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Chastity and Forgiveness

THE SUPREME IDEAL of human life is the realization of God. Religions were made to perpetuate the teachings of great souls who had attained enlightenment. They have left an account of their personal experiences for the guidance of posterity. They have all said that God is omnipresent. Whatever we see around us is undoubtedly His manifestation, but the question is how to see Him?

We find in the Jap Ji *The Lord's Word is all pervading. There is no place where His Word does not exist.* The Gurbani tells us: *We have seen the glimpse of God.*

One can experience God only by rising to His level of superconsciousness. Although the atmosphere is full of microbes, nothing is visible to the naked eye. Does that mean that there is nothing in the air? We can see thousands of tiny objects through a microscope. Now, there are two possibilities. Either whatever is present in the air is made to magnify so as to correspond to the visual level of our eyes, or our vision should become so subtle as to see these tiny germs clearly. So, it is impossible for us to see the highly subtle and indescribable Lord with our physical eyes. When we are able to develop superconsciousness and subtlety at His level, we can have some experience of Him. The question is one of developing the Third Eye. Who can open the inner eye? Only the Master's grace

can do it. In the Gurbani we find, *Through the grace of a Godman, you will see the temple of the Lord within.*

The human body is the temple of God. In order to attain super-consciousness, one has to withdraw from all the physical attachments. So long as we remain identified with external objects, we cannot assume a subtle form. Tulsi Sahib says: *The Lord dwells within us, but we remain ignorant. Cursed is such a life.* Even after getting human life, if He is not manifest within, it is a great curse because we can accomplish this task only in human life. *O Tulsi, the whole world is suffering from cataract.*

Doctors do not give vision to cataract patients. They only remove the thin membrane covering the pupil of the eye. Similarly, the Lord is within us. He is our controlling power. The entire universe is His manifestation. He can be realized within, but not before our subtle eye is able to pierce through the darkness within.

Tulsi Sahib and Shams-i-Tabrez both have said the same thing: See the Lord with your own eyes and hear His Eternal Music with your own ears.

If we see through the darkness inside, we can experience the divine Light. Tulsi Sahib says that you will not be able to penetrate through the darkness without the help of a perfect Master. In this lies the greatness of a Master soul, who can dispel our darkness and give us the inner experience of divine Light. This is possible when our attention is withdrawn from outside and we rise above body-consciousness. This is not easy. Despite years of meditation, past sages and seers could not always get this experience (of divine Light). They used to practice Kumbhak (Hatha Yogic exercise) and after passing through the six ganglionic centers, got a little inner experience in the center of the two eyebrows. This practice takes hundreds of years.

Swami Ji has clearly stated: *Only the all powerful Master can pull the soul up, He alone can free us from the prison of oblivion.*

Who can rise above body consciousness? One who is unattached and is not engrossed in sensual pleasures can do it. Only such a person can easily tap inside. An ethical and chaste life is, therefore, very essential. Even if the Master by his own grace lifts someone, whose life is not pure, above body consciousness, the latter will not be able to withstand it. It is crystal clear that there are two main obstacles in the way: passionate desires and anger. To lead a chaste life is not enough. We have to overcome all desires. In anger the soul flows out. Self-indulgence and anger lead to various other vices. Unless these two enemies are disciplined first, others—greed, attachment and egotism—cannot be controlled. One who succeeds in conquering all these five enemies is free from suffering. The senses derive their power from the mind and the mind from the soul. If our attention is concentrated at the seat of the soul, the senses become powerless.

Saints show us the way back to God through Surat Shabd Yoga. Where is the seat of the soul in the body? At the time of death, the soul withdraws behind the two eyebrows after leaving the lower regions. Anyone who is able to withdraw his sensory currents at this point in his lifetime can open his inner eye. But, this can only be done through the grace of a perfect living Master. First, the Master helps us in withdrawing our attention from external worldly objects with which it is identified. In this body—the temple of God—dwell both we and our Controlling Power. The Master has great power to pull the soul above the plane of senses to the seat of the soul. He opens the inner eye. Thus, the spiritual aspirant has a first-hand experience and does not require any other evidence.

Until I see the Truth with my own eyes, I cannot be fully

convinced of what the Master says, the Gurbani tells us very clearly. Unless the senses are controlled, the mind is stilled and the intellect too is equipoised, the soul cannot realize itself. Gyan Yoga will not be of much help. We only draw inferences to acquire knowledge. But, the true knowledge has to be experienced. Only an adept who has had a first-hand experience can give you a taste of it. Similarly, only one in whom the divine Light is manifest can show you Light. Intellectuals and religious preachers cannot do this work. True inner experience can be given only by the grace of a truly competent Master. By infusing his own life-impulse, he puts us on the spiritual path and then unites us with the Power of God. One who has subdued the senses qualifies for the divine grace.

Cravings and anger can be controlled by cultivating chastity and forgiveness. If you go into details, you will find that these are our main hurdles. If you were to listen to someone silently, you will find that he talks of his passionate desires, petty jealousies, factions, enmities, recriminations, etc. He will overrate some and underrate others. These vices must be dispensed with. Prophet Mohammed has said: *If you can control two sense-organs, namely, the one between the two lips and the other between the two thighs, I shall stand surety for you in the Lord's court.* We simply read and hear these words but never go deeper into their meaning. If these two virtues were cultivated, it would be a great blessing. In the absence of these virtues, meditation is hampered. This is the main object of my laying stress on keeping a diary. The first column in the diary is for *ahimsa* (non-violence) and forgiveness. Even if someone harms you, forgive him. Do not injure anybody's feelings. One who practices ahimsa will not tell a lie, cheat others or have ill-gotten gains. Now let us see what saints have said on the subject.

Chastity and forgiveness are the two basic and most noble

virtues of all. If we acquire these virtues, we will be successful in our meditation. Christ says: *Suffer the little children to come unto me, . . . for of such is the Kingdom of God.* Children are endowed with these two qualities. They are totally indifferent to sex. They never mind if they are naked. If they go astray, we parents are to blame. If they fight with each other, they soon reconcile their differences. Let us become like little children and we will be successful in our meditation. A competent Master, by virtue of the God-Power working in him, turns away your attention from outer pursuits, pulls it above the plane of senses and opens the inner eye. He gives to the spiritual aspirant some capital of inner experience, which is His grace, but it is our responsibility to preserve it.

Ibrahim Adham, King of Bukhara, once went to Sant Kabir. He served Kabir day and night. Mother Loi, one of Kabir's disciples, one day praised Ibrahim for his selfless service to the Master and felt that Ibrahim had become a deserving devotee for the spiritual gift. Kabir remarked that Ibrahim had not yet attained maturity. To prove this, Kabir asked her to throw rubbish on Ibrahim's head from the top of the house and then listen to what he had to say. She did so. At this, Ibrahim said that he would have dealt with the mischief-monger properly had he been in Bukhara. When Kabir came to know of Ibrahim's reaction, he said that the latter had not got over his pride of kingship and egotism and so he was not mature enough for initiation. After some time, Kabir told Loi that Ibrahim had become ripe for the gift of spirituality. As she had not noticed any appreciable change in Ibrahim, she wanted to know the criterion for this verdict. This time, Kabir asked her to throw the night-soil on Ibrahim. She did so. To her surprise, Ibrahim said, "O God, I am even worse than this." Remember, one whose heart is full of compassion for others, who wishes well after having been hurt and prays

even for his enemies, is known as a *Mahatma,* a great soul.

Christ was asked as to what should be the code of conduct in life. On enquiring about the injunction of Moses in this regard, he was told: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." At this Christ remarked: "It was because your hearts were hardened that he gave you this injunction." When asked to express his own opinion, Christ said: *Love thy neighbor as thyself.* When further asked how enemies should be dealt with, he replied: *Love thine enemies.* Jealousy, malice, calumny, backbiting, falsehood and fraud can be overcome by love. Unless these vices are given up, there is no way out. Even good preachers and reformers are found wanting in chastity and forgiveness. They indulge in recrimination, falsehood, fraud, hypocrisy, etc. What is wanted is cultivation of forgiveness. If we develop childlike qualities, we can reach our Goal. Now let us listen to what Sant Kabir has to say about purity of life:

When chastity and forgiveness sprout in one's heart,
the invisible Lord becomes visible.
Without chastity one cannot reach Him;
empty words are of no avail.

Kabir says in very clear words that chastity and forgiveness are the two pre-requisites for God-realisation. Without purity of life, all sermons or learning are of no use. Chastity means purity of thoughts, words and deeds. Chastity is life and self-indulgence is death. Forgiveness is difficult to practice. Outwardly we pretend to be humble, but inwardly we do not hesitate to harm others.

I remember an incident in my life. Long ago, my wife was relieved of her purse at a railway station. The police caught the thief and the purse was recovered from him. I was asked to lodge a report at the police station. I told the police it was

unnecessary as the purse had been found. But on their insistence, I had to go to the police station, perhaps for the first time. I told the officer on duty that I was not interested in reporting the matter, but he would not agree and the report was ultimately lodged. Later, I had to go to the court as a witness. The police officer talked to me on this issue. He felt that justice must be done, but I contended that there were two aspects of the law, one justice and the other compassion or mercy. I emphasized that even after justice had been done, bitterness would remain. Whereas, through mercy he could be forgiven. Compassion leads to mercy which in turn leads to non-violence in thoughts, words and deeds. Anyway, when I appeared in the court, I requested the magistrate that if he could let the accused off on some ground, I would have no objection. The magistrate, after satisfying himself that there was no record of previous conviction against the accused, ordered his discharge with a warning. As a result, the accused and his relatives always remained grateful to me. What a tremendous effect forgiveness has! Justice could never produce this effect. Forgiveness is the greatest of all virtues. So is purity of thought. But alas, all our time is spent in tensions and petty squabbles. We find it difficult to pardon others. Remember, only a brave man can forgive others, not a weak person. Indirectly, we remain busy in condemning our opponents. Such persons can never realize God.

All learning and religious pursuits are of little significance unless the qualities of chastity and forgiveness are thoroughly understood and cultivated in life. Because of these two virtues in children, saints always have a great love for them. God does not dwell in the skies, but is within us. Unless proper background is developed, spiritual advancement is not possible. Kabir now explains in greater detail what chastity is:

One who is chaste is the greatest of all and is a storehouse of all virtues.

Chastity is the main source of all virtues. It is rare to come across a really chaste person. Nearness to such a pure soul produces a soothing effect and even his reflection causes awakening. It is not an exaggeration. By virtue of ethical life, the body of a celibate is charged with the divine grace, tranquility and fragrance. Chastity is thus a great blessing. *Chastity brings all the treasures of the three worlds* (physical, astral and causal).

You may ask as to what should married persons do. In olden days (in India) people used to observe continence for the first 25 years. Thereafter, having assimilated religious scriptures, they would settle down as householders for another 25 years. Having got one or two children, they would leave their homes to enter *Vanaprastha Ashram* for another period of 25 years, during which they would devote themselves to achieve the ultimate goal of life—realization of Self and God. After reaching the goal (in Vanaprastha Ashram), they would become *Sanyasis*—those who renounce the world completely and wander from place to place to preach religion.

The real significance of marriage is to have a life-partner who will stand by you under all circumstances—in pleasure and pain, in riches and poverty. Both should cooperate in striving to realize God. To go on producing children is not our aim. *If a woman has to give birth, she should bear a saint or a philanthropist or a great warrior. Otherwise, it is better if she remains barren and does not waste the divine Light.*

Our forefathers generally used to lead more disciplined lives, but now there is little restraint. I have to say this because of the deplorable condition in which we are. The world population is increasing at an alarming rate of ninety a minute.

