CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Master and His Duties

COUNTLESS are the duties and responsibilities of a Master. His first and foremost work is to link once again the created with the Creator; to win for him the Kingdom of God and restore him to his ancient and forgotten lineage and heritage. This He does by means of Shabd or Word, which carries the spirit to its native Home.

Like electromagnetic waves, the Shabd or Word is vibrating everywhere, but, unfortunately, through the overpowering density and weight of matter on the physical plane we are unable to feel It and harness It to our benefit.

A Master, by His personal guidance, frees the spirit from the dead weight of matter, disengages it from the sensory organs, withdraws its everspreading rays and collects them at its center, behind the two eyebrows, thereby enabling it to experience a little of the Light of God and to hear Shabd, the Voice of God; both of which by continuing practice can be developed in course of time.

The jiva then finds himself attracted by that magnetic power, the Sound Principle, which carries him step by step to his ultimate goal. A mere knowledge of the science of the Masters cannot be of any avail, and intel-

lectualism by itself, however keen, cannot be of any aid.

An ethical life is a stepping stone to spirituality. Cleanliness is said to be next to Godliness. A Master, therefore, begins His work with man-making. Cleanliness in thought, word and deed is an essential which cannot be over-emphasized. As self-knowledge precedes God-Knowledge, a Master has first to impart in theory and practice the knowledge of the spirit, to liberate it from the shackles of mind and body.

Gradually the spirit is enabled to cast off the various coverings or sheaths with which it is enshrouded, until it becomes spirit, clean, untrammeled and unalloyed, and exultantly cries out, "I am Spirit!"

After this comes training in God-Knowledge, which is the climax and the crest jewel in the science of spirituality, and enables the spirit to attain Godhead.

Once the shepherd takes charge of a lost sheep and brings it to His fold, he takes over the entire responsibility. Once a Master, always a Master, is a well-known dictum. Master on earth, he is Master in the various regions, subtle, causal, and beyond. He does not rest until a spirit is safely escorted back to the Father's mansion in Heaven.

The process of home-going and progress on the path is entirely at His discretion, and He is the sole judge for the time and measure of each step Godward.

From the time the spirit crosses over to the astral plane and comes face to face with the self-luminous form of the Master, the jiva has nothing more to do and strive for. It is the Master's job henceforth.

Apart from this a Master is a child of Light, and like a lighthouse over tempestuous seas sheds His kindly Light throughout the world. Like the good shepherd He has to look after and tend many sheep. Whoever has anything to do with a Master Soul is ultimately to be prepared for the path and helped through in his probation and apprenticeship.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Guru is Godman

MASTER is in truth the perfect manifestation of God. Filled with Godly Light He is the torch-bearer of God. He is the pole from which God works out His plan of redemption. God, having made man after His own image, placed an iron wall between Himself and the spirit, owing to the first sin of disobedience to Him. Man was thus driven out from the Garden of Eden and placed in the physical world, so the story goes, to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow, and to work out his salvation through a Saviour—the Son of Man, in which garb God Himself comes with the key to unlock the Kingdom of Heaven for leading in the lost sheep.

The Word becomes flesh and dwells among us, God's Light shines through His eyes, God's voice speaks through Him, and God's Grace works out salvation for those who hunger and thirst for Him. Like a common man, He lives among us, shares our joys and sorrows, gives us instructions in spirituality and guides us on the path. Embedded in the Father He works out His Will.

> *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father,*

> *save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.*
>
> MATTHEW 11:27

Maulana Rumi also says:

> *In the Master is lodged both God and the Mediator. There is in fact not the least distinction between the two. Drive all thought of duality from thy mind, or else thou shalt get lost in the wilderness, and so also shall be the fate of thy first lessons in spirituality. He who considers the two as separate entities has not yet learnt anything from, or known anything of, the Master.*

Master is the form of the formless God—the form that we can see and have relationship with. It is this very form that imparts to us the knowledge of God, and again it is this very form, luminous of course, that accompanies us on the journey Godward and directs our footsteps on the path.

In each plane, physical, causal, and beyond, there is increased splendor of the Master, and His limitless sway and power becomes more manifest to the companion spirit as it travels along.

Godman as He is, in the world His form is the *Kibla* and *Kaaba* of the Muslims, the altar of the Christians, the eternal light of the Zoroastrians, the temple, the synagogue and the *Gurdwara,* for He alone is fit to be worshiped.

Like electricity in the atmosphere, the universe is

charged through and through with God. There is no place where He is not, and yet He is hidden from view; and Guru or Master is the mighty switch, the source and fountainhead that makes it possible for us to witness His greatness and get glimpses of His power.

In short, Master is the pole at which God actually works, and therefore He may fittingly be called *polarized* God as distinguished from the latent state in which He is at one with everything and yet we know Him not.

The greatness and the puissance of God is manifested in the Master in abundance. So long as a person does not come in contact with some Godman, God just remains an idea with him, a mere figment of his everyday mind, a shadow with no real substance at all.

In the Godman, one finds a living God on earth, just as anyone talking and smiling with us, guiding us by word and example and helping us through from stage to stage. Blessed indeed is a spirit that can establish a living contact with a living Master—the greatest gift of God to mankind.

Man indeed is the teacher of man. Unless a Godman gives us Light, we cannot have the Light of Reality, and like blind men we grope in utter darkness.

In the physical world we, with physical eyes, can see nothing but physicality around us. The subtle vision can see the subtle world, and the causal can view the causal universe. Master of all three and even beyond, He bestows inner Light that illumines the inner darkness and one begins to witness an endless panorama of spiritual vistas ever expanding and bringing to view new delights

at every step. All this work He does by means of the Sound Current or the Voice of God, hearing which the dead are quickened with Life and attain life everlasting. He is the connecting link between a soul and the Oversoul. With roots embedded in God and branches spreading throughout the world, laden with flowers and fruits of Paradise, He provides spiritual food to all who come to Him.

Maulana Rumi in this context says:

> *O Friend! sit near One who knows the condition of thy heart (and Who can make it whole). Rest a while under the shade of a tree that is laden with fresh and fragrant flowers. Loiter not in the market place from shop to shop, as idlers do. Go straight to One who has a store of honey with Him.*
>
> *Take hold of the garment, O brave soul! of One who knows well the various planes: physical, mental, supramental, and beyond; and is able to remain with thee like a true friend, whether in life or in death, in this world or in the next.*

The form, physical or astral, of the Master or God-in-man which helps us through in our journey Godward, is better by far than the native invisible form of God which is beyond all thought and contemplation.

Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Ishwar (Niranjan) and Parmeshwar (incarnations of Brahma) are all worthy of our respect and adoration.

We have read much about Them, religiously, in sacred lore. They figure as heroes and heroines in mythological tales, but as such are nothing but figments of human imagination.

When *Satguru* or the Master of Truth takes charge of a spirit (at *Gaggan),* He gradually reveals the true significance and way of each of Them. All of Them have existed since creation, and are engaged in carrying on duties assigned to each of Them.

But we cannot know Them or their handiwork and authority unless the Satguru takes us along and shows us the nature of this mysterious hierarchy.

God Himself in the garb of man (Saints and prophets) informs us of His Own Natural Self. Guru Amar Das has therefore declared:

> *It is the basic principle of God that without a Master of Truth, no one can even think of Him.*

Sant Kabir also tells us:

> *The Master is greater than God. Ye may very well think over this dictum. Devotion to God keeps a person entangled on this side (in the physical plane); but devotion to the Guru leads him across to God.*

The greatness of the Master lies in this: that He connects the souls with the Unknown Reality, and puts a stop to the cycle of births and deaths. The Oversoul, even when with us, could neither manifest Itself directly nor could It take the soul out of the physical plane and liberate it.

Only through instructions from a Guru (Master Soul or Godman) and association with Shabd (Word or God-in-Action) can one achieve these wondrous results.

Without Word one can have no escape (from bondage).
Word Personified is the Master and He can manifest It in us.
God may turn His back and one may not mind, but if the Master does so, none can bring about reconciliation.

KABIR

If Siva gets estranged, the Master can reconcile us to him; but who can reconcile us to the Master?

In this respect Sehjo Bai, a lady devotee, sings to us in melodious strains of the greatness of her Master—Charan Das:

I may give up God, but cannot for a moment forget the Master, for God Himself cannot come up to Him.
God drove me into the wilderness of the world, but the Master has snapped for me that ceaseless cycle of transmigration.
God set on my heels the five deadly sins (desire, anger, greed, infatuation, and egoism), but the Master taking pity on my helplessness saves me from them.
God entangled me in the meshes of the family ties, but the Master cut asunder these bonds.

God delivered me to disease, decay and death, but the Master with His yogic powers delivered me from them.

God bound me hand and foot in the web of karmic reactions, but the Master revealed to me my true nature—and I have now found out that I am soul, the spirit of the universe.

God in me hid Himself behind a curtain, but the Master with His torch of Truth revealed God to me.

Again God created both bondage and salvation, but the Master put an end to all these chimerical fantasies.

I would sacrifice my very body and soul for Charan Das, my Master. I would rather surrender God for the Master's sake.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Gurudev

(The Astral or Self-Luminous Form of the Master)

THE TERM *Dev* is derived from the Sanskrit root *Div* meaning "Light." The words *Guru Dev* are therefore used to denote the astral or luminous form of the Master as He appears in astral regions, after leaving the physical plane to guide the spirit as it transcends the physical body.

Theosophical literature refers to the luster of Master Souls in subtle and causal planes extending for miles and miles. Tulsi Sahib likewise tells us that the nails of the Guru's feet shine like *Mani* (a crest jewel in the head of a toad that shines forth like a flashlight in darkness). This astral light bestows vision to the third eye.

> *Blinding Light flashes forth from the nails of the Master's Feet and illumines the very soul of the devotee.*

Maulana Rumi speaks of It:

> *As the Light of the Master dawns in the soul, one gets to know the secrets of both worlds.*

A real Guru is the true manifestation of God. He is, in fact, Satguru or Master of Truth, and manifests in the world the Light of Truth.

O Nanak! Guru is the Satguru; I would like to touch the Feet of the Satguru.

The term *Guru Dev,* therefore, signifies the self-luminous form of the Master, which is free from and far above his physical body, and which the spirit actually perceives with its inner subtle Light. When the spirit comes face to face with the astral Master, all doubts vanish and its labors get the crowning reward—the *summum bonum* of life.

Guru Dev gives vision to the eyes. All doubts become airy nothings and love's labor receives its crowning glory.

Jesus Christ in the Gospel speaks thus:

If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

MATTHEW 6:22

Guru Arjan tells us that the Blessed Form of the Master manifests itself in the forehead of a devotee.

The Blessed Form of the Master is in my forehead. Whenever I peep within I see Him there.

A Muslim Divine also speaks like this:

The image of the Beloved is in the mirror of my very heart. I see Him with just a little turn of the head downward.

It is this astral or self-luminous form of the Master that

leads a spirit Godward through various planes intervening between the physical plane and *Sat Lok* or the Region of Truth. There is no distinction between Guru and Guru Dev and Satguru and God.

