soul experiences the same impressions and passes through the same processes as are experienced by those who are initiated into the Great Mysteries."

But how many of us are prepared to experience the death processes while living? We are all mortally afraid of death. And why so, particularly when we know, and know so well that it is the necessary end of all created things? The reasons

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therefore are not far to seek. In the first place, we have not yet learnt 'to die at will' while living. And secondly, because we do not know what happens after death. Where do we go? What lies beyond the death-trap? This is why we have a horror of death; and the mere idea of death holds us in a state of mortal terror:

The entire world is mortally afraid of death,
And everyone desires to have an endless life,
If by the grace of the Guru one learns of death-in-life,
He becomes the knower of divine wisdom.
O Nanak! he who dies such a death,
He gains for himself the gift of life eternal.

Death, after all, is not a dreadful incident. 'How charming is divine philosophy; not harsh and crabbed as the ignoramus suppose; but sweetly melodious as Appolo's lute; and a perpetual feast of nectared sweet.' It, in reality, opens new vistas and new horizons of life beyond the grave, and the flames of the funeral pyre, that engulf, entomb and extinguish the mortal remains, do not touch the soul. 'Dust thou art and to dust returneth' was not spoken of the soul. The life-principle in us or in fact in any other living thing never dies. It is only the elemental parts that go through a process of change which we erroneously call death, and wrongly understand it to be an extinction.

'In nature, death feeds life and life illumines death.' It is the universal law that operates everywhere and on all planes of existence. 'The wise men discover that the perception of Reality comes with the annihilation of the self (the bodily self in which the spirit is incarcerated).' The moment the spirit voluntarily breaks through the fetters, something breaks in upon the spirit with a 'terrible illumination from the world behind the world' making It 'the Prophet of the Most High God'. It is at the Mt. of Transfiguration that one

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gets revelations and sees the mingling of heaven and earth.' It is here that one finds 'the dark grows luminous and the void fruitful.'

Everyone has, as a matter of course, to die some day—man, bird, or beast; rich or poor; healthy or diseased, young or old. The soul which takes on the physical raiment has to shed it one day. Death alone is certain and real, while life (in this world) is uncertain. We seldom pause to think about the long journey which lies ahead of the inner being in us. We usually lament the death of others and mourn for them for days on end but are not wise enough to care for our own end and prepare ourselves for the final journey into the great unknown that lies beyond life's end. Before an analysis is offered of the death-process, practical and informative as it may be, it would be worth our while to know at least what we are. Who we are? Whence we come? Whither we go? And above all what is the meaning or purpose of life?

Man, as at present constituted, is an aggregate of body, mind and intellect with a great motor-power working from behind, called soul. Formed and environed, as we are, through the ages, our attention is continuously flowing outwards and downwards through the nine portals of the body—the eyes, the ears, the nostril nares, the mouth and the two passages below the waist. It is not that we wish it, or do it voluntarily, but it has just become a habit with us. We are not yet master of the house in which we live. We are being constantly dragged out by mind and the senses through the various sense-organs, into the vast and varied fields of sense-enjoyments.

It is this constant association of the self in us (attention) with the mind and the material objects that has not only debased us, but defaced us beyond recognition, and now we do not know what we really are. We have become so identified with our limiting adjuncts that we do not know

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anything independent of, and apart from them.

Unless the self gets depersonalised by throwing off the mask of dross personality with which it has covered itself and becomes disrobed self, pure and simple; by dissociation from these countless limiting agents: (1) the mind, comprising the faculties of hoarding impressions (chit), thinking (manas), reasoning intellect (buddhi) and egoism or self-assertiveness (ahamkar); (2) the sheaths or coverings: physical (ann-mai), subtle (pran-mai and mono-mai), causal (vigyan-mai and anand-mai); (3) the inborn and natural propensities of righteousness (satva), mercurial restlessness (rajas) and inaction born of ignorance (tamas); (4) the five elements (tattvas): earth, water, fire, air and ether of which the entire physical creation is made and (5) the twenty-five compounded elements in varying degrees of proportion (prakritis) which prepare the physical moulds or bodies in different shapes and patterns, shades and colours as a result of karmic reactions; the self imprisoned in so many meshes, cannot know its own real nature, much less its divine ancestry and the rich heritage, all of which come to light only when it comes to its own and realises itself as the self-luminous 'Self'.

Let us see what some of the English thinkers have to say in this context:

Man is a little world in himself, made cunningly of elements and angelic spirit. His God-like qualities have depraved by the fall, and he is constantly visited by divine wrath—wars, plagues and thunderstorms. Yet, he can enjoy a civilised happiness, provided he treats the world as preparation for the next, and keeps the body subject to his soul.

—J. Donne

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What is it to trust on mutability,
Sith that in this world nothing may endure?

—Skelton

There is within the all-comprehending ambit of animal instinct, some secret urge which drives the chosen men towards transcending of animal impulse. This transcending animal impulse manifests itself as complete disinterestedness (of all that is in the world without). The urge of animal ego is completely disregarded; and the evidence of this disregard is a willing submission to a 'self-sought death,' an acceptance of the annihilation of the animal instinct is arrayed against this acceptance... (till) nothing remains on the subjective side but pure consciousness, and one is transformed into a Superior Being whom he imagines (contemplates)...

Nothing ever becomes real till it is (actually) experienced—even a proverb is no proverb till your life has illustrated it. But how many philosophers have made this acquisition?

For this, the mind has to be reintegrated (made an undivided whole), as a faculty of sense, integrating which is a prelude to and a necessary condition to total detachment from it. The self must be whole before one can wholly detach oneself from it (body, mind and intellect). It is an all-seeing mind which embraces the totality of being under the aspect of eternity. As we gain our entrance into the world of Being, a total vision is ours.

—Middleton Murray

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There is a communication between mystery and mystery,
between the unknown soul and the unknown reality;
at one particular point in the texture of life the hidden
truth seems to break through the veil.

—Ibid

How then is this inner urge to be fulfilled? The process of getting fully into, and staying completely in the eye-focus (the gateway to the so-called death), is akin to a part of the process of death.

The process of withdrawal of the sensory currents from the body below the eyes is a voluntary one, and one comes to experience the mysteries of the beyond into which a Master-soul (Sant Satguru) initiates a disciple during his lifetime. He gives a first-hand inner experience of conscious contact with the holy Naam—the Divine Light and the holy Sound-Current (Holy Ghost) as coming from the right side, as the lowest expressions of the divinity within. One cannot by one's own unguided and unaided efforts have an access into the spirit world when one cannot hold on by himself even in the physical world without the active aid and guidance of many teachers from the cradle to the grave. Herein lies the paramount need and importance of Satguru or Murshid-i-Kamil (Perfect Master, an adept in the science and art of soul), competent enough to disentangle the spirit-currents from every pore of the body, the plane of sensations as it is, and to raise it above body-consciousness to witness for himself the inner divine splendiferous glory.

With the process of withdrawal of the sensory currents from the body, the death-like process commences. You have not to do anything but simply to sit in a calm, composed and fully relaxed position with attention fixed at the eye-focus and engage in Simran, or repetition of the charged names, which carry the life-impulse of the Masters through

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the ages and serve as passwords into the regions beyond. While so established in an easy posture (asan) in healthy surroundings, you forget yourself, entirely forgetting even the life-giving and life-sustaining pranas (vital airs) which will of themselves gradually slow down and grow rhythmic; and so do the entire respiratory and circulatory systems of the body.

At first, the sensory currents begin to gradually withdraw from the extremities of the body—tips of the hands and feet and come upwards and gradually pass through the various bodily centres, each of which being the region of one of the five elements of which the body is composed, until taking off from the heart-centre they reach the throat-centre, the seat of Shakti, the Mother of the universe (the all-pervading energy); benumbing the entire bodily system below the eyes; and then proceed directly to the centre behind the eyes (Agya Chakra). This is where the spirit-currents get collected and gain an entry into the fox-hole within (Brahmrendra or the hole of Brahma) and have a peep into the Brahmand or the cosmic universe. This is the tenth aperture in the body, the only inlet, apart from the nine outlets. This is the place where you have to knock and get admittance into the realms above—realms more vast, more glorious, self luminous and self-resounding with rapturous strains of celestial Music, unheard of anywhere in the physical world which has been left below; now no more than a great slum area, fraught with miseries and tribulations ‘fading into a faint reflection of the world of ideas’ as Plato puts it.

At this stage man becomes truly blessed at having access to the aerial region, the world of spirits. He is now at the threshold of the astral world in company of the Radiant Form of the Master (Guru Dev) with Gurubhakti complete in every respect. When a disciple reaches the Radiant Form of the Master, his job of self-effort is over. The Guru Dev

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now takes charge of the spirit and trains the spirit in Shabd-bhakti in the real sense, or devotion to the Sound Current, which is his own real form (Shabd Swaroop). From here He takes the spirit along with Him on the spiritual journey that lies through countless regions of varying spiritual sublimity: the causal or instrumental plane, the seed-world, the ever pregnant Mother with vast and countless creations lying involved in its womb; and then into the Super-cosmic Beyond (Par Brahmand) planes of Silence (Sunn) and Great Silence (Maha Sunn), and finally Sach Khand where dwells the Formless One of ineffable radiance (the Ocean of Consciousness) called Sat Purush, the primal manifestation of the Supreme Being. This holy process is simple, natural and does not involve any onerous austerities. It does not involve drastic control of pranas. The Masters have evolved this rare technique and termed it the 'Science of Soul', which can best be learnt under the able and competent guidance of some Master-saint, well versed in the theory and practice of life-current that exists in all created things, the creative and sustaining principle upholding all.

All the scriptures of the world bear testimony to this fundamental truth:

In the beginning was Prajapati (the Supreme Being),
With him was Vak (the Holy Word),

And the Vak (the Word) was verily the Supreme
Brahma (Param Brahma).

—Vedas

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life; and life was the light of men.

—John 1:1-5

Kalam or Kalma is the All-creative principle. God Spake: “Kun-fia-kun,” “Let there be,” and from this fiat the whole creation sprang into being.

—Alquran

Shabd is the Creator of the earth,
Shabd is the Creator of the firmament,
Shabd is the Source of light,
And Shabd resides in the heart of all.

—Nanak

It is on this basic principle in all existence (Light and Sound of God) that the Master gives a practical experience to all those who come to him in search of Truth. The rare boon of holy initiation, explanation of the theory and demonstration thereof (shiksha and deeksha), into the esoteric knowledge and experience of the saving lifelines within, is not an end in itself but just a beginning, a preliminary step for starting on the long journey for the soul to the true Home of the Father.

