THE TEACHINGS OF KIRPAL SINGH
Volume III

THE NEW LIFE

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DIVINE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL

BOOK ONE

THE NEW LIFE IN THE WORLD

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The New Life in the World

True Living

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

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

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

honest endeavor from day to day before one can note an appreciable improvement in his life and conduct, both toward himself and toward others around him.

"What constitutes the life of man?" one might naturally ask. The aged one with a lot of experience in life and fed up with what he has seen and experienced of the world, turns to self-analysis of life. Does life consist only in eating, drinking, sleeping, having children; fearing, fretting, and fighting; snatching, hoarding, and hating; in imprisoning and subordinating those that are inferior to us in strength, physical or mental; and in killing others and grabbing other people's possessions? Must we pass our days in enjoying the ill-gotten earthly gains with no other achievements in the end but to die a miserable death, with sorrow to self and those around us, the near and dear ones who helplessly stand by and mourn? Again, what about the worldly attractions—lands, buildings, money, pets and other countless possessions which, perforce, are to be left behind against our will? In the face of all these hard facts of experience, should the hoarding of worldly riches then be our sole aim—the be-all and end-all of our existence—or should we strive for something higher and nobler, permanent and lasting, that may abide with us here and hereafter? The reply is simple: the Almighty Power, the original source and fountainhead of all life, our home of happiness, peace eternal, and the means of our liberation from fearful bondage of births, deaths and karmas, should be the main objective and the only thing worth craving and achieving, for it is the *summum bonum* of life.[1]

Q. To what extent is outer behavior indicative of inner spiritual growth?

A. A keen sense of self-abnegation and self-naughting is the outward expression of one's spiritual progress. It is not exhibited to hide our weaknesses but to actually make one feel in the heart of hearts that one is nothing but a mere tiny cog in the vast machinery of Divine purposes. One who becomes a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan never asserts but humbly describes in third person. He never despises anyone but always relishes to offer loving help and assistance to others. He does not criticize, but narrates the facts of life in a selfless manner for our spiritual benefit. He lives sincerely up to the Holy Commandments, irrespective of the results. He does not yield to the environments, but adjusts himself cheerfully, knowing it fully well that he is always under the Gracious Protection of the Master-Power. He is never gloomy and in his heart of hearts is always cheerful, even in the face of misfortunes. He does not blame others for their shortcomings but seeks to weed them out by careful living and adaptation. He does not attribute his spiritual progress to his own single-handed earnest endeavors but considers it as a Holy Gift from the Master. He is well-balanced in failure and success. He can forgive and forget easily. He is seldom provocative and is rather blessed with a keen sense of loving co-operation for the spiritual welfare of others.

He does not assert his authority nor claim any superiority over the less developed souls, but behaves like a friend or brother and inwardly prays for their redemp-

tion. He never feels burdened with the worries of others and can offer sublime solutions with much ease. He is ever compassionate in his heart and wishes the welfare of all men, animals, birds, or insects. He is always full of deep gratitude and seldom complains about his difficulties whatsoever. He is chaste and kind but hides his virtues under the cloak of studied science. He never boasts of his valor or intelligence but seeks to help others surreptitiously. He dislikes limelight. He shuns publicity and feels shy in large crowds. He does not like acting and posing, but is always unassuming and natural in his behavior.

He can silence his thoughts at will by attuning with the *Holy Naam* within and by turning his attention to the Holy Feet of the Master. He is ever protected by Him and is hourly fed—nay, rather, every moment is blessed with the loving life-impulses from the Master Power. He knows fully well that this physical life is but a passing phase of the soul from the lower categories of creation in the long drama of human existence, and nothing material will accompany it into the Beyond. He does not believe in hoarding but tries to live a frugal life full of contentment. He is not allured by the spell of high living but considers it as a strong fetter on the human soul. He does not vie with the so-called affluent and rich people, but inwardly prays for their spiritual liberation from the wheel of birth and death. He does not live for eating but eats for living a life full of Divine Bliss and Harmony. He is not fond of gaudy dress but is satisfied with the simple garments procured at reasonable prices.

He does not shirk hard work but undertakes mighty

jobs for the good of others at the cost of his physical endurance in a selfless manner. He does not demand reward for his labors but considers the sacred dedication as a boon in itself. He will seek to help others even at the cost of his own suffering. He is, in a nutshell, a righteous man of good thoughts, good words and good deeds.[2]

Today, it is becoming more and more difficult for an honest man to live in the world. Virtue is on the decrease and is to many the object of derision. Vice is on the increase, and its practice is even lauded as a virtue. The moral fabric of society, which is its warp and woof, is becoming threadbare, and if this process is allowed to continue, the fabric will tear apart. Even art, which in former years was a means used to educate people to a nobler way of life, has not escaped this destructive process. In the theatre, cinema and television media, the filth and dirt of perverted intellect is spawned forth without let or hindrance. Even the most respected of all educational institutions, the university, is becoming forgetful of its true function, which is to produce the highest type of citizen dedicated to the service of his fellow man.

It is to counteract this pernicious process that Ruhani Satsang has established, both in India and abroad, training centers or study circles where man can learn the true values of life, as taught from a spiritual standpoint. In these centers, the students are trained and guided by personal classes, through correspondence and submission of progress reports. The progress reports detail the success and failures that are experienced in the practical application of the principles of true living which are taught

to the students by such classes.[3] Initiates should be guided by the Teachings of the Master only, in all phases of life, whether material or spiritual. To allow other concepts to creep in is to sully His Teachings and confuse the initiates.[4]

Worldly Attachment

ONE'S ATTENTION is his sole legacy and estate of greatest price, and too much external expansion is detrimental to one's spiritual interests, as well as worldly ones. One should therefore endeavor to make the best use of all outer pursuits to achieve the ultimate goal of knowing one's self by practical self-analysis and knowing God.[5]

So love is innate in our soul and we are conscious beings. If it is directed to all Consciousness, it is true love. That will give you freedom, all bliss, and all joy. If it is attached to the worldly things, the physical body, its environments, the enjoyments of outward faculties, then that is bondage and a sure way of coming again and again to the world where you are attached.[6]

When God meets you and gives you initiation, something to start with, He guards you against reveling in the outward enjoyments, in the low pursuits of lust, anger, and their effects. These impressions are received through the outgoing faculties, which are open to the outside world, and they are embedded into the astral

body. To give an example, if you take a glass and cover it with some wax, make some impressions on the wax and then pour some acid over it, all those impressions will be embedded into the glass. Similarly, all impressions from outside are impressed in our astral body through the physical body and outgoing faculties.[7]

The Master wants each of us to penetrate through the fleeting forms and patterns and pass on from the phenomena of Nature to Nature's God. He warns us not to be misled by alluring attractions and wild enchantments spread out by Dame Nature through her evanescent charms and fleeting beauties. We should take them merely as signposts pointing to the Lord, the Eternal God that resides within and pervades each of the ephemeral productions. He further wants us to summon up all our energies and press them into service, so as to make our bodies the living temples of the Divine Music—the Word—in our earthly sojourn.[8]

Attachment to the objects of the senses, the gorgeous display of riches and wealth, the luxuriant abundance and opulence, the licentious sensualism of ease and affluence: all these contribute to the imbalance of the unsophisticated mind. These are thorns and thistles that mar the beauty of the undisturbed state of mind, which is the soil best suited for the dawn of Divinity. Every day, every hour and every passing minute are leading us more and more into the bondage of sensuous worldly phenomena.[9]

Romantic life on the physical plane appears charming. It has its attraction, but it is debasing. It leaves behind

horrible bitterness and a dislike for life. Life on the higher planes is more romantic and gives eternal peace and joy—so why lose a higher and purer thing for lower and debasing transitory things? One has, therefore, to stick to one's principles and not violate the rules of purity and ethics, and he who does this, receives all the necessary help in his efforts and is greatly benefited.[10]

Those eyes which are attracted to a beautiful woman or man are defective eyes, for that beauty is temporary and only for a few years. A thing which sweetens your tongue cannot sweeten it forever; the sweetness lasts only for a few moments. If we take Master to be all sweetness, then nothing will be sweeter to us. Instead of so many efforts to dig so many pits, put in all your efforts to dig a well so that you may be able to drink the Water of Life. We have got to accumulate wealth—what is this wealth? It is the wealth of Naam—that very Power which is giving life to the whole universe. Remember: God first and world second.

Like a flute, be all vacant within so that the Master may make sweet music of your life.[11]

Reading of books is a good thing. But their purpose is that one should mould his life so that the good about which one reads becomes a part of his life.[12] Mere book knowledge or intellectual development fails to awaken Spirituality. Through book learning the intellect is certainly stuffed, but the spirit receives no food. This is why each one of us can speak fluently of spiritual matters, but actual life gives no evidence of it.[13] Anything which

is above the intellect cannot be explained—it can be contacted only.[14]

Photographs should be kept only for remembrance and not for visualizing. Dwelling on photographs will, after some time, bring the picture before you which will neither speak nor move to guide you inside. On the natural Path mind has to be stilled . Everything will come naturally and unasked.[15]

You ask about music. Music is not necessarily bad for spiritual meditations, as prayerful hymns sometimes prove beneficial in awakening the inner impulse. But outer music feeds the mind, whereas listening to the Holy Sound Current feeds the soul, with which it is surcharged, as it enables it to have regular flights to the regions of the Beyond.[16]

I note your inclination for golf and cards. The latter game is harmful and you have done right to discontinue it. Golf is a good game so far as its physical refreshing aspects are concerned. It is a good physical exercise, and if you can afford it, there is no objection to your continuing with it. You know gambling or the like is harmful. You will appreciate that the mind is already full of restless attributes—so feeding it with more of similar disturbing ideas will simply mean adding fuel to the fire.[17] Speculation or gambling is a great sin and as such, spiritual aspirants are warned not to indulge in it, in the larger interests of their spiritual progress.[18]

Most of our attachments and actions in life are to pay off the karmic debts. Your going to relatives again and again was one of them.[19]

One must not be led away by the world but look upon each object with discrimination. "The entire world is tied with the ropes of the love of parents, children, wife and earthly relations," and one must free oneself from this slavery. Running away to the jungles was no solution. It had to be an inner detachment, and this inner detachment could only come through the love of a true Master. Hence the great value of Satsang, for it was only through association with Him that one imbibed the true values of life, learnt of the delusions of Maya, and imbibed a love that displaced the love of the world. Peace and blessing radiate from the person of a Saint and whoever came under His spell was freed from worldly tensions, ambitions and jealousies. He saw all creatures as of His own essence and knew all worldly gains to be a passing shadow. Such a man alone could cut through the meshes of Maya and reach out towards the worlds beyond.[20]

O Lord, we are your ignorant children. The Guru teaches us and makes us open into awareness. Today you may do one thing, tomorrow something else; you are unstable and always wanting new things, from which you go on desiring other new things. The Master always gives permission for what you want, and remains with you in all you do, but gradually continues turning you toward the Truth: that your interest in It becomes more and more powerful. When He has your interest well established, He will make a new life for you and take you into a new world.[21]

Stay in the World; an Inner Detachment is Needed

THOSE PERSONALITIES who are Truth personified never advise the seekers to leave their hearths and homes to take up vigil in the jungles and lonely places. This is not at all necessary.

When you meet a complete Satguru,
Competent is His method:
Laughing, playing, eating, weaving,
You will gain salvation by following Him.