We can well imagine the population problem after 20 or 30 years. So, it is all the more necessary for us to cultivate continence. St. Paul has said: *Husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church.* Swami Ram Tirath has also emphasized: *Unless husbands and wives love each other as brothers and sisters, there is no hope for India.* Those who are awakened say so. The solution thus lies in leading a life of self-restraint. Even if a person is able to find a perfect saint who can give the disciple a first-hand spiritual experience, progress on the spiritual path is impossible unless we practice chastity and forgiveness. We should therefore forget the past and start leading a clean life from now on.

> *There is no dearth of scholars, religious and disciplined people, but we seldom come across a really chaste person.*

Kabir says that there are countless learned men, those who meditate and achieve concentration and those who are benevolent and disciplined, but a celibate is rarely found. I have come into contact with the heads of almost all religions, but only a few lead a life of celibacy. A celibate can reach his real Goal without making much effort. One who practices both forgiveness and chastity has nothing to worry about and will realize God. Let me give my grandfather's example. He was a clean-hearted man. He would not nurse any grievance against anyone. He became a widower at the age of 25. He never married again although he lived for more than 100 years. A day before his death, he told some people that he would be leaving the world the next day and if they wanted to convey any message to their dear ones in Heaven, they might let him know. Just before his end, some of his relations asked him to utter the name of God, but he said that "God is

permeating throughout my body and I am going straight to Him." I am talking of chaste ones. Such people have an innate feeling about the presence of God.

The Gurbani pointedly tells us: *Those who have complete faith in God, they enjoy the quintessence of true knowledge.*

You may go on meditating all through your life, but unless you practice chastity and forgiveness, it will not bear any fruit. Anger causes excitement. Most of our ills are psychosomatic, being the result of emotional disturbances caused by hatred, animosity and worry. Saints always lay stress on the basic essentials of life, but alas, we do not pay heed to them.

Chastity is the ocean of happiness; none can fathom its depth.
Without the Word none can be called a Sadhu, a disciplined soul;
Without capital there cannot be a money-lender.

Kabir says that chastity is the ocean of happiness. It is so deep that none can measure its depth. But only the Word-personified saints can realize it. The Word will become manifest where there is a life of continence. Nanak says: *One who loses semen, loses everything.* A person who practices celibacy and forgiveness can realize God and can truly be called a Sadhu. These two virtues are of prime importance and wherever these exist, other virtues come in of their own accord. Such a person by constant contact with the inner sound current, the Shabd, becomes a storehouse of all virtues.

One who has found a Master, but has not become his mouthpiece, a *Gurumukh*, has not yet freed himself from lusts of the flesh. After having found a Master, one must develop receptivity towards him. Who is a Gurumukh? One who has no wish of his own and lives in the will of the Master. Such a person is automatically relieved of all sorts of passions. As

the Master is an embodiment of chastity, chastity radiates from him and penetrates into the disciple the moment he thinks of him. He is full of compasion and forgives all. Only a Gurumukh can escape from all kinds of indulgences since he abides in the Word of the Master. Christ told his disciples, *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* Hazur Sawan Singh Ji used to say: *We hesitate to commit an impious act in the presence of a child; don't we know that God within us is all-seeing?*

The Master is an embodiment of the Word and gives us a contact with it. By listening to the Eternal Music and seeing the divine Light, one gets inner peace.

Gurbani assures us: *Mind gets docile by communion with Naam.*

The Upanishads state that by attaining the Word, we attain all.

So long as man has animal passions, he cannot be a Gurumukh.
When the Satguru resides within, the disciple is free from lusts.

As you think, so you become. If your mind constantly dwells on a chaste person, you will unconsciously attract and imbibe chastity. Kabir says that one who becomes a Satguru incarnate will automatically rid himself of all desires. In the first place comes his sweet remembrance. The next is his manifestation within. One should, therefore, exercise great caution in adopting a Master. If he is really an adept in the science of soul you can achieve salvation. Otherwise, if you concentrate on the form of a so-called guru, you may at the most become like him.

You might have heard of Dadu Sahib? One day he was going bare-headed. Someone, knocking him on the head, in-

quired: "Where is Dadu's house?" He replied: "Go this way and you will find him inside the house." To his consternation, he found the same man (Dadu) sitting in the house. The visitor felt ashamed when he realized that he had insulted the saint. Dadu Sahib said it did not matter since even an earthenware pot of insignificant value is purchased after the buyer has made sure of its serviceability by knocking it all over.

A Master should be chosen after thoughtful consideration,
Just as water should be taken after filtration.

A perfect Master is a rarity. The world is full of so-called gurus, while there are only a few really competent Masters. Such Masters alone are described in the Vedas and other scriptures as sages, saints and great souls for they are Word-personified.

Christ says: *Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.*

The Gurbani further tells us: *He who can give you a first-hand experience of the divine Light and celestial Sound is a true Master. . . . Through association with a saint, the power of God becomes manifest within. . . . A saint bestows the essence of esoteric science.*

Anyone can lecture, sermonize or give a religious talk, but practical inner experience can be given only by an awakened soul.

Only an alert and wide awake person can practice chastity.
The thieves of sensual desires cannot rob such a person.

It is only an alert and conscious person who can cultivate chastity and can attain higher consciousness. By practicing

chastity one gradually rises into cosmic consciousness. When consciousness dawns within, one is not troubled by the sensual thieves—we are being robbed by five deadly passions. In the absence of chastity and forgiveness, a thick wall of darkness comes over the soul and we are not our own. Christ has described this state as "death of the soul." What is the death of the soul? It is the bedimming of the Light-consciousness in us. Attachment to material comforts lowers our consciousness. Consciousness increases with increasing awareness. Where does this awareness come from? It comes by cultivating compassion and chastity. See how important these virtues are? But we do not pay attention to them. We have already been blessed with His grace and also with the capital of holy Naam. Is it not our duty then to safeguard our capital? We should keep his commandments instead of doing mere lip-service to him.

One who is courteous to one's guests is a great soul; one who offers them a seat is a saint. One who lacks these courtesies is either a heretic or a pagan. Now, all this is about our external conduct. One who is endowed with the two virtues of chastity and compassion would welcome even an enemy courteously. A mahatma (great soul) has this virtue. He welcomes anyone who calls on him even in the dead of night. Such a person remains cheerful even in the face of death. To observe celibacy in youth is a great thing. People usually postpone it for the old age.

> *Those who do not meditate while young will not be able to do so in old age.*

As in old age physical disabilities appear one by one, we cannot engage in meditation. One should therefore make a start while young. Saints have said that one who practices celibacy

while young is a prophet. This is not child's play. We simply read these things and forget about them.

We do not forgive others. In the absence of forgiveness, anger, jealousy, hatred, back-biting, etc., emerge. Our hearts and minds are contaminated with all such thoughts. We talk of these things and do not hesitate to slander those with whom we are angry. My Master used to say, *All sensual appetites have some taste in them, but what taste comes from slandering others? If there is any, is it sweet, sour, saltish or insipid?* Still every family, society, and country is afflicted with this malady. A devotee, who is an embodiment of forgiveness, has nothing to fear. He will always greet others with love. If someone thinks ill of you, let him do that. In what way does it affect you? Instead, the former harms himself by being angry and jealous. If you retaliate, you will be afflicted likewise. One who considers that the Lord is omnipresent and is dedicated to Him, is not carried away by what others may speak of him. These are the shortcomings in our way to self-realization and God-realization.

Forgiveness extinguishes the fire of anger. Great souls go to the extent of welcoming those who find fault with them. Once a man went to Lord Buddha and started abusing him. When he was about to leave, Lord Buddha said: "Brother, listen to me: if the receiver refuses to accept the gift offered to him it remains with the giver. I refuse to accept the gift you have brought for me."

And Kabir says:

If one abuses and the other retaliates, there will be a shower of abuses.
But, with non-retaliation, the matter will end.
Where there is compassion, there is religion.
Where there is greed, there is sin.

Where there is anger, there is negation.
Where there is forgiveness, there is the Lord Himself.

Compassion leads to forgiveness and greed leads to sin. Greed and attachment means desire for name or fame. For the fulfillment of one's desires, one becomes jealous of others. One neither becomes good nor bad by others' opinions. Those who indulge in slandering others, are unpaid apprentices of the C.I.D. of God. God and the Master are both within you. One who is true to the Master has nothing to fear, for his heart is pure and purity of heart gives added strength. One cannot realize God unless the mind is equipoised. Anger, jealousy, malice and ill-will, even in thought, fan the flames of invisible fire all around. Kabir says that at a place like this you will find nothing but Negative Power, but where there is forgiveness, there is God Himself. Forgiveness washes clear all inner defilements and leads to peace of mind. Otherwise, anger would provoke anger, and accusations counter-accusations, vitiating the entire atmosphere.

All quarrels and strifes emanate from abuse.

Kabir says that bad language is the root cause of all quarrels. You know how the great Mahabharata War started. Just by sarcastic words. One single sarcastic remark by Draupadi led to the destruction of Indian culture and civilzation. Again in the Gurbani we find, *No power on earth can harm one who is protected by the Guru.*

If someone harbors in him thoughts of jealousy and hatred, they react doubly on him. This is the natural law. One noble thought gives rise to thousands of noble sentiments, and one evil thought to thousands of miseries. If you sow a single seed in the soil, the plant that sprouts will bear hundreds of similar seeds. Likewise, if you plant a mango seed, you will

get hundreds of mangoes from it. One thought may produce a soothing effect, while the other may excite you. Every action, even a thought, has its reaction.

The words of a vicious person are like so many arrows but saints alone can tolerate them.
If lightning falls into the sea, what damage would it do?

Kabir says that malicious words are like poisoned darts. But a forgiver is like an ocean which is not affected even by lightning. So forgiveness is a great blessing. Kabir says that a man becomes tough by bearing external hardships. He who has prepared his ground can listen to the Music of the Spheres all the time.