Those who have chosen to undertake this course of life are indeed fortunate, and experience this rare phenomena of ‘death-in-life’ and thus become jivan-mukat or the liberated beings, while yet in flesh, leading life in fullness on whatever plane they like, but always remaining within the Will of God. Such a lucky one, fully entrenched in God-head is in full control of his intellect, mind and senses. He is the master of the house and not a handmaid of his mind

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and intellect. Like a good charioteer, sitting in the chariot of the body; he directs his intellect aright which in turn gives a correct lead to his mind, and mind, when trained in the path of righteousness, refuses to be swayed by the senses, which gradually lose their potency and cease to be attracted by the glamour of the sense-subjects. Thus is reversed the primal process of expansion, and one sets settled in himself with the result that the still waters of the mind begin to reflect the Light of God, fulfilling the ancient maxim: Unless the senses are subdued, the mind is stilled and the intellect, too, is in a state of equipoise, one cannot witness the glory of God.

The rich experience of life in fullness is variously called the second birth, the birth of the spirit as distinct from the birth of the flesh. Led by the spirit, one now lives and walks in the spirit, abandoning the lusts of the flesh and cuts right across the inexorable law of cause and effect or karma, which keeps all others in perpetual bondage. With the day to day progress on this path, new vistas of indescribable joy and beautitude open up and new horizons loom into view, encompassing the totality of all that is, thus giving greater and greater awareness, first personal, then supramental, next cosmic and supercosmic.

Hereafter the liberated souls, liberated from all the shackles of mind and matter, enjoy perpetual bliss in the life of the spirit, with an outlook on life entirely changed; the vast creation now becoming the manifestation of the One life-principle pulsating everywhere in him and around him and in all things, animate and inanimate. The world that he now witnesses is totally different from the world known to him before. It now looks as the veritable abode of God and one sees God truly dwelling in it, nay in every constituent part of it; for all created things appear like so many bubbles in one vast ocean of life. Hereafter he lives unto the Lord and dies unto the Lord. Like St. Paul, he gets 'crucified in Christ'

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(fana-fī-sheikh) and Christ lives in him, and with repetitive experience of the death process he triumphantly swallows death in victory—the Father and the Son becoming one. Though the outward man of flesh and bones still persists and continues to exist, to spin out what remains of the web of life, yet the inward man (the spirit in man) is renewed—growing stronger and more sublime with time.

Thomas A. Kempis therefore says:

Forsake the flesh for the spirit. Learn to die
so that you may begin to live.

In this context, we have from Kabir:

While the people are mortally afraid of death,
I welcome death as a harbinger of bliss.
Die, and be thou dead to the world,
Such a death I experience many times a day.

In all the four Gospels, we come across so many references of like nature:

He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth
his life for my sake shall find it.
—Matt. 10:39 & 16:25

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it:
but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake
and the Gospel's the same shall save it.
—Mark 8:25

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it:
but whosoever will lose his life for my sake,
the same shall save it.
—Luke 9:24 & 17:37

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He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth
his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.

—John 12:25

Dadu, a celebrated Saint says:

O Dadu! learn to die ere death overtakes thee,
What will it profit thee, when die thou must?

Guru Nanak also says the same thing:

O Nanak! practise such a yoga as may teach thee
to die in life.

Prophet Mohammed too exhorted his ummat, or the faithful, to practise the art of dying before death: 'Before thy death, do thou die—Mautoo-qibalantumautoo'. The mystic Muslim divines like Khawaja Hafiz, Shamas Tabrez and Maulana Rumi greatly emphasised the importance of such unique experience:

So long as you do not transcend the plane of the senses,
you remain unaware of the inner life.

Thou hast raiments besides the outer (physical)
one without;

Why then dost thou fear to come out of the body?

One can go on multiplying any number of apothegms on this subject. We may close it with a passage from Earl R. Wassermann:

Many are only imperfect individualisations of the One;
and death permits the un-individualised, and hence unbounded, spiritual life. The post-mortal life, therefore, is a spiritual existence, for death, destroying the many coloured dome, allows the soul to 'out-soar the shadows of night' instead of working inwards to destroy

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organic existence. What then appears to be physical destruction, proves to be spiritual immortality... What we call 'life' is a decay; therefore earthly confinement, the mortal atmosphere stains the radiance of Eternity. On the other hand, the resurrected soul, reincorporated in the One, not the shadow of death or physical matter, is discovered in the true sense, spreading itself throughout nature, for the final reality everywhere is spirit... Were the atmosphere of mortality removed, man would perceive that the 'One remains' and that 'Heaven's light forever shines;' and that day and night are one and so life and death, Lucifer and Vesper... and that the ultimate reality of both earthly life and the post-mortal eternity is the Spiritual One;...and this realisation of spiritual identity of mortal and post-mortal life finally ceases the pairings of opposites like life and death... Since One glows 'through time and change, unquenchably the same'.

He then goes on to say:

Learn to go unterrified into the gulf of death, for where mortal existence ends, the spiritual existence begins. With death, the resurrected soul out-soars the shadows of night, and is reincarnated into the changeless One.

Prophet Mohammed also speaks of death in life in much the same strain:

A death like this will not take thee to the grave,
But it shall lead thee from darkness to light,
Learn then to die every day by transcending the body.

When a man learns to transcend the human in him, the Master in His Radiant Form comes in to help the soul onwards to its true Home, guiding it on the higher planes,

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both in one's lifetime and even after when the mortal coil is finally cast off. In this connection Nanak says:

O Nanak! snap all the ephemeral ties of the world and
find thou a real friend in some Saint;
The former shall leave thee while ye live but the latter
shall stand by thee even in the hereafter.
Following the instructions of a Satguru, take hold
of Truth,
Be thou true to Him and He shall stand true to thee
unto the last.

A Muslim darvesh likewise says:

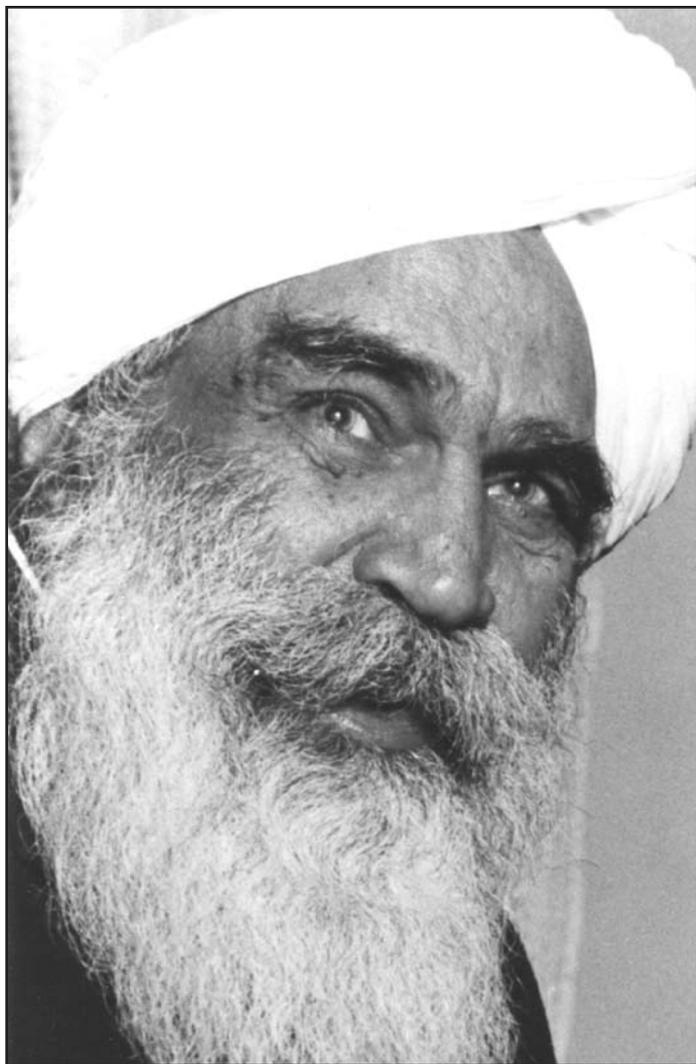
O brave soul! take a firm hold of His hem,
For He is truly above all the worlds, here and above.

So we find in the Gospels:

Lo! I shall be with thee till the end of the world, I shall
not leave thee nor forsake thee.

In this way the highest mission of human life is achieved and the fullness of life experienced. This is the subject of contacting the 'Self' by the 'self' which disengages from the thorns and thistles of the worldly life, under the proper guidance and help of a Master-soul who vouchsafes this experience to all alike irrespective of sex, age, avocation, religious affinities and social orders based on blood, caste, colour and creed.

The spirit has got to be divested of the false halo of the self-created and self-projected personality that one unwittingly weaves around himself. Unless one becomes a pure spirit divested of the love of all created things, one cannot enjoy the life of the Creator which is a life of fullness in beatitude.



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

IV

DEATH IN BONDAGE

IN nature death follows life and life proceeds from death. Death as a cessation of life in one form is but a prelude to re-living in another, and generally at a higher level of existence than before, and in better and more congenial environs.

Evolution is the law of life and it consists in active flowering of the latent possibilities in the spirit-matter, and comprises in its compass, not only evolution of the spirit-matter which grows more plastic and translucent in its onward march, but also evolution of forms from minerals to human entities and lastly expansion of self-consciousness. The so-called dead matter is not really dead though the energy in it may for some time be in a congealed state.

A worn-out garment, that has outgrown its utility is to be cast off and replaced by a new one, moulded in a fashion one desires the most. Such is the law of Dame Nature, the handiwork of God. The kindly Father, it is said, hath ordained that His children may have what they ardently wish for.

In providing the essentials of life on the earth-plane, Love, Light and Life and the necessary adjuncts thereto, like earth, water, sun, air and space together with all the means of sustenance, the Supreme Lord of the universe is munificent beyond measure, and provides the same freely to all though each one gets according to his need and measure of descent. His bounties are innumerable and inexhaustible, and for ages man has fed upon them in diverse ways. Not satisfied

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with the limitless gifts, man ever craves for more—more of silver and gold, more of amenities and conveniences of life and more of everything else, and he struggles and strives endlessly for them.

Instead of being grateful to the Lord for all that He has, by His grace, provided for us, we curse ourselves, curse those around us in better and more affluent circumstances than us, and curse the innocent stars above and do not hesitate to cavil at, and criticise in stinging terms, our own fate or destiny which we have by our own actions, forged for ourselves. ‘With all his possessions, one loses his head for just a pittance.’