It is not a matter of leaving the condition wherein God has placed you; there is no need to change your location, but simply change your angle of vision. Bow down to the Satguru's words, not His body only, or you remain very far away from Him and from your aim.[22]

God is within you. The Guru or Master Power is within you. He is waiting for you, but you are attached outside. It does not mean that you should leave the world and go to the Himalayas. We have to learn swimming in water, not on dry land, and not only through intellectual wrestling. It is a training in which you are given something to start on within you. It is like the needle of a compass, which always points to the north. It is to be done while you are doing your work in the world. A true Master does not advise you to leave the world, but to remain in it and yet be not of it. A boat remains in the water and you may be rowing in the boat; otherwise, you will be drowned. If the outward impressions are

overflowing within you, you will be drowned in the water of the world and will have to come back again and again.[23]

The seeker who had found a true Guide and who had begun to develop the right kind of love and faith in Him, would naturally attempt to fashion his life according to his Satguru's Will, and Baba Ji laid great emphasis on the need to transform our lives. It was not necessary, he maintained, to leave the world in order to pursue the inner path. What was needed for spiritual progress was inner detachment, and he who had surrendered himself completely to his Guru was free from all earthly ties. Some of his disciples would at times express the desire for complete renunciation, but he always kept such tendencies in check:

> "You say you wish to give up home and service and devote yourself exclusively to Bhajan. Home or service or wealth—are they really yours? Turn it over in your mind. It is all a magician's game and the world is a dream. Then wherefore worry about clutching and relinquishing.[24]

You are not the man-body, but are a conscious entity: you have got the intellect but are a conscious being. You have been given this man-body by the grace of God to enable you to go back to your Home. You are to remain here, pay off your debts, your give and take and find your way back to God.[25]

True Living: to World and to God

KABIR SAHIB says that all are human beings and this is the time to understand these noble things and awaken out of the slothfulness.

Awake beloved, why sleep?
The night has passed, why lose the day also?

This is the time to wake up—to become more conscious. Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and remember that your soul belongs to God.[25]

You can make your home a lonely forest. Is not the night a lonely forest? The disciples who spend their nights in sweet remembrance of the Lord become God themselves. If a man can control the dim hours from sunset to sunrise he becomes a true human being.

One Master has said that in the night, the Lord's fragrance is given out—he who remains awake receives this precious gift. Do the worldly duties in the daytime, and at night consider that you are all alone, deep in the country. One's duties and social obligations with family and friends should be performed with pleasure, because God has joined you together, for the sake of give and take. But in the night you can feel free from all this and repose in His lap. It is not at all necessary to leave your home and family for meditation when you have the long lonely nights. When you are wholly absorbed in some object, it is a true sanyas, cutting off from all other things; and if we start from today, most definitely our lives will change.[27]

We should cultivate true humility, which is neither servile nor assertive. These are the things that will please the Master and make us receptive to the gracious Master Power working overhead. If you live a life of humility and simplicity, you will have peace of mind. After all, what is there on earth that belongs to you? Why be attached to the vanities of the world when the treasures of divinity lie within you. If you live for God, all things shall work out in your best interests, not only spiritually but also materially. This is the fundamental law of God and can be realized by all who practice true living.

Another important aspect of the "good life" concerns outer behavior, which should be natural to the society into which one is born; no acting or posing is required. There are some dear ones who believe that they should adopt the outer symbols of dress and name that characterize the society into which the Master was born, in the belief that this is pleasing to Him. The life of the spirit does not call for conversion to outer modes of living in name, appearance or apparel. The Masters do not come to make or unmake social orders. Their mission is just to fulfill the law of God, which is to redeem His lost children. They simply ask us to convert ourselves inwardly, to be poor in spirit and pure at heart.[28]

You need not worry about the opinions of others. Views based upon one's own testimony are the best. Every person receives help according to his individual receptivity. All are on the way to Perfection. All that each dear one has to do is carry on with meditations regularly, with love, faith and devotion, and to develop from

day to day. All necessary help is extended from the Master Power within and without.[29]

Just learn to live in the living present, making best use of time at your disposal. The precious moments of earth life spent in meditations and honest work count much for inner spiritual progress.[30]

With continued spiritual progress toward inner development, outer things become less disturbing. Remember, events come and go. Inner development, as it progresses, will gradually eclipse the physical temptations. One begins to do things in order to carry on with the higher ideal always before him or her, the fulfillment of which becomes an all-absorbing vocation in one's life. Such things as are conducive to higher progress become joyful.[31]

Everyday and every hour convey thanks to the Master —the God in Him, Who has put you on the Way—and for all other gifts you enjoy. In this way you will be aware of the Master all the time. Without Him you can do nothing and with Him you can do all things. The more time you will spend with the Master, the smoother your everyday life will become.[32]

Try to develop within, and you will see for yourself how the karmic circle works. The why and the wherefore of all things will become as broad daylight when you rise into the causal plane.[33] The possibility of future incarnations can be ruled out by gradual development of loving devotion to the Master Power and aversion for worldly possessions.[34]

If you sleep in remembrance of God, the very thought

will be circulating in your bloodstream, and when you awaken, you will arise in His sweet remembrance. They say that if one's early morning hours are wasted in sleep, one dies before living.[35]

So whatever labels are stuck on your physical form, allow them to remain, and keep your own faith, language, symbols and customs. The soul, however, is of the same essence as God, and we are all His children. The soul therefore belongs to God—give it to Him.[36]

If you will run Godward, all else will follow of its own acccord.[37] The greatest purpose of human life is that one should know one's self and know God, and all the rest is mere dissipation.[38]

Master is "Word made flesh." *He is Light, Life* and *Love*. If you live and move in Him, He will be your very *Life* and give you more *Light* and *Love*.

Word is the "Bread of Life" and "Water of Life." When you are hungry and thirsty, enter into the inner stillness and receive amply of the same, which gives Life Eternal. This is within you; none is barred from it.

Forget the past, forget the future—relax fully. Be still; be alone to your own self, giving yourself wholly to the Master. *Light* and *Love* will be generated through you to all the world over.[39]

Right Thoughts, Right Actions

EVERY THOUGHT, every word, and every deed, good or bad, leaves an indelible imprint on the mind and has to be accounted for. Hence the necessity for right thoughts, right aspirations and right conduct, all of which constitute the hedge around the tender sapling of spirituality.[40]

I wish you to "simplify, simplify, and simplify." To be simple in all aspects of life is to accept Life.

Try to help all others with a spirit of self denial. Your self will expand to cover all humanity and other creation. Such an enterprise will lead your soul on to God.

Be pure in thought, word, and deed and love all. Love is the panacea for all ills of life. Be good and do good. These five words contain in them the essence of all religions of the world. My work shall be amply repaid if you live up to them.[41]

Man is what he thinks about all day long. One can only live one moment at a time. Emerson said, "There is no moment in eternity more important than this moment." All real good or evil that may befall a man is from himself. If a man lives in a good or bad way in the real present, he will ensure the same in the future. If you have bad thoughts for others, you will harm not them only but yourself as well, as thoughts are very potent.[42] Nothing is good or bad in the world, but our thinking makes it so. We, like the one or the other of the seeds, draw upon impulses from the atmosphere as suits our own mental make-up.[43]

The road to perfection lies in walking rather than in talking, and such a thing as judging others or the Master from one's own viewpoint or understanding gained so far, is hardly justified or proper for anyone. All are on the road to Perfection and it is not wise for anyone to find fault with others.[44]

Talking is easy. Doing is difficult. Nothing is gained by talking, but by doing one may progress on the Path.[45]

Too much talking dissipates spiritual energy. You should try to control your speech by resorting to Simran of the Names silently. You will be able to tide over the difficulty and improve in due course. Think twice before you speak. Think out as to whether what you speak is true, kind and necessary.[46]

The Master's strong and protective arms and His loving vigilant eyes are always on His fold. He is for their progress. When outer difficulties seem hard, His inner grace increases. If someone says something unpleasant about you, consider it calmly. If what has been said is correct, partly or in the main, try to remove those defects and thank the person for his kindness in pointing out those truths. If, on the other hand, those things are incorrect, accept the fact that the person is not fully informed and has spoken through a misconception. Excuse him for it and *forget* it. Should an opportunity occur to remove this misunderstanding, remove it lovingly and with an open heart. This will hasten spiritual progress and help to clean the vessel which is destined to be filled with the ever-ready and over-flowing grace of the Master.[47]

So long as one has not attained universal consciousness, differences of opinion are bound to exist. But if one has understood their cause, one will not allow them to disturb one's peace of mind. Whatever the outer opposition, whatever the opinions of others, if one has surrendered oneself completely to one's love, then nothing can ever disturb one's equanimity or obstruct one's spiritual course. He who is upset by what others have to say is without question one who is still controlled by the ego and has yet to conquer his self. He has yet to learn the rudiments of spirituality.[48]

So whenever anybody hurts your feelings in word or deed, forgive. Forgiveness is the only sweet water that will wash away all dirt. Justice won't do it, mind that! If you want justice, then that will react. Forgiveness only washes away all dirt. Forgive and forget, this is the way to spirituality.[49]

Good books are helpful but too much dwelling on such like books results in bewilderment.[50] An unbiased and careful study of the sacred books published from here will bless you with more of right understanding. These do not require further interpretation. Howsoever, if you will attempt to elaborate the subtle points discussed in them, you shall have to be more receptive by eliminating yourself totally and let the gracious Master Power work through you. Smooth channels do get moist with the inflow of divine grace and for deriving maximum spiritual benefit you should be more self-abnegating and humble.[51]

The ethical and clean life is most essential, but without some degree of inner conviction, one would generally

run the risk of a lapse, under some severe stress and strenuous strain. This conviction and growth, in fullness of bloom, is necessary and the Master, through His sheer grace and kindness, helps to obtain it. Your welfare is as dear to me as His child is to a loving Father.[52]

Try to live by the precept of the Master and then alone your words can have weight with your friends. You cannot preach of chastity with lust in your heart and a leer in your eyes.[53]

If there are those who do not understand or who do not wish to understand the Truth, we must not feel irritated with them. They are all God's children as we are, and must be won over by love and persuasion.[54]

All initiates are on the Way. Some have developed more than others. So some may have more faults and failings than the others. We have to hate the sin and love the sinner.[55]

We should be happy in the happiness of others and suffer in the sufferings of others.[56] 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.[57]

It is indeed a great service to make a dreary child find its way to the Father, and contrarily it is the height of sin and stupidity to prevent one going the right way and to misguide him.[58]

You are beginning to learn that things in life happen according to plan. That plan is a direct result of reactions

of one's own actions. It is therefore stressed that one should act lovingly and sweetly so that further reaction is properly channelized, side by side with the liquidation of *Pralabdh* (destiny) karmas.[59]

You are advised to be more calm, patient and tolerant in face of harshness. Such like passing phases of trials and tribulations come up as a reaction of past karma and as such should be treated in the like manner.[60]

It is true that laws of Nature are very rigid and any transgression must be paid, though their severity is, to a great extent, toned down at the feet of a Great Master. Each one has to earn and cleanse one's own vessel before it is filled with blessings of the Master. There are no windfalls, although the labor bears more fruit in the house of the Master.[61]

Yes, the philosophy of karma has a specific place in the Science of the Soul. But it should not induce morbidity nor create a sense of frustration among the initiates and non-initiates. Man is the maker of his own destiny. Though one cannot alter the past, he may forge the future.[62]

The past is dead and buried and repentance, though good in itself, cannot cure or undo it, while the future is chiefly based on the reactions of the past karmas, and is affected to a great extent by what we are doing in the living present. So, if we care for living a nice, honorable, and honest life in the living present, abiding by the Holy Commandments of the sages and seers, there should be little to worry for the past and nothing to become anxious about for the future.[63]