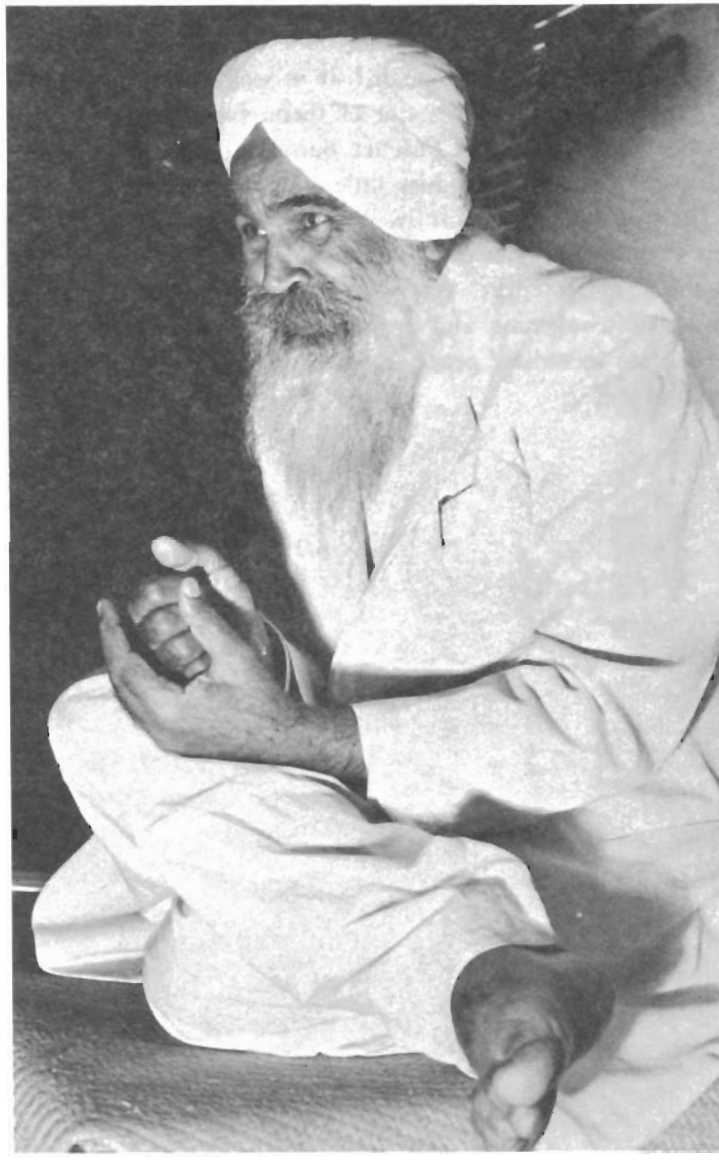
The earth can tolerate digging and the forest cutting.
Only a saint can bear harsh and malicious words.

You may dig the land or cut a forest and they do not resent it. Similarly, only a saint is endowed with forgiveness and chastity. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. You can reap only what you sow.

Actions, good or bad, bear their own fruits. We must understand these principles and implement them in life. First, a perfect Master, capable of imparting the experience of inner Light, is hard to find. Even if you find one, you cannot reach the Goal without purity of life and forgiveness. If you follow and act on what I have just said, you will be liberated from the bondage of matter and mind. These virtues will bring to you higher consciousness and you will develop faith in the existence of God. After all, what is the purpose of worship? It is to develop firm faith in the existence of God. By self-introspection, you can see what your condition is. Learned people, moralists and theologians generally preach to oth-

ers. What is their own plight? It is well said: "Wanted—reformers—not of others, but of themselves." We preach to others what we do not practice ourselves. The result is that all our exhortations produce little effect on others.

Be true to Him Who is dwelling within you. If you practice the two virtues—chastity and forgiveness—you will find that, without much effort, you will attain higher consciousness, complete awakening and perfect peace of mind. Thus, you will begin to radiate peace, harmony and tranquility to those around you.



Kirpal Singh during his first Tour in the United States in 1955.

10

Change Your Habits Now

SATSANG is purely meant to discuss and explain the subject of contacting the Naam Power—it is not a place where the social and political matters are taken up. It is a place of righteousness, and we should regard and respect it as such. When we visit any religious temple, do we not enter with respectful humility? Where our attitude is not so, we surely expect to gain little from our attendance there. To talk of worldly affairs in sacred places is considered to be a sacrilege.

So your purpose in coming to Satsang is to imbibe the love of God, to sit in His sweet remembrance, to unite with Him. All things past and future, all irrelevant matters can be dealt with in your own place of residence. Come, but come with the very best of intentions. Bring the remembrance of the Lord with you, and take it with you when you leave. Do not listen to others' conversation and do not talk to anyone unless it be about the Truth. You will thereby gain full benefit from Satsang—otherwise the years will pass by without any real advancement.

Swami Ji Maharaj tells us, *Many days of attendance at Satsang have passed; Now give up your old habits.* So much time has been spent at Satsang without gaining the benefit. Only by having full attention focused will you receive. If the words enter through one ear and leave from the other, nothing will be retained. Furthermore, if you live up to what you

hear, that will be a great achievement, otherwise your purpose in joining the Satsang will have failed. Swami Ji says, *O Man, let anybody attend the Satsang in the accurate way from today.* How to attend Satsang? When you leave home for Satsang forget all worldly matters and go in sweet remembrance of the Master, and so long as you attend the Satsang, you should not think of anything else except the Master and God. *If your body is in the Master's company, but your mind is elsewhere, Kabir says, how can you color an unbleached cloth?*

Even though you may not understand all that is said, yet if you sit with full attention you will profit by it. If your thoughts are somewhere else, not only will you lose, but other people will also be affected by the impure atmosphere you are creating, for thoughts are living and possess great power. Regard the Satsang as a place of purity; do not talk or think of anything but God, and whosoever attends will be blessed by the uplifting atmosphere. We do not go to Satsang to meet our friends or to socialize.

The Master unites us in a true relationship, which can never be broken. This relationship is with God Himself, who is manifested in the human form. It is such a relationship that can never be sundered, even after death, not to speak of during life. But we, with our poor understanding, assert ourselves with pride, ego, and low habits, desiring to be recognized. Consequently we succeed only in heaping more misery upon our heads. What is the use of attending Satsang for so long if you are not going to change the old unwanted habits? Dry land can become green again by giving it water, but of what use is land that is watered yet remains dead? Your attendance has become a mere routine—you cannot get salvation by rote —you will not get it, you will not get it.

Try to understand what the spiritual path means, and then

live up to it; and the more it seeps into your heart, the happier you will be. *Let the words of the Guru abide in your heart, and you abide in Him.* This is the only way, the only hope. If you do not obey him, what can be done? For so many years I have pleaded with you. That which you receive here, you will not find anywhere else—but with all that you receive, yet you continue in your old ways of enmity, avarice, jealousy, etc.—you do not keep your spiritual diaries—whose fault is it that you are not progressing? Stop being childish and grow up. Those who do not wish to listen and obey should not enter upon this venture of the spiritual path. I am not saying any new thing. We are not all Saints—we have come here to become that, and you will become that if you fully understand and then live up to the teachings.

Everyone makes mistakes. I remember, I went on leave from my office once, and on returning found that two clerks had been dismissed. When I took their case to the Controller for appeal, he began to question the merit of it, but I asked him, "Is there any person without faults? You will not find anyone who has not done something wrong, and the punishment for mistakes should not be dismissal, for not only the man will suffer, but his wife and children also." They were reinstated in service. If these teachings are no new thing, then try to fully understand them now, and take them into your lives. If we could learn to obey and keep the diary, we would become gods and goddesses. Do not discuss or wrangle intellectually over the subject, but think carefully—have you not come here to keep the company of the Truth? Then why keep the company of others? This disease has ever been in evidence, and will continue, but the Masters come to prescribe the cure by making us realize the Truth. In Swami Ji's shabd, he laments over the situation:

Many days of attendance at Satsang have passed;
Now give up your old habits.

O Man, it is the time now to discard your old disreputable habits and adopt new ones. Habits are formed by repeatedly doing the same things, so we should first unravel all bad actions: lies, hypocrisy, cheating, criticism of others, enmity, avarice, malice, backbiting, and various others. If you do not intend to change these ways, what is the use of attending Satsang? *Your steps are forward, but your mind is retrogressing.* Satsang is the means of making us into something beautiful, but not by merely repeating God's Name. Change your habits now into good ones, for habit turns into nature with time. Cast away all negative thoughts, and instil positive ones in their place. If a person does wrong, forgive him, and he in turn should forgive your misdeeds.

In the Koran it is written, *Even God has no thought for him who has no inclination to change.* How can we expect other people to show excellent examples? If we ourselves would change, the whole world would change with us. It is a message for all. One of the worst habits is that of criticizing others. All virtues exercized in righteous living are good, but that of *ahimsa parmo dharam* (non-violence of thought) is the highest. It can become a daily habit, for it lies inherent within us all, and although other thoughts are there, yet consciously or unconsciously it is working and will rise to the surface one day. That is why you are told frequently in Satsang that the past is past, forgive and forget, and do not make a foundation of bad thoughts or there will undoubtedly be reactions. You will be the loser, for again you will revolve on the cycle of births and deaths. So with love the Masters encourage their children to change their habits while there is

still time. With great compassion for humanity, Swami Ji is telling us:

> *For how long will you try to deceive your Guru?*
> *Now recognize what He is.*

Hiding the true facts, you think, "What does the Guru know? What *we* want to do is correct." You get hold of an idea and place it above all else, considering everyone else to be wrong —even if your Guru tells you something different. How long will you keep this up? Make no mistake, he watches our every action, for the Guru-power is residing within our very being. But we foolishly think that he is not present to see us, so we can do anything and he will not know. He entreats us to try and realize what a Guru is. The Guru is not the physical form —he is not the human pole but is the all-omnipotent power of God which has manifested therein. It is accepted that God is everywhere and sees everything. Give full attention to learn what the Guru is, and then come to *know* it. He has love for everyone—for his own, for all others; even for those who are against him. His wish is to do good to all, and even though a knife were put to his neck he would not think ill of the wrong-doers. He is different and expresses this wealth of love and forgiveness because of the Guru-power in him. So he says we should stop all this deceit—if one thinks of one's Guru as a Guru, then obey him. After all, he does not give bad advice.

Sometimes it is possible that two idiots can be bound together in love breaking the chains of the creeds that are binding them, whereas intellectual people would snap the silken threads of love—without hesitation. *Gurumukh loses, and lets the world win.* He who loses out of love and humility, in actual fact wins the day, for he has saved what he has stored; otherwise in the fire of anger his precious store will be consumed to ashes. If there is no anger in a person, not even

a wisp of smoke will be seen. Try to recognize your Guru, for Satsang is concerned with the Guru, not with a mere human being. When you go to Satsang, go in His remembrance for He is God in human form; be present there in His remembrance, and when you leave take that remembrance with you.

We should exploit those qualities which will assist us to join back to God, and discard all traits which are liable to lead you away from Him. It is not difficult to realize the Lord, but it is most difficult to become a man—a true human being. One hundred times and more we bow our heads and say "yes, yes, I will do it" but in action we do just as we please. This indicates that as yet we do not truly understand the spiritual path. If you have not as yet changed your old habits, then do so at once. Make a start *now*. To have bad thoughts for others, to take sides in enmity, like a lawyer criticizing the lives of your fellow-beings—would you not expect the fire to flare up within you? The Guru sees all events with a different eye, for every man sees from his own level. If you have accepted someone as being superior to you, then obey him.

A teacher who has not reached the higher level can easily be the cause of further downfall. Those from higher levels always strive to reunite all humanity. You came to the Satsang to realize the Truth, to be free from your miseries. To fulfill this, whatever you learn must be adopted and reflected in your homes and daily living, that peace and happiness may blossom forth in you and in those who surround you. The Satsang is a place of special purity, and even your thoughts should be pure as long as you are here. No other thought save that of the Lord should enter your head, and whatever advice you hear, live up to it. If you obey, without exception you will change for the better; if not, you will suffer the consequences.

Guru is not just a man, and whoever looks upon him from

that angle of vision is gravely mistaken. Kabir says, *He who considers the Guru a mere man will retrogress in the lower species, birth after birth.* The God in him is the Guru, though we respect his physical form because He is manifesting therein. Whatever he tells us, whether it appears to be correct or not, should be of the utmost importance and interest to us; otherwise, and with emphasis I repeat, that, life will become complicated and nothing but misery will result. You can say that it is actually preparing the way for unhappiness. We attend Satsang to increase our joy, for those around us too, and when the soul is reunited with God it will reflect all His qualities. God in the Guru is all compassion, and without disclosing our sins he washes us clean—free from undesirable impurities. When the child becomes dirty with filth the mother does not throw him away but washes him with loving attention and draws him close to her breast. The soul of man is very dear and precious, so we loathe the sin but rather love the sinner. If all men refrained from wrongdoing there would be peace and happiness everywhere. If your aim is to become Masters, you will succeed only when you hear and then become that.

