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Spiritual Link

Science of the Soul Research Centre

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Spiritual Link

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Yours Affectionately

You say you are “highly interested in attaining the higher realms of God’s spiritual world.” We are to seek God’s spiritual world and God within us. The spiritual worlds lie behind the mental worlds and the mental worlds are at the back of the physical world. Our attention is, at present, held by the physical world through the nine portals of the body – eyes, ears, nose, and so forth – whereas access to the mental and the spiritual worlds is through the tenth portal, located in the eye centre. So long, therefore, as our attention does not develop the capacity to detach itself from the world, vacate the nine portals of the body, and collect in the eye centre, we have not even come to the starting point of the path to the mental and spiritual world. From this point – the eye centre – the attention sticks to the sound current and follows it right through the mental worlds to the spiritual worlds and God. The Master, who is familiar with the path, acts throughout as a guide.

The method, as was explained to you at the time of initiation, is the simplest when compared with other methods. This has been followed and recommended by the past Masters. It is natural, within all, designed by God, and as old as the creation itself.

Because our attention in the long, long past lost touch with the sound current and got attached to the mind and the physical world, adopting forms of life according to the actions performed, it has become materialized, in a way, and now finds it difficult to detach itself from the material world, vacate the nine portals of the body and concentrate in the eye centre, thereby dematerializing itself and becoming fit to make contact with the sound current again and enter the mental plane.

The simplest way to dematerialize the attention is simran – the repetition of the five names by the attention in the eye centre. When the attention is engaged in the eye centre in this repetition, it begins to withdraw itself from the world and from the extremities of the body, leaving them numb. As the practice increases, leaving the whole body numb, the attention concentrates in the eye centre and enters a new world.

This method is natural with us, as everyone in this world is engaged in repeating words – a farmer is mentally making use of words connected with his work when he thinks of his fields and bullocks and plans agricultural operation; a housewife thinks in words connected with what is in stock in the house and what is to be purchased for the table; a lawyer thinks in words connected with his cases. In this method of concentration, by repeating words in the eye centre, there is no change in our daily habit; only new words have been substituted, thereby changing the subject matter but not the habit. The words we use in concentration refer to nothing in the external material world but refer to our spiritual journey within us.

Therefore, let there be no doubt about the simplicity and the efficacy of the method. If followed with faith, love and perseverance, it is bound to give results. Strong effort is needed in making every venture a success. I am glad to read in your letter: “Nothing else in life is as important to me as drawing ever closer to my Father’s home.” This is the aim of human life, for it is given to man alone and to no other form of life, to reach his Father’s home.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, *Spiritual Gems*



You ask for a message. The message is that you develop the power to withdraw your attention, at will, from the outward objects and from the physical body, and concentrate it in the eye focus. Enter the astral world, make contact with the Astral Form of the Master, become very intimate with him, make him your companion, catch the sound current, cross the mind planes, and reach your eternal spiritual home in Sach Khand so that your wanderings in the worlds of mind and matter may end. Do it now, while alive. This is the purpose of human life.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, *Spiritual Gems*



Are We Missing the Point?

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson are on a camping trip. In the middle of the night Sherlock Holmes wakes up and gives Dr. Watson a nudge.

“Watson,” he says, “look up in the sky and tell me what you see.”

“I see millions of stars, Holmes,” says Watson.

“And what do you conclude from that, Watson?”

Watson thinks for a moment. “Well,” he says, “astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. Theologically, I see that God is all-powerful, and we are small and insignificant. Uh, what does it tell you, Holmes?”

“Watson, you idiot! Someone has stolen our tent!”

Plato and a Platypus Walk into a Bar

It is easy to miss the point when we are busy trying to find a deeper and more complicated meaning to things. It's like the time a large American food company released the perfect cake mix. It required no additives, no butter, no sugar. Just add water to the powder and mix, pop it into the oven and ready!

There was a problem though; no one bought this mix. After conducting many surveys, the manufacturers concluded that it was just too simple, and simple was synonymous with ‘not good enough’. They decided to alter the recipe, which now required half a cup of butter. Within a week of the new launch, sales skyrocketed.

Sant Mat is very simple to understand. We are born as humans who are gifted with a sense of discrimination, which should be used to pursue something that gives us permanent happiness. Permanent happiness can only be achieved when our soul merges with its source, and for this we need the help of a God-realized soul who can teach and guide us through the process of meditation.

The problem is that this is too simple and ironically difficult for us to accept. We figure that there has to be more that needs to be learned. We need to understand the workings of the mind, the reason why the Lord

sent us to this creation, and we need to be able to assess how much the Master does for us.

While knowledge is power, it becomes powerful only when we take action. We are often told to stop analyzing and experience things for ourselves. Instead of scrutinizing every single aspect of the path, we must practise the teachings, and wait for clarity to come through experience.

When it comes to understanding the workings of God and the Master, and when it comes to understanding the nature of the mind, we have only one tool to use, and that is our own limited mind – it is like a first grader trying to understand Shakespeare. If we attempt to gather more knowledge in order to get a better understanding, we are missing the point. What we need to do is gather more awareness through meditation so that we can assimilate our knowledge and turn it into wisdom or understanding.

Our job is to do our best at meditation and trust the Master to take care of the other details – details that we really can't understand at this physical level.

Sant Mat is also very simple to follow (note that simple is not the same as easy). We often miss the point when it comes to the role we are to play, and this is evident from the kind of questions and requests that we pose to the Master: “I cannot sit for meditation”; “I do my meditation but why can't I see anything?”; “I need more grace.”

Master tells us that we can sit for meditation, we do it all the time. Meditation requires us to sit still in one place for a certain length of time, which is something we constantly do at movie theatres, lectures and at the hairdressers. Meditation also requires us to engage the mind in the repetition of the five Names, which again is something that we constantly do when we are thinking of the chores we do during the day, when we are remembering our loved ones or when we are recalling the scenes of the movie that we spent two hours watching while sitting still in the cinema.

“I do my meditation but why can't I see anything?” Was seeing something part of a contract we signed? Were we guaranteed shining bright lights and majestic symphonies at initiation? We conclude that if we can't see or hear anything after spending a certain amount of time in meditation, then it means that we are doing something wrong, or that we don't have it in us to succeed. Once again, the point is not success,

the point is effort. Great Master made this very clear when he welcomed our failures with great love.

“I need more grace.” This is probably the most widely misused statement or request at every question and answer session with the Master. His grace is his gift to us, and if it is his gift, he has anticipated our needs. His grace is his love for us; can one put a tap on how much love needs to be dispensed at a time? Our Master has given this gift to us at initiation and it already carries with it an unending amount of power, courage, inspiration and love. We don’t need to ask for grace, what we need is to become receptive to it.

A medical professor wanted to prove that alcohol was injurious to health. He had two containers, one with distilled water and one with pure alcohol. He put an earthworm into the distilled water and it swam beautifully and came to the top. He put another earthworm into the alcohol and it disintegrated in front of everyone’s eyes. He wanted to prove that this is what alcohol does to the insides of our body. He asked the group what the moral of the story was and one person from behind said, “If you drink alcohol you won’t have worms in your stomach!”

