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Surat Shabd Yoga

Sat sandesh

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Poem. Arran Stephens

the
message of the Masters

March 1968

True lovers

They are true lovers whose love is from the heart.
Others are false ones who are inwardly different
from what they profess to be.
True ones are intoxicated with the love of God
and yearn for His glimpse,
But those who forget His Naam are but
a burden on this earth.
If He condescend to make someone His own,
such a one is His real devotee.
Blessed is the mother who gave birth
to such a fortunate one!
His coming alone is most fruitful
among the children of men!
Thou, my Benefactor, art unreachable,
limitless and beyond!
I kiss their feet who have realised Thee.
I seek Thy shelter, O merciful Beloved,
Graciously grant Farid the boon of Thy Naam.

—Farid

Sat sandesh

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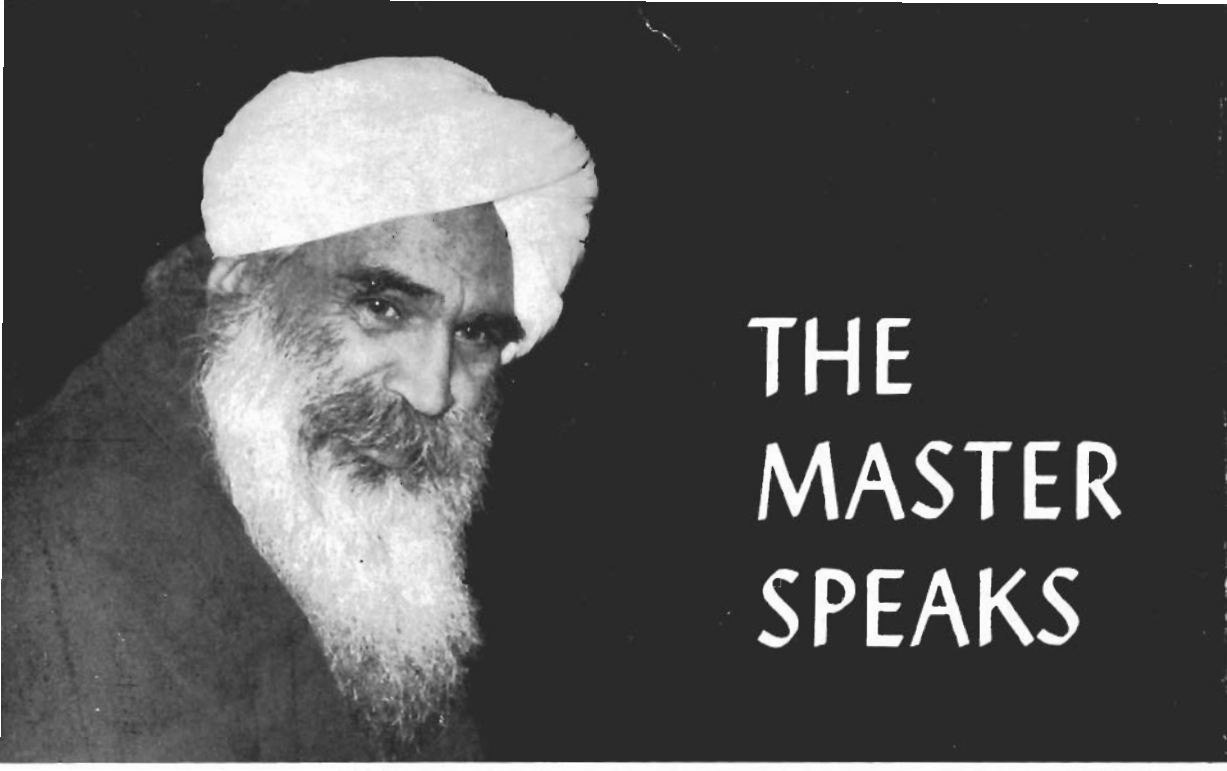


THE MASTER SPEAKS

The purpose of human life

MAN is in search of happiness, but has no peace of mind. Even if he succeeds in achieving his objectives, he remains dissatisfied. His search for peace and happiness, therefore, never ends. Saint Augustine says that God gave us the senses for using them properly, but we misuse them by indulging in sensual pleasures; whereas the bliss for which we should have strived, remains enshrined in scriptures only.

Man is an ensouled entity gifted with body, mind and intellect. He takes good care of his body for the sake of his domestic, social and political wellbeing. Intellectually, he has made strident advances. He has successfully explored the earth, oceans and space and has made atomic bombs. A single atom bomb can destroy millions. Strangely enough, with all his achievements he remains ignorant about the prime source of energy from which his body and mind derive their strength—soul—his true self. He has so much identified himself with the body that he is unable to distinguish his soul from the body. In fact, he does not know that his real self is something separate from the body. Have we ever thought about the propelling force in us? Have we recognised the indweller of the house?

Soul is a conscious entity. Just as any essence has its basic source, soul too has an ultimate source—the Oversoul—a vast ocean of all consciousness. The entire universe is His manifestation. The soul is identified with the material body by constant association with the senses. Man does not know that he can have true happiness only when he is able to disfranchise the self in him from the outer vestures. He is so much entangled with the mind and body that he ever remains unhappy and restless. Soul being conscious and body being material, these cannot coexist amiably.

We pretend to be religious by reading the scriptures without knowing their true import and by offering ceremonial prayers at the places of worship. All that we worship is physical health and worldly riches. We aspire for material wellbeing and not for God-realisation. It is said that once Majnu, a legendary lover, was told that God wished to see him. Majnu replied if that was so, God must come in the form of Laila, his beloved. Most of us offer our pravers to God only because we want to fulfil our worldly ambitions. We seek God's blessings to become physical and intellectual giants. Thus, to us God is only a means to worldly ends. Consequently, we get only that we crave for i.e. the material world and not God.

To know God we must first know ourselves. From time immemorial many have tried to define God philosophically. But He remains undefined as ever. God cannot be realised by the body or intellect or senses. He can only be experienced by the soul. Unless we know ourselves, the question of knowing God does not arise. Thus, the first step in this direction is self-knowledge which precedes God-knowledge. "Know thyself" has been the call of saints and sages. Guru Nanak was once asked by a Muslim holyman to define his faith. The Guru replied that he neither claimed to be a Hindu nor a Muslim in the ordinary sense. He explained that his body was composed of five elements—ether, earth, fire, water and air—and the God-power was pulsating in him.

Hazur (Baba Sawan Singh Ji) was once asked as to which religion he belonged. He replied: "If God is Hindu, I am a Hindu; if He is Sikh, I am a Sikh; if He is Muslim, I am a Muslim; if He is a Christian then I am a Christian."

All religions are man-made. God has not put a stamp of religion on anyone. To know the Controlling Power of the universe, it is inevitable and essential to "know thyself", as Christ has put it. Guru Nanak has also said: "Until and unless one analyses one's self, it is not possible to shed delusion and to realise the Reality." Unless your Third Eye is opened, you cannot realise God.

How various saints have solved the mystery of life is the subject for today. The fact is that Truth is one, but the ways of expression may be different. Our ideal is Truth. Let us see what Swamiji[2] has to say on the subject: "Link your soul with Naam."

We are advised to connect our soul with the Word. It implies that our attention is presently linked with something other than the Word. What is meant by attention? It is consciousness, a state of awakening or awareness. We may call it attention, spirit or soul. It is this life current emanating from our self (soul) which acts as a driving force within us. Swamiji asks us to link this current with the Word. Now, where is the source of these currents ? It is at the seat of the soul between the two eyebrows. What happens at the time of death? Life withdraws from the feet and rises to the back of the eyes. The power which is concentrated behind the eyes is

our real self. After that power is withdrawn, the body is of no significance. This is the most important and mostly ignored subject.

In order to probe further into this subject, one has to realise that soul is an entity distinct from the body. We have to learn and practise to withdraw the soul currents from lower centres of the body to the eye-focus. This process is similar to the one undergone by the soul at the time of one's physical death. We have to rise above body-consciousness. The theoretical knowledge of this process is not enough. Practice is far more important. An ounce of practice is more than tons of theory.

So we have to link our soul with the Word. Let us now consider what the Word (Naam) signifies? The Word has two aspects. One is an epithet and the other is that ultimate Power to which the epithet refers. For example, water itself is one thing, but it is referred to by many names e.g. water, aqua, H_2O, etc. Similarly, Truth is one, but sages have described it in various ways. Guru Nanak says: "I want to sacrifice myself on all Thy names O Lord." Guru Gobind Singh (the tenth Sikh Guru) compiled hundreds of names of God in his work "Jaap Sahib." These names are in addition to those already mentioned in the various scriptures. Despite hundreds of names, God is one. Similarly, there are many religions, but their goal is one.

We have to understand the God-power with the help of spoken names. This is our first step. Though the name is not different from the named, yet it seems so until the named is actually contacted. A person tastes a mango and declares that it is sweet. But one who has neither seen a mango nor tasted sugar, cannot know how sweet it is. Thus, to realise God is of utmost importance. We have to make a beginning with spoken names. It is unfortunate that people quarrel over the different names of God as given by the founders of the various religions. All the names refer to the supreme Lord and as such they all deserve our respect. The real thing is the Power-of-God which these names refer to. That Power is eternal Truth. It is one, will ever remain one and is called Naam or the Word.

The Word is the source of the entire creation and can be experienced only with the help of a Satguru (true Master). Guru Nanak has explained this point lucidly in the Japji[3]: "Whatever has come into being is the creation of the Word." The Word is the Power which exists in the minutest speck in the universe. That is the divine link which connects the body with the soul. When this link breaks, it brings about physical death. It is the same link which sustains the universe and higher spiritual planes. When this divine link is withdrawn, there is total dissolution.

Now, the question arises, if we are connected with the divine link, which is the point in the body at which the two meet? Guru Nanak tells us that the word can be contacted after one transcends the six *chakras* (ganglionic centres) and has reached the *Agyay Chakra* (behind and between the two eye-brows). The divine link can be established only there and not anywhere else in the body. Rishi Patanjali[4] as also other past saints have explained this process. When one reaches the *Agyay Chakra* after rising above the six lower *chakras*, one is connected with the celestial Sound-current, the *Anhat*[5] sound, and merges into *Sahasrar*,[6] the first spiritual plane. The *Anhat* sound is the divine link; it is the Word, or the divine Power, which is manifested in every humanbeing. This is the primary source of all existence.