Do not think of the Guru as a man;
He is the life of the Sat Purush (True Form).

The question, who is a Guru, is not a new one—it has ever been asked through the ages. When it was put to Guru Nanak, he said, *Shabd is the Guru, and the surat is the disciple.* The ever-existent God or His expression, the Shabd, is the Guru and the attention is the disciple. When Kabir was asked the same question, he said, *My Guru is above the gaggan* (heaven), *and the disciple is in the body.* When our attention gets connected with Him, our coming and going is finished. *The greatest being ever born; He, you should know, is my Guru.* He is the Light itself, at whichever pole He is mani-

fested, and only He can give the Light to others. By this the seeker can recognize the criterion in the true Guru. Christ said, *I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life.* At whichever pole this wealth is found, you can be sure there is something else there too, worthy of your obedience.

He has not come for any particular person but loves everyone, and will wash anyone clean regardless of their condition. Those who are wise enough to obey him will find their progress flourishing. *Satguru's words—words are the Satguru.* The words he utters are he himself and those who bow down to his words will truly get salvation, but those who bow in hypocrisy and then do whatever they choose with the thought that the Guru does not know, make their lives miserable. That which is hidden in us is apparent in the Guru and wherever you find it blossoming forth in fullness, there you will get the experience. Anyone can talk on any subject, for and against, with a little training but when a person receives something there is no question of doubt. The Power in the Guru—the very life of the Sat Purush—is forever, and will never die. When it worked through the pole named Jesus they called it the Christ Power, and it works at various human poles according to the age. Whoever is fortunate to be connected to this Power will find that it never leaves them.

Somehow or other, make your mind understand;
Then put all your attention in Him.

Making the mind understand is difficult for it tries to convince us that we are wrong in our search, but we must assure it that, having got the connection from where God is manifested, there is no need for doubts. Lectures, stories, bookish knowledge, acting and posing, all can be found in profusion—but who can give the Light? If someone can reveal the Light in

the seeker, it is proof that he has got it. Having received from him, then obey him. If the mind dislikes obedience, then we must make it agreeable. When you frequently witness others receiving the Light, is this not proof enough? There would perhaps be cause for hesitation if you were told to fight or kill each other, but the Guru himself thinks good of even those who work against him. By acquiring such noble virtues we also will become Masters.

Iqbal says that when Hazrat Mussa (Moses) climbed the mountain to talk to God and to realize Him, did he not know that God Himself was in search of a man who desired only Him? Baba Jaimal Singh Ji left Punjab and went to search for Hazur in the Murree Hills—was there not any man in the whole of Punjab that was suitable? What I am stressing here is that you have to obey his commands. If you do not persuade your mind to accept the facts, thoughts will come that "am I less than he? I am as big as he is!" and many other illusory ideas, by means of which duality will increase.

Through love and mercy He speaks;
He is Complete and Nameless.

He creates love, for he is all love. He teaches how to love—the rays of love issue forth from him, wherever he goes. His words are uttered to increase the love within us, so obey him and change the old habits which have encrusted for life upon life. If you do not, then you will continue in the wheel of birth and death. If through obedience to the Master a love for God is created in us and we see Him in all beings, then where is the necessity to return to this earth? When his words are forgotten, the squabbling among ourselves increases. If you hurt someone or bring unhappiness into their life, their natural reaction will be to return the same treatment. Karmic reac-

tions are a very powerful law, and you will be ruled by that law.

With so much love, Swami Ji makes us realize that our character must change. Masters are the very reflection of love, for the Positive Power works through love only. It can be observed that Saints work only with love, but Avatars also give punishment. The latter come when righteousness is at an ebb, to punish the wicked and reward the innocent, and to keep the world conditions in proper balance. The Saints tell us to err no more. *They at once give connection with God, to whoever approaches them.* Though the Lord is already within us, yet they make it possible for Him to appear, that we may see Him.

> *To give salvation to you, somehow or other.*
> *He took this physical form, the Guru;*

It naturally follows that man's teacher must be a man. If a monkey screeches, hundreds of monkeys will gather around him in answer to his call. Even if a bird twitters, others will collect. So the Guru comes in the human form to teach man the correct understanding of Truth. Excuse me, but the past Masters cannot come here and give this knowledge. Some intimation may be grasped from the scriptures, but those who have left the scene cannot give guidance as to their correct import. Even if a voice came from the skies to direct us, mankind would merely remark, "What has it to do with us?" On the other hand, if a man's Guru is a renouncer of worldly things, the disciple has doubt that his Master can understand his mundane troubles, for he feels that only one who has himself experienced the worldly ups and downs can really appreciate his condition. A true Master has achieved success in both the worldly and spiritual fields of life, and is thereby a living proof of what can be accomplished.

One's principles in life are highly important and one should never fall below one's supreme principle—and that is? The highest principle is Truth itself, and if you have love for Truth, then you must have love for all life. Soothe and erase away the mistakes of others with your love. Bloodstains cannot be washed with blood, but anything can be cleansed with the water of love.

Give service unto Him and worship Him;
Think of Him as Guru Nanak.
He was Kabir, He was Sat Naam;
Recognize all Saints in Him.

Develop into one who can serve the Master. What kind of service? True service means to obey his instructions implicitly; to live as he advocates in a clean, chaste, simple, and loving manner; to develop the Truth in yourself; to purify your thought. God dwells in every being, so love all life. Is this not what he teaches? You have got the human form through great good fortune, so make the best use of it and take advantage of every aid to reunite you with the Lord. Everyone makes mistakes, for all are not Saints as yet, but they should not be repeated. The same God-power worked through Kabir, Guru Nanak, and others at different times; just as a fused bulb is replaced by another. The teachings, however, remain the same.

You will remember that when they brought before Jesus the woman who had been found committing adultery, they asked him whether she should be stoned, according to the law of Moses; but Jesus told them, *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.* Can you put your hand on your heart and honestly say that you have never hurt anyone? Hazrat Mohammed Sahib says, *If you can control the two organs—one between the lips, and the other between the*

thighs—then I will stand before God in your support. Jesus told the woman to "go, and sin no more." With love he forgave her and helped her to understand—after all, it was his work to make her into something.

Guru Power never dies; it is everlasting and continues for ever. *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* These are the words of Christ, and not of Jesus, for they were uttered by the Christ-power or Guru-power in him. *The whole world is a house in which the Truth is residing.* Those who attend Satsang, in particular those who have got a true Master, should set an example in their love for one another, and their forgiving attitude. Christ also said, *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love for one another.* Otherwise, where is the proof that you are on the spiritual path? The teachings are not bad, the Satsang is not bad, he who teaches is not bad—if anything is bad it is the mind, so make your mind understand correctly and everything will be set right. It is the only cure if you want advancement. If we have helped even one person by removing a little misery from his day, we have done a great service. With sweet words, with kind sympathy, share the unhappy burden resting upon our poor fellow beings. or it spreads and grows as the days go by. From a man it travels to his family, his friends, and so on.

Only He can achieve your aim;
Do not wander—be rid of your pride.

What is our work in this world? To meet God—and for that we must first have the right understanding. *Our true friend is He who removes wrong understanding.* We have not come here to be property owners, socialites, or to have lofty ideas about ourselves, or to breed animosity among each other—we have come to imbibe the correct understanding about life.

But sadly, we daily sow more seeds, and only we will reap the harvest thereof. And each type of seed will bear its own fruit. If you have sown enmity then try to smooth it out—do your best to wash it away with love, that it may not grow with time and take deep roots. *You came to the world to receive, and you got God's Name in the Master's home; Now give up your pride and control your mind.* We say that we are very important people, we are very intellectual, we give excellent lectures, we have great influence over others, etc., but *we* should leave all this and take up the practice of Truth alone. Then only will the true happiness and joy well up from within us. We have come here to realize God, and only God can help us do so—who else is capable? *Do your work and do not entangle yourself in other affairs.* Think deeply, and if you find anything undesirable in you, weed it out, and with love help others to overcome their shortcomings also.

King Dhritarashtra, famous ruler from the Mahabharata epic, on a certain occasion insulted the powerful bow of Arjuna, and Arjuna immediately made to kill the king, but Lord Krishna stepped forward and demanded, "Arjuna, what are you doing?" Arjuna replied, "I have taken a solemn vow to kill anyone who insults my bow—it is my *dharma* (principle)." Krishna then asked, "What is the outcome of dharma —happiness or unhappiness." Arjuna said, "Of course, it is happiness." Lord Krishna smiled and explained, "Just think, what will be the outcome of this action? Where is your dharma in this?" Masters have spoken thus through the ages. Christ advised, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* A butcher may think that to kill is good, but what is the outcome of his action? Can it be happiness? So when we act, we must weigh the outcome. While we cling to our old habits we will never succeed, without exception. True happiness will be ours when we join back to

God, through the radiant company of the Master and through obedience to His words. He himself has taken this practical path, which is the shortest route to salvation.

This time is precious, do not fritter it away;
Greater than He you will never meet.

If you lose this golden opportunity, you have no idea when you will be given another. Give up pride, cunning, and other worldly habits, and cease wandering in vain from one attraction to another. You will never get another like the Guru you have got. Whoever you meet will attempt to separate you from the Lord rather than rejoin you back to Him. *Know a Satguru as one who comes to reunite.* He wishes to bring all children of God together and sit among them. Such personages are rare, and if you have found one, then obey Him—do whatever he says. If you refuse to obey, how will you hope to progress? The Master has no selfish motives, he is merely following the orders from above. This has nothing to do with any team or intrigue, nor is it a matter of creating policies. As everything is straightforward and above board, the question of policy does not arise; there is nothing underhanded or hidden, there are no ulterior motives behind the teachings. It is a very simple fact that only he whose soul has rejoined the Lord enjoys complete happiness. Human beings do have many weaknesses—you will find animosity and unrest amid peoples all over the world, and this is because each man is obeying his mind. If they were to obey someone who is above habits and failings, what an abundance of joy would there be throughout the nations.

If you leave your Guru now
You will wander the four regions of illusion.

If, having got the double blessing of the human form and the

Satguru, you throw away the chance by disobeying him, what will happen? Those who live on another's earnings go under the law of give and take or illusion; if you offend or harm anyone, you reap the reaction of that and under the same law you will be born there where the offended person is born, that the account may be accurately balanced. *Wherever your attention is, there will you reside.* Who knows when you will again get the human form? Fire consumes even green wood as well as the dry, and everyone must go sometime. If you spend your days losing everything but saving the invaluable treasure given to you, then your work here will be successful. True Masters do their work quietly, without a fuss and show. They lead a quiet life—not like the bulls in the ring, tossing their horns about. *Your earthly sojurn's purpose was distinguished; That was Amrit* (Water of Life), *given by the Guru.*

Jad Bharat was a king after whose name India was called Bharat. He was in search of God, and so he left his kingdom and went to live in the jungles, in order to realize Him. However, there he grew very fond of a certain deer which became tame and friendly—so what happened? After death, he was again reborn, but into the form of a deer. You should remember that what I'm saying is for your own benefit. A Guru wishes to see the whole world have joy in life, and when he sees faults and mistakes he tries to wash them away and ensure that they are not repeated.