We must, therefore, pay proper heed to the sowing and not to the harvesting, for the harvest will come of its own from the seeds sown. Guru Nanak has beautifully said: It may be very well to worry about events and happenings contrary to the divine plan (which, of course, can never be): and what is destined will, of course, happen in spite of us. Learn the sacred technique of doing one thing at a time and that, too, with one-pointed, wholehearted, and undivided attention. In this way you will accomplish much more in less time and with far less effort. So the Master tells us that all we need to care for is our spiritual perfection and take the routine round of the fated karmas as superbly beneficial for soul emancipation. In this way we will cultivate a state of perpetual resignation which will be helpful in holy meditations.[64]

It is a happy thing to note that you have a dominant desire to better the world in which you live, and that you worry about the human race and let your salvation take care of itself through good works and clean living. It is a very noble idea. But the practical way of effectively carrying it out is to first grow into a beautiful flower yourself and then to emit fragrance and sweetness to all, as a matter of course.[65]

"Service before self" is a very good thing. But very often one does not even know the true significance of service and with all his well-meaning intentions actually does disservice, instead of the much wanted service of which we so glibly talk. Until we discover the true "Self" within us, we cannot visualize, much less actually realize in others the self-same Life-Impulse vibrating in the uni-

verse. This is why emphasis is laid in the first instance on Self-Knowledge, for it paves the way to God-knowledge, and when it dawns, one sees nothing but the Spirit of God working in all harmony, in each creature. "Service to others" now assumes quite a different aspect, becoming a dedication to the Spirit of the universe pervading in and around you, because when one grasps the Human in himself, he understands all mankind.[66]

Every initiate has to be put on the Way and will one day reach his True Home in *Sach Khand*. Those who work earnestly and live according to the commandments of the Master will progress quickly, while others will take more time to reach their goal.

The journey home is a long one, but a pleasant one, and when one reaches the True Home, he may be selected as a Master. This is, of course, a commission from God. Anybody who after a little progress, considers that he has become a master, just harms his or her own interest. This is ego and should be avoided.[67]

It is most difficult to please a Guru: he is above offerings of money, property and worldly goods. You cannot have his pleasure by demand, either. His pleasure may be gained through respectful attention, obedience to his wishes, devotion, and selfless service to humanity.[68]

Gratitude is a very rare virtue. Because of friends and relatives, we even risk our Guru's displeasure; and this is due to lack of gratitude and faith.[69]

If the child comes up one step, He comes down a million steps to pick up the child. We are all laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. We should learn to appreciate the

good in others. It helps us all around.[70]

These three things will help you: to eat less, sleep less, and have mercy, forgiveness and love.[71]

Do not dwell upon past happenings or try to recapture their past pleasures, for in that way the mind is fed surreptitiously.[72]

Procrastination is the thief of time.[73]

Abortion is unnatural action and amounts to the taking of a life. It should not be encouraged for obvious reasons of karmic debts.[74]

So we are:

To be just and friendly to everyone.
To be sincere and to be true to one's self.
To be good and to do good to others.
To make others happy.
To comfort the sick and the afflicted.
To serve the poor and the needy.
To love God and all His creation: man, animals, birds, reptiles, and also the least conscious.
They are all members of the One family of God.
There is one caste, one religion, *and* one God.
There is only one caste—the caste of humanity.
There is only one religion—the religion of love.
There is only one Dharma—the Dharma of Truth.
There is only one God—the Omnipresent.
the Omniscient.
the Omnipotent.
There is one language—the language of the heart.

Family

LET YOUR HOME be peaceful, as a peaceful home contributes much toward success in the spiritual practices. Even the bees will fly around in a noisy home to disturb the equilibrium of the mind. I am glad you are progressing. I have love for you. Any father will do all in his power to see that his children are at ease.[76]

If you have children, or father, mother, wife, husband, see the Light of God in them. He has united you in this relationship, not merely for an outer bond but to see and serve God in them. If you do so, there will be no bondage in your relationships. Bondage occurs only when the I-hood steps in and the Lord is forgotten. So you can do all the world's work, but live like a compass whose needle always points in one direction. Keep your attention on the Lord, for if the direction changes, then? *The Giver is forgotten, the gifts become loved, and miserable Man forgets the approaching death.* Man is fully enwrapped in the world—he is all "me and mine," and wherever "me and mine" are, there rules Illusion. "Me and mine" have some bearing on one's life, but the Lord Himself has arranged it, and when everything is seen in the correct perspective there will be no binding effects.[77]

I have led a householder's life. You also should live in the world, but there is no need to add to its degradation, and to your own. Women in the home should maintain it properly with cleanliness and tidy habits, look after the children with interest, and serve their husbands wholeheartedly. This is also a dharma (principle of righteous

living). To him whose home is heaven, the whole world is heaven. How can anyone hope to realize the Lord if they declare they serve Him and ignore the needs of others? Does it mean that we dislike God in some forms?[78]

I told the people in the West also, that every home should have a church—a temple, a gurudwara, or mosque—call it what you will; then morning and evening the whole family, big and small, should sit down in remembrance of God. The children's lives will change, and yours also. Example is always better than precept, and seeing you doing what is right, the children will copy you. We are in fact responsible for the coming generation's character, and if we will not change, how can we expect that character to be decent and upright? Stop for a while wherever you are, and review your situation. Search for true meanings hidden behind all things, and make sure you have got the right understanding.[79]

Please realize that it is your inner craving and fondness that keeps you bound hand and foot, as it were, to your dear ones, and this attachment or infatuation makes you worried and miserable at all times. You see, the very ties of affection which should be a source of happiness become fetters of bondage, as you are always in the grip of fears which to say the least, are imaginary and baseless. The heart, as you know, is the seat of the Lord God. It is an asset entrusted to us for a higher purpose of life: viz., self-knowledge and God-knowledge.

Where the heart goes, everything follows on its own. So herein the Master warns us against our attention being directed always towards our worldly relationships,

which always cause distraction and disturbance.
You know very well that the impediments which stand in the way of the child disciple and recklessly intrude upon him in the precious moments of holy meditations, are the family ties that drag us down, again and again, from the seat of the soul, the eye focus. We have, of course, to live in the world, yet in a completely detached manner, just as a lotus flower, which grows out of mire and yet holds its head aloft and above the muddy pond, retains its pristine purity.

Similarly, we are to attend to the mundane duties entrusted to our care without being concerned with the worries and cares of our relations, who, apart from us, are sufficiently protected by the Gracious Master Power.

You can very well understand it by a simple example. A man traveling in a train has a box beside him on the berth. Now both the man and his box are being carried by the train. If a person were to put the box on his head, he would surely be a fool, for he would break his neck for nothing. This is exactly the state of affairs with the worldly wise. We generally lack faith in the gracious Master Power and unnecessarily create problems for our bondage, as, otherwise, everything would progress smoothly in the well-established divine plan. You might well have noticed that disturbed waters do not reflect. Always try to resign your precious little self in favor of the Gracious Master Power, while sitting in your Holy Meditations, and thereby prepare a receptive ground for the inner divine grace to descend within you and fill you in abundance.[80]

I am sorry for the family disruption caused by a misunderstanding on the part of your dear mother and dear husband. Such things do happen sometimes for testing the integrity of spiritual aspirants. I appreciate your calm attitude in the face of provocation which will have a salutary effect on their strained nerves. The golden principle to be applied in such a situation is to leave the place and allow the atmosphere to become more favorable for weighing the sequences and consequences. A tumbler full of cold water when taken very often helps to bring down the temper and should be resorted to and astute silence be observed. This is a tried medicine for your guidance, which may be communicated to both of them.[81]

As regards your attitude towards your dear parents, you may please note that your duty is to be humble, polite and sweet outwardly and at heart. Everybody is free to choose his or her course of faith and action, which is chiefly determined by past karmic evolution. You should try to exhibit and inculcate more of loving humility which will be more effective to prove your greatness and that of the Holy Path on which you have been put. You do owe them some parental debt which can best be repaid by service and loving devotion. Please convey my love to them.[82]

The grown up children should deem it a rare fortune to serve their aged parents in all sincerity and humility, when they need much care.[83]

Q. If one has great love for relatives and wishes them the highest good in the world, can one pray to the Master that that person will get Initiation, or is it a destiny

fixed before death which nothing can change?

A. It is always beneficial spiritually for the initiates to radiate compassionate feelings for guiding the footsteps of their beloved ones to the Master for holy Initiation. The destiny of every person changes every moment by virtuous or wicked deeds. The holy Path of the Masters is open to one and all. It may, however, be understood that it is due to the evolution of some rare noble karma of past lives that the inner yearning of the soul gets strong for spiritual enlightenment and those dear ones who benefit from such chances by putting in extra effort are put on the holy Path, whereas others simply drift and have to wait for some better future chance. There are instances, though rare, when the sincere aspirants have seen, and received Initiation from the Master even without meeting him physically.[84]

God has united you, some as brothers, some as sisters, mothers or fathers. It is God who has united you, and you should behave in the proper way as a matter of devotion to Him. Because God has done this and because you love God, then pay off fully, as best you can. But all the same, you should be detached while doing this, just like a nurse who looks after somebody else's child. She nurses it, of course, but with all that, she knows at the heart of hearts that it is not her child. She does it for the sake of earning a living. Similarly, we should be in the world, pay off our debts, love those with whom our debts lie because God has united us, but all the same remain in air-conditioned rooms. They will only be air-conditioned if we become self-centered.[85]

So you should please be a loving and patient wife and mother to your dear husband and children. Do nothing that will upset them. Participate with them in your family life, which should include sitting down to eat with them at the dinner table. Be outwardly devoted to your mundane obligations in every way, but be inwardly and silently attached to God.[86]

Marriage

MARRIAGE MEANS to take a companion in life who will keep one another together in weal or woe during the earthly sojourn, and both of them meet the Lord. One duty may be of begetting children, for which the scriptures lay down that this power should be used for begetting the children, and rest from any such communion during the conception period, and also thereafter when the child is taking milk from the mother. In this way, the child, the mother and the father will all be healthy. Most of the diseases the people are suffering will be eliminated. The Saints say that if the children are to be given birth, let them become either Saints, a donor to all the poor and the server of the needy, or be valiant ones who can protect the forlorn and the weak.

The Saints do lead an ideal married life; and when they take up such a role, they stop such a course. So, married life is no bar to spirituality if led in accordance with the scriptures. The partners in life are advised in their best spiritual interests to observe chastity by leading a mod-

erate life by mutual cooperation. The check marks on the diary forms are essential for the people seeking improvement gradually. One learns by self-introspection and careful living. The dear ones are not forbidden to marry or have homes. But they should have ideal family life flavored with the divine grace of the Master Power. The young ones before marriage should be asked to lead chaste lives, as chastity is life and sexuality is death. A lamp burns splendidly when it has oil within, but if all the oil is leaked away, how can there be light? A life of self-restraint goes to make body and brain strong.

An impersonal deviated approach or slight relaxation in the observance of ethical code of morality in accordance with the sacred tenets of the holy Path is likely to cause harm. Normal association and company breeds attachment. But when this is flavored with divine fragrance and relished in the Name of the Master, this is bound to have much deeper impact. Opposite sex has much strong hold amongst one another when the charm results in gradual infatuation and bondage. A slight slip and attraction involved is too much to be resisted. This can cause much havoc when the dear ones are hurled down in the abyss of sensual gratification.

