SURAT SHABD YOGA

THE YOGA OF THE CELESTIAL SOUND CURRENT

I have written books without any copyright – no rights reserved – because it is a gift of God, given by God, as much as sunlight; other gifts of God are also free.

– from a talk by Kirpal Singh with the author of a book after a talk to students of religion at Santa Clara University, San Jose, California on November 16, 1972

This book is excerpted from the book *Crown of Life* written by Kirpal Singh. No changes have been made to the text, it is exactly the same as Chapter 5 of *Crown of Life.*

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Dedicated

to the Almighty God

working through all Masters who have come

and Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj

at whose lotus feet

the author imbibed sweet elixir of

Holy NAAM—the WORD

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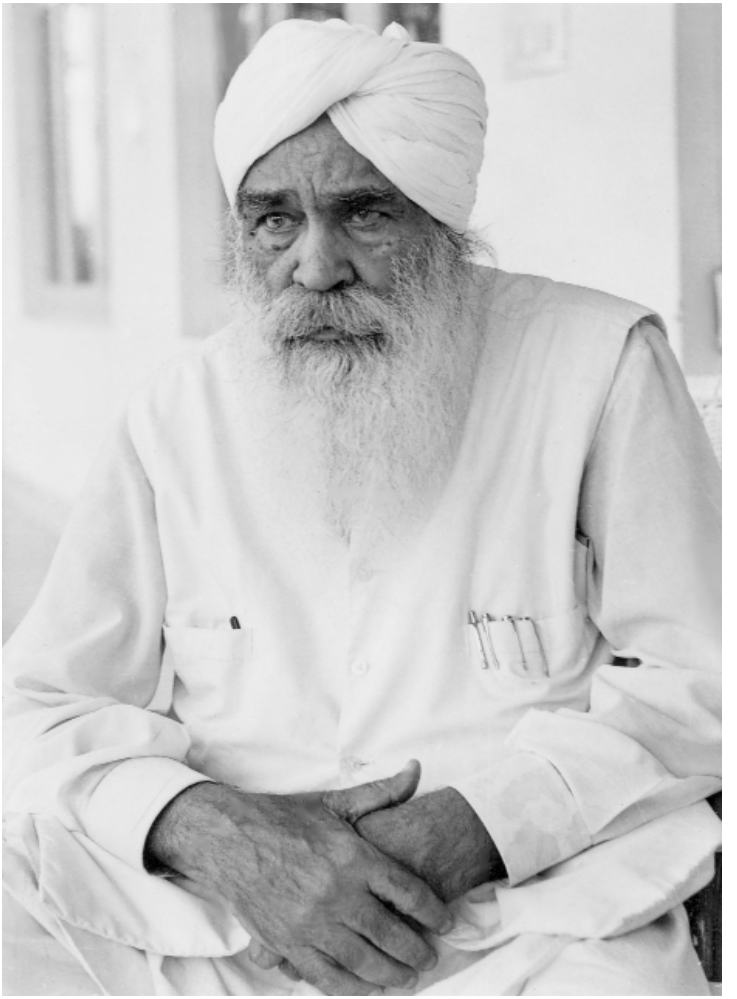


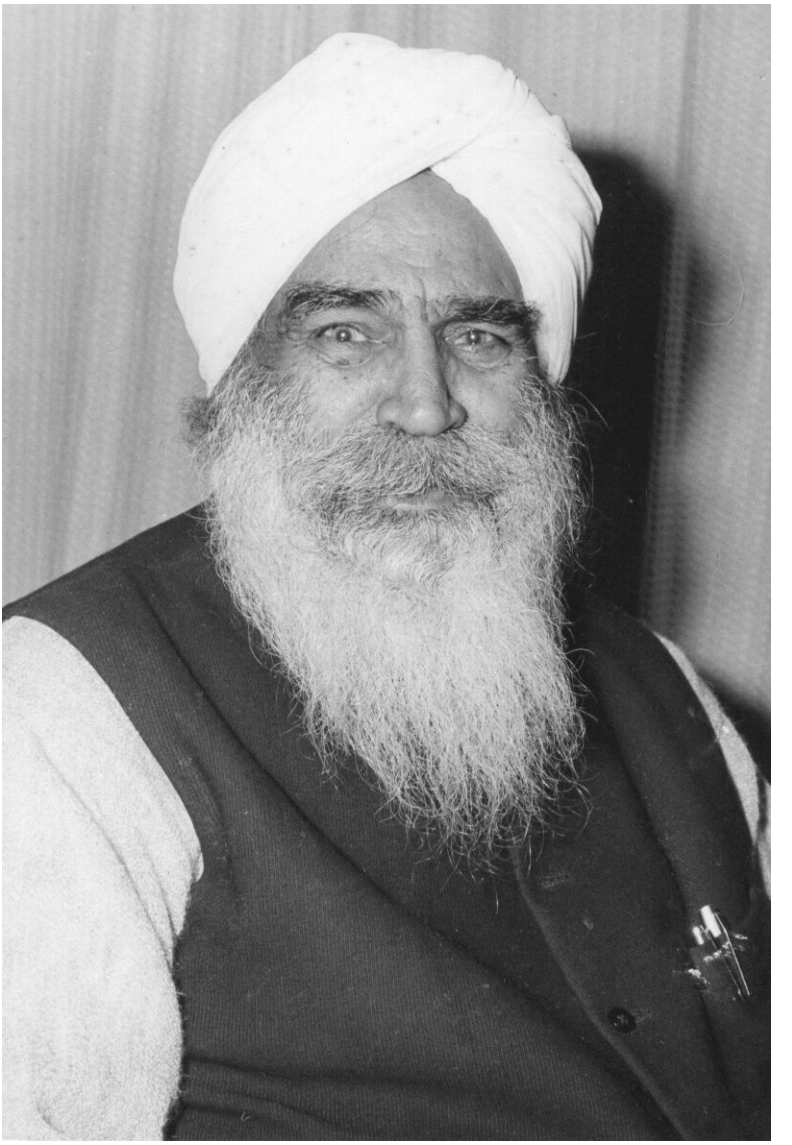
THE STUDY OF SURAT SHABD YOGA

The Yoga of the Celestial Sound Current

(Chapter 5 of Crown of Life)

KIRPAL SINGH

This music streams from a transcendent plane within
and is caught by a soldier Saint
–Shabd 9, page 94, Sar Bachan (Poetry)



Instructions for Seekers After Truth

Before the living Master [an adept in the science of the Sound Current or Word], gives Initiation, he wishes that every prospective initiate abide by the following instructions:

I. *To cultivate and develop the five cardinal virtues which constitute the bedrock of spirituality. These are:*

1. *Ahimsa* or Non-injury to all living creatures, and more so to fellow beings, by thoughts, words and deeds – the injunction in this behalf being: "Injure not a human heart for it is the seat of God." We must have respect for others' feelings and tolerance for others' opinions.

2. *Satayam* or Truthfulness: As God is Truth, we must practice Truth in all our dealings. If Truth resides in every heart, it must manifest itself in life and action. "Be true to thyself and it must follow as night the day, thou canst not be false to any man." We must therefore avoid falsehood at all costs. It includes, besides downright lies, hypocrisy and dishonesty, *suppresso veri* [suppression of truth], and *suggestio falsi* [suggestions of false ideas].

3. *Brahmcharya* or life of Chastity: It includes continence in thoughts, words and deedhoughts within, for "Chastity is life and sexuality is death." If we want to tread the Path of Life Eternal, we must be chaste and clean both

within and without.

4. *Prem* or love for all living creatures and more so for all human beings. Let there be hatred for none. The entire manifestation is the handiwork of God and must therefore be loved and respected. "He who does not know love, cannot know God".

5. *Nishkam Seva* or Selfless Service to all living creatures in sorrow and distress. If one limb of the body is in torture, the other limbs can have no rest. "Service before self" should therefore be our motto in life.

II. *To practice these three purities – in Diet, Livelihood and Conduct:*

1. *Ahar* or Diet. What we eat goes to constitute the body and the mind. "Sound mind in a sound body" is a well known aphorism. We can neither have one nor the other with unwholesome diet. A strictly vegetarian diet consisting of vegetables and fruits, both fresh and dried, cereals, dairy products like milk, cream, butter, cheese, yogurt, etc., is essential for all aspirants for Truth. We must therefore avoid meat, meat juices, fish, fowl, eggs both fertile and unfertile, or anything containing any of these ingredients in any form or in any degree. Every action has a reaction and flesh eating involves contracting fresh karmas and thus helps to keep the inexorable karmic wheel in motion for we have to reap what we sow. We cannot have roses if we sow thistles.

The above prohibitions apply equally to all kinds of alcoholic drinks, intoxicants, opiates and narcotic drugs, as they tend to dull our consciousness and make us morbid.

"The body is the temple of the living God" and it must therefore be kept scrupulously clean.

Any prospective candidate for Initiation should there-

fore try the vegetarian diet for at least three to six months, to ensure that he or she can adhere to it, when put on the Path.

