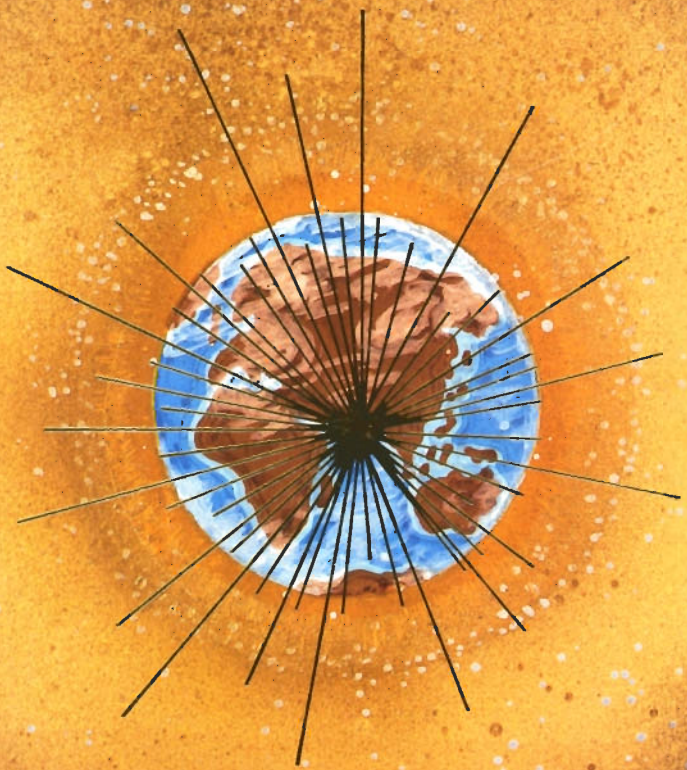
GODMAN

BY KIRPAL SINGH



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Considered by many people who met Him in the East and in the West to have been a living example of a true Saint of spirituality, Kirpal Singh was born in a rural setting in Sayyad Kasran in the Punjab (then in India, now in Pakistan) on February 6, 1894. He followed the career of a civil servant in the government of India, and retired on His own pension in 1947. Following instructions from His Master (Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, 1858-1948), He founded and directed RUHANI SATSANG. He was Commissioned by God and authorized by His Master to carry forward the spiritual work of contacting sincere seekers after God with the WORD (or NAAM). He continued in that capacity until He left the earth plane on August 21, 1974. Elected four times, consecutively, as President of the World Fellowship of Religions, He upheld the truth that, though the various religions are different schools of thought, the Aim of all religions is One and the Same. Kirpal Singh visited the major cities in the United States on the occasions of each of His three world tours: in 1955, in 1963-64, and again in 1972, staying in this country for three months or more, each time. From His intense study at the feet of Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj and from His own personal inner experiences of a spiritual nature, Kirpal Singh was eminently qualified to convey to sincere people everywhere the importance of self knowledge and God realization.

KIRPAL SINGH

GODMAN

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

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

Introduction

ACCORDING to some religious traditions we are living in the *Kali Yuga*—the final age of development on earth. People of all sorts and needs are entering society to make the final attempts toward Divine Realization. Central to these efforts to expand consciousness naturally is the Guru.

The Guru is much more than teacher in our sense, rather He is "The Spiritual Father." This enlightened presentation of the Guru should clear up many questions which have arisen in the minds of those who have their feet on the Path.

One vital point for the religious seeker today is the need for a Guru. One might say that the "Inner Guru" is the ultimate refuge; why bother to search in that jungle outside for a Living Guru?

True, the Inner Guru is the ultimate refuge; but in our age we all too often find the inner world a confusing labyrinth while the external world is our familiar playground. It is for this reason, to provide pathways through this labyrinth, that this book is so vitally necessary for our time. We are here told how to find our way among the welter of teachers and sects to find the True Guru, the *Sant Satguru*— the Inner Light and Word.

Even for the intellectually oriented western mind, these discourses on the Guru enlighten us on one major mys-

tery which the Christian Church finds insoluble. That is, how can the incarnation be both God and man? This problem is solved here and in a most universal way, clear and timely for our age, yet as an answer very ancient to India.

The universality of this message cannot help but be a benefit to our age and be the groundwork for a much needed universality in religion. I would certainly commend this to every seeker.

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Baba Sawan Singh Ji
(1858-1948)

Author's Preface

FOR TWENTY-FOUR short, beautiful, inspiring years, it was my blessing to be under the love, guidance, and protection of a Godman, Supreme Master Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj.

Introducing the zealous seeker after Truth to a Godman is answering the perennial queries:

What is God?
How can His creation know Him?

It is my privilege to relate the mission of a Godman. Commissioned from above to give free to suffering humanity the gift of *Naam* (*Shabd*) the effulgent melody—the symphonic radiance which leads the *jiva* (embodied soul) back to his Father's Home.

If only the *atman* (soul) could be contacted with the Shabd this "string from the Nameless Lord" would lead to His door. But the spiritual faculties are so fogged and cloaked with gross coverings of mind and *maya* (illusion), that even though Shabd is reverberating within and around, the Soul cannot hear Its music nor see Its glory. How can man once again revive his link with his Maker?

Dhur Khasme Ka Hukam Paya;
Bin Satguru Chaitya Na Jai.

(Such is the Will of the Lord; He cannot be known except through a living Satguru.)

VAR BIHAGRA 556

Without the enlivening touch from the living Satguru, the soul cannot awaken from Its slumber and get attuned to Naam.

We are familiar with:

In the beginning was the Word . . .
And the Word was God.

And:

Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

So, Godman is the Word, the *Logos,* the *Naam (Shabd),* the *Kalma,* the *Akash-Bani,* the *Sraosha,* and the *Udgit* of the various religions of the world.

To the lovers of the Scriptures, the explanation is given of scriptural limitations.

To those who adore past Saints, historical evidence is given on their just immortality.

It is impossible to reduce to bare statement a Godman's words of wisdom, of peace, of consolation, of reassurance, of encouragement, of loving reprimand, which He utters as He moves among His disciples. His acts of selfless kindness and superhuman love bring home to those around Him the unquestioning conviction of the Truth that He teaches.

But His life, conduct, influence, and blessings are indelibly recorded on those who earned this gift of Association.

His controlling power and solicitude inspire the jiva to surrender at His feet to be forever guided by His Word.

May the indefatigable seeker after the Mystery of Life find eternal rest in his Naam.

KIRPAL SINGH

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Thou art the pilgrim's Path, the blind man's Eye,
The dead man's Life; on Thee my hopes rely;
If Thou remove, I err, I grope, I die.

Disclose Thy sunbeams, close Thy wings, and stay;
See, see how I am blind, and dead, and stray;
Oh, Thou, that art my Light, my Life, my Way.

FRANCIS QUARLES

Godman

CHAPTER ONE

Guru: What He Is

'Tis much that man was made like God, before,
But, that God should be made like man, much more. . . .

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

JOHN DONNE

IT IS well nigh impossible to know the Master and to understand His greatness. We have not the eyes wherewith we may behold His Reality. A prophet alone can know a prophet. We, the embodied spirits living on the plane of the senses, simply cannot know Him.

What Thou art we know not;
What is most like Thee?

Again:

How can the lesser the Greater comprehend?
Or finite reason reach Infinity,
For what should fathom God were more than He.

DRYDEN

In *Jap Ji* (the daily morning prayer of the Sikhs), it is mentioned:

> *Unless one rises to His level, one cannot know of Him (God).*

A Master Soul may be likened to a skylark, which is described as:

> *Ethereal Minstrel! Pilgrim of the Sky.*

He who can soar as high as the skylark and follow her course may know something of the ethereal pilgrim; but poor crows and doves cannot. The Master is, however, not a pilgrim of the sky, but a denizen of the highest Spiritual Realm, and He comes down to sing to us the "Ethereal Song," and to take us along with Him to His heavenly abode. While on earth, He is:

> *Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam;*
> *True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.*

He is far beyond the limitations of the three bodies (physical, astral, and causal); of the three innate, natural and native propensities or instincts (*Satva, Rajas,* and *Tamas;* i.e., of righteous actions, worldly actions, and inertia or inaction, or actions born of ignorance and darkness); of the five elements of which the entire creation is made (earth, water, fire, air, and ether); and of the twenty-five *Prakritis* (i.e., subtle forms of varying degrees of which the elements are compounded); and also of mind and matter.

Shamas-i-Tabrez therefore describes him as:

He is a lark that lays a golden egg;

that is, an egg that shines like solid gold; the reference being to the Light of *Naam* or Word that is bestowed on each individual at the time of his Initiation.

He rides the high heavens every morning.
When He races, He covers all the solar systems,
And when He goes to bed, He makes pillows of
the Sun and the Moon.

In other words, when He is not engaged in any worldly pursuits He crosses over into highest regions for rest.

O Shamas-i-Tabrez! by just one kindly look,
He can give sight to thousands of stark blind
(i.e., make them seers and prophets).

Such Master Souls are in fact one with God, but come down into the material world at His behest to fulfill His divine purpose. Out of compassion for the world-weary souls, thirsty and hungry, moaning for reunion with the Beloved, God has to make provision for their homecoming.

As man alone can be a teacher of man, God has to send forth His Elect with a direct commission to lead back those who will listen to God's Message. He works as a means to an end.

Standing on the top of a hill, as it were, He can locate the smoldering fires of love in the various human hearts, and like a great and powerful magnet or lodestar, He draws all such individual souls as come into His sphere

of influence, and by personal instruction and guidance works out the Divine Mission.

Each soul gains in spiritual grace in proportion to her receptivity. The more a person develops this receptivity, the more he experiences grace and spiritual benefit. Gifted with a limitless spiritual wealth He generously bestows it on all who aspire for it. Each gets according to his need and capability, and gradually develops the seed sown in him.

Sheikh Mueen-ud-din Chishti says:

> *They (Master Souls) live in the world, but Their spirit is ever in the High Heavens;*
> *Imprisoned in the tentacles of the body, Their spirit soars high above.*

Maulana Runi also says:

> *Never take a Godman at a human level; for He is much more than He seems.*

Apparently, and in generalities, all men look alike, though each differs from the other in inner development. It is this background that helps each individual on the spiritual path and determines the measure of every step he takes, and, consequently, each one has his own time factor.

A Master Soul in human form cannot be rightly comprehended. He is a limitless ocean of *Sat* or Truth—ever the same from the beginning of creation and from age to age. As it is not possible to do justice to God's greatness, so we cannot do justice to God's Elect.

A Persian Saint tells us:

> *He is beyond comprehension, apprehension, conception, and even conjecture. He outstrips the faculties of sight, hearing, and understanding. All the glories that one can sing of Him all his life cannot do any justice to Him.*

Again:

> *If all the mountains were pounded into ink and mixed with the waters of the oceans and the whole earth were a sheet of paper, one cannot record the greatness of a Guru or Master.*

He is the King of Spirituality, and we, groveling like insects in the muck of the world, cannot know Him and His greatness.

Maulana Rumi says:

> *If I were to sing praises of His countless blessings till Eternity, I can hardly say anything of Them.*

Whatever we say of Him, we perforce do so at an intellectual level, which has a very narrow and limited scope. All our efforts in this direction are bound to discredit Him rather than to give Him any credit.