Divine Love and sex are quite opposing poles. Sex is not only sinful, but a serious impediment on the holy Path. It is by long cultivation when one can expect some degree of success in living a clean, chaste life. This aspect of life should please be kept in view by the senior members of Satsang when they can guide the "young buds" in their larger interests of spiritual progress.[87]

The serene love between the partners of life starts from flesh and dissolves in the souls. It is an attachment for the achievement of some higher goal of life and ultimate liberation from the Wheel. It is rather a life full of spiritual beatitude and dedication, serving as a sure sheet anchor against the injustices of society.[88]

Both of you should serve as the two wheels of a carriage thereby traveling on the way back to God. My love and best wishes are with you.[89]

Q. Please tell us something of the help which marriage partners might give one another when both are initiates in the matter of helping balance and harmonize the physical, mental and emotional fields of energy of individuals so as to increase their receptivity towards Shabd. This could be very inspiring for students yet to come as well as for those already begun.

A. Marriage is a sacrament and a companion for life in weal or woe, during this earthly sojourn. It is a rare boon of the Master when both the partners in life happen to be initiates. Both of them should exhibit and inculcate a deep sense of loving cooperation and tolerance for the rights of each other. The physical, mental and emotional fields of activity should be kept under check and control lest these degrade the soul in pursuit of carnal satisfaction.

To fall in sin is manly but to remain therein is devilish. The vital sex energy should be rationally transmuted and sublimated by exercising self-restraint and chastity. The procreation of children is one of the legitimate functions of married life. The scriptures prescribe this sacred pur-

pose as and when such a necessity arises. The couple having such disciplined lives will be an asset for spiritual progress.[90]

It is due to the evolution of past karma that persons with varying temperaments are brought together in the sacred bonds of holy matrimony for the liquidation of their give and take. All efforts should be made for cementing the relationship. You should try and be more obedient and serviceable to your husband. Loving devotion and respect for each other's sentiments will bring in more of right understanding and harmony. You are both dear to me and I wish for you both to be happy together and help each other to know God and to fulfill the highest aim of man's life. My blessings are with you.[91]

It is incorrect to think that you have married a wrong person, as it is strictly in accordance with the Divine Plan that only destined people are married to each other for the karmic reasons.[92] Two people are brought together by the unseen Hand of God. Whom God unites, let no earthly power disunite. You are one soul in two bodies.[93] St. Paul said, "It is the unseen hand of God which has joined wife and husband, and given the former to the latter and the latter to the former." Therefore, you should be careful that you love each other and have a pure and spiritual life. Let no earthly power separate one from the other who are united by the unseen hand of God. We should not dream of divorce. I note that you still have love for each other. Love knows only of sacrifice and of giving—cannot your love for each other make you tolerant of each other's views to the maximum ex-

tent and work jointly for your higher aim and ideal of life?[94]

As regards your wife, please treat her with love and toleration; when she will slowly understand the true worth of higher life, she will begin to appreciate your action on this side. Until such time there is no occasion to feel bad-tempered. She speaks from her present level; when it is raised, she will become more understanding; so she needs your love and indulgence to bring her around. Hate does not make amends for a bad thing. It is love that corrects, so give increasingly your love to her.[95]

It is due to the evolution of some past karma that persons of varying temperaments are blended together in the bonds of matrimony for the liquidation of their give and take.[96] The karmic debt of many an intricate nature is to be paid and it is proper that it should be paid while in physical frame so that there is no stop on the Way within.

Sympathetic waves often draw the effects of the karma of one's partner in life. Moreover, wife's and husband's right and wrong love goes a long way to help or retard each other's progress in the spiritual uplift. This you witness in daily life.[97]

You should be more obedient and serviceable to your husband which will enable you to win him. Love and humility surmounts all troubles whatsoever. Please convey my love to him.[98]

I have noted your remarks in regard to your dear husband. He is so dear to me and I wish him all spiritual

success. Your attitude toward him should be one of service and kindness. You must not lose your temper, but be patient and considerate. All spiritual aspirants should inculcate and exhibit rare tolerance and humility in their behavior, so that others may know that you belong to the Living Master. The balanced mind never becomes irritated or annoyed at the slightest provocation. One learns swimming in water and our daily living should be fashioned in such a manner that we make it a point to learn something new every day. Patience, humility and a sense of self-abnegation are the ennobling virtues which should figure prominently in the lives of the initiates. You will progress in this field in due course.[99]

On Raising Children

I HAVE NOTED about your lovely children . . . The raising of children is a virtuous duty. The young ones imitate their parents, who should reflect peace, harmony and sobriety by leading a disciplined life full of spiritual beatitude. The assertive attitude of dear —— shows the greatness of his soul. Self assertion is the innate attribute of soul which is all divine in miniature scale. This kind sentiment is mostly predominant in promising personalities who inherit congenial environments most helpful for their spiritual progress. You need not worry over his learning late about dressing or talking. So far as his demands are concerned, these should be met lovingly, as far as possible, as long as they are legitimate and within

the scope of his raising. The young sentiments should not in any way be injured. It is the unbounded love of the parents for the children which makes them bold, brave and adventurous in their lives. You must be an affectionate and bravely stern mother as far as your love and discipline is concerned toward your children. Your good action of sitting with them regularly for listening to the Sound Current is appreciated, and will be helpful for their spiritual growth. Please convey my love to them.[100a]

You may please try to lavish the things for her which she is prone to steal. You will find that when everything is procured for her, the tendency to obtain them by stealing will be overcome in due course. Simultaneously, you can ingrain in her mind that anything and everything she is desirous of having will be provided for her.[100b]

Mother's affection for the child is innate and should not be misconstrued as unchaste. Your recurring desire to hug him is a natural human instinct. You should know that mother's love is an inner impulse and goes a long way in the healthy breeding of the child. Every soul coming to this world relishes such loving care and affection which create an inner sense of bravery and boldness. Your sacred instincts are injected in the child, which will enable him to grow gradually, and the child will come out a healthy stalwart with the grace of the Master.[100c]

If the children make mistakes, appeal to their finer instincts, with love and careful understanding. Losing one's temper, shouting, and taking violent action will only confuse them; they will not know what they have

done wrong. Take time to explain, even three or four times, and it will eventually have effect.[101]

If you wish to have one or two children, well and good, but look after them properly and help them to become something good. Set a worthy example for them, and remain aware of the responsibilities of parenthood. Furthermore, the whole family should sit together and sing the praises of the Lord.[102]

Protection to Family and Friends

TRY TO REALIZE that God has concern for all His children and that He is Himself looking after all the dear ones in your family. Try not to worry about them, and the more you are devoted to your meditations, the more help you will be to all of them.[103]

Master takes care of and extends protection for all who are dear and near to the disciple and looks after their best interests.[104] The relatives of initiated persons do get help from the Master Power in proportion to the love that the initiates have for the Master and their relatives have for the initiates. Even the souls that have left the physical plane get feasible help in the manner indicated above.[105]

The near and dear relations of the sincere initiates are granted feasible protection in the Beyond, even if they had left much earlier, before the initiates took Initiation.[106]

Diet

OUR FIRST and foremost problem, then, is food, for food conditions body as well as mind.

Right Type of Food
Rightly Earned
Rightly Taken

helps a lot in this direction.

One must, therefore, earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, as the saying goes, and should not depend on others' earnings. We must for our livelihood engage in some honest and useful pursuit, maybe physical or mental, but it must be free from all guile, hypocrisy, ill will and animosity, for Karmic Law is inexorable in its working. Every action leads to reaction and thus the endless series rolls on interminably. Hence, the need for an honest living, howsoever poor it may be. You cannot have riches by honest avocation. Riches grow by the groans of the poor and the downtrodden, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, and thrive on the lifeblood of our fellow beings. We ought not, therefore, run after rich foods and dainty dishes, for these bring in their train much blood-sucking and are tainted with the untold miseries of the lowly and in the long run make us miserable as well.[107]

Now, foods are of three kinds:

1. SATVIK: Pure foods: milk, butter, cheese, rice, lentils, pulses, grains, vegetables, fruits and nuts.
2. RAJSIK: Energizing foods: peppers, spices, condiments, sour and bitter things.

3. TAMSIK: Enervating foods: stale foods, eggs, meat, fish, fowl and wine, etc.

Out of the above, we should always prefer satvik or pure foods. These do a lot of good. Again, even of these, we must partake a little below the saturation point of the appetite. When we get delicious foods, we are tempted to eat more than what is actually needed and the extra food taken, instead of giving extra health and energy, proves baneful. The food which is not digested properly and assimilated in the system causes colic pains and aches and in some cases even cholera, and one has to pay with one's life itself. "Do not overload the motor of your stomach," else you fall an easy prey to nausea. A surfeit of even what is good does prove harmful at times. A moderation in victuals and viands helps in the growth of vital powers in man.[108]

Fresh air is the most essential part in our food. One must intake long breaths, retain them a while and then exhale them out fully so as to cast out all the impurities of the body. Besides, one must drink a lot of pure water and take fruit juices to flush the system through and through to make one clean. But avoid all types of hot and soft drinks, spiritous liquors, and intoxicants, for they render the mind and intellect morbid. Grains and fruits should form our normal and staple foods.[109]

The satvik food keeps the head and heart free from all types of impurities.[110] The prohibited food flares up carnal desires.[111]

Q. Alcohol is not allowed to the initiates. Does it apply to such cases where it has to be administered under

medical advice for the restoration of health?

A. A certain percentage is generally there in most of the medicinal preparations for their maintenance, and there is no bar to the use of such medicines. All homeopathic medicines are prepared in alcohol. In both cases they have no intoxicating effect. But to take alcohol as such for the so-called reasons of health, even when prescribed by medical men as medicine, is prohibited, for every action has a reaction, and no amount of alcohol can prolong life even by a jot or tittle when the sands of time are running out. Do you think that alcohol can stop the process, and if not, why prolong the agony by administering deleterious substances?[112]

Food, as you know, is made for man and not man for food. We have to make the best use of food like all other things of life. One who is a slave of the palate, cannot do anything useful. By a righteous control of the palate, we can control our entire physical and mental systems. A simple diet is more nourishing and wholesome and conducive to spiritual advancement than all the so-called delicacies which the modern culinary art provides. It will always give a comfoltable feeling and serenity of mind, help you to live within your means, however limited they may be, without extending your hand before others.[113]

Sheikh Saadi, a great mystic poet of Shiraz in Persia, always preached to divide the stomach into four compartments: two for filling with a limited quantity of simple diet; one for pure and clear water while reserving one for the Light of God.[114]

Light evening meals are very essential for a spiritual

aspirant. As regards sleeping, six hours rest is more than sufficient for a normal and healthy person.[115]

The more we live a regulated life, the better our health will be. All phases of life are touched upon by the Master to help people. If you have a simple diet and eat only that much which can be digested, you will be healthy. If you eat more than can be digested, the result is that you cannot sit, you cannot think clearly, you cannot devote time, you feel lazy. So simple living, simple diet and high thinking is what is wanted. You should eat only what is really a necessity. Do not overfeed. Overfeeding will make you lazy and slothful. You will always be procrastinating. You will say, "No, I will do it later; let me rest." This is because the stomach is not well.[116]

It is the moral duty of the housewife to cook the satvik food with heart engrossed in sweet remembrance of the Lord. A food cooked like this, with the mind entrenched in the Beloved and the hands engaged in the work, becomes a manna from heaven and proves a blessing to those who partake of it. The great Master, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, often used to give us an instance of an Indian peasant with his hands on the plough but singing paeans of soul-enthralling songs to his lady love. Such indeed should be our attitude in these things.[117]

Sickness

THE PHYSICAL ailments come up as a result of reaction of past karma and have to be born willy nilly,yet much of the severity and duration is toned down with the loving grace of the gracious Master Power working overhead. The barest minimum which cannot be dispensed is to be passed through the gracious protection of the Master.[115]

When Baba Sawan Singh Ji's leg was fractured, Baba Ji revealed that it was the result of no mere accident but of past karmas whose fruit could not be avoided. But his suffering, if not wholly cancelled, had been mitigated through his Satguru's intercession. "Whatever suffering has come to you," Baba Ji wrote, "is only a fifth part; four parts have been condoned," and went on to add:

> Suffering and troubles are blessings in disguise for they are ordained by the Lord. If our benefit lies in pain, He sends pain; if in pleasure, He sends pleasure. Pleasures and pains are tests of our strength, and if one does not waver or deflect, then the Almighty blesses such souls with Naam.