Human life is a great privilege and a rare asset and blessing. It comes after passing through a long evolutionary process extending over time unending. It is an opportunity for amassing the riches of spirituality that lie hidden within us and of which we are hardly aware. But the majority of us are after ephemeral non-essentials—the sense-pleasures of the earth-life, and not real happiness.

For these short-lived and fleeting pleasures, which we may or may not get, we, by all means, fair or foul, try to move heaven and earth, and more often than not pay dearly, even with our own life, and quit the stage of life with many a deep regret for one thing or the other, and for the unworthy means employed and for the sorrows suffered in the attempt.

Nature is not extravagant in her design and purpose. As one thinks, so he becomes. Our feelings and emotions, thoughts and passions, desires and aspirations do not die with the death of the body. They constitute an inner vest, an undergarment (the astral body), below the physical cloak; and the spirit clothed therein, goes out to be covered by yet another mantle, drawing upon the karmic seeds lying

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in store in the seed-body, the precious treasure-chest. It is this causal or instrumental body with its vast resources that helps its inmate, the spirit, in fashioning a new mould, a fresh tabernacle of flesh, which may serve as a fitting vehicle for the fulfilment of what lies uppermost in the unconscious self.

The curtain finally rises, unfolding the entire panorama of life down to the minutest detail ere one passes out of sight from the stage of life. On death-bed one may get a glimpse of reality, but then it is too late to comprehend it. This process works on and on giving at the end of each span on earth, fresh momentum to the wheel of life and death with its natural concomitants of joys and sorrows, weal and woe—sometime up and sometime low, moving in interminable gyres, as one is never satiated with all that one gets in one's sojourn on earth, and goes on adding new hopes and new desires, mixed with many a regret for what he wanted and did not get. He is thus unwittingly engaged perpetually in sowing the dragon's teeth, and life after life, he spends in fighting his self-started battles with the self-raised armed bands which, like shadows, follow on his heels as untamed furies or the avenging spirits.

Nature, like the potter's wheel, provides the means in the form of many clayey pots, one after the other, for slaking the insatiable thirst and expectation of each individual. Weighed down by countless desires from top to toe, one makes a slave of himself. Without them one could revel in his Godhood. What is man after all?—God plus desires. And conversely what is God?—Man minus desires.

The great philosopher-poet, William Wordsworth (1770-1859) draws a beautiful pen-picture of a growing child in his memorable Ode on Immortality:

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The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do We come
From God, Who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy...
Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

This then is the sordid picture of life on earth as we witness from day to day. Even having our fill, as preordained, we are yet hungry—ravenously hungry for more and more of pelf and power, more of ephemeral pleasures and sense-enjoyments. Far from being thankful for what we have of the bounties of nature, 'we look before and after, and pine for what is not.' Nature cannot remain a silent spectator of our unappeased gluttony and with her magic wand turns us, Circe-like, into swine so that we may have our fill of the piffle and be done away with. It is only some wise Ulysses, armed with a magic-flower from Mercury (the messenger of gods) who can fight the enchantress on her own ground and rescue his followers, getting them reconverted from swine into men, and along with them all others held in captivity by the sorceress in many different forms, each according to his or her innate nature. It is the type of the ruling passions that

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determine our course of life, not only here right now in the living present, also in the hereafter.

Now let us have a look at the inevitable process of change called death. This transference from one state of life to another is a necessary adjunct of life; and takes place in its own good time but with a swift and stunning suddenness, the more so when it is least expected. Death knows no calendar, and no one can predict it, nor can anyone escape from it with all his cunning and wit. Each living thing has its own allotted span of lifetime. We all live, move and have our being in time, and when the sands of time run out, this change comes and continues to do so, time and again, until one gets beyond the farthest bounds of time and arises into timelessness.

Death, then is something terribly real and unavoidable. It perhaps seems to be the only real thing in the midst of the unrealities of the world. Everyone, rich or poor, king or beggar, young or old, healthy or diseased, has to pass through the death's trap-door, whether one likes it or not. One may live long or short, a hundred years or just a while; but one cannot live on eternally in one and the same life form, which in course of time, is sure to decay and become wearily burdensome, a millstone around the neck as it were, and one in sheer desperation may cry out in anguish for a quick riddance from the heavy load hanging around the self in him:

Neither kings nor beggars remain,
All go, each one in his own time.

—Ramkali M.1

A Muslim darvesh therefore advises:

All thy life thou hast bemoaned the death of others, Why
not thou sit for a while and ponder over thy own fate?

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Is death a painful process? is the next question. Generally speaking it is so with most. The scriptures tell us of the excruciating pain that a dying person suffers at the time of death. In the Bhagwad Purana, it is said that one experiences the horrors of death-pangs as if one is bitten by a million scorpions at once. The holy Quran likens the throes of death to the condition of a person when a thorny hedge were to be pulled through the alimentary canal from one end to the other. The Sikh scriptures also speak in much the same strain: The life-currents are wrenched out.

All such statements are merely illustrative of the immensity of the torture that one experiences when the demons of death appear to forcibly take the spirit out of the body. What actually happens at that time, it is only the dying man who knows. No one, after the actual experience of death, has ever returned from across the borders of the death-land to tell us of the exact nature of his sufferings. Each one suffers unto himself and becomes silent forever. To be on the death-bed is a veritable nailing on the cross, and the death-chamber is a charnel-house.

One can hardly stand unmoved, when some people toss restlessly for days on end with a death-rattle in their throat, writhing in extreme agony on the death-bed. Who can assuage the tortures of death ? All stand helplessly by; the best of physicians administering drugs to the last, the attendant nurses standing on toe-tips, the nearest of kith and kin with tearful eyes and woebegone looks and sombre faces, awaiting the inevitable end. Who hears the piteous cries of the poor victim and his life companions, his wife and children?

As the wife with hairs dishevelled moans,
The solitary spirit wings its way alone.

—Kabir

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Of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.); king of Macedonia and conquerer of the world as known at the time, it is said that it had been prophesied that he would die only when the earth would be of steel and the sky of gold. As neither of these two phenomena could be possible, the king was lulled into a false sense of perennial security. He imagined and believed that like the Olympian gods, he was immortal. After long and wearisome campaigns in the far east, as he was passing through the desert near Babylon, on his way back to Greece, he was stricken with fever. Being unable to hold on to the saddle, he was helped to dismount, and one of the generals spread his steel coat-of-mail on the ground, lined as it was with velvet on the inside, and made the king lie thereon, and held up outstretched his gold-embroidered umbrella over his face to protect him from the scorching rays of the fierce desert sun. It was then that the great hero of many a battle, the invincible conquerer, realised that his end was near, for he was now lying on the steely ground with a golden awning over him. He was overtaken by consternation. Addressing the best of the physicians who were attending upon him, he, with tearful eyes, begged that something should be done to save him for the time being, so that he could reach home and meet his mother whom he greatly loved. But one and all expressed their helplessness. He offered to them, at first, half his kingdom and then the whole if they could, by their medical skill, procure for him that much of respite. But who could help to stay the divine decree? On the tenth day of illness, as his generals one by one, passed through the tented chamber of the dying king, he bade them good-bye and directed that at his funeral, both his hands be kept out of the shroud so that all could see that a great emperor was leaving empty-handed, just the way he came into the world.

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Similarly, we hear of the sad story of a great and talented queen who ruled over vast dominions. She was adored by her people for her dazzling beauty, and admired for her sagacity. She had ruled wisely and well for quite a long time. Brought up in the lap of luxury, with hundreds of attendants, she could not for a moment believe that there was such a thing as 'death'. When her end came, she was stricken with great sorrow and overtaken by poignant grief. The royal physicians by her bed-side could do nothing to assuage her fears and torments. As death stared her in the face, they tried to console her and advised her to prepare for the last journey. 'What,' in her horror, she exclaimed. And where was she going? she wondered.

'Alas ! to the land from where there is no return,' was the simple reply.

She could not believe her ears. 'Am I dreaming?' she enquired,

'No, you will have to go, your majesty.'

'Is there a land of no return? and if so, where is it?'

'It is far off from this world,' said the courtiers.

'Could not you locate it for me in time? And what preparations have you made to make my stay over there comfortable?' asked the queen.

'None, your majesty,'

'How many of you will accompany me to that land?' inquired the terrified queen.

'You will have to go alone and by yourself, madam,' said the courtiers.

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‘How many attendants will I be permitted to take with me?’

‘None, not one.’

Such, indeed, is our ignorance of the realities of life. We are clever, very clever, in the workaday affairs of the world. But strange as it may seem, we know next to nothing of the stern retribution that awaits all of us; and we have, like all others, to go all alone and empty-handed.

‘Naked I came into the world, and naked shall I go,’ says the hymnologist. That, indeed, is the inevitable fate of all. Weeping we come into the world, and weeping we depart from the world. To come weeping is understandable. A newborn babe does weep as he emerges from the chamber of the womb, for he is severed from the Light of lights, the Light of life, that has been sustaining him right through the period of gestation in that chamber, suspended upside down. This is why we generally keep some sort of light on for a few nights after the birth of the child, and whenever he cries, we turn his face towards that light, or at times, we play the rattle to amuse the baby and quieten him.

But why should we weep at the time of departure, when on the way back to the parental care of the loving Father? It was open to us to re-link the strands of life in us by consciously working for that end. This we, willy-nilly, do not care to do, and the human existence from cradle to the grave runs waste. Once this opportunity is lost, we go down in the scale of existence.

To fall from the top rung of the ladder, more often than not, proves fatal. Snapping ties with acquired relationships of the world, spread over a number of years, is painful and the departure terrifically poignant, the more so as we are quite unprepared for the quit-notice that is sprung on us. We

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do not know how to quit the rented house and where we are to go. The prospect of being thrown out into the unknown as we take the life after death to be, bewilders us. All this works up a state of horror, unimaginable horror of the worst type. This is why it is said:

Remember thou the day you came weeping into the world to the jubilation of those around thee; Live thou a life that you may depart laughing amidst the weeping and wailing of all.

Francis Quarles (1592-1644), a mystic poet, speaking of death tells us: "If thou expect death as a friend, prepare to entertain it; if thou expect death as an enemy, prepare to overcome it; death has no advantage, but when it comes a stranger."

Herein lies the difference between the eastern and the western thought on death. St. Paul, describing death as 'the last enemy of man' said that he died daily 'swallowing death in victory' and mockingly asked: 'O grave, where is thy sting?'

The eastern savants hail it as an occasion for union with the Beloved. The conclusion, however, is the same in both cases; viz., that death claims an advantage over us only when it comes suddenly and swiftly as an unexpected stranger, neither as an expected friend nor as a dreaded foe, and we are entirely unprepared to receive it or to meet its challenge.