Guru Arjan, therefore, says:

> *Thou art a King, and I address Thee as an "Elder-Man";*
> *Far from doing any honor to Thee, I bring Thee discredit.*

The highest and subtlest intellect attempting to describe Him is just like a toddler standing before his mother and saying, "Oh darling, I know you!" How much can he know of his parent when he does not know anything of himself? His sweet lisping words cannot do any justice to the deep motherly love and affection that lies in her bosom. We too cannot sing the glories of the Master, for we cannot know, at the bar of the intellect, Him who is beyond all barriers and limitations.

Blessed indeed are we, for Master Souls, as and when They do appear, at times tell us of Themselves. It is from Their rare utterances that we can know something of Their greatness and of the potential power that works through Them.

In innumerable little ways, in parables and otherwise, They tell us of what They are, what is Their mission, from where They come and how They carry out God's Plan.

It would be advisable for us to go to Them and listen to what They have to say about Themselves.

CHAPTER TWO

Guru is Shabd
(Master is Word Personified)

THE Gospel of John begins with the memorable words:

> *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
> *The same was in the beginning with God.*
>
> JOHN 1:1-2

Guru is Shabd or Word personified. *The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,* says the Gospel. Shabd or Word is just a ray from God or the great Ocean of Consciousness, and this one ray is responsible for the creation and sustenance of all the planes comprising the universe.

In the Gospel of John we read further:

> *All things were made by Him (i.e., the Word) and without Him was not anything made that was made.*
> *In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.*
> *And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*
>
> JOHN 1:2-5

Dryden in his poetic fantasy refers to It as Harmony (or Sound Principle):

From Harmony, from Heavenly Harmony
This Universal frame began;
Through all the compass of the notes It ran,
The Diapason closing full in man.

In Gurbani, we have:

Word is the Master and spirit is the disciple of Word.

Word is the Master and the Prophet, full of wisdom, deep and profound. Without Word, the world cannot exist.

Between Word and the Master, there is no distinction. Word indeed is the Elixir of Life, and whosoever follows the Word according to the instructions of a living Master, safely crosses the ocean of life.

Tulsi Sahib says:

Spirit is the disciple, and Word is the Master. It is only after the spirit is linked with the Word that she finds the way Godward, by rising into the beyond and entering into the inverted well.

Bhai Gurdas speaks of spirit as:

It is only after the spirit faithfully and conscientiously accepts Dhunni (Sound Current or Word) as Master, that she becomes a Gur-

mukh and knows that the Word and the Master are in fact One.

Saint Kabir likewise thus explains:

Where is the Master, and where does the spirit dwell? How can the two unite? For without union, spirit has no rest.

He himself then answers:

Master is in the Gaggan, and so is the seat of the Spirit.
When the two are united, there is no separation thereafter;
Accept the Word as Master; all the rest is sham tinsel;
Each selfishly engaged wanders from place to place.

Thus Word or Shabd is a World Teacher from the beginning of time.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for in them the Word of the Master manifests Itself. This Word is the Real Saint and can act as a living guide. It is "God-in-Action" and is expressed in abundance in Master Souls who are one with God.

When I churned the sea of body, a strange phenomenon came to Light;
God was identified in Master, and no distinctinction could Nanak find.

He Who is a Doer of the Word is called a Saint, a

Master Soul. This Truth dawns only when one studies the significance of the term *Guru*. It is derived from the Sanskrit root *Giri,* which means *One who calls;* thus He Who always hears this call within Himself, and is devotedly attached to the call and can make it manifest in others, is described in Gurbani as *Guru*.

Accept as Master One who can make Truth manifest;
Give expression to the Inexpressible by means of Sound.

Again:

O Nanak! verily Truth alone is True.

Kabir Sahib says:

We do obeisance to all teachers, whatever their creed;
But the Adept in Sound Principle is greatest indeed.

Again:

Teachers there are of degrees vast in variation,
But the One of Sound Current is for highest adoration.

Tulsi Sahib also exhorts:

He Who can reveal Sound Current is verily a Saint;
By analysis of self, one locates the Sound within.

Kabir Sahib has challenged that whoever calls himself a

Satguru or a Saint should enable us to see the Unmanifest Manifested.

In *Sar Bachan* we have:

> *Master brings the message of Sound; He serves nothing but the Sound;*
> *Perfect Master is ever engaged in Sound; Be thou the dust of the feet of the Master of Sound.*

Satguru is a veritable *Veda*. He is endowed with *Sach Naam* and thus possesses the Elixir of Life. He distributes *Shabd*, which works as an "Open Sesame" to the Heavenly regions and grants free access to pilgrims on the Master's Path.

The Theosophists call It the Voice of the Silence; its reverberations can be heard from plane to plane.

In the terminology of the Masters, a real Saint is one who can teach of Shabd. Without an Adept no one can have the gift of Shabd or *Naam*. It may be likened to a rope ladder leading directly to God, and a spirit by taking hold of It can easily ascend Godward.

> *Contact with Shabd is contact with God; and blessed is one who contacts Shabd within.*

Again:

> *God in Guru distributes Shabd; By contact with Truth one merges in Truth.*

And again:

> *O Nanak! all Saints from the beginning are embedded in Shabd;*

Blessed is Master Ram Das Who too has contacted Shabd.

In the Holy Bible we have:

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

It is from an Adept in Shabd that one gets a true life impulse. He Himself is One with that true Life Current, from which everything animate derives life. He is a resident of the egoless region, He is Shabd personified. He lives and has His very being in Shabd, having crossed far beyond the sway of *Kal* or Time; He lives life everlasting and is competent to pass it on to others who contact Him and follow His instructions.

The human spirit at present lies buried under an immense load of *mayaic* or material pressure. It does not even know that it is spirit. It can be awakened to Reality and made aware of its greatness only by means of Shabd. This Life Principle of Shabd already lies in each one of us, but only in a latent form.

It has to be made patent or audible to the spirit, so that it may by sheer affinity grow conscious of its rich spiritual heritage and claim it as its own.

This contact of the spirit with Shabd can be brought about and is firmly established by the Master (Who is Shabd personified) and no one else can do it.

Shabd is a sacred trust with the Master, and is scrupulously discharged;
Shabd of the Master, a Master alone can manifest;
And none else is competent to do so.

It means that Shabd or Word is under the control of the Master. He alone can manifest It or make It audible by pulling the spirit out of the physical sensory organs.

This contact with Shabd comes as a gracious gift from the Master. No amount of meritorious deeds performed within the limitations of time, space, and causation, can merit such a priceless gift, so vast and so limitless as Shabd:

All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

And again:

By works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

The Master may grant the gift of Shabd out of extreme compassion and grace if He so wills.

The moment a helpless child tries to pull himself toward his mother, she fondly runs toward him, tenderly picks him up, and lovingly hugs him to her bosom.

It cannot be had by endeavors nor by service;
But may come when fully reposed without clutching;
Out of the Great Grace of the Lord, one takes to the instructions of the Master.

It does not mean that a person should not try to exert himself. He must on the contrary work zealously according to the Master's instructions. The success, however, depends on the will of the Master alone, for He is the sole arbiter of the manner and measure of His Grace.

Christ said:

If you love me, keep My commandments.

To mold one's life in terms of the Master is a necessity on the path of the Master.

> *He who verily follows the Master is ever engaged in hearing the Divine Music. As the Naam develops, one gets absorbed in it.*

Though this *Anhad Bani* (Ceaseless Sound Current) or *Naam* (Word) is the Life of our life, yet we cannot make It manifest or audible by ourselves; an approach to It is always through a Master Saint or *Ustad-i-Kamil*:

> *Ceaseless Sound is a Treasure within, with an approach through a Saint;*
> *Without a Master, even Sidhs and Sadhaks have failed to get Naam.*

Shabd is the mainstay of Saints as well as of all living creatures, the difference being that of conscious awareness in one case and unconscious ignorance in the other. While the former have not only an experience of "Sonship" but truly live in that relationship, the latter have no idea of it at all.

Christ says:

> *I am the Son of God.*
> *I and My Father are One.*
> *Whatever comes from Me comes from My Father.*

In *Gurbani* we also have similar references:

> *Hari (God) does what His Saints wish for.*
> *What They (Saints) desire, that comes to pass; none can deny Their wishes.*

Father and son are dyed in the same color.

Maulana Rumi tells us:

An Aulia (Godman) is competent enough even to divert a bolt from above.

It does not mean that Saints in any way question the authority of God, or run a parallel administration of Their own. Far from this, They act as agent and hold His Commission. In the world God acts through Them.

Egoless as They are, they become fitting instruments of Godly Powers. Allied closely with Shabd, They receive from and transmit direct messages to God; and in relation to the world, They are just polarized God:

The Father and the Son are One, and administer the same law.
O Paltu! In the domain of God, there is no other manager than a Saint. The Two are so closely and indissolubly knit together that the Saint appears to be running the whole show.

Maulana Rumi speaks of It in this wise:

Aulia or Godmen are the chosen of God.
They have full knowledge of all that is visible and invisible.

Again, God speaks through Saints:

O Lalo! I simply speak out what God makes Me speak, said Nanak.
Sadh is the mouthpiece of God.

In the garb of man, God comes into the world for the sake of suffering humanity, and through His Saving Grace He takes upon Himself vicarious responsibilities for their shortcomings:

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 devolv'd on thee.

DRYDEN

A living Master is the only hope for the erring mankind; a kindly Light to guide their faltering footsteps and a Saviour for the sinful. With the help of limitless Naam or Shabd, of which He is a vast treasure-house, He helps the *jivas* or the embodied spirits to cross safely over the ocean of life and gain Life Eternal.

Inwardly linked and embedded in Shabd, outwardly He works like a Teacher or a Guru and gives spiritual instructions to the aspirants on the physical plane, and then passes on at will to the subtle and the causal planes and beyond, as the jiva progresses on the spiritual path, and guides him at every step. He does not stop until He leaves the *Sadhak* in his native home from where Shabd originates and which, in fact, He is.

One who has known *Sat Purush* (or the Primal Cause), is a *Satguru* (or Master of Truth). He is beyond the sway both of Dissolution (*Kal* or Time) and of Grand Dissolution (*Maha Kal* or Greater Time), and is competent to lead the aspirants to this stage. A

Master of this caliber alone can save the jivas and nobody else can.

He Who is One with Truth, is the Master of Truth;
He can liberate spirits and Nanak sings His praises.

More safe and much more modest, 'tis to say;
God would not leave mankind without a way.

CHAPTER THREE

Gradations in Mastership

MASTERS are of four different types: The father, the mother, the preceptor or teacher, and lastly, *Satguru* (Spiritual Guide or *Murshid-i-Kamil*).

Of all of these, *Satguru* is the greatest teacher, for He imparts spiritual instructions alone. One who is well-versed in wordly wisdom is called *acharya* or preceptor, for He gives us rules of social conduct and of ethical life.

Satguru or Master of Truth is also known as *Sant Satguru.* His relation with His disciples is purely a spiritual one, as He is concerned with the advancement of the spirit and has nothing to do with worldly matters.

From the viewpoint of spiritual attainments *Gurus* may be classified as:

Sadh Guru,
Sant Satguru, and
Param Sant Satguru.