Naam (the Word), says Gurbani[7], is

invisible, unfathomable, limitless and sweet beyond description. It has an everlasting divine intoxication and bliss. Whosoever experiences it forgets all worldly pleasures. The soul is a drop of the ocean of all-consciousness, but is covered by numerous sheaths of body, mind and senses. So long as a man is engrossed in the material world, he remains unaware of the divine Naam within him.

What does the Naam signify? According to Gurbani, communion with Naam opens within a grand vista of divine Light—the Light of God. Naam also refers to the Sound principle—the Sound of unabounding joy. Thus, there are two expressions of Naam —the God-power—Light and Sound. In the Vedas, Naam has been described as *Udgeet, or Naad*—the music of the Beyond. According to the Vedas, Naad has created fourteen spheres.

Muslim sages call it the *Kalma*. They also believe that the *Kalma* has created fourteen *tabaks* (spheres). Maulana Rumi[8] once prayed: "O God, lead me to the place where conversation goes on without words." Christ says: "In the beginning was the Word, Word was with God and Word was God." The Gurbani says: "Naam has created the earth and the heaven. All light has emanated from Naam. All creation has come into being from Naam which is resounding in all humanbeings."

The Word was there even before the universe came into being. The Word is thus the source of all creation. Saints of all the religions have expressed parallel thoughts on the subject:

> "The Word has been the source of salvation to human beings during all the four *Yugas*[9]." —*Gurbani*

God is wordless, nameless and beyond description. When He came into being, It was called Naam, the Word—the Light-Sound principle. One who communes with Naam, is able to establish a contact with God. Hafiz Sahib, a great Persian mystic poet says: "No one knows the abode of the Beloved, but it is certain that sound of bells comes from there." If you follow the strain of sound you will reach its source. Thus, the Word—Light and Sound—is the safest means to the end—the way back to God.

To get a contact with the divine Light, one has to rise above body-consciousness by self-analysis. Only then a contact with the divine Sound is possible. By contacting Naam one gets peace and eternal bliss.

> "Blessed are they who are linked with the Word,
> O Nanak! whosoever listens to the eternal music, attains salvation."
> —*Gurbani*

People generally get lost in various names of God. The whole world talks of Naam, but there are only a few who know the real significance of Naam. It is a practical subject. Unless we realise ourselves by rising above body-consciousness, soul cannot establish a contact with the Oversoul. We have therefore to link our soul with Naam:

> "Those who have communed with the word, their toils shall end,
> Not only shall they have salvation
> O Nanak, but many more shall find freedom with them.
> —*The Japji*

Again we have in Gurbani :

> "A Gurmukh (beloved of the Master) can liberate millions of souls by imparting just a particle of his life-impulse."

Emerson says: "The keynote to success is one's own thoughts." To make a mark

in any walk of life, you have to concentrate your attention on that particular aspect. Similarly, if you concentrate your attention on Overself, you will become spiritually great. Bulleh Shah[10], a Muslim saint, inquired from his spiritual guide, as to how one could find God? The guide replied: "It is as easy as withdrawing the attention from here (world) and connecting it there (the Word). Our "very self" is our attention. We are soul and not the body, but we are engrossed in our bodies.

Swamiji tells us:

"Let any one of us connect his attention with the Word.

This body and wealth will not be of any help when confronted with the negative power."

The human body is the soul's first companion. It comes first with the soul when the child is born. But even this companion leaves us at the time of death, not to mention other worldly associations acquired by us. Our own being, having constant attachment with the physical world, has fallen to the latter's level. As a result, we have to come to this mortal world again and again. Gurbani says: "Soul goes where there is attachment."

If we are able to analyse the self in our lifetime and learn to rise above body-consciousness by getting a higher contact with Naam, we experience such a bliss as to forget all worldly pleasures and attachments:

"Worldly pleasures are nowhere before the divine bliss."

—Gurbani

That is why saints have taught:

"O friend, give up the insipid sensual pleasures,

And drink the sweet elixir of Naam."

—Gurbani

When one gets a taste of the real bliss, the pleasures become insipid. The real bliss is either within our inner being or in Naam—God-into-action Power—since soul is its essence.

Soul is a spark of the divine essence. It is bliss in itself and it is a conscious entity. It is the soul which is the source of all bliss and not the body and worldly things. Saints have warned us that worldly objects, in which our attention is engrossed, are not going to be of real help to us. Not only that all these worldly objects will stay back at the time of death, but their constant attachment will bring the soul back again and again to this world. "What does it profit a man to gain the possession of the whole world and to lose one's own soul." The soul resides in this house (body). It has to go out of this mortal frame leaving everything behind. When the time comes to vacate this body one is greatly distressed because of man's attachment with the body. Repenting then is of no avail. If during one's lifetime the soul establishes a contact with the beyond, it attains perfect peace. But, we never think of the world beyond. We generally follow the maxim : "Eat, drink and be merry." If someone reminds us of death we just ignore it by saying that we will face it when it comes. This is not a wise approach. If a pigeon closes its eyes at the sight of a cat, the cat is not going to spare it. Everyone has to leave the body. There is no exception to the rule.

"Emperors or kings, rich or poor,
All have but to go in their turn."

—Gurbani

We all have to go, but we do not know when. We should be prepared for the change. Are we?

"Everyone is scared of death and wishes to live till eternity,

With Guru's grace if one learns to die
while alive one can become a
conscious co-worker of the Lord.
Whosoever so dies, gets salvation."

—*Gurbani*

If you learn to die by rising above body-consciousness, you will attain life everlasting. All saints tell us that God has bestowed us with three forms: physical, astral, and supramental or causal. We are already active at the physical plane (*Pind*) through the senses. After leaving the physical body, the soul acquires the astral form. With the astral senses it can traverse the astral plane (*And*). Similarly after attaining suparmental form, the soul can enter into causal plane (*Brahmand*). It is beyond these three planes, that the soul gets self-knowledge. It is only at that stage that you will be able to know who you really are.

Swamiji says :

"This is the most opportune time to attain peaceful bliss by avoiding the fire of ceaseless desires."

The world is being consumed by invisible flames of fire. Guru Nanak has prayed: "This is the fire of desires that has spread all over." Although we are its victims, we are unable to percieve it. Only saints know the real magnitude of this fire. Yet only human life is capable of getting away from this blazing furnace. That is why, human life is considered to be the crown of creation. But without sincere effort in the right direction there can be no salvation. For instance, if we have to avoid scortching heat, we have to find shelter in an air-conditioned room. In our context, the air-conditioned room is within us. We shall have to withdraw from outside and enter into it to find blissful solace from all the miseries of the world. This is high time that we introvert ourselves. If we miss this God-given opportunity, we are no better than beasts. The human body has a worth so long as the soul dwells in it. We should make the most of it while it lasts.

Man is enveloped by flames of passionate desires, anger, greed, attachment and vanity. One can escape himself from delusion only by contacting the Word within. The most important task before us, therefore, is to withdraw our attention from outside and get attuned with the divine Melody within. Then comes eternal peace in the form of the Word. Whosoever has accomplished this essential task is really successful in life. Otherwise, any amount of learning, name and fame have no real meaning. It is high time that we learn to rise above body-consciousness and know the real self in us.

"Contemplate the form of Satguru,
and serve him true,
And he shall lead thee away from all
harm."

—*Swamiji*

Swamiji now tells us how to link the soul with the Naam-power. He says that three steps should be taken to rise above body-consciousness. First is Simran (contemplation)—continuous remembrance of the Almighty. Secondly, service to the Master. Thirdly, control of all desires. We are always busy in contemplating worldly affairs. If we have to establish a contact with the Word of God, we must first constantly remember Him by any name of our choice. This should be our first and formost ideal by inculcating the habit of His contemplation every moment of our life. We have to replace worldly thoughts by contemplating the Word.

Contemplate on Him alone ceaselessly; so much so that you begin to feel the pangs of His separation. Thus, the first step is His remembrance. Remembrance leads to love which in turn results in pangs of separation. This creates a strong urge for the Beloved.

"Only one to remember and to sigh for, Sing ceaselessly His praise alone.
Meditate on Him with all the love in thee."

—*Gurbani*

Simran should be undertaken with intense love for God. Love brings concentration. One forgets the whole world while contemplating one's beloved.

Another purpose of Simran is to identify the soul with its real form. Yet another aim of Simran is to enable the self to know itself. As it is, the soul is completely identified with the physical body. It has to be withdrawn from the body and concentrated at its seat—in the centre of the eye-brows. In the Gita, Lord Krishna says that great ones traverse into the cave starting from a place above the nose.

There are various methods of doing Simran—with the help of a rosary, or with tongue, or in throat and heart. However, saints do no advise these methods as these are apt to become mechanical and allow the mind to wander away. Thus, concentration of attention through those methods may not be possible.

Saints have, therefore, advised the practice of Simran with the tongue of thought. All saints, including Maulana Rumi, Guru Arjan and Swamiji, have indicated this spiritual path. Guru Arjan prayed : "O saints, take pity on us; we have yet to learn to serve our souls."

We are working on the mental and sensual planes. Until we learn to rise above body-consciousness our plight remains unchanged. Yogis tried to control breathing through *Kumbhak* to achieve concentration of attention. It is a difficult process and everyone cannot practise it. Saints, therefore, do not interfer with the breathing function. They concentrate their attention at the seat of the soul, behind and in the centre of the two eyes, by means of Simran with the tongue of thought. If it is done with rapt attention, the soul will cease to flow out through the body pores. The body will then become senseless. It is only thereafter that the concentrated soul gets the contact of God.

However, Simran with the tongue of thought is not as easy as it appears to be. It can be accomplished successfully only through the blessings of a competent Master. Now, there is a difference between practising Simran by repeating the names given by a competent Master and the name or names taken out of scriptures of one's religious belief. The names given by a competent living Master at the time of initiation are charged with his thought transference and have tremendous force in them. This type of Simran, therefore, is above all other forms of Simran. The Vedas and other scriptures have stated that in order to seek God, one must seek the guidance of a true Master. Besides giving the charged names, the Master also gives a practical contact with the divine Power. Now the question is how to get that competent guidance?