Those who are prepared for it and are ever ready, they receive it, welcome it, taking as a home-going and a means of union with the Beloved. A true lover of God even when condemned to death for heresy cheerfully lays his head on the block and beseechingly calls the executioner, praying, to make a short shrift of his body with his sword, as he sees

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reflected in it the Light of his Beloved (God). After all, what is death? "Death," says Euripides "is a debt we must all pay." This being the case, why not pay off the debt and be forever free from the obligation? The body is the ransom or the dower which the soul has to deliver to obtain ultimate release from the Law of Retribution.

To have some idea of what happens after death, let us have recourse to the scriptural texts. The Masters divide mankind into four categories. In the first place, there are those who have not had the good fortune to take refuge in any Sant Satguru, and these form a considerable bulk. They have to go, all alone, each a solitary soul by itself, without any friend and companion. All such souls have to appear before, and abide by the decrees of the just-god (Dharam Rai), who dispenses stern and strict justice on the principal of 'as you sow, so shall you reap', without compassion or commiseration. This is what is called the inexorable law of karma that works relentlessly. This law does not take any count of extraneous circumstances and admits of no exceptions: "Castes and colours avail naught there; One gets his meed according to his deeds." (Asa M. 3). "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but the Lord pondereth the hearts." (Prov. 21: 2).

At the appointed time of which no one is aware, good angels (Ramgans) or bad angels (Yamgans), as the case may be, come to forcibly take the spirit out of the body, and one has to go along with them. They escort the spirit to the judgement-seat, so that each has to render account of his thoughts, words and deeds. "Fool thinkest thou that because no Boswell is there to note thy jargon, it therefore dies and is buried. Nothing dies, nothing can die. The idlest word thou speakest is a seed cast into time, which brings fruit to all eternity." (Carlyle). Jesus in no uncertain terms has declared: "And I say unto you, that every idle word that

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men shall speak, they shall give account thereof on the day of judgement. For by thy words thou shalt be justified: by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” (Matt. 12: 36-37).

All thoughts, feelings and emotions, all words uttered intentionally or unintentionally, and all deeds done premeditatedly or casually, leave indelible impressions (samskaras or naqsh-i-amal) on the tablet of the mind, and the account has to be rendered after death. It is all a summary procedure, but just, with no provision for logic-chopping or argument or appeal to any higher power, nor can there be any chance of release there from. The one who has indulged all his life in sinful doings is sent to hell (Narak or Dozakh) to undergo the penal servitude for a particular length of time as his deeds may merit, and thereby rid himself of the evil impressions, and understand the law that works for his ultimate good. When the allotted time runs out, he once again takes birth so that he may have another chance to lead a reformed life freed from the evil now washed off, and make a fresh start avoiding the pitfalls of the past.

If one leads a life of righteousness, he is assigned a place in heaven or paradise (Swarg, Baikunth or Bahisht), where he, for some time enjoys the fruits of his good deeds, after which he too once again, comes down to the earth-plane.

Thus all persons ensconced in the karmic wheel of life move up and down by the ceaseless momentum of their own deeds. There is no escape from this ever-revolving giant wheel until one, by a stroke of good fortune, meets some Sant Satguru and the latter accepts him and helps him to a way-out and to the God-way.

The spirits on coming out of the nether world of Pluto, gradually work their way up from the mineral to the vegetable kingdom, and then to the world of insects and reptiles, and on

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to that of the feathery fraternity, and next to the quadrupeds, and finally to human beings:

After passing through the wheel of the eighty-four
thou hast gained the top,
O Nanak! now take hold of the Power of God,
and be thou eternally free.

—Shri Rag M. 5

Even the Devas or deities, the various gods and goddesses who are said to reign in regions of bliss, are there on account of their highly meritorious deeds on the lower planes.

As soon as they exhaust the merit gained, they have also to return to the physical world. The blessed Lord Krishna, the adorable one, once explaining to Udhav, a devoted disciple of his, about the working of the law of karma, pointing to an insect crawling in the filth said: “O Udhav, this insect that you see before you, has oft times been Indra, the god of thunder and rain, and has oft times been grovelling in dirt as at present. Such indeed is the fate of all.”

Even the Avtaras or incarnations, the embodiments of the Powers of God, are not immune from the inflexible working of the karmic wheel and are called to judgement. Like a soldier in the army, an Avtara is not immune from liability under the civil law, in addition to his obligations under the military law governing his profession. Even if he may be doing his duty under the command of his superiors, which is law unto him under military regulations, he may incur a civil liability under the civil law. His is a two-fold responsibility: one under the army law—to wit, to obey implicitly what the officers order him to do on pain of being court-martialed and the other under the civil administration if, in the discharge of his duties, he is found to have exceeded the limits.

Gods and goddesses, and the incarnations of various

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God-powers, are therefore included in this category, so far as the law of karma goes. With all their privileged position, they, and the entire hosts of angels, are under the law and not above the law. This is why they too seek human birth, in which lies the possibility of escape from the toils and struggles on to the abode of peace-eternal and life everlasting. Even the great Rishis with all their austerities and penances, when their end draws nigh, wish and aspire for a human body in preference to celestial abodes in heaven as the shining ones (Devas). They do so because it is in this way alone that they stand the chance of contacting a Satguru, getting instructions from Him, and rising above the inexorable law of causation or action and reaction.

Heroes like Arjun and the Pandva brothers except Yudhishtira, the dharam-putra (the embodiment of dharam), as he was commonly known and believed to be, were cast into the nether regions for engaging in a war, though of righteousness, and enjoined by no less a personage than the blessed Lord Krishna, because in doing so they could not, with all His exhortations, divest themselves of the idea of doership.

Again, of Lord Krishna himself, it is said that he met his death by the chance arrow of a bhil, thus requiting his past karma committed ages before as Rama, who killed the invincible Bali, a forest prince, by the artifice of shooting an arrow from behind the cover of a tree. Rama and Krishna, it maybe mentioned, were both incarnations of Lord Vishnu in different ages.

Similarly, of King Dasrath, the father of Rama, it is said that one night while hunting in the forest, he heard a gurgling sound that appeared to him to be of some wild animal lapping water close by among the rushes and the reeds. Guided by the sound, he directed his arrow in that direction, hitting a

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young man, Sarvan, who had gone to the riverside to fill a pitcher with water for his blind and thirsty parents, whom he was carrying in a pannier across his shoulder, and had just left them at some distance. Hearing the piteous anguished cry of his victim, the king rushed towards the dying man, who told him of his plight and begged him to take the water to his parents. Full of grief, the king went to the aged couple and told them of the mishap. They could hardly bear the shock and died bemoaning their lot, wishing the same fate as their's for the unknown perpetrator of the crime. In course of time, the king also met the same fate, when he died in bitter agony caused by the pangs of separation from his son, Rama, who had been exiled for fourteen long years. This is how Nemesis overtakes each one in his turn, meeting out what is due unto him. Thus each one comes in his own way into the world, and goes out of it into the valley of death under the compulsive force of karma.

In the second category fall all persons who come in contact with a living Perfect Master, are accepted by Him, and initiated into the esoteric science of the soul, but for one reason or another, are not able to develop Communion with the Holy Word to any appreciable extent, be it on account of indulgence in sense-pleasures, or because of sloth or lethargy, or something else.

They stand on a different footing from those in the first category. At the time of their death, when the soul-currents begin to withdraw from the body, or a little earlier, the Satguru in his Radiant Form appears within, to take charge of the departing spirit. His Radiant Form gladdens the heart of the devotee, and he gets so absorbed in Him that all attachments of the world fall off like autumn leaves, and he fearlessly and joyously follows Him into the valley of the shadows of death. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadows of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me," says the

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Psalmist. (23:4). And this indeed is His troth — ‘Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide; In thy most need to go by thy side.’ Again, ‘So... I shall not leave thee nor forsake thee till the end of the world.’ The Master constantly keeps a watch over the affairs of the disciple. He is ever with him in weal or woe. “He stands by him even before the judgement-seat of God,” says Nanak. With the darveshes, there is no reckoning of deeds of their disciples. The Master is all in all, the sole judge and arbiter of the disciples’ deeds, whether these be righteous or unrighteous, and deals with them as he thinks best: “The Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in himself ; And hath given him an authority to execute judgement also, because he is the Son of man.” (John 5:26-27). It is because of such a deep solicitude for the disciple that Nanak so emphatically declares:

Love thou the true Master and earn the riches true,
He who believes in Him unto the last, the Master
rescues him true.

Like wandering sprites, the mind-ridden roam up and
down,
Animals in human form—devoid of light through and
through.

—Malar War. I

Distance does not count with the Master. The Master-power does come at the last moment, or even earlier, no matter where the disciple may be—far or near. He apprises him of the impending inevitable hour of his exit from the world and accordingly comes to escort him. The Subtle Form of the Master is resplendent, and leads the spirit into higher regions and assigns each one an appropriate place to which he may be entitled according to his sadhna or the practice of the Holy Word during his lifetime; and imparts to him the necessary instructions for further and fuller development on

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the spiritual path. “In my Father’s house are many mansions; and if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2-3).

In case one is to be chastised for his laxities, He Himself administers the necessary chastisement, but never lets him into the torture of hell-fire. The divine balance-holder (the king of shadows) who judges each according to his deeds, has no authority over the apt disciples of the Master, for they live in ‘the name of Lord (which) is a strong tower.’ (Ps. 18:10). It is not given to him to pass and execute judgement on them. In all such cases the Master Himself decides and does things as He thinks best. “The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.” (Ps. 147:11) Again, “For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth (accepteth).” (Heb. 12:6). In brief:

Those who love the Master, are never alone,
Nor are they answerable to any, nor do they suffer pain.
—Gujri War M. 3

But such initiates who have no love for the world, they are not reincarnated on the earth-plane, unless for some particular reason the Master deems it necessary to do so, and in that case, such a one does not slide down the scale but is reborn in some family of pious and religious parents so that the new-born easily gets into touch with a Master-Saint and resumes on his path Homeward, from an early age, without any let or hindrance. For the seed of the Word sown by the Sower (the Master) ever remains within the depths of his soul and cannot but, in time, sprout, blossom and fructify by the Water of Life that he is sure to get from the Master of his age: “None can take away the gift of the Guru; He who has

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bestowed it, knows how to ferry across.” (Maru M. 1) “Once the seed is sown by a Sant; None has the power to singe it.” (Soami Ji). Hafiz, the mystic poet of Persia, says:

On the day of reckoning, thou shalt know for certain,
In the land of darveshes, there is no count of deeds.