2. *Vihar* or Livelihood: Closely associated with diet are the means of livelihood. There are no shortcuts in spirituality. The end here does not justify the means, as it may be construed to do anywhere else. Ignoble means to earn one's living do contaminate one's diet, the very source of life itself. So an honest living by the sweat of one's brow is essential in this line. The life plant has therefore to be nurtured with pure water to make it sound and healthy, a fit instrument for the efflorescence of spirituality.

3. *Achar* or Conduct: The above remarks apply equally to one's conduct in life. Every thought, every word and every deed, good or bad, leaves an indelible imprint on the mind and has to be accounted for. Hence the necessity for right thoughts, right aspirations and right conduct, all of which constitute the hedge around the tender sapling of spirituality. The details in this behalf have been dealt with under the five virtues discussed above.

III. *Satsang* or Association with Truth:

The guidance of the living Master is of supreme importance. A Master is a Master indeed, a Master in all three phases of life: A *Guru* or Master on the physical plane, sharing our joys and sorrows, guiding affectionately each one of us in our worldly affairs, and above all imparting spiritual instructions; a *Guru Dev* or Radiant Form of the Master in astral and causal regions helping the spirit in meditation at each plane, and *Satguru* or Master of Truth or Truth itself in the Beyond.

The importance of attending Satsangs or spiritual gatherings cannot be overemphasized. Theory always precedes practice. It is but necessary to understand clearly the teach-

ings of the Master in all their bearings before starting spiritual practice. The Master is the be-all and end-all on the spiritual path. He does not ask for blind faith, however, though experimental faith is necessary for the purpose, to start with. He emphatically says: "Believe not the words of the Master unless you see the Reality yourself," or at least have some experience of it yourself.

IV. Spirituality:

It is a path of love, discipline and self-control. After the initial spiritual experience given at the time of Initiation, the rest depends on relentless regular practice as enjoined by the Master. Daily practice with loving faith, in all sincerity and humility, is the cornerstone round which each disciple must turn, so as to make progress on the Path. Love for the Master means implicit obedience to His commandments.

V. To Eschew All Symbolism and Rituals:

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

VI. Record of Conduct and Progress:

Every seeker after God is enjoined to maintain a strictly

impartial record of his daily conduct, so as to find out his weaknesses and try to weed them out one by one; to note his/her progress on the Path and the various difficulties and shortcomings in the way. The diary so maintained is to be sent to the Master every four months for further guidance. For this purpose regular forms are available and can be obtained from the nearest center.

VII. Application for Initiation:

Every true aspirant for spiritual science, who can adhere to the above, after preliminary abstinence in diet for about three to six months, can put in an application on the form prescribed for the purpose, giving his brief life sketch, age, marital status and the like along with a copy of his or her photograph. All applications for Initiation are to forwarded to the nearest representative of the Master for His approval, and instructions in Initiation are given only after the Master authorizes them. The place and time of Initiation are communicated in each case by the representative.

VIII. Ruhani Satsang or Path of the Masters:

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

for internal progress.

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

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

Surat Shabd Yoga

The Yoga of the Celestial Sound Current

In the first four chapters of the book *Crown of Life*, we have seen how it has been taught since time immemorial by the Indian sages that behind the apparent self, of which we are conscious in everyday existence, the self that shirks pain and seeks pleasure, that changes from moment to moment, and is subject to the effect of time and space, there is the permanent "Self," the Atman. This Atman forms the basic reality, the final substance, the essence of essences; and it is in the light of its being that all else assumes meaning. Likewise, we have seen how the Indian mystics have analyzed the nature of the Universe. Seen from the surface, our world appears to be a queer composition of contradictory elements. Faced with these contradictions, man is compelled to look for a Creator who holds the opposing forces in balance and represents permanence behind the flux of existence. But as he penetrates deeper and still deeper, he discovers that the contradictions are only apparent, not real: that far from being opposed in nature, they are differentiated manifestations of the same Power, and that they are not even "manifestations," properly so called, but are illusions of the ignorant mind which are dispelled in the light of realization when one begins to know that the ocean is changeless, though it appears to change.

These two insights are basic to Indian thought, and on closer examination will be seen to be not separate, but one. The recognition of the absolute nature of the inner Self, the Atman, implies recognition of the true nature of existence of the Paramatman, the Brahman, while an understanding

of the nature of Paramatman or Brahman implies an understanding of the Atman. If behind the changing, time- ridden self there be an eternal, changeless, and timeless One, and if behind the flux of mutability of the creation, as we normally know it, there be an Absolute Immutable Reality, then the two must be related and must, in fact, be identified. How can there be two Absolutes? How can the Atman be distinct from the Brahman, when all that is, is only a projection of Brahman?

The moment we realize these truths about the nature of Self and Overself, or the One Truth about the nature of Reality, the problem that inevitably poses itself is: Why do we in everyday existence experience the world in terms of duality and plurality, feeling ourselves separate from each other and from life in general, and what may be the means for transcending this unnecessary constriction of ourselves and merging into the Ocean of Consciousness that is our essential state? The answer to the first part of this question has been that the spirit, in its downward descent, gets enveloped in fold upon fold of mental and material apparatus which compel it to experience life in terms of their limitations, until, no longer conscious of its own inherent nature, the soul identifies itself with their realm of time and space–*nam-rup-prapanch.* The answer to the second part has been that the soul can bear witness to itself, provided it can divest itself of its limiting adjuncts. The many forms and variations of yoga that we have examined are no more than the various methods evolved for accomplishing this process of disentanglement or spiritual involution.

The one recurring theme in the teachings of all great rishis and mystics has been that their insights are based not on inherited learning, philosophical speculation, or logical reasoning, but on first-hand inner experience or *anubhava* – a word whose lucidity of expressiveness defies translation. They explain that seeming differences are not because of any contradiction inherent in what they say, but because

men vary greatly in temperament; and what is possible for the man of a cultured and refined intelligence is impossible for the unsophisticated peasant, and vice versa. Various rivers may wend through different plains, but they all reach the sea. Patanjali's Eightfold Path is the first major attempt to correlate the many available avenues into a single coherent system for spiritual reintegration. Later rishis and teachers derived much guidance from him, but their teachings implicitly embody the recognition that his system is too exacting and tends to deny spiritual attainment to the average man. Furthermore, it is so complex, that for the majority of *sadhaks* (aspirants), it is likely to become a maze in which they lose their way and mistake the intermediate goals for the final destination. And so, while Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga, Hatha Yoga, and especially Raja Yoga carry on Patanjali's tradition in modified forms, there emerge three other major forms that represent, in contrast to the Ashtanga Marg, a great simplification and specialization. The Jnana yogin, the Karma yogin, or the bhakta no longer need to retire from the world or undergo exacting psycho-physical disciplines. Each approaches the goal from a particular angle and reaches it by sheer purposeful concentration.

The end of all yoga, as Shankara clarified, is absorption into the Brahman. All the paths, therefore, aim at samadhi, in which state such experience can be attained. But if Patanjali's system and its derivatives have certain serious drawbacks, it is a question whether the three other major forms are wholly without them. If for the Karma yogin freedom lies through detachment and desirelessness, is it possible for him to be completely free? Does he not seek emancipation in following his path, and is not that itself a form of desire? Besides, is it psychologically possible for the human mind to detach itself completely from its normal field of experience without first anchoring itself in another and higher one? It is a universal characteristic of man that he seeks kinship with something other than him-

self. This is the law of his life and source of all his great achievements. The child is bound to his toys, and the adult to family and society. As in the case of a child, you may not, without harm, deprive him of his playthings until he has outgrown them psychologically; likewise, to expect the sadhak to give up his social and family attachments, without first outgrowing them by discovering something greater and larger, is to cut at the root of life. It will not bring progress but regression, for the man who undertakes it as an enforced discipline only succeeds in repressing his natural desires. The result is not the enhancement of consciousness but its numbing and atrophy, not detachment but indifference. This, as Mr. T. S. Eliot has pointed out, "differed completely" from both "attachment" and "detachment," resembling

> *... the others as death resembles life, being between two lives–unflowering, between the live and the dead nettIe.*

The discipline of Karma Yoga is a necessary one; but if it is to fulfill its end, it must be completed by another discipline of an esoteric kind, without which it tends to reduce itself to an ineffectual attempt to lift oneself up by one's shoestrings.

As for the Jnana yogin, jnana may carry him very far indeed. It may take him beyond the gross physical plane into the spiritual ones. But can jnana carry him beyond itself? And if jnana, which as we have seen, forms one of the koshas that encompasses the atman, albeit a very rarefied one, how can it then give the soul absolute freedom? Jnana is the help and yet it may prove to be the hindrance. It has indubitably the power to rid the soul of all encumbrances grosser than itself; but having reached thus far, it tends to clog further progress. And since it is not of the true essence of the soul, the Absolute, it cannot be wholly above the reach of *Kala* or Time. Mystics distinguish between the two realms of time, *Kala* and *Mahakala,* thus:

the first of these extends over the physical world and the less gross regions immediately above it, whereas the second stretches to all the higher planes that are not of pure spirit. Hence, the gains that the jnani achieves may be out of the reach of time as we normally conceive it *(kala),* but they are not wholly beyond the reach of greater time *(mahakala).* It need hardly be pointed out that what is true of Jnana Yoga is also true of those forms of yoga that depend upon the pranic energies. They, too, are not of the true nature of the Atman and, as such, cannot lead It to a state of Absolute Purity, beyond the realm of relativity.