It is one and the same current of divine compassion that assumes different names at different regions.

Following the law of similitude, the Divine Current as It materializes on the physical plane for the benefit of the aspirants is called *Guru* or Master, Who by word of mouth imparts the spiritual instructions as any other teacher would do.

As the spirit of an aspirant leaves the body and is ready for the journey in the astral or subtle planes, that very Divine Current assumes a subtle form for the soul's benefit and guidance.

This subtle form disengaged from the bodily form of the Guru is termed *Guru Dev*. It is self-luminous and lustrous with Light extending over miles and miles. *Satguru* or the Master of Truth is the Power of Truth or God that works through both Guru and Guru Dev. With roots firmly embedded in *Sat* or Truth, He directly derives His inspiration from the eternal and unchangeable permanence, *Sat,* hence is known as *Satguru.*

Thus we see how the *Sat Dhara* or the current from *Sat* flows down, creating regions upon regions far below, ending with the physical plane.

It is this very current that also helps in taking the jivas back home, and is differently known as *Guru, Guru Dev* and *Satguru,* at different places, until the very roots of *Sat* are reached, and here the spirit cries out in won-

der *Wah-i-Guru,* which means, "What a glory is thine, O Guru!"

Indescribable and beyond comprehension! So we have in Gurbani:

> *Guru Dev is Satguru, Par Brahm, and Parmeshwar. O Nanak! a Salutation to Guru Dev is Salutation to Hari or God.*

This very *Sat* or Truth is at one with the Guru as He works on the physical plane. Hence, it is said:

> *Blessed is the physical form of the Master, filled as it is to the brim with full power from above.*

> *The Greatness of the Master is indescribable and beyond all comprehension, for He is Par Brahm, Parmeshwar, beyond perception and knowledge.*

> *Guru Dev can neither be known nor measured. By following the instructions one can penetrate far into the mysteries of the past, the present, and the future. It is through His sheer Grace that one begins to know something of the unknown and the unknowable.*

In the physical world He works and acts like a Guru or Master; but when a jiva after some spiritual practice and discipline is ready to leave the *Pind* or body and is about to enter *And* (the subtle plane), the Guru comes to his aid in subtle shining form as his Guru Dev. Here He

works as a connecting link between Guru and Satguru for He takes over the charge of a spirit from the Guru in the body, and leads her across to Satguru and Sat Purush.

Guru Dev meets and greets the spirit as it crosses the border lying between the physical and subtle regions by passing through the stars, the sun and the moon, spoken of in the *Vedas* as *Devian* and *Pitrian Margs* (Paths). This astral form is exactly like the physical form of the Master, but much more beautiful, luminous, and magnetic.

Maulana Rumi tells us:

> *Should you desire to see this refulgent Light, turn homeward like Ibrahim. Pass through the big star and the sky and the blue beyond. Steadily walk over the sun and the moon, and then you will find yourself in the heavenly Presence.*

Guru Nanak refers to this illuminated path, thus:

> *The Luminous Form of the Master is wondrously enrapturing and enchanting. Only a perfect Master can manifest this to a spirit.*

This lustrous form of the Master always accompanies a spirit in the various planes, ending with *Sach Khand* or the Home of Truth. When His luminous form descends to the focus of the eyes, a devotee has nothing more to strive for. Herein lies the devotion of the devotee. Half his success has been achieved, and hereafter the Master's astral form takes over the charge of the

spirit with full responsibility for leading it to the final goal. Even the Saints also adore this Form and derive ecstatic delight from It.

The Blessed Feet of the Beloved Guru Dev are worshiped by the Saints, the beloved of God.

Khwaja Moeen-ud-Din Chisti also talks of the Luminous Form of the Master:

O Master! The sun cannot stand the resplendence of Thy Face.
The moon also has covered herself with clouds to escape Thy Dazzling Light.
The sun having borrowed his brilliance from the dust of Thy Feet has pitched his golden pavilion on the blue sky. If a single ray of Thy Face were to shoot forth into the sky, the sun would in shame go behind a veil. In the very Person of the Nabi (Prophet), the Light of God has taken up a material form just as the light of the sun does in the body of the moon.

Maulana Rumi also refers to the lustrous form of his Master thus:

What dost thou know of the King of Kings that keeps me company?
Cast thou a glance within me and be not deceived by my outer appearance.

St. John has similarly described in the Bible his experience with the Luminous Form within:

I was in the Spirit . . . and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, . . .

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw . . . one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

His head and hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

And his feet were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. . . .

And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

REVELATION 1:10, 12-16

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

REVELATION 4:1

In the *Sar Bachan* of Swami Ji Maharaj, we have a similar reference:

Wondrous strange was the Form; No words could this Glory write.

Hafiz, a mystical poet of great reknown, tells us:

Like the newborn moon the pure of sight may see;
His Glory would not manifest to every eye.

The astral form of the Master Soul is unchangeable and permanent. It is the form that guides aspirants to their goal.

Guru Dev is in the beginning of creation. He is in the beginning of each age and continues from age to age. Through Guru Dev alone can one reach Hari.

Guru Arjan speaks of Guru Dev:

Salutations to Guru Eternal (Har Ṛai);
Salutations to Guru of the Age (Sat Purush or Ram Rai);
Salutations to Satguru (the manifestation of Sat Purush); and
Salutations to Guru Dev (the Refulgent and Self-Luminous Form of the Guru, the connecting link between Guru and Satguru, responsible for guiding and leading a spirit through various planes).

Guru Dev is the greatest and highest manifestation of Sat Purush. He is the controlling power of God and can grant salvation. By devotion to Him one gets all comfort.

Nothing but *Sat* is Guru Dev; false is all worship apart from His.

Guru Arjan in His memorable words sings of the greatness of Guru Dev thus:

Gurudeva is father; Gurudeva is mother; and He is the Master and God Himself;
Gurudeva is a real friend; dispeller of dark ignorance and breaker of all ties;
Gurudeva is the bestower of Naam, an incantation of which chases away all evils;
Gurudeva is the embodiment of peace, truth and intelligence, and truly a philosopher's stone;
Gurudeva is a place of pilgrimage, fountain of the Elixir of Life, and light of reason;
Gurudeva ordains everything, destroys sins and purifies the sinners;
Gurudeva is ever eternal from the creation and beginning of each age, and His Word has a saving Grace;
Gurudeva is the greatest gift of God, which, if granted, saves the worst sinners;
Gurudeva is Satguru, Par Brahm, and Parmeshwar.
Salutations to Him, O Nanak.

Gurbani tells of the immense benefit that one enjoys on meeting Guru Dev:

The five deadly sins—desire, anger, greed, infatuation, and egoism—just vanish.

Myriads of Karmic impressions of countless ages are destroyed. He pulls a jiva from body and mind con-

sciousness and ushers it into cosmic awareness, where it no longer experiences the fires of the world in which the entire humanity is trapped.

Even in the world all the soul's desires are fulfilled. His course is soft and smooth thereafter, and receives acclamations from every side.

In this *Kali Yuga* (Iron Age) of iniquity and darkness Guru Dev serves as a beacon light on the stormy sea of life, and safely pilots sinners to the Heaven of peace and bliss. A saved soul in its turn pulls along all who are near and dear to it.

The manifestation of Guru Dev depends purely on the grace of God and one's special merits in one's progress on the spiritual path.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Perfect Master
(Murshid-i-Kamil)

IN ORDER to derive full benefit from *Para Vidya* (Science of Spirituality), it is absolutely necessary to have the guidance of a living Master, or an Adept both in the science and art of spirituality. He must be a *Murshid-i-Kamil* or perfect Saint who can lead aspirants to perfection. *If the blind leads the blind, both fall into a ditch* is a common aphorism too well known to need any comment.

There are various grades and stages on the spiritual path. A Saint of the highest order alone can safely take the jivas to the pinnacle of spirituality. One who is a novice or has climbed half-way cannot take a jiva to the top.

In an educational institution we see that there are different types of teachers for different classes. In this science also, there are a number of grades and degrees, as for instance, *Sadh, Sant, and Param Sant.*

For a proper understanding of the theory and practice of spirituality, we need the help of at least a *Sant* or Saint. A *Sadh* (one who has successfully transcended the physical, astral, and causal planes, and is above body and mind consciousness) can give us a lead, and befit us for further training from a Saint; but one who is not

yet a Sadh cannot be of any help. For complete liberation from the cycle of birth and death, a Master Saint is necessary.

A perfect Master has no hallmark on His person. It is by personal contacts that one gradually begins to know something of His greatness, just as a student when he advances in studies gets to know little by little something of the ability of his teacher.

Again, the Master cannot disclose all His greatness at once, but only in proportion as an aspirant shows his keenness and makes progress on the path. The Master starts just like an ordinary teacher and imparts instructions as any friend or well-wisher would do. In course of time, He demonstrates the authority of a *Murshid* or Master on the path, and finally is seen embedded in *Sat* or Truth as *Satguru* or the Master of Truth; until there comes a stage when He and God appear merged in each other with no line of demarcation between them.

CHAPTER TWENTY

How to Find a Perfect Master and Know Him

TO FIND A perfect Master is not so easy as it may seem. While living on the plane of the senses all the time, we have not the eyes with which to recognize the Human Pole from which the power of God works in the world. Yet where there is a will, there is a way. All that is required of an aspirant is the sincerity of purpose, intense longing and a burning passion for the Lord above everything else. Where there is fire, oxygen of itself comes to its aid. The principle of demand and supply works equally alike in all the spheres of life from the physical to the spiritual. There is always food for the hungry and water for the thirsty.

> *Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*
>
> MATTHEW 7:7

> *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*
>
> MATTHEW 6:24

For in the Bible we have:

> *I the* LORD *thy God am a jealous God . . .*

And in the same way Godman, like God, demands from His lovers an exclusive and unstinted love unto Himself and unless one is prepared to sacrifice his all—body, mind, possessions—the way unto Him is not opened; nor can we come near to the Godman who makes manifest the way.

When the chela is ready, the Guru appears is the Law of God. How can a blindfolded person reach the ringmaster's cell by himself?

> *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*
>
> JOHN 6:44

Those whom God wills are of themselves drawn to the Godman, or the Godman Himself finds them out, no matter where they may be.

Similarly, to know the Godman in his fullness is not given to man. We can have only such glimpses of His greatness as He may choose to grant. He alone is the judge of the time and measure of each advance and reveals to us gradually as much of His spiritual wealth as He wishes, and this He does by degrees as He qualifies us to grasp and understand and to hold it safely in trust. As one proceeds along in His company on the inner spiritual path, one gets to know Him more and more as he sees His power working in all the inner planes from end to end until in the purely spiritual region (Muqam-i-Haq or Sach Khand), He appears in His Primal Manifestation *(Ek-Ankar)*. On the physical plane, He is Word made flesh and dwells among us according to the laws of the earth-plane, and

like any other worldly teacher, He teaches us; not, of course, of this world, but of a world totally different from this, a world that is self-luminous and is studded with stars, moons and suns in countless numbers. While apparently sharing with us our joys and sorrows of the world, He yet remains far above the pairs of opposites, endlessly imparts to us His spiritual instructions, both without and within, encouraging us at every step by His words of wisdom and in countless diverse ways inspires in us the Love of God and exhorts us to glorify Him.