Shamas Tabrez, another great mystic of Persia, says:

Death breaks down the cage, liberating the spirit,
Death has no sway over phoenix that dies to soar again,
Why should I not fly back to my own home?
Why should I tarry in the clayey mould?

Again:

The lovers know where and how to die,
They accept and relish death as a gift from the
Beloved:
With inner eye opened, they see the glory of God,
When others are forced blind-fold into the blind alley.
While the lovers wend their way happily to the Lord,
The ignorant ones die a horrifying death.
Those who pass sleepless nights in fear of God,
They have no regrets in life nor any hopes and fears;
While here they seek His glance of grace,
Merrily do they go in His holy presence.

The third category comprises such persons as make the most of the instructions imparted to them by the Master, but have not yet attained Perfection though they are well on the way to it. Such souls know of the time and day of their departure in advance of the event. Since they are fully conversant with the death process and every day undergo its experience; they are not afraid of death and know its shadowy character. On the contrary, they wishfully and wistfully await the appointed time and voluntarily throw off the worn-out mortal mantle, just in the same way as they had

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put it on, on their advent into the world. They know some of the higher planes of the spirit-world which they traverse day in and day out along with the Master-power, and know the particular plane to which they are ultimately to go for sojourn after death. There they live for some time and work for their way up to still higher regions. They live all the time consciously in the love of the Master, and the Master-power ever abides in them. He is their mainstay and support and they owe no allegiance to anyone else. “Led by the spirit they are no more under the law.” (St. Paul).

Last, but not the least, come the Perfected Souls. They, while living, are liberated beings (jivanmukats) and lead a freed life of the spirit. They know full well, far ahead of the time, as to when they have to go back to the Mansion of the Lord, and gladly await the hour, and welcome the manner in which they are required to quit the bodily frame—be it on the cross or the gibbet, on the red-hot iron plates, or on the executioner’s block. With no will of their own, they live in the Will of God, and joyously embrace death as a means of reunion with the Beloved, unmindful of the swift or lingering process of death, as may sometime be ordained by the religious zealots and tyrannical pontiffs and potentates, for that is the moment of highest jubilation for them. Thenceforth, they live out their span of life from moment to moment. They care not if they are flayed alive, hacked to pieces, or burnt at the stake, or made to drink the cup of hemlock, or nailed to the cross along with felons. They give a hearty handshake to death as it comes in their way, no matter what form it may assume. This then is the way that Gurmukhs, the Saints and the Prophets follow.

Of Guru Amar Das, it is said that when the time of his departure drew nigh, he called for the Sangat (congregation) and addressed: “I am going back to the Hari (Lord). No one should weep for me. He who will do so, will incur my

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displeasure. After I am gone, be ye all engaged in the silent Music of the soul.”

Similarly, Shamas Tabrez said: “On the day of my death, as my bier slowly moves along, never for a moment feel that I am going with any regrets in life. When you see my coffin, utter not a word of separation, for then alone I am in union with the Lord. When I will turn my face away from the world, I will then be facing the eternal Reality.”

Hazur Baba Jaimal Singh Ji Maharaj had foretold of his approaching end long before it actually came about. When he was nearing the end of his earthly pilgrimage, he said: “I am going back to my native place and none should press me to stay on. My mission in this life is over and I have amassed immense spiritual riches. Happily I go to the Mansions of the Lord.”

It is a sacrilege to lament and bewail the passing away of Saints, for verily do they go back to their own home. One may, if he likes, shed copious tears at the death of a worldling who is forcibly ejected from, and dragged out of the body by the Prince of the nether world, and passes through devious processes up and down: “O Kabir, why weep for a Saint who goes back home: Weep, if you must for a worldly-wise who tosses from hand to hand.”

Saints, when called back, on completion of their mission, are given an honoured place in His Court. To die such a death is a rare privilege and a real blessing, which may be envied by mighty kings and emperors.

V

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“AND God said, let there be light; and there was light.” (Gen. 1:3). And this is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And light is the life of men.

In memorable words like these, all the scriptures describe the genesis or creation of the world and of all that is in the world. Rays of Light vibrating with the Music of Life, emanating from the Formless Absolute Existence came to manifest the world in its variegated colours in countless shapes and forms.

As above, so below. The Spirit and Power of God manifested in the vibrating holy Light, pervades all the four Grand Divisions of the universe: *Sach Khand*, the abode of Truth or the Changeless Permanence in Its pristine purity, with the material cause (the mind) yet hidden and involved therein; the *Brahmand* or the egg of Brahman, the second Grand Division of the universe, brought into being by the universal mind of elemental essence by the Will of the Supreme Being; and the next, *Und*, or the third Grand Division, called the astral world with mind-stuff in its subtle state; and lastly, *Pind*, or the physical world, the fourth Grand Division, the handiwork of the gross mind.

During our sojourn on the earth-plane, we work out our destiny or fate as planned with great precision and exactitude by what is called *Prarabdh Karmas*, which determine in broad outline the general framework marking the duration

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and course of life in each case. This plane is a big counting house or a clearing office, so to say, in which each one has to square up his or her account, coming down the ages, and in doing so, we willy-nilly open fresh accounts and raise credits and debits to be paid off and cleared in the distant future, and no one knows how and when and in what form and in what manner. Thus, while reaping the harvest sown in the past, we prepare the ground for fresh sowing, in season and out of season, with seeds good, bad, or indifferent; and all this we do promiscuously, prompted by mind and the senses.

The sages call the earth-plane as 'karam khshetra', or the field of actions, where sowing and harvesting automatically go on all the time, under the superintendence, direction and control of Dharam Rai, the king of shadows, who measures and judges each thought, word and deed, however trivial and insignificant it may appear to be, rightly and justly, and administers justice to each at the end of one's life-span. Nanak calls this region 'Dharam Khand', for each pilgrim-soul coming to this region has to realise in fullness, the existence of the 'Law of Retribution and Requitall', which governs all alike with no favours and no exceptions.

Each is weighed with the weight of his own acts and deeds and learns, sometimes with hard blows and heavy knocks, the grand lesson of Brahman, the Lord of the three realms: the gross or physical, subtle or astral, and causal or instrumental (*Pind, Und and Brahmand*); all of which are the mind-zones of the universal mind, with numberless planes and sub-planes, including *inter alia* various hells and heavens with intermediate stages as one may create by one's senses, sensibilities and susceptibilities, likes and dislikes, loves and hatreds, prides and prejudices, born of desires of one kind or the other.

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Each one thus builds his own habitat, and not only here but also in the hereafter; the astral and mental worlds where one stores up his impressions gathered from time to time, in different incarnations from the beginning of time. All these linger in the soul in the form of general latencies in the folds of the karmic body; and a part of them at the time of rebirth prepares an etheric body in advance of the coarse, dense body. Thus 'destiny is cast into the mould before the physical vesture is prepared', to work out the causes involved therein.

Similarly, at the time of death the departing soul carries with it all the life-impressions, deeply engraved on the tablet of the mind and the ruling passions of the entire lifetime, now singled out in blazing colours which determine the course of its future destination in the astral and/or mental world of spirits. Stripped of the physical mantle, each soul displays its subtle individuality, as it were, in the light of the noonday sun. Men may deceive themselves here for any length of time, by wearing pious looks and dressing in attractive clothes. They may for the time being succeed in deceiving others; but none can play the hypocrite in the astral world, where one is denuded of the solid outer covering, the gross garment of the flesh:

O Nanak! it is there that the divine mystery is finally
revealed,
The Perfect are they who worship Perfection,
And the imperfect are perfected over there;
Such, as dying come to be born again are yet imperfect.

The astral world is the world of spirits of disembodied souls—souls having cast off the physical body and yet enfolded in the subtle and mental coverings. It is also called 'Pitri Lok' the place of the Pitris or manes of the defined souls of the departed ancestors. Here the souls are imprisoned in

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the seven-shelled encasement of the astral world, drawing subtle material from each of the seven sub-planes existing therein. It is here that they work out the causes which they set going on the earthplane, by undergoing certain purificatory processes in the divine crucible, so as to make them worthy of the land of the shining ones after the dross is burnt off.

Mrs. Annie Besant (1847-1933), a pupil of Mme. Blavatsky, in her famous study *'The Ancient Wisdom'*, has given a graphic description of the various sub-planes in what she calls 'Kam Lok', a lower sub-plane in the astral world. As the name indicates, it is a 'place of desires' and is said to contain seven sub-divisions in it, each peopled by persons of varying natures and temperaments. The scum of the society, the vilest of the vile, the murderers and marauders, ruffians and profligates and persons with bestial tastes and brutish appetites who, while living on earth, shaped for themselves besital astral bodies, now appear, after death, in savage forms in their natural likenesses and native hideousnesses, in the lowest strata of the infernal region, roaming about, roaring, raving and raging, fiercely and furiously, pret-like wandering in search of means for the gratification of their insatiate desires.

In these gloomy and loathsome surroundings, they reap the harvest of their own sowing, and learn the much-needed lesson which they failed to learn during their lifetime, as they were whirled away on the tide of lusts and desires. Nature's lessons are bitter and sharp, but merciful in the long run, designed, as they are, for their ultimate good.

To the next sub-plane go such souls as quit their bodies with some deep anxiety weighing heavily on them, or such who had implacable appetites or desires for self-enjoyment and gratification.

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Then there are two sub-planes for those who are educated and thoughtful people, chiefly occupied with worldly affairs during their lifetime on earth. Their attention is directed more onwards than backwards because they belong to the progressive types.

From the fifth sub-plane onwards, the environ changes considerably, becoming astral in the true sense of the word i.e., truly starry, studded as it is with stars, and the surroundings are cheerfully inspiring. These three sub-planes are euphemistically termed heavens—heavens of a lower type, sometime spoken of, as by the later Jews, as infernal heavens, being situated in the infernal world as distinguished from supernal heavens.

The religious and the philosophic busy-bodies find their way to the materialised heavens in the fifth region, which they desired and coveted while on earth: like the Happy Hunting Grounds, the Valhalla (the final resting place of the illustrious dead and the heroes slain in battles), the joy-filled Bahisht or paradise of the Muslims, the golden Jewelled-Gated New Jerusalem or the Lyceum-filled Heaven.

The souls of the more advanced type, like artists, find a place in the sixth sub-division. The seventh or the highest sub-division is entirely for the materialistically-oriented intellectuals, like politicians and administrators, and men of science who were pronouncedly materialistic on earth, and wedded to the ways of the world in acquiring knowledge.