A *Sadh* is One who has gone beyond the region of *Trikuti (Onkar)* which is the same as *Lahut* in Sufi terminology and *Hu* in Islamic theology. He has witnessed the spirit in Its pristine glory, after having rid It of all coverings, and is now *Trigunatit (beyond* the three gunas: *Satva, Rajas,* and *Tamas,* in which all human beings work according to their natural and native instincts); *beyond* the five elements (earth, water, fire, air

and ether, of which the physical world is composed); *beyond* the twenty-five *Prakritis* (the subtle forms in varying degrees of the elements); and *beyond* also mind and matter.

In short, He is an adept in self-knowledge, or the art and science of spirit, and can, at will, disengage the spirit from various *koshas* (sheaths or caskets) in which It is enclosed like a priceless gem.

The greatness of a Sadh lies beyond the three gunas (as He is Trigunatit).

By a process of self-analysis, He (a *Sadh)* has known the self or spirit in Its real form—to wit, that It is of the same essence as God; and now He strives for God-knowledge.

A *Sant* is One who is adept not only in self-knowledge but in God-knowledge as well. He far transcends the material, materio-spiritual, and spirituo-material realms. Master of Truth as He is, His abode is in the purely spiritual region, technically called *Sach Khand* or *Muqam-i-Haq,* the Realm of Truth.

A *Param Sant* is the Grand Master of Truth beyond all description and hence ineffable. He is at one with what is variously known as *Anami* (The Namless One) of Kabir; *Nirala* (Indescribably Wonderful), *Mahadayal* (Boundless Mercy) or *Swami* (The Great Lord of All).

There is no material difference between a *Sant* and a *Param Sant* except in nomenclature.

But none of them, whether a *Sadh,* a *Sant,* or a *Param Sant,* can act or function as a Guru or Master un-

less He is competent to impart spiritual instructions and He has been commissioned from above to do this work. Whoever holds this authority for spiritual work becomes a *Sadh Guru, Sant Guru,* or *Param Sant Guru,* as the case may be.

There may be a number of *Sadhs, Sants* or *Param Sants,* but none of them can of himself assume Guruship or spiritual preceptorship without being commissioned for the work.

So the terms *Sadh, Sant* and *Param Sant* have a much wider connotation than the term *Guru,* which is restricted to a spiritual preceptor alone—the rest being only spiritual adepts of varying degrees.

The Guru holds a direct commission from God, and works under instructions just as any vice-regent would do on behalf of a king.

Again Gurus are of two types:

1. *Swateh Sant Gurus*: They are born *Sants* who come into the world with direct commissions; as for instance, Kabir Sahib and Guru Nanak.

They start the work of spiritual knowledge and instructions right from a tender age. They need no special training from anyone, since They come from the Most High for this purpose. Such beings, when They come, simply flood the world with the light of Spirituality, and establish a line of *Gurmukh Gurus* for carrying on the work long after Them. But in course of time, substance comes to be sacrificed for show, and gradually Spirituality disappears altogether.

Then comes another Master Soul to re-orient this

most ancient science according to the needs of the age. In this way, "old wine" remains in circulation for souls athirst. Such Master Souls do appear from time to time in different lands and among different peoples.

2. Besides *Swateh Sants* there are *Sants* who by devotional practice and spiritual discipline under the guidance of some Master Soul acquire spiritual merit here and are granted a commission to work as a Guru.

They already have a rich spiritual background ripe for fruition, and in the present span of life simply seem to complete the process. *Gurmukhs* are always in the making from life to life, and acquire perfection in this life.

> *Kabir saith that He came directly from the Kingdom of God and held an instrument of instructions from Him.*

Bhai Gurdas, while speaking of Guru Nanak, tells us:

> *First He got a commission and then He worked it out.*

In short, the former come with authority, and the latter acquire authority while here. But there is absolutely no difference between the greatness of the Two, the nature and scope of Their work and the method by which the work is executed. Each of Them is endowed with equal authority, and work out the grand plan of God according to the needs of the time and of the people.

But the rest who claim this status and pose and act as Master Souls not only deceive themselves but misguide

the masses at large. In this category are included persons who are either greedy and selfish or those who are after name and fame.

In innumerably different ways and wiles they practice deception on the unwary and simple-minded seekers after Truth with a view to serve their own ends.

It is because of such impositions that Guruship is being looked down upon by most people, and no wonder that the science of Spirituality is being stigmatized as a mirage and a fool's paradise.

CHAPTER FOUR

Guru: One or Many

SHABD or Word (the Primal Sound Current) is the only Guru for the entire world and *Surat* (individual consciousness) is the only disciple, as the latter cannot do without the former. In fact, there is the principle of unity, for God is One, though He has manifested Himself variously.

But as we look the other way and turn to the world abounding in diverse forms, we see a Pole-star shining in its majesty reflecting the Light of Heaven.

Such a pure soul (Word made flesh or Godman) with authority to give spiritual instructions to the seekers after God, is as much a Guru as the Shabd Itself, for He Himself is a living embodiment of Shabd and with Shabd as stock in trade freely distributes It to whomever He likes.

Kabir speaks of Himself:

> *I come from the Kingdom of God to administer the Law of God.*

Guru Nanak, too, was invested with a similar authority to impart spiritual instructions when He was in deep meditation in *Veiny Nadi* (the Water of Spirituality within).

Both of Them were Param Sant Satgurus.

Kabir Sahib was born in 1398 A.D. at Lahr Talao near Benaras and passed away in 1518. Guru Nanak was born in 1469 A.D. at Talwandi, and left the physical plane at Kartarpur in 1539. Thus both of Them were contemporaries for about forty-nine years, from 1469 to 1518. In the same way Shamas-i-Tabrez and Maulana Rumi were also contemporaries for some time.

Again, Guru Angad and Dadu Sahib lived together from 1504 to 1552.

So also, Guru Arjan and Dharam Das from 1561 to 1606.

These instances go to show that there can be more than one Guru at the same time, but a person cannot have more than one Guru for spiritual perfection. It does not matter even if a Guru after initiating a person passes away.

Once He initiates an individual, the Subtle Form of the Master gets embedded in the disciple for He becomes from that moment the disciple's ideal and His instructions gradually begin to bear fruit.

There is no power on earth that can render sterile the seed sown by a Master Soul. Master never dies. He may leave the body, as anyone else does, but He is more than a mere body. He is an ideal, a living Sound Current or a Life Principle that gives Life and Light to the entire world.

After His passing away one may derive benefit from the *Satsang* conducted by a *Gurmukh* who is carrying on the duties of Guru, and may consult him in case he has some difficulty. It is, however, of the utmost

importance that the Master is not to be changed on any account.

Loyalty to the Master Who has initiated the spirit and to Whom the spirit has pledged his troth demands the recognition that the Master is competent to impart further guidance and instructions, even when He is working on the spiritual plane after having left the physical world.

CHAPTER FIVE

Present Master

MASTER OF THE TIME is a living Master Who is imparting spiritual instructions to His following. But all Masters of bygone times are *past Masters* or Masters out of date. Each of these Masters had His own role to perform. The accounts of the ancient and outdated Masters and Their teachings do a kind of spadework by cutting the untrodden soil, and by creating an interest in us in esoteric matters of the spirit. Each of Them lays emphasis on the need of the living Master and records His own spiritual experiences. It is from Their exhortations that we are moved to begin the search. The innate urge in us is quickened and we are impelled to go in quest of One Who can lead us Godward.

The work of imparting actual spiritual instructions and guidance is, however, done by a living Master. Highly charged as He is with higher consciousness, He injects the jivas with His life impulse. Spirituality can neither be bought nor taught, but it may be *caught,* like an infection from One highly infected Himself. As Light comes from Light, so Life comes from Life, and a spirit that is bodily ridden can only be moved by a Spirit that is untrammelled by body and mind. This

is the only way and there is no other way for spiritual training.

Without a living Master there can be no escape from bondage for the spirit.

Maulana Rumi, therefore, emphatically declares:

Trust not thy learning, cunning, and craft;
Do not break away from the sheet anchor of the Living Prophet.

Prophet Mohammed, too, says:

He who has not sincerely approached the Immam of the Time (living Master), the Vice-Regent of Allah, the Perfect Guide, cannot get anything.

Again, the Great Maulana said:

Hie to thy God through the Godman:
Float not uselessly on the treacherous waters of egoism.

In the absence of a living Master, one cannot develop the devotional attitude so very necessary on the spiritual path. There cannot be any devoted attachment for a person or thing which we have never seen and of which we have no idea. The very term "attachment" signifies that there is an object of attachment.

Some persons feel that this need for an approach to a living Master so emphatically stressed in *Gurbani* related to the time of the ten Gurus alone, but that is not the case. The teachings of the Masters were addressed to man in general and were for all times. Their

appeal was universal and not restricted to any particular sect or any specific period:

> *The teachings of the Masters are common for all.*

Again:

> *Bani (Word or Sound Principle) is the Guru, and Guru is the Bani personified, and the Elixir of Life gushes out of the Bani.**
>
> *Whoever accepts what the Gurbani says, he can be freed through the grace of the living Master.*

Bhai Gurdas in this context says:

> *The Vedas and scriptures are the wares of the Masters and help in crossing the ocean of life; but without the Master of Truth coming down and living among us, we cannot apprehend the Reality.*

The esoteric mysteries cannot be fully explained in writing, as the inner process has its own difficulties and handicaps. In various ways the Master in his Subtle Form helps the spirit in the journey from plane to plane. This work of guidance both within and without cannot be performed by past Masters.

* There is a vast difference between *Gurbani* and *Bani*. The former refers to the sayings of the Gurus as recorded in the holy scriptures (especially the *Granth Sahib*), whereas the latter refers to the eternal Sound Current, sometimes called *Gur-ki-Bani*, reverberating in all creation. It emanates from God Himself and He alone can manifest it. Moreover, this Bani (Naam or Word) is sounding throughout the four *Yugas* (ages) and gives its message of Truth.

The nameless and formless *Shabd* becomes a form and assumes a name and dwells among us. In the Holy Gospel we have:

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Unless God comes down in the garb of man, we cannot know the Unknowable. The teachings of scriptures remain sealed to us under the heavy weight of ancient and archaic verbiage, unless a Master Soul who has actual experience of the Science of the Spirit explains to us the truth of these scriptures.

Even the apparently simple teachings of the late Masters fail to yield the right import unless some living Adept in the line tells us their true significance, and makes us experience the same experiences mentioned in the scriptures.

By transmitting His own Life Impulse, he enlivens the spirit lying helplessly shrivelled in the body under the dead weight of mind and matter. Like a clever guide, He, in an inimitable way of His own, quietly gives her a new lead.

Next, He lays bare to the spirit's view new heavens full of wondrous sights, charters her a plane *(Shabd)* and pilots her Godward Himself. From day to day the spirit is wheeled around sharp corners, touches new spots, experiences unknown thrills, and enjoys exhilarating experiences too subtle to be described.

All this and much more is the work that a living Master has to do.

In the history of Sikhism, we find that the Holy

Granth was compiled for the first time by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan. In spite of the well-known and oft-quoted dictum that *Bani is the Guru,* implying thereby that there was no need of Gurus thereafter, the Gurus carried on the work of initiating people; and even today the *Khalsa* (Pure One) with perfect, resplendent Light within is authorized to carry on the work of spiritual instruction and guidance to seekers after Truth.