Though ever kind the Master is, yet none can claim His grace; His grace flows alike to all, yet each gets his fill as He ordains.

Satguru is Sat Personified and knows one and all; Himself in all, yet He remains above the praise and malice of all.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

His Life and Conduct

THE LIFE and conduct of a perfect Master single Him out as a unique personality apart from the rest of mankind.

1. He is always a bestower of gifts and never a recipient. He never wishes for the slightest service from His following. He earns His own living and is never a burden upon anyone. All His personal savings, if any, He spends on the relief of the needy.

> *Touch ye not the feet of one who makes his living out of the offerings of the people;*
> *O Nanak! He who earns His own bread and helps the needy knows the path.*

2. He is a living embodiment of humility. With all His instructions. On the contrary, He bestows spirituality as a free gift like any other gift of God, such as light, air, water and so forth.

3. He is a living embodiment of humility. With all His powers and greatness co-equal with God, He never claims credit for anything, but attributes everything to God or to His own Master. Like a fruit-laden branch of a tree, He bows to the lowest, and moves about in simple dignity peculiar to Him alone.

He who regards Himself as the lowest is in fact the highest.

4. He is at peace with all and is angry with none. He smilingly forgives all who talk ill of Him, and does not pick flaws in others. His love embraces all humanity. Christ-like, He proclaims and practices the cardinal truth, *Love thine enemies.*

5. Purity, Godliness and Spirituality flow from Him like shining springs of cool and refreshing waters, bringing life to the parched and arid hearts of the aspirants who joyfully move along the Spiritual Path under His able guidance.

6. He does not wear any conspicuous form of dress. He adopts just an easy middle path. His Grand Trunk Road bypasses austerities on the one hand, and forms and formalities on the other. His teaching consists of enunciating natural truths which sink into the soul, and everyone irrespective of sex and age can practice the spiritual discipline enjoined by Him.

7. He never believes in nor performs miracles for attracting people and gaining their credence, as a juggler would do. He keeps his treasures well concealed in the deepest recesses within Him. He may, if necessity demands, make use of His powers on some special occasion. The disciples, of course, everyday feel the hidden hand of the Master working for their welfare and advancement.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Physical Form of the Master

WE READ of peculiarities in the physical form of a perfect Master. Physically, too, He suffers from no deformity and has no weaknesses in Him. His gait is full of grace and dignity. His eyes shine like those of a lion. He has a broad forehead, a mark of a lotus on his feet, and generally a black mole on his brilliantly luminous face.

Hafiz, a great Sufi poet of Shiraz, tells us:

> *If that beauty of Shiraz (the Master) were to take charge of my wandering mind, I would throw away both the worlds (earth and heaven) at the altar of the wonderful mole on His Face.*

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The Influence of the Master

IN HIS PRESENCE, the mind grows docile and feels anchored.

> *How can we get the company of such a One by looking at Whom the ever-restless mind gets lost, and Life Impulses swarm upon the soul? The Beloved Master makes a True Friend, and bestows God Intoxication.*

He sheds around Him rays of purity, saturated with dignified humility, which exert a powerful influence upon the jivas. His words are charged with Spirituality and drag the soul into the beyond and administer a kind of living intoxicating exhilaration.

> *If He were to disclose his secrets, my very soul would swiftly soar Godward.*
>
> MAULANA RUMI

2. A steady gaze at His forehead and eyes reveals a peculiar Light which gives a pull to the soul and momentarily gathers up the all-pervading sensory currents, and one feels his being in higher Consciousness.

3. He is a Prince of Peace, and is above the pairs of opposites. His association releases in us currents of bliss and benediction. He dispels all thoughts of antagonism

and rivalry, and gives instead, equipoise to the soul, leading gradually to the Godhead.

In Whose company one feels blessed, is the Master of Truth.
He purifies the mind and grants salvation to the soul.

4. He is completely filled with the power of *ojas* (the fruit of chastity), and His forehead shines with Godly Light. One is irresistibly drawn by the magnetism of His charged words. From His eyes a peculiar Light shines forth, which like an osprey paralyzes the mind. He works like a leaven and quickens life in the desert of the mind.

5. With His lynx eyes, His gaze can penetrate deep into the feelings and emotions of a person; and He adjusts His instructions according to times and individual needs. The physical raiment of a jiva or soul is for Him just like a transparent glass jar; though He can easily detect what is therein, He never exposes it to public view, and keeps His experience of each to Himself. Whoever goes to Him, whether a beetle or a wasp, gets sweet fragrance as from a flower. In the House of the Master, everything is in abundance, and each gets what he wishes for. Every person who contacts a Master Soul receives spiritual impressions which, in course of time, are bound to fructify. From the very moment an individual meets a Master, better times are assured to him.

6. A *Sant Satguru* is verily the Son of God. He has genuine love alike for persons of all religions, nationali-

ties and countries. He sees the Light of God in all. His appeal is therefore universal to all mankind.

All are born of the same Light, and as such there is no difference between man and man.
O Nanak! people of all denominations flock into the fold of the Satguru.
Satguru is all-merciful and all-knowing. He treats all alike, and does the work of all who have faith in Him.

He neither destroys the old church nor sets up another church of His own. He is a Master of Truth and does not care to what sect or creed a person may belong. All that matters is spiritual aspiration, for that alone befits a jiva for the Master's Path.

When one revels in Shabd or Word, he forgets all about himself.
For the intelligent there is but One Path, no matter be he a Pundit or a Sheikh.

KABIR

He fearlessly talks of the Spiritual Path that lies within each one of us, in spite of our religious differences. One who is able to establish contact with such a Master is in fact a veritable pilgrim on the Path, and gets the greatest benefit from Him.

Maulana Rumi, therefore, says:

Should ye be anxious for a pilgrimage, ye must take for a guide and companion any experienced pilgrim, no matter whether He be a

Hindu, a Turk, or an Arab. Care not how He may look but see only that He is competent and knows the Path.

We have, after all, not to establish any worldly relationship with the Master. All that we need from Him is spiritual instruction and guidance, and if He can give us that, it should be considered enough.

7. Master Saints are the manifestation of Godhead. As heavenly truths dawn on Them silently and subtly, so do Their instructions work quietly, and sink into the very depths of the jivas without any word of mouth.

A Sheikh (Master), like God, is embedded in the formless Beyond, and He imparts His teachings without uttering a single syllable.

The instructions of the Master are in a language that is speechless and can neither be imparted by word of mouth nor by word recorded.

Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my Word.

JOHN 8:43

Tongue of thought is His only instrument. It is a matter of inner experience for the spirit.

Maulana Rumi says:

Soul is of the same essence as that of God; it is God epitomized, and can express itself without any outer aid (like organs of speech).

In the teaching of the Masters, physical senses are not of much avail. Everything is done automatically, despite the senses.

> *One sees without eyes, hears without ears, walks without feet, acts without hands, and talks without tongue; for this is just like Death-in-Life.*
> *O Nanak! it is then alone that one can know the Cosmic Will and meet the Beloved.*

Maulana Rumi also says the same thing:

> *I fly into those Regions without wings, travel there without feet; enjoy manna and elixir without lips and palate; and see the glories thereof by closing my eyes.*

8. The aspirants seldom have to question the Master to resolve their doubts, for the latter of His own accord explains things that are uppermost in the minds of the audience.

9. Time and again the teachings of the Master center around one theme: *Naam* or *Surat Shabd Yoga*. In clear terms they tell us that one cannot find God nor reach Him by engaging in outer pursuits, for He is the Lord of our very soul and must therefore be sought within, by the process of inversion.

Saint Matthew in his Gospel tells us:

> *Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted,*

and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

MATTHEW 18:3

Again, in the Gospel of St. Luke, we have:

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

LUKE 18:17

Great indeed is man, for his body is verily the Temple of God and the crest jewel of knowledge shines forth within.

Once again, St. Luke tells us:

The Kingdom of God cometh not by observation . . . the Kingdom of God is within you.

LUKE 17:20-21

A Muslim Divine speaks in similar strain:

The human heart is the Masjid (Mosque) and the body is the place of worship.

Again:

It does not befit a spirit (soul), the denizen of the God-made mosque (human body), to wander in search of the Beloved in man-made temples.

TULSI SAHIB

Magrabi Sahib also tells us:

Thy Beloved is within thee, and thou art ignorant of it. He is the very Soul of thy soul,

and thou art wandering without in quest of Him.

Maulana Rumi in this context says:

Within the folds of thy brain there are wonderful gardens and beauty spots. Should you like to enjoy them, hie to a Murshid (Master) for instruction.

Those who search without for the inestimable Treasure are in stark ignorance. They wander in the bewildering mirage of the desert sands of the world, like a deer who runs about looking for musk in bushes.

The *Pind* (human body) is the exact replica of *Brahmand* (universe). The same spirit is working on both the microcosm and the macrocosm. We cannot see, feel, and be one with the Cosmic Spirit unless we establish harmony and come in touch with the spirit within us.

Until the embodied spirit becomes disembodied and rarified and rises above the sensual plane, it can hardly harmonize itself with Universal Spirit.

Nevertheless, our quest for God or Universal Spirit is all the time on the physical plane. We try to discover God under the bowels of the earth, on the snow-capped mountains, in the waters of the sacred rivers, and on desert sands; in man-made temples and mosques, in churches and synagogues; hence we fail to find Him.

If we know the inner Path in the body, we can hope to experience and feel the influence of the great power

within. But this *inversion* or *conversion* is not possible without the aid of an Adept in *Para Vidya* (Science of the Soul), for He alone holds the key to the Kingdom of God and His words act as an open sesame that flings open the secret door.

Just peep within as instructed by the Master, and thou shalt find within thyself a veritable Temple of God.

10. The teachings of Master Souls are perfect, and their findings are as verifiable as in any other exact science.

This experience and realization is, however, quite different from book learning and intellectualism, nor is it a figment of an obsessed brain, as some think.

The Saints always talk with conviction and authority, for Their utterances come from the depths of Their Souls. Their knowledge is neither derived from books nor based on hearsay testimony. They directly give us first-hand experiences of Their own, in pure, unalloyed and unadulterated form. Again, They never ask for blind faith and acceptance on authority. On the contrary, each aspirant is asked to personally verify the result for himself.

Truth is that which must be experienced at once, and not after ages, no matter how slight that experience may be in the first instance. The Masters see things through to their very roots, and then talk.

Nanak sees God right before him.

Sri Ramakrishna, being questioned by Naren (later known as Swami Vivekananda) about seeing God, re-

plied, "Yes, my child! I have seen God as I see you."