Swamiji tells us to serve the Master. One can serve the Master in many ways; physically, financially, intellectually and spiritually. One should lead a chaste and clean life. Keep the body ever-engaged in selfless service. This is physical service. As for monetary service, spend a part of your income for charity. After fulfilling your family requirements, you must keep aside a part of your earnings in the name of God, This is a duty one must not neglect. Service by heart and mind means love for all, hatred for none and observance of truth. The service of the soul is of the highest order. To do this, one has to rise above body-consciousness and to open the inner eye.

Hazur used to say that a Master may keep a servant or two to serve him. He does not need our services in the normal sense. If we only obey his commandments, keep our lives chaste and pure, we not only serve the Master, but also our own 'self'. The Master loves them most who serve their own souls and lead a pious life. So, Swamiji exhorts us to imbibe the feeling of service and to refrain from sensual desires.

All desires are included in sensuality. The observance of celibacy is most important. Just as light and darkness cannot stay together, the Word and sensual desires are not compatible. Therefore, we must observe celibacy. Married people need not despair. They ought to live a disciplined life in accordance with the scriptures where marital relations are permitted only for procreation. *Grihastashram* (family system) is a great institution. Most saints or great souls (*mahatmas*) were householders and fulfilled their family obligations. Hazur has said that those who wish to bring up their children pure and chaste should themselves become so. Children tend to emulate their parents.

Swamiji thus asks us to take three steps if we want to rise above body consciousness and to get contact with Naam: to practise Simran; to serve Satguru and to lead a chaste life.

Swamiji says that you can have a taste of the divine nector with the help of a true Master, only after you have brought your mind and sensual desires under control. At present the soul is flowing out through the senses. Discipline your senses and keep your mind steady. You will then know who you are. When you have realised yourself, only then the question of realising the Overself will arise. Those who have disciplined their senses, can free themselves from the influence of enemies like lust, anger, greed, attachment and vanity. These five deadly enemies attack us through the five senses. You can escape their fatal attacks if you rise above body-consciousness. The Upanishads state: "The soul is riding a chariot of the body driven by horses of the senses with the mind as its reins and the intellect as its driver in the field of sensual pleasures." Swamiji therefore stresses the need to discipline the senses and the mind. When this is done and the soul rises above body-consciousness, the Master is there inside to offer the divine elixir of Naam. Now, are these teachings meant for any particular sect? The teachings of all great souls are meant for the entire humanity and not for the followers of any particular religion.

Hazur used to say: "Go to the door where Satguru, full of compassion and mercy, is waiting to receive you." Which is that door? This door is in the centre and behind your two eye-brows. Once the soul gets an opportunity of testing the elixir of Naam, it has a starting point for its spiritual journey to the ultimate destination Moreover, this will bring about freedom from the dragnet of the mind.

Mind is a tremendous hurdle on the spiritual path. The world at large has always been its victim. Even *Mahatmas and Rishis* (great souls) in the past, who tried various methods to control the mind, often succumed at some stage to its powerful impact. So, we have to control the mind. How can it be done? The mind cannot be controlled by outer pursuits like learning or studying the scriptures. Even if it is under check for a while, it again goes out of control for it is always after sensual pleasures. There are mainly two types of attractions for the mind—beautiful things

(*Continued on page 29*)

The Master speaking on Guru Nanak at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi. The occasion was the presentation to the President of India (second from left) a biography of Nanak published by the National Book Trust.

The Prophet of peace

This article is based on the Urdu talk by Sant Kirpal Singh on Guru Nanak and his message, broadcast on All-India Radio on the occasion of the last birth anniversary of the Guru.

WE are today celebrating the birth anniversary of that great prophet of peace, the Messiah of his age, the fountainhead of spirituality and the great Godman whose life rediated rays of spirituality towards the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. The social and political conditions in the country had then reached the lowest ebb. The exalted soul, who showed the path of peace and righteousness to the misguided people, was the great Guru Nanak.

This great sun of spirituality rose on the horizon in the year 1469. He was born in Talwandi village, now known as Nankana Sahib in West Pakistan. Chaotic conditions prevailed in the country at that time. In the name of

religion, all kinds of atrocities were being perpetrated by those in authority, swayed as they were, by lust, greed and immorality. Mistrust and hatred were the order of the day. Both the rulers and the ruled had forgotten their respective duties and obligations. Casteism and untouchability were rampant. People were losing faith in religion. Moved by the piteous cries of the people in agony, Guru Nanak prayed:

"The whole world is being consumed in the invisible flames of fire,

Save it, O Lord, as best as You may in Thy merciful compassion."

Nanak was a great reformer. He was the torch-bearer of peace, truthfulness and universal love. He did not see man from the physical level, but as a spiritual being. He preached: God is one, the creator of the universe. All are His children and belong to one family of man. He laid emphasis on the idea of universal brotherhood. Why then all this strife? God is love-personified and abides in the human heart. There is one Light that lighteth the entire creation. We should love all, the entire creation:

"Castes and creeds matter not in His realm,

He who worships Him is dear unto Him."

Guru Nanak's teachings are not for any particular sect or community but are for the entire mankind. This saviour of mankind travelled far and wide, not only in India, but also to distant lands like Ceylon, Burma, Mecca, Madina and Mesopotamia. He delivered his divine message to all, irrespective of different religious and political ideologies. He believed in the Religion of Man and taught that the Lord's Gospel was for all. When asked about his religion, he remarked:

"Neither I am a Hindu nor a Muslim,
But only have a body made up of five elements;
In whom pulsates the Power-of-God,
And called by the name of Nanak."

He exhorted people to earn their living through fair and legitimate means. He went to the length of saying:

"Bow not unto him who claiming to be a Godman, lives on the charity of others,

He who earns his living with the sweat of his brow and shares it with all, can know the path of God."

He forbade people from encroaching upon the rights of their fellow men. Those who thrive on others can never have a pure heart.

Time and again, he enjoined upon all to have a pure heart and do good deeds:

"Take the name of the Lord with a pure heart and a clean tongue.

For without this what thou doeth will not bear any fruit."

Again:

"It is only the deeds that count,
And not the religious hallmarks one bears."

"Whatever one soweth,

That alone one harvesteth."

He reiterated:

"The deeds alone are weighed in the divine scale,

This will determine whether you are near or away from God."

Guru Nanak cleansed the hearts of all who came in contact with him. With the alchemy of God's love, he transformed decoits like Kauda and Sajjan into men of piety

Guru Nanak was a true mystic, always in communion with God and everywhere perceiving His munificent grace. He said: "Nanak sees the Lord in all His glory." Intoxicated with the love of the Lord, he always remained in a state of ecstasy. Once Babar, the great Mughal emperor, offered him a cup of hemp. The Guru politely declined and said: "O emperor, the intoxication of your pernicious liquor is weak and ephemeral, but I have drunk the wine of the divine Naam which never subsides."

He preached that the essence of religion was humility, compassion and respect for the prophets of all the religions. Service of His creation and love for God is all that one can take with him on his last journey.

According to him, the essence of religion is that followers of all faiths should get together, control their minds and seek communion with the Almighty. It is only by disciplining your senses that you can reach, the ultimate goal of life.

"All human beings formed but one class, and
The battle of life can only be won by conquering the mind."

He did not advocate renunciation as a means of God-realisation. He believed that salvation is possible for a householder through proper discharge of his duties and obligations with full faith in God.

He was a beloved of all. Hindus and Muslims alike owned him. When he gave up his mortal frame, the Hindus were keen to cremate him, while the Muslims wanted to bury the body. It is said that when the shroud was uncovered they found nothing but a heap of fragrant flowers. He came like fragrant flowers and radiated perfume all around. The sheet of cloth and the flowers were accordingly shared by the two communities and disposed of according to their own rites.

Guru Nanak always prayed for the welfare of mankind:

"O Lord! great is the power of Thy Naam,
May all live in peace under Thy will."

Today men have lost sight of all human values in spite of epoch-making achievements in the field of science and technology. The devil in man is in the ascendancy. Human goodness has given way to lust, greed and mistrust. We are all living in a state of horror and mistrust of each other. Mankind is heading towards its own doom. Today, as never before, we need the teachings of the great Guru. These are true for all times and for all the peoples the world over.

We all pray for peace on earth. Nanak was the prophet of peace, unity and love. If we follow the path shown by the great Teacher and work wholeheartedly for the right understanding of the moral and spiritual values, peace, love and happiness will reign supreme. It is only by self-knowledge and God-knowledge that we can establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

Tuning in

Through Simran and Bhajan and Dhyan profound,
We enter the silence like waving a wand,
And tune in the "Science of Soul" in Satsang,
For our jubilant journey to sacred Sachkhand.

—Louis Warter

Come unto Me

L. Gurney Parrott

"No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him."

—John 6 : 44

"Those whomsoever God wills are of themselves drawn to the God-man, or the Godman himself finds them out, no matter where they may be."

—Kirpal Singh

These words are true. I know this by experience, not mere belief. This is an account of how I came to the Master, Sant Kirpal Singh, the culmination of a life-time's search for God and my first steps on the spiritual path.

In 1957, after a two-year sojourn in the Nilgiri Hills, I was leaving Bombay by air for London. I had a chance meeting with a young Indian official at the airport and an occasional exchange of letters with him during the next nine years. The autumn of 1966 found me in Malta trying to adjust myself to a severe bereavement—and failing. I was miserable, off-balance, and quite unable to call upon the spiritual power and understanding I thought I had acquired over long years of study and effort.

In this state of mind I wrote to my Bombay friend to say that I was thinking of re-visiting India. I received an enthusiastic reply, including the statement that I must meet his Master, Sant Kirpal Singh, who would be in Bombay during the Christmas week. There followed a tremendous eulogy of his Master that left me quite cold. I had a fairly wide acquaintance with the various books on world religions, especially the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita and the various forms of Yoga. I had also studied the teachings of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and the works of Swami Vivekananda, for which I had great reverence and love.

I had, however, come to the conclusion that whatever truth there was in these scriptures and personalities, they seemed to be of the past and it was doubtful if they had any relevance to the present. Past Masters there had been, but were there any—was there even one—today? I doubted it. Any how, I was not in a mood for Masters. I knew nothing about Sant Kirpal Singh. I had not even known that my friend had a Master. Such was my mood, but I went ahead with my plans even so. Why? I did not know. For three weeks I tried to get a passage by sea, and failed. In a fit of irritation and frustration one day I suddenly decided not to go and wrote to my friend accordingly.