Sant Mat is simple to understand and follow, and if we are missing the mark then maybe we should consider whether we are honest and sincere in our intention to please our Master and achieve our goal.



Once a soul rests peacefully in God, it will never exchange this stillness for all the most satisfying things of earth.

François de Sales, as quoted in *The Love of God*



Something to Think About

A satsangi should honestly adhere to the pledges taken at the time of his Initiation. Your conduct should be such as to set an example for others to follow. A satsangi should never behave in such a manner as to bring discredit to his Master or to be the cause of discredit to the society to which he belongs. Beware that your mind does not deceive you. How do you know that you and the other woman were husband and wife in a previous birth? Do not make it a cover to find excuses to satisfy your lust and sensuality. It is only a justification for your weakness. I would be very sorry to see a devoted satsangi fail and fall.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Divine Light*

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When you begin meditation, expel all thoughts from your mind and tell your mind that all anxiety and all kinds of thoughts can wait till the meditation is over. Do not allow any kind of idea or thought to arise while doing your repetition or listening to the Sound. When the mind and soul sit quietly within, the spiritual progress will begin. Clearness and intensity of Sound depend on the degree of concentration. The greater the concentration, the clearer and louder the Sound.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, *Spiritual Gems*

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How we waste our precious human lives in running after sense pleasures, which bring only distress, disease, agony and pain in their wake. In fact, we do not seem to realize the great value of this precious gift which the merciful Lord has bestowed upon us. We get the human body after passing through millions of lives in lower species. As worms, birds and beasts we had father, mother, spouse and children. Love, hate, lust, hunger and greed we experienced even then. What then is the superiority of man? Our benign Creator's main purpose in giving us intelligence was that we may know ourselves and seek and meet our Creator in this life. If we fail to do that, we are no better than beasts. Let us then avail of this gift in realizing God.

Maharaj Jagat Singh, *The Science of the Soul*

The Paradox of Effort

Effort is a key component for a disciple on a spiritual path. We can apply a bottom-up and top-down perspective to effort. Effort is an integral component to make progress. It is our effort that counts, our effort that pleases the Master and our effort that invokes the grace of the Lord.

Yet, from a divine perspective, what can our puny efforts count for? It is all divine grace that grants us a human birth wherein we are initiated by a true living master and it is this grace that prompts us to turn our attention inward through our spiritual practice. Nevertheless, as spiritual aspirants, we strive to be good human beings and remain in the will of the Lord. As initiates, we have taken the vows of adopting a lacto-vegetarian diet, abstaining from alcohol and mind-altering substances, leading a moral life, and practising two-and-a-half hours of daily meditation as taught to us at initiation. We can examine the scope of our efforts in each of these endeavours.

What prevents us from becoming a better human being? When we are triggered we react by judging others. Despite the best of intentions and knowing better, we end up hurting others. Our ego – our need to be right insists we are heard or praised. How do we become better human beings?

In ego you want other people to love you; in love you want to love another person. You want to submit to another person. You want to eliminate your individuality in another being. In ego you want other people to respect you, to love you, to praise you. The ego makes you think you're much higher than everybody. In love there's always submission.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. I

What effort is involved in remaining in the will of the Lord? In uncontrollable circumstances, we are disappointed when our health, careers, even our cooking, does not turn out as we had hoped. Our effort invites us to let go of expectations and attachment to specific outcomes. We are invited to give up the fallacy that we know what is best for us and surrender instead to a destiny that is, in fact, playing out in accordance with divine wisdom.

We are happy with whatever he gives us; we are contented to go through our life. We just see the drama of our life as a spectator in this creation.

So we are contented with whatever he gives us. In other words, we live in the will of the Father – that is also contentment.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. III

In our meditation practice, where do we focus our effort? As disciples, the guidance given to us is to sit, start our simran, and let go. Whether we fall asleep or our mind wanders is irrelevant. All that is required of us is to gently pull the attention back to the task of repeating the words as mindfully as possible. We are not judged on our ability to do this. This is simply how effort and grace play out in our meditation. When you try to feel his presence, he makes his presence felt.

So you can say, “I am doing the meditation,” provided you are doing it. But when you really do it, then you won’t say, “I am doing it.” “I” only comes when we don’t do it. When we truly meditate, then “I” just disappears. Then we realize His grace, that but for Him how could we ever think or even attend to it. Then there is no “I”, there is nothing but gratefulness – everything in gratitude. Then we know our insignificance. The more we attend to our meditation, the nearer we are to the goal, the more we realize our insignificance.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Die to Live*

This shedding of ego clarifies the significance of our effort. At our physical level, our ego needs to be directed towards trying. Once we let go of our individual identity, the question of effort doesn’t arise because the one who strives no longer exists. Only the Lord and his grace exist.

All effort circles back to letting go and holding on to nothing. The phrase ‘letting go’ has a lightness, an ease, a softness, a serenity, a simplicity, and a bliss to it. It invites us to unclench our fists with respect to the attachments we are holding on to so tightly. It allows us to relax our jaw as circumstances unfold. It allows us to draw in a breath of self-compassion over our shortcomings.

In response to a disciple’s question about what one could offer his spiritual teacher, the teacher replied, “He doesn’t take anything from the disciple,” and then he added, “but he doesn’t leave the disciple with anything either.”



Rise Above

On the first day of a new year, we open our eyes and take stock of our emotions and thoughts. Some people wake up feeling fresh, happy, blessed and grateful; others may feel lazy or sleepy, and there are some who wake up with the previous day's burdens still on their minds because tensions and problems do not magically clear up on the morning of a new day.

This is the norm. Some people are happy and some are sad. Hazur Maharaj Charan Singh has said that if we were to study closely the life of any human being, we would not come across a single person who has all pleasure and no pain; nor would we meet anyone who has all pain and no pleasure. Hazur said that if we have ten days of pleasure, pain follows close behind. If we spend ten days in pain, we're given breathing space that contains some pleasure.

As a result of this, we find ourselves permanently on an emotional roller coaster – speeding through highs and lows, twists and turns, happiness and sadness, as we go through life and its experiences. Time flies and the roller coaster never stops moving. Eventually, we get tired of constant emotional pressure.

Wouldn't we prefer a life of peace, bliss and balance, as opposed to being affected by every little thing?

My mind, abandon this abode of pleasure and pain, rise above it and attach yourself to Satnam, the true Lord.

Soami Ji Maharaj, *Sar Bachan Poetry*

In this poem, Soami Ji Maharaj speaks to the mind, and encourages it to leave this world of pleasure and pain. He urges it to rise above the material level and attach itself to Satnam, the Father, the true Lord. In every verse, he appeals to the mind to turn away from the world and turn towards the Shabd.

There is a Tibetan saying that although it is uncertain when or how we will die, it is an absolute certainty that we will die. Soami Ji Maharaj emphasizes the same point in this poem. He reminds us that our body is fragile and our life span is short. The body will not accompany us when

we die, nor will our relations and friends, our wealth and possessions, our honour and glory – these are all temporary and will be left behind.