In fact, all Master Souls have actual experience of the Godhead and they revel in His Light and Life and in a way become conscious co-workers with Him. Shamas-i-Tabrez says:

> *Better by far it is to see God with one's own eyes and to hear the Voice of God with one's own ears.*
>
> *His Glory is hidden behind the darkness at the back of the eyes and His Greatness may be apprehended within.*

In St. John we read:

> *When the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God . . . they that hear shall live.*
>
> JOHN 5:25

Such great souls never depend on scriptures or sacred lore, which after all are recorded experiences of souls like Them. They are truth personified, Word made flesh and living among us. All the Vedas and Shastras originate from the fountainhead within Them. They are much more than the scriptures, which constitute but an infinitesimal speck of Their personalities. The teachings of the Masters are very liberal, and help the embodied souls in the task of liberation and salvation.

> *I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*
>
> JOHN 6:35

In *Melar-ki-war,* Guru Nanak tells us how to know a Master Soul:

He who can show us the Kingdom of God in this body is a Master Soul.

He can attune our ears to the Voice of God.

Even the grand divisions and minor divisions of the Universe are in perpetual ecstasy, for they live by the music emanating from the Seat of God.

The Master exhorts the jivas to listen to this music in the Sukhman, the artery between the two eyebrows;

Then be established in Sunnya (the Region of Silence), with the result that all oscillations of the mind would cease.

When the chalice of the mind thus turns into the correct position, it will get filled with the Elixir of Life, making the mind steady and self-poised.

The ceaseless music of eternity becomes a constant companion.

All the aspirants attend to these five strains and in course of time become Gurumukh (the mouthpiece of the Guru), and attain the eternal abode of Truth.

He who can with the aid of this music gain back the Garden of Eden (from which he has been exiled) is the beloved of God, and Nanak would wish to be his eternal slave.

He never keeps His followers in delusion about the inefficacy of outer pursuits. His cardinal tenets center around one thing: contact with, and devotion to, Shabd alone. The manifestation of ceaseless music within is a gift of a Master Soul.

O Nanak! whoever contacts the perfect Master
hears within himself the Divine Melody.

Satguru is ever engrossed in Naam, and like a master pilot safely ferries bona fide aspirants across and leads them back to the Kingdom of God lost within them.

One dyed in the color of Naam is Satguru and,
in Kal Yuga, He acts as a Captain of a ship.
He who confides and resides in Him is carried
across and finds Truth manifested in him.

11. A Master Soul at times does uncommon things, that may appear baneful to ordinary individuals. This He does to keep the wordly-minded away from Him, as one would do in the case of flies, so that they will not obstruct the way of true aspirants.

A darvesh (man of piety) needs no darwan
(gateman);
Yes, he does need one, to keep the dogs of the
world away.

An evil tongue or slanderer does work as a darwan for darveshes, so that the worldly-wise are kept out of the way.

In the biography of Bhai Bala it is on record that once Guru Nanak said:

> *In Kal Yuga many Saints or manifestations of God will come down, for the good of suffering humanity.*

Bhai Ajita questioned:

> *Master, will you tell us how we would know a perfect Saint; what would be His expression and how shall we recognize Him?*

The Master replied:

> *Whenever a Saint appears, some leaders of society, religious bigots and caste-ridden individuals, talk ill of Him. Rare indeed are those who go to Him. The rank and file slander both the Master and His disciples. The people in general engage in outer pursuits, like reading scriptures, offering public prayers in churches, temples and mosques, and recitation of mantras, etc. They will not practice Surat Shabd Yoga by tuning with the primal Sound Current. When such conditions predominate, I will come time and again to revive the Path of the Masters and link people with Anhad Bani.*

12. With the advent of a Saint, the refreshing showers of Spirituality flood the dry and parched hearts encrusted with the dust of ages. Everyone who comes to Him, whether a devotee or a sinner, derives benefit in

his own way and gets solace from Him. Many a robber, murderer and highwayman has had a complete transformation in His company. Like a master washerman, He cleans our souls through and through of all impurities, bodily, mental and causal; until they shine forth in primal glory and become luminous and living selves.

We find in a Saint a living embodiment of selfless love and sacrifice. His appeal is universal and directed to the soul of man. The aspirants in thousands congregate around Him and are benefited by His teachings.

13. A Saint is truly a Son of God and shares with Him all His Powers. His long and strong arm embraces the universe, and His helping hands extend to all parts of the world. Distance has no limitations for Him. His saving grace miraculously works wonders in strange and unpredictable ways, and people escape unscathed from many a tense and hopeless situation, even from the jaws of death.

Master of earth and the heavens, He guides the spirits in their homeward journey through spiritual regions, and His Lustrous Form ever keeps company with the pilgrim soul as it transcends the body.

Maulana Rumi says:

The hand of a Master Soul is in no way shorter than that of God. It is in fact the Hand of God Himself.

Yes, it stretches across seven skies and inspires spirits with hope and confidence.

These are just a few of the innumerable signs that indicate a Saint.

Maulana Rumi says in this context:

An Aulia (superman) has in Him wonderful powers and possibilities, which a man of piety alone can see and experience.

The glory and greatness of a Godman becomes more and more manifest to a spirit as it crosses over bodily and mental limitations and proceeds onward in His company. The Lustrous Form of the Master is ever with him now wherever he may be, guiding his footsteps both within and without, answering all his questions, the sole arbiter of his destiny—his very Saviour. It is at this stage that a person gets firmly established in Him and cries out, *The Master is ever with me,* for now he realizes the truth of the Master's sayings:

Everyman, I will go with thee and be thy guide;
In thy greatest need to be by thy side.

The world is full of people who profess to be Masters and teachers of mankind. But all those who hanker after pelf and power, name and fame, cannot possibly play the role and perform this arduous duty, and one must try to avoid such false prophets, who are no less than ravening wolves in the garb of lambs.

It never pays to test and try a genuine Master. His very presence will of His own accord magnetize the mind.

Maulana Rumi says:

None can subdue and still the oscillation of mind except through the overpowering influence of a Pir (Godman). Take thou a firm

hold of such a person. If you are able to do this, it will be by His own grace and then His power will work in you.

He is an entity pure and desireless. Surrender your all at His feet; body, mind and attachments, and He will mold you to His fashion. How this can be done is the question.

Kabir Sahib tells us of the way:

Give thy body and mind to Him who has no desire of His own;
With no thought of the self, be established in Him;
After the mind, what then remains? Not even the body;
Nothing is left to be surrendered, says Kabir.
Having given the body and the mind, no burden remains to be carried;
He who takes pride in this sacrifice will yet have punishment.
For who can part with the seed-mind within?
O Kabir! How can that mind be subdued and surrendered?
Along with body and mind part thou with the seed-mind;
O Kabir! Only after hearing the Master, one becomes fearless;
Place the seed-mind at the altar of the Lotus Feet of the Master.
O Kabir! Now one sees nothing but the Luminous Form of the Master!

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Oneness of Guru, Guru Dev, Satguru and Malik

(The Various Forms of Truth)

In scriptures, we read that God is Formless. He sees without eyes and does His work without hands, moves about without feet and hears without ears.

He pervades everywhere, but cannot be seen. He is beyond all thought, comprehension and apprehension. Man with his limited intellect and finite understanding cannot reach Him. How then can we see God and love Him? Love and longing always exist betweeen creatures of the same class at one level. Birds of the air fly together in flocks; and there is love between animals of the same type, and they move about in herds. Man by nature is gregarious and cannot but live in society with his fellow beings.

Contemplation means concentration of human faculties at one center or focus. But if the center and the focus are not apparent and visible, how can there be any contemplation at all? To satisfy this fundamental need of mankind, Lord Rama and Lord Krishna (the manifestations of *Kal* or the Negative Power*) had to come in

* The same Power manifests in different ways to maintain life at various levels, just like electricity which produces fire at one place and ice at another.

the garb of man and so did Master Saints who manifest *Sat Purush* (the Positive Power)—Truth—the substratum of all that is visible and invisible, the entire universe with its grand divisions and subdivisions; right from Sach Khand or Muqam-i-Haq to Kal Desh, the physical world, which is subject to decay and death. A Muslim divine has beautifully described Him:

> *If He is Khud-aa (Self-Moving God), let Him come by Himself (to teach us).*

In fact, He has to come down to the level of man for then alone can man know of Him.

In the garb of a Master Saint, He works His Will by giving instructions to the souls that long for Him but cannot reach Him.

He tells them that He is not a physical body and He instructs all the embodied spirits how to transcend the limitations of the physical body, and by a gradual transmission of His power, He pulls them out of the physical raiment and becomes their friend and guide.

Thus the Formless has to assume a form, adopt a pole for the manifestation of His Godhead, for the suffering and helpless humanity; He tells us of our native worth and how to regain the lost Kingdom, the Garden of Eden, from which we have been exiled since the beginning of time.

God's power in fullness works at the pole of a Master Soul and He may therefore be truly described as polarized God come into the world with happy tidings to announce God and God's Kingdom, both of which He says are

near at hand and can easily be gained by a little practice in the right direction.

He who has known Truth is Satguru. In fact, Satguru is *Sat* (Truth) personified. Word really becomes flesh and dwells among us, and by His instruction and guidance takes us along with Him, until we, like Him, become Word, a conscious principle working in harmony with the Divine Will on the Divine Plan.

Know ye for certain that Guru is not apart from God.
Whatever His wishes, they are acceptable to God.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

The Nature of Oneness

VERILY A SATGURU (Master of Truth) is One with *Sat* or Truth, as He is embedded in and revels in Truth. Truth is infinite and all-pervasive, while it manifests itself and works among people from a Human Pole —call It what you will: Master, Satguru, etc.

He is a beacon light that sheds the light of Truth on the tumultuous sea of life, to guide yearning humanity. He may be likened to a live switch that has behind it the entire energy of the powerhouse, but doles it out in such measure as may be needed by each individual according to his or her requirements.

Like a magnetized pole or a live switch, He possesses a raiment, but, in fact, is not the raiment but the Power inside the raiment. Exactly so is the case of jivas or embodied spirits.

We too are, in fact, not what we possess and apparently seem to be—physical entities—but spirits or souls that enliven the physical bodies.

A spirit or soul is purely of the same essence and power that works in the Master, though clothed in countless raiments or sheaths and hedged in by numberless limitations.

But when it is able to transcend the various bodies and

become a spirit untrammeled and free, it can then witness the glory and greatness of the Master, for He is the horizon where the earth and heaven meet and the sun of God's Light rises and illumines all space.

A veritable sun lies hid in Him.

We cannot have any adequate idea of God's beauty, grandeur and greatness by looking at the physical form of the Master. For an actual experience of Him, we have to rise to His level.

Unless we rise to the level of God, we cannot know of God.

As God is spirit, we too, by self-analysis, must be able to separate the spirit in us from the material sheaths or raiments enshrouding it, for spirit alone can see and experience spirit; not the physical senses nor even the intellect or mind.

The eyes of a Master are charmed casements that open within on Infinity and without on the finite. In them, one can get glimpses of Divine Light unparalleled in this world—a shadowless Light that never is found on sea or land.