A few days later, however, I was suddenly conscious of a gentle, unseen presence, and distinctly heard a voice say: "Go to India!" Imagination? Perhaps. I immediately went out and bought a return air-ticket for Bombay, where I arrived on December 19 to a heart-warming reception at the airport.

The next morning my friend took me to the house where the Master was staying. I was still in a critical and unres-

ponsive mood, however, as I stood self-consciously in my socks (having, as custom demanded, discarded my shoes) in a corridor, apathetically watching people being admitted to the Master in a room at the end of it. I felt rather foolish, very English, an outsider and an intruder, the only European present on that occasion, with not the least idea of what it was all about, and not very optimistic that the Master would even see me, or, if he did, that he would probably have me thrown out. In my then state of mind, I had forgotten the words of the Master Jesus: "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out!"

Suddenly, my reverie was broken by a voice at my elbow saying: "The Master will see you now." I turned, to see a smiling young man in a blue turban, and exclaimed involuntarily: "see me?" "Yes", he replied, "come this way." In a turmoil of conflicting thoughts, I followed him.

As I entered the room, a tall strongly-built, white-bearded figure rose from a couch and came forward to greet me, taking both my hands in his, and saying "hello!" This took me by surprise. I had expected something oriental, some pious words, some indication of religiosity, but there was nothing.

There was nothing unusual in his dress—white turban, black three-quarter coat over a white tunic and trousers and slippers—no religious emblem; no prayers; no incence; no music; just a simplicity and a naturalness which of themselves were far more impressive than any pomp or splendour could be.

With gentle courtesy he himself brought forward an armchair and placed me in it, resuming his seat on the couch. This brought him well below my level—such is his humility—and I found myself looking down on him. Suddenly, I was overwhelmed with an uprush of emotion and realised that I could not possibly stay in that position and slipped to the floor at his feet. In that moment alone was unconsciously expressed an instant recognition and acceptance of the spiritual grace and power flowing from the Master. He only smiled and said tranquilly: "Tell me something about yourself." "You know it already, Master," I replied. "What is there to say?" "Never mind," he said "tell me something and we'll take it from there!" I tried to speak of my past life but emotion gripped me and I had to stop after a few sentences, fighting for self-control. Seeing my distress, the Master made a small gesture and immediately I was calm again. He went on to speak of the Christ and his teachings, of the Kingdom of Heaven within us, and of the Light "that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

When I rose to leave, he said: "Come again tomorrow, early, about 8 O'clock."

Next morning, I found myself one of about seventy or eighty people in a large room, squatting on the floor and I (thanks to the Master's thoughtfulness), sitting in a chair at the back. The Master sat in an armchair at the front of the assembly with men on his right and women on his left.

In a few simple words he told us that the Master-Power would give us a "peep within," and that each one of us would have spiritual experience, according to his or her spiritual development and receptivity. All we had to do was to introvert our minds, still our thoughts, and focus our attention at a point between the two eyebrows, there to watch and wait quietly and reposefully, without any strain or worry.

It was a stupendous statement. Here in the simplest possible way, again without any of the usual ritualistic accompaniments of an approach to God, was the assertion that by the Master's grace alone, our inner eye, the 'Third Eye', would be opened and we should see the Light of God. Only the power of a Godman (the

Word made flesh), could do it. As I composed myself for the ensuing meditation—and it is not surprising if for some time I failed to control my whirling thoughts—I must confess that I was still watchful and critical, and more than a little sceptical.

Here was a practical demonstration of the truths taught by all the religions. I was conversant with the theory and here was the practice; yet more incongruous than anything else was the mere fact that I was taking part in it. Could I be blamed for doubting? No one could feel less worthy than I to receive such a gift; it surely was not possible!

For some time so it certainly seemed, for nothing happened and the demon doubt reared again his ugly head. With an effort I dismissed such thoughts and resumed meditation, but not before casting a swift glance around to see if anything unusual was going on! No, there they all were, sitting quietly with eyes closed, and there was the Master sitting in front, and the sunshine was streaming in at the windows and the birds were singing outside. I closed my eyes again.

Suddenly, the Light came within, slowly as the breaking dawn and grew in intensity until it seemed the sun was about to rise above the horizon, and in that Light other manifestations arose about which it is not permitted to speak.

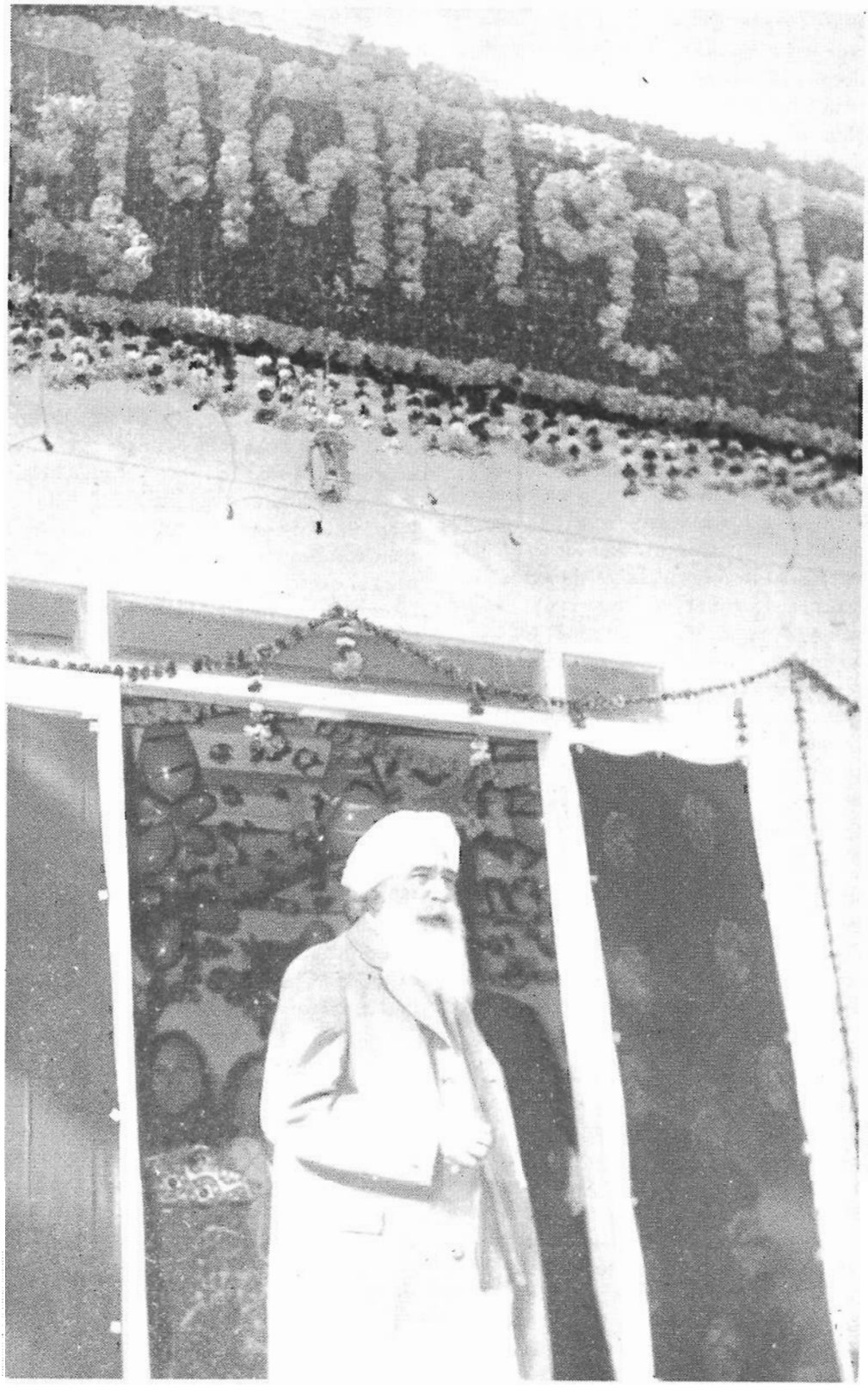
Fortyfive minutes by my watch and the Master closing the meditation asked each person separately and privately what he or she had seen, explaining and commenting. It is not possible to convey my astonished delight, not to say rapture. Here was practical proof of: "Believe not the words of a Master-soul unless thou seest the things he tells about with thine own eyes". (Sant Kirpal Singh in Godman, P. 80). And if the theory of religion was hereby demonstrated to me in "the laboratory of the soul," by whom had it been accomplished? Who was that apparently ordinary man who could impart spiritual experience? Who did so as a free gift? Who "spoke with authority?" But, wait, there was yet another step to be taken before a complete answer could be given, and we were told to assemble again in about an hour for meditation, this time for Sound, the Word, or the Voice of God.