Soami Ji Maharaj refers to our breath as a two-edged sword, because we must breathe to live, but every breath we take brings us one step closer to the end of our time in this body. He also compared our body to a punctured float (which is like an air-filled life boat) leaking day and night. If the air in the boat leaks out completely before we can reach the shore, the life boat will sink. Similarly, our human body inhales and exhales every second, but if before our last breath we have not succeeded in connecting with the Lord, then we will surely drown in this creation of pleasure and pain. Therefore, Soami Ji Maharaj urges the mind to give up its chase for worldly desires as we will never find peace in them.

He urges us to focus on the practice of Nam, the practice of our meditation. The Maharashtrian saint, Niloba, wrote:

When the heart lives for meditation, a peace sets in – a tranquillity.

Many Voices, One Song

As our practice of meditation matures, and as we experience through it a quiet mind, then we taste real rest and joy. We become less interested in running after external satisfactions and voluntarily go back to the restful and joyful place the mind has found within.

In this way, we will be able to get off the emotional roller coaster, and bring about stability, calm, peace and bliss into our lives. Soami Ji Maharaj's message to us is to rise above pleasure and pain by remembering the five holy names of the Lord. These should be engraved in our hearts and our minds, so that the soul can be one with the Lord eternally.



Did You Know?

Intellect is a great barrier in our way, but we have to pierce the barrier of intellect with the help of intellect. An intellectual man will not accept a simple truth just by a simple statement. He wants to be convinced. But once conviction comes, nobody can shake him. So reasoning convinces us and then we become firm in our faith and we attend to meditation.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Die to Live*

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No action – even if it is service and help to others – is helpful if it increases our ego. Serving and helping others should produce feelings of humility and kindness in us. We should try to help ourselves first by more meditation and get strength to face our problems gracefully.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Quest for Light*

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The eye centre is the window opening into the astral world and may present wonderful panoramas. But the disciple should not get interested in these sights, for this also gives an opportunity to the mind to play tricks. Just watch as a spectator. There are angels, but we are to keep our attention on the goal.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Light on Sant Mat*

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If you apply yourself earnestly and regularly to simran and bhajan, and carry on your worldly duties to the best of your ability, your worldly life too will be regulated properly. Love is the one thing essential on the path. The more you can give, the quicker and easier will you achieve results. This would also be reflected in your daily conduct and dealings with fellow men.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Light on Sant Mat*



Humility, Humility, Humility

The way to God is firstly humility, secondly humility and thirdly humility. Again, unless humility precedes, accompanies and follows every good action we perform, pride wrests wholly from our hands any good work on which we are congratulating ourselves.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, *Philosophy of the Masters*, Vol. III

All spiritual paths advocate humility as a requirement for spiritual growth and development. Why is this so? In the course of cultivating this trait, one sheds the biggest obstacle on the spiritual path – our ego. Our ego is the love we have for ourselves, the self-consciousness we carry as we navigate through this worldly existence. The more we are consumed by love for ourselves, the less we have for the Lord. This then is the primary reason why saints consider humility a prerequisite of spirituality.

One could argue that we need our egos to survive in this world and that our intelligence, confidence and motivation keep us afloat in this competitive environment. It is almost unimaginable to subsist without them.

Arguably, the existence of our ego is a matter of survival. Factors such as our family background, physical appearance, education, career, spouses and the properties we own are examples that add to the growing ego. Its sum total is what defines our worldly existence, and we stand before everyone with pride.

In this situation, is it possible to be conscious of the Lord if our awareness is one-pointedly directed at ourselves? Even if our demeanour is quiet and meek and even if we involve ourselves in religious activities, that pride and ego remain at the forefront.

How then can we love the Lord and acquire humility?

Though the world does seem like a hostile environment for learning to love the Lord and developing true humility, it is not an impossible task.

It is the practice of meditation that is the game changer in managing our ego. There is no substitute for it. We simply must sit in meditation for the prescribed time. While we sit in meditation, the mind is slowly cleansed and its downward direction towards the world is reversed and focused upward, towards the divine source. The process is long and

arduous, but this is how our love for the Lord is developed. As we love the Lord more and more, love for the self is lessened.

When our whole body is filled with love, the ego is gone and only humility and meekness remain. When that love and devotion is not in us, the whole body is full of ego. We have to detach ourselves from the world and attach ourselves to him. Only by the spiritual practice, only by that meditation, can we kill the ego.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. III

Meditation makes us realize how insignificant we are in the vast universe, and how, in the grand scheme of things, we are nothing and the Lord's hand is guiding everything. Likewise, it makes us understand that all that we are and all that we have has come through the grace of the Father rather than our efforts.

We may have some accomplishments where we put in time and effort, but we have to acknowledge the unseen power that created opportunity and orchestrated events. As for material wealth, meditation helps us realize that one is merely a custodian.

Realizing this, we start to lose our so-called pride and vainglory. We learn to give what we can without egotism and fanfare. We become more and more conscious of the Lord and gradually the 'I', 'me' and 'myself' – the manifestations of our ego – decrease. We care less about being the centre of attention; we fade into the background doing good for others without the need for recognition.

The ego is powerful. It is only meditation that can sustain us and reduce its hold on us. Great Master says that humility, humility and even more humility is required on the path to the Lord and our only hope of achieving this is our meditation. There is no other way.



Talk of High Romance

O mind, you speak of graduation
from the School of High Romance,
but there are serious signs
you are flunking first grade.

You study books on arithmetic
to calculate how much you gain
from gazing at your Beloved's face
for ninety minutes in a row.

You say you're in love,
but when he wants quality time
you make up lame excuses
or show up late, lukewarm,
and lost in your own little world.

You dole out a little attention,
but keep peeking at the clock,
then yawn and knock off early,
saying you need more sleep
because you have a big day ahead.

O mind, you talk a good game,
dropping hints with all your friends
that you are quite a lover of God.
But he has much better lovers than you.
That's who he'll be with tonight
while you're sleeping like a baby.



From His Point of View

If you were to put on a pair of glasses with green tinted lenses, what would you see? Everything would be green.

Our outlook towards life is based on how we perceive things. We look at life from different perspectives. Most of the time, we look at any given situation from our own point of view.

The tenth-century Sufi mystic Sheikh Abu Saeed, who was spoken of as “Nobody, Son of Nobody,” said: “Under this cloak is nothing but God. Introduce me as ‘Nobody, Son of Nobody.’”

When Sheikh Abu Saeed was ready for his final journey to the realm of the Beloved, he said to his disciples in his last sermon:

My last advice to you is, do not forget God, not even for a moment. Know that during my time, I did not invite you to myself. I declared that in reality we do not exist. I say that He exists and that is sufficient. He created us for non-being. Remember that a hundred years of praying is not worth as much as making a heart happy. Walk the path of God and see everything from His point of view. Look at the created beings from the Creator's eyes.

Nobody, Son of Nobody, Renditions by Vraje Abramian

How beautiful is this Master's advice to his disciples; not to forget God – not even for a moment – and to look at everything from his point of view. What is his point of view? How does the Creator look at everything? The first answer that comes to the mind is with love. The Father is all love, all mercy and all forgiveness.