Guru Gobind Singh says: *We are the worshipers of the Great Conscious Light* and defines the word *Khalsa* as: *The pure Khalsa is One in whom the Light of God is fully manifested.* He further goes on to say:

> *Khalsa is My true form; I reside in Khalsa,*
> *He is the life of My life, and My very prana (vital airs);*
> *Khalsa is My valiant friend, Khalsa is My Satguru Pura (fully competent Master);*
> *I have told no untruth.*
> *I tell this in the presence of Par Brahm and Guru Nanak.*

CHAPTER SIX

The Need of a Master

THE FORMLESS GOD pervades the Universe in the form of Shabd or Word; but we cannot feel blessed unless we are enabled to contact It within.

The entire atmosphere is charged with electricity but one cannot derive any benefit from it so long as one cannot reach out to an electric switch that controls the energy coming from the power-house.

Once this contact is established, it gives us light, hot or cold breezes as we may need, and helps us in innumerable ways in sweeping the house, cooking our food and the like. It carries huge industrial loads like the proverbial demon and does work that a thousand persons put together cannot do.

In exactly, the same way, if one could but reach out to some Human Pole where God's energy in the form of Shabd is manifest, one can become truly blessed and reap a rich spiritual harvest beyond all measure. Saints, prophets, seers, and Master Souls are such manifested Poles that radiate God's Light, Life and Love.

They are the Children of Light and come to give Light to the world which is steeped in utter darkness. They are Shabd personified and, so to say, polarized God within the world.

Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

II PETER 1:21

The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my tongue.

II SAMUEL 23:2

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a Light unto my path.

PSALM 119:105

Satguru or Master of Truth is then the Pole wherefrom God's energy works for the Divine Will. This energy or Shabd is the Subtlest Form of the Great Unknown and the Unknowable. It is through the Satguru that one can know even this much and come into contact with Shabd.

It is from the physical that we move to the subtle. The Master and the Master's Sound Current are the means to the end. They alone can lead the spirit Godward. The Master solves for us the mystery of God and saves us from the tentacles of mind and matter.

His long and strong arm pulls a spirit out of body and mind consciousness and makes it Spirit Consciousness by linking it with the Sound Principle.

The Radiant Music next leads the spirit to the source or region from which It is emanating. The Master and the Sound Current are not two different entities; they are but two aspects of the same thing.

As He works on the physical plane, He has to assume and work through a physical vehicle, without which

spiritual instruction cannot be imparted. But as soon as He disengages a human spirit from the various sheaths and coatings, He also assumes and works through a subtle Form—luminous and resplendent.

This process goes on until the spirit of man becomes identical with that of the Master. This is the grand purpose for the fulfilment of which Masters come into this lowest region which is so full of misery and woe. Armed with the Saving Grace of God, in the form of the Holy Ghost—variously called *Shabd,* Word, *Naad, Bani* or *Kalma*—the Master saves such souls as are ripe for redemption, listen to Him, and work out their salvation by following His instructions.

Unless God comes in the garb of man and dwells among us, we cannot know of God in spite of His immanent presence everywhere.

Someone must churn clarified butter from milk, and strike fire out of the granite blocks, before we can know that butter is hidden in milk and fire in stone. "Word," therefore, becomes flesh and dwells among us, as we learn from the Holy Gospel.

When spirits grow restless from their long exile into the physical plane, helplessly cry out for homecoming and see no way out of the clutches of Kal's all pervading limitations of time, space, and causation, the Saving Grace of God is stirred by the piteous appeals and comes into the world in the form of a Sant Satguru (Master of Truth) to help them out of the impasse.

It is the living Master who can do this job. No one else can. It is through the Voice of the Silence that He

speaks. His is an unwritten law and an unspoken language.

Scriptures, however sacred and authoritative, contain bare references to spiritual regions and record the experiences of their authors, but can neither impart spiritual instruction nor be a guide on the spiritual path.

The Word of the Master works as an "Open Sesame" to the heavenly regions. He holds the key that unlocks the Kingdom of God, now a lost province to us. It is out of compassion and love for the lost sheep that the Shepherd comes out of His fold, treads the stony path in an endless search, picking up lost souls here and there.

> *I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*
>
> JOHN 8:12

CHAPTER SEVEN

Past Saints

TODAY a person who is ill cannot have the benefit of medical advice from Dhanwantri (the progenitor of medical science), nor can a litigant ask Solomon to decide his case, nor can a lady marry Adonis and bring forth children.

Similarly, Saints who appeared in the past from time to time and conferred spiritual benefit on those who came into contact with Them, cannot do anything for the present generation. Each had His commission, and on completing it, entrusted the work of regeneration to His successor. Man can learn only from man, and God works His ways through living Saints.

> *Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth his secret unto His servants the prophets.*
>
> AMOS 3:7

Some people think that past *Mahatmas* continue to live in spiritual regions and can even now confer spiritual benefit on the aspirants. Let us see how this holds good in the light of reason:

1. Each Saint has His mission in life and comes with a definite instrument of instruction. As soon as He completes His job, He retires from this world (physical plane)

and goes back into the Spiritual Ocean from which He sprang, leaving the work of further reorientation to His successor.

2. Again, in accordance with the Law of Nature, even if the Predecessor has had to do something for His followers, He does it through the living successor to whom He entrusted the work in retirement; and only the latter, as a brother-in-faith or *Gur-bhai* may help and guide His brethren on the physical plane.

3. It is only when we are able to leave the physical plane at will or at the time of death that we can contact the Master who initiated us if He has left the body. Even while living on this earth His resplendent and luminous form never comes down from the *Gaggan* (astral heaven), for He always awaits human spirits at the threshold of the materio-spiritual regions.

4. Again, in the hope and belief that the ancient Saints and sages can even now help us, we begin to attach great importance to ill-shaped and ill-formed currents and undercurrents of thought and feelings, and try to work on the suggestions of our own subconscious mind, little understanding its true import, and taking for granted that the impressions are from this or that past Master.

These manifestations may even have been stirred up by some agency other than that of our *Isht Dev,* or the past Master of our choice. This cannot be seen in its proper perspective unless one is first gifted with inner vision (*Divya Drishti*), which can successfully penetrate

through the veil of mind and matter and see clearly and judge correctly the nature of the ill-conceived inner urges, as they swim up indistinctly to the mental surface.

5. Alongside the above, we cannot possibly understand the working of a Prophet Whom we have never met and seen with our eyes, nor have we the means to verify His *modus operandi.* In these circumstances, we can easily be deluded by any wandering spirit or will-of-the wisp, or may even fall easy prey to the Negative Power, with its diverse ways of enticing untrained souls.

6. If, for instance, it may for the moment be admitted that the ancient sages can still lead us on the spiritual path and the present Master is not needed for spiritual instructions, then the very idea of having a *Guru* at any time in the past or present is at once eliminated, for God can directly teach man easily without any prophet or Messiah.

7. The very fact that a Sage or Seer appeared at one time or another and helped people Godward is in itself proof, conclusive and positive, even in this age, that there is need of such a Godman; for without Him one cannot know of God or move Godward.

8. God by Himself can teach man only by becoming man, for man alone can teach man. He has perforce to put on the garb of man—call Him what you will: a *Sadh, Sant,* prophet, *Messiah* or *Rasul. Like attracts like* is an incontrovertible dictum.

God appears as a Sadh.

God takes on the appellation of Sant.

This does not mean at all that past Masters are dead and gone. Far from it; They have attained Immortality. Having finally traversed the physical, the subtle, and the causal planes, They are at One with the Cosmic Awareness. If with all Their devotion and spiritual advancement, They were still to wander under the moon, They would have wasted all Their endeavors.

It will not serve any useful purpose to enter into theoretical discussion and disputation. Everything will become clear if one searches for a real Master, well versed in the art and science of spirit, and learns from Him an easy and natural way of approach to God.

There will be no need to wait for the result until death. If the seed is sown properly and watered, the fruit must appear quickly and in abundance in one's very lifetime.

A living Master can grant eternal beatitude in its fullness. A simple touch with the dynamic power of the higher consciousness in Him is enough to charge one with the radiating waves of spirituality. The spirit is drawn inward and upward and riding the magnetic-like radiant strains, crosses from plane to plane. Blessed indeed is the spirit that contacts such a Master and comes under His protection.

It is a matter of common experience that a person bound for any foreign country consults directories, collects data about shipping companies, the various boats scheduled by each, the facilities they offer, the ports of embarkation and call, the route that each boat would follow, and the time that each would take, the places of

interest on the way, and ultimately where he would stay on reaching the destination.

After having laid his plans, he has to obtain a passport from his own government, without which he cannot leave his country; and he also has to arm himself with a landing permit from the government of the country to which he is bound.

In exactly the same way, a person who intends to leave the physical plane for any of the spiritual planes has to obtain a passport and a landing permit from some competent authority, some vice-regent of God (a Saint), Who works on all the planes.

This is granted to him at the time of Initiation, when acquainting him with the various ports of call on the way, the different signs and signals wherewith to distinguish and recognize each place, the difficulties of the journey and the like. In this way, He grants the traveler the necessary passport, and a landing permit for disembarkation. Once the seed of Naam is sown in a jiva, it cannot but fructify, and he must one day reach the Kingdom of God, the Garden of Eden, from which he has been an exile from time immemorial. And no power here or beyond can stand in the way of his homecoming.

The next thing the Master does is lay down the correct path that leads to God. Like a veteran seaman, He plans the entire route for the traveler, as without it he cannot, with all of his sincere devotion and steadfast effort, reach the destination.

The correct lead Godward is the second preparatory stage for this venture on the unknown seas. The Master

Himself charters the boat and underwrites the disciple's safety *en route,* by telling him of the shoals and the submerged rocks in the way and other dangers besetting the journey, and how best to avoid them.

He does not stop here. Master of both Heaven and Earth, He every day traverses at will the various spiritual regions. *Sach Khand* or *Muqam-i-Haq* is His perpetual abode from where He comes down every day to the earth plane, to discharge the lowliest duties cast on Him.

> *Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam;*
> *True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.*

Since He has a personal knowledge and actual experience of the journey which He performs so often every day, and is a resident of the highest plane, He gives a cheery call to the world-weary:

> *Come ye all, my unhappy brothers and sisters, into the Kingdom of Heaven and into the Gracious Presence.*

He not only gives us first-hand knowledge of the Kingdom of God, plans our itinerary for the journey and books our passage homeward, but also offers to accompany us and be our guide. He may even pilot us, and does not rest content until He escorts us to the mansions of the Lord.

We can verify for ourselves some salient features of the account given by Him, by reference to the directories; and should the latter seem to support Him in broad out-

line we take courage and depend on Him and His competency with confidence.

The scriptures are nothing but directories which record the personal experiences of those sages and seers who in the past traveled on this path, and a living Master refers to them in His talks and discourses simply because we by nature have dogmatic faith in them, and He wants to take us up from the line of least resistance.

We may break the arid ground by careful study of scriptures, but these *per se* cannot help in liberating the spirit from body and mind consciousness, and in leading her across to the spiritual regions. It is the strong and long arm of the living Master that can accomplish this Herculean task of cleansing the Augean stables, of carrying the spirit beyond all limitations and concepts, and steering her course safely and getting back for her the lost Kingdom.