Besides its inability to ensure absolute freedom, Jnana Yoga is not a path accessible to the average man. It demands extraordinary intellectual powers and stamina which few possess. It was to meet this difficulty as well as that posed by Karma Yoga, when practiced by itself, that Bhakti Yoga came into prominence. He who normally would not be able to detach himself from the world nor had the mental powers to analyze the true Self from the untrue could, by the power of love, leap or bridge the gap and reach the goal. But how can man love that which has neither form nor shape? So the bhakta anchors himself in the love of some *Isht-deva,* some definite manifestation of God. But in overcoming this practical difficulty, he exposes himself to the same limitations as the jnani. The chosen *Isht-deva* by its very nature represents a limitation upon the Nameless and Formless Absolute. And even if the bhakta reaches the level of that manifestation, can that limited being take him beyond itself to that which has no limitation? A study of the lives of the prominent exponents of this system clarifies the point. Ramanuja, the well-known mystic of the Middle Ages, failed to apprehend the teachings of his predecessor, Shankara. He followed what in Indian philosophy is known as the school of *vasisht advaita;* i.e., that the Atman can reach Ishwar (God as the manifested Creator of the Universe) and can get saturated with cosmic consciousness, but it can never become one with

Him. What to say then of reaching God as the Unmanifested, Nameless Brahman? The experience of Sri Ramakrishna in our own time once again brings out this limitation. He had always been a worshiper of the Divine Mother, and She often blessed Him with her visions. But He always perceived Her as something other than Himself, as a power outside Himself and one for Whose operation He could often become a medium, but in which He could not merge Himself. When He subsequently met Totapuri, an advaita sanyasin, He realized that He must get beyond this stage to one where there was no name or form and where the Self and the Overself became one. When He attempted to enter into such a state, He discovered that His earlier attainments became a hurdle, in spite of all His efforts. He tells us:

> *I could not cross the realm of name and form and bring my mind to the unconditioned state. I had no difficulty in withdrawing my mind from all objects except one, and this was the all too familiar form of the Blissful Mother–radiant and of the essence of pure consciousness—which appeared before me as a living reality and would not allow me to pass the realm of name and form. Again and again, I tried to concentrate my mind upon the Advaita teachings, but every time the Mother's form stood in my way. In despair I said to "the naked one" (his Master Totapuri),“ It is hopeless. I cannot raise my mind to the unconditioned state and come face to face with the Atman.” He grew excited and sharply said, "What! You can't do it? But you have to.” He cast his eyes around for something, and finding a piece of glass, he took it up and pressing its point between my eyebrows said, "Concentrate your mind on this point." Then, with stern determination, I again sat to meditate; and as soon as the gracious form of the Divine Mother appeared before me, I used my discrimination as a sword and with it severed it into two. There remained no more obstruction to my mind, which at*

*once soared beyond the relative plane, and I lost myself in Samadhi.**

It is clear, therefore, that while the bhakta can go very far spiritually, can greatly enhance his consciousness, can gain miraculous powers, and anchored in a higher love can rise above the love of this world, it is, nevertheless, not possible for him to get beyond the plane of "name and form," and therefore of relativity. He may get lost in the contemplation of the Godhead with His amazing attributes, but he cannot experience the same in its *Nirguna* and its *Anami,* its "Unconditioned," and "Nameless" state. He can feel himself saturated with Cosmic Consciousness; but it comes to him as something outside himself as a gift of grace, and he is not able to lose himself in It and become one with the Ocean of Being. If he does seek to attain that state, his accomplishment as a bhakta, instead of helping him further, tends to hinder and obstruct him.

The two things that emerge from an examination of the popular forms of yoga that were evolved after Patanjali 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 Realization or True Samadhi is not merely a matter of transcending the physical (though that is necessary as a first step), but is the end of a complex inner journey in which there are many intermediate stages, the attainment of which, 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 a means other than that of pranas, jnana, or bhakti of an Isht-deva, as not only to enable the spirit currents to be released from their present physical bondage, but also to enable the soul to be drawn upward unhindered from one spiritual plane to another until it transcends completely all the realms of relativity of *naam* and *rup,* of *kala* and *mahakala,* and reaches

*Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna (Mylapore–Madras, 1954), page 313

its goal: at-one-ment with the Nameless and Formless One.

The Sound Current

It is in the context of this problem that 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 literature 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.

ST. JOHN

In ancient Indian scriptures we read repeatedly of *Aum*, the sacred Word pervading the three realms of 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.
Shabd is the directive agent of God, the cause of all creation.

PRABHATI

The Muslim Sufis declare:

Creation came into being from Saut (Sound or Word) and from Saut spread all light.

SHAMAS 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. 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 distorted to mean "reason" or "order," and "light" may even be made to mean no more than mental illumination; but their equivalents in other religious literature–*nad, udgit, akash-bani, shabd, naam, saut, bang-i-Ilahi, 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 the Revelation of St. John 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 the voice of harpers, harping with their harps.

While 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, after which the bhervi will be heard, intermingled with the sounds of bell and conch.

NAD BIND UPANISHAD

The Prophet Mohammad heard celestial music which gradually assumed the shape of Gabriel and formed itself into words, while Baha U'llah relates:

Myriads of mystic tongues find utterance in one speech, and myriads 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, and 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 Shabd Yoga, are not figurative but literal, referring not to the outer illuminations or sounds of this world, but to inner transcendent ones. They teach that the transcendent Sound and Light 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; and 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 in which the

Positive pole *(Sach Khand* or *Sat Lok)* is a plane of pure, unalloyed Spirit, while the Negative pole *(Pind)* is 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 the balance of Positive-spiritual and Negative-material forces in each plane.

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 downward assumes a varying density of spirituo-material forces. Mystics speak of the purple light and the light of the noonday or setting sun, and refer to the sounds of flutes, harps, violins, conches, thunder, bells, running water, etc.; but though manifesting differently at different levels, the *Shabd* yet remains constant in Itself.

As a river springing from the snowy peak of a towering mountain flows toward the sea, it undergoes many changes of setting, shape, motion and appearance; and 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 nevertheless they are the surest way on the upward journey. Be a range howsoever unscalable, the waters will have cut a pass and carved a passage; and he who will 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 Wordless, he who holds firmly to It will inevitably reach the starting point, transcending plane after plane of varying relativity until he arrives at the very source of name and form, thence to merge into That which has no name or form.

The Cornerstones

The Sound Current undoubtedly offers the surest way to man for reaching from form to the Formless; but the question arises, how can man get access to It and thus accomplish his inner journey? Those proficient in this 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 True Teacher Who is an Adept in this mystic science. The subject is one of practical self-realization, not of philosophic dissertation 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, one of direct transcendental perception, of inner hearing and seeing. One born deaf and blind may, with the help of Braille, learn the most detailed expositions of man's rich and varied audiovisual experiences; but his study can never give him direct experience. The most that he can get from books is the realization 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 effect a 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 to a single conclusion, provided he is sensitive to the point involved: the need for a Living Master. Without such a Master he cannot even understand the true import of the revelatory scriptures. They speak of experi-

ences beyond his level of experience; and even in his own language, they can speak only in metaphors and parables, for how can the discourses 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 the true meaning. We might gather a great deal of psychological wisdom, but the inner significance would be lost on us, and all our intellectual theorizing would only land us in unending theological contradictions with which the various institutionalized 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 there. 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 in 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 efflorescence. 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 thus love and obey,

and so transform one's life, the gift of the Guru remains as a seed locked away in a steel vault where it cannot sprout and grow to fruition.

Sadachar: It is the necessity for self-discipline that makes sadachar the second cornerstone 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 and pure 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 from the same Essence; and so 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; and 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 fulfillment 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

W.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 also 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 perforce be filled to overflowing with sympathy for all that he confronts, and sympathy toward 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, the mountain, or the 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 recognize 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 these he will never forget the ultimate purpose of life, always knowing how to give unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s, and preserving for God that which is God’s. The way for tran-

scending desire, he will know, is not through repressing it, but meeting it squarely and overcoming it. To him, *sanyasa* 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,*
> *And endeavor for the Divine and respect for the higher Self your wallet,*
> *And constant meditation on Him your ashes,*
> *Let preparedness for death be your cloak,*
> *And let your body be like unto a chaste virgin.*
> *Let your Master's teachings be your supporting staff.*
>
> JAP JI

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 even higher realms of consciousness, to resort to narcotics and intoxicants is only to court regression. It is not an idiosyncracy 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 Koran and the Holy Bible. Thus in Proverbs 23:20, we find:

> *Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh.*

And in Romans 14:21:

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

And in I Corinthians 6:13:

Meats for the belly, and 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.

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 nevermore see disease?"