We, being the children of the Creator, should learn to be like him and imbibe his qualities. Sheikh Abu Saeed says to look at all created beings from the Creator's eyes, with love pouring out of us towards all beings, towards the whole creation.

Christ taught the same to his disciples. The greatest commandment laid down in the Bible is: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” And the second commandment is: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”

The eyes of the saints or masters speak volumes. From their eyes pour out an infinite ocean of mercy and forgiveness. Looking at the creation

from their point of view is possible only when we develop a broader perspective in life. If we broaden our perspective to see beyond ourselves, we grow. It is about being a person of a spiritual mindset, enabling us to embrace beautiful virtues. Shifting our way of thinking from one level to another gives us a better understanding of others and greater empathy. It reduces negative thoughts, bias and judgment towards others.

Our Father is all forgiving. We, too, should adopt this same magnificent quality. Like our Father, we should learn to look up to others, see their positivity, focus on their strengths and uplift our fellow beings, having confidence in them, just like our Father has confidence in us.

When a true master looks at his disciples, he sees potential. Saints believe in us. This word 'potential' means having the capacity to develop into something in the future. He sees that energy within us and he believes in us. He has confidence in us but we lose confidence in ourselves. This is where our self-worth is critical.

We must understand that we are his children and he is our heavenly Father, but how can we know and experience this? By building a strong connection with the Lord through our meditation practice. Only through meditation can we become aware of our true potential.

When we start looking at others from the Lord's perspective, we will realize that every one of us has that potential, every one of us has that energy within. A true master looks at every being as a beautiful drop of the divine ocean. This very drop is no different from the ocean itself. When he looks at us, he sees divinity.

There's a profound quote by the thirteenth-century Persian poet Rumi (as quoted in *Words of Wisdom*): "You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the entire ocean in the drop."

Normally we tend to think of ourselves as just a speck in the big picture, but this quote by Rumi flips that. Each one of us individually is abundant.

True masters come to remind us of our true self. When a true master looks at his disciples, he sees nothing but love.

*Once I was bathed in the Light of Truth within,
I abandoned all planning and scheming.
If you, too, seek this transcendence,*

*leave your lower self – then from head to foot
you will see your whole being as God's refuge.*

Sarmad, Martyr to Love Divine

Hazur Maharaj Charan Singh has explained that it is only through our meditation practice that we can fill ourselves with that Shabd, that creative power, that love. It is only when we tune in to this energy – this power of love – that our soul is charged with an inconceivable energy capable of soaring through the inner skies to the Beloved. That is why love is considered the be-all and end-all of true spirituality. Such will be our vision too, when we go within and seek the truth. Not only will our perspective be broadened but our whole being will be filled with love. When we put on glasses tinted with love, all we will see around us will be love, love and more love.

The single most important factor in developing spirituality is the cultivation of love for the true Beloved. It is hard to explain what love is. It is a pure and delicate feeling or emotion which can be experienced only by one who is in love. It is beyond the capacity of the tongue or pen to describe it.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, Dawn of Light

Giving time to our meditation is like accepting our Master's invitation to play the game of love – provided we actually 'play the game', by making an honest and sincere effort. The masters have explained that in this game we cannot lose.

As Saint Paltu once said: "In the game of love, I cannot lose; if I win, I get you, and if I lose, you get me." So let us play this game of love with our Beloved. Falling in love with the Divine by keeping the company of saints, attending satsang, doing seva and most importantly attending to our meditation will change our whole perspective of life. We will slowly, but surely, start to look at things very differently and take the advice given by Sheikh Abu Saeed:

Do not forget God, not even for a moment....

Walk the path of God and see everything from his point of view.

Look at the created beings from the Creator's eyes.



Surrender to the Guru

An explanation by Maharaj Sawan Singh

To surrender to the Master means to subordinate one's will to the will of the Master and unreservedly resign oneself to him. This is an easy means of gaining release from the cycle of birth and death. The disciple should rely implicitly on the Master and should give himself up to him in the same way as one confides in a surgeon and entrusts his life into his hands. Similarly, one follows the instructions of a guide when one is lost in a jungle, is sick and tired, and cannot himself find the way. The Master's task is not only to teach, but to help the disciple in overcoming his difficulties. He alone is a true friend who not only advises us regarding what to do in difficulties, but also helps us in removing them.

Let us suppose that one wants to go to a foreign country. He makes enquiries about travel by air or by sea. When he sets out on his journey, he takes his place on a specific ship or plane.

He resigns himself completely to the care of the captain or the pilot and has no further worries. In actual fact, he has to depend on the captain or the pilot. If the passenger should happen to fall into the sea, the captain, without any payment, would try to save him. The case of those travelling in the spiritual regions is the same. In order to understand spiritual matters and the teachings of a Master, one should use one's intellect and discrimination; but after one takes shelter with a Master, he should surrender to him unconditionally. One should follow the path indicated by the Master. He knows the path we have to tread, while we are ignorant of it. We have to rely on his help, and by doing so we can fulfil our ideal of progress in the spiritual regions.

To take shelter means to have full confidence in the Master and to be guided by him. One should follow his orders without considering their so-called propriety. Whatever the Master directs us to do is for our good, although at the time it may not appear to be proper or beneficial for us. The disciple should obey him in word, deed and spirit.

When the disciple surrenders himself to the Master for good, the Master looks after him in every way. Just as a mother brings up her child, so the Master looks after his disciple. As the disciple becomes purified,

the Master gives him spiritual wealth. The child who sits in the lap of his mother need not worry, because all his worries are hers. He is carefree and happy. Similarly, the disciple, after taking shelter with the Master, becomes carefree and happy.

The Gurus call out with raised hands, “Friends! If you wish to enjoy spiritual bliss, take shelter with the Master!”

It is easier to practise meditation than to surrender unconditionally to the Master. When one takes shelter with the Master, one must be like a child. He must give up his own will and conform to the will of the Master. He must surrender himself to the Master in word, deed and spirit. This is difficult, but if one has the good fortune to find such shelter, then all his desires will be fulfilled. He will merge in the form of the Guru.

Philosophy of the Masters, Vol. V



Devotion to God should be only for the sake of the love of God, and not for acquiring any favors or possessions, or removing any ills or evils. Thy Will be done. It is His pleasure to keep us as He likes, as He thinks fit, and always for our own good. It is not for us to appeal or pray that it should be like this or like that. We should acquiesce in His Will and try to merge ourselves into Shabd.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Light on Sant Mat*



Nothing More, Nothing Less

When a sannyasi reached the outskirts of a village and settled under a tree for the night, a villager came running up to him and shouted, “The stone! The stone! Give me the precious stone!”

“What stone?” asked the sannyasi.

“Last night Lord Shiva told me in a dream that if I went to the outskirts of the village at dusk, a sanyasi would give me a stone that would make me rich forever.”

The sannyasi rummaged in his sack and, pulling out a stone, he said, “He probably meant this one. I found it in the forest yesterday. Here, it’s yours if you want it.”

The man gazed at the stone in wonder. It must have been the largest diamond in the world – the size of a man’s head.

All night he tossed about in bed. At break of day, he woke the sannyasi and said, “Give me the wealth that made it possible for you to give this stone away.”