> *It is the fundamental Law of God that no one can think of Him unless he is reminded of Him by some Master Soul.*
>
> NANAK

Bhai Gurdas says:

> *Endless queries, without treading the Path, cannot lead thee to thy Beloved.*

One cannot understand God by means of intellect alone, however sharp and keen it may be. How can an instrument by nature limited in its scope measure the Limitless? Some higher consciousness can lead the little con-

sciousness to the Great Consciousness, for He serves as link between the two:

> *If one could reach God alone, why then the pangs of separation?*
> *Meet Him through a Sadh, and have beatitude, O Nanak.*
>
> *A quest in the wrong direction cannot lead to success. O Kabir, take with thee a guide and find the great jewel. A sure guide will help thee to reach the goal quickly, however distant it may seem to be.*

We feel the need of a teacher at every step. A student in cookery, for instance, has to learn it from one expert in the culinary art. A student in medicine has to seek the aid of a professor of medicine. A novice in surgery has to master the art from some reputed surgeon, and so also a pupil in engineering, painting, and so forth. Books and learned treatises on these various subjects cannot by themselves make a student expert in the subject.

It is the practical demonstration, the experiment at the table, and the actual operation in the theater under the guidance of an adept in the profession that matters.

If all of these physical sciences that belong to the realm of *Apara Vidya* and are studied and mastered on the plane of the senses require the help of a teacher, the need of a teacher is still greater for spiritual science (*Para Vidya*), which is an inner process far beyond the ken of the senses, to be studied in the depths of the mind and experimented with in the laboratory of the soul.

It has been locked up for ages upon ages and is enshrouded in stark darkness and there is no visible approach to it. The fact is that a person who denies and derides the necessity of a Master in Truth and yet wants to learn Truth all by himself does not in fact want it. His case is just like that of a man who prefers to dig a well for himself rather than quench his thirst at a spring of cool and refreshing water nearby, with a waterman ready to serve him.

Bhai Nandlal says in this context:

None but a lover of rubies can understand the value of a ruby.
It is only the jeweler's eyes that can at a glance give value to it.

The need of a Guru or Master is absolute, and there can be no exception to the rule. Suppose, for instance, a person wants to have a joy-ride in the air. No one will allow him to enter a plane by himself. Even if he enters it surreptitiously, he will find the machinery locked. If somehow or other he overcomes this obstacle, he will not know how to handle the various parts of the machine. Should he dabble with it and the plane starts, he cannot take it up for want of necessary training, nor can he bring it down, nor steer it correctly. The result, sooner or later, will be a crash and loss of life. The mechanism of the human body is much more complicated and delicate than that of any machine; therefore the need of a Spiritual Adept is all the greater, both for success in the practical process of self-analysis and also for the ap-

proach to God Himself and the understanding of the working of the divine Will.

The spirit imprisoned in the body cannot *per se* separate itself from it. With its seat above the focus of the eyes, it permeates the entire sysem, and the two are indissolubly intertwined with each other. Should it somehow or other find itself freed momentarily and collected and gathered up at its center, it cannot enter the airliner of Shabd. If it may find a way in, it does not know where to go, how to go, and how to return.

But if the master pilot (the Sant Satguru) could be there to take the spirit along with Him, and the two could enter the plane and take a few joyful rides together in the spiritual realm, the spirit could also learn how to handle the heavenly liner, and to repeat the spiritual experiments.

One well-versed in the mechanism of the human body (which is composed of three coverings: physical, mental, and causal, plus the living sentient entity underneath), a habitual traveler to the heavenly regions, day in and day out, can initiate a spirit into the mysteries of spiritual knowledge, and by a practical demonstration show her a "Way Out."

By actual guidance and help, the Master Himself steers her safely from plane to plane, and explains on the way the dangerous signals and points, sharp turns and twists, and the dangers of the unknown and untrodden spiritual realms. Blessed indeed is the spirit that comes across such an Adept in the science and art of Spirituality.

Nothing but ill luck would dog a spirit's footsteps if

she were to spurn His offer and attempt the divine journey by herself, unattended and unaided by a Master Soul.

Maulana Rumi, therefore, in no ambiguous terms warns against such a course:

> *Find a Master Spirit, for without His active help and guidance this journey is beset with untold fears, perils, and dangers.*

In essence, Naam or *Dhun Atmic Shabd* (Word) is an unwritten law in an unspoken language, and, hence, It cannot be had from scriptures and other holy books. This wealth can be obtained only from some Adept in Naam, for He is Word personified. He alone is competent to make It manifest to the spirit, and no one else can.

> *It is a fundamental Law of God that none can manifest Naam except Satguru (Master of Truth).*
>
> *The Shabd of a Master Soul can be heard only through His Grace, and no one else can even make It manifest.*

A Master of Truth is fully conversant with all the mysteries of spirituality; hence His testimony carries weight and His charged words drive home and prove effective.

> *Listen to the true and infallible testimony of Saints, for They have a first-hand experience of what They say.*

Gurbani also in unambiguous terms emphatically de-

clares the imperative necessity of a Master Soul. The embodied spirits for ages upon ages have been leading a life of the senses, and have never known that there is another side of the picture as well. Truth can neither be known nor experienced except through the grace of a Master of Truth.

> *Without a Master no one ever found Truth in the past nor in the present. The Crest Jewel of Naam has been kept in the hands of a Master, and He is competent to manifest the same in the jivas.*

> *It is through God's Grace that one comes across a Master of Truth. After a spirit has passed through cycles of births, then the Master makes her hear the Sound Current.*

> *Listen ye all with attention and learn that there is none so great a philanthropist as a Satguru; for He bestows upon jivas the gift of precious Naam. Those who are prepared to lose their lives (i.e., come above the physical life of the senses), shall find Truth on contacting a Master Soul.*

All Saints with one accord declare that without a Godman, one cannot reach God and attain Godhead. God Himself made this abundantly clear:

> *It is a cardinal principle of God that one cannot even think of Him without the Grace of a Satguru.*

Nanak has learned from God that one cannot gain salvation without the active aid of a Master.

Satguru is a great ophthalmologist and an expert eye surgeon. We are all stark blind. God is within us, and darkly we grope for Him without. But a contact with a Satguru restores to us the lost vision and we begin to realize and experience God in the laboratory of the human mind:

The entire mankind is blind and is blindly engaged in deeds of darkness, and finds not a Way out. O Nanak! when a spirit meets a Master of Truth, she begins to see with her own eyes (inner, of course) and she realizes the Truth in the depths of the soul.

We are nothing short of truly blind, for we see not, regardless of physical eyes. Blindness consists not in the loss of eyes, but in keeping away from God. Nanak says:

Call them not blind who have no eyes, O Nanak!
Such in fact are blind who see not the Light of God.

Guru Arjan tells us that even a person with eyes may yet be blind, if he sees not God Who is the very soul of his soul, and thus he commits sins:

A person in full possession of his senses may yet be blind; if he considers that God, the

very Soul of his soul, is far removed from him, and thereby he shamelessly engages in evil.

With physical eyes we witness the physical world around us. But the *Shiv Netra* or Third Eye in each one of us is closed. When this eye opens, we can see the wonders of the subtle and causal worlds, and even those of the purely spiritual world beyond these:

Blind is one who performs deeds of blindness, because his inner eye is closed.

All of us are concerned with matter, and know not if there is anything else.

Ever engaged in mind and matter, he does not even think of God;
Bound for Hades, he is ever in perpetual misery;
Blind and deaf, he does not see beyond;
A slave of the mind, he is immersed in sins.

It is impossible for anyone to enter the higher regions by his individual efforts. It is imperative for an aspirant of these to take with him an Adept who daily treads the sun and moon in his heavenly journeys.

Maulana Rumi says:

A person desirous of making a pilgrimage should take with him an experienced pilgrim for the purpose—no matter whether

that pilgrim be a Hindu, a Turk, or an Arab.

The Satguru, like a master surgeon, can restore vision to the inner eye.

Shamas-i-Tabrez tells us:

Should you like to see God, apply the dust of a Godman's feet to thine eye, for He can give sight even to the born blind.

Naam or Shabd is the collyrium that makes a person capable of seeing heavenly visions. Without Its use one forever remains blind, and human birth avails him not:

Without contact with Shabd, a person is both blind and deaf, and gains naught from human birth.
The greatest asset is the blessed Bani, which restores the sight that can apprehend God.

NANAK

God is permeating through and through, but we do not see Him, as we suffer from myopic vision:

Accursed is the person who sees Him not, though He is within;
All persons, O Tulsi, suffer from cataract over their eyes.

Eyes are a great blessing. Without them a person gropes in the dark. The whole physical world is just a blank sheet to a blind person. But how grateful would he feel

if some expert surgeon were to restore his sight by means of an operation.

The inner eye is a thousand times more useful than the outer one, as without it one cannot see anything beyond the physical plane, and for ages upon ages he has been blindly staggering, ever since the dawn of creation. The Master of Truth bestows vision to this third eye that has long been lying sealed as it were by constant disuse. Is it not a pity that such a valuable organ should be rendered useless, and that we have not taken the time even to think of the helpless state in which we are? Such indeed is the overpowering influence of mind and matter upon the embodied spirit.

It is not only human beings, but also the gods that stand in need of Light for the third eye, for without It they, too, cannot see anything beyond themselves and their surroundings. Located as they are in the descending order, one below the other, they cannot even see their own Mother—*Shakti* (Energy)—from which each of them has sprung.

> *The entire creation is born of Shakti (Energy), which works through three distinct agencies: Brahma (Creator); Vishnu (Sustainer); and Shiva (Destroyer). Though all three are under Her direction and control, yet strange as it may seem, they know Her not.*

Tulsi Sahib also tells us that none can safely cross the sea of life except through the Grace of a Guru:

> *None has ever crossed the fearful stream of life*

except with the aid of a Guru, no matter if he may have been an intellectual giant, like Shankara.

When great personages like these stand in need of guidance and help of a Guru, the puny child of clay simply cannot do without a Master Soul.

Without a beneficent Guru no one finds a way out, although he may perform myriads of charitable works and deeds of merit.

Again, Tulsi Sahib says:

Tulsi, without the aid of some Murshid-i-Kamil (perfect Master), you cannot have salvation nor can you see the way thereto.

In *Gurbani* we find emphatic reference to the need for a Guru:

Let there not be the least doubt in the mind of any, for none has ever crossed the tempestuous and fretful seas of life without a Guru.

The world is a fearful ocean. The Word of the Guru is the boat, and He is the captain thereof. It is with His grace that one can reach God, and there is no other way.

Guru is at once the barque and the captain, and without Him none can cross. God is the veritable gift of Guru, and the way to salvation lies through Him.

In the scriptures of the Hindus also, we find many such references. In Katha Upanishad I:ii, we have:

> *Very few indeed are the persons who have the good fortune to hear of God, and fewer still who can know of Him. Blessed is the high souled one who talks of Him, and blessed are they who have access to such a personage, and truly blessed is he who with His help and guidance finds God within him.*
>
> *Mere thinking and contemplation are of no avail. Without Initiation one cannot know of God. Unless you learn of God from some Master Soul, you shall not experience Him.*
>
> *He is so subtle that thoughts fail to reach Him and intellect cannot apprehend Him.*

In Chandogya Upanishad IV:ix-3, we have:

> *From the pious and the holy who are just like Gurus, we have heard that without a Master Soul we can neither know nor experience the true nature of the Self.*

In Mandukya Upanishad (I Mandukya, Khand 2, Shalok 7:12), we read:

> *It behooves a Brahmin to disengage himself from the desires for the fruits of Karmas and acquire a spirit of detachment, for God is self-existent and cannot be attracted by deeds of merit. To know Him, he must, like a true seeker and disciple, go to a Guru who*

is adept in the knowledge of Brahma and is fully embedded in Brahma.