Whatever troubles befell his disciples, Baba Ji told them to be of good cheer. The sooner their accounts were cleared the better, and special grace was theirs in the hour of trial:

> Sickness and pleasures are the fruits of past actions. All those who are sick are extended spe-

> cial grace. Let them, therefore, have no worry, but bear it with equanimity. During suffering, the mind wanders not and turns to Bhajan readily in sorrow. So blessed are the periods of sickness when the mind is turned towards Bhajan. This is a special gift to Satsangis. So whenever sickness and pain afflict you, accept them as the Lord's Will and devote yourself to your spiritual exercises. So long as the surat is absorbed in the Shabd Dhun, pain will not be felt . . . Has it not been said: "Pleasure is the disease and pain the remedy."[119]

Saints, when seemingly ill, are generally seen taking medicinal doses as may be prescribed by the physicians, but actually They do not need such treatment. This They do just to keep up the worldly order of things. In this way, they set an example to man to continue his worldly routine wisely and resort to proper treatment whenever necessary. It is, of course, expected of the disciples to resort to such medicines as do not contain products of, or substances from, animal sources; but some of the disciples who have an unshakeable faith in the benign power of the Master-healer within, usually avoid the so-called remedial measures, and allow nature to work on its own, for the healing power within is a part and parcel of the human system. The bodily disorders as they come should be accepted and borne cheerfully, for they are generally the result of our own dietetic errors and can be set right by resort to proper hygienic measures and selective foods. Hippocrates, the father of the medical system, emphasized

that food should be taken as medicine. Even serious illness resulting from karmic reactions has to be tolerated with patience without grumbling or bitterness, because all karmic debts are to be paid and their accounts squared here and now, and the speedier it is done, the better, instead of keeping any outstanding balances to be paid hereafter. In the time of Hazrat Mian Mir, a great Muslim devout and mystic, it is said that one of his disciples, Abdullah, when down with an ailment, withdrew his sensory currents to the eye-focus and closed himself safely in the citadel of peace. His Master, Mian Mir, when He visited him, pulled Abdullah down to the body consciousness and ordered him to pay what was due from him, for he could not indefinitely evade the payment by such tactics.[120]

Adversity

THE LIFE-PLAN of each of us has already been drawn by the Great Planner, and what actually we see and come by is nothing but an unfoldment of the Divine Plan, which, if rightly adjudged, is being executed with fine exactitude. But it should be taken as certain, that all things work to the good for those who love God; and since you are all directly linked with the God-into-Expression Power within, you are under His Grace and not the Law, to the minutest detail; and so severity, intensity, and duration of the trials and tribulations of life, whatever they be, are suitably and gracefully mitigated, softened, and toned down by the Master Power. Just have more of deep

faith in the Supreme Power within you, for undoubtedly It will come to your aid, guide you aright, and eventually take you out of the seemingly impossible situations, in such a sublime manner which you cannot possibly imagine.[121]

The physical bodies of all are apt to undergo change and are liable to be influenced by diet, climactic conditions, seasons, age and the like. The laws of Nature affect everyone to some degree according to the extent of one's knowledge of them, or whether he neglects or follows them. A devoted disciple living simply and cautiously and reposing all trust in the Master Power need not feel concerned with karmic situations even if they appear to be intolerable at the time. A loving devotion to the Master has always cushioned the hardest of conditions. Meditation is the most important thing and must not be neglected. Procrastination is the thief of time. Mind also is ease-loving by nature and should not be let loose to allow any neglect in one's program of life. As much time as possible should be devoted to this side.[122]

Divine Will works for the spiritual benefit of the dear ones, and fortunate are they who resign in His favor and accept the weals and woes of earth life cheerfully, considering them as helpful for their spiritual progress. Every day brings in untold chances of goodness and progress for a wise person to mold him or her in the cast of divinity. Reasoning is the help but reasoning the bar. Human intellect is prone to error and doubt which assail weak minds. Holy Naam is the bread and water of life given to you. These should be eaten and drunk lovingly

and regularly for having strength of soul. Any time you happen to be obsessed with negative thinking, just give out five charged names and think sweetly of the Master, and you will be blessed with instantaneous protection.[123]

Sometimes it so happens that something comes in our way which we think not good, but that very thing which appears before us is a remedy to set us right, so that we may have something higher. Man learns swimming in water, not on dry land. When you develop that angle of vision, you will have opened your eye to see things in the proper light.[124]

Physical troubles do crop up at times due to the reactions of past karmas, when the child disciple is obliged to undergo a purification process for eventual spiritual progress.[125] Many good and necessary lessons are derived from adversities.[126]

The storms of life, no matter how severe, must be faced, but with complete trust in the Master Power working overhead, and by trying to be regular in meditation and placing all hope in Him. This lessens the severity of the storm and brings hope and cheer. The storms are passing phases; they come and go.[127] It is the essence of right understanding to be contented with whatever comes, as it is invariably flavored with divine mercy and is for our spiritual benefit.[128]

Silent suffering strengthens character and has much compensation.[129]

I am sorry for your troubled affairs which dominate you and cause mental agony and disturbance. The inexorable law of karma operates and much of the severity

and duration of the strain is toned down by the intervention of the gracious Master Power. That is all that you can do, and doing so, you will be finding a new approach to your problems and will be accepting the results with cheer, knowing it to be a passing phase.[130]

When the Lord wants to make a great poem of a man's life, He sends him or her to the school of privations, worries and difficulties, and all the time He keeps extending His protective hand over him or her to pass through unscathed.[131]

Man would do little for God if the devil were dead. A man living under the shadow of an impending calamity lives at his best for he strives the hardest.[132]

Fear is not good and should be discarded by giving your worries over to the ever-present gracious Master Power working overhead. Fear is always based on some unknown apprehension, and one should look at it squarely and then it will flee in no time, as it is a result of your self-created frustration.[133]

We should be constantly on the watch not to stumble and fall when obstacles come on the way. Even if you fall, never allow such fall to throw you off balance in any way—pick yourself up and continue on your way with patience and perseverance with full trust in the Master working over your head.[134]

Even if prayer may seem to fail to avert calamity, yet it has the power to take the sting out of it. With an inner transformation there comes a change in the angle of vision, which greatly affects the outlook on life. Everything puts on a new mantle of color superbly Divine.[135]

As soon as a person collects himself and focuses his attention at the seat of the mind, he stirs up the mercy of God which, in turn, fills him with a strength and fortitude never experienced before. These enable him to find a way out of the difficulty whatever it may be.[136]

Morbidity

YOU NEED NOT dwell much on your personal character or impurities of mind. It amounts to self pity. Although it is a very happy augury to be conscious of one's shortcomings, undue apprehension sometimes breeds morbidity which hampers inner progress.[137]

Any moment you feel depressed you should resort to the counting of manifold blessings granted to you by the gracious Master Power.[138]

Depression and despair breed in egoistic hearts. Ego is a human element. It is annihilated very slowly by meditating on sound current and light principles. Gradually it will dawn upon you that you are a doll in the hands of divine power dancing to His bid.[139]

Prayer

THE GRACIOUS Master Power working overhead sets in motion all forces of nature to save the child disciple under all circumstances. An intense yearning, an imploring and fervent prayer coupled with sincere effort will never fail you.[140]

The trouble with us is that we do not know how to pray. We may in a case like this simply ask, "O Lord! teach us how to pray."[141]

Since all souls are of the same essence as of God and are correlated with each other, one may as well pray for the benefit of others. High souls always pray for the good of the entire humanity. They are not content with the greatest good for the greatest number as is commonly sought by the leaders of society. Their prayers generally end with the words: "O God, do good unto all."[142]

It is a common experience that most of our prayers get no response. The reason for this is not hard to find. We have not yet learned the Will of God and how that Will works entirely for our benefit. In our ignorance we very often pray for things that in the long run are likely to do more harm than good, and no wonder that the loving Father in His boundless compassion for us does not accept such prayers and they bear no fruit, or else we would never be able to escape from sensual enjoyments.[143]

Spontaneity. A prayer being the cry of the soul in agony is most beautiful and most natural when it gushes forth spontaneously like a spring of cool water from the bowels of the Earth. It needs no embellishments of particular words and peculiar phrases. On the contrary, such adornments mar the true beauty of free expression, and very frequently the man of prayer is imperceptibly drawn in and imprisoned in the net of verbiage. All this makes a prayer artificial—a product of deliberate art divorced from feelings. Such prayers make us false to ourselves

and are not at all beneficial. God is concerned with genuine emotions expressed in howsoever simple words and not with set speeches, vain repetitions, ostentatious phraseology and learned expostulations.[144]

A Disciplined Life

APPRECIABLE INNER PROGRESS cannot be made until you learn to lead a well-regulated and disciplined life. A regular schedule of devoted meditations, morning and evening, coupled with weeding out of all lower desires and sensual impulses, will bless you with inner strength and fortitude to carry out your daily obligations and also ensure inner spiritual progress.[145]

The way to salvation lies not outside; it is within. Outer rituals are of no avail and, though it is desirable to honor the memory of past Masters, to be lost in the worship of their samadhs, statues or pictures cannot be of any substantial use. One must hold up their lives as a model and, like them, concentrate upon the world within. Baba Ji himself would spend weeks in Bhajan and Simran with only short breaks for food. He always encouraged his disciples to give as much time as possible to the sadhans he had taught. Constant remembrance of the Lord was the best protection against attachment and Maya; and one should maintain the five-fold Simran all the hours of the day.[146]

It is a path of love, discipline and self-control. After the initial spiritual experience given at the time of Initi-

ation, the rest depends on relentless regular practice as enjoined by the Master. Daily practice with loving faith, in all sincerity and humility, is the cornerstone round which each disciple must turn, so as to make progress on the Path. Love for the Master means implicit obedience to His commandments.[147]

If, after all these means are applied, the disciple still does not understand and progress, he uses yet other means to keep him on the straight path. Forgive me, but when he pulls the rope, the soul writhes in torment. When the child does not obey and wastes his life, the Master shakes him hard, and though he might be a hopeless case, the unceasing love of the Master will infuse a breeze of enthusiasm into his heart eventually.[148]

After initiation by a Competent Master, the disciple is assured of going on to his True Home. Those who after initiation fall back to sin and to an evil life and remain attached to the world, will have to be incarnated again as a man or as a woman and then continue their progress on the Path. Those who have a deep love for and faith in the Master and are progressing and have given up all attachment for the world, will not be incarnated as a man or woman. They are placed in the lower planes inside where, with the help of the Master, they may progress on and eventually reach their True Home. Usually an ordinary initiate would take four births to complete his course, but it can be shortened even to one birth according to the disciple's love and faith and obedience to the Master.[149]