Anthony de Mello, *The Song of the Bird*

In *Spiritual Gems*, Great Master said: “Innumerable worlds are worthless, compared to one atom of spirituality.” Being happy with what we have and not desiring more is contentment. Nobody gets everything they want yet we are always in pursuit of something. We feel we will be content after we get what we want, but contentment is being happy with what we already have. When we reach that level of contentment, we will realize that we already have exactly what we need. Nothing more, nothing less.

The masters tell us that it is not bad to have desires to better our conditions, or to put in effort to achieve them; however, we should not lose our sense of balance, and we should not compromise our principles to get them. As simple as this sounds, it’s not easy to achieve, given the competitive world that we live in. From the time we wake up to the time we go to sleep, we run around like well-programmed machines. We think we do not belong in this rat race but our routines are set, calendars filled, meetings planned, and targets set.

If we wake up in the morning and are able to enjoy what we have and if we are able to lose interest in the desires that are beyond our reach, we may have unlocked the way to finding contentment. But how do we do that – how do we become desireless?

All desires arise in the mind, and when the mind is subdued and is merged in the sound current, the game is won.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, *Spiritual Gems*

It is very difficult to withdraw our mind from the worldly objects and desires. The power lies in controlling the mind, where it raises no desire. Great Master describes the mind like a restless boy; if you shut the boy indoors, the first thing he does is to try and break the door and windows. When he cannot find a way out, he gets tired, sits quietly and begins to see what lies in the room. The mind has to be closed in against its will; when it acquires a taste for the interior, it does not go outside.

Our mind is plagued by persistent dissatisfaction. It is always on the prowl for more and more. According to an adage, a man with one watch always knows what time it is, however a man with two is never quite sure. It is our choice to let the mind continue as a misleading master or accompany us as a faithful servant.

Meditation is the remedy that brings the mind to rest. When we meditate, we provide an anchor for our mind, and we create a channel for it to attach itself to the sound and light within. Maharaj Charan Singh explains that meditation helps us to detach from those desires. By fighting our desires we can never succeed. Suppression will only cause the mind to rebound with even greater force. Only attachment can create detachment. One cannot fight off desires without meditation. Maharaj Sawan Singh explains:

Soul is enveloped by the mind, and mind by the body. Soul is powerless in the clutches of the mind, and mind is helpless before the senses. A beautiful object attracts it, and sweet music holds it.

Spiritual Gems

When the mind is absorbed in the divine Light and Sound, it detaches itself from the senses and worldly desires.

*Cleverness and worldly wisdom are of no avail;
only that which the Lord is pleased to bestow brings peace.
A million ritual actions do not put an end to desire.
Abandoning all other pursuits
Nanak has made Nam his mainstay.*

Guru Arjun Dev Ji, *Voice of the Heart*

When we start meditating on Nam, we gradually understand that there is nothing to possess or to lose. At that stage, we realize that compared to God-realization all our other pursuits are trivial; we are happy with what we have, and nothing is lacking. When we don't feel the lack of anything, we are content, we have no desire for anything else. Contentment is the attitude that says, "I will always be happy with what the Lord has given me – nothing more, nothing less."

Wealth or poverty depends upon the absence or presence of desires, respectively. He who has no desires is rich. He who does not desire anything is a sovereign.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, *Spiritual Gems*



The Lord does not find excuses to send us back. He gives us opportunity after opportunity to improve, to go ahead. But if we refuse to make use of this opportunity, we can go back. Our attachments, our unfulfilled desires, our karmas can pull us down. We do not like to think so, but that is a fact.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. I



The Two Babies

“Dr Wayne Dyer told a wonderful story about two babies that I wish to share.

In a mother’s womb were two babies. One asked the other: ‘Do you believe in life after delivery?’ The other replied, ‘Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later.’

‘Nonsense,’ said the first. ‘There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?’

The second said, ‘I don’t know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can’t understand now.’

The first replied, ‘That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short. Life after delivery is to be logically excluded.’

The second insisted, ‘Well I think there is something and maybe it’s different than it is here. Maybe we won’t need this physical cord anymore.’

The first replied, ‘Nonsense. And moreover, if there is life, then why has no one ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery, there is nothing but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere.’

‘Well, I don’t know,’ said the second, ‘but certainly we will meet Mother and she will take care of us.’

The first replied, ‘Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That’s laughable. If Mother exists, then where is she now?’

The second said, ‘She is all around us. We are surrounded by her. We are of her. It is in her that we live. Without her, this world would not and could not exist.’

Said the first: ‘Well I don’t see her, so it is only logical that she doesn’t exist.’

To which the second replied, ‘Sometimes, when you’re in silence and you focus and listen, you can perceive her presence and you can hear her loving voice, calling down from above.’”

Jake and the Monk, by Lynn E. O’Leary,
originally adapted from Henri J.M. Nouwen



The Master Answers

A selection of questions and answers with Maharaj Charan Singh

Q: *Master, when Christ said that if we had faith we could move mountains, what did he mean by that? He didn't mean physical mountains, did he?*

A: Well, brother, with your faith you can move the Creator of the mountains, what to say of mountains. Who created the universe? Who created the mountains? The Lord. By your faith in him, you can move him. You can become him. If you become him, you can move anything.

Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. II

Q: *Master, does the Master sometimes send us situations to test us, or is this just our own karmas coming to us?*

A: Why test us – doesn't he know us, how strong we are? Doesn't the professor know the quality of his student? Does he need an examination for that? What is there to test? We are all full of weaknesses, we're all struggling souls. Christ said, somewhere in the New Testament, that I will not condemn you to my Father because we are already condemned. We are already miserable with our weaknesses. What is there to test us about? Guru Nanak says: If you go on scratching the earth, you will never reach the bottom, no matter how much effort you keep putting in. So similarly, he says, if you go on scratching your weaknesses, there would be no end to it. We live only on the Lord's grace, on his mercy. If we think that we are ready for the examination or that we have become fit for the examination, that is impossible. So what is there to test us about? The saints help us. Sometimes when we feel quite egoistic about ourselves – then situations arise in which we may realize where we stand. But it's not that the Master is testing us; he has just made us conscious of where we stand. It's not that he doesn't know anything about us. We are all struggling souls.

Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. III

Q: *How can we know what our attachments are?*

A: At the last moment they come to the surface. Many attachments just fade out – they don't possess you at all, you are not obsessed by them at all. But many attachments linger on, even in the subconscious mind, and you feel you are being possessed by them. You can't get rid of them – they have made such a strong groove on your mind. Those attachments definitely will pull you back. Many attachments are just on the surface – they come and go. But some make very deep grooves on the mind, and if you are not able to rise above them, they may pull you back. Meditation definitely helps us to rise above them. They become meaningless to us. Those very faces or things we thought we could not live without, we don't want to see them, we are not even attached to them.

Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. I

Q: *Is it okay to talk to the master within when we pray? Should we try to stop doing that, or should we start doing simran?*

A: Do meditation. Meditation is nothing but a prayer. Meditation is nothing but knocking at the door of the Giver. Meditation is begging the Father for his grace, for his forgiveness for what stands between us and the Father.