Without a Guru one cannot even have true import of the scriptures. In Svetasvatara Upanishad VI:23, it is recorded:

He who is extremely devoted to God and has the same amount of devotion for his Guru, he alone can understand the significance of the text herein.

Let us now turn to Manusmriti, Chapter II:

A disciple must stand before his Guru in perfect equipoise, with full control over his body and bodily organs.

SH. 192

A disciple must everyday before the commencement of his daily lessons and after completion of the same do obeisance at the feet of his Guru and act according to His instructions.

SH. 71

Those who try to follow the Vedas on hearsay authority only, do a great disservice to the Vedas—for none can truly learn the Vedas without a Guru—and such go to hell.

SH. 116

Whosoever imparts to you knowledge either exoteric or esoteric is worthy of your respect.

SH. 117

In Bhagavad Gita IV:34, we have:

> *The practice (of spirituality) can best be done at the feet of a Master Soul, fully conversant with the Reality, for such alone can guide properly.*

We cannot know the spiritual path without the help of a Godman and our search should, therefore, begin with the latter. In the Holy Gospel, it is said:

> *No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*
>
> JOHN 14:6

> *No man knoweth . . . who the Father is, but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him.*
>
> LUKE 10:22

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

> *He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*
>
> MATTHEW 10:40

In short, the sacred books of all religions repeat the same thing; to wit, that man cannot gain salvation except through a Master of Truth.

The Shastras, the Vedas and the Smritis all converge at one point: no one can have salvation except through grace. Right contemplation will bring home this universal Truth to you as well.

The easiest and the quickest way to reach God is through devotion to some Master Soul. The Prophet of Arabia, while exhorting Ali, said:

O Ali! thou art a lion in the cause of Truth, brave and steadfast, but depend not on thy prowess and strength. Far better it would be for thee to take shelter under a tree laden with flowers and fruits.

O Ali! of all the ways leading to God, choose one that is of the Beloved of God, for long and strong is His arm and He can easily take the seekers after Truth into His Holy Presence.

Maulana Rumi also exhorts in the same fashion:

The ever oscillating mind cannot be stilled unless it comes under the overpowering influence of some Saint. Should you come across one, take hold of Him with a firm grasp. Take rest under the shelter of an Accepted One, for the proximity of a liberated Soul shall liberate thee as well.

Dove-like sigh thou night and day and search for the hidden treasure from some darvesh (man of God).

Again:

There is no Friend greater than Satguru; He is the protector here and everywhere.

Search for such a one right and left, high and low, and never rest until He is found.

Never turn away from the holy and pious, but diligently try to understand Them and Their real greatness.

The path of spirituality is strewn with dangers and difficulties and cannot be safely trod except with the help and guidance of a Master.

Every soul is clothed in three distinct sheaths; the physical, the astral, and the causal. It is through each of these that she can operate in the three corresponding planes. Her native plane, however, lies beyond the three.

The physical plane itself is beset with terrible snares and difficulties. The astral or subtle plane is full of inconceivable temptations from which it is impossible for a jiva to escape unscathed.

Similarly, still greater glamor awaits a jiva in the causal plane. Again, it is no small adventure to enter spiritual planes by oneself alone. This path is strewn with thorns and is sharp as a razor's edge.

Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

MATTHEW 7:7

It is, therefore, all the more necessary that a seeker after Truth must first find an adept in Truth, fully conversant with the spiritual path leading to Reality, and obtain his lessons from Him, and practice them under His direct supervision, guidance, and control. Without these prerequisites there cannot be a ghost of a chance for success. In Katha Upanishad, we come across a dictum:

Awake, arise, and stop not until the Goal is reached.

The knowledge of God can be had from a man of God. At every step an aspirant feels the need of the Master's strong and long arm, which alone can reach him, save him, and keep him on the path and lead him correctly. Maulana Rumi says:

First find a Pir (adept in the line) for without a Pir the way is beset with dangers, difficulties, and tribulations.

Whoever attempts to walk on this path by himself is sure to be led astray by Satan and thrown down the precipice.

Without the overpowering influence of a God-man you are bound to become bewildered by the howling cries of ghouls.

Many a wise and intelligent person attempted this path alone but by the wiles of the negative powers came to a sad end. Many a time the ghouls imitate the sounds of the Master, and these may drag thee to perdition.

It is through the loving grace of the Master that a spirit can get out of the prison-house of the body. From here the Luminous Form of the Master directly takes charge of the spirit, and protects her at every step with His loving grace.

The intricate and bewildering turns and twists of the path are easily passed through with the help of the Satguru.

The subtle and causal planes are a vast wilderness for the soul, and it is unsafe for her to traverse them by herself. Maulana Rumi tells us in this context:

> *Take a fellow traveler with thee and travel not alone on this path. Do not venture in this wilderness by thyself alone.*

Hafiz Sahib also gives the same advice:

> *Do not attempt these stages alone. In the bewildering darkness, you are sure to lose your way.*

CHAPTER EIGHT

Without a Guru All is Darkness

WITHOUT A Guru we are in utter darkness. The Reality remains a mere miasma and a mirage. It is an unwritten law and unspoken language quite unintelligible except when a Master Soul by his personal attention makes it significant. The glamor of the world is so great and overbearing that passing phantoms appear stable and substantial, the untrue puts on the mantle of Truth, and we cannot possibly tear aside the magic veil and escape from the false charm in which we are enveloped. It is the Master's Grace that can pull a spirit out of the physical sheath right above the plane of senses, enabling her to move unfettered to higher spiritual visions and attain her native Godhead.

> *Without a Master, it is sheer darkness, and one sinks into bottomless depths.*

An embodied spirit cannot have bliss unless it obtains experience of itself through the grace of a living Master. He initiates her into esoteric knowledge, which has to be practiced in the laboratory of the human mind:

> *Without a Master there is blinding darkness, and one simply cannot know. Without a Master, spirit does not become Spirit, and there can be no salvation for her.*

Verily, verily, I say unto you that you must have a Master.
O Mind! ye must turn to some Master Soul.
Accept as Master an Adept in the Sound Principle and He shall wash thee clean of all impurities.
The Master both by His attention and His instruction imparts the Knowledge of Truth.
He who has never seen a Master Soul nor accepted one, simply wastes his life in this world.

A jiva is always in stark darkness. If he closes his eyes, there is darkness within. Again, he is enveloped in total ignorance. He who can dispel this darkness of jivas is called a Guru. The term *Guru* consists of two words: *Gu* meaning darkness and *Ru* meaning Light. Hence *Guru* means one who can lead us from darkness to Light, from untruth to Truth, and from death to Immortality. The illustrious poet, Kalidas, speaks of the Guru:

He converts darkness into Light and makes the invisible God visible.

As a jiva is clothed in ignorance, all his actions too are born of ignorance and thus keep him in bondage.

The Saints declare that without a Master Soul to guide us, all charitable deeds and meritorious acts, like study of the scriptures, keeping of fasts and vigils, performance of pilgrimages, observance of social customs and rituals and scrupulous adherence to strict religious injunctions as of old, do not help in the liberation of a

soul. Kabir Sahib, therefore, in very strong terms warns us against such acts:

The telling of beads and acts of charity, without a Master Soul to guide, go in vain.

None of these bears any fruit. Bullah Shah tells us:

O Bullah! Without a Master all thy devotion would be barren.

Unless the inner eye is opened and contact is established with the Power within, nothing can be of any avail. We have of necessity to seek a Master who is competent to wean us from all outer pursuits, pull the spirit out of the plane of the senses, and lead her step by step from one plane to another until she is led back to her pre-natal Home: *Sach Khand* or *Muqam-i-Haq*. He dispels all doubts born of darkness, and gives us Heaven's Light as a guide, unfailing and unfaltering.

With the Guru, the darkness is dispelled; Guru is there wherever one may turn.

With no vision in our eyes, the light of hundreds of moons and thousands of suns can do us no good. Such a radiant effulgence would surely fail to end the darkness of the eyes. In exactly the same way, when there is no vision in the inner eye, we cannot see the wonderful brilliance of the soul, and we remain steeped in pitch darkness.

Hundreds of moons and thousands of suns together may rise;
Even with such radiance, there is not a speck of Light.

CHAPTER NINE

Historical Evidence

WE HAVE the testimony of history to show that one cannot have access to spiritual regions by one's own self. In the Shastras it is mentioned that Narad was refused admittance into Vishnupuri—The Land of Vishnu—when he by himself attempted to enter into that kingdom, because he had not been initiated by any Guru.

Again, Sukh Dev Swami, the son of Ved Vyas, with all his spiritual knowledge and learning, right from his conception in his mother's womb, could not enter the kingdom of Vishnu until he accepted Raj Rishi Janak as his spiritual mentor.

Nowhere do we come across any instance in which an uninitiated jiva by himself may have been allowed to enjoy this privilege.

All born Saints, though very few, come into the world with esoteric knowledge right from their birth but have for form's sake to adopt a Master.

Kabir Sahib, for instance, had to accept Shri Ramananda as His Master. In spite of their completed spiritual background, they had to associate with Saints, as one would do in a refresher course.

Guru Amar Das tells us that it is God's Law that one cannot even think of Him without being reminded of Him by some Master of Truth.

It is ordained by God Himself that one thinks of Him only when he meets a Master of Truth (Godman).

Again:

No man can come to me except the Father which has sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

JOHN 6:44

The generality of mankind simply cannot do without a Master Soul. Even Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, the very incarnations of Vishnu, had to bow down before Maharishi Vashisht and Ingris Rishi, respectively.

When such high-souled personages with sway extending as far as the causal region had to accept a Spiritual Guide, we ordinary human beings cannot dispense with this absolutely basic necessity.

Guru Nanak emphatically declares that the importance of *Guru* can be known from Brahma, Narad, and Ved Vyas:

O Brother! without a Guru, you cannot have absolute Truth (as opposed to relative knowledge through perception by the senses). You may verify this by reference to Brahma, Narad, and Vishnu.

Tulsi Sahib says:

Who is greater than Rama and Krishna? They too, had to accept a Master. Lord of the three regions (physical, astral, and causal), They too, had to bow before a Master.

Everyone who has made any mark in spirituality has had the backing of some Master Soul. Raj Rishi Janak got a practical demonstration in spirituality form Maharishi Ashtavakra. Gorakh Nath received His initiation from Machinder Nath. Arjuna, the warrior prince of the Pandavas, learned His lessons in spirituality from Lord Krishna. Swami Vivekananda sat at the feet of Paramhans Ramakrishna, the Saint of Dakhshineshwar.

Among the Sikhs, Guru Nanak molded Lehna and made Angad out of Him (his *ang* or limb), and the latter, in turn, raised Amar Das to the status of a Guru, and so on.