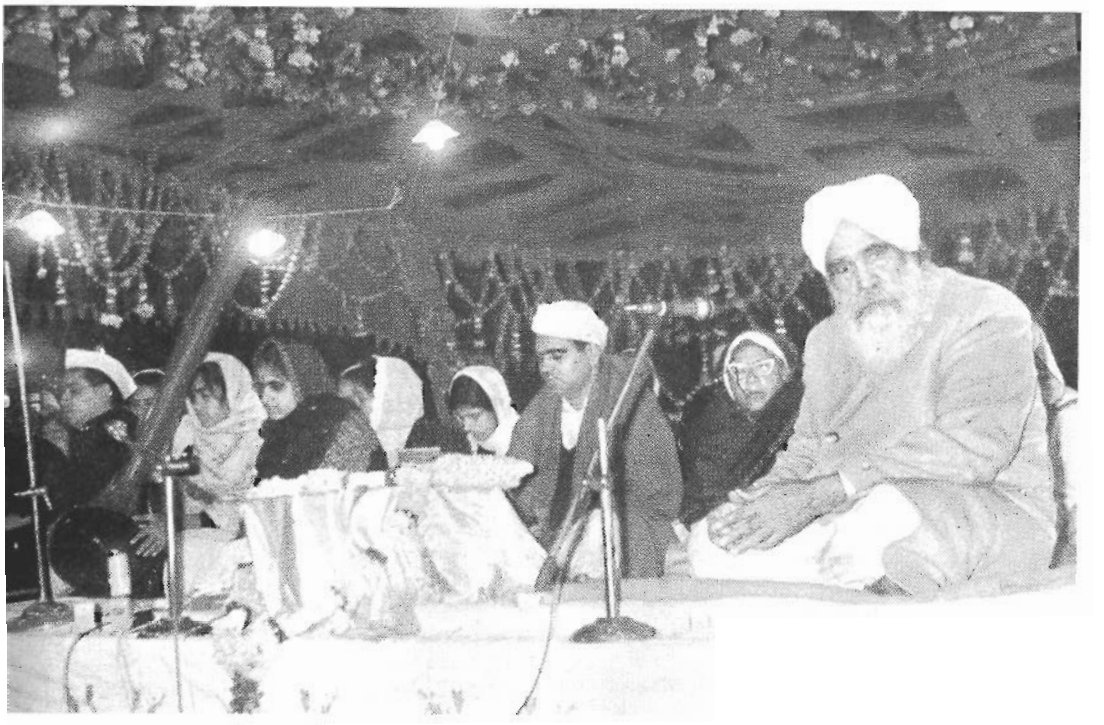
If I was almost stunned by the marvellous revelations in the first meditation, what would happen in the second? Again we assembled and were told to place our hands on our foreheads and insert the thumbs into our ears to exclude outer noises, and to listen without strain to what should manifest itself. For a long time again nothing happend, and then the Sound came, falling into one of five categories. There the most wonderful experience imaginable ended. Impossible to convey the joy and serenity, the certainty of the reality of spirit once it has been seen and heard.

At once comes the corollary of an earlier statement—who is this man who does what he promises in both Vision and Sound divine?

As I taxied back to my hotel that evening, I suddenly realised that all my misery and sorrow had gone and I was brimming over with happiness. I understood then as never before the meaning of those words: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden."

When I got to my room I switched on the light and as I moved round for some reason I closed my eyes, and there before me was the Master in his radiant form, smiling, shining like gold! I opened my eyes and closed them again, and there he was. I opened them and walked round the room amazed, then closed them again, and he was still there. I cried aloud in joy and astonishment: "It is true, it is all true—it is real, it is real." Christmas-eve, 1966, never to be forgotten!





The Masters' birthday celebrations

The Master's birthday (February 6) was celebrated in Delhi by thousands of seekers after truth who had gathered at Sawan Ashram for the occasion. A large number of devotees had come not only from various places in India but also from abroad. The Ashram was beautifully decorated with flowers and bunting.

The celebrations started early in the morning at 3.30, when the Master came out of his house to give *darshan* to the devotees. The Master sat on the dais and listened to the enchanting devotional songs sung by a group of devotees. It was a chilly morning but everyone sat still charmed by the charmed atmosphere and melodious music. The music over, the Master explained the real significance of a birthday. "For saints the birthday is the day on which one is reborn or rises above body consciousness", he said. "You are all micro-gods" and "you must be reborn," he emphasised a number of times. The entire congregation sat for meditation at 8.30 A. M. under the personal guidance of the Master. The meditation session ended at 9.30 A.M. with hundreds of people reporting wonderful inner experiences.

Later in the day, poets recited their poems of love and devotion for the Satguru. Holymen of different faiths offered their felicitations and praised the Master for his mission. The memorable celebrations ended at 9 P.M. with a Satsang talk during which the Master discussed at length the real purpose of the human life and the way back to God. The two photographs published here give a glimpse of the celebrations.

Surat Shabd Yoga

THE two things that emerge from an examination of the popular forms of yoga that were evolved after Patanjli are: first, that the soul can rise above physical consciousness, given means whereby it can focus its energies, without recourse to the arduous control of *pranas*, and second, that full spiritual realisation or true samadhi is not merely a matter of physical transcension (though that is necessary as a first step) but is the end of a complex inner journey in which there are many intermediate stages whose attainment under certain conditions may be mistaken for the final goal and may thus debar further progress. The problem that arises before the true seeker in the face of such a situation is to discover means, other than that of pranas, jnana or bhakti of some such an *Ishta-deva*, as not only enables the spirit-currents to be released from their present physical bondage, but also enables the soul to be drawn upwards unhindered from one spiritual plane to another until it transcends completely all the realms of relativity of *naam* and *rup*, of *kala* and *maha kala*, and reaches its goal: at-one-ment with the nameless and formless One.

It is in the context of this problem that the Surat-Shabd Yoga, or the yoga of the celestial Sound current, assumes its unique importance. Those who have mastered this yoga teach that the Absolute, though free of attributes in its primal state, projects itself into form and assumes two primary attributes: Light and Sound. It is no mere accident, they point out, that in the revelatory literatures of all major religions there are frequent references to the "Word" which occupies a central position in their pattern. In the Gospels we have:

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.
>
> —*John 1 : 1*

In ancient Indian scriptures, we hear repeatedly of 'Aum', the sacred Word pervading the three realms: bhur, bhuva and swah (i. e. the physical, astral and causal).

Again, Nanak says:

> The earth and sky are of naught but Shabd (Word)
> From Shabd alone the Light was born
> From Shabd alone creation came
> Shabd is the essential core in all.
>
> —*Janam Sakhi*

> Shabd is the directive agent of God the cause of all creation.
>
> —*Parbhati*

Muslims ufis declare:

> Creation came unto being from *saut* (Sound or Word) and from *saut* spread all Light.
>
> —*Shams-e-Tabrez*

> The Great Name is the very essence and life of all names and forms,
> Its manifest form sustains creation;
> It is the great ocean of which we are merely the waves,

He alone can comprehend this who has mastered our discipline.

—Abdul Razaq Kashi

Moses heard the commandments of God amidst thunder and flame, while in Zoroastrian and Taoist thought alike there are references to the "Creative Verbum", the "Divine Light" and to the "Wordless Word": the silent Word.

Some learned scholars and theologians in subsequent times, because of their own limited experience, have interpreted these descriptions as metaphoric references to intuitive or intellectual enlightenment. But on closer examination such a position will be found to be untenable. The terms "Word" or "Logos" as used by the Greeks, Hebrews and Europeans may be coerced into meaning "reason" or "order", and "light" may even be made to mean no more than mental illumination, but their equivalents in their religious literature—*nad*, *udgit*, *akash-bani*, *shabd*, *saut*, *bang-i-Illahi*, *nida-i-asmani*, *sraosha*, *tao*, and *jyoti*, *prakash*, *tajalli*, *nur-i-yazdani*, etc. refuse to bear such a travesty of their original mystic meaning. What is more, some seers have stated their real connotation in such a way that there can be no scope for equivocation, or room for doubt that what is involved is not figurative expression of ordinary mental experience, but transcendent inner perception. Thus in Revelations we have:

His eyes were as a flame of fire...
His voice as the sound of many waters...

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

And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard voice of the harpers harping with their harps.....*XIV*

In the Upanishads we are told:

First the murmuring sounds resembling those of the waves of the ocean, the fall of rain and then running rivulets and then *bhervi* will be heard intermingled with the sounds of bell and conch.

The prophet Mohammad heard celestial music which gradually assumed the shape of Gabriel and formed itself into words; while in Baha U'llah, we have:

Myriads of mystic tongues find utterance in one speech, and amyriads of His hidden mysteries are revealed in a single melody; yet, alas! there is no ear to hear nor heart to understand.

Blind thine eyes, that thou mayest behold My Beauty, stop thine ears that thou mayest hearken unto the sweet melody of My Voice.

These references to Light and Sound, say the masters of the Surat-Shabda Yoga, are not figurative but literal, referring not to the outer illuminations or sounds of this world, but to inner transcendent ones. This transcendent sound and this transcendent Light, they teach, are the primal manifestations of God when He projects Himself into creation. In His nameless state, He is neither light nor darkness, neither sound nor silence, but when He assumes shape and form, light and Sound emerge as His primary attributes.

This spirit force—Word, Naam, Kalma —or God-in-action is responsible for all that is. But the physical universes that we know are not the only ones that it has created. It has brought into being myriad regions and myriad creations over and above the physical. Indeed the whole is a grand, unfathomable, illimitable pattern to which the positive pole (Sach Khand or Sat Lok) is formed by the plane of pure, unalloyed spirit while the Negative (pind)

of gross physical matter with which we in this world are familiar. In between are countless regions which those who have journeyed from one end to the other often divide into three distinct planes in accordance with their own peculiar balance of positive-spiritual and negative-material forces.

The Masters teach that the one constant principle that links all these planes from pure spirit to gross matter is the principle of the flaming sound or the sounding flame. The Word or Shabd as it descends downwards, may assume varying density of spirituo-material forces—mystics speak of the purple light, and the light of the noonday or of the setting sun, and refer to the sounds of flutes, harps, violins, conches, thunder, bells, runing water etc. but though manifesting differently at different levels, it yet remains constant in itself.

A river springing from the snowy peaks of towering mountains undergoes many changes as it flows towards the sea, changes of setting, shape, motion and appearance, yet its waters remain the same.

If one could discover this audible life-stream within oneself, if one could discover its lower reaches, one could use it as a pathway leading inevitably to its source. The currents might at certain points enter gorges and rapids, but they nevertheless are the surest way to the upward journey. Be a range howsoever unscaleable but the waters have cut a pass and carved a passage; and he who would avail himself of their guidance would never fail to find a way. And since this Naam or Word-current springs from the Anaam or the worldless, he who would hold firmly to it will reach inevitably the starting point, transcending plane after plane of varying relativity until he arrives at the very source of Name and Form; and thence can merge into That which has no name or form.

The Sound-current undoubtedly offers the surest way to man for reaching from form to the formless, but the question that arises is how can man get access to it and thus accomplish his inner journey? Those proficient in the path always maintain that there are three conditions that must be fulfilled before success in this truest of all yogas can be attained:

Satguru: The first condition is that of finding a *Satguru* or a true teacher who is an adept in this mystic science. The subject is one of practical self-realisation, not of philosophic disquisition or intuitive feeling. If it were one of mere theory, then books and scriptures would be enough for our purpose; and if it were one of mere feeling then each could trust the promptings of his own mind. But the question before us is that of unlocking a 'sixth' sense, that of direct transcendental perception, of inner hearing and seeing. This cannot come simply from the reading of books. One born deaf and blind may, with the help of Braille, learn the most detailed expositions of man's rich and varied audo-visual experiences, but his study can never give him direct experience: the most that he can get from books is the realisation of an extensive plane of experience wholly beyond him, and this can generate in him the urge to discover means whereby he can overcome his physical limitations. It is the expert surgeon or doctor who alone can bring him cure (provided his ailment is curable). And should he fall into the hands of a charlatan, his condition will only become worse and more complicated.