You see, meditation alone can never clear all our karmic accounts. The attitude of the mind which we develop by meditation, that helps us a lot. That fills us with devotion and with love and makes us feel the separation from the Father, and we become restless without him. Our whole attitude towards the world is then changed. If you think that by mere meditation we can ever account for all the karmas we have been committing in previous lives, it is impossible. Nobody can do it. What to say of doing it in four lives, even in twenty lives we could not do it – that's how much dross we have collected. But when the Father sees our attitude, when he sees the devotion and love within us – which we can only develop by meditation, by living the Sant Mat way of life – that invokes his grace to forgive all that stands between us and the Father.

Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. II



Nishkam Karma

The Bhagavad Gita contains a beautiful sermon in which Lord Krishna imparts to his disciple, Arjuna, the way to perform right action. Arjuna, the warrior king, falls prey to despondency and is in a quandary over fighting a war against his kith and kin. Fearing the consequences of his actions, Lord Krishna advises Arjuna:

*Dedicating all actions to Me,
with mind intent on the self, and being free
from desire and the conceit of mine-ness,
fight without any fever (of passion).*

The Bhagavad Gita

As Arjuna's guru, guide, and confidant, Lord Krishna explains the above lines to Arjuna as the art of desireless or selfless action or nishkam karma. This is the path to right action and is necessary for a spiritual aspirant to understand.

We often place questions in front of the Master about our actions, and he always tells us to act but without fretting about the results, and to always be happy with the will of the Lord. Similarly, Lord Krishna here tells Arjuna that performing nishkam karma means performing work without any expectation of reward and to do work as a sacrifice to the Lord.

*Honour and shame from no condition rise,
act well your part, there all the honour lies.*

Alexander Pope, as quoted in *Pathways to Liberation*

Honour or shame should be none of our concern. Our performance in this world has to be without any expectation of reward. Shakespeare said, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." Saints and masters add to this saying that on this stage, action is the rule. We are bound to this world due to the actions we have performed in our previous lives. These karmas (actions) are the responsibilities we have to bear in this lifetime – they become our dharma (duty). But when we attach expectations and calculations to our duties, we sow new seeds of karma. For example, a mother loves and nurtures her child regardless of not knowing whether her deed will be returned in her old age. A judge has

to sentence a criminal to harsh punishment; he can't pass a verdict based on his emotions. In the same way, a soldier has to take part in fighting a war. All of them are doing their duty. Maharaj Charan Singh explains how we can act our part to the best of our ability:

To do your duty is something different from being attached. We have to do our duty as a citizen, as a husband, as a son, as a brother, as a friend. But we should not be so obsessed by these duties and people that we forget the real purpose of life, the real destination, the real path. If you keep yourself attached to the holy spirit within, then whatever type of work you do in this world, you always do it with a detached mind. Otherwise, you are doing everything in the world with an attached mind. Your attachment to the spirit within automatically detaches you from everything else.

Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. III

The keyword here is *detachment*. Only the meditative process can help us reach a state where we can become silent actors and observers of our destinies. Hazur referred to this process as being attached to a bulldozer, something so powerful it will pull us towards itself. The Master, Shabd, or Nam is the bulldozer. The power of the Shabd will eventually pull us to its level of purity, where we become capable of acting without any desire for results. It will bring us to that level of understanding that everything that is happening is in our best interest and is the will of the Lord.

In almost all the letters in the book *Spiritual Letters*, Baba Jaimal Singh encouraged Baba Sawan Singh to do all his work in a selfless manner:

All work is his work; remain happy wherever he keeps you, and take on whatever work you do as the Satguru's work – do not keep your self in it. Instil it firmly in your mind – this idea should never leave the mind – that the body, mind, wealth, and the inner faculties, the eyes, mouth, nose, ears, hands, feet, all, everything, each and every article that exists in the world, belongs to the Satguru: "I do not exist." Look upon everything you do as the Satguru's work; do only that which is appropriate.

This advice, the directive I have written above, should never leave your mind at any time. Keep these words firmly in the mind while doing your work, and also during simran and while listening to the Shabd-dhun.

Lord Krishna's philosophy of nishkam karma can be summed up in one word: surrender. One should never feel he is the doer – that thought brings in the ego and keeps the mind working and analyzing one's actions. In today's world, self-assertion has become a prominent part of our personality. However, masters tell us to inculcate the quality of nishkam karma instead, where our action is determined by wisdom, understanding and compassion without the interference of thought or ego. This type of action is calm, not reactive, not hurried, and does not come from a place of fear or anxiety; it does not leave any residue of guilt, shame or repentance.

We can learn from our Master by how he humbly acknowledges himself as merely a sevadar, attributing all that is being done to his own Master and even to the sangat. His actions are selfless, without bias or attachment. Every act of the saints comes from being in harmony with the laws of this universe; they are one with the Lord and see the Lord in all. We have to walk in their footsteps – in the direction towards God. That is truly the path to nishkam karma.

*Whatever a person does
by his body, by words, by thoughts,
by will, by intellect, by ego
or due to his natural tendency (samskaras),
he should dedicate them all to the Supreme Being.*

Shrimad Bhagavatam, as quoted in Pathways to Liberation



A Farewell Interview with the Master

An excerpt from *Adventure of Faith*

Finally my time in the Dera ran out and I was granted a farewell interview with the Master, who received me with his usual kindness. I sat facing him at his writing table and he looked at me silently for a while. Finally, I asked him for some guidelines for my work for Sant Mat in Germany. He referred me to his representative there and then said, “Give satsang, help the people.” He also spoke of the need to integrate the writings of Christian mystics into the literature of Sant Mat, and said that I should write down how I came to the path of the Masters. He also asked me whether I would return to my monastery, and I answered that I was not sure what I should do there, but that I would go first to see my mother in Munich.

“Yes,” the Master said, “we should look after our parents.” These words of the Master were to be a pointer for the future, when I actually would have to nurse my mother.

We also spoke about the fact that, after twenty-five years of living in the ‘desert’, I would now be returning to the world and, on top of that, to the centre of a big city. The Master looked at me lovingly and said, “Don’t be afraid. Do your work with a detached mind and don’t get involved in things, but keep your mind above them.” Then I said that I did not know whether and when I would be able to come to the Dera again. Hinting at his visit to Germany, planned for 1975, but without telling me about it, the Master said, “If you cannot come to me, I shall come to you.”

That would have been the end of the interview, but I wanted to be very close to the Master one last time and so I got up, went around the writing table, kneeled down before the Master and asked for his blessing. The Master put his hand on my shoulder and said, “Be brave.”

Please have no worry. The Master is always with you to help, guide and protect you at every step. Just turn to him and realize his constant presence. Attend most regularly to your meditation with faith, love and humility.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Quest for Light*



Staying on Track

While the Sant Mat philosophy and way of life seem simple, conducting one's life according to Sant Mat principles can be incredibly hard. The effort to put the teachings into practice is much more difficult than merely comprehending them.