Maulana Rumi tells us about Him:

A Godman is ever in a state of intoxication without a drop of wine. He is ever satiated without a morsel of food.

His eyes are the eyes of God; His hands are the hands of God.

While living in the world, He is not of the world, nor is He a prisoner in the prison of the body, as we are. He is a free entity and at will crosses over into spiritual realms and is competent to grant this power and capacity to thousands of jivas, if He so wishes.

A living Master of Truth is One with Truth, and has in Him Truth in fullness, whereby He carries on the work of salvation entrusted to Him.

In spite of His form, He is formless. He is Word personified, a great fountainhead of love, bliss and peace. Man has to learn from man and, in accordance with this natural law, Word becomes flesh and dwells among us to impart spiritual instruction and guidance. Again, by transmitting His own life impulse He enables us to go homeward.

While doing this work among us, He every day at His sweet will escapes to His heavenly abode of Truth, so as to take rest in *Nij-anand* or imperishable bliss.

Master of Truth and Truth are one; for He is polarized Truth.

> *He is beyond everything, beyond Brahma, the primal principle;*
> *Nanak has met with such a Guru.*
> *The Master of Truth is eternally the same. He neither comes nor goes.*
> *He is the imperishable Life Principle that pervades everywhere.*

With all our paeans in praise of the Master, we can never do justice to Him; for He existed when nothing was

and from Him everything came into being at each cycle of creation.

Who can sing praises of the Master? He is the source of Truth.
He is eternally unchangeable, the source of all life from age to age.

In *Gurbani,* it is mentioned that after careful scrutiny within, one comes to an irresistible conclusion that Master is Truth and Truth is Master, with no distinction whatever between the two.

When churning the great sea within, one thing has come to the surface: Guru is Gobind and Gobind is Guru. O Nanak! There is no difference between the two.

The Almighty in fact resides in the garb of a Saint and works His plan through Him.

The Kartar (primal principle) resides in the Master and He becomes the means of salvation for many a soul.

One knows nothing of love without a Master, for everyone is devoid of love. Hari resides in the Master, and blessed Master becomes the connecting link between a jiva and Hari.

Kabir Sahib tells us that He is one with God:

Now I am one with Thee and feel satiated and blessed.

Having reached the highest abode, I am one with Him; so much so that one cannot distinguish Kabir from Ram.

Similarly, Shamas-i-Tabrez speaks in the same strain:

We have become so united, like body and soul, that hereafter no one can say I am different from Thee.

Christ, too, says:

I and my Father are one.

JOHN 10:30

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.

JOHN 14:9

God and Godman are indeed just like a sea and its tides. Momentarily as the tides rise and fall, They appear as something different, but They are of the same essence as the water of the parent sea.

Exactly the same is a drop of water. When separated from the sea it is a drop, but the moment it goes into the sea, it loses its apparent individuality and becomes part and parcel of the sea.

God is formless, while in Godman He assumes form for instruction and guidance of the people.

Nanak has after careful study of the Vedas and scriptures come to the conclusion that there is no difference between Parbrahm and Guru.

God is the primal Sound Principle, which He gives to the thirsty through a Godman.

God resides in a Guru and releases the Sound Current among the aspirants.
Established in Truth, Master revels in Truth.

He is at once the Master of Truth and Truth itself.
In every age, He comes down for the benefit of the devotees.

In the Holy Bible, we read:

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth.

JOHN 1 : 14

In *Gurbani,* we have:

There is not the least distinction between Satguru and Swami (God-in-action and God).
A contact with the former leads to devotion for the latter.

A man of God is called Satguru or Sat Purush and He speaks of Hari alone; whoever listens to Him attains salvation.

Guru being one with the Almighty is the doer of everything and sustains the entire creation including the jivas.

Guru is the doer and does everything; He is the true Gurumukh.
Guru is a conscious co-worker with God and is the sustainer of the entire creation.

Guru is the bestower of peace and comfort and He is the Kartar (great motor power), O Nanak! We live and have our being in Him alone.

Gosain Tulsi Das, the celebrated author of the Hindi *Ramayana,* speaks of the Guru:

Salutation to the Lotus of the Guru, who is the ocean of mercy and God Himself in human form. His kindly words dispel in us the darkness born of blind attachments.

In the Holy Bible, we read that Jesus once asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" And Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to Peter:

Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

MATTHEW 16:13, 16-18

On another occasion, he spoke more clearly to them:

Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me,

Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?

JOHN 14:8-10

Guru Arjan has in very explicit terms told us of His oneness with God:

My temples are in the highest heaven, and my Kingdom is limitless. My sway is eternal and countless is my wealth. My glory is known through the ages and my people live everywhere. I am worshiped by all and sundry and everyone is devoted to me. My Father is manifest within me and now the Father and the Son work together.

O Nanak! The son has become a conscious co-worker with the Father and there is now no difference between the two.

In the Hindu scriptures, we have:

Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Shiva, and Guru is the veritable Par Brahm; and we offer our salutations to the Guru.

In Mankukya Upanishad, it is stated:

As the various mountain streams, after passing through different plains, fall into an ocean and lose their names and separate existence, so do the knowers of Brahma merge in the

Illustrious Self-Lustrous Being, losing Their names and forms.

Here a question arises as to how an all-pervading spirit can come to occupy a limited space in a human body. In Discourse 7 of the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna thus sets at rest this question:

Not knowing my transcendent, imperishable, supreme character, the undiscerning think me who am unmanifest to have become manifest.

Veiled by the delusive mystery created by my unique power, I am not manifest to all; this bewildered world does not recognize me, birthless and changeless.

SHALOKS 24-25

Again, in Discourse 9, Shalok 11, the Blessed Lord says:

Not knowing my transcendent nature as the Sovereign Lord of all beings, fools condemn me incarnated as man.

Muslim divines also seem to corroborate this, according to Maulana Rumi:

The arm of a Pir (Master) is in no way shorter than that of God, and the veritable Power of God works through the former. His long arm stretches as far as the seventh heaven; His hand is in the hand of God and no one besides Him shows His greatness. In fact, an

effulgent sun lies hid in Him and the greatest good lies in knowing Him, as He is.

Again, the Maulana says:

The Light of Truth shines in the heart of a Wali (Godman). If you are a momin (Guruman) you may see this as it is.

The Prophet once declared that God Himself told him that He far transcended the highest heights, the lowest depths, the earth, the sky and all the heavens; but strange as it might seem, He could comfortably rest in the heart of His devotees, and he who wished to meet Him could find Him there.

Though he (the Murshid) lives on the earth, yet His soul spreads out in the limitless beyond, which all reasoning and philosophy of the religious cannot reach.

Shamas-i-Tabrez tells us in this wise:

The King of Kings is enthroned in us, behind a dense curtain. In the vile garb of flesh, He comes to grant us access to Himself.

Bulleh Shah says:

Maula (God) becomes man so as to pull men up (from their deep slumber).

We have in Gurbani many references to this effect.

*God Himself assumed the name of Ram Das.**

* The fourth Guru of the Sikhs.

Greatly intelligent is our God. He Himself assumes and takes for Himself the title of a Saint.

O Pipa! Pranva (the Sound Current) is the only Reality, and becomes embodied as a Satguru for our instruction and guidance.

Satguru is Niranjan (pure, immaculate); do not consider Him as a human being.
A Devotee of the Lord Himself becomes the Lord, but man knows not this mystery.

Bhai Gurdas likewise says:

Ek Onkar (the one God unmanifest) becomes Akar (the manifest) and assumes the appellation of a Guru.

He who can tell you of the Reality (impersonal) and put you in contact with Reality (Truth eternal and unchangeable permanence), is no other than personal Reality (Truth personified). He truly is the primal Sound Current emanating from the Most High.

In order to teach mankind, this Sound Current becomes materialized in the form of Saints. How else can men have spiritual instruction unless the Spirit of God, which the Sound Current is, takes a human form and lives among them, talks to them face to face of mysteries both human and divine? This is why Kabir says:

Brahma cannot speak as Brahma alone. He too needs a human agency for His self-expression (among human beings). We, as human entities

encased in flesh and bones, cannot have an idea of that attributeless Formless One, unless He assumes a likeness to our own, on this material plane, and becomes for us a living God capable of being seen, heard and understood. He is at once both God and man, and may be called Godman. He works as a means to an end, a link between man and God. He is Word personified so that He may impart instructions about God and guidance toward God.

Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, was anxious to learn shipbuilding and the art of navigation, so he went to Holland disguised in the garb of an ordinary laborer. In the Dutch dockyards there were many other Russian laborers, working for their living, and Peter worked with them, talked to them of Russia their native land, and often asked them to return with him.

These poor people were exiles from their country and would heave sighs because they could not go back however much they wished. Peter told them that the mighty Czar himself was known to him, and he might be able to secure them a pardon. But very few could imagine that a person in tattered clothes like their own could have anything to do with the Czar.

When Peter started on the journey homeward, after completing his training, just a few who believed his words accompanied him. When he entered Russia, he was received royally from place to place. When the outlawed laborers saw the honor given Peter, they felt encouraged and confident that he would be able to have

the Czar reverse the decree of outlawry against them. When at last they saw Peter enter his capital and ascend the throne, they were astounded at the change in their co-laborer.

The Master, like Peter the Czar, is the King of Kings. He comes into the dockyard or prison-house of this world just as an ordinary laborer or prisoner like us. He also earns his living as we do, talks to us of our native land, infuses in us a longing and desire to return home, and offers to be our companion and guide on the way. A few who put faith in His words begin to act on His advice. and they are taken out of this vast prison back to the throne of God, where they find the Master in His Radiant Form, more lustrous than thousands of suns and moons put together.

Guru Arjan tells us that He who sent us into exile is now calling us back to His Kingdom as His true inheritors and legatees.

Again, when Queen Indra Mati completed her course of spiritual discipline and reached Sach Khand, she found her Master, Kabir, in the seat of Sat Purush (the True God). Seeing this, she said, "Master! Why did you not tell me before that you were Sat Purush yourself? I would have believed you." Kabir, smiling, replied, "I could not have convinced you then."

All Saints who reach Sat Lok or Anami Desh become one with God and as such rank equal to each other; and none can be said to be greater than the other.

He who tries to distinguish a Saint from a Saint starts headlong for hell.

Generally, thousands of people congregate around a Satguru and listen to his discourses, but each one sees Him according to his own mental and spiritual make-up. Some consider Him as a person of piety; some take Him for a philosopher, and some as just a man of learning. Others regard Him as an ideally moral man, and still others as a selfless worker. Rare indeed are the jivas who find God in Him.

Thus each one finds in Him a reflection of what he himself actually is or wishes to become, and so gets from Him that quality, for He distributes to each what he merits.

As a man in physical raiment His foremost duty, of course, is man-making; and as God personified it is revealing or manifesting God. So it all depends on one's own preparedness through the ages. Blessed indeed is the man who is ready for immediate transformation into God, for to such an individual He at once reveals his Godhood; as Krishna revealed His oneness with Kal to Arjuna, when through ignorance he hesitated to perform his duty as a Kshatriya prince.