In like manner the aspirant who seeks inner spiritual mastery must seek the aid of one who has already mastered the way. All his readings of scriptures, all his thinking, can at best lead him (provided he is sensitive to the point involved) to a single conclusion: the need for a living Master. Without such a Master, he cannot even understand the true import of

the revelatory scriptures. They speak of experiences beyond his level of experience, and when they use his language, they can only speak in metaphors and parables for how can the discources of the blind be made to express directly that of the seeing. To attempt to interpret the rich spiritual heritage in our religious literature wholly in terms of our own limited experience might lead to a distortion of their true meaning. We might gather a great deal of phychological wisdom, but the inner significance would be lost on us, and all our intellectual theorising would only land us in unending theological contradictions with which the various institutionalised religions are encumbered today.

Only one who has himself experienced what the great scriptures describe can guide us to their real significance. But the task of a spiritual teacher does not end here. The elucidation of the true meaning of religion is no more than a first step. After the aspirant has understood the nature of his goal, he must pursue it practically and rationally. To know is one thing, and to do is quite another. It is only after he has explained to the aspirant the end to be attained that the Master's real task begins. It is not enough that the doctor diagnoses the cause of the blind man's ailment, he must perform the operation as well. So, too, the spiritual guide at the time of initiation gives the disciple a first-hand experience of the inner Light and Sound. He puts him into touch with the divine stream, be it at its lowest level, and instructs him in the *Sadhnas* to be followed for consolidating and developing this inner experience to its full extent.

He who can find such a teacher is blessed indeed. But to discover such a one and be initiated by him is not enough. The germinal spiritual experience that he gives must be nurtured and developed to the point of full spiritual afflorescence. And to be able to do this, one must accept whatever one learns, and attempt to put it into practice. To know such a man is to love him, and to love him is to follow his commandments. Until one can love, obey and transform one's life, the gift of the guru remains as a seed locked away in a steel vault that cannot sprout, and grow to fruition.

Sadachar: It is this necessity for self-discipline that makes *sadachar* the second corner stone of the pattern. The word *sadachar* is not easy to translate: One can find many literal equivalents but none of them really expresses its extensive and many sided significance. In brief, it stands for the good life. It does not imply any rigid code or set moral formulae, but suggests purity and simplicity which radiate from within and spread outwards, permeating every action, every word, every thought. It is as much concerned with one's personal habits, good and hygienic, as with one's individual and social ethics. And on its ethical side it is concerned not merely with one's relation to one's fellow men but to all living things, i.e. harmony which is the result of recognition that all things are of the same essence, and a worm is as much a part of Brahman as the mightiest of gods, Indra.

The first lesson taught by a true guru is that of 'the identity of substance' ; and he who has grasped this truth will discipline his life accordingly. He will not be a prey to inordinate desires : his one aim will be to reach the still-point which holds in itself all actions, the point where to have nothing is to possess everything. He will know that the one path to fulfilment is through renunciation, and the one way to reach the Almighty is through freeing himself from all other attachments:

In order to arrive at having pleasure
in everything,
Desire to have pleasure in nothing.
In order to arrive at possessing everything,

Desire to possess nothing.
In order to arrive at being everything,
Desire to be nothing.

—*St. John of the Cross*

Cleanse the chamber of thy heart
That thy Beloved may enter.

—*Tulsi Sahib*

Where there is nothing there is God.

—*H.B. Yeats*

Freed from the demon of desire (*kama*), he will be freed from the demon of wrath (*krodh*) which follows upon frustration of desire. Liberated from these, he would be freed from greed (*lobh*), attachment (*moh*) and pride (*ahankar*) which are but the extensions of desire.

His would be a life of detachment or of *nishkama*. But detachment would not be for him a life of indifference or of ascetic renunciation. To know all life is to discover a new bond between oneself and the rest of creation. He who knows this cannot be merely 'indifferent'. He must preforce be filled to overflowing with sympathy for all that he confronts, and sympathy to the whole must imply a certain holy indifference to the part. He will no longer be tied to his own narrow individual interests but will share his love and resources with all. He will develop slowly but surely something of the compassion of the Buddha and the love of Christ. Nor will he feel himself called upon to leave the world for the solitude of the forest or the mountain and desert-cave. The detachment must be an inner one, and one who cannot achieve it at home will not achieve it in the forest. He will recognise the great use of occasional retreats from worldly affairs and cares to the silence of solitary meditation and concentration, but he will not seek to escape from life and its responsibilities. He will be a loving husband and a good father; but while being there he will never forget the ultimate purpose of life, always knowing how to give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and preserving for God what is God's. The way for transcending desire, he will know, is not through repressing it but meeting it squarely and overcoming it. To him *Sanyas* is not a matter of outer evasion, or escapism, but of inner freedom, an idea that is well-expressed by Nanak thus:

Let contentment be your ear-rings;
Endeavour for the Divine and respect
of the Higher self your wallet;
And constant meditation on him your
ashes,
Let preparedness for death be your
mendicant's cloak,
And let your body be as a chaste
virgin.
Let your Master's teachings be your
supporting staff.

—*The Japji*

The two cardinal virtues that such a man will cultivate will be charity and chastity. He will be large of heart and bounteous, caring more for the sufferings of others than for his own and easily forgiving those that injure him. He will be simple and restrained in his habits. His wants will be few and easily satisfied; for one who has too many desires and too many attachments cannot be pure of heart. For him chastity will extend even to giving up meat and drink. When all life is one, to live upon the flesh of other living beings would be to defile oneself. And when one's goal is to attain ever higher realms of consciousness, to resort to narcotics and intoxicants is only to court regression. It is not an ideosyncracy of Indian seers that they should have made abstinence from meat and drink a necessary part of the spiritual discipline. We have similar injunctions in the Alkoran and the holy Bible:

He who adds drunkenness to thirst:
the Lord will not spare him...and the

Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.

—*Detronomy (29:18-20)*

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

—*Romans (14:21)*

Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

—*Corinthians (1, 6:13.)*

In the Essene Gospel of John (direct translation from the Aramaic of the pure original words of Jesus), we have:—

"But they answered Him: Whither should we go, Master,.....for with you are the words of eternal life? Tell us, what are the sins we must shun, that we may never more see disease?"

Jesus answered: "Be it so according to your faith, and He sat down among them, saying:

"It was said to them of old time, 'Honour thy heavenly Father and thy earthly Mother, and do their commandments, that thy days may be long upon the earth.' And next afterward was given this commandment: 'Thou shalt not kill,' for life is given to all by God, and that which God has given, let not man take away. For I tell you truly from one Mother proceeds all that live upon the earth. Therefore, he who kills, kills his brother. And from him will the earthly Mother turn away, and will pluck from him her quickening breasts. And he will be shunned by her angels, and Satan will have his dwelling in his body. And the flesh of slain beasts in his body will become his own tomb. For I tell you truly, he who kills, kills himself, and who so eats the flesh of slain beasts, eats of the body of death. And their death will become his death. For the wages of sin is death. Kill not, neither eat the flesh of your innocent prey, lest you become the slaves of Satan. For that is the path of sufferings, and it leads unto death. But do the will of God, that His angels may serve you on the way of life. Obey, therefore, the words of God: 'Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth wherein there is breath of life, I give ever-green herb for meat. Also the milk of every-thing that moveth and that liveth upon each shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given unto them, so I give their milk unto you. But flesh, and the blood which quickens it, shall ye not eat.' And Jesus continued: 'God commanded your forefather; 'Thou shalt not kill.' But their heart was hardened and they killed. Then Moses desired that at least they should not kill men, and he suffered them to kill beasts. And then the heart of your forefathers was hardened yet more, and they killed men and beasts likewise. But I say to you : Kill neither men, nor beasts, nor yet the food which goes into your mouth. For if you eat living food the same will quicken you, but if you kill your food, the dead food will kill you also. For life comes only from life, and from death comes always death. For everything which kills your foods, kills your bodies also. And everything which kills your bodies, kills your souls also. And your bodies become what your foods are, even as your

spirits, likewise, become what your thoughts are."

With the chastity in food and drink will go another kind of chastity, the one that pertains to sex. He will not suppress all sexual desire, for repression can only breed neurosis and prepare the way for a downfall, but he will be ever seeking to sublimate it. He will understand that nature's purpose in this instinct is to preserve the race and he will channelise it so as to fulfil that purpose, never making it an end in itself, a source of physical pleasure, for when it becomes that, it turns into a drug that anaesthetises the spirit and begins to defeat nature's purpose of procreation by encouraging the invention and use of contraceptives.

In short, the sincere and conscientious aspirant will reorient his entire mode of life: in eating and drinking, thinking, acting, feeling etc. He will gradually weed out of his mind all irrelevant and unhealthy desires, until he gradually attains the state of purity and simplicity that marks the child.

> Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of God.
>
> —*Matt. 18:3.*

All religious teachers the world over laid great stress on higher moral values and these in fact constituted the groundwork for their teachings. A true Master always insists on maintaining record of daily lapses in thought, word and deed, from non-injury, truth, chastity, universal love and selfless service of all, the five cardinal virtues that pave the way for spirituality. It is only the knowledge of our faults that can make us weed out the same, and strive in the right direction.