Never will you get a Guru like Him;
Acknowledge, oh acknowledge this at last.

It is easily understood why gurudom has such a poor reputation nowadays, for the gurus are mostly political at heart, with self-centered motives for holding power over people and making money, etc. Instead of sincere sympathy for the plight of mankind, lies and cheating are used to gain the confidence

of the followers. And sadly, people are more easily pleased and satisfied with suchlike performance than with what a genuine Master has to offer. Truth is truth—a lie is a lie. Black cannot be white, no matter how much it is washed. The true Master is met through great destiny behind the disciple. *Without great good fortune, you cannot meet a Satguru.* If you have been fortunate to meet a Satguru, just obey him and you will succeed. What is worth more than having our soul reaching the Lord's lap, never to be separated from Him? Now that so many years have passed, give up your old habits at last.

Reading scriptures, singing the hymns;
Why so much pride in this?

Are you proud because you can sing better than others, or because you can thrash out the written words? Or perhaps you are the best lecturer around? What real achievement is this—singing and reading and being proud because you know more than other people? It is written that King Ravan was a learned yogi who was familiar with the four Vedas and the six Shastras. Today, in what manner do we remember him? In effigy, we give him a donkey's head. Why? Because he lost whatever knowledge and progress he had gained. So to be academically proficient is no spiritual accomplishment. *To be clever, to read, to write—that is an easy thing.* It is not difficult to be clever or cunning, to bring together the earth and sky with eloquent words. *To control desire, to leave the body, to control the mind—these are difficult.* Keep the Truth before you. *You go on praising your Guru, but will not allow Him to reside in your heart.* He will have salvation who will bow down to his Guru's commands: *The whole world sees the Satguru but salvation does not come with just a glimpse; Without love for His words, you will not get it.* These words

are always uttered with no distinction of individuals—they apply to rich or poor, high or low, for Saints speak freely, even about themselves if necessary. Pride and ego do not let us progress—when we make mistakes we will not admit them. In our hearts we have the thought, "There is none greater than me." Self-respect and praise are both food for the mind. Caught up in this failing, we at times push the Guru aside, saying, "What does the Guru know?" A mother always considers her child's betterment, and so the Guru has concern for the progress of his disciples. Is it likely that the mother will cast out the child if he misbehaves toward her? The fact is that we do not even try to recognize what the Guru is. Give up the ego, or it will be your downfall.

This pride has spoiled you;
This same pride even now does you great harm.

We may have been given human birth many times, but pride and ego killed us again and again, ruining all our good work and causing us to return to the same scene time and again. In the past it was our ruination, and it is winning the present also. Do not obey your mind—obey the words of the Guru, which will bring you great joy, whereas obedience to the mind will give you unending distress—the mind ever gave birth to trouble. Wash anger away with love, just as your Guru does. He never leaves his duty, though mankind may make good or bad remarks about him. He does not live on the earnings of others—does not accept anything for himself—has no desires. If anyone brings money to the Satsang, it is used for the Satsang. Up to today I live on my pension and have managed to live within its means. If the advice is good, you should appreciate it and be grateful—if through the advice your distress is increased, it's a different matter.

Oh beloved children, I have unfolded it to you;
Think not that thy habits are good.
Hurry and leave all deceit;
Increase your devotional attitude.

Your carelessness will result in the loss of everything most valuable if you do not change your habits. In the heart there is one thing, on the tongue is another, and our actions denote something different again. Leave such deceit as soon as possible—leave all cunning ways and develop sincere humility. If you do this, the Guru himself will embrace you. An attitude of devotion will take its own place within your being. You are greatly mistaken if you think you can gain his pleasure by merely saying you love and serve him when your heart denies it.

If after this the mind does not agree,
Then you will see the result yourself.

If you refuse to understand, then nothing can be done. You will just have to continue paying up for your mistakes. Even the Saints are defeated at this point and say, "If you will not listen, what can we do?"

On your head, the Negative Power's orders;
That's why the mind does not obey.

The hand of the Negative Power on your head will not allow the mind to obey you. He will go on increasing the duality to make it more and more difficult and confusing. The Negative will not help you to overcome this duality—only the Positive can do that. It is a marked difference between the Powers.

One thing I have discovered, my brother;
You are dishonorable.

In the end, what can one do if no one wishes to listen and obey? Honor is a noble virtue—what kind of man is this, that has no virtue in him?

Constantly keep the Guru's company;
Perhaps one day the mind will agree.

With the co-operation of the mind, go on perservering. If we see the Guru through a dark curtain, it does not mean that the Guru has turned black! Slowly, slowly, slowly—do not leave the Guru, but go on trying to understand, then definitely there will be hope of the curtain being drawn aside forever. To be constant and then unfaithful, sometimes this and sometimes that—this does not remedy anything. A rolling stone gathers no moss. That which has to be developed is the "inner man." If the Guru is true, and I have told you how to discover this, then stick to him, listen to his words, and do your best to understand. You will make the grade if you ignore your mind. The mind may stand in between, but the soul knows what Guru is and what God is.

Radha Soami has unravelled it;
Why should man be in doubt?

God manifested on a human pole was termed as Radha Soami by Swami Shiv Dayal Singh Ji (who is usually called Swami Ji). It is surprising that mankind does not accept the true facts of life, when God Himself is explaining them through the Godman.

Hazur Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj (1858-1948) during a Satsang in India.

11

Gurubhakti: A Lesson in Love

THIS DAY we have gathered together in the loving memory of the Godman, Hazur Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, who revived the age-old perennial science which we had forgotten. The object of the celebrating the birth anniversary of a Master-soul is to make a fresh appraisal of his teachings and by following his footsteps we keep his memory alive. Ordinarily, we are expected to live daily, nay hourly, in the loving presence of the Master and be ever thankful to him for the indelible footprints left by him on the sands of time. That, of course, is an individual affair. But we must, once a year at least, hold a memorial service on the occasion of his advent into the world for the spiritual uplift of man. Whatever time we spend together in this congregational service to the memory of the Godman will be amply rewarded and should, therefore, be considered a great blessing.

What then are the lessons we can take from such a dedicated life of selfless service as that of Hazur? for it is by knowing them that we can strive to follow them as best we can and advance on the path of Self-realization and God-realization. It is to his great credit that he revived the most ancient science of Para Vidya (the knowledge of the Beyond, the great unknown cause that lies beyond the senses, the mind and the intellect). In the modern age, the teachings originated with Kabir and Nanak, and the torch of light was carried on by

the successive nine Gurus and then Tulsi Sahib, Swami Ji Maharaj, and afterwards by Jaimal Singh Ji and then Hazur Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj by whose grace the sacred teachings are being imparted even now to the spiritually hungry souls. Fortunate indeed are those blessed souls who had the privilege to be initiated by him. We must, therefore, make the best use of the short life-span allotted to us. The greatest purpose of the human birth is that it offers us an opportunity, rare as it is, to experience our own "Self" and God. None can help us to unite with God but one who is already united with Him. In the Gurbani it says: *Some Godman may link us with the Power-of-God.*

That divine power is, of course, within each one of us for we live, move and have our very being in Him. Further in the Gurbani it says: *My Lord consort pervades in all beings, but blessed is one in whom He is manifest.*

It is this God-manifested being or the Godman who can guide us Godward. The question here is: Why can we not unite with God by our own unaided efforts? It is because the soul is under the powerful sway of mind, which in its turn is being controlled by the senses, and these senses are running riot with the sense-objects. We are thus totally identified with mind and matter and have no independent existence of our own. So it is the God-in-man who can link us with God. In other words one who has established a contact with God can show us the way to effect this contact for ourselves. Thus, God in the garb of man is the Guru of all. When Guru Nanak was questioned on this subject, he replied: *Verily, it is the holy Word, Shabd or the Sound, that is the Master and the soul in man, permeating through and through the physical body, is the disciple.* Now what is meant by Shabd? The absolute God is Ashabd (Wordless) but when He comes into expression, He is known as Shabd (Word). The Gurbani tells

us: *With one Word, the whole creation came into being.* Again Gurbani says: *It is from Shabd that the whole creation comes into being and ultimately gets absorbed into it and it is through Shabd that regeneration takes place.*

This manifested Power-of-God which is the substratum of the entire creation is called Shabd. This Shabd then is the Jagat-Guru or the Master-power. This very question was put to Kabir, "O Kabir, who is the Master and where does the disciple reside? How did the two get together in an indissoluble Union?" He replied: "My Master is in the Beyond, while the disciple is in the body. Both of them got together by means of Shabd and now there is no fear of separation between the two." So the Master of all the world is the Shabd-power or the holy Word. Guru Gobind Singh has put it succinctly: *He who is one and the same in the beginning and the end is the manifested Power-of-God, the Shabd, and that is the real Master.*

Thus the physical body in which the Shabd-power is manifestly working is worthy of all our adoration, for that power alone can draw the soul to Himself. The Master is not the physical body but the divine Power which is enlivening his body. And the Gurbani clearly tell us: *God speaks through a human frame, as without it how can He speak to us?*

The physical body is not the Master but blessed is that body in which that Power is manifest for spiritual guidance. This Power-of-God as manifested on the human plane helps in liberating all human souls entombed in the meshes of mind and matter. Swami Ji says: *The great Power-of-God in the Guru helps in disengaging the souls from the shackles of the body and in raising them upwards.*

The living Master is competent enough to unite with God such souls as seek his guidance. The prime job of a Master-soul is to unite all the children of God under his saving pro-

tection. Gurbani says: *Free from birth and death under the compulsive force of Karma comes the redeemer of souls; with a touch of his life-breath he alchemizes the human soul and connects it with the holy Word.*

Such great souls come into the world for the spiritual welfare of humanity. They are commissioned from above for this job. Now perhaps you may understand what is meant by a living Master. He is in fact God manifest on earth or the *Word-made-flesh* to dwell among us as Christ puts it. The Gurbani tells us, *Dwelling in the Guru, He distributes the holy Word.*

Man alone can be the teacher of man. It is with the help of some human instrument that God works for mankind. God does, from time to time, descend in a human garb for the uplift of the people stuck fast in the mire of the world and all that is worldly. A Saint has a two-fold mission: to awaken people from a long-drawn dream of the material world and to reveal to them the saving life-lines within. Like a radiant pole-star, he guides the erring humanity. When it rains, every place, high or low, equally gets the blessing of the life giving showers. Hazur's name was Sawan and significantly enough like Sawan-rains, he blessed the people with spiritual showers and everyone—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian—benefitted from his teachings.