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

"It was said to them of olden time, 'Honor thy Heavenly Father and thy Earthly Mother, and their commandments, that thy days may be long upon the earth.' And next 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 lives 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 whosoever 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 every green herb for meat.' Also the milk of everything 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 forefathers, '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. One 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 will channel it so as to fulfill 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 anaesthetizes 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.*
>
> ST. MATTHEW

All religious teachers the world over laid great stress on higher moral values; and these, in fact, constitute the groundwork for their teachings. A true Master always insists on the maintaining of a 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 them out 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 beckoning him toward the ideal 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 centers in the divine. In short, as he increasingly realizes 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.

Sadhna: And now we come to the third cornerstone of the spiritual edifice, that of spiritual sadhna or discipline. The one recurrent theme of a *Puran Guru* or Perfect Teacher is that the good life, though highly desirable and indispensable, is not an end in itself. The goal of life is something inner and different. It is an ascension from the plane of relativity and physical existence into one of Absolute Being. He who recognizes this will mould his life accordingly; first, because such a recognition implies a state of mind that, being free from ego and attachment, expresses itself in virtuous and creative action; and second, because without cultivating such a state of mind and of life, one cannot attain the poise and concentration required for inner ascension.

So the basic stress of the Enlightened Teacher is laid always upon the transcendental goal. He teaches that the pranic and vigyanic energies are not of the essence of Atman, but take their birth in planes lower than those of pure spirit. He who would use them as a ladder may transcend bodily consciousness, may reach the planes whence they originate; but he cannot reach beyond. The spirit being similar in all, the means to spiritual enlightenment should likewise be accessible to all. But, as has been seen already, such forms of yoga as are based on the pranas or

on jnana make special demands which all cannot fulfill. The pranic systems are beyond the reach of the old, or those of tender years, and also of those who suffer from any respiratory or digestive disorders. The path of jnana presumes mental and intellectual capacities that Nature bestows only on few. If these approaches were, indeed, the natural ones open to us, then the logical conclusion would be that Nature is very partial in her blessings, discriminating between man and man. Why, if the sun shines for all and the wind blows for all, should the inner treasures be available only to the chosen few? They are also for the learned and the unlearned.

Yogas that are so discriminating in selecting their practitioners, and so exacting in their practice, cannot be wholly natural. The method taught by the Masters of the Surat Shabd Yoga is different. As mentioned earlier, the nature of Creation and the way back to life's Initial Source is explained to the seeker. At the time of initiation, he is given a first-hand inner experience which he is taught to develop. The seat of the soul is between and behind the eyebrows. This at least is accepted by all yogas. It is to this point that mystics refer when they speak of *shiv netra, divya chakshu, tisra til, Brahmrendra, triambka, trilochana nukta-i-sweda, koh-i-toor,* third eye, single eye, figuratively called the still point, the mount of transfiguration, etc. It is at this point that the sadhak, having closed his eyes, must focus his attention; but the effort at concentration must be an effortless one and there must be no question of any physical or mental strain. To assist this effort the teacher gives the disciple a *mantra,* or charged verbal formula, which is symbolic of the journey ahead. This formula, when repeated slowly and lovingly with the tongue of thought, helps the disciple to collect his scattered thoughts gradually at a single point. What gives this Mantra its potency is not any magic inherent in the words per se, but the fact that it is given by One, Who by His own Spiritual practice and mastery, has charged It with inner

power. When the aspirant, by his inner concentration and by the mental repetition of the charged words, has brought his inward gaze to a sharp and steady focus, he will find that the darkness within that he at first confronted gets gradually illuminated by shifting points of light. As his powers of concentration increase, the lights cease flickering and develop into a single radiating point.

This process of concentration, or the collection of *surat*, automatically draws the spirit-currents, normally dissipated all over the body, toward the spiritual center. This withdrawal is greatly assisted by *simran* or repetition of the charged Mantra; and the perception of the inner Light, leading to *dhyan* or one-pointed concentration, quickens the process still further. In turn, dhyan, when fully developed, leads to *bhajan* or inner hearing. The inner light begins to become resonant.

> *Within thee is Light and within the Light the Sound, and the same shall keep thee attached to the True One.*
>
> GURBANI

The practitioner, when he shuts his physical ears, gets rapidly absorbed into the music. It is a common experience that though light can catch the eye, it cannot hold it for very long and has no very magnetic quality about it. But with music it is different. He who hears it in silence and stillness is drawn irresistibly, as it were, into another world, a different realm of experience. And so the process of withdrawal that begins with simran, is stimulated by dhyan, and is rapidly extended by bhajan. The spiritual currents, already moving slowly, are carried upward, collecting finally at the third eye—the seat of the soul. The spiritual transcending of physical consciousness, or death in life, is thus achieved with the minimum of effort and travail.

When students of the other forms of yoga reach the state of full physical transcendence, after a long and exacting mastery of the lower chakras, they generally assume that they have reached their journey's end. The inner plane at which they find themselves—the realm of Sahasrar or Sahasdal Kamal, often symbolized by the sun-wheel, the lotus, or the multifoliate rose—is, indeed, incomparably more beautiful than anything on earth, and in comparison appears timeless. But when the student of the Surat Shabd Yoga succeeds in rising above physical consciousness, he finds the Radiant Form of his Master waiting unsought to receive him. Indeed, it is at this point that the real *Guru-shishya* or teacher-student relationship is established. Up to this stage, the Guru had been little more than a human teacher; but now He is seen as the Divine Guide or *Gurudev,* Who shows the inner way:

> *The feet of my Master have been manifested in my forehead, And all my wanderings and tribulations have ended.*
>
> GURU ARJAN

> *With the appearance of the Radiant Form of the Master within,*
> *No secret remains hidden in the womb of time.*

Christ also speaks in the same strain:

> *There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known.*
>
> ST. MATTHEW

Under the guidance of this Celestial Guide, the soul learns to overcome the first shock of joy and realizes that its goal lies still far ahead. Accompanied by the Radiant Form and drawn by the Audible Life Current, it traverses

from region to region, from plane to plane, dropping off kosha after kosha, until at last it stands wholly divested of all that is not of its nature. Thus disentangled and purified it can at last enter the realm where it sees that it is of the same essence as the Supreme Being, that the Master in His Radiant Form and the soul are not separate but One, and that there is naught but the Great Ocean of Consciousness, of Love, of Bliss ineffable. Who shall describe the splendor of this realm?

Only heart to heart can speak of the bliss of mystic knowers:
No messenger can tell it and no missive bear it.

HAFlZ

When the pen set to picturing this station,
It broke in pieces and the page was torn.

PERSIAN MYSTIC

Having reached the journey's end, the seeker too, merges with the Word and enters the company of the Free Ones. He may continue to live like other men in this world of human beings, but his spirit knows no limitations and is as infinite as God Himself. The wheel of transmigration can no longer affect him, and his consciousness knows no restrictions. Like his Master before him, he has become a Conscious Co-worker of the Divine Plan. He does nothing for himself but works in God's name. If there be, indeed, any *Neh-Karmi* (one free from the bonds of action), it is he, for there is no more potent means to freedom than the Power of the Word.

He alone is action-free who communes with the Word.

GURBANI

Freedom for him is not something that comes after

death *(videh mukti);* it is something achieved in life itself. He is a *jivan-mukta* (free-in-life); like a flower shedding fragrance, he spreads the message of freedom wherever he goes.

Those who have communed with the Word, their toils shall end.
And their faces shall flame with glory.
Not only shall they have salvation,
O Nanak, but many more shall find freedom with them.

JAP JI

In actual practice of the spiritual discipline, stress is laid on *Simran, Dhyan, and Bhajan,* each of which plays a specific role in unfoldment of the Self. The Master gives Simran or mental repetition of the charged words, which helps in gathering together the wandering wits of the practitioner to the still point of the soul between and behind the two eyebrows, to which place the sensory currents now pervading from top to toe are withdrawn; and one becomes lost to the consciousness of the flesh. The successful completion of this process of itself leads to dhyan or concentration. Dhyan is derived from the Sanskrit root *dhi,* meaning "to bind" and "to hold on." With the inner eye opened, the aspirant now sees shimmering streaks of heaven's light within him and this keeps his attention anchored. Gradually, the light grows steady in his sadhna, for it works as a sheet-anchor for the soul. Dhyan or concentration when perfected leads one to *Bhajan* or attuning to the Music which emerges from within the center of the Holy Light. This enchanting Holy Melody has a magnetic pull which is irresistible, and the soul cannot but follow it to the spiritual source from whence the Music emerges. The soul is helped by this triple process to slide out of the shackles of the body and becomes anchored in the heavenly radiance of its Self (atman), and is led on to the heavenly home of the Father.

The entire process is nurtured by *Sat Naam*, *Satguru*, and *Satsang*, which in fact, are synonymous for the Master Power at work. Sat Naam is the Power of the Absolute stirred into compassion; and when It puts on the flesh, It assumes the form of the Guru (Word made flesh), and works through Him by means of Satsang, both outer and inner, which helps the jivas ripe for regeneration. This Power works on all the planes simultaneously according to the needs of each individual, by word of mouth as a Guru in human form, sharing in all joys and sorrows of the human beings; by inner guidance as Gurudeva in his astral, luminous or radiant form; and finally as Satguru—a veritable Master of Truth.