A blind man cannot see one with eyes nor can he take hold of him, unless the man with sight compassionately takes him by the hand and leads him aright.

Similarly, no one can see in a Master the Master of Truth or Truth itself lodged in Him unless He reveals His real self to him. Even those who constantly live with Him, including His close relatives, can seldom recognize in Him the hidden Godhead.

Without the gift of special merit one can never know

of the really intrinsic nature of a Saint (his Godhood). He who can see and recognize God in Him has indeed found God, for He not only resides in Him but manifestly works through Him.

He is the pole from where the power of God shines forth and works out the Divine Will.

Bhai Nandlal says:

> *God is ever present before thee; see thou His blessed form.*

Guru Nanak similarly says:

> *The God of Nanak is ever before him.*

In the same way, when Naren (later Swami Vivekananda) first met Sri Ramakrishna, he asked him, "Master, have you seen God?" And Ramakrishna replied, "Yes, my child! I have seen Him as I see you."

Thus it all depends on our inner vision. If one is gifted with this, or if Satguru so wishes, he may see the flashes of God's Light coming through the Master. The purpose of all spiritual discipline is the restoration of the lost vision to the inner eye, so that we may be able to see God, both as all-pervading in the Universe and as deeply concentrated behind the mighty breakwater of the Master.

This revelation then depends upon the sweet will of God and no one can claim it as a right. It is just a pure and simple gift from Him to one who has prepared himself through the ages.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

The Blessings of God and the Master

THE PATH OF SPIRITUALITY is not a highway that one may tread easily. It is an arduous and an uphill task, tortuous and difficult.

In Katha Upanishad, we find:

> *Awake, arise and get illumination by sitting at the feet of Masters. The wise say this way is sharp as a razor and as difficult to walk on.*

Farid, a Muslim divine of great repute, says:

> *O Farid! Get up and tread the world over in search of some Godly man, for then alone can you be truly blessed.*

In the Holy Koran this path is termed *Pul-i-Sirat,* and is described as "sharp as a razor's edge" and "narrow as a hair."

Bhai Gurdas also speaks of *Gur Sikhi* (Master's Path) in the same words, "narrower than a hair and sharper than a razor's edge."

> *Because strait (narrow) is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*
>
> MATTHEW 7:14

In the Vedas, too, there are texts prescribing countless rules and regulations for the performance of yogic *asans* and *sadhans* so difficult that the thought of them makes one's hair stand on end.

With such hardships ahead, how can a puny child of clay, powerless as he is, constantly ridden by mind and matter, entangled in the meshes of blind infatuation and beset with desires, anger, greed, attachment and egoism, escape unscathed by himself and become a successful pilgrim on the Path?

In such a weird setting, all baffling and bewildering, with no way out, God takes mercy on His creatures. He Himself comes down in vile man's attire, to suffer woe so that His children may be blessed. But again the same trouble confronts us.

To understand the teachings of the Master and strictly follow them from day to day, to confide in Him and to completely surrender one's self, body and soul, to His will; is not an easy thing to do. Unless God and Satguru both take pity on a jiva, he cannot possibly see through to Reality and escape from bondage.

Himself the Master of the Universe, He may
draw in a jiva, and effect a union.

We with our limited understanding cannot even listen comprehendingly to the Master's words.

But in the fullness of time when it so pleases God, He brings about a meeting between a jiva and a Sant Satguru, who establishes his contact with Naam—the power of God or God in action—the Primal Sound Current,

wherewith a jiva is gradually led on and on until he reaches the source and the fountainhead of Shabd or the Sound Current.

Those who serve not Truth wither away like a broken reed,
O Nanak! Whom the Master blesses gets linked with Naam.
With a special merit alone one meets a Satguru; and he brings about a union between Surat and Shabd.
Meeting with a Master is a pure gift of God, and so is the union with Hari Nam (God).

The Master is in the likeness of God, though in physical raiments. He, too, is endowed with the same attributes as God Himself. He, too, comes to save the sinners and administer His Saving Grace among the rest. He washes the jivas clean of their sins and gives the gift of Naam, which acts as a sovereign remedy against all ills, physical, accidental and spiritual.

My Master takes away all sins and I depend on him. Forgive all my trespasses, O Master! Nanak prays for this alone.
Great are the blessings of a perfect Master. With the worship of Hari comes eternal bliss.
The union with the Lord is the gift of a perfect Master. Eternally forgiven, I now soar limitless and free.

The seventeenth century English poet Dryden, speaking of Christ, tells us:

See God descending in thy human frame; the offended, suffering in the offender's name.
All thy misdeeds to Him imputed see; and all His righteousness devolved on thee.

The grace of the Master is as limitless as His greatness, so much so that He forgives even those who talk ill of Him and accepts them as His very own.

One who talks ill of the Master may yet turn around,
To find His saving grace leading him to His fold.

Countless are the persons whose sins are forgiven and are safely ferried across the sea of life.

With Shabd He burns to ashes the Karmic impressions of many a soul;
Like a Captain, He pilots the ship through many a shoal.

The Master truly is God. He is a sea of heaving compassion. All kinds of gifts eternally flow from Him like perennial springs of cool and refreshing water.

Narain (Creator) in Guru is compassion incarnate and a true friend;
In His pleasure is everything, and Nanak is a sacrifice unto Him.

The greatest gift of God and Guru is just one thing—

Naam. They always bestow upon their devotees the blessings of Naam, and thus bring about their salvation.

Devotees of God ever revel in Naam; with saving grace they ever march on.
The very sight of Him is a rare blessing; the truly blessed can have it; with the mercy of the Merciful, Satguru confers the gift of Naam.

In this world and hereafter, there is no gift greater than that of Naam.

Priceless is the treasure of Naam; a True One may grant it at His will.

One can secure the gift of Naam and thereby find an approach to God through Satsang and Satguru.

Whomever the Master may bless, he may have the Love of the Lord.
The compassion of God comes into commotion when one is truly blessed by a Sadh, O Nanak.

The saving grace comes through *contact* with Naam, and *continuous cherishing* of His love and saving grace in turn helps the other way. Both grace and Naam work in reciprocity and help in developing each other.

O Nanak! Naam comes from grace alone. There is no friend other than Ram Naam.
Getting above the pairs of opposites, stick to Naam and He shall bless.

The moment I forget Truth, that moment is wasted.
Remember Him with every breath, and His grace shall be with us.

His grace descends by acceptance of His *bhana* (will) and recognition of His *hukam* (commandment).

He who knows His hukam has no occasion to regret;
O Nanak! engrave the gift of His Naam on thy soul.

The seed of Naam, once sown by a Saint, cannot but fructify—no power can stop it; and the jiva must sooner or later reach the goal, viz., self-realization and God-realization.

Truth one gets through grace alone; none has the power to stop Its growth.
Naam is watered by death-in-life, and Guru-mukhs do it; God grants them this treasure and none can snatch It.

Even *Kal* (Time) and *Maya* (Delusion) can have no effect on the seed of Naam, for It is conceived in a region much higher than their domains.

Besides, the sower of the seed—the Satguru—is *Sat Purush* Himself (His manifested form); and so Ishwar *(Niranjan,* Lord of the Subtle Region) and Parmeshwar *(Om,* Lord of the Causal Region) cannot interfere in His work.

The gift of the Guru is eternal; It has the saving grace for the recipient.
The Shabd of the Master reigns supreme, O Nanak! The Master is no one but God.

The blessings of the Supreme Lord are limitless and do not at any time suffer from scarcity, but one partakes of them only by extraordinary merit. A particle of grace is enough to save a jiva from the ceaseless cycle of transmigration.

Once He showers His blessings, there is an end to endless births;
As comings and goings cease, one at home finds eternal rest.

It is only the Gurumukhs who get this grace and not the manmukhs.

O Nanak! He does all by Himself, and Gurumukhs enjoy His favor.
The bitter words of the Master taste sweet;
His sweet words are a boon all His own;
His words, whatever they are, bear fruit in abundance,
But the idle words of others go in vain.

One works out Naam through His grace alone.

Thy grace alone helps in developing the power of Naam;
Without any shortcomings, one ever engages in Naam.

Man by himself is just a helpless creature and can do nothing. He must not therefore feel vainglorious for what he seemingly does.

> *God alone is the Doer of all acts; He knows the innermost secrets of all hearts.*

The panacea for all ills and the only way to win God's grace is perfect surrender in all humility at the feet of the Master Soul.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

The Solicitude of the Master

THE RELATIONSHIP of the Master and the disciple is unique in character and we find no parallel to it on earth. Still, Saints have tried to make us understand something of it. While all worldly connections and ties are more or less tainted by selfishness, the relation between the Master and the disciple is purely one of selfless love.

Just for the sake of analogy, we may consider the love of a mother for her child. An infant at birth is just a mere helpless mass of tender flesh and bones. He cannot express himself and his needs, nor can he look after himself, but the mother takes tender care of the tiny piece of humanity. She attends to his every need and looks after his comforts. In his happiness lies her happiness and in his sorrow she feels distressed. Day and night she tirelessly works for the child's welfare and does not consider any sacrifice too great. She denies herself everything so that her child may have all that she can afford to give and is ready even to lay down her life for his sake.

As the infant grows, he begins to imbibe his mother's love. The kindly rays of love pass from eyes to eyes. In mute language he begins his first lessons in love. Gradually, the toddler is taught to speak, at first in broken syllables, and the mother's delight knows no bounds at

every success in her endeavors, until he grows big enough to look after himself.

In exactly the same way, when a person is accepted by the Master he takes a second birth, as it were, into the Master's house. He comes into the Master's fold full of worldly attachments and dyed deep in the darkest shades of mind and matter. He is so identified with his body and bodily relations that he can never think that he is something apart from them.

With all his worldly wisdom, whatever riches, name and fame he may have, he is blank in matters spiritual. Having lived all his life on a sensual plane, he is conscious of nothing but sense pleasures which are the end and all for him.

With his birth in the Master's house, the Master takes upon Himself an immense load of responsibility. By individual instructions and attention, He gradually weans the jiva from sense pleasures. He tells the disciple that he is neither body nor mind nor intellect, but something more glorious—soul or spirit—and has been endowed by Nature with various faculties to serve a high purpose in life. By spiritual discipline, the Master enables him to free his mind of mental oscillations. Now he develops a state of equipoise, and with it he begins to evaluate life from a different angle. His entire outlook is changed and a consciousness of spirit dawns in him.

He is no longer a slave of his senses engaged in sensual pursuits, but finds an inner satisfaction, peace and serenity which keeps him engrossed all the time at the seat of the very Self. All this is the work of the Master, and

much more besides. To wash clean a jiva from the impurities of the world is no mean task, but it is absolutely necessary for a spiritual life.

He has to be pulled up from his senses, mind and intellect, and this no one but a Master can achieve.

To stop the course of the mighty rush of sensory currents flowing headlong into the world, and to hold them at one center, is a gigantic task in itself. The next job of the Master is even more important than this.