One falters many a time while walking on the path, often going off-track. At times, one's conduct seems out of sync with the principles of Sant Mat. These instances may be due to external circumstances or even one's own compulsions and weaknesses. Even years after being initiated, upon self-reflection, one may notice little to no change in one's constant faltering. But according to *The Book of Mirdad*:

Every stumbling-block is a warning. Read the warning well, and the stumbling-block shall become a beacon. The straight is the brother of the crooked. The one is a short cut; the other, a roundabout way. Have patience with the crooked.

It is natural and human for one to experience remorse or even guilt during these phases. One may even have doubts about whether it is even possible to make any progress at all in the inner journey, never mind reaching the destination. It is easy for despair to set in. But Huzar Maharaj Charan Singh tells us:

On the path, we are always going ahead and ahead. But we have to pass through so many phases; so many human failings are there. But we ultimately overcome them.

Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. III

Hazur's response to a disciple's question offers a perspective on the vicissitudes of life and the impact they have on practising the path. Sometimes phases of strong undercurrents block our progress. These are meant to be overcome. He tells us:

We should have a positive approach, which is to get rid of our weakness. And only by meditation can we help ourselves rise above our weaknesses. Just to feel guilty and not to do anything about it also doesn't solve any problem.

Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. III

One way of looking at life and the spiritual journey is to see it as scaling a vast mountain. There are many starting points, the terrain is difficult and the route to the peak is hardly ever straight. On some stretches, one has to move sideways, or even go down into a trench to access a better route to the peak. All of these apparent detours are necessary in the quest to reach the summit. Each person's starting point is different, and the obstacles we encounter are different. But if we persevere, we eventually reach our destination.

Where many roads converge do not hesitate as to which one to follow. To a God-seeking heart, all roads lead to God.

The Book of Mirdad

The difficult phases we encounter are part of the human design, part of our karma. However, neither despair nor disappointment need to be our response to such situations. A positive approach and practising daily meditation are the anchors offered by the Master. Meditation is the way to go through these phases so that we can ultimately reach the peak.

By spiritual practice we rise so high that we can meet anything, we can know anything. We advance spiritually. Our mind becomes refined, matured, and we can know anything. That is how spirituality should help us, in developing within ourselves.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. II

SPIRITUALISTICKS®



Where Our Attention Goes, So Our Love Flows

Be it negative attention or the healthy, positive kind of attention, attention in whatever form is indeed a kind of love. If you hate someone, the attention flowing towards that person is as much as it would be if you loved that someone dearly. This is a universal truth that saints do not deny.

Hatred is another form of love. When we hate anybody, we are actually in love with him; otherwise, we would never hate him. How could others affect us if we were not concerned about them, if we did not bother about them, if we never thought about them? When you hate a person, you are always thinking about that person. You cannot drive that man out of your mind, you hate him so much. You are not analyzing yourself, for actually you are in love with him. You have not been able to make him according to your wishes, so you hate him; but all the time you are in love with him or you would not even be thinking about him.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. I

Bulleh Shah was told by his Master, his Murshid, Shah Inayat, that to realize God one must just do one simple thing: pull one's attention away from the world and redirect it within. In practice, it is not that simple. Our conscious attention, conditioned by lifetimes, has a tendency to escape into illusion.

The path of Sant Mat asks of us one sublime action: to focus our attention with the intensity of a laser beam towards the eye centre. This is the most difficult yet most powerful act we can perform.

Unfortunately, we have no inkling of the value of our attention. How often do we catch ourselves thinking of the most useless things, or shifting our thoughts to the past or future? Now that is attention wasted. Our attention determines our destiny to a great extent.

Man's attention has been scattered outside through these five passions since time immemorial. We have not yet found the path and have wasted our whole lives in straying farther away from our real home. Only by attaching ourselves to and merging ourselves in something which is permanent and everlasting do we become immortal; otherwise after death

we are reborn in the form in which we can best fulfil our desires and thus once again go through the 'wheel of eighty-four'.

Maharaj Jagat Singh, *The Science of the Soul*

The Master often says that to keep any relationship going we need to give it two things: time and attention. Everyone is starved for attention. It is a natural human need. Our children need our attention more than they need pricey toys and nannies. What the world needs is not more mega-malls and high-tech gadgets. It needs more loving human relationships. Love and attention are a package deal. They cannot be separated.

But more than the outer flow, the inner flow of attention is extremely powerful. Inner concentration comes from holding one's unbroken attention at the eye centre. When concentrated rays of the sun pass through a magnifying glass, it can kindle a leaf to burst into flames. Imagine what concentrated attention could do within us. It could ignite our soul consciousness into a flame of devotion that could burn our stored karmas.

By focusing at the third eye, we can access the inner world. The Master has taught us how to enter the inner realms whenever we wish.

Our focused attention is the greatest and most appreciated gift we can offer our Master. To hold the reins of the mind in our own hands requires relentless practice, until eventually it becomes a healthy habit. The objective is to ensure that the mind does not wander but stays fixed in the present, and in the simran, even throughout the day.

Whatever we pay attention to will grow and grow. If you give attention to your garden, it will grow, and if you give attention to your aches and pains they will worsen. We aggravate our pain by paying too much attention to it, like adding fuel to fire.

We must use the mind only when we need to perform a function. When it is not required, we must hook it on the hanger of simran.

This whole process eventually leads to emancipation from the wheel of birth and death. Therefore, we must focus our attention at the eye centre with patience and determination.



Trust the Sword

A warrior and his wife were crossing over to an island on a small boat. Suddenly a fierce storm rocked their little boat. Tossed wildly about, with waves crashing over the sides, the boat seemed about to capsize. The wife was terrified, knowing that if the boat went down they would surely drown. She started trembling and crying. Meanwhile, the warrior sat motionless. The wife pleaded with her husband to do something to save them. He just continued to sit there without moving, as if he were totally at peace.

Over the noise of the storm she called out to him, “Are you just going to let us drown? Why don’t you do something?”

The warrior silently pulled his sword out of its sheath and held it menacingly against her throat. She started laughing.

“Why are you laughing?” he asked. “This sword is razor sharp. Just one movement and it’ll slit your throat.”

To which she confidently replied, “The sword might be dangerous, but it is in your hands. And that is enough for me. I trust you completely, that’s why I’m not afraid.”

The warrior put the sword back in its sheath saying, “Just so, this storm is in my Master’s hands, that’s why I’m not afraid.”

A Wake Up Call

The eye centre is the door that leads up into higher regions, and down into this body or the world as well. The world exists for us and influences us only when we play through the nine doors, but when we make for the tenth door we rise above the world. It is then that we acquire strong faith in the Master and realize that in whatever we have to face, to go through, the Master is always with us and guides and protects us. The Master always guides and protects, though he seldom interferes in pralabdh, but at this stage we see and know what he is doing, and that inspires faith, love and courage in us. It is then only that knowable contact with the Master is made at will (whenever we wish).

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Light on Sant Mat*



Heart to Heart

The Masters are always more concerned about the needs of their disciples than their own. I remember once Maharaj Sawan Singh had a cold and high fever; some of us begged him to rest and not to go to satsang that afternoon. He said he was all right and must go to satsang. Bibi Ralli and a few close satsangis knew that he was far from well and was in great discomfort. They almost insisted that Maharaj Ji stay in his room and rest. But he replied, “The more this body is utilized in seva the better. After all, it will be consigned to flames one day. I should never neglect the duty entrusted to me by Baba Ji.” At satsang his face was radiant and his voice so powerful that the sangat did not suspect that he was ill.