There are two ways within: *jyoti marg* and *sruti marg* (the way of Light and the way of Sound), respectively. The Holy Light keeps the soul anchored and absorbed and, to a certain extent, leads the soul as well; but the holy Word pulls it upward and carries it across from plane to plane in spite of various hurdles on the Way, like blinding or bewildering lights, densely pitch darkness, etc., until the soul reaches its destination.

A Perfect Science

Even the foregoing bird's-eye survey of the nature and scope of the Surat Shabd Yoga conveys some of its unique features. He who studies it in relation to the other forms of yoga cannot but note the completeness of its solution of all the problems that confront the seeker when pursuing other systems. On the plane of outer action, it does not base itself on a dry and rigid discipline that is often laden with the consequences of psychological repression. It holds that some discipline is necessary but adds that it must ultimately be inspired by inner spiritual experience and be a matter of spontaneous living, and not of rigorous asceticism and a too deliberate self abnegation. The seeker must strive toward a state of equipoise and must, therefore, cultivate

the virtue of moderation in thought and deed. The integration he thereby achieves enables him to gain greater concentration, and so higher inner experience; and this inner experience must, in turn, have repercussions on outer thoughts and action. The relationship of sadachar to inner sadhna is a reciprocal one; each enlivens and gives meaning to the other, and one without the other is like a bird with a single wing. How can the spirit be brought to perfect onepointedness without the purity of mind and body, and how can the soul transcend all human attachments and imperfections without centering itself in the love of the Divine?

When the qualities of the Ancient of Days stood revealed,
Then the qualities of earthly things did Moses burn away.

RUMI

The Surat Shabd Yoga not only provides a means for achieving in practice the difficult ideal of sadachar, it also offers a mode of life that, while raising one above this physical world, does not enslave one to the realm of Name and Form. The Masters of this Path know only too well that abstract speculations about the non-attributive aspect of the Absolute cannot lead one to It. How can man, conditioned by name and form, be drawn directly to that which is beyond name or form? Love seeks something which it can comprehend and to which it can attach itself; and God, if He is to meet man, must assume some shape or form. It is this recognition that inspires the devotion of the bhakta to Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna, or Kali, the Divine Mother. But these divine beings represent fixed manifestations of God; and once the devotee has reached their plane, their very fixity, as we have seen already, prevents further progress. The Masters of the Surat Shabd Yoga wholly transcend this limitation by linking the seeker not to a fixed, but to an all-pervading manifestation of God, the Radiant Sound

Current. It is this *anhat* and *anhad* Naam, this unstruck and unfathomable Word, that supports the various planes of creation ranging from pure spirit to gross matter. Its strains pervade every realm, every region; and it runs through them like a river that flows through the valleys which it has brought into being. And, like the river, it exists in a fluid state, changing at every plane, yet ever remaining the same. The seeker who has been inspired by the love of the river of the Word is blessed, indeed, for he knows none of the limitations experienced by those who adore God in other forms. As he is drawn upward by Its beatific power, he finds It changing, modifying, becoming even stronger and purer, beckoning him on to higher and still higher effort, never allowing him to halt or to loiter, but leading him on from plane to plane, from valley to valley, until he arrives at the very source from where the Unmanifested comes into manifestation, the Formless assumes form, and the Nameless, name. It was this completeness of the inner journey made possible by the Yoga of the Sound Current that led Kabir to declare:

All holy ones are worthy of reverence,
But I adore only one Who has mastered the Word.

The Surat Shabd Yoga is not only the most perfect of the various yogas, but it is also comparatively easy to practice, and one accessible to all. Not only do those following this path reach the ultimate end, but they do so with greater economy of effort than is possible by the other methods. The transcendence of physical consciousness that the yogin pursuing the path of the pranas achieves, only after a long and arduous discipline, is attained by practitioners of the Surat Shabd Yoga sometimes at the first sitting at the time of initiation. That this should be so is not a mere chance or accident. The fact is that the Surat Shabd Yoga adopts a more scientific and natural approach to man's spiritual problems. Why, it asserts, if the spiritual current reaches the bodily chakras not from below but from above,

should it be necessary to master each of these chakras in turn? A man standing at the heart of a valley, if he wishes to reach the river's source, does not have to travel down to its mouth and then retraverse the distance. It further holds that if prana and mind (even at their most refined) are not of the true essence of the spirit, then how can they be the best means of disengaging it from its encrustations? If it could be put in touch with that which is of its own essential nature, like would draw like, and with the minimum of effort the desired end would be achieved. It is from the point of the *tisra-til,* the third eye, that the spiritual current spreads itself into the body. All that is needed is to check its downward flow at this point by controlling one's senses and it would, of its own accord, collect itself and flow backwards toward its source.

Shutter your lip, your ear, your eye;
And if you do not Truth descry,
Then let your scorn upon me fly.

HAFIZ

The seeker has no need to begin from the very bottom; all he has to do is to turn in the direction of the spiritual stream and the rest will follow.

What is there in reaching the Lord?
One needs only to transplant the heart.

INAYAT SHAH

It is this simplicity of approach coupled with economy of effort that have induced many to call the Surat Shabd Yoga the *Sehaj Marg* or the Easy Way. It begins at the point where other yogas normally tend to end. Sahasrar, the region of the thousand-petaled lights, which marks the end of the normal yogin's journey after traversing the various bodily chakras, is well-nigh the first step to be taken by the follower of the Surat Shabd Yoga. Further, by refusing to

disturb the pranic or kundalinic energies, this yoga greatly reduces the strain of physical transcendence. By contacting the Sound Principle, the sensory currents are automatically drawn upward without the practitioner consciously striving to achieve this end; and the motor currents are left untouched. Not only does this simplify the process of entry into the state of samadhi, but that of returning from it as well. The adept in this path needs no outer assistance for coming back into physical consciousness, as is the case with some other yogic forms; spiritual ascension and descent are entirely voluntary and can be achieved by him with the rapidity of thought.

The method of transcendental hearing is only an extension of our normal daily practice. When we are faced with some knotty problem, our entire conscious energies tend to focus at one point—the seat of the soul—without affecting pranicmotor energies functioning automatically in our body. The Surat Shabd Yoga practitioner achieves this concentration at will under controlled conditions through simran and dhyan; and as soon as he contacts the reverberating Word, the sensory spiritual current that is still in the body is drawn irresistibly upward, and complete physical transcendence is achieved.

It is this quality of *sehaj*, of naturalness and ease, that makes the Surat Shabd Yoga accessible to all. The music of the Divine Word is vibrating in all alike; and he who follows Its path needs no special requirements, whether physical or intellectual. It is as much open to the old as to the young, to the sinners as to the saints, to the simple as to the learned, to women and children as to men. Indeed, women and children and the unsophisticated, owing to their simpler modes of thought and their spontaneous faith, often make quicker initial headway with this method than their more sophisticated brethren. However, full attainment in this field demands unwavering perseverance and effort, which may not always be forthcoming. As no rigorous and

extensive disciplines of food, physical exercises, etc. are required, it does not necessitate *sanyasa* or complete renunciation of the world, and is as much open to the *grehastis,* the married, as to the *brahmcharis,* those who are under a vow of celibacy. Had the pranic and vigyanic systems been the most natural available, then we should have had to conclude Nature to be partial, for the physical and mental capabilities they require are distributed unequally among men. If the sun and the air are available to all, why should the spiritual gifts be reserved only for the chosen few? Besides, prana and vigyan can, at best, lead one to the plane of their origin; and as they are not purely spiritual, how can they lead to the realm of pure spirit?

However, to say that the Surat Shabd Yoga is the most perfect of the yogic sciences and the most natural is not to say that it demands no effort, and that anyone can just take to it and succeed. Had that been the case, humanity would not have been floundering as it is today. The fact is that competent teachers of this crown of all sciences are rare; and that even when a teacher is found, few are prepared to undergo the kind of discipline required. The spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak. Most men are so deeply engrossed with the love of the world that, even after having had a glimpse of inner treasures, they are reluctant to give up their worldly ways and concentrate on the possession of that which makes one the master of all. Since the stress in this yoga is always on the inner, never on the outer, no path could in a way be more exacting for the general run of men. Many can spend whole lives in outer ritual and ceremonial, but few can attain perfect inner concentration, undisturbed by mundane thoughts, even for a few moments. Hence it was that Kabir compared it to walking on a naked sword, while the Sufis spoke of it as the *rah-i-mustqim,* finer than a hair and sharper than the razor's edge. Christ described it as the "strait and narrow way" that only a few ever tread. But for one whom the world lures not and who is filled with a passionate love of God, noth-

ing could be easier and quicker. He needs no other force than that of his own urge and, purified of earthly attachments by his sincere and strong longing, his soul shall wing homeward, borne on the stream of Shabd toward its point of origin, the haven of bliss and peace. Should the soul confront any obstacles on its homing flight, its Radiant Friend is always beside it to lead it past and protect it from all pitfalls.