Through all this process of reintegration, his inspiration will be the example of his Master and the inner experience he gives. His master's life will be a living testament backoning him towards the ideals of *Sadachar*, and the experience he has of the Word within will stand as a proof of the truth of what his Master teaches. Sadachar is no dry discipline that can be attained by following certain set formulae. It is a way of life, and in such matters only heart to heart can speak. It is this that makes Satsang, or association with a true Master, so important. It not only serves as a constant reminder of the goal before the seeker, but through the magic touch of personal contact gradually transforms his entire mode of thinking and feeling. As his heart and mind under this benign influence grow gradually purer, his life more fully centres in the divine; in short, as he increasingly realises in practice the ideal of sadachar—his thoughts, now scattered and dissipated, will gain equipoise and integration till they arrive at so fine a focus that the veils of inner darkness are burnt to cinders and the inner glory stands revealed. *(Extract from "The Crown of Life."—To be continued)*

> Weapons do not cleave the Self, fire does not burn him; waters do not make him wet; nor does the wind make him dry. He is uncleavable. He cannot be burnt. He can neither be wetted nor dried. He is eternal, all pervading, unchanging and immovable. He is the same for ever.
>
> —*The Gita*

Prayer of supplication

Like a scarf, we had been stolen from the Lord,
Driven and blown across the burning barren desert of life,
To rest ensnared and torn on the thorns of a bush
Which deceived us with its alluring flowers.

When hope was abandoned and life began to ebb,
A Radiant Sage appeared and set to naught
The thorns, the barren desert, and the pangs of separation.
When the Sage turned and looked upon our expectant souls,
We found that it was Thee, O Lord!

In Thy Oasis Presence, we have found
The cooling springs of liberation,
And beneath the shelter of Thy almighty Hand,
We have found the safe peace
Which no thing and no one can put asunder.

Thou hast baptised our souls in the resonant
Harmonies of Light, issuing from Thy Lotus Presence—
Wooed by Thy charm, we have become
Slaves of the Love of God. Small wonder that
Millions of creations are filled with awe and joy.
At the sight of Thee, O' Master Divine!

None of nature's beauties can compare to Thy Munificence
For God Himself has showered all Gifts upon Thee--
With Thy grace, O' Satguru Ji, free us from the tyrant of the mind,
O' make us the dust of Thy Feet
And eternal slaves of Thy Hari-Naam.

—Arran B. Stephens

Questions answered

The Master receives from devotees queries on various aspects of spirituality. These may be personal or academic, but the Master's answers have universal appeal for spiritual aspirants. We reproduce here some of the questions and answers from the Master's book, "Spiritual Elixir", for the benefit of our readers.

Q.—*People say they are searching for 'Truth'; or they have found Truth. What does this word 'Truth' imply in the teachings of the Masters?*

A.—Truth in the teaching of the Masters is a definite science. It is called the Word or *Naam*. It has a practical aspect. It is universal and for all mankind. It is the natural way back to God achieved during ones lifetime. It is a process of self-analysis and self-introspection in which first-hand experience is given by the Master individually or in a class by opening the inner vision to the Light within, called the 'Light of God' and a contact with Sound or the audible Life-stream of the 'Voice of God' at the time of initiation, more or less, according to each man's receptivity and background. The disciple must then develop it further by alloting time regularly each day with love and devotion.

Q.—*How can we become passive and attain absolute stillness and silence inside to enable us to obtain the bliss of the Light of lights?*

A.—There are no short cuts on the spiritual path. One has to work for the spiritual bliss. Mind, like fire, is a good servant but a bad master. While sitting for meditation, we have to free the mind of all thoughts, and the intellect of all reasoning. This can be achieved by a mental revolution. What in the world is after all ours? Nothing, not even the body, the mental apparatus and the wealth that one may possess. These are given to us for a legitimate use only. They belong to the Giver. Why not surrender them at the holy feet of the Godman when attending to the task assigned by him; to wit, to sit at the eye-focus and lovingly gaze within with devoted undivided attention, mentally repeating the charged Words very very slowly, may be at intervals, so as not to disturb the gaze. Gradually it will, by practice, become a habit and a second nature with you and the Master-power above will take care of you and without any effort on your part, you will find your 'self' rising above body consciousness into consciousness of a higher order. Love, longing and devotion are the keynotes on the path Godwards.

Q.—*What is yogic sleep?*

A.—It is a sleep in which the soul descends into the lower *chakras* and goes into deep sleep and sometimes sees dreams. It comes while con-

templating, on some fixed idea. The Masters do not advocate or encourage it.

Q.—*How can man free his body from all negation and achieve perfection or near perfection?*

A.— Man can free his body from all negation and achieve perfection by resorting to stern discipline, self-control and regular meditations faithfully under the guidance of a perfect Master.

Q.—*Why does the mind forget the bliss?*

A.—Forgetfulness is the chief attribute of human mind. It is due to the gross *maya* or materialism that we forget the inner bliss and are overtaken by the sensuous urges. When inner consciousness grows gradually, mind forgets its lower pulls and relishes inner bliss perpetually with the grace of the Master.

Q.—*Can the Power of God work in our lives in spite of bad karma?*

A.—The divine Power of God continues working for our spiritual welfare irrespective of the response. It is rather the enlivening principle in human body which sustains and maintains the life, and as such works ceaselessly throughout the physical sojourn. What we term as 'bad *karma*' means lesser good and if one is granted the boon of holy initiation, there are ample chances of improvement.

Q.—*How does karma work on lower animals?*

A.—Lower animals or forms of creation are bound by their past *karmic* debt and they do not contract any more *karma* during their life span. They simply are born to undergo their *karmic* liquidation.

Q.—*What is the true meaning of the Word?*

A.—God is 'wordless' and when it came into expression, it is called the Word or Naam in the terminology of *Sant Mat.* It is the God-into-expression Power which when manifests itself reveals the divine Light of God and the holy Sound-current, the conscious contacts of which are granted by the Master to the initiates. Please refer to the book Naam or Word for exhaustive explanations.

Q.—*What are the five Shabds? Are these the charged names?*

A.—The five Shabds are the varying types of the Sounds heard within denoting the various spiritual planes up to *Sach Khand.* As a matter of fact the Sound-current is one but varies according to the density of the inner realms, where there is all consciousness predominating *maya*, another region where *maya* and consciousness are at par, and the last where *maya* predominates and consciousness is at a lower ebb. The five charged Names denote these stages.

Q.—*Why is it so difficult to hear Shabd?*

A.—Shabd is reverberating in all the universes, seen or unseen. The human soul and holy Shabd are of the same divine essence. Those who develop their inner consciousness by regular, faithful and accurate meditations can listen to this heavenly melody anytime they choose to do so. The novices do feel some trouble in focussing their attention at the eye-centre and controlling their vibrations and thoughts carefully. Besides those who speak much and waste their precious energy in idle and loose talk cannot listen to this heavenly melody. It is the inner single-minded devotion and attention which grants this rapturous listening. Practice undertaken with perseverance and steadfastness invokes divine grace and the initiate can listen to the Holy Shabd Dhun.

Q.—*Why does one put off practising Shabd when it is so very essential for spiritual progress?*

A.—Human mind is fashioned as such by Providence that it resents silence and stillness at its centre—back between the two eyes. It is an agent of Negative Power attached to each human soul and relishes externality. It does not relish introversion. Besides, it is fond of sensuous pleasures, which cannot be eschewed easily. It is the gracious protection of the living Master that he grants the conscious contact of this heavenly melody. Yet *Satsangis* do not pay proper heed to this most important aspect of spiritual discipline. It may be added that the dear ones who are engrossed in the pursuit of gross pleasures of flesh and matter seldom take to the holy path, and if per chance some of them may happen to be led to the Master and granted initiation, due to some past *karmic* evolution, they do not relish this spiritual discipline.

Human body is just like a radio set wherein these divine melodies are being received by all. The living Master is the one who can repair our damaged sets and grant us the knob and wave-length at which this heavenly song can be heard. Regularity and steadfastness coupled with untiring selfless service in a spirit of dedication are the chief helping factors for practising this spiritual discipline.

Mind has a varying set of tricks to unloose on the initiate for evading this listening. Some times it poses as a friend to coax the disciple by putting forth family obligations etc. and the dear one is caught in the noose of attachment. At other times it stands up in tough fight like a formidable foe. Besides, the temptations of worldly pleasures keep the mind constantly swinging and wavering. The only point where it can find rest is at the eye-centre, the seat of the soul. The putting off of practising *Shabd* is an age-old malady of the human mind for which divine grace of the Master is most essential.

Q.—*Now that we have come down to earth from our Heavenly Home, do we have definite promise that we can remain there after going up with a Master?*

A.—Yes, there is a definite promise from the living Master, supported by the statements of past Masters, that the souls merging with the Father within, are not to be reincarnated when blessed with the rare boon of holy initiation of Naam. The seed karma being the basis of future birth of the initiates is burnt in the fire of holy Naam. Guru Nanak has proclaimed in the Granth Sahib, that having been blessed with the rare boon of holy Naam, the accounts of the disciple are torn, and he or she has nothing to do with Dharam Rai—the judge, appointed by the Negative Power for administering justice to the souls, after the termination of their earthly lives. They can be sent to the earth to fetch back the souls to God, but not like a prisoner to reap the fruit of their actions.

Q.—*How much are our lives pre-ordained, and what part does 'free will' play after we become initiates?*

A.—Six things are pre-ordained or covered by fate-karma; viz. health and sickness, poverty and opulence, honour and ignominy. Strenuous effort, self-control and discipline do play an important role for our betterment with the grace of the Master. Many dear ones with unhappy and checkered careers claim to have become saintly persons after holy initiation and faithful meditations on holy Naam. For elaborate discussion, reference is invited to "Wheel of Life".

The purpose of human life

(*Continued from page 9*)

to look at and sweet melodies to hear. Just now, if you happen to hear melodious music, your attention will be diverted to it. The only way to keep it under control is to link it with Naam which has both these attractions. At various spiritual planes within, you have wonderful visions to see as also enchanting melodies to hear. When the mind has more fascinating experience within than it has outside, it is automatically subdued.

Thus, only by establishing a contact with Naam one becomes desireless. According to a parable, once Lord Krishna plunged into the river Yamuna where a thousand-headed cobra used to live. Lord Krishna performed a dance on the Cobra's head to the tune of his favourite flute and subdued the deadly snake. What does the parable signify? The thousand-headed cobra is the mind itself. The mind poisons us in innumerable ways. By attuning to the celastial Sound-current within, mind can be subdued. There is no other remedy. A Muslim mystic has said that if you have firmly resolved to reach God, put one step on your mind and your second step will be in God's court.