Association with People

QUESTION: *Should I avoid if possible those who, because of their worldly ways and negative vibrations, cause me to suffer—especially prolonged contacts?*

A. A man is known by the company he keeps. It is the association which molds our character, and the spiritual aspirants should be careful in keeping a keen vigil. The worldly-minded people are usually engrossed in physical and sensual pleasures and their activities affect the spiritual aspirant adversely. You should know that yours is the Way into the Beyond, whereas the worldly wise have their own ambitions of sense gratification. You should carefully avoid uncongenial society in the larger interests of your spiritual progress. Even the reading of obscene literature affects adversely, and as such, should be avoided scrupulously.[150]

It is always better to avoid company of those who have a tendency to pull down one's genuine spiritual desire.[151] Those who are far away from God are like cotton full of tangles. Without thread there is no cloth, so beware of those people in whom He has not manifested Himself, for they will fill you with further doubts. Though one may be already seeing a little truth, through association with such people, doubt will come and one will begin to wonder about it. Kabir Sahib says, "Run away from these people." If you desire some company, find a good and truthful person—otherwise keep aloof and lead a lone life. Each person's company has a very big influence, and in the company of him whose attention is

wandering, one will be further adrift. The company of him who is the controller of his attention will bring an exceptional stillness.[152]

The man whose astral body is quite clear of outward impressions, with no lust, attachment or hatred, but who is imbued with the love of God, such a man, when you come into His company, will radiate those qualities to you. In the causal body are the impressions of the past births. When these are also cleared, that man is called a Saint, in the true sense of the word. The Masters always deprecate the love of the physical body and outward attachments. If you have the company of, or think of someone whose astral body is not cleansed, who is not imbued with the love of God or is imbued with the outer attachments of loves and hatreds, the company of such a man will give you a like radiation.[153]

So to develop this love, we must first obey His commandments; second, weed out all imperfections; and third, devote time to the spiritual practices. You should also have the company of somebody who just reminds you of your ideal. Avoid the company of all others in whose society you are attached to the world, or forget Him. If you cannot have the company of those who can help you to remember Him, then it is better to live alone. Live with the Masters speaking through the books, through the scriptures. You will be better off.[154]

Q. Are all initiates related spiritually?

A. Yes, more than blood relatives, as they are destined to reach their True Home to meet there in due course, where all will become one with the primordial

Source. This is a true relationship which never breaks.[155] The souls treading the same Path naturally develop affinity for one another. Those who love one another are very dear to the Master. This mutual love should enable you to develop love for the Master and will in no way intervene between you.[156]

Work

CLOSELY ASSOCIATED with diet are the means of livelihood. There are no short-cuts in spirituality. The end here does not justify the means, as it may be construed to do anywhere else. Ignoble means to earn one's living do contaminate one's diet, the very source of life itself. So an honest living by the sweat of one's brow is essential in this line. The life plant has therefore to be nurtured with pure water to make it sound and healthy, a fit instrument for the efflorescence of spirituality.[157]

The Master's teachings do not touch the social structure of life, and therefore the thousand little duties of every day life that one may have to do are not interfered with. Work should be done as a part of the duty is all that is stressed, and that one should not be fully submerged and attached in such work to the detriment of one's spiritual uplift. Work one must and work one should. Work is worship, but one should dedicate all to the Master and not be grossly attached to it. A nurse would do the work of rearing up a child efficiently and

with joy in return for the remuneration she gets without any attachment. So should we do all our work. In this way the performance of physical duties will liquidate the give and take smoothly. So you may do any honest work that may bring you more financial gain, subject to the condition that you are able thereby not to forget and ignore your meditations. While you do your physical duties, let not your spiritual duties suffer.[158]

You must work earnestly for your livelihood. Work is the grand cure for all maladies and miseries that ever beset mankind. Work is worship, and as such, all honest work should be honored and undertaken in a spirit of dedication.[159]

All honest work is good and it should not bore you. You may consider that you are simply doing your duty to your Master when you are doing work, for duty is worship. Until such time therefore that you can find some other suitable work, you will carry on with your present work in the most cheerful way and not consider it boredom. You must support yourself and your family by honest means. It is just a way of thinking. Consider it to be Master's work and do it as your duty.[160]

It is good to work, and one should work wholeheartedly; and then forget it. To continue concerning oneself with countless petty matters will fritter away the attention. This only causes further enmeshing attachments, and wherever your thoughts are, there will you reside.[161]

Devotion to God does not mean procrastination. The lover of God works harder than other people because love knows no burden. Out of love he serves everybody.[162]

So please develop the habit ot putting your heart and soul in the work before you; be it worldly affairs or meditation. The habit of doing one thing at a time will help you to progress inwardly from day to day.[163]

"Work is worship" and as such, all honest work should be honored and accepted in this sense. The usual fatigue and exhaustion are the routine functions of the physical body, yet you can relax completely by fixing your inner gaze at the eye-center, releasing the pent-up tensions by rolling down all your worries and cares on to the holy Feet of the Master within. You will find a radical change in your thought pattern and will be greatly relieved with the grace of the Master.[164]

If somebody else is looking after you and serving you, that will be debited against you. You will become bankrupt. If you have got money in your bank, that's all right; otherwise, it will go against you.[165]

If some sincere seeker after truth who was living on the earnings of others came up to our Master, he was told to put in three hours meditation for himself and three hours more for those who served him. Nobody serves you without wanting something in return. So our Master asked those who were served by others to put in double time for their meditations to be successful in the way to reach God.[166]

Riches, Responsibility

RICHES *per se* are no obstacle in the way of "spirituality," for it is the common heritage of all, the rich and the poor alike, and neither of them can claim it as a special gift for himself. All that is required for success on the Path is genuine desire, honesty of purpose, a pure living, and a steadfast devotion to the cause. A rich man has, of course, to see that he does not use unfair means in amassing his wealth and that he uses his honestly acquired treasures in fruitful pursuits and not on wasteful and ephemeral gains. He should always look upon his riches as a sacred trust from God, wherewith to help the needy and the poor, the hungry and thirsty, the sick and the ailing, for all such people have a claim on him as human beings and children of the same Father.[167]

Gifts

IT IS DIFFICULT to go through life without going through the motions of give and take. It is this very give and take which has to be worked out by the pilgrim soul that brings us back to this world. There is no harm in accepting small gifts from those with whom you come into contact in your business or family connections, provided that you have been or are in a position to do them some service in a direct form. Likewise, small gifts may be exchanged during this season of goodwill among a family. However, it is not wise to accept gifts from ac-

quaintances, business or otherwise, who are outside your areas of immediate contact with whom you have no give or take.[168]

The Law of Karma is immutable and inexorable. The exchange of gifts amongst the satsangis will result in mutual balancing and adjustment. It should be understood carefully that the karmic binding lies in the fact that any gift is given or taken with the inner intention of doing so, whereas if the giver gives in a spirit of selflessness as a dedication to the Master Power, and the other receiving the same receives in a spirit of gratitude as a token of grace from the Master Power, both are relieved of the burden involved.[169]

Death

EACH MAN has to cast off the mortal raiment in a manner predestined and pre-ordained by past karmas, viz., by disease or accident. Death cannot befall anyone before it is due. Then why worry? We may not know as to how we will meet death, by disease or by accident, but one thing is certain, if the sweet remembrance of the Lord exists at the time, we will have a peaceful death, as the Master's presence will be overhead.[170]

Wherever our desire is, we shall go there. That is why a person's thought should be on God at the time of death.[171]

The initiates of the Living Master have a rare privilege for they are granted divine protection at the time of their final exit from the world. Such disciplined souls

are at the last moment greeted by the Radiant Form of the Master, who escorts them graciously into the realms of unalloyed harmony and bliss for further progress on the Path as may be necessary for each individual. There are living instances of such events when those leaving the earth plane for good bore testimony to the presence of the Master and made a happy transition, with the kindly grace of the Master.

Death is no bugbear; it is the name given to a change which comes when one leaves the coarse atmosphere of the earth and enters a finer one of Light. Something like the sun setting in one place and rising in another. We have to leave the body one day, and at the very first sitting, the Master raises the consciousness above the body and gives an experience of the Light and Sound Principle. Then, through daily practice, this is increased. The fear of death will leave. *He who is afraid of birth and death should sit at the feet of a Perfect Master.*[172]

This is another indication of the value of Naam. So we should now begin to earn it: become the controller of who we are and what we are, and with this all fear of death will go. A child cries at birth, and when he leaves he should have good reason to rejoice.[174]

There is no court of trial after death for a love-hearted disciple. The Master is ALL![175]

The major events of life are predestined. Your deep agony over the great loss your entire family has suffered is natural. You should please be rest assured that the blood and near relations of the initiates are granted feasible protection and help in the Beyond. You need not

nourish any feelings of sadness in this behalf, as such an attitude will not only affect your spiritual progress, but will cause disturbance to the departed soul.[176]

Yam Raj, the Lord of Death, is so strong that no one can overpower him; but the Guru's Shabd is all-powerful and so those who are connected to the Guru have full protection, and he cannot approach them. This shows something of the greatness of the Shabd. And yet Yam Raj was made by the same God Power. Why did the Lord make him? For His own work. But it has been seen that if a Satsangi who has the real connection with Naam, in whom the Naam has manifested (has appeared), sits at the deathbed of any person, even a non-initiate, while he remains there, the Lord of Death will not come to claim that soul.[177]

Q. Can an ascended Master help His initiates who are still on the physical plane?

A. Yes, a Competent Master is a Master to His initiates for all time, and does not rest till He takes the souls to the highest pinnacle of blissful glory in *Sach Khand*. He is not a physical being only, but Word personified, and on the higher planes acts as a *Gurudev* and *Satguru,* which terms would become meaningless if His activities were to be confined to the physical plane. If it were so, how could He take charge of the souls of the initiates on death after His passing away? A Master, in essence, never dies for the initiates. It is His troth to take them up to the True Home of His Father, and inwardly His Light and Sound forms are permanently implanted though He may have left the earth plane.[178]

Religion and Ritual

THE OBSERVANCE of religious practices, rites and rituals, keeping fasts and vigils, going on pilgrimages, etc., and doing breathing exercises are the elementary steps only which go to create in you a desire for turning to or meeting God. You have made the best use of them when you are put on the way back to God, which is the science of the Word or the Sound Current and is one for all humanity. A devotee of this science need not indulge in the elementary steps. In short, all acts involving physical labor belong to the realm of the physical world, while we have to rise above the body and bodily consciousness to get contact with the primal manifestations of the Godhead: Light and Sound. You cannot pray God with hands. "God is Spirit and can only be worshiped in spirit."[179]

I have no rituals, no forms, nothing of the sort here. No temple, no church, no mosque. Why? Because what I am telling you is the highest thing. Remain where you are; you are not to leave your religions but to make the best use of them and see how far you have proceeded, advanced, progressed on the Way. So that is one of the reasons why I have got no church, temple, or anything. I take them as elementary steps. People are stuck fast to them. They don't bear the fruits of performing the rituals or methods of outward performances. Here we have got no forms; we do not care what label you are wearing or what school of thought you have belonged to. We never care for it; we want just to enjoy that you

are a man, you are a soul. The same God is within you. You must rise in that God-consciousness. This is the main purpose of Ruhani Satsang, what we are after here. This is what the world needs today.[180]

Miracles and Yogic Powers

THE SCIENCE of the living Masters is the most ancient and the most perfect science the world has ever seen. It is the most natural and the easiest to follow, and can be followed by men of all ages. Married life, avocation, caste and creed, social and religious beliefs, poverty or illiteracy, etc., are no bars. It is an inner science of the soul and consists in contacting the soul with the Oversoul, with the help and guidance of the spiritual adept, well-versed in the theory and the practice of *Para Vidya* or the Science of the Beyond and capable of granting some first-hand spiritual experience at the very first sitting. Nothing is to be taken on trust or make-believe. Miracles, spiritual healings, psychic phenomena, fortune-telling, akashic records and worldly desires are all to be left aside, for these are positive hindrances on the Path. The entire energy is to be conserved for internal progress.