The road through the higher planes lies charted before the soul as completely as that for Hatha yogins of the lower bodily chakras; and with such a Power to bear it, and such a Friend to guide, nothing can deter or entrap, nothing can disturb the steadiness of its course. "Take hold of the garment, O brave soul, of One Who knows well all places, physical, mental, supra-mental, and spiritual, for He will remain thy friend in life as well as in death, in this world and the worlds beyond," exhorted Jalalud-din Rumi.

And sang Nanak:

> *He that has found a True Master and pursues the perfect way of the Holy Word shall, laughing and living in this world, find full freedom and emancipation.*

Again,

> *Like the lotus shall he rise immaculate above the mire of the world and like the swan shall he shoot forth from its murky waters untouched and untramelled.*

The Master

Apart from its scientific approach, its comparatively easy accessibility, its quality of naturalness, and its free-

dom from the drawbacks of other yogic forms, another distinctive feature of the Yoga of the Sound Current is the unique and pervasive emphasis it lays on the need at every step for a Satguru, *Pir-e-rah* or *Murshid-i-Kamil* (a competent, living Master). Though something on this theme has already been mentioned under "The Cornerstones," much remains to be elaborated.

The *Guru-shish* or *Guru-sikh* relationship is important in all forms of practical yoga, but it is pivotal here in a unique sense. For the Guru in the Surat Shabd Yoga is not only a Being Who explains to us the real nature of existence, instructs us in the true values of life, and tells us of the sadhnas to be practiced for inner attainment, He is all this and more. He is the inner Guide as well, leading the soul from plane to plane to its ultimate destination, a Guide without Whose aid the soul would mistake the intermediate stages for the final goal and would encounter barriers which it would be unable to surmount.

The role of the Master being what it is, it is little wonder that all mystics who have pursued this way should have sung of Him with superlative reverence and adoration. From Kabir, we read:

I wish and long for the dust of his feet–the dust
that has created the universe;
His lotus feet are the true wealth and a haven of
peace.
They grant ineffable wisdom and lead one on the
path Godward.

And the Sikh scriptures sing:

Sweet are the lotus feet of the Master;
With Gods writ one sees them;
And myriad are the blessings that follow upon
such a vision.

GURU ARJAN

From the Sufis, we have:

If I were to sing praises of his countless blessings
till eternity,
I could hardly say anything of them.

JALALUD-DIN RUMI

Some mystics even go to the extent of raising his position above that of God:

The Master is greater than God.

KABIR

The Guru and God both stand manifested, whom
may I adore and render obeisance?
Wonderful indeed is the Guru who has revealed
the God-power within.

SEHJO BAI

All this may lead the skeptic to suspect human idolatry. He may ask: "Why this deification of a human being? Why such praise heaped upon one who is mortal?" Mystics at times have responded to this question with holy indifference:

People decry that Khusro has turned idolator;
Indeed, I have, but what has the world to do with me?

AMIR KHUSRO

But sometimes, they have themselves answered it fully:

Without the munificence of the Master one gets naught,
Even if one engages in a million meritorious deeds

GURBANI

Devotion to God keeps one entangled in this (physical) life—just consider gravely,
But devotion to the Master carries one back unto God.

KABIR

Enter within and verify for yourself,
Who is greater of the two: God or the Guru.

GURBANI

God drove me into the wilderness of the world,
but the Master has snapped for me the ceaseless chain of transmigration.

SEHJO BAI

All great Spiritual Teachers have maintained that without the help of a living Master, the spiritual journey is difficult and impossible to traverse to the very end. Jalaluddin Rumi, the Persian mystic, suggests this forcefully when he says:

Veiled from this was Moses
Though all strength and light,
Then thou who hast no wings at all,
Attempt not flight.

And makes His meaning still clearer elsewhere:

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

In the Gospels, it is the same strain that vibrates through the sayings of Jesus:

No man cometh unto the Father but by me.

ST. JOHN

No man knoweth who the Father is, but the Son;
and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.

ST. LUKE AND ST. MATTHEW

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

ST. JOHN

While conferring apostleship on the twelve disciples, Jesus said unto them:

He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me.

Wherefore, He was able to save them to the uttermost that came unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The Master is, indeed, the "Intercessor" or *Rasul,* Who moves between us and God, linking us to the holy Word; and without Him, there could be but little hope of salvation. No friendship could be greater than His friendship, no love truer than His love, no gift greater than His grace. Chance winds may blow others apart and death may come to part the most faithful lovers; He alone is unfailing in life as well as in death:

I have commanded you; and, lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

ST. MATTHEW

He alone is a friend who accompanies me on
my last journey,
And shields me before the judgment seat of God.

GURBANI

Other gifts may decay and perish; but His gift, the gift of God's Word, is imperishable, indestructible, ever shining, ever fresh, ever new, a boon in life, a greater boon in death.

From where does the Master derive this unique and superhuman power that makes Him almost equal to God and, in the eyes of His disciples, places Him even above God? Can mortal flesh compete with the Immortal and the finite outdistance the Infinite? This may well seem a paradox to the world; but those who have crossed with opened eyes to the inner Kingdom, see in this no contradiction, only the mystery of God's greatness. The true Master is One Who, under instruction and guidance from His own Teacher, has learned to analyze the soul from the body, has traversed the inner path to its very end, and has beheld the Source of All Light and Life and merged with the Nameless One. After merging with the Nameless One, He becomes One with Him and One with all that is. On the human plane, He may appear as limited as any one of us; but on the spiritual, He is Limitless and Infinite even as God Himself:

O my servant obey Me, and I shall make thee like unto Myself. I say, "Be," and it is, and thou shalt say "Be," and it shall be.

BAHA 'U' LLAH - THE FOUR VALLEYS

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us.

ST. JOHN

The Word is the Master and the Prophet, full of wisdom deep and profound.

GURU NANAK

When I churned the sea of body, a strange truth
came to light,
God was identified in the Master and no distinction
could Nanak find.

GURU RAM DAS

Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Shiva
and Guru is the veritable Par-Brahm, and we offer our
salutation to Him.

The Guru-shish relationship has very often been described as below:

Who is the true Guru for a disciple?
Shabd indeed is the Guru and Surat the disciple of the
Dhun (Sound).

GURU NANAK

The Shabd-Guru is too deep and unfathomable,
Without (the Controlling Power of) the Shabd the
world would be but a wilderness.

GURU NANAK

The Word of the Master is Master indeed, full of
life-giving water,
He who follows His Word doth verily cross the
strands of time.

GURU RAM DAS

The disciple-Surat can traverse the Path only with the
Shabd-Guru,
Exploring the heavenly mysteries, it doth find rest
in the inverted well (of the head).

TULSI SAHIB

Know it for certain that Shabd-Guru is the veritable Guru,
Surat can truly become the disciple of the Dhun by being a Gur-mukh (receptacle for the Word).

BHAI GURDAS

Guru resides in the gagan (spiritual realm above) and the disciple in the ghat (between the two eyebrows)
When the two, the Surat and the Shabd, do meet, they get united eternally.

KABIR

There is an essential and indivisible relationship between God and the God-man, for he serves as a human pole at which the God-Power plays its part and helps in the regeneration of the jivas. It is needless to distinguish between the magnet and the magnetized field, and it is therefore said:

Devotion to the Satguru is devotion to the Lord,
Satguru secures salvation by giving contact with Naam (the God-Power).

Uncovetous of worldly riches, He may seem poor; but He is rich in God's Infinitude and, once the mortal coils have been cast off, He is reabsorbed into the still center, subject to no limitations. What gives Him His unique pre-eminence is precisely this spiritual at-one-moment with the Absolute, and to judge Him on the human level is to fail to understand Him. Rumi has well said, "Never take a God-man to be human; for though appearing so, He is yet much more." It is by virtue of the extra-human potential that He becomes the Master. Having merged into Divine Consciousness He, in His human state, becomes Its agent and speaks not in His individual capacity, but as the mouthpiece of God:

His hand is the hand of God
And the power of the Lord works through him.

RUMI

O! my friend, I speak nothing from myself,
I only utter what the Beloved puts into my mouth.

GURU NANAK

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

ST. JOHN

The Master being what He is, it is not surprising that He should be held so high. Being an instrument of the Divine, to praise Him is only another way of praising God; and to extol Him above God is not to set up an opposition between the finite and the Infinite, but to assert that from the human standpoint, the aspect of God which bends down toward man to raise him to Itself (i.e., the centripetal), is higher than that which merely allows him to run his ways in the world of relativity from birth to birth (i.e., the centrifugal), even though both at the supra-human level are seen to be one and indivisible.

A system in which the Teacher is so central to every aspect of the student's outer and inner discipline and progress, and without Whose instruction and guidance nothing could be done, must lay great emphasis on the principle of Grace; and mystic literature is not wanting in stressing and underlining this aspect. But, if from one angle it is the Master Who bestows everything upon the disciple, it must not be forgotten that, in doing this, He is only repaying a debt He owes to His own Guru, for the gift He bestows is the gift He Himself received when He was at the stage of a disciple; and so He usually never claims anything for Himself, but attributes His power to the grace

of His own Teacher. Besides, from another angle, everything is in the disciple himself, and the Master does not add anything from outside. It is only when the gardener waters and tends the seed that it bursts into life, yet the secret of life is in the seed itself and the gardener can do no more than provide the conditions for its fructification. Such, indeed, is the function of the Guru.