Life in Kam Lok is said to be more active, forms more plastic and the spirit-matter more highly charged and more subtle, and intangible and imperceptible though transparent or translucent. The thought-forms here appear and disappear with kaleidoscopic rapidity because of the great velocity of the vibrations generated by sensations, feelings and emotions.

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A spiritually advanced person with a purified astral body merely passes through Kam Lok without delay. The pure and the temperate, though less rapid in his plight, dreams away peacefully through it. Others, less developed still; awaken to consciousness in the region similar to the one in which they worked in their lifetime. Those whose animal passions still cling to them (pretas) wake up, each literally and exactly 'to his own place' in the appropriate region to which he belongs.

This plane is treacherous and tricky, and as such, those who are initiated by a Perfect Master of the time into the divine mysteries of the Beyond are not permitted to tarry, lest they be bewitched here. On the contrary, they are quickly led under cover through it, to higher regions for gaining maturity and stability so as to be able, at a later time, to face it with confidence and to stand the tempting witchery and delusive and illusory charms of the place, and do not get stuck-up in their march upwards in the spiritual region.

From the astral world of desires, some of the souls pass on to another world, the world of thoughts. It is a mental zone (mano-mai srishti) created by the thinking mind or manas as it is called. Thoughts have tremendous energy and each person, while on earth, creates his own dream-land by flights of imagination and fancy; and to this, the soul, after death, is gradually led on to experience 'the castles built in the air', as the saying goes.

Mind at every stage, from the universal Brahman, with His pure mind-essence, down to the individual, weaves a world of its own and takes delight to live in it, as a spider caught in the web of its own making, and flits up and down, right and left, on the gossamer texture so artistically set up with a light filmy substance coming out of its own body. So do the thought-patterns and thought-images of each

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individual go out to make a wonderful thought-kingdom, far in advance of the time that the thinker in the body is freed from the prison-house of the physical existence in the material world.

As you think, so you become. This is the law of nature, and no one can escape from its operation. In this world of thoughts, thought-vibrations are the only channels of communication between soul and soul, and all the souls live in close communion with each other. There space and time do not matter. If at all there is any separation between them, it is only due to the lack of sympathy and not for anything else.

All in all, life there is richer, fuller and more advanced than in any of the foregoing regions, but it continues to be delusive, it being the outcome of the mind-stuff of each, and no one here can totally escape from delusion, though each one enjoys in full, his own heaven-world, vast and expanding or shallow and restricted according to one's own mind-stuff, but all the same each one retains in him, a sense of reality in the midst of surrounding illusion.

A sanctuary of special interest in the mental world is Dev Lok, the abode of the Devas or the shining ones—people highly enlightened in their time and greatly advanced in their researches. Here are located the Svargas and Baikunths of the Hindus, the Sukh Vati of the Buddhists, the heavens of the Zoroastrians and Christians, the Arsha of the less materialised Muslims and the Supernal Paradises or Pleasure-grounds of the later Jews. Here lies the garden of Eden from where man was expelled and excluded by God for his first disobedience of His commandments. John Milton (1608-74), a great poet and genius of his age, and a profound political and spiritual thinker has, in his immortal classics, '*Paradise Lost*', and '*Paradise Regained*' given a wonderful account of the Fall

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of Man and his Resurrection and return unto Him through the intercession of the Son of Man.

Without wading through the scriptures of various religions, dealing with post-mortal existence of man in the various realms, we would do well to once again refer to Brahma Vidya or the Divine Wisdom, rightly termed by the Greeks as 'Theosophia', which provides an adequate philosophy, embracing in its fold, the wisdom of the east and the west.

Turning again to the great occultist, Mrs. Annie Besant, we find the mental plane inhabited by human beings after they cast off their physical and astral vestures. Purged of the selfish animal passions, each one enters into this region to reap the harvest of his good deeds, whatever the same may be, large or small, according to the measure of good thoughts of personal self-aspirations and ambitions, hopes and fears, loves and interests. "We cannot have more than what we are, and our harvest is according to our sowing. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7).

It is a universe of the 'Good Law,' mercifully just, and brings to each, the exact wages or meed of his work on earth. Everything thought of, every aspiration worked up into power, frustrated efforts transmuted into faculties, struggles and defeats becoming pillars of strength and power, sorrows and errors forged into shining armour; now find fruition in one of the seven sub-planes or heavens in the land of midnight sun where self-consciousness awakening, makes one fully conscious of his non-self surroundings: with memory spreading out into the hitherto unknown past, bringing to view the cause that worked out his life on earth and the causes that are wrought by him likewise for the vast future. The past, the present and the future now present

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to him an integrated view of life, like an open book, with nothing to hide and withhold. Here he develops for himself an all-seeing eye, and becomes a perfect seer, so far as his individuality is concerned, in the true sense of the word.

In this heaven-world, the lowest part is assigned to the least developed souls with sincere and unselfish love for their families and friends, an admiration for nobler, purer and better persons than themselves. The measure of their meed is accordingly narrow and shallow, the cup of their receptivity being small; but still bubbling over to the brim with joy, purity and harmony; and they are reborn after a while on this plane with improved powers and faculties.

Next, come in men and women of religious faith with hearts and minds turned towards God—the personal God of their own choice, with any name and any form they had faith in, and to them the Nameless and the Formless appears in the said likeness in which they lovingly worshipped Him, overwhelming them with devotional ecstasy according to their mental and emotional capacity. The Divine veils Himself in the form familiar to His devotee. It is really strange that men forget that all deities reside in the human breast. We have but to turn inward to get a glimpse of the Formless in the very form in which we adore Him the most. It is therefore said: “Formless is He and yet all forms are His; Nameless is He and yet all names are His; Call Him by any name thou wishest; And He turns to thee.”

To the third plane, come devoted and earnest souls who see and serve God in man, and worship Him in His manifested creation. At this place they are perfected into great philanthropists of times yet unborn, and endowed with a rich power of unselfish love for mankind.

The souls of Master-minds in fine arts, like music,

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sculpture and painting; the researchers and discoverers of the laws of nature; eager and reverent students delving into the depths of knowledge, get an opportunity in the fourth sub-plane for developing into perfect Teachers of mankind in the ages to come; and when they do come, they serve as torch-bearers and leave their footprints on the sands of time.

Next, there are three lofty regions of formless heavens. A large number of souls simply reach the lowest reaches, have but a brief stay, and a flash of insight, according to their sowing and then they come back to the earth-plane with a dip into the great unknown. But souls with deep thinking and noble living, correctly and immediately perceive truths, see the fundamental causes and the underlying unities, and learn of the changeless working of the divine law in all harmony, in the midst of the most incongruous effects as appear to untrained eye—And where, “though all things differ, all agree.” (Alexander Pope).

More advanced souls, with memory perfect and unbroken, find their way to the sixth sub-plane, and after garnering the riches of the divine mind (Brahmand), return as great pioneers of mankind, to justify the ways of God to man and to glorify God. The ‘mighty dead’ of ages gone by here get a taste of the ‘glorious living,’ seeing and witnessing as they do, the working of the Will of Brahman in Its fullness, with no link missing in the chain of causation.

In the loftiest sub-plane come the souls of the Masters of Brahma Vidya and their initiates (Brahmacharis), for none but an initiate can find the ‘strait gate’ and the ‘narrow path that leadeth unto life’, and so the chosen few enter into the land and life of Brahman. They enjoy their self-consciousness to the highest point, but are not yet endowed with cosmic consciousness.

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In the end, Mrs. Annie Besant sums up the position thus: “Such is an outline of the ‘seven heavens’ into one or other of which men pass in due time after the ‘change that men call death.’ For death is only a change that gives the soul a partial liberation, releasing him from the heaviest of his chains. It is but a birth into a wider life, a return after brief exile on earth to the soul’s true Home (Home of the universal mind), passing from a prison into the freedom of the upper air. Death is the greatest of earth’s illusions; there is no death, but only changes in life conditions. Life is continuous, unbroken, unbreakable; ‘unborn, eternal, ancient, constant,’ it perishes not with the perishing of the bodies that clothe it. We might as well think that the sky is falling when a pot is broken, as imagine that the soul perishes when the body falls to pieces.”

The run of mankind after death finds no rest in the three worlds: the physical, the astral and the mental. The souls freed from the physical vesture are carried on, up and down, in the giant Brahmanic wheel of life by the momentum of their own thoughts, words and deeds. It is all a play of the individual mind, with its vast field of ramifications, spreading out from the lowest, the physical, to the mental worlds wherein one builds his own tabernacles in the hereafter, for a temporary stay, long or short, according to one’s needs for learning the lessons of Brahman; as he advances on the path towards Perfection, and each soul gathers as rich a harvest as he can; before exhausting the causes set in motion through the external stimuli from powers that be in his surroundings in the various planes in the three worlds thus described.

The causal or the seed-body of the human soul, the innermost vest, has yet two more very subtle and sublime linings underneath, respectively called the buddhic (the vigyanic) and nirvanic (the anandic or blissful). It is only a brave soul, very brave indeed, like that of prince Sidharatha,

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who may enter into Buddha-hood and become Buddha, the Enlightened one and enjoy the bliss of the Creator of the three universes; and comes to the earthplane to give the Law—the Law of Dhamma or Dharma unto the world, with emphasis on desirelessness so as to free the mind of all attachments, and then to tread the eight-fold path of righteousness leading to Perfection. Again, it may be a Jain Tirthankara, the Mahavira, the bravest of the brave, who could dare approach the divine throne of Brahman and give out to the world the Law of Universal Love and Ahimsa, love for all creatures from the tiniest insect, helplessly crawling in the dust, and the water and air spirits, floating in countless numbers, in their respective spheres, invisible to the naked eye.

In the Buddhic plane, one develops the intellectual side of divinity in him, and begins to see and realise the self-same Self in him, as in all around him, and he is as much in that Self as others are. Thus he comes to the great fundamental unity of existence, the ‘Sutra Atma,’ carrying everything from an ant to the elephant, as so many beads on the string of a rosary; in spite of the differences in shape, size and colour, both within and without, due to climatic conditions, and mental make-up and inner development and growth.

Now the human monad, the outbreathed life of Brahman, dwells in the inbreathed life of Brahman, with divine powers and attributes, and aspires for the bliss-aspect of the divinity in him—the Atmic or the Nirvanic consciousness of Sat-Chit-Anand—the heart and soul of the universe, which now becomes his, and he is one with it.