Maulana Rumi tells us that He got his spiritual impetus from Shamas-i-Tabrez:

A maulvi (school teacher) could not become maulana (leader in theology),
If it were not for the grace of Shamas-i-Tabrez.

Again:

O Saqi (Master)! come and look with favor upon the Malauna;
From housetops He cries: He is the slave of Shamas-i-Tabrez.

Many a Mahatma has in his discourses paid homage to his divine preceptor, and though some have not made any such mention, there can be no denying the fact that Light comes from Light, and Life from Life, and that mind and matter-ridden jivas cannot awaken and arise in cosmic awareness unless pulled up by some Master Soul.

CHAPTER TEN

Before and After Guru Nanak

THERE IS always food for the hungry and water for the thirsty. A babe that was born five hundred years ago was provided by Dame Nature with milk from the mother's breast; and so was the case with one who came into the world a thousand years back. Those who are born in the present age are also being provided with similar means of sustenance.

The law of supply and demand is an immutable one in Nature. In exactly the same way this law works inexorably in spiritual matters also.

For the aspirants before the time of Guru Nanak or in this age or hereafter, Nature cannot but provide the means of satisfying their aspirations.

To delimit a particular period of one or two centuries as the period of Gurus and to say that there were no Master Souls before or after that particular time, is against the fundamental law of supply and demand, and hence incorrect.

The teachings of the Masters are for all times and not for any particular period. They utter eternal truths which hold good for eternity, and are the common heritage of mankind in general. Their seed-dictum, for instance, is that God is One and is the Gift of a Godman. It is an

axiomatic truth, self-evident, and hardly needs any comment.

In *Anurag Sagar,* Kabir Sahib tells us that He came into the world in all the four yugas or cycles of time.

Bhagat Bani was in existence long before *Gurbani.* From *Guru Granth Sahib* and the verses of Bhai Gurdas, we learn that from age to age people benefited from Shabd or *Bani.*

> *Krishna and Balbhadra both bowed before a Guru.*
> *Namdev the calico printer and Kabir the weaver learned the esoteric science from a Guru.*
> *Bani has been in existence in all the four cycles of time and carries the message of Truth.*
> *Shabd is true, and Bani is true. Godmen have from age to age explained this.*

In the biography of Guru Nanak by Bhai Bala, Guru Nanak is said to have stated that in this *Kali Yuga* (Iron Age) many a Saint would come to lead people Godward.

> *Seventy Bhagats and fourteen Saints would come during this period.*
> *The Saints would carry shiploads of people Homeward. Those who would not believe would flounder, and those who are slaves of their lower selves would not be accepted.*

From the above it is clear that both Guru and *Gurbani* have always existed side by side. It is the Guru who has ever been the means of helping the seekers after Truth.

O God! Thy Saints have at all times been in the world.

O God! throughout the ages the line of Gurus has been in existence. The succession of Satgurus continues throughout and They have ever preached the lesson of Naam.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Scriptures and Their Value

GURU IS A highly spiritual being with a sway extending as far as Sach Khand. He has a firsthand knowledge of And, Brahmand and Sach Khand: the three grand divisions from physical to purely spiritual realms.

Free from the clutches of body and mind, he is charged with pure spirituality. Unless a jiva comes into contact with such a being, his latent spiritual aspirations are not stirred up. The Guru is really a lighted candle that lights many blown-out candles. He can be transmitting His own life impulse, enliven others. Some persons feel that by the study of scriptures alone they can have spiritual light and need no Master for this purpose. We may pause here and consider the value and worth of the sacred books or holy scriptures.

These are, after all, nothing but the records of the personal spiritual experiments and experiences of ancient sages, seers, prophets, and men of piety. It is good to read them with loving devotion. We should have respect for them, for they constitute a great treasure-house of spirituality which our forefathers have left for our benefit.

The sacred books and biographies of the high-souled personages create a spiritual longing and inspire us with

hope and courage. We may to a certain extent become acquainted with the broad principles of spirituality, but cannot learn their right import nor get the life impulse, both of which come from a living Master alone.

Books are, after all, material things and matter cannot impart Life.

Life comes from Life as Light comes from Light. It is only an Awakened Soul that can rouse us from our deep slumber. We may read scriptures for ages upon ages and perform countless sacrificial deeds, but cannot have spiritual awakening and spiritual insight.

Spirituality can neither be bought nor taught, but may be caught like an infectious disease from One who may Himself be spiritually infected, nay rather, obsessed.

The teachings of the Saints have not only to be learned but have also to be revealed. Besides knowledge of the theory of the Path, it has to be seen, experienced and verified. It is at once a science and an art, into the mysteries of which only an Adept can safely lead, guide, and take us through.

> *God can best be served through devotion to a Godman, for it is by his grace that we can reach God.*

Again, even the scriptures and the past Masters emphatically exhort us to find a living Master.

> *Drink the washings of the Sadh's feet*
> *Make a holocaust of theyself for His sake.*
> *Wash in the dust of His feet and be a sacrifice to Him.*

Be ye a slave to the Saints—and this is all that ye need to know.

Bhai Gurdas also tells us:

In the Guru lie hidden all the Vedas and the sacred scriptures. A contact with Him is enough to help one to safely cross over the ocean of life. We cannot know Truth without the Master of Truth. God Himself has to come down for this very purpose.

There are persons who studiously and scrupulously study the scriptures all their lives. They know a great deal by rote and can deliver learned discourses and give high-flown talks on spiritual matters, but unfortunately are altogether devoid of spiritual knowledge and spiritual experience. Their life and conduct is as blank as that of any other. They have not learned at the root nor drunk the Water of Life at the fountainhead of life: the living Master. In *Sri Asa Ki War,* we have:

One may stuff his head with so much learning and accumulate a heavy load of knowledge. He may raise and gather a regular harvest of learning. All his life he may go on studying from year to year, month to month, from moment to moment. O Nanak! One thing you may know for certain: he will become a bloated ass.

O Nanak! One may study sacred lore by weight and be engaged ceaselessly in this

task. What after all is the value of learning when Naam lies far beyond all holy books?

Books, after all, contain a description of God's Knowledge, but cannot actually deliver the goods.

Know ye for certain that the essence of all knowledge and wisdom lies in Dhuni (Sound Principle) and as such it is indescribable.

This essence then is within us, but we cannot have It unless we know how to tap inside, as Emerson puts it.

Dr. J. D. Rhine, the parapsychologist and researcher, tells us in his book *Mind and the New World* that there is something in man that transcends all matter. If spiritual knowledge could be had from books, then all the learned people would by now be saints.

But in actual experience we see that in spite of all their book learning they continue to be as material as the very libraries that house these books.

Laden with the dead weight of book knowledge, they may be likened to an ass staggering under the deadweight of sandalwood and experiencing not the sweet scent emanating therefrom.

Like a ladle in the pudding, they are ignorant of the taste of the pudding. In this age of learning, when the world is literally flooded with books, there is, unfortunately, no flood of spirituality and not even a sprinkling of spiritually-minded people.

It is only the advent of a Master of Truth that brings spirituality into the limelight and many there are who become dyed in spiritual colors. A conscious spirit can be

activated and quickened into life by someone who is more conscious. Neither books nor intellectual knowledge can do this thing. No person, no matter how intellectual, can infuse Life in another unless he himself has Life.

To talk of spirituality is much easier than to live spiritually. Such persons only dabble in spirituality and just make a show of it, and cannot do any real good.

Maulana Rumi says:

Come under the overall influence of some Saint;
Thou canst not find the path from a mere imitator.

In the Gospel we find the words of Christ:

Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

MATTHEW 7:15

An association with a Saint is bound to create in a jiva a longing for spirituality. This, in fact, is the touchstone for the worldly-wise. Such a being is worthy of respect and adoration with all our hearts and souls. Whoever comes in contact with Him is magnetized and is charged with spirituality and taken along to spiritual realms.

My body, mind, and wealth all belong to the Master;
His Grace has provided the Holy Grail and made me whole;
The world holds no greater benefactor than He,

He who contacts a Sadh is ferried across safely.

The ideal of the Master is spiritual. He is not limited to His physical Body as we are. He is Word personified.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

The physical body is just like a raiment which has to be cast off both by the disciple and the Master, the moment this spiritual journey begins; as it is the untrammeled spirit that has to tread the spiritual path. But so long as He works on the physical plane as a teacher to the stray brethren, blessed indeed is His form full of Godly Grace, shedding Godly Light around Him and charging all and sundry with powerful rays of spirituality. Man is the teacher of man and ideal man has ever been the ideal of man.

Those who regard it as idolatry do not know the secret of the Master's greatness. This "man worship," as they call it, is much better than "book worship" or "idol worship," because it is a worship of Higher Consciousness by lower consciousness. Life can come from Life, not from inert matter. Hazrat Khusro, a great Sufi poet, in his well-known couplet, tells us:

People allege that Khusro has become an idol worshiper,
Verily do I admit it, for the world has nothing to do with me.

Again, another Persian poet from his sick bed said:

O ignorant physician! take thy leave, for thou

knowest not that for the love-sick there is no other remedy except the sight of his Beloved.

Similarly, Guru Nanak in His childhood when afflicted with the pangs of love asked the physician who came to attend Him to quit, as he could not find out the illness of His heart.

There is nothing in common between a worldly-wise man and a devotee. One who has never known devotion cannot know the worth of a Master, who is a polarized God, shedding kindly Light in the world.

Truly speaking, the term *Guru* is not an appellation of any person. It signifies and stands for a dynamic power that works in and through a particular human form and is the ideal for us all.

This is the power that helps in spiritual advancement. Like a floodlight He floods the world with His spiritual Light, and one cannot see anything besides Light. The aspirants for spirituality gather around Him like moths and make a holocaust of themselves in His august and holy presence.

Kabir Sahib says:

The ignorant regard the Master as a human being and are caught in the whirlwind of the world and sink down. Their mind and body are of no consequence and they cannot gain anything. They cannot develop any devotion in themselves, hence cannot escape from bondage. Such jivas make a headlong dash for hell-fire, and ceaselessly move with the giant wheel of creation.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Guru is Superman or Godman

AS A MAN, Guru is an ideal man: in Him shines the very Sun of Spirituality. He is the fountainhead of Life. He is an epitome of the entire creation, visible and invisible, right from Sat Lok down to the physical plane. No one can know Him fully, even as it is impossible to swim across an ocean. For a dip in the water one does not go into mid-ocean, but is content with the water at the beach or the bathing ghat. Through the Perfect Man one can enjoy the Love, Light and Life of God.

If we ask of His greatness, of His native place, how He has come down, and what His mission is in life, all that can be said is that He has come directly from the Kingdom of God or Sat Lok, and having crossed the various intermediary planes *(Tap Lok, Jan Lok, Swar Lok, Bhanwar Lok,* etc.) has reached the physical world or *Bhu Lok* just to manifest the Godhead that is His to the world-weary.

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

> *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*
>
> LUKE 19:10

Murshid-i-Kamil (Perfect Master) is a veritable abode of God's attributes in fullness and in abundance. The kindly Light of heaven shines in Him and He diffuses it among mankind. The Love of God is surging in Him like heaving sea-waters.