> *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all things shall be added unto you.*

This is the highest Truth that has been taught from hoary antiquity by sages and seers since the day of creation. It is unalterable and shall remain so. God, Godway, and Godman can never suffer any change and shall ever remain eternal.[181]

Master Saints never show any miracles to a disciple except in rare cases due to special circumstances. Miracles are in accordance with the laws of Nature but are nevertheless terribly entangling webs detrimental to the highest ideals of man in his approach to Almighty God. It is a subject that an ordinary man would not care to study, for the simple reason that it requires immense self-control and training of the mind, with restrictions that he would not like to tolerate or pursue. The miraculous powers achieved after a lengthy period of time are instrumental in doing both good and harm, and as they are utilized more for harm than anything else, they are termed as a disease by all truly spiritual persons. The Masters are in possession of Supreme Power but their mission is sacred. A disciple whose inner vision has been opened sees any number of miracles at each step. To hesitate to believe in a Master without seeing miracles is as foolish as our refusal to believe that a certain person is a multi-millionaire unless he shows us his money. He may have all his money deposited in a bank and wishes to spend it in the way that he chooses, without caring for public applause or approval. Out of an audience of several thousands watching a magician perform his tricks, only a very small number would thereby be induced to learn the art. Those who are anxious to see miracles are not true seekers.[182]

Saints do not display miracles nor do they allow any of their disciples to indulge in such vainglorious and empty baubles.[183] Making prophesies and performing miracles are simply collections of mind.[184]

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

The *sidhis*, or extraordinary powers referred to above, are yogic powers which of themselves come to aspirants after Truth with a little *sadhan* (practice) but these are positive hindrances in the way to God-realization, for one is generally tempted to indulge in miracles like thought-reading, foretelling, transvision, transpenetrations, wish-fulfilling, spiritual healing, hypnotic trances, magnetic influences and the like. These *sidhis* are of eight kinds:

Anima: To become invisible to all external eyes.

Mahima: To extend body to any size.

Garima: To make body as heavy as one wishes.

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

Prapti: To get anything one likes by mere wishing.

Ishtwa: To attain all glories for the self.

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

Vashitwa: To bring others under influence and control.[185]

Spiritual Healing

SPIRITUAL HEALING is prohibited by the Masters. It has reasons and deeper significance behind it, which ordinarily people ignore, considering the face value of the profits accrued and attributing it as service to the suffering humanity. The inexorable Law of Karma is supreme and demands adjustment of each farthing. The human body is the highest rung in creation granted by Providence for the spiritual perfection of the soul during this incarnation. The soul in man being of the essence of God Himself has the same attributes as those of God, but having been environed by mind and matter has lost its true heritage. Soul in its present state is gravely enmeshed by body and bodily attachments, which are more or less the reaction of past karma, which it has been contracting all through up to the present incarnation. The present earth life is a passing phase in the long journey of the soul from the lower categories of creation on to the True Home of the Father. Physical body is material but the soul is spiritual, but when reaction of karma occurs, the man is bound to suffer pain and pleasure.

Now the sufferings demanding spiritual healing fall mainly in the domain of physical troubles, which may include even mental agonies such as nervous breakdown, etc. These being the reactions of past karma must de-

mand adjustment and as such are to be borne by the victim. The healer, whosoever he may be, conducting this service, takes the karma on his head, to be borne by him at a later stage. Besides, the bit of spiritual attainment he has attained in silencing his mind is dissipated in such gestures of a miracle healing. Moreover, this process of healing is administered on weaker minds which usually fall a prey to their sentiments. What can ordinarily be cured by undergoing a bit of suffering and medicine, is exchanged for spiritual dissipation, and the debt remains standing, awaiting adjustment at a later stage. Again, this sort of healing becomes professional and at times encourages corruption and misery. It not only invites malpractices, but brings in more of mental agony and wretchedness in multiplied form added with interest. This is a causal postponement of payment for a future date, and adds strong fetters over the soul.

Contrarily, the Masters advocate right living and right thinking. A disciplined devotee of the Master is advised to lead a pure, clean, chaste life, thereby pursuing a spiritual goal under the protective guidance. The implicit obedience for the dietary regulations and leading a simple truthful life leads to happiness and joy. If, however, some suffering due to the evolutions of past karma comes, its severity and duration is much toned down by the intervention of gracious Master Power, like a penny for a pound, or a needle prick for the gallows, and the disciplined child disciple comes out unscathed with the grace of the Master.

The healing which is said to have been administered

by Jesus or others, was of a higher quality, as when you merge in the cosmic awareness, and lose your identity, you become so spiritual that even thinking of a person or those touching the hem of your garment will get healed, as termed colloquially in the Bible. You have not to exert on your part to heal others. Yet above all, it is the faith which cures, and the sincere initiates do not indulge in these things and rather aspire incessantly for the attainment of their spiritual perfection, which is the highest goal of earth life. The soul which has to go far higher to merge into the Oversoul is retarded by engaging herself to lower pursuits. The initiates are, therefore, warned not to administer this spiritual healing in their own larger interests, which would result in spiritual dissipation and bankruptcy. It will add strong fetters over the soul and karmic debt will be very heavy to be repaid.[186]

Other Yogic Powers

Q. Can I teach Yoga?

TEACHING YOGA is all right; you may earn your money in any way you like, but don't be your own subject of yoga. If you do, then you will go the longer way. Our way can be done very quickly. That way would take at least hundreds of years to come inside; you would have to take the longer way. If you want to take the longer way, all right, do it. You may want to teach it, that's all right, but don't do it your own self, that's all. If you

want to go the longer way, very good, you may choose it if you like. That is the longer way; it was introduced in the past ages. In the Golden Age man lived for one *lac* of years. People could put in 70,000 years, 80,000 years in that practice. Then came the Silver Age. In the Silver Age the age came down one tenth to 10,000 years. People could put in two or three thousand years in that way. Then came the Copper Age. Life was cut down to one-third. Even then you could put in two or three hundred years. Nowadays man does not live 70 years. How can you follow those methods that were introduced in those years? We cannot live up to that age. So Kabir and Guru Nanak introduced this simple way that we do —even a child can do it. It is the quicker way, you see. Have you read *Crown of Life?* I wrote this book about the comparative study of all yoga. There is one part that explains what you do, what you are teaching. There are other forms of yoga in it too. But our method is the quickest way through all the ages, for any man of any age. Now, is it clear to you?[187]

Q. Hatha Yoga groups have grown in popularity in this country. Could we have your comments on the value of such groups?

A. So far as the physical aspect of Hatha Yoga exercises is concerned, it is all right to have a few simple and light exercises for maintaining good health; but it does not seem advisable to go in for strenuous exercises involving several other hazards of breathing, etc., which are rather diagonally opposite to Surat Shabd Yoga. You will please note that there is a world of difference be-

tween soul and physical body, and these are separate entities. Besides, chanting or too much outer singing scatters the attention, which on the contrary requires introversion and inner silence.[188]

Baba Ji maintained that "religious wranglings and disputes, the pride of caste (the Varnashram), of worship, pilgrimages, mere reciting of scriptures, worshiping those who were past and gone, and such other actions and disciplines" were all "a great deception" and a trap set by Kal to keep the soul within the bondage of the realms of relativity. In like manner, the outer kriyas or practices of traditional yoga—pranayam and various mudras and asanas—were ineffective for taking us to our real goal.[189]

He had at a very early age experimented with many a yogic method and whenever he pronounced on the subject, he spoke not as one who bases himself on academic learning, but as one who has himself practically experienced what he says. His words carried conviction, for there was not a trace of prejudice in what he said. He simply explained that he himself had explored all avenues and found the path of Sant Mat or Surat Shabd Yoga to be the highest. He had a great deal to say about the wonderful miraculous powers that could be acquired through yogic sadhans; but his one criterion was: did they make one the master of one's mind, freeing one from the tyranny of desire? If so, then there was nothing to be said against them, but if not (as was usually the case), then they were hardly of any use. While in Murree in 1894, he, in response to many questions addressed to

him by Baba Sawan Singh Ji, dwelt at length on the subject of comparative yoga and concluded by demonstrating how Kabir and Nanak had assimilated the best from their predecessors; how they had penetrated far higher into the Mystic Path; and how they had succeeded in developing a method for mergence with the Formless Absolute that was within the reach of all.[190]

What was this Science of the Surat Shabd Yoga that represented the crown of mystic achievement? It was, said Baba Ji, the path most economical in effort and the one most rewarding for reaching back to the Primal Source of all life and light. Its secret lay in the insight that if the soul was to merge back into the point from where it had descended, the way of ascent must be identical with that of descent. The Nameless One when he had assumed Name and Form had projected himself into Shabd, Naam, Kalma, or the Word. It was this spiritual current, whose primary attributes were melody and effulgence, that was responsible for all creation.[191]

As regards the Kundalini, you should not pay any attention to that as it is fraught with danger. You have been put on the Path, the Natural Way.[192]

Astrology, Reincarnation Investigations, I Ching

ASTROLOGY is a regular science, but few there are who are really conversant with it. This requires a clear mind vision. Moreover, it affects those who are under

the influence of the Stars; but those who transcend the starry sky, or are taken under the care of Masters who transcend the starry sky, the predictions in their cases do not stand correct.[193]

Q. Is group investigation of reincarnation and karmic relationships advisable among initiates?

A. You are kindly advised to leave all such studies well alone and devote your precious time in holy meditations and the study of the sacred books of the Master. The holy Path of the Masters offers a direct conscious contact with the divinity within after rising above body consciousness. This sublime principle differentiates the holy Path from all other schools of thought.[194]

The book *I Ching* has been seen. Stop altogether asking questions of this book, as these are not only misleading but fraught with dire dangers. It is incorrect to understand that Master speaks through the book.[195]

On Military Service

EVERY CITIZEN has an obligation to the country in which he resides. If that country is threatened by an invader, then it is the duty of every man and woman, in accordance with his or her mental and physical capacity, to protect the innocent people of the country. For example, one could render service in a non-combatant branch of the army such as the Medical Corps whose primary duty is to relieve the suffering of the wounded and the like.

If a government, for any cause, orders a general conscription of all able-bodied men to the armed forces, there is little that can be done. If one can honestly be excused from military service because of physical disability or any other valid reason, then by all means this may be done.

All Saints and Masters have greatly deprecated not only wars, but all forms of violence that bring suffering to mankind. These conditions are brought about by man himself, who, in his ignorance of the fact that God resides in every heart, will not allow his fellow men to live in freedom and peace.

All the dear ones who are obliged to fulfill their duty to their country should have full faith and courage in the gracious protection and guidance being extended to them by the Master Power working overhead.[196]

Baba Jaimal Singh (the Master of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh) served in the army for 34 years, and saw active service. I have written a biography entitled *Baba Jaimal Singh—His Life and Teachings* which may be referred to by the dear ones for an account of His life during and after His active army career.