It is indeed a long and weary process to understand correctly the Brahm Vidya, and then to successfully practise it, to traverse the Brahmmand from end to end, stage by stage,

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from the physical world of coarse matter to Brahm Lok proper, the region where maha-maya in its finest and most subtle form reigns. The Brahmand is the manifestation of the Power of God, lodged in Om, the most sacred syllable in the Vedic lore; hence It is the akar or form of Om (Om-kar), It is the Logos of the Greeks and Ek-Onkar of the various scriptures.

This is the ultimate end of human attainment, says Vedanta—the highest teachings as given by the later Vedic teachers and scholars (the Rishis of old), as a result of their intense meditative experiences in the snow-capped mountain fastnesses, or in the thick forest dwellings. Brahman is the very life of the universe, comprising, as it does, the three worlds described above with all that exists in each—the Triloki Nath, the lord of the three-fold panoramic life in its fullness.

Their words of wisdom, we find in aphoristic form, as gems of ‘purest ray serene,’ in their valuable treatises known as Upanishads, which are rightly considered as Vedantas, or the final rungs or parts of Veda, the efflorescence of divine wisdom; which ends with the Maha Vakya (the great Truth): ‘that thou art’ meaning that man is Brahman, in his real nature and essence, and when one realises this fundamental truth, he involuntarily proclaims “aham Brahm asmi” or ‘I am Brahman’ or ‘I and my Father are one,’ or ‘I speak nothing on my own but as my Father bids me do.’

The greatest lesson that one derives from Vedanta is—we are all one; one in our origin, one in our make-up, both inner and outer formation, one in our potentialities and powers, however latent and involved they maybe, but equally capable of developing the same, may be sooner or later, but the process of development or unfoldment of the self is essentially the same for all; and then the goal too is one

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for all mankind, for all of us are worshippers of Brahman.

In this way, the out-breathed life constituting as it does, the individual mind merges in the in-breathed life of the universal mind or Mahat, 'the great mind of the cosmos'—the third Logos or Divine Creative Intelligence, the Brahma of the Hindus, the Mandjusri of the Buddhists, the holy Spirit of the Christians, and Allah-hu of the mystics and Sufi darveshes.

Here in Brahm Lok souls live for long, and in close proximity to Brahman, imbibing the love, the intelligence and the bliss of that Being or Power, and again, so long indeed is the stay, that one is prone to believe and call it a veritable salvation, 'the flame merging in the flame (of Brahman).' But the stay there, however long it may be, is not eternal and it lasts only till the Brahmmand itself dissolves, and the universal mind rolls up its life, absorbing all the souls in its fold wherever they may be. This drama of infolding and unfolding of life called Brahmmand is repeated again and again; and the grand play continually goes on in and through eternity. The divine philosophy deals with it so beautifully:

How charming is divine philosophy,
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose;
But musical as is Appolo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweet.

It is from Brahman that there spring the three great powers (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva), creating, sustaining and dissolving all that is of the matter or maya, in one form or the other. These three offsprings or powers come into being by His Shakti or Maha-maya, called the Mother of Universe, not in the sense of sex as we ordinarily know it to be. Once again we have to take the simile of the spider's light filmy substance that comes out not from without but from within

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the spider's body, or the cocoon or a silky case as is spun by a larva from fine threads of its own making, to protect itself as a chrysalis especially as a silkworm; wherewith we in course of time prepare all sorts of silken garments of so many designs and colours, to cover our nakedness and take delight to stunt in borrowed clothings.

Nanak, speaking of the working of God's creation, also refers to the triple principle concerned with creating, sustaining and destroying it—all working according to the Will of the Supreme Being, as viceregents, only exercising delegated authority; and strange as it may seem, it is not given to them to know Him, since they are but the part of the objective creation and He, the Supreme Being, is subjective and formless:

The great Mother, conceiving, brought forth three regents;
The first creating, the second sustaining, and the last destroying.
What he desires, they perform,
They work under His Will.
But great the wonder, though
He watches over them, they behold Him not.
Hail, hail to him alone,
The Primal, Pure, Eternal, Immortal, and Immutable
in all ages!

As to the vast and stupendous work connected with the running of the three worlds in the creation, including all sorts of hells and heavens in them, Vishnu, the second counterpart of Brahma, in the great triumvirate or trimurti, wields the power of administration. Once questioned as to how he (Vishnu) could manage such a big show and make elaborate arrangements for the innumerable souls entrusted to his care, for providing all sorts of comforts and woes in

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the supernal and nether worlds in his domain, he just smiled and said: “Oh! I have nothing to do at all, for whosoever comes into any of my worlds, he brings with him his own load of pains and pleasures, thereby creating his own hell or heaven both on the earth-plane and thereafter. Whatsoever each one needs, in any of my realms, he arranges the same for himself, and I simply look on, unconcerned, at the human drama, tragic or comic or tragi-comic, as the case may be, unfolding the infold in himself.” Thus runs the divine machinery automatically, all on its own and by itself but all under His Will.

Brahman is a great power, too great for the human mind to conceive, and of the Beyond, none but the Saints know of and can speak with authority—not the formally canonized saints, as we know of, but Saints of the status of Sant-Satguru, authorised and commissioned by Truth—the Truth that was in the beginning, the Truth that now is, and the Truth that shall remain hereafter—to teach mankind and initiate such aspiring souls into the mysteries of the Beyond and beyond the Beyond state; as may be ripe for the purpose of understanding correctly and properly the Causeless Cause of all the causes that operate down below, in each of the worlds; and are ready to live the life of the spirit as *jivan mukats* or liberated beings while yet in flesh: “A *jivan mukat*,” says Nanak, “is one who knows and practises the art of ‘death-in-life’ and when he finally quits the stage, he quits it for good, never to return again.” This is what *Pra Vidya* or the knowledge of the Beyond teaches.

Apart from this, there are many categories of teachers of *Brahma Vidya* which is ‘*Apra*’ in character and paves the way for the ‘*Pra*’, and all of them teach people in the ways of Brahman, each according to his own capabilities. The Prophets and the Messiahs generally prophesy the coming of great events, train mankind to live a godly life, and bring

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to them the tidings and messages of God (Brahman). The Avtaras are incarnations of the various powers of Brahman, and their function is to keep the world agoing in a balanced and orderly manner, holding the balance of the social order aright between righteousness and unrighteousness. The yogis and yogishwars remain within the sphere of their yog-maya (mind-force), and lead their initiates up to the highest point within their yogic powers.

The Brahm Lok has many sub-loks called Puris, Bhavans, Tabaqs or Divisions; each allotted to one or other of the powers of Brahman like Brahma Puri, Vishnu Puri, Shiv Puri, Indra Puri, etc., to each of which the souls of the worshippers of these powers, collectively called Brahman, are irresistibly attracted and drawn in course of time, each to his own destination in the place to which he belongs.

The ancient Greeks speak of this three-fold aspect of Divinity as the 'Three Sisters of the Spinning Wheel'—one engaged in spinning the thread of life for each, the other in adorning and embellishing the thread of life, and the third in cutting the said thread of life when the allotted time comes to an end. Similarly, in the Christian theology we have first Logos, the creative principle in nature, the second Logos and the third Logos, who carry on similar duties of their own. This is the famous Doctrine of Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Where all the philosophies of the world end, there the true religion begins. It is only after soul, the 'dweller in the body,' sheds its dross personality comprising as it does, the three vestures or vehicles of body, mind and intellect, and becomes an entity in its pristine simplicity, an undivided whole, the great immortal tree, evergreen and ever fresh in its native essence, in spite of the ever-changing panorama of life around; it can break through the magic hall of multi-

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coloured mirrors, and transcend the trigunatmac egg of Brahmand, and escape into the Beyond.

One has to be born anew, like a new-born phoenix, arising out of the ashes of its own previous self, with renewed youth and vigour, so as to be able to live through the life of the spirit that lies ahead.

To cross the mental world is not so easy as it may seem to the untrained in the mysteries of the Beyond. It is the most delusive world where even the Mahatmas and the Rishis, with all their learning and tapas, fail to hold on to their own ground. What is there in that vast universe which Brahman would not like to offer to those earnest souls who try to escape through his domains and reach the true Home of their Father!

At every step, be it in the physical world, the astral or the mental, he tries to block the way of the aspiring souls. The great Prophets and Messiahs and all others have given their experiences of the fierce encounters that they had with Satan, Mara, Ahirman; the evil spirits,—Asuras, Demons and their agents in countless ways, fair or foul, whereby they try to obstruct the way, to win over the seekers after Truth by assurances of worldly kingdoms and principalities; and if they do not succumb to these temptations, then by threats of violence by fire, thunder, earthquakes, heaven-splittings, cloud-bursts, lightnings and what have you.

It is in predicaments like these that one can only stand these trials and tribulations when one has by his side, his Guru or Murshid, for the Guru-power then draws and absorbs the disciple soul into Himself and takes him along the path of 'Ringing Radiance'. For each soul the Brahman stakes his all, and does not yield, unless he is convinced that the seeker clings to the protection of the Master-power (Akāl or

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the Timeless). Do we not see even in the material world that the rulers and governments of one state seal their borders to prevent unauthorised emigration of their subjects, and devise laws to control such outflow?

Great indeed is the power of Time, and none can
conquer it.
And yet Time itself is in mortal dread of the Timeless
Music,
Lest He himself may get lost in the Divine Harmony.

We had exegesis of Dharam Khand by Nanak elsewhere in these pages. After that the great teacher goes on to describe the journey of the pilgrim-soul through various regions culminating in Sach Khand. The next two regions, he respectively calls Gyan Khand (the realm of knowledge) and Saram Khand (the realm of ecstasy). In the former, the soul's horizon expands immeasurably, for It comprehends at once the manifold nature of all created things with infinity of forms and phenomena, and understands the immutable laws of the workings of nature. In the latter, the soul becoming attracted by the Power of the Word, gets a taste of, and insight into the real nature of things.

Next comes Karm Khand or the realm of grace. With the purification wrought by the Holy Word, soul is freed once and for all times of even the faintest, vague and indefinite traces of the dross in the form of vashnas, and matter no longer blinds the vision, and one becomes fully conscious of Him, coming as he does, face to face with the pure Essence of the Word, the Light of Life, giving birth to Brahmmand and all the worlds included therein.

Finally, the soul reaching Sach Khand—the abode of Truth, realises in fullness, complete oneness and harmony according to His Will — ‘All hearts filled with God, they live

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Beyond the reach of death and of delusion... All destined to move according to His Will.. Such is the beauty that to describe it is to attempt the impossible.' This arising of the soul into Super-conscious awareness is termed, as said before, life everlasting from which there is no return.