After the preliminary cleansing process, He pulls scales from the inner eye and gives it vision and Light; and He breaks the seal on the inner ear, making the jiva hear the inner Music of the soul. By His individual attention and care He makes an adept out of trash and scrap—capable of understanding and enjoying the unspoken language and unwritten law of God, and of doing actions without the aid of outer organs and faculties.

The Master takes care of the disciple with His own life impulse.

Blessed indeed is the Master, Who by His instructions, purifies us through and through.
Satguru cuts asunder all the shackles of the disciples.

As Wordsworth sang of his sister, so a disciple sings of his Master:

She gave me eyes; she gave me ears;
and humble cares and delicate fears;
A heart the fountain of sweet tears,
and love and thought and joy.

The Master always saves His disciples, no matter how dangerous a situation they may be in. His protecting arms serve as a shield and buckler, and the disciple leads a charmed life, as it were. The Master does all this simply because He has taken charge of a jiva; there is no obligation on the disciple's part, nor does he necessarily know about it.

Again, the Master takes upon Himself the burden of His disciples' sins and iniquities.

All thy misdeeds to Him imputed be
And all His righteousness devolved on thee.

DRYDEN

He takes in His own hands the entire process of winding up the karmic impressions of the jiva. Having freed him from the sensual plane by reversing his sensory current so that it flows upward, the Master renders him incapable of sowing any more karmic seeds for future harvesting; and whatever trespasses he may still commit through weakness of the flesh, the Master Himself gently and firmly deals with here on earth, leaving no debit balance to be carried forward. In this way, the account of *Kriyaman* karma (present deeds) is settled and squared.

Next come the *Pralabdha* karmas, which determine what we call fate or destiny, and because of which we come into the world. The Master does not touch them and happily the disciple weaves his way through their spell.

Through the compassion of the Lord all trials
and tribulations fly;

Satguru himself saves a jiva from all harm.

Last but not least, the Master feeds the jiva with the Bread of Life and quenches his thirst with the Water of Life (Naam) until he grows into spiritual adolescence and is capable of a certain amount of self-reliance. The touch of the spark of Naam (God-in-Action or the controlling power of God) burns out the storehouse of unfructified karma of ages upon ages (*Sanchit* or storehouse), thus rendering them incapable of germinating in the future.

Satguru keeps his sikh (disciple) on manna and elixir;
So very kind is the Master to His disciple.

I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

JOHN 6:35

The protective care of the Master is much more than that of a mother for her child. He ever keeps His loving eyes on His disciple and guards him from all that is harmful, for His love knows no bounds.

As a mother tends her child and ever looks after him;
Gives him food and nourishment for growth all around;
So does the Master look after His beloved with Godly love.

As mother loves the child, and fish the water,
so does Master love His own man.

In this respect, distance is of no consequence and it does not count with the Master. His long and strong arm can reach everywhere, and His penetrating gaze can pierce through all space.

His hand is the hand of God, and the power of
God works through Him.

Wherever a disciple may be, however extreme his outer circumstances, the Master is always with him and guides him at every step, for that is His eternal promise:

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

A skylark is a pilgrim of the skies, and yet she hatches her eggs by giving them her whole attention. Similarly, the Master always keeps His disciple within His gaze, nurtures him with the Water of Life—the seed of Naam sown in the seeker's soul—until the spirit is able to break through the triple-shelled egg (physical, astral and causal sheaths) and shines forth in her own self-radiance.

O Nanak! Master takes care of the disciple
with His very life impulse;
He keeps him safe in His own hands and looks
after him all the time.

Love alone is the cementing force that binds the Master

and the disciple. Through unbounded compassion He delivers God's message to suffering humanity and prays that they may be saved from the imperceptible fire in which all are being consumed.

Maulana Rumi says:

He calls the people toward the Kingdom of God;
He prays to God for their forgiveness and salvation.

Satguru is the real friend of the disciple. He saves him from tense and hopeless situations. He comes to his aid when he has despaired of all hope and relief, and is surrounded by seemingly powerful forces arrayed against him. From time to time the disciple feels the overpowering influence of the Master working for his good. At times He works in ways that are difficult for the disciple to understand. Just as a mother waits in the early morning hours for her sleeping child to awaken, in the same way, even more anxiously, the Master looks forward wistfully to the time when His disciple, steeped in deep ignorance born of matter and mind, will raise his head, look toward Him and gladden His heart.

The loving care of the Master becomes more manifest at the time of the disciple's final leave-taking from the world. While all his relatives and friends helplessly wait beside the sickbed, and the doctors declare the case hopeless, the Luminous Form of the Master appears to take charge of the departing spirit and guide it to the new world, to the judgment seat of God.

After that, He takes it to whatever region He thinks best, for further discipline and advancement on the path.

Serve the real Satguru and secure tightly the riches of Truth;
At the last moment He shall come to thy rescue.
He alone is a friend who accompanies me on my last journey, and stands by me before the judgement seat of God.
My Master is all in all and the source of all comforts.
He links me with the transcendent Brahma and comes to my aid at the last.

Maulana Rumi says:

O ignorant fool! Quickly take hold of a guide; for then wilt thou be saved from the horrors of the beyond.

All our worldly ties and connections are of an ephemeral character. Some leave us in poverty, some in adversity, some in illness. A few may stay beside us all through life, but they too fall away at the time of death. But Satguru is the real friend, who always overshadows the disciple and keeps His protecting arms around him wherever he may be. He stands by him at the time of his death and even goes along with his spirit as a guide to the other worlds.

O Nanak! Snap asunder all ties of the world, and find some friendly Saint;
World attachments shall leave thee even in life,

while the Other shall stand steadfast unto death and beyond.

A soul awakened to Reality by a Satguru cannot be a prey to the messengers of death but must go with the Radiant Form of the Master, which comes to receive it when it casts off its physical raiment.

Kabir Sahib tells us that gold does not rust, nor steel eaten by worms; so a disciple of the Master, no matter how good or bad, never goes to hell.

Gold attracts not rust nor steel the worms;
The disciple of the Master will never go to hell.

The Master is the Master indeed, both in this world and the next, and helps a jiva in both the worlds. There is no greater friend.

I have taken hold of my Hari; He is my sustainer and is ever with me.
He is a guardian angel in both the worlds; for almighty and ever merciful is the Satguru.
I have with me Satguru, who helps me in all my needs; blessed is the Satguru, who reveals God to me.
There is no friend greater than Satguru; He is the Protector, here and everywhere.

If and when a jiva comes across a Satguru, he may thank his God, for the Guru underwrites life eternal for him Full of compassion as He is, He unhesitatingly helps him through difficult situations, and without the least thought of obligation.

Maulana Rumi says of Him:

Kind hearted and selfless is the Friend;
He helps in dire difficulties and hard times.

The Guru is pledged to help the helpless. Through sheer compassion He extends His saving grace to all humanity. His company is the most beneficial; with Guru by his side, one may successfully defy millions of enemies.

When Guru is thy shield and buckler, millions of hands cannot strike thee down.

Truly blessed are the jivas who have had access to the charmed precincts of the Satguru, for they have nothing to worry about here or hereafter.

The world bows to Him in adoration; regions divine anxiously await His advent;
For perfect is He who is in touch with the Perfect.

How very fortunate are the disciples who are under the shadow of His holy wings; in their lifetime and beyond, they march with leaps and bounds on the grand trunk road of spirituality.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Master and the Controlling Power

SATGURU is the fountainhead of grace. Strange are the ways in which He works His grace. With just a single kindly look He may bless a jiva forever. He showers Naam in abundance. Should He in His pleasure place His blessed hand on the head of a jiva, the latter wishes for no other blessing.

In the twinkling of an eye, the jiva penetrates through the dark veil of ignorance and experiences the power of His grace—the Divine Light and the Divine Music—both of which become manifest to him. The contact with these at once wipes off the otherwise indelible karmic impressions of many ages, and the jiva attains life eternal, full of grace and peace.

My Friend has blessed me with peace, for He has manifested the Sound Current within;
My Friend has shown God to me by a touch of His hand.
With the touch of the Guru's hand, God has blessed me with the pearl of Naam;
The sins of ages have vanished—such is the power of Naam.

Rare indeed are the jivas who are fortunate enough to be blessed like this by the Master's hand.

Worship one who has the treasure of God with him;
Blessed is the jiva who has the Master's hand on him.

Blessed indeed is the touch of the Master's hand,
Which one in millions is fortunate enough to get.

In all the wide world the touch of the Master's hand helps the jiva in his trials and tribulations, and he becomes free from care. The entire world bows and bends at his feet in silent adoration. He can freely go to the various divisions of the creation at his sweet will and pleasure, for the grace of the perfect Master makes him perfect as well.

With His hand over one's head, His power extends on all sides;
His grace opens the way to the spiritual realms, ending all ills.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Surrender to the Master

SURRENDER to the feet of the Master means to merge one's individual will in the will of the Master, and to completely place oneself at His mercy. It is the surest and easiest way to escape from all cares and anxieties. It comes only when a disciple has complete faith and confidence in the competency of the Master.

This type of self-surrender is like that of a completely helpless patient who, trusting in the skill of a competent surgeon, places his life in his hands and quietly submits himself to his knife and lancet.

Or it may be compared to the trust given by the hopelessly lost traveler in the wilderness to the forest ranger who finds him and leads him out.

In exactly the same way, the work of the Master does not consist in merely teaching the theory of Para Vidya (Science of the Beyond), but it includes the practical demonstration of results of spiritual experiments, and help and guidance through all the disciples' difficulties. A True Friend not only gives theoretical lessons in how to escape from mind and matter, He helps in effecting the escape itself.

Suppose, for instance, that a person has to go abroad. He will begin by making inquiries as to the various

means of transportation available, land, sea or air, as he may choose. After he makes his choice he enters the plane, ship or train, and relying on the skill of the operator, takes his seat comfortably without the least anxiety. Should the ship flounder, or the plane be caught in a storm, it is the duty of the captain or pilot to take every possible care to save the conveyance along with the passengers for whom he is responsible.

In exactly the same way, an aspirant for spirituality has, after careful investigation, to decide first about the spiritual worthiness of a Master, and then to submit himself wholly and solely to His authority and direction without any mental reservations whatever; for He alone knows the turns and twists of the spiritual path and is in a position to act as an unerring guide.

The term *surrender* therefore means that a disciple should have full confidence in the skill and competence of the Master, and scrupulously follow and act on His instructions whatever they may be, whether in conforming with his own reason or not—for his reason being limited may be faulty or fall far short of the depth or prove uncertain.

It is not for him to question the propriety of the Master's commandments. He must learn, like a soldier, to obey His command without knowing the why and wherefore of things; for the Master knows what is best and most suitable in each case.

One must therefore obey the Master literally, and straightway engage himself in the sadhan or spiritual practice and discipline as it may be laid down for him.

This is the only way to spiritual success; there is no other.