An ancient Indian parable vividly brings out this aspect of Master-disciple relationship. It relates that once a shepherd trapped a lion's cub and reared him with the rest of his flock. The cub, judging himself by those he saw around him, lived and moved like the sheep and lambs, content with the grass they nibbled and with the weak bleats they emitted. And so time sped on until, one day, another lion saw the growing cub grazing with the rest of the flock. He guessed what had happened; and pitying the cub's plight, he went up to him, drew him to the side of a quiet stream, made him behold his reflection and the lion's own and, turning back, let forth a mighty roar. The cub, now understanding his true nature, did likewise, and his erstwhile companions fled before him. He was at last free to enjoy his rightful place, and thenceforward roamed about as a king of the forest.

The Master is, indeed, such a lion. He comes to stir up the soul from its slumber and, presenting it with a mirror, makes it behold its own innate glory of which, without His touch, it would continue unaware. However, were it not itself of the essence of life, nothing could raise it to spiritual consciousness. The Guru is but a lighted candle that lights the unlit ones. The fuel is there, the wick is there; He only gives the gift of flame without any loss to Himself. Like touches like, the spark passes between; and that which lay dark is illumined, and that which was dead springs into life. As with the lighted candle whose privilege lies not in its being an individual candle, but in its being the seat of the unindividual flame that is neither of this candle nor of

that, but of the very essence of all fire, so too, with the true Master. He is a Master not by virtue of His being an individual master like anyone else, but He is a Master carrying in Him the Universal Light of God. Again, just as only a candle that is still burning can light other candles–not one that is already burnt out—so only a living Master can give the quickening touch that is needed, not One Who has already departed from this world. Those that are gone were great, indeed, and worthy of all respect; but They were preeminently for Their own time, and the task They accomplished for those around Them must, for us, be performed by One Who lives and moves in our midst. Their memory is a sacred treasure, a perennial source of inspiration; but the one thing Their remembrance teaches is to seek for ourselves in the world of the living that which They Themselves were. Only the kiss of a living Prince (Master) could bring the slumbering Princess (Soul) back to life, and only the touch of a breathing Beauty could restore the Beast to his native pristine glory.

Where the guidance of a competent living Master is such a prime necessity, the task of finding and recognizing such a Genuine Soul assumes paramount importance. There is no dearth of false prophets and of wolves in sheep's clothing. The very term *Satguru,* or true Master, implies the existence of its opposite; and it is the false that meet our gaze at every turn. However difficult it may be to find a God-man (for such Beings are rare, unobtrusive in Their humility, and reluctant to declare Themselves by spectacular miracles or court the public limelight), it is nevertheless not impossible to single Him out from the rest. He is a living embodiment of what He teaches; and though appearing poor, He is rich in His poverty:

> *We may seem beggars, but our actions are more than royal.*
>
> SHAMAS TABREZ

He is unattached to worldly objects and is never covetous. He gives His teachings and instructions as a free gift of nature, never seeking anything in return, maintaining Himself by His own labors, and never living on the offerings of others:

Bow not before one who calls himself a Master,
yet lives on the charity of others.
He alone is of the true path who earns his own
livelihood and befriends the needy.

GURU RAM DAS

Further, a genuine Master-soul never sets up any contradictions in our minds; alI the distinctions between faith and faith, creed and creed, vanish at His touch; and the unity of inner experience embodied in the various scriptures stands clearly revealed:

It is only the jeweller's eye that at a glance can
tell the ruby.

BHAI NAND LAL

The one recurrent theme of such a Master's teaching is that, in spite of all the outward distinctions that confuse and confound us, the inner spiritual essence of all religious teachings is the same. Hence, the Masters come not to propagate new creeds or dogmas, but to fulfill the existing Law:

O Nanak, know him to be a perfect Master who
unites all in one fold.

GURU NANAK

If He tries to convert, it is not the outward name and form that He seeks, but the baptism of the spirit within. For Him the inner life is a science that is open to men of all creeds and nations; and whosoever shall take up its disci-

pline, to him shall all things be added.

Thus, it is the inner message that is ever paramount in the teachings of a real Master. He can best interpret the true import of the scriptures; but He speaks not as one who is learned in such matters, but as One Who has Himself experienced what such writings record. He may use the scriptures to convince His listeners that what He teaches is the most ancient truth, yet He Himself is never subject to them and His message moves above the merely intellectual level; it is inspired by the vividness and intensity of direct first-hand experience. "How can we agree," said Kabir to the theoretical pandits, "when I speak from inner experience and you only from bookish learning?" He makes the seeker turn always inward, telling him of the rich treasures within:

Dost thou reckon thyself a puny form,
When within thee the Universe is folded?

ALl

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation,
The kingdom of God is within you.

ST. LUKE

Inviting and persuading him to undertake the discipline that unlocks this treasure He says:

Cleanse thou the rheum from thy head
And breathe the light of God instead.

RUMI

And this discipline, if He be indeed a Perfect Teacher, will focus itself not on Hatha Yoga or other such extreme practices, but on transcendental hearing and seeing,

accompanied by a steady outer purification of one's thoughts and deeds by means of moderation and introspective self-criticism, rather than by torture, austerity, or asceticism. But the most important and least fallible sign of the Satguru is that His teachings will not only always be centered on this inner science, but at the time of initiation, He will be able to give the disciple a definite experience–be it ever so rudimentary–of the Light and Sound within; and when the disciple has learned to rise above body-consciousness, His Radiant Form will appear unsought to guide him onward on the long journey.

The wondrous and luminous form of the Master
only a true Master can make manifest to the spirit.

GURU NANAK

He is a guru in vain who cannot turn the darkness (gu) into light *(ruh).* And Nanak has said, "I will not take my Master at his word until I see with mine own eyes." If he is a genuine teacher, he will never promise salvation that comes only after death. Accordingly, to Him it is always a matter of now and here. One who has not attained liberation in life cannot hope to achieve it after death. Jesus, too, always urged His disciples to master the art of dying daily. A Master will further maintain that spirituality is a science, albeit a subjective one; and that every individual can and must verify its truth in the laboratory of his own body, provided he can create the requisite condition, which is one-pointed concentration. Life is one continuous process which knows no end, though it may assume different aspects at different levels of existence. As one passes helplessly from one plane to another, he is supposed to have died at the plane quitted by the soul; for we have yet no knowledge and much less experience of the life on other planes where one is led by the propelling force of karmic vibrations. It is from this bondage and forced comings and goings that the Master prepares the way to liberation in this

very life by connecting a jiva to the eternal lifelines pervading endlessly through the creation, and gives one an actual foretaste of the higher spiritual regions, provided one is prepared to forsake the flesh for the spirit. "Learn to die, that you may begin to live," exhorted the Master Christian. Blessed is the man who daily prepares himself to die.

Those in whom the eternal Word speaks are delivered from uncertainty; and it is, indeed, the Master's job to make this Word audible in man.

O Nanak! snap all the ties of the world,
Serve the true Master and He shall bestow on thee true riches.

GURBANI

He who has such a Teacher is blessed, indeed, for he has verily made friends with God Himself and found a Companion Who shall not forsake him even to the end of the earth, in this life or after death, and Who shall not cease to guide him until he reaches his final destination and becomes as great and infinite as Himself.

A philosopher's stone at best may turn base metal into gold,
But glory to the Master who can transform the disciple into His own celestial mould.

Whatever one's problems, there is peace and solace in His company; and association with Him gives strength and stimulates inner effort, hence the pressing need for Satsang (association with the True One) for those who have not yet learned to commune with Him on the inner planes.

A seeker must certainly be critical and discriminating in his search for a perfect Master; but having succeeded in finding One (and he who is a genuine seeker will never

fail, such is the Divine decree), what will be the nature of his relationship to Him? Will he continue to be critical of what he is told and observes? Will he continue to test every act of his Teacher with the microscope of his discrimination? To maintain such an attitude, even after having initially ascertained the genuineness of the Perfect One, is to fail to appreciate His greatness and rightly respond to it. To meet such a Soul is to meet One infinitely greater than oneself, and to know Him to be One with God is to be humbled and full of awe. To judge Him by one's limited faculties is to attempt to hold the ocean in a test tube, for He is moved by reasons that we can never comprehend.

He who can appreciate the blessing of being taken into the fold of the Satguru or the *murshid-i-kami* will forever sing of His Grace, Beauty, and Perfect Love:

If the beautiful One were to take my wandering
soul under his wing, I would sacrifice all empires
for the lovely mole on his face.

HAFIZ

He will never question the actions of his Master, even if he fails to understand them, for he knows that even:

If Khizr did wreck the vessel on the sea
Yet in this wrong there are a thousand rights.