Now we revert to our original question: Whom should one love in the world? If we look critically, we find that love is an innate quality in man and everyone is devoted to one thing or another: may be service to one's family, community, nation or religion, or it may be to the development of some art or craft or any other such thing. And yet there are some who love themselves above all else and self-indulgence is with them the be-all and end-all of life. Once there was in our country a ruler named Mohammad Shah Ran-

gila. He was given over to bouts of drinking. When Delhi was in the throes of a wholesale massacre, the people petitioned the king to intervene. The king was so busy drinking that he had neither the time nor the heart to attend to this appeal for mercy and exclaimed: "Let these papers of no importance be drowned in the wine." Similarly, it is said of Nero, a Roman emperor, that he fiddled while Rome was burning. There is no dearth of such people in the world. He who worships his family is far better than the one who worships himself and lives for self-gratification only. So also he who loves and serves his society, religion or country is still better progressively. But all these varying types of love and devotion are more or less characterized by a sense of ego and smack of pride, and as such, more often than not, the result is a clash between family and family, class and class or country and country. We have had what are euphemistically called crusades or holy wars fought in the blessed name of religion, but born out of misguided religious zeal and, to speak plainly, out of sheer religious ignorance, bigotry and intolerance. But on the contrary, the love of God far transcends all these petty adorations as it consists in total self-abnegation and selfless sacrifice because of the knowledge that God resides in all hearts and He is the substratum of the entire creation. God is an unchangeable permanence and everlasting. But we have not yet seen Him, and without seeing Him how can we love Him and inculcate devotion for Him? So we have, of necessity, to bestow our loving devotion on the human pole where the Power-of-God is manifest. Guru Amardas Ji says: *If you want to worship God, worship the Satguru, who is God personified or the Word made flesh.*

He then grants contact with the holy Naam and helps us in crossing over into the Beyond. The worship of Satguru is really the worship of God. The easiest way of developing the

worship of God is to develop *Gurubhakti* (love of the Master). In Gurbani we have: *The loving devotion to the Master is above everything else and I love His holy feet with all my strength.*

Now what is *Bhakti* (loving devotion)? It is the love of God. God is love and love is God. The way back to God is also through love. Love knows naught but service and sacrifice. What is it that distinguishes love? He who loves, desires to sacrifice his all for the sake of the beloved and after having sacrificed all does not look for any reward in return. God Himself speaks thus in the Gurbani: *If you desire to join Me in the game of love, Come unto Me with your head on your palm as an offering. If you want to tread the path of love, Never for a moment hesitate to offer your life.*

This is the type of sacrifice that love demands and in doing so never think that you have done any favor. You should rather feel grateful that you have won love so easily.

Amir Khusro was a great devotee of his Master. One day he exclaimed with delight that he had received happy tidings from his beloved. "What is it?" the people asked. "My beloved has ordered that I be decapitated tomorrow in the open market," he said. "Has your beloved given you any assurance to see you and cast his loving glance on you?" enquired the people. "None whatsoever," was the reply.

This is what love demands from the lover and complete submission to the will of the beloved without any rhyme or reason. Love is just a one-way traffic so far as the lover is concerned. It knows no bargaining. All it connotes is implicit obedience. *Not my will, but thine,* cries the true lover. A Persian poet has defined love thus: "What is Love? It is to be a bondsman of the beloved. And to go wandering and offering one's heart."

Love then means to dedicate yourself—body and soul—

to someone and to wander the earth over in his search.

A real devotee dedicates his very life to the service of his Master and dissolves his will in that of His. It is a life of complete surrender with no mental reservations. Sarmad, a great Gurbhakta, said: *I have given away my heart, my life and my very soul; Having passed on all my burdens I know no greater gain than this.*

All the ills of the world originate with mental activity. We are stuck fast in the heart-focus from where the rays of the mind start and passing from the sense organs envelop the sense objects; and we get attached to the world around us. How little do we realize the great motor-power of the soul behind, enlivening the mind and the intellect. If we could divest ourselves of these adjuncts and dedicate our very life to the service of a Godman, we would at once become a freed soul ready to go Godward. Can there be any greater gain than to escape from all the trials and turmoils of the earthly life? This is what we gain by practicing the presence of the personified God in our midst. He is a living embodiment of the God-into-expression Power and helps us to reveal and develop it the same way as he has done.

Swami Ji says: *Contemplate thou on the form of the Master; Besides it there is no other way of escape from bondage.*

The term *Dhyan* (contemplation) is derived from the root *dhi* which means to fix the attention on the living Master. I may illustrate my point by taking the analogy of a newly wedded girl coming back to her parents' home. However busy she may appear to be in household chores, all the time she thinks of her husband. In exactly the same way, the attention of the disciple should always be grounded in the Master—the Word-made-flesh. Guru is Godman, i.e., man plus God. Those who get attached to man only remain entangled in the body, while those who see the God manifest in the man, the

link with Him is revealed to the disciple. He learns quickly how to rise above the body. As you think so you become. It is He who loves us first, and our love is simply reciprocal. Mother loves the newly born child first and the child loves the mother in return. Our love is but a kind of reaction of the love of the Master who has drawn us to him. Gurbani says: *The Master loves the disciple with all his life.*

This is known as Gurbhakti. When you think of the Master with all your heart and soul, you cannot but obey Him implicitly. Christ said: *If you love me, keep my commandments.*

Love calls for direct and immediate obedience and not merely lip service. In this respect there is a general weakness in all of us and we fail miserably. We must learn to understand Him and be able to do what He bids us to do, even though, at moments what He says may not appear sound to us. He speaks from a higher level and sees things from afar to which we have yet no access. So if all the time we think of Him, no matter while we are engaged in worldly pursuits, we will gradually imbibe his spirit. Our outer entanglements shall not then bind us. In this way we will get cut off from outer attachments, the more his divine power will enter into us and transform us into his likeness. Christ has said: *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me, ye can do nothing.* All this may be likened to a grafting process. When we engraft the twig of one tree in the body of another tree, then the fruit of the second tree will be of the quality and taste of the tree from which it got the graft. Similarly, if the disciple reasonably develops his receptivity by constant devotion, loving faith and implicit obedience, he will, when asked, give you the same reply to a question as you would get from the Master Himself. When two hearts work in uni-

son they operate with the same vibrations, as in telepathy. Such a disciple naturally gets from the Master His own impulses. So Gurubhakti is the *sine qua non* on the path of the Masters. Swami Ji has rightly said: *Those who engage in the practice of listening to the Sound Current without Gurubhakti or devotion to the Master are but fools.*

The essence of Gurubhakti is that our thoughts and feelings be detached from all else and be centered at one focal point, the eye-focus. Our Hazur used to illustrate this sublime truth thus: *Suppose there is a pipe with many holes or small openings in it from which the water is trickling drop by drop. If we were to close down all these holes save one, then the water will gush forth from the one hole left open in a strong current and to a great height. Exactly in the same way if we cut off all our worldly connections, then the sensory currents will get collected at one point and then shoot forth from the tenth opening at the eye-focus.* Hazur used to say that the Guru does not need our devotion but if we adore him and offer our unstinted love to him, it is helpful for our inner spiritual progress. The principle of "as you think so you become" works here. Swami Ji says: *The holy Word or the Shabd is revealed just by the grace of the Guru and then the long and strong arm of the Master pulls the spirit-currents out from the body below.*

Now you will understand the basic need of Gurubhakti. It does not mean dancing around the Guru or shouting this way or that. If you do not care to listen to what the Guru says or to understand and follow his behests, it is not Gurubhakti at all. Such persons cannot get any spiritual benefit even if they live with the Master for ages upon ages. On the contrary, those who turn their back upon the world and are wholly engrossed in the love of the Master and make loving devotion as their ruling passion, they easily and quickly get transformed

into the likeness of the Master. Just take a worldly example of a person full of lust and see how he lovingly dotes upon the form of his beloved and in her presence feels inebriated. Guru Ramdas says: *I feel highly elated with joy by looking at the physical form of my beloved Satguru.*

If one could, from afar, just get a glimpse of the glorious turban of Hazur while standing in the midst of thousands of persons, a thrill of joy would run through from head to toe. Maulana Rumi says: *Even if I were to behold the face of my beloved, hundreds of times with hundreds of eyes, I would still like to see him again and again for each time one gets a novel experience from such a blessed sight.* He goes on to say: *Just as a drunkard feels restlessly agitated by looking at a vintage splashing in a goblet of wine, similarly by looking into the cups of the deeply set eyes of the Master, the souls of the devotees soar high in ecstasy divine.*

Those who have attained the climax of love like this for the Master, they feel divinity surging in the fibres of their being. It was a matter of common experience to see people standing statue-like for hours on end with their eyes intently fixed on the radiant face of Hazur. The sweet and loving remembrance of the Master, the contemplation of His form and careful attention to His discourses are some of the tried methods for the purification of the mind. If the Master is full of piety, you will automatically become pious. After all what is there in Him which attracts us so much? He is charged with the spiritual glow and the divine glory which attracts one and all alike. An Urdu poet says: *Where there is no beauty, love cannot evolve, And a nightingale finds no delight in flowers painted on the walls.*

It is the glory of the living God in him which attracts others. The radioactive rays emanating from his person sink deep into the hearts of the devotees. So long as there is no inner

charm, no one can charm the people around him. Swami Ji warns: *A soul entombed in the body cannot possibly do Gurubhakti; when even the gods themselves are ignorant of His greatness, how can the incomprehensible Satguru be comprehended? He may be known as much as He may in His grace reveal Himself.*

Guru Nanak was considered by the worldly people as one who perverted the intellect of others. He was not allowed to enter the town of Qasur (now in Pakistan) lest he should misguide the people. But there were others who recognized in him a living God in the garb of man. So it all depends on how much he may choose to reveal himself to each individual. Similarly, Hazur was looked upon by many as a very pious old man, whereas those who had had the good fortune to go near him would see something higher in him. And still fewer who had developed some inner receptivity and devotion found him a veritable Godman. Hazur used to explain the matter: *A highly qualified teacher attending to boys in a primary class would reveal as much of his knowledge as it may be possible for the novices to grasp. But the same teacher when teaching middle classes would impart higher knowledge to his students befitting their capacity to learn and when he will go to the higher secondary, he will show more of his learning, till in a college, he will be at his best.* In other words, as a student advances from class to class and his understanding ripens with the passage of time and experience, he imbibes more and more of his teacher's learning and the teacher too tries to impart greater knowledge which may be commensurate with the capacity to understand and assimilate. The time factor then is important in any type of development. The more a person attends upon his Guru and diligently follows his instructions, the more he develops his receptivity and in the same proportion, the Guru reveals to him more and more spiritual experi-

ence. It all depends on *Upasna* which means proximity to the spiritual preceptor. If you sit near the Master with heart and soul attuned, you are sure to be benefited a lot by his divine radiation and that in turn will develop your inner receptivity or power of assimilation. The easiest, the shortest and the simplest way to get greater benefit is to lose yourself completely in the holy presence of a Sant Satguru. Swami Ji says: *O Soul, be fully absorbed in Satsang at least this day.*

What then is "full or complete absorption"? is the question. It means that while in the company of a Saint listening to him one should forget not only the place where he is sitting but become wholly oblivious of the very surroundings in which he is and dissolve his very being, losing all consciousness except of the holy presence of the Master. This blanking of one's self is called "absorption." The more one empties himself of his worldliness and pettiness, the more he will be filled by the divine grace emanating from the divine presence before him. This is the secret of a successful Satsang. Excuse me, when I say that it is seldom that we get a Satsang or company of a truly perfect Master for such highly advanced souls—souls one with the Lord—are very rare indeed. They are not easily available and recognizable and if by some mighty good luck we do come across a Godman, we do not know how to derive the fullest benefit from his company or Satsang. The way to make the most of such a rare opportunity and derive the maximum benefit is that one should try to come to the place of Satsang as early as possible and sit silently in a prayerful mood, blanking the mind of all the worldly thoughts in the august presence of the Master, inwardly absorbing his words of wisdom. If by sitting close to fire we feel warmth and the proximity of a glacier gives a cold shiver, there is no reason why one should not be affected by the divine aura of a Master-saint whose radiation has an unimaginably long range.