Later in the evening as I was coming out of the Master’s residence, a man approached, running, and said that he had just arrived and must see the Master. I told him that Hazur was ill, had just given a two-and-a-half-hour satsang, and it was not proper to trouble him now. But he would not listen. He said he had to report on duty at Meerut Cantonment the next morning. He became very insistent in his demands, so I bolted the door on him.

When I returned to Maharaj Ji, he said, “There is a man outside who has come from a long distance. Please bring him to me.” I replied that I had already sent him away, but Maharaj Ji told me to find him and bring him back. I looked everywhere, and only after giving up the search did I see him on Hazur’s veranda, the very picture of misery. I apologized to him and told him that Maharaj Ji wished to see him. He was overjoyed. With tears of gratitude in his eyes, he went upstairs with me to Maharaj Ji’s room.

The man requested initiation. Hazur agreed and asked him to sit down. Anxious for Maharaj Ji’s health, I begged that the man be initiated the following morning. Though unwell and looking tired, Maharaj Ji overruled my suggestion and initiated him.

A few weeks later the Master gave me a letter to read. The man had died just ten days after initiation. He had had a fever for only two days when he announced to his wife and brother that his inner eye had opened and Hazur was with him. He told them that his end had come, and asked them not to grieve over his death. His wife asked what she would do without him. He said,

“Go to the Satguru at Beas and take his refuge.” To his brother he said, “If you want liberation, you should also go to Beas and get initiation.”

A lump rose in my throat as I read the letter. Now I realized why the Master, in spite of his own ill health, had initiated the man so late in the night.

Heaven on Earth



To the Master, his spiritual children are dearer than the offspring of the flesh. The latter are entitled to his worldly property but his spiritual children would succeed to his spiritual wealth. You, as disciples, are dearer to me than my own sons.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, *Spiritual Gems*



BOOK REVIEW

The Bond with the Beloved: the Mystical Relationship of the Lover and the Beloved

BY LLEWELLYN VAUGHAN-LEE

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Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, Ph.D. (1953-) is a contemporary Sufi mystic and author. His unique approach integrates insights from Jungian psychology and personal dreamwork with Sufi meditation practice. After a lifetime of effort in self- and God-realization he offers his gratitude to his own teacher: "I know that everything has been given to me by my Sheikh, that I belong to him more than I can ever know. Through him the path has become my life." The power and intimacy of his relationship with his teacher shapes his spiritual practice and is the cornerstone of *The Bond with the Beloved*.

The author declares that the disciple's bond with the sheikh, master, or teacher is unique and has existed from the beginning of time. It has been "imprinted in the substance of the lover's soul." It is unlike the worldly loves that come and go because it "exists on the level of the soul and it can never be broken." Herein lies the peace and certainty that we long for; this union is forever.

The author believes that this individual bond between the disciple and the sheikh reflects the universal desire of the Creator to love and to be loved by his creation. The lover's responsibility is to become an empty space, empty of self or ego, to be filled with the Creator himself. The disciple's impetus to do so is love for the Beloved, solely for the sake of that love. The power of this love is the only force great enough to overcome the grip of the ego and our attachment to our individual selves. Then "the grip of the ego is shattered by the need of the heart." The author explains,

We cannot turn away from the world unless we turn towards God. We can only free ourselves from the desires that imprison us in this world through the greater desire that we have for God. We escape from the gravitational pull of the earth by consciously aligning ourselves with the greater gravitational pull of the sun of suns.

In this process of letting go, he says, we may suffer a sense of desolation and loss, and of grief for losing our individual selves. This turning away from

the world and from our attachment to it “evokes an intense struggle as the ego and the mind hold onto the known values and structures of the outer world, resisting the pull of the heart and its deep desire for the formless inner world.” This struggle is “a process that is repeated many times over as the ego gradually loses its hold. Slowly we die to the world and each death is painful.” This pain then carves out a space for our joy. As “the ego holds our attention less, there is more space for the Beloved.” He describes his own experience:

Each time after a period of darkness it always amazed me how He gave more than I could ever imagine. Each time it becomes somehow easier because we consciously come to know the value of our sacrifice – we know that we suffer in order to come closer to Him.... Then He lifts a veil and gives us a glimpse of our real Self and of the infinite tenderness He has for His lovers.

Slowly we develop under his loving care; slowly we turn from separation to union; slowly we comprehend the gift that he is giving to us. The struggle for the survival of the ego is replaced by our longing for him and by the conscious recognition of who he is and who we are in him.

We do not reject the world; rather it falls away and we begin to rest in God.... Gradually the Beloved does more and more and we learn to co-operate. We learn to give space to the Beloved and allow Him to live through us. It is from this relationship of love that the [true] Self is conceived and then born.

Sufis describe this release of ego as entering into nothingness. This nothingness is not a void but an experience of true love, the love that arises from knowing the true self, the self that could never be comprehended or accessed by the mind.

And one of the mysteries of the path is that this Emptiness, this Nothingness, loves you. It loves you with such intimacy and tenderness and infinite understanding. It loves you from the very inside of your heart, from the core of your own being. It is not separate from you.

In this nothingness there is no sense of loss of self; we lose nothing for we have gained him. The drop has found the ocean; it abides now in the fullness of its own nature and is complete.

How does all this happen? The author explains that it is by giving him our attention, turning to him. “The inner attention of the lover is the one thing needful.... In all their outer work the attention of his lovers is inward, their hearts

are turned towards the Beloved.” This giving of our attention is made possible through the process of dhikr or remembrance, “when every cell of the body endlessly repeats ... His name.” This “meditation of the heart” is

not metaphoric, but a literal happening.... Working in the unconscious the dhikr alters our mental, psychological, and physical bodies.... Through continually repeating His name we alter the grooves of our mental conditioning.... The dhikr gradually replaces these old grooves with the single groove of His name. The automatic thinking process is redirected towards Him. Like a computer we are reprogrammed for God.

Our relationship with our teacher or master makes this possible.

The dhikr is magnetized by the teacher so that it inwardly aligns the wayfarer with the path and the goal. It is for this reason that the dhikr needs to be given by a teacher.... The vibrations of the word resonate with that which it names, linking the two together. Thus, it is able to directly connect the individual with that which it names.

As this practice becomes an integral part of our being, as our consciousness begins to “reverberate at a higher frequency,” it becomes automatic and continual. Then one of its greatest gifts is given: “At the moment of death, with your very last breath you will call out His name.... If your final thought is Allah, His name will take you to Him.”

As we move forward on this journey of God-realization we realize that union is the reality and that separation is the illusion. We understand that we were never apart from each other; there is now and has always been only him. Vaughan-Lee concludes, “In crying out to Him we share in the mystery of His creation, which is that He who was One and Alone wanted to be loved, and so He created the world.” Love created love and then called to love to return. We come to know that our longing is nothing but his call to us. As Rumi says, “Thy calling ‘Allah!’ was my ‘Here I am.’”