What Nanak has described above, falls within the realm of Vijnana (subjective inner experience, direct and immediate), as distinct from jnana or theoretical knowledge which the Master expounds and imparts to the disciple through a correct rendering of the scriptures. A Perfect Master is all the scriptures combined and something more. The scriptures, after all, are the record of the experiences of holy men, who appeared from time to time to teach mankind in the ways of God. We can, no doubt, read the scriptures if we are proficient enough in the ancient and archaic original languages in which they are written; but cannot get at their true import nor can we reasonably reconcile the apparent differences and explain the discrepancies in the scriptural texts of various religions. He who has an access to the inner fountainhead of the life and spirit of all these texts, which of course is common to all men, with his first-hand inner knowledge, makes things easily intelligible to us all in a way simple enough both for himself and for us.

In the company of a Saint, it is said, God comes nearer to man, for God Himself speaks through him. As we all are scripture-bound in one way or the other, the Master takes full advantage of these different scriptures which come in handy to him as aids in his work of spiritual regeneration, to lead different types of people aright along the line of least resistance in each case.

A Murshid-e-Kamil is not content with imparting mere theoretical knowledge. He gives a practical demonstration of what he says and therein lies his greatness. One who

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cannot grant on soul-level some actual experience of what he asserts on the level of the intellect, is not a Master in the true sense of the word, and his words cannot carry weight and conviction.

A Satguru is verily Truth personified, God in the garb of man. His mission is to lead human souls to the True Home of His Father (Sat or Truth) called Sach Khand or the abode of Truth; the first Grand Division that came into being by His Will and hence the region of pure Spirit, eternal and indestructible.

The Path of the Masters is a grand road leading from merely physical material world to the purely spiritual realm, beyond all duality and pairings of opposites. The Satguru says:

Move ye in the vast sea of Light substance,
In your hearts, in your perfection.
Go on, and on and on, until there is not a vestige
of the human left.
The Light substance knows no limit.

His is the path not of hells and heavens, nor of toils and sorrows, but one of flowery boulevard 'studded with heavenly lights and soul-stirring strains of Divine Harmonies;' and above all, He himself as an unfailing friend and an unerring guide comes, in all his glory in full radiance, and accompanies the pilgrim-soul into the great Beyond, instructing in the life of spirit, as he proceeds along, explaining the beauties and mysteries of the way, guarding against pitfalls and warning us of the sharp turns and twists that lie en route.

The disciple, from the very beginning is taught how to withdraw from the body and rise above body-consciousness into higher regions. The inner man is to draw himself from his coarse bodily encasement, as a hair is drawn out

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of butter, for it is the soul in the 'luciform body', to use the Neo-Platonist phraseology, that rises to find the Self. Mandukopnishad tells us:

Not grasped by the eye, nor by speech, nor by the gods (senses), nor by austerity, nor by religious rites and rituals and ceremonies, but by serene wisdom, the pure essence doth see the Partless One in meditation,

So do the western scholars say:

True happiness never comes through the avenue of senses, as it lies beyond the senses. Boundless joy can be ours, only if we know how to rise above the senses and catch the sublime vision which comes to the pure.

The divine wisdom, in short, is at once the Science and Art of soul and only a Theocentric Saint, well-versed in both, can solve for us the riddle of life and death by giving us a first-hand experience of 'death- in-life', thereby demonstrating beyond the least shadow of doubt:

Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible sun within us.

What has life and death to do with Light? In the image of My Light, I have made you. The relativities of life and death belong to the cosmic dream. Behold your dreamless being.

Creation is light and shadow both, else no picture is possible.

The darkness grows luminous and the void becomes fruitful only when you will understand that you are nothing. It is only at the Mount of Transfiguration that you will get revelation and see the mingling of heaven and earth.

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To worship Perfection is the highest education in life, and only a Perfect one can, by transmitting his own life-impulse, release the soul from its trammels of mind and matter and grant a vision of the sublime Reality. He who can, at the very first sitting, open the inner eye more or less to a glimpse of heaven's Holy Light and unstop the inner ear to the Music of the Spheres, alone is entitled to be called a Perfect Saint and a True Guru. It is of such a one that Shankara says:

No known comparison exists in the three worlds for a true Guru. If the philosopher's stone is assumed to be truly such, it can only turn iron into gold and not into another philosopher's stone. The venerated Teacher, on the other hand, creates equality with Himself in the disciple who takes refuge at His feet. The Guru is therefore peerless, nay transcendental.

Guru Arjun speaking of his Master, Guru Ram Das, says: "I have searched the entire Brahmand but have not found one who may come up to my Master." And finally he said: "Hari (God), it seems to me, has taken for Himself the appellation of Ram Das."

In the workaday world, we are all very busy, very busy indeed, too busy to think of God, much less to practise the presence of living God and still less to live in His holy presence. If, at all, at odd moments we speak and talk of Him, worship Him, and offer our prayers to Him, we do so not to win Him for His own sake or to reach unto Him for our own sake but just to seek favours from Him and to get an easy and quick riddance from our difficulties, and to escape from trials and tribulations.

Again, if we at times, feel serious about God, we try to find Him in the earthly surroundings about us, the snow-covered mountain caves, the burning desert sands, the depths

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of sacred pools and rivers, worshipping Him in the elemental powers of nature like the rising sun, the vacuous expanse above, the thunderous clouds, the Lucifer and the Vesper, and worse still, in the hollows of trees, in the fish of the sea and the fowls of the air; and no wonder that with all our efforts we do not find Him.

God Himself has declared: I am so big that the entire world cannot hold Me, nor the heavens can provide an adequate support to Me, nor the earth can provide Me a seat; but strange as it may seem to you, I reside in the heart of Holy Men. If you desire to see Me, seek Me there and you shall find Me. Kabir also tells us:

How can you find the Reality, where It is not,
Seek thou the Real, where Reality dwells,
Take hold of him who knows the Real,
He shall hie thee to Him in no time.

This then is the way to self-illumination. The process though seemingly complicated and lengthy is simplified by the grace of a Perfect Master (Sant Satguru). He provides the magic wand, the 'Open Sesame,' that does the trick and enables one to get access to what is inaccessible:

He who goes beyond the Sat Lok,
He knows the Incomprehensible and the Inexpressible.
It is in the Nameless that the Saints live,
The slave Nanak finds peace in Him.

Thus we see that if one could learn to die while living, a voluntary death at will, one gains life everlasting, free from the endless cycle of births and deaths and rebirths. Saints, therefore, sing praises beyond measure of such a death, and teach us how to transcend the various planes, and to traverse into the Beyond and gain the Kingdom of God, which is

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our birthright now lost to us. It is within our reach if we but listen to them, accept their teachings, and follow them diligently and with willing obedience.

After death, each one of us has to go blindly in a state of utter destitution and helplessness. The scriptures, all the world over, place a high premium on crossing the borderland between life and death on this side of the world, and then, death and life on the other side:

Where thou hast to go after death,
Why not gain a foothold while alive?

—Sri Rag M. 1

O Nanak! learn to die while there is yet time,
For verily this indeed is a real yoga.

—Suhi M. 1

Die thou and remain dead to the world,
A death like this I experience many times a day.

—Kabir

With the grace of the Master, one may ride over the
mind;

By vanquishing the mind, you meet the Lord for
certain.

—Kabir

Be ye dead while ye live and be fearlessly free,
With a competent Master by thy side, there will be
nothing to rue.

—Kabir

You will get rich dividends should you know
How to die before death overtakes you.

—Bulleh Shah

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Shabd or the eternal Life Current is the only help on this path:

In Shabd we die (get absorbed), in Shabd we live eternally with no fear of death,

This is the true Water of Life that a rare soul may get with His grace.

—Sorath M. 3

What does the Master give? He makes manifest the eternal Sound Current which is the life of the universe and in which we all live. By riding on this Audible Life Stream we, while living, can at will transcend the various planes of existence; and come back into the physical when we so desire:

Without of the aid of Shabd, thou cannot get out of the clayey mould. There is no other way besides.

—Soami Ji

Salvation or life-everlasting cannot be earned by deeds howsoever righteous or commendable in themselves they may be or in the eyes of the world. It is purely a gift of grace from a God-man with the Power of God working in him to the full. “For by grace ye are saved... and not by yourselves; It is a gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9). “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”. (Titus 3:5). “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name, under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12). “And the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,” (Titus 2:11) and His grace shall continue to appear hereafter so long as God exists and His creation continues to people the earth.

WHAT AFTER DEATH?

This then is the way to eternal life, by living in the life-principle itself, ever in Communion with the Holy Word, the Will of God (Hukam); and there is no way other than this, try howsoever hard one may. But the revelation of the God-way in the living life-lines within (the Holy Light and the Voice of God) solely depends upon the grace of some God-man, a World-personified Saint, 'unto whom all things have been delivered by the Father,' and of whom it is said, "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father, neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." (Matt. 11: 27).

Time and again, great souls come into the world to remind us of our true Home. They tell us with clarion call that this world is not our natural habitat. We are here just for a brief span as travellers in a caravanserai and must therefore prepare to quit, and sooner we do it, the better it would be. We must, therefore, work for the kingdom of heaven and gain life-eternal. 'May Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.' And of this kingdom, it is said: "The Kingdom of God does not come by observation. The Kingdom of God is within, and verily this body is the temple of the Holy Ghost and the Holy Ghost dwells in it.' This is why all the sages and the seers exhort us:

The place which thou hast to quit in the end has
gripped thee most.
Little doth thou know of the place where thou hath to
dwell for good.

—Nanak

Arsh (Heaven) is thy true abode, my soul,
Fie on thee, thou art entangled in clayey mould.

—Shamas Tabrez

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

Thou, my Lord dwelleth in Thy native land,
While I am here grovelling in dust.

—Nanak

Your place is where earth is not,
Why doth thou cling to the earth ?

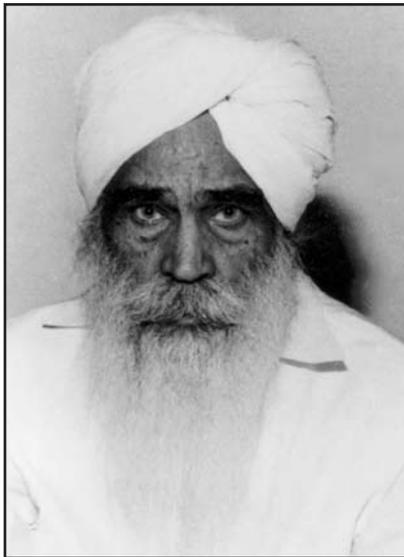
—Soami Ji

Human life is just as a vapour,
Why not live in Communion with the Eternal Word?

—Kabir

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.

—Nanak



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

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