Swamiji now advises us to give up procrastination and to start meditation without delay. *Sehaj Yoga*, the path shown by saints, has three aspects: Simran, meditation and catching the celestial Sound-current. Simran lifts the soul above body-consciousness. Once this is done, meditation or contemplation with rapt attention provides a resting place for its stay there till it catches and listens to the celestial Sound-current.

Shamsh-e-Tabrez says: "Every moment a divine Sound is calling my soul to come to the Lord." Tulsi Sahib also says: "Listen with rapt attention at the arch-way of the real *Kaaba* (body) and you will hear a call from the Beyond." This body is the temple of God and the forehead is the arch-way of the temple as described by Tulsi Sahib. Procrastination is the thief of time. We tend to postpone meditation on one pretext or the other. Start meditation forthwith so that we may come out of the mortal body which is the domain of negative power. After all, this body has to be left behind. If we learn to leave it while alive, death will not perturb us. You will then be care free.

Swamiji says that only the Satguru is capable of pulling the soul above body-consciousness. Therefore, pray with every breath for the grace of a true Master. I have already discussed the functions of Simran i.e., it brings the soul above body-consciousness. Another equally important point is that the soul is attached to the body and unless a competent Master helps with his thought transference through personal attention, the soul cannot be separated and lifted above body-consciousness. Here lies the greatness and importance of the Satguru. As a matter of fact, the real test of a Guru is that he is capable of pulling the soul to its own seat. We must therefore pray for his grace and help. All great souls have pray-

ed likewise. Maulana Rumi testifies it by asking: "Who is capable of saving the humanity from this mysterious box (world)? Only either a prophet or a Master commissioned to do that." We have thus to seek the help of a realised soul, but he must really be a realised soul. When a so-called Master cannot lift his own soul above body-consciousness, how can he help others. The responsibility of a competent Master is great indeed. Not only he guides and helps us in this world, but he is also a torch-bearer in our journey within.

Swamiji, therefore, emphasises that the only way out is to pray to a competent Master. Out of compassion, he will give you an experience of super-consciousness. Thereafter, follow his commandments, remember him constantly with all your heart and ever remain eager to serve him.

Tulsi Sahib also asks us to look through the veil of darkness behind the pupil of the eyes. How to do it? He tells us to go to a God-realised soul. Such a Master will give you some inner experience, pull you above body-consciousness and tell you how to see through the darkness within. Your inner eye will thus be opened. All saints agree on this point.

Swamiji has advised us to seek the company of a true Master with love. Go there with devotion, leaving behind all worldly ideas. You should then have only one thought—the thought of your Master. Sit there with solitude and listen with full attention to what the Master has to say.

Swamiji now explains the importance of Satsang. He says; "Attend Satsang in all seriousness." We have to solve the mystery of life and death. Grasp and imbibe what is taught there. We are fortunate if we get in touch with a true Master and get inner experience through his grace. If we do not act on his commandments, our spiritual progress will be retarded. That is why so much emphasis is laid on doing away with unnecessary worldly things. This way one's spiritual experience will continue to grow till a luminous form of the Master appears within. He will talk to you and guide you. On getting proper guidance from the Master, devote adequate time to meditation and mould your life according to the Master's teachings. We must have tenacity of purpose as we cannot afford to slacken our efforts in our present state, when we have yet to rise above body-consciousness.

Finally, Swamiji explains what is Naam (the Word); what is the destination and what is our ideal? He says that our aim is to merge our soul with Sat Naam (true Word), the eternal nameless God-power. We have first to rise above body-consciousness and get the lowest link. After gradually traversing the various higher planes, the soul will finally reach where there is nothing but all Truth. The three regions—primal, subtle and causal —are destructible. Beyond these three regions is Satlok or Sachkhand which is the abode of the Almighty. This is our goal and we must achieve it. Jesus Christ at the time of leaving his immortal frame, instructed his desciples first to accomplish what he had taught them. The human birth has given you a golden opportunity. Make the best use of it.

(*English version and substance of one of the Master's—Sant Kirpal Singh Ji's—Satsang talks in Hindi at Sawan Ashram, Delhi.*)

The Master speaks: explanatory notes

1. *Guru Nanak*: (1469-1539 A.D.): The founder of the Sikh religion.
2. *Swamiji*: (1818-1878 A.D.): Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, the great saint of Agra, who revived the teachings of the Masters like Kabir and Nanak.
3. *The Japji* : The hymn of Guru Nanak; prologue to the Adi Granth, Holy Book of the Sikhs.
4. *Rishi Patanjali*: The father of the Yoga system. His *Ashtang Yoga*, the eight fold path, is the first major attempt to co-relate the many available avenues into a single coherent system for spiritual reintegration of man.
5. *Anhat*: Unstruck melody.
6. *Sahasrar*: There are four grand divisions of the universe. These are: (i) *Sach Khand* or the region of Satnam—the region of pure spirit; (ii) *Brahmand* (causal or superamental). Here spirit and subtle form of matter combine in varying degrees, yet spirit is the ruling force; (iii) *And* (astral). Here spirit for its manifestation depends on matter. *Sahasrar* is a stage of this region; and (iv) *Pind* (physical). Here spirit lies dormant under a heap of matter in its grossest form.
7. *Gurbani*: The writings of the Sikh Masters.
8. *Maulana Rumi*: A great Persian saint, author of the famous Masnavi.
9. *Yugas*: The four cycles of time: *Sat Yuga*, *Dwapar Yuga*, *Treta Yuga*, and *Kal Yuga*, which complete the time unit of *Parlay* or dissolution.
10. *Bulleh Shah*: (1760-1810 A.D.): A saint poet of Punjab. His '*Kafis*' constitute a land-mark in the mystic Punjabi poetry.
11. *Shams-e-Tabrez*: A great saint of Tabrez, Persia. He was the Master of the celebrated Maulana Rumi.
12. *Tulsi Sahib*: (1763-1843 A.D.): The saint of Hathras. Original name: : Sham Rao Hulkar, Crown Prince of Gwalior, who spurned the throne to practise meditation.

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From the editor's desk

By a great good fortune thou hath got a human birth,
This is the only opportunity for thee to contact the Lord;
All else in the world will avail thee naught,
Seek ye the company of the saints, and learn to commune within.

—Guru Arjan

NATURE is not extravagent in her plans and purposes. It provides every one, of course according to one's background, opportunities to evolve what is involved in him or her. The causes set going in the distant past, may be in this life or in lives past out of mind have, of necessity, to be worked out in the living present and there is no go from reaping the rich harvest already sown.

Laws of nature prescribe the conditions under which man has to work out but do not prescribe the actual workings. At the centre of his being, one is a free agent in spite of the ever revolving wheel of life around the centre. And yet the apparently still point in the wheel is the point of intense activity.

Spiritual growth is a long drawn process. From mineral world to vegetable kingdom, to tiny insects, rodents and reptiles, to the feathery fraternity, to quadrupeds and finally to bipeds as man is a process that extends over ages upon ages. Thanks to the Power-of-God in man that he has come to the top rung of the ladder in God's creation. He is virtually the roof and crown of all that is and yet has in him potentialities and powers that lie dormant in him. He is a micro-god, with the very breath of God Himself surging in the image of His being, as he is verily the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is another thing that he may not, in his ignorance, know of it.

To reach at the top and yet not to develop the Power-of-God in him is to lose the golden opportunity provided to him by Dame Nature. To fall from the top rung of the ladder is great fall indeed and sadly deplorable. The opportunity once lost may mean a torturous uphill task. Why not then to make the most of the means at our disposal?

The purpose of human life has succinctly and yet in forcefully expressive and lucid terms, been set forth above by Guru Arjan, fifth in the line of succession to Nanak. Time and tide wait for no man. Now or never should be our motto. Make hay while the sun shines.

So long there is the concept of God, God surely exists and there is a Godway and the Godman to guide Godward. 'No one knoweth the Father save the Son and those to whom the Son may reveal Him.' Again, Guru Amar Dass, the third Guru, has said: 'Without the active aid of a perfect Master, one cannot be a true devotee nor get attuned to the Word,/ For those who commune with the Word, they do so by the Master's grace.

To know one's 'self' and to know God is the be-all and end-all of human existence. The principle of demand and supply is ever at work. There is water for the thirsty and food for the hungry and whosoever feels the need for the water of life and bread of life can have them in abundance from a competent Master and thus achieve the grand purpose of life—full efflorescence into Godhood.

Wisdom of the ages

Here are some of the verities of life which are eternally true. Let us take one for cogitation each day and try to reflect the truth of it in our life. We have, of course, to guard against making an alloy of it by a subtle admixture, traducing it to suit our own commonplace convenience.

March:

1 If you don't get tasks you like, like the tasks you get.
2 Blessed are they who 'know' and whose knowledge is free from delusion and superstition.
3 No man is completely born until he is dead.
4 Purity is best pilgrimage and the best prayer is the healing of a broken heart.
5 Blessed are they who speak what they know in a kindly, open and truthful manner.
6 Love truth and truth will love thee.
7 Practice silence, and the spark divine that dwells in your heart will grow into a flame of Light and shine on, leading you nearer to God—the Light Supreme!
8 One can neither buy contentment with all riches of the world, nor reach Him with all mental ingenuity.
9 Procrastination is thief of time.
10 Serenity of mind, gentleness, silence, self-control and purity of heart—these constitute the austerity of mind.
11 The purpose of this mortal life is to reach the shore of immortality by conquering both life and death.
12 Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.
13 No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.
14 If any one pretends to know the Lord through his unaided investigations, he does not deserve to be called spiritually advanced.
15 Blessed are ye when ye direct your best efforts to self-training and self-control.
16 The wise man keeps earnestness as his best jewel.
17 It is in self-surrender that we fortify ourselves.
18 All living things die but out of death comes life.
19 Each one requires to be renewed.
20 The true guide of our conduct is no outward authority, but the Voice of God.
21 Love is the only reality.
22 Man is nature's supreme masterpiece.
23 The impulse to perfection is innate in man.
24 Knowledge should lead to realisation.
25 There is none good but one, that is God.
26 The self is not a set of perceptions, emotions and thoughts.
27 Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.
28 Religion is the direct apprehension of the Supreme. It is the attaining of a state of illumination.
29 We must wake up to the reality of the kingdom of spirit.
30 The hidden treasure of the self is life in eternity which knows no bondage, decay or sorrow.
31 We are all micro—gods.