Similarly, both Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji and myself served the military in connection with the construction and accounts work in the field under fire.[197]

The Master

THE MASTER is always with His children who are all dear to Him. Where more than one meet in His loving remembrance, His grace takes a practical shape and happy and fortunate are those who are able to benefit from this grace.[198]

There will be moments in the course of developing love for the Master when one, judging from one's own limited understanding, doubts the validity of the Master's instructions, but such moments are only tests to make our self-surrender more complete and more secure, and he who passes through these tests successfully, will one day radiate with the glory of God.[199]

The Master-soul's vision is correct: he does not dance to *anyone's* tune. He can never see anything inaccurately, so naturally he will never do anything wrong, like the depraved man with his smoky spectacles.[200] Though the Masters know everything, they do not disclose what they know, but allow things to come out openly of their own accord on the material level.[201]

We sometimes consider the Guru to be less able than an ordinary man. With this type of outlook, what can we hope to achieve in progress? The worldly things are more beloved; Guru and God are accepted casually for whatever can be derived through them materially. The attitude is one of tolerant duty, with respects paid in a condescending manner. Man always thinks he is the greatest of all, but if he really *became* great he would not be in this blind egoistic state.[202]

Correspondence

ALL MAIL is dealt with confidentially and but for my personal correspondent who receives instructions for drafting replies, nobody else reads the letters received from the dear ones.[203]

Hearing Shabd Before Initiation

THERE ARE those who see the Light, even before initiation. This is good and is a reaction from the good karmas of past lives—but to progress farther into the Beyond, correct guidance and protection is necessary.[204]

Hearing of inner music at its lower links by a person is not something unusual. It gives some pleasure and joy to the hearer, but he does not know how to develop the process from stage to stage to reach one's True Eternal Home of everlasting Peace, Joy and Bliss. This is not at all possible by one's own unaided efforts.[205]

Dreams

QUESTION: *What is the significance of an initiate having terrifying and vivid dreams?*

A. Dreams are the outcome of past recollections based on hearings, seeings, readings or dreadful thinking. The terrifying dreams generally are attributed to some digestive disorder; a bad stomach which can be cured by simple medication. The vivid dreams denote clarity of

inner vision when some people can recollect their dreams very clearly whereas others cannot recall them.[206]

Pets

THE PRESENCE of pets like cats or dogs in the room during meditations is no harm provided these do not disturb you to be there during meditations.[207]

Your dog should not be fed on meat as it will contract karmic debt for you. It can live on vegetarian diet all right, just as you have switched over.[208]

It is better to avoid looking in the eyes of others and this includes animals.[209]

In caging birds and keeping pets collared, chained and imprisoned, one wrongly takes it for granted that these poor, dumb creatures have no court of law where they can lodge their complaint.[209a]

It is a Noble Search

TO FIND OUR true self—does it mean that we are lost? If you ask me for the truth, I would say we are *completely* lost.[210]

The whole play of Spirituality is with the attention. *Where the attention is, there you are.* Through putting your attention wholeheartedly on physical exercises, with a little training you can be a wrestler of powerful strength. With your attention directed on scholastic subjects, you can become an intellectual giant. If you put all

your attention on the Greater Attention (God), you will grow in spiritual stature. On the spiritual health depends the health of mind and body both. This teaching is for all, but most of us are still playing with toys. *We are disinterested with this doll's play when we see the true form of our Beloved.* How beautiful must the real thing be, if the imitation is so attractive! But, unfortunately, while the blind lead the blind, both continue to fall into the ditch. This is a very frank talk.[211]

This pure subject—the study of the attention, which you can call Spirituality—is ever in existence, but sad to state, we are not interested in this higher knowledge. Our attention is on the body, on sensual pleasures, and on intellectual deliberations. Bookish knowledge is all wilderness; there is no way out. By reading the stories and anecdotes of the Masters, we can enter a state of pseudo-intoxication, but first we should see something of the Truth and then sing the Lord's praises.[212] If the soul is a conscious entity, then its food must be something conscious, and the expression of the Lord, which is Light and Sound, is the bread and water of life. And he who has it, can give to others. *My Beloved is everywhere, no place is without Him; Glorify that body in which He is manifested.*[213]

The Master has the same physical form as other men, but although he lives in the world, he remains aloof from its effects. He is in perfect control of all his faculties, and can rise above the body at will. Or he can work in the bodily senses, at his own choice. We see his body on this earth, but his soul travels in all the spheres. Contrary

to this, we are tied to the body and cannot rise above it. Therefore only in his company and with his assistance can we have true realization. Yet while I utter these words you will not have true conviction unless you see for yourselves.[214]

The Naam has an indescribable intoxication. *Delightfully sweet is the beloved Naam.* Also, *Nanak is perpetually intoxicated with the Holy Naam—day and night.* Who gets it? *Those who have merit from the distant past will get the gift of Naam to bring them near to God.* Those children who God has decided are to return to Him are connected to the Naam by the Satguru, and the Naam takes them back to whence it emanates. A Muslim fakir says, *You have sacrificed the true mosque for the outer one.* The outer mosques and temples are for those whose inner eye is not open to see the true Light of God. He cannot be known through senses, mind and intellect, or through pranic practices (i.e., practices involving the motor current in the body)—but only by self-analysis. When we achieve self-knowledge, then the Life Sustainer will be met. *The attachments will break, salvation will be given, and you will go home.* You will be released from all ties, and though living in this world, you will be free.[215]

Dear friends, this world is a sea which we must swim across with the aid and support of God's inner Light. It is really very clear and simple when one sees everything from the right angle of vision. And the definite indication that a Master is true, is when he lights that flame within another.[216]

Most of the world's population is in the dark; not knowing whence they came, to where they are going, or what their purpose is on earth. Basically, all religions indicate that there is Light and Sound; I have mentioned that Lord Krishna spoke of it. The Muslim fakirs also referred to it. It has been termed the Music of the Spheres, Truth clothed in Light, and the Unstruck Fire; Buddha called it Intrinsic Hearing. The teaching remains the same, though man forgets it; but the Masters come to revive the Truth again and again, and give the right understanding of true integration. Some people want to know, "What do we get out of this?" Apart from the benefit of becoming detached while living in the world, we are told: *Unhappiness will not touch us; The illusion will be revealed as mind and matter.* What a wonderful blessing! He who becomes one with the Unchangeable Permanence, life and death are the same to him. Someone is born, someone dies—he feels neither happiness nor misery. Such elevated existence comes through development of the inner being. You cannot start to dig a well on becoming thirsty, for you will die of thirst before reaching the water. The spring of the everlasting nectar of life comes through the inner contact, and to drink from this spring daily will render ineffective all the pinching consequences of worldly experiences.[217]

It is said, *After meeting the Satguru, one knows.* When is this? *When attachments and outer effects are finished.* Is it possible to be free from attachments while living in the body? If one is in full control of one's attention, and can direct it at will, then it is possible. If one daily rises

above the body and journeys into upper regions, how will one remain attached to the world and its environments? Also, one will work in the world with a double zeal without that clinging nature to hinder.[218]

There are three kinds of heat which burn within man. One is *adhibhutak,* connected with the physical body. Another is *adhidevik,* through the outer, untoward happenings. The third is *adhiatmik,* and that is when one gets a higher contact within and one is then no longer dragged around by the mind and senses. When death comes, one merely says, "Let's go." A true disciple is thus ready for the change. When your condition has become like this, then you will know that you have met the Satguru.[219]

Be grateful that you have got something at last—even if it is after a long search. Only the power of the Naam can overcome the difficulties of this age.[220]

The clue lies in the Guru's teachings through which you will develop true love for God, wherever He has manifested Himself. A small spark of fire can burn to ashes a huge pile of logs, and similarly life upon life's sins can be burned away through a small spark of Light from the Satguru. On the very first day of Initiation, he manifests the radiance of Naam within the seeker, who then should take great care of it and value it. *By repeating the Naam, the Light of millions of suns will be seen.* Also, *In the darkness, He came and lighted the Lamp.* You receive the very thing that the true Master teaches, for the Light is manifested in him, and he gives a spark of that Light. *The Master placed a small share in my*

safekeeping. Guard that small share carefully. In the ages past, the Master would keep the disciple at his feet until he had become ready to receive the precious gift. These days, which disciple has the patience and will to learn? So, on the very first day, the connection is given, and then it is up to the disciple what he makes of it. The value of Naam can never be estimated—always remember this. Keep a watch over your whole life—each action—day by day, and through meditation increase your inner progress.[221]

Out of the abundance of the heart, a man speaks. Whatever is the state of mind at the time, so the speech will have similar effects on others. If the mind is filled with anger, lust, greed, etc., even though these thoughts be hidden behind sweet words, yet the effect produced will be drastic. The breeze which passes through fire will bring heat, and on the other hand, that which passes through ice will bring coolness.[222]

There is great charging in the Master's words. Due to His elevated condition, there is a sweet fragrance radiating from Him. If you visit a perfumery, though you may buy nothing, yet you will freely enjoy the delightful perfume permeating the atmosphere. A Saint's name is glorified throughout the four corners of the earth. He may or may not declare Himself, but His radiation is spread everywhere. *O Nanak, the Gurumukh is a rarity*. It is seldom one meets such a personality, but the world is not without them. He is our true friend, meeting whom all doubts are erased and right understanding established in our hearts. He who can do this is a friend indeed.

Such people have always been hard to find, but when they do come, through radiation a flood of Spirituality pervades the world.[223]

Today there is a great awakening beginning. Some have got the answer, some have not, but the search to solve the mystery of life has been born all over the world. The day that question arises in the mind is the greatest day of one's life, for once it is born it does not succumb until it is satisfied.[224]

Whoever approaches a Master with full devotion and humility will get the rareness of the gift. After getting the human form it is our hereditary right to realize God. Of course, if we do not make the best use of our life, then who is to blame?[225]

It matters not to which religion you belong—if the Light is burning within you, all is well. *A true Master is one who brings everyone together.* With right understanding, man and man become one, for each has a soul and that soul is of the same essence as that of God, the Life Sustainer of all things. If all men truly realized this, then who would hate his fellow man, and who would cheat or take another's goods? The police and military forces would become superfluous, for man's very neighbor would be his protector.[226]

My friends, no matter in which town or country you live, you should live as true brothers and sisters of the one Father. The morals of all daughters and daughters-in-law, their protection and welfare, should be your concern, for in this will be your own family's protection. Live in love for one another. If husband and wife are

happy, loving, and loyal together, then no one and nothing can come between them. Similarly if the people of any country are one in each other, then no power or politics can disturb their peaceful living. All laws are for the lawless; if you are good, nothing touches you. Each one of you should make your life a model, and you will see that the whole world will have peace and happiness. Lack of this simple existence is bringing unhappiness everywhere.[227]

As long as the higher contact is not made, the world's misery will not be resolved. As it stands, whatever a man sows, so shall he reap.[228]

Just see, only by talking about these things so much peace enters our hearts. How much more happiness will we gain through true realization—received through the radiation from a perfect Master. So, make your life an example of the teachings you follow—live up to them. If you have already got the connection, take the utmost care of it, and value it. If you have a strong desire to get it, then God Himself will make the arrangements for you. When you get the contact with the Holy Naam, remember it is the soul's very food. Furthermore, introspect your daily thoughts and actions and see where you have reached. Many ages have passed by since you were first given a human form, and many years have passed since you joined some religion; now consider, where have you got to?

As long as inner contact is not established and practiced daily, and you don't avoid all that may lead you away from it—through self-introspection—then where-

ever you have reached up to now will be hidden by a dark curtain and your path of progress will be obstructed.[229]