In this context, we have the testimony of Hafiz, a great Sufi poet of Persia, who declared:

Dye thy prayer carpet in wine should the Master so desire;
For He is not ignorant of the turns of the highway ahead.

When a disciple entrusts his all to the Master, he becomes carefree and the Master has of necessity to take over the entire responsibility; just as a mother does for her child who does not know what is good for him.

As the disciple develops in his sadhan, he fits himself to receive more grace from the Master. Under His kind and benign influence, the disciple begins to thrive from day to day, and all his wishes are fulfilled without the least trouble on his part.

Sages and seers cry from the housetops:
Ye seekers after peace, hie to a Master Saint.

In Discourse 17, Verse 66, of the Bhagavad Gita, the Blessed Lord Krishna as a world teacher announces:

Abandon all duties and come to me, the only refuge; I will deliver thee from all sins: grieve not.

In the Holy Koran, we have likewise:

Whosoever surrenders his purpose to Allah while doing good, his reward is with his

> *Lord, and no fear shall come upon him, neither shall he grieve.*
>
> 2.112; 10.6

And in the Bible:

> *And I will turn my hand upon thee and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.*
>
> ISAIAH 1:25

> *Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*
>
> MATTHEW 11:28

Also:

> *Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee.*

Self-surrender is not an easy task. To accomplish it, one has to recede back to the position of an innocent child. It means an entire involution, a complete metamorphosis, supplanting one's own individuality.

It is the path of self-abnegation, which not everyone can take.

On the other hand, the path of spiritual discipline is comparatively easy. Self-effort can be tried by anyone in order to achieve spiritual advancement.

It is, no doubt, a long and tortuous path, as compared with the way of self-surrender, but one can, with confidence in the Master, tread it firmly step by step. If, however, a person is fortunate enough to take to self-surrender, he can have all the blessings of the Master

quickly; for he goes directly into His lap and has nothing to do by himself for himself.

He is then the Master's Elect, His beloved son, the son of God Himself. But very rarely even a really blessed soul may be able to acquire this attitude.

Should the Lord so ordain, then, O Nanak!
a person may take the path of self-surrender.
Blessed indeed is one who surrenders at the feet
of the Satguru;
Standing near Truth he revels in Truth and
easily merges in Truth,
O Nanak! It is by the Lord's grace that one
may meet such a Gurumukh.

In the scriptures one finds a large number of advantages from adopting this path:

All ills and sorrows vanish by surrender at the
Master's feet.
In the world of joys and sorrows, he alone es-
capes who gains the feet of the Satguru;
A Gurumukh stands apart from the three gunas
and is acceptable to the Lord.
In self-surrender the mind becomes purified;
but chanting of God's name alone does not
help.
For the world's good do those come who thirst
for a sight of Him;
He who surrenders makes a clean escape, with
desires all fulfilled.
All joys lie with Satguru; bow then at his feet;

blissful is the very sight of him.
With no regrets chant paeans unto him.
I see the world being consumed in the fire of egoism. Escape thou by surrender to the Master, and then attend to True Shabd.
I surrender to One who alone is the cause, both material and efficient. His grace has shown the native land in the light of the moon.
With a Life Impulse from a perfect Master, Ram Naam rests in me;
O Nanak! With a surrender to the Master's feet the Lord Himself becomes merciful.
In Kali Yuga Naam lies hidden everywhere, and the Lord in fullness pervades;
But the precious Naam becomes manifest in that surrender to the Master.

With the blessings of the Guru one becomes fearless of death and is successfully ferried across the sea of life.

He happily conquers death and never goes to hell. O Nanak! He is saved by surrender, for Hari just takes him into His care.

Having been accepted by the Acceptor, all his acts become pure.

O Nanak! Never will he go to hell; such is the gift of surrender.
None but the Elect engage in the devotion of Naam. O Nanak! With surrender at the

Master's feet one never comes and goes.
The dispeller of ills and Lord of all is attained through surrender to a Sadh; and the tumultuous sea of life is ferried across quickly.

When a jiva surrenders to the Satguru, the Lord takes him under His own protection and grants unto him the blessings of *Sehaj* (eternal happiness). All doubts and fears now disappear and he comes to his own real Self.

CHAPTER THIRTY

The Words of the Master

WHEN A PERSON comes to a Master, he must come with an open-minded outlook. Since he knows that all his actions hitherto, individual as well as social, have not so far secured him salvation, he should bid goodbye to them and ask the Master for His instructions in the matter of spiritual practices.

Having obtained His instructions, he must then follow them scrupulously, and that alone should constitute his sole devotion. Whatever the Master ordains, that must be taken as Gospel truth, no matter whether it stands the test of mere human reason or not. Our intellect and our reason, after all, are limited and cannot reach the depths to which the Master penetrates. He knows the why and wherefore of His instructions, and like a fully responsible Field Marshal issues His commands.

We must therefore learn to obey Him implicitly like a true soldier, and do what He bids. Hafiz, in this context, says:

Dye thy prayer carpet in wine if thy Master so desires;
For he is not ignorant of the turns of the highway ahead.

Mere lip loyalty to the Master never pays. The Master

wants full devotion to what He says, for therein lies the ultimate good of the disciple. In the Gospel it is emphatically declared:

> *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*
>
> JOHN 14:15

> *But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*
>
> JAMES 1:22

Again, mere chatter about spirituality will be of no avail.

> *The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: . . . but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.*
>
> MATTHEW 23:2-3

> *For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*
>
> I CORINTHIANS 4:20

As the body without the soul is a dead carcass, so talking, if it be alone, is a dead carcass. St. Paul says:

> *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.*
>
> I CORINTHIANS 13:1

The same may be said of *darshan* or having a look at the Master. It may give you temporary peace and quietness of mind, but the moment you go away the mind begins to run riot again, and reigns supreme over body and soul.

Thus, nothing but doing and performance count on

the Path of the Masters. The Master's words sink deep into the heart; one can hardly think of not following Him.

> *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.*
> *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*
> JOHN 15:7-8

> *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*
> MATTHEW 7:20

> *But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*
> MATTHEW 13:23

The world is compared to a harvest (Matthew 13:30) and men at harvest regard nothing but the fruit.

> *Accept the Master's words as Gospel truth, and harvest well the Fruit of Life.*

The words of the Master cannot be detached from the Master. It is from the abundance of the heart that the tongue speaks. The Master is embedded in the Word and His words are expressions of what is in Him; that is, Word, Life-impulse, and power. How then can the two be separated from each other? His words undoubtedly

pierce through the hearts of the aspirants and none other can know the sweet pangs from which they suffer.

As longing for the Lord grew keen, words of the Master pierced my heart; the mind alone knows the pangs; who else can know another's pangs?

The more one gives weight to the Master's words, the more he grows in grace. True devotion to the Master consists in acceptance of, and doing, what He commands. Guru Ram Das exhorts us that the thought of the Master should ever be a companion, no matter what we may be doing. The Master is hidden in His Words, and His Words are in fact the real Master.

Holy is the Word of the Master, and through It one gets the Elixir of Life; for acceptance of His Words gives one immortal life.
Remember ever the Word of the Master, for herein lies real devotion and truth.
Act in conformity to the Master's Word; this constitutes contemplation aright.

The Word of the Master ever abides with the initiates. No power on earth can snatch It away. Fire cannot burn It nor can water sweep It off. It is indestructible and immortal. It fathers the fatherless and protects us at every step. It strikes at the root of all doubt and skepticism. Even the angel of death cannot come near It.

Contact Ram Naam through the instructions of the Master;

This nectar can be enjoyed in the company of Saints;
Find thy native home with the help of the Master;
Then there will be no more coming and going.

One cannot come into the treasure of Naam by the performance of deeds on the plane of the senses.

All persons no doubt sing and hear the Gurbani, but only those benefit from that who really believe in the words of the Master as Gospel truth:

Servants and disciples as they come to the Master
Chant the holy verses from scriptures divine;
Chanting and hearing is alone acceptable
From all who with faith accept the words of the Master.

Persons who time and again meet the Master come to love Him more and more; and those who regard His words as Truth become beloved of the Lord.

Whatever the command of the Master may be, it must be followed with unswerving zeal; so that you will be able to take hold of the Shabd, which will lead you back to your native home.

Whatever the Master says, that ye must do;
Following the Sound Current, come ye to your own and win for yourself laurels with the help of Naam.
He who acts at the Master's bidding, true comfort is his reward;

By following His behests, O Nanak! one fearlessly crosses over.

It is absolutely necessary to serve the Will of the Master, for in doing so lies the good of the disciple.

Many people meet the Satguru, but that is not enough. For salvation, one has to obey Him in thought, word and deed.

Everyone looks at the Master, yes, the entire world;
But salvation cannot be had by seeing, without contact with Naam.

The Master must be an adept in Surat Shabd Yoga and be able to make Shabd manifest within us; that Shabd which does not exist within the nine portals, but is the characteristic of the tenth alone.

When such a Master has been found, it behooves a disciple to wholeheartedly submit himself to His yoke and mold himself accordingly. In doing so, he derives the greatest benefit from his human birth and renders a yeoman's service to his ancestors as well as his descendants, and has nothing of which to be afraid.

Blessed indeed is the birth of those who follow the will of the Master;
For they save their families and bring much glory to their mother.
He who molds himself in the way of the Master never gets any ill;
In his way lies the Pool of Nectar and he easily gets to it.

A disciple who follows the Will of the Master gets the Elixir of Life in his own right, and wins the Kingdom of God as his birthright.

O man! Follow thou the Will of thy Master;
Dwell in thy native home and enjoy life eternal.

Who understands the Will of the Master and follows it scrupulously? One in whom the grace of the Lord works.

In whom the Lord's grace works, he alone accepts and follows the Master's words.

There is no person greater than one who, accepting the Words of the Master, realizes God. We must therefore aspire for the Word and try to secure a contact with It through the Sant Satguru.

O mind! Always remember the Lord's words;
He who through Word gains his native home
is the crest jewel among men.

The blessings of Hari Naam are too numerous to be recounted. One who becomes dyed in the color of the Word always chants the glories of God. All his works automatically take the right shape at the right moment.

What he wishes must happen, for Nature herself is at his beck and call. He is freed from all ills and all evils. He loses all thoughts of I-ness and my-ness and never becomes vainglorious.

He rises above the pairs of opposites: riches and poverty, comforts and discomforts, pleasure and pain, fame and obscurity; for he remains in a state serene and with equipoise.

The poison of mind and matter can have no effect on him. While in the world, he is no longer of the world, but is unattached and carefree; he moves about wherever he likes.

The illusions and delusions of the world do not affect him. He escapes the sway of Kal (Time) for time has no bondage for him, nor has space any limitations nor causation any spell.

He gains life everlasting and once again wins back the Kingdom of God, the Garden of Eden from which he was driven because of his first disobedience to God.

He not only saves his own soul, but through the power of the Word, saves the souls of many others who come in contact with him; yes, the souls of his ancestors and descendants as well.

Blessed indeed is a person who has the good fortune to come into the fold of a Sant Satguru and thus gains the summum bonum of life.