The devotion to and the love of the Master are synonymous terms. Love is all comprehensive and it knows only service and sacrifice. Guru Gobind Singh while speaking of his own descent on the earth plane says: *Having merged in the Lord, I did not like to come down again into this mundane world, but was prevailed upon by God to do so—for the spiritual welfare of humanity.*

When loving devotion is at its highest, nothing remains of the individual self for it becomes universalized and all pervading. Hafiz says: *My heart is so filled with the love of the Lord, that I cannot think of myself apart from Him.*

We have, therefore, to rid ourselves of the personal ego for it stands between us and God. Gurbani says: *The true Lord is attained by Gurubhakti.* This is the way that He comes to dwell in us, absorbing the mind in Him. The main object of all spiritual practices and disciplines is that we should develop Gurubhakti or devotion to the Guru which, of course, grows out of love. This is why all saints and sages laid great stress on cultivating love. Guru Gobind Singh says: *What does it profit to close the eyes, and sit stork-like with folded wings, And to take dips in the seas of the world, gaining nothing here and hereafter, And while traveling in sense-pleasures, waste time in useless disputations. Verily I tell thee, listen all if ye may, they alone get to the Lord who know how to love.*

Similarly, John in his first Epistle says: *He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.* Again, in the holy Koran, we have: *A loving man cannot do without a beloved.*

It is in fact the beloved that teaches the lover the art of love and enables him to progress steadily on the path of love. As God is love so is the human soul a particle of divine love. The essence of love is at the core of all creation and more so in man. Man is he who has in him feelings of loving sympathy. What is it that characterizes a sage or a saint?

He is a cup bubbling over with the love of God,
His proximity quickens in us the life of love.

As light comes from light and life from life, so does love come from love. Love does not grow in fields nor can it be had from a shop but we may catch its infection from the love-laden eyes of a lover of God. There are some people who are fondly in love with the pleasures of the world and care not for the next. Then there are others who are carried away by hopes of a paradisal bliss. But those who love the Lord share the things that really matter far better than either of them. Love ignites in us the flame of Living Light or the Light of Life. That type of love is:

Meeting the God-intoxicated soul I enquired about the nature of divine love,
The only reply was that in its fullness it could not be described.
The flaming love of the Lord cannot be kept under a bushel,
One may not open one's mouth but tearful eyes belie and shed tears involuntarily.
A heart devoid of love is a charnel-house,
An iron monger's bellows which breathes without the breath of life.

Kabir says: *Humility, simplicity, devotion and courtesy are great virtues, But he alone is great who observes decorum with all.* Decorum or propriety is the core of true living which ranks almost as high as truth itself. We must love all, respect all and be courteous to all, which we seldom do. We generally play double-faced like Janus and apply double standards in all our dealings. Our head and heart do not work in unison nor do

our acts and words exhibit the same pattern. Guru Nanak says: *Humility tinged with sweetness is the essence of all virtues.*

It is from the abundance of heart that the tongue speaks and unless there is sweetness in the folds of our mind, we cannot speak sweetly. All the sages therefore, speak of love as the only way of salvation. Guru Nanak pointedly tells us: *Beauty, lineage, prowess, learning and riches are of no avail, Endowed with all these but devoid of love of the Lord, one is as good as dead.*

How can we get the wealth of love? It comes to the elect of the Lord and he showers it in abundance on whomsoever He pleases. The worldly wise entombed in mind and matter can hardly aspire to it and do not get it. Once princess Zaibul-Nisa went to Sarmad and requested him for the rare boon of God's love. Sarmad said: *O Sarmad, the burning passion of the Lord is not granted to the avaricious, Nor the moth's love for the flame, to flies that hover round filth. It takes ages to get revelation of the Lord in one's mind, O Sarmad, this wealth is not doled out to all and sundry.*

Now the question is: Whom should we love? As love is the law of life, we cannot do without loving one thing or the other. We bestow all our love on the world and all that is of the world, wife and children, riches and possessions. But all these objects of the world betray us at one stage or another and leave us rueful sooner or later. We must love something which may be eternal so that our love is not falsified. The former is not love in the strict sense of the word but blind infatuation commonly known as attachment. Why not then find something worthy of our love and which can befriend us both here and hereafter? In this context, I place before you a small hymn of Kabir so that we may understand the subject better.

We must love one who will not leave or forsake us till the end.

He alone is worthy to be loved who will stand by us in all the vicissitudes of life on the earth plane and also lead us into the Beyond before the judgement seat of God. In the Gurbani we find this statement: *O Nanak, snap all ephemeral ties of worldly relations and find the company of a true saint, the former shall break away in this very life, while the latter shall abide with thee even after death.*

The friends and relations in the world, howsoever near and dear they may be, do not stand by through thick and thin. Some of them leave off in poverty and indigence, some in prolonged illness and disease and some in adverse circumstances and misfortune. At the most, a few may help you to the funeral pyre and that is all. The friendship of a saint is everlasting. He abides forever and forever and even stands by to help you before the judgement seat of God. Thus Kabir says: *When in affluence, all flock around thee and feed thy vanity, With the turn in fortune, all fly away and none comes near.*

Even the most sincere stand by helplessly when you are at death's door and gasping for breath. When they see you fighting and losing the battle against death and helplessly struggling for life, all that they can do is to pray God to relieve you from the tortuous agony of the last moments. What else can they possibly do? Again in the Gurbani we are told: *Serve the true Master and develop the holy Word. The Master receives at death those who have done their best to follow Him.*

We should, therefore, be the doer of the Word and practice it day and night. It is the "comforter" of which Christ spoke. It helps us in diverse ways when we are helpless in

death's trap or in treacherous situations. It materializes in the likeness of the Master to advise and encourage us, no matter where we may be, on the snowy mountain-tops, in the burning desert sands, down in the ocean depths or high up in the sky. And again, when one is in the last moments of one's life it appears in the radiant form of the Master to escort the soul into the Beyond, leads the spirit gradually from plane to plane, as and when He thinks fit, until He conducts you safely to the Abode of God. My Master used to say that a Satguru while revealing the holy Word, at the time of initiation, actually reveals His true form (*Shabd Swarup*), which always remains with the initiated soul till both merge in Sat Naam, the primal manifestation of God, Who then helps the soul to Agam (the incomprehensible), Alakh (the ineffable) and Anaam (the Nameless, without form and attributes). It is because of this momentous and signal service and sacrifice of an eternal nature that we are advised to cultivate love for one who loves us eternally and befriends us both here and hereafter. Maulana Rumi, speaking of this love, tells us:

Love is different from sensuality in men,
For senses feed upon the objects of senses,
And thrive upon the food we take.

Thus we see that love is something sublime and sacred and should not be confused with lust which is the outcome of base desires and sensual appetites. It is love of the soul for the Oversoul, or of the created being for the Creator. How then can we come by love is the next question.

Love neither grows in the field nor is sold in the market,
Even the high and the mighty who aspire for love have to pay for it with their head.

Love is the zest of life for we live by the love of the Lord. Guru Amardas has said: *Accursed is the man whose heart is bereft of love.*

Love is the Light of Life in which we live. What does it avail to have a human birth if we know not what love is and make the most of it? We must taste the blessings of love and be really blessed. That is the whole purpose of human existence. But what do we do? All the time we are busily engaged in doing things on the plane of duality and are lost not only to God but also to our own true self, forgetful of our essentially divine nature. Is there no remedy then? The reply is: Yes, there is a remedy: *The love for a Godman inspires love for God.*

If you love one who is truth-personified, He will surely pass on His infection to you. This is the way to be inspired with the love of the divine. Live in the divinely awakened and you will live in the divinity. Hence the supreme need for cultivating love, the life-principle, that will abide with you for ever and ever. *Without love, the mercurial nature of man finds no rest.*

Tossed in the seas of sense-pleasures, we have lost our moorings and are drifting rudderless along the stream of time. Until we find some safe anchorage, a haven of peace, we are ever a prey to chance winds and storms of life as it is. Every day we see strife and struggle everywhere, clashes in households, men set against men, tribe against tribe, and country against country. Why all this confusion? Because of the lack of loving understanding, of loving toleration for the views of others. In spite of our man-made artificial barriers—national, linguistic, religious and political—are we not members of one great family of man? So long as we do not rise above these petty, racial and clannish prides and prejudices, which have bogged and clouded our vision, we cannot gain access to the

bright sunshine of loving unity and have peace within and without. And this will be possible only when we rest our soul in the causeless cause. St. Augustine tells us: *Thou hast created my soul, O God, after Thee and it is restless until it rests in Thee.*

During my second world tour I had an opportunity of meeting national, religious and political leaders in various countries and I placed before them the principle of "live and let others live," and it had a chastening effect on them. I told them that God had put under their care and protection millions of His children and if they could not, for one reason or another, take proper and adequate interest in them, they should pass over a part of their burden to others. This line of thought appealed to them and at one or two places where relations had almost reached the breaking point, better counsels prevailed by divine grace.

Love works as a great healing balm in the affairs of the world. In our households if we could make use of a sweet tongue we would have paradise on earth. A sword-cut may get well in a few days but the wound caused by a sharp tongue festers all the while like a running sore. The more one ruminates on the bitter words, the more do they rankle in the mind. The great epic of the Mahabharata war was the outcome of just a few bitter words uttered inadvertently by Draupadi. When the Kauros visited the queen's palace, at one place the glittering surface of the courtyard looked like ripples of water. Naturally, they pulled up their garments. Watching them, Draupadi facetiously remarked that the children of a blind father could not but see things blindly. The result was a great homicidal war in which the most ancient culture and civilization of India came virtually to an end. This weakness for fault-finding and sarcasm has unfortunately become a common feature of the present day society. We are keenly

alive to a mote in others' eyes, but cannot see a beam in our own eyes. We try to be clever in making allusions and speaking in oblique terms. This in fact is a very nasty habit for it deeply hurts others' feelings.

I would suggest you all—old and new initiates—to maintain introspection diaries and at the close of each day make a note of all your failings during the day from the path of rectitude, viz.; truthfulness, purity, straight-forwardness, non-injury, selfless service and the like. In this way you will know your faults easily and try to eradicate them one by one. It will also enable you unwittingly to cultivate corresponding virtues on all levels—in thought word and deed. *Ahimsa parma dharma* or non-injury is the highest of virtues. If you have love in your heart for all, you will not then try to deceive any person, for in doing so you will in the first instance be deceiving yourself. Far from this you will try to be of service to others. *Service* you know, comes before self and becomes sanctified by being selfless. All these are aids in purifying the mind and the more the mind gets purified, the more it is fitted to receive the light of truth and the more you will be able to radiate it in your acts and deeds. I have always insisted on keeping such a diary. In the Gurbani it says: *A seer of Truth can lead you to Truth, And from death can take you to life eternal.*

This then is the purpose of the prayer that the ancients were never tired of repeating time and again: *O God, lead me from darkness to light, from untruth to truth and from death to immortality.* And now we have seen how we can make this time-hallowed and time-honored prayer fruitful. Gurbani says: *He who links you with the Power of God take Him verily to be God.*

For who else but God can lead you to God? This is a profound truth and you can verify it for yourself when by mighty good fortune you find a Godman, or a Godman picks you up,

for we all are engaged in the game of blindman's buff:

Satguru Himself is doubtlessly the immaculate One,
Despite the human garb in which He appears.

Again:

Godman is but Godlike in spite of the human cloak
He wears.