> *The moving waters at their priest-like task of pure ablution, round earth's human shores.*
>
> KEATS

And, above all, He is the Life of Life, and His greatest mission is to impart the Life Impulse to the stark cold jivas all immersed in worldly pursuits, dead to higher instincts. God may well be perceived in Godman. It is said that God made man after His own image and asked the angels to bow before him. Maulana Rumi says:

> *He has placed the veritable sun in man.*

When a person rises in cosmic awareness, he finds that the Master is the hub of the entire universe. He is Truth personified, possessing the very essence of God and fit to be worshiped by all.

He is the leader and guide of mankind; the greatest, the highest and the perfect One among them. He is the genuine abode of all that is good and noble. He is the prototype of God, working as His viceroy and administering His laws on all planes (physical and spiritual). He is gifted with forensic acuteness, discriminative acumen and sound judgement. He may be unlettered, but still He is the most learned. Even as a man, He is the holiest of the holy, most pious and most loving; with love that

far transcends societies, countries, and nations. His self is co-eval with mankind. He is the citizen of the world, and His appeal is one of universal interest. He is, in short, the deputy of God, come into the world to share His Love, Light, and Life with erring humanity.

In this world, He lives just like any other individual. Although in the world, He is not of the world. He loves all people much more than parents love their children. He knows but looks beyond our shortcomings and smilingly helps us to overcome them. Full of compassion, Christ-like, with sore and bruised feet, the Son of Man ceaselessly goes about with insatiable hunger in His soul, passionately seeking to recover and retrieve that which is lost: lost man, his brother, lost soul.

He may look like a man, but in reality He is more than a man, more than a Superman, indeed. He is perfect in every respect: physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and as a manifestation of God. With all His greatness, He works as the lowliest of the low and humblest of the humble. He combines in Himself power and poverty, intellect and love, greatness and humility.

Master of Truth as He is, He far excels even a Superman. His sway extends to purely spiritual regions, which lie beyond human limitations of time, space, and causation. He can at will leave the physical body, tread the sun and moon, traverse subtle and causal planes, and transcend Par Brahm and beyond.

Science with its material accomplishments is groping in the dark. All scientific research is still in the material world where the scientists are relentlessly working with

all the mental and moral force at their command. They have no idea of the various planes to which the Master of Truth has access at His free will and sweet pleasure.

Those who accept the Master's teachings and work under His direction can see for themselves. All the Saints are at one in Their conclusion:

The Kingdom of God lies within.

Christ tells us:

> *The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.*
>
> LUKE 17:20-21

Again, in *Gurbani,* we have:

> *Everything is within you and nothing is outside you. Quest without is fruitless, when the crest jewel, O brethren, is lodged within you.*
> *He who searches without is yet in the wilderness.*

The human body is the Temple of God. It is the real church, the synagogue, and the mosque made by God, and what a pity we try to seek Him in man-made houses. One who knows how to cut deep in the cavern of the mind and experiment in the laboratory of the soul can successfully see the wonder of sublime sights and hear the celestial strains of the harmony divine.

In the body lies everything: Khand, Mandal

and Patal (inner planes, high and low, including the nether world). In it is lodged the crest jewel of spirituality, and a devotee can have this in abundance. The entire macrocosm is in the microcosm. In this body one can find Naam (Word) if one were to follow the instructions of the Master.

Sannai, the great philosopher, tells us:

In the kingdom of the human body there are innumerable firmaments and powers that work in order. The spirit has to traverse many a high and low region, mountain and river valley. There are many plains, oceans, wildernesses and bewildering heights of which one can hardly conceive. In this mighty maze the physical world is just like a tiny speck on a big ocean.

The human body, being the Temple of God, is just a model of the grand creation and whoever delves into it is able to know the secret of the creation.

Brahmand and Pind have been fashioned alike. The investigations of the one automatically reveal the mystery of the other, like an open book.

Great indeed is man, gifted as he is with untold possibilities. The very macrocosm is lodged in the microcosm of the body. We, however, look to outer raiment and are concerned with it constantly, little knowing what is be-

hind the folds of this garment. We nourish and pamper the body but allow the roots to run dry. The roots of the entire creation originate in the subtle region, which we can reach by a process of inversion.

> *Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*
>
> MARK 10:15

But, unfortunately, we never have a peep within, because we are averse to becoming as a little child. Emerson, a great philosopher, also exhorts us to *tap inside.* Bergson advises us to take a *mortal leap within* to land at the source of all knowledge.

The lessons of the process of inversion, tapping inside, the mortal leap within, or becoming as a little child, as Jesus puts it, are given in detail by the Master of Truth, both by word of mouth and by instructions on the various planes as the spirit travels onward under His personal guidance and care.

Saints are scientists of the spiritual world and Masters of *Para Vidya*—Knowledge of the Beyond; i.e., knowledge of that which lies beyond reason and intellect and can be learned or known through the sense of perception.

It is a subject of extra-sensory perception (ESP) as it is called by the modern psychic science researchers and parapsychologists, who, as Dr. J. D. Rhine tells us in his book *Mind and the New World,* have discovered through their investigations that there is something operative in the human being which transcends the laws of matter.

The Master of Truth is fully conversant with that *something,* and is competent to grant the full extra-sensory perception, as an eye-surgeon can restore sight to the physical eyes. The Master, like Buddha, tells us that physical life is all misery, but that beyond it there are countless subtle planes where one experiences nothing but bliss and light. Every day, He goes to these planes and tells us of His experiences. Those who follow His instructions and experiment in the laboratory of the mind under His guidance, see subtle worlds just as we see the physical, and the results are as sure, certain and definite as two and two make four.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Master and the Homegoing of Jivas

MASTER comes from his spiritual abode to call the jivas back home.

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

Our spirit is exactly of the same essence as God's. Having been separated from that ocean of bliss it has become imprisoned in the prison-house of body and mind. Saints also come down from Their spiritual abode to take back home such spirits as are prepared for the return journey.

It is, in fact, God Himself who comes in the garb of man to lead the jivas out of the tentacles of the Negative Powers, after they have served the period of probation. This is the fulfillment of the grand covenant or the great law—Man is to be the teacher of man—teaching the true redemption, and home-going with rejoicing.

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

> *He who sent thee into the world calls thee back. Return ye to thy native home in Sahaj (beyond the three-fold regions, physical, mental, and causal).*

One with God, they come into this world under His behest as His plenipotentiaries to administer His law concerned with home-going. This is Their noble mission, and gracefully They fulfill His purpose. Shamas-i-Tabrez tells us about himself:

> *Little can you imagine what type of birds we are, and what we keep warbling all the time. We may look to be a beggar, but our actions are more than kingly. We may appear to be poor, but we are richer than the richest mine. When we are king of kings we care not for the brief stay in this prison-house of the world. We are just a pilgrim here, and cannot remain for long. We hold a covenant with the Lord and stand true to our troth. So long as we are in physical raiment we do not get annoyed with anybody nor do we vex another. Like a veritable paradise we are ever filled with kindly light and heavenly grace. Happily do we live with a cheery heart and a smile on our lips.*

Guru Gobind Singh likewise tells us of himself:

> *Casting off the duality, I had become one with the Lord. Never did I like to come down again into the world, but it was at His bidding that I had to yield, and I came to fulfill His purpose.*

Kabir Sahib also says:

> *Kabir comes from the celestial abode of the*

Lord and holds a direct commission (instrument of instruction) from Him.

Again, in the Gospel, we have:

I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

JOHN 8:28

In *Gurbani,* we also come across similar references:

O Lalo! I speak nothing from myself. I simply utter what the Beloved puts into my mouth.

Poor Nanak opens his mouth only when he is bidden to do so.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Master and His Mission

MASTER SOULS come into the world out of sheer compassion for suffering humanity.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

MATTHEW 11:28

They have of necessity to put on the physical raiment, full of impurity as it is, because They have to work on the physical plane among human beings.

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

JOHN DONNE

The way in which They come into and go out of the world is, however, quite different from ours. They come and go of Their own free will; while we do so under the irresistible force of karmic pressure, just as a prisoner would enter a prison under a sentence of penal servitude. They come for the benefit of mankind—to grant the Life Impulse to such embodied souls as yearn for Life. Disembodied and eternally free, They come as Saviours of souls.

They that are whole have no need of the physi-

> *cian, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*
>
> MARK 2:17

> *Birth and death affect them not, for They come as Saviours for the sinners. By transmitting Their own life energy, They transform the disciples into Saints.*

A Master Soul is the greatest benefactor on earth. His work is of the highest order. He comes to liberate the souls from the vast prison-house of mind and matter, so that He may take the exiles back to their glorious home and restore them to their rich heritage. A kindly soul may direct the prison warden to provide delicious food for the prisoners under his charge. Another may grant the boon of delicacies to them. A third may order for them good clothing and lodging and so on. Each of them no doubt may do something to ameliorate their lot for the time being.

But if someone were to throw open the prison gate and ask them to escape the squalor and misery of the jail, his work would naturally be counted as one far excelling the works of others.

This is exactly the nature of the work of a Master Soul. He reveals to us the Lost Kingdom, and restores us to Paradise from which Adam and, through him, his progeny were driven out for the original disobedience to God's Commandment.

Man had an ignoble fall from the Garden of Eden, and none could restore him to the good grace of the

Father and bring about reconciliation except the Son of Man. He takes upon himself the vicarious responsibility for the sins of man, purifies him of all ignominy and by a transfusion of His own Life Impulse makes him arise into cosmic awareness and gain everlasting life.

> *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.*
>
> JOHN 3:36

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Master and His Work

MASTER is like a wish-yielding tree. He always grants the wishes, whatever they are, of the seekers. The rich and the poor, the high and the low: everyone comes to Him for something. His greatest pleasure, however, lies in liberating spirits from the clutches of body and mind. Irrespective of His denominational character, He attends to the spiritual needs of all.

He neither creates new "isms" nor does He denounce the "isms" in existence. He comes not to break the law, but to fulfill the law. All "isms" (spiritual), in fact, receive strength and solidarity from Him.

In His inimitable loving way, He takes everyone from the line of least resistance. He does not interfere with the creeds and beliefs of a person, whatever these are, nor does He meddle with the social order of things. He simply talks of the spirit, its intrinsic nature, its seat in the body, its various operative processes, its latent capabilities, and how it can be developed in its relation with body, mind, and with God, and how it can be liberated, made self-poised and turned Godward.

His appeal is directly to spirit, and His words sink deep into the very depths of the soul. He deals with ready cash at the counter and does not make people live

in hope till the end of their lives or thereafter. He teaches:

> *Believe not the words of a Master Soul unless you see the things He tells about with your own eyes.*

It is just for the sake of experiment that we have in the first instance to accept the words of a Master. But when we find the truth of what He says, by actual experimentation, then the hypothesis is turned into conviction.

When a person once sees the light of the sun, he cannot deny the existence of the sun even though the bats of the world may unite in denying the solar phenomenon.

Unless the inner vision is approached, the Truth of the Reality does not dawn, and the jivas or embodied spirits remain groping in utter darkness and ignorance of the highest and the greatest magnitude.

Whenever a Master of Truth comes into the world, the spiritually hungry and thirsty gather around Him and quench their hunger and thirst by the manna and the Elixir of Life that He freely gives to the aspirants.

Gradually their love develops into a steady devotion that befits them more and more for the saving grace of the Master, and helps a jiva to travel quickly home.