In crystal clear words, Maulana Rumi declares: *When you approach a Godman, you approach God and when you move away from Him you are farther from God.* Why? Because Godman is a deputy of God Himself on the earth plane. When we sit near a living Master with a vacant mind, we are filled with His divine vibrations which penetrate through the very pores of our body. This is the sign of His greatness and goodness. It is very rarely that we get a real Satsang, i.e., by a really God-intoxicated person. If we do get an opportunity, we hardly take full advantage of it. Unless we go to Satsang with faith and receptivity, we do not feel the effect of the radioactive rays that emanate from His person. When even a stone lying in water gets the cooling effect of water, there is no reason why a person, howsoever ignorant he may be, should not get intoxicated in the presence of a divine being. He will surely breathe the exhilarating fragrance of the Satguru provided his mind is blank (free from worldly preoccupations). A living Master is Word-made-flesh and the atmosphere around Him is highly charged with spiritual vibrations with the result that one begins to feel their effect and experience blissful calm within. Once one tastes this, one grows indifferent to all the pleasures of the world.

After all there must be some specific spiritual gain in the company of a saint that all the scriptures of the world have spoken so highly of the value of Satsang and its necessity for

progress on the spiritual path. But a Guru must be a perfect Guru and not a half prophet laying claim to the whole truth. It is not a matter of acting or posing but one of revelation of the life-principle within. The bitter experience of fake masters compel the people to disown even the greatness of real teachers and they prefer scriptures to direct experience. Once bitten twice shy. But without the aid of a really perfect Master, there is no way out for a soul to escape from the shackles of mind and matter in order to enter into spiritual realms beyond, to regain the kingdom of God now and to enjoy life eternal. Love of, and obedience to, such a Master unlocks the portals of heaven and the soul is led by the ever-loving spouse and Radiant Guru Dev safely from plane to plane and becomes eternally united with the Satguru (Sat Naam or Sat Purush, the True One).

As the water of a river in spite of the enclosing banks
remains water,
So does the Power of God manifest at a human pole
as Truth itself.

Guru and Satguru are but synonymous terms being just two phases of the Reality. Outwardly, He is a Guru for imparting spiritual instructions to the disciples, but inwardly He is a Satguru for in Him is working manifestly the power of *Sat* or Truth. He is in brief *Word-made-flesh* and dwells among us for revealing to man the lifelines within each individual: Guru Nanak says,

O Lalo, I speak nothing on my own,
I open my mouth only at His bidding.

A Guru is one who has become the mouthpiece of God. The devotion to the Guru then is the first stage in spirituality and it consists in implicit acceptance of His commandments. *If*

you love me follow my commandments, was the exhortation of Christ to his followers. When you come across a real Guru forget everything else and listen attentively to what he says and even if you do not fully understand his language, it does not matter much. His radiation will of itself have a soothing effect on you. His magnetic rays have an unimaginably long range. If you sit quietly and listen, it will be to your benefit. Try to live up to what you hear, your life will take a change for the better. The sage Lukman used to say: *When you go to a saint, sit quietly before him and listen attentively to what he says on his own.* But do we do so? We keep talking either with others or keep interrupting the saint by useless questions, with the result that we return empty handed.

Today we are celebrating the birth anniversary of Hazur (Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj). It would, therefore, be a fitting tribute to his memory if you resolve to make your life a continuous saga of love and service—love of the Lord and service of His creation. As you have not yet come face to face with God, then for the time being try to develop love for one in whom the Power of God is working for the good of humanity. The first step in this direction is to do what He directs you to do: *There is no difference between the Satguru and His words.*

We must learn to believe and have faith in what He says. Now that we are sitting in the sweet remembrance of Hazur, it will be a great day for us, if we resolve to turn over a new leaf in our lives. For this purpose we must maintain a spiritual diary. It will enable us to introspect. At present we are unable to see the foibles lying hidden in the depths of our minds. But when you try to plumb the unconscious you will gradually be able to see them on the surface, at first in trickles and then in torrents.

O Mind, learn to love the Lord and love Him yet more.

This is what Kabir has said. In the same vein we have the words of Jesus: *Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul and with all thy strength.* And again: *Love thy neighbor as thyself.*

Asked as to what should be the Christian attitude towards wrong doers, he declared: *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father-in-heaven. Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

This then constitutes the love in the teachings of all the great sages from time immemorial and it shall eternally remain the same. They all exhort us to mold our life on these lines. Courtesy does not cost you anything. All the time we are malevolently concerned with what others say and do. The world would be much better if we could stop involving ourselves in the sayings and doings of others. Again, we do not confine our mistakes to ourselves, but all the time busily sprinkle folly among our neighbors with the result that we get from them a hundred-fold in return. What good does it bring after all?

On a day like this, I repeat with all the emphasis at my command that Hazur was a veritable ocean of love; and we should and must, if we love him, learn afresh our lesson in love, by following in his footsteps by diligently working at the spiritual practices that he gave out for our uplift. By withdrawing himself from the physical plane he has not forsaken us for his godly power in its full radiance still sustains within and he is, more keenly than ever before, waiting at the focus of our being to help and guide us.

God is not sitting on some throne in heaven. He is enthroned in the heart of each one of us. We must, therefore, learn to love and serve our fellow beings in distress and suf-

fering. God Himself has declared: I love him who loves my created beings. This is the great lesson that Hazur taught us in the first instance and if we put it into practice in our every-day life, his grace shall most surely descend and help us in our spiritual progress. Let us see what Kabir says:

Poor Kabir, from his life-long experience cannot help reflecting again and again,
Self-effacement is the only way that will take you to God and to your eternal home in heaven.

Kabir says that the only way to salvation lies through love. It is by love that you rise above self and become selfless. Without transcendence of the self (the ego) in us, the light of God does not dawn. When you are charged with love, love of God-in-man, you cross over from stage of duality to oneness. How can we get to the fount of divine love? Love can be imbibed from the love-laden heart of some God-inspired soul. In a few words, Kabir has provided us with the Master-key that unlocks the doors of heaven: find out a Godman and learn from him the secret of love. Try to understand what he says and then diligently practice his teachings. He commands you to be chaste and clean in thought, word and deed and to cultivate love for all that exists by the love of God. As God is not separate from His creation, you will see the spirit of God enlivening the entire universe. You will not then feel isolated from the world. Your little self, now cramped within the human mind, will expand, become universalized and embrace the totality of all beings. This is the secret of success on God's path. There is no other short-cut to it. Try to be true to your own Self and then you will not be untrue to anyone. Alongside do Bhajan and Simran (sit in sweet remembrance of the Lord with rapt attention), make it a point to give daily nourishment to the soul as you do to the body. This is the love of

which Kabir has given us a description in a few words. Mere lip-service and acrobatic feats will not do.

I would explain my point by means of a parable of two gardeners. A king had a fine orchard which was entrusted to the care of two gardeners. One of them was hard-working and would silently go about his job tending to the trees and flowers with due care and attention, keeping them in proper trim. The other was lazy but had a glib tongue and strong lungs. Whenever the king would visit the garden, the former would just pick up a few flowers and humbly present them to his royal master, while the other who did nothing would jump about and dance before the Master and sing of the Master's virtues, deportment and clothes. Now whom would the king like? You can give the answer yourself. Certainly, the one who applied himself to his work diligently and honestly without making any fuss. Similarly, the all-knowing Master looks to your innermost intentions, the sincerity of purpose in you and honesty of efforts you make in following His commandments and bestows on you the gift of His spiritual wealth according to your merits.

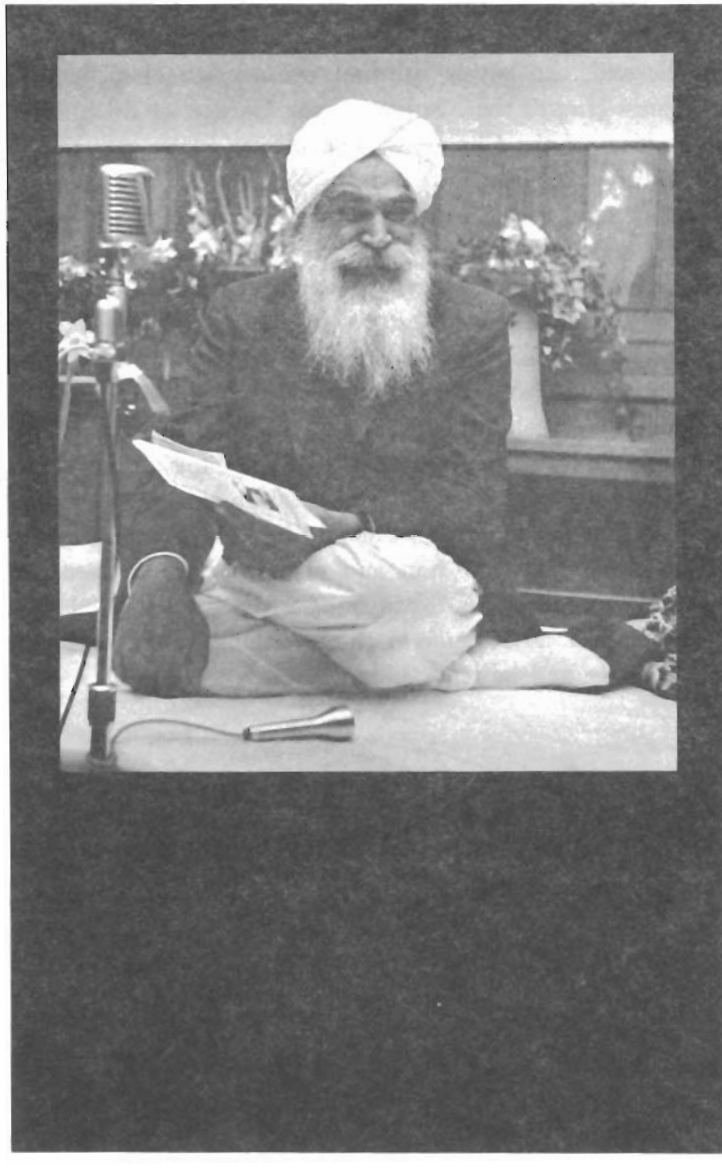
Kabir concludes his hymn with the following memorable words:

> *He who gives precedence to the Guru over everything else and religiously follows his teachings,*
> *O Kabir, such a person has nothing to fear in all the three regions.*

There are three mind zones or mental regions in which the embodied soul moves up and down in the giant wheel of life, propelled by the compulsive karmic force: the physical, the subtle and the causal, with no easy way of escape therefrom. Kabir tells us of a way-out through the kindly grace of some Master-soul that can lead a jiva unscathed from these into

the Beyond, the purely spiritual realm — Sach Khand or Muqam-i-Haq of the Muslims or the Garden of Eden (New Jerusalem) of the Christians. The Master is the greatest gift of God to mankind.

Hazur used to tell us that we refrain from any evil act in the presence of a child of even five years. But, strange as it may seem, we have not even as much regard for the King of Kings—the all-knowing Master who knows even the innermost latencies of our mind. We shamelessly indulge in things which no sane person would do in the false belief that no one is looking at us. We must at all times remember that the Master in his subtle form is ever with us and watching all our deeds. Be careful to avoid misdeeds and misdeameanors at all costs. And last but not the least we should in no wise transgress the limitations imposed by him and pledge on this blessed day positively to follow his instructions with a rededicated zeal. Please make a careful note of all these things so that you may live in peace and be really blessed.



Kirpal Singh addressing a Satsang gathering at the Friends Meeting House, 2111 Florida Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., in January 1964.