RUMI

He will have to develop the faith of a child who, having trusted himself to a loving hand, moves as directed, never questioning anything:

. . . whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of
God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

ST. LUKE

Even if he asks thee to dye the seat of worship with wine, be not scandalized, but do it,
For He who is thy Guide knows well the journey and its stages.

RUMI

The cryptic words of the God-man very often baffle human understanding. His behests, at times, may apparently sound contrary to the scriptural texts or ethical injunctions; but in reality they are not. One should follow them in full faith, and in due time their true significance will be revealed.

And like the child's should be the devotee's love, full of humility and simplicity. The purity of its flame alone shall burn away the dross of the world:

Kindle the fire of love and burn all things,
Then set thy foot unto the land of the lovers.

BAHA 'U' LLAH

Weld into one the vessel, which is now fragmented into a thousand parts, so that it may be fit to contain the light of God. It is the link between the seeker and his Friend, and through Him, between the seeker and the Absolute. How can one love the Nameless and Formless but through Him, Who is His true embodiment, for as the Lord revealed to Mohammed:

I dwell neither high nor low, neither in the sky nor on the earth, nor even in paradise,
O beloved, believe me, strange as it may seem,
I dwell in the heart of the faithful and it is there that I may be found.

RUMI

On this mystic path reasoning is the help, but reason-

ing is also the hindrance. Love alone can bridge the gulf, span the chasm, and knit the finite to the Infinite, the mortal to the Immortal, the relative to the Absolute. Such Love is not of this world nor of this flesh. It is the call of soul unto soul, of like unto like, the purgatory and the paradise. Who shall describe its ecstasy?

Speak not of Leila's or of Majnun's woe
Thy love hath put to naught the loves of long ago.

SAADI

Live free of love for its very peace is anguish.

ARABIAN POEM

A million speak of love, yet how few know,
True love is not to lose remembrance even for an instant.

KABIR

Indeed, it is the quality of ceaseless remembrance that is of the essence of love. He who remembers in such fashion must need to live in perpetual remembrance of his Beloved's commandments and in perpetual obedience. Such Love burns in its fire the dross of the ego, the little self is forgotten, and the lover surrenders his individuality at the altar of his Beloved:

If thou wouldst journey on the road of love,
First learn to humble thyself unto dust.

ANSARI OF HERAT

Love grows not in the field and is not sold in the market,
Whosoever would have it, whether king or beggar, must pay with his life.

Carry your head upon your palm as an offering,
If you would step into the Wonderland of love.

KABIR

Again:

Accursed be the life wherein one finds not love for the Lord;
Give your heart to His servant for He shall take you to Him.

Such self-surrender is only a prelude to the inheriting of a larger and purer Self than we otherwise know, for such is the potency of Its magic that whosoever shall knock at Its door shall be transformed into Its own color:

A lover becomes the Beloved–such is the alchemy of his love;
God Himself is jealous of such a Beloved.

DADU

Calling on Ranjha, I myself become one with him.

BULLEH SHAH

It is of such a love that Lord Krishna spoke in the Gita, and of such a love that St. Paul preached to his listeners:

I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

ST. PAUL

It is of this that the Sufis speak when they talk of *fana-*

fil -sheikh (annihilation in the Master):

The vast expanse of myself is so filled to overflowing with the fragrance of the Lord that the very thought of myself has completely vanished.

It is of this that the Christian mystics declare when they stress the necessity of "Death in Christ." Without such self surrender, learning by itself can be of little avail:

Learning is only a child of the scriptures,
It is love that is their mother.

PERSIAN POEM

The world is lost in reading scriptures, yet never comes to knowledge,
But one who knows a jot of love, to him all is revealed.

KABIR

Such Love alone is the key to the Inner Kingdom:

He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.

ST. JOHN

The secret of God's mysteries is love.

RUMI

By love may He be gotten and holden,
but by thought never.

THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING

Verily, verily I say unto thee, that only they that have loved have reached the Lord.

GOBIND SINGH

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

ST. JOHN

We love him, because he first loved us.

ST. JOHN

This relationship of love between the Satguru and His shishya, the Godman and His disciple, covers many phases and many developments. It begins with respect for one knowing more than oneself. As the disciple begins to appreciate the Master's disinterested solicitude for his welfare and progress, his feelings begin to soften with the dew of love; and he begins to develop faith, obedience and reverence. With greater obedience and faith comes greater effort, and with greater effort comes greater affection from the Master. Effort and grace go hand in hand; and each, in turn, helps in development of the other. Like the mother's love for her children is the love of the Divine Shepherd for His flock. It does not discriminate between the deserving and the undeserving; but like the mother, the depths and treasures of His Love are unlocked only to those who respond and return His Love:

He is with all alike, yet each gets his share according to his own desserts.

GURU AMAR DAS

With his greater effort and the greater grace from the Master, the disciple makes increased headway in his inner sadhnas, leading finally to complete transcendence of bodily consciousness. When this transcendence has been achieved, he beholds his Guru waiting in His Radiant Form to receive and guide his spirit on the inner planes. Now for the first time, he beholds Him in His true glory, and real-

izes the unfathomable dimensions of His greatness. Henceforth, he knows Him to be more than human, and his heart overflows with songs of praise and humble devotion. The higher he ascends in his spiritual journey, the more insistent is he in his praise; for the more intensely does he realize that He Whom he once took to be a friend is not merely a friend, but God Himself come down to raise him up to Himself. This bond of Love, with its development by degrees, becomes the mirror of his inward progress, moving as it does, from the finite to the Infinite:

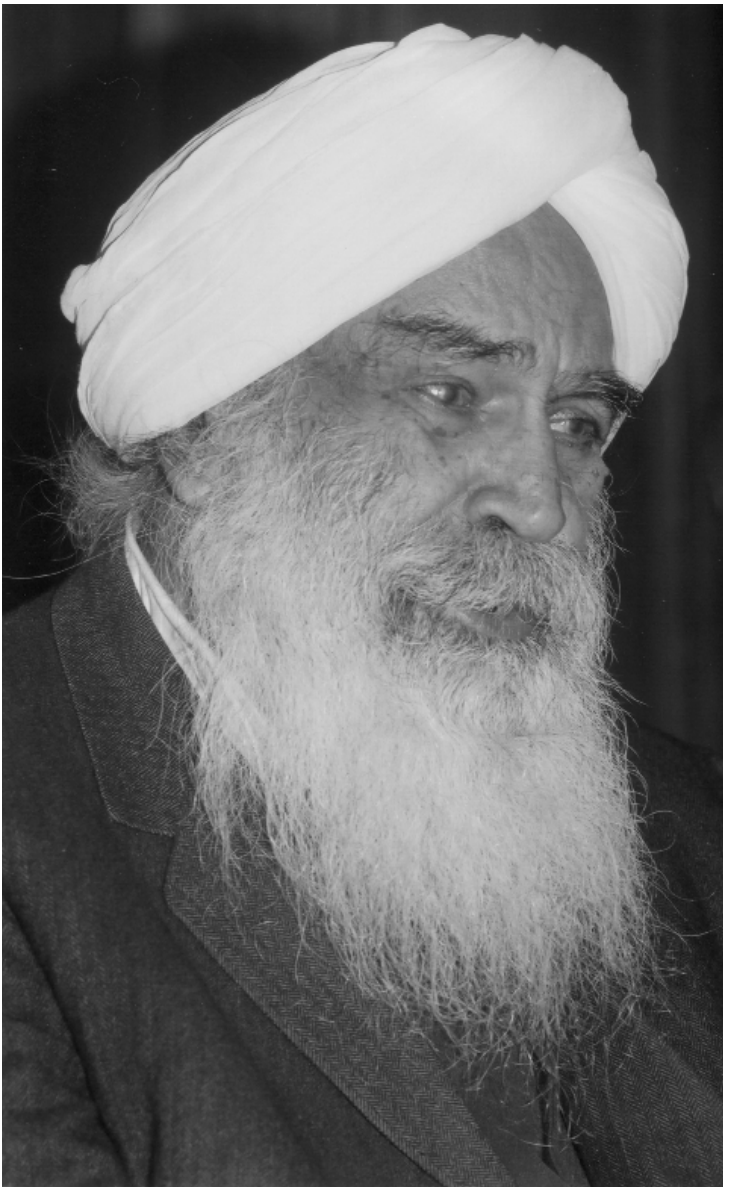
Love begins in the flesh and ends in the spirit.

ST. BERNARD

At its initial phase, it may find analogies in earthly love, that between the parent and the child, friend and friend, lover and beloved, teacher and pupil; but once it has reached the point where the disciple discovers His Teacher in His Luminous Glory within himself, all analogies are shattered and all comparisons forever left behind; all that remains is a gesture, and then silence:

Let us write some other way
Love's secrets—better so.
Leave blood and noise and all of these
And speak no more of Shamas Tabrez.

RUMI



A Brief Life Sketch
of
Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj

A BRIEF LIFE SKETCH
OF
HIS HOLINESS SANT KIRPAL SINGH JI MAHARAJ

THE EARLY YEARS

The man who was destined to become a Master of the highest grade was born on February 6th, 1894, at Sayyad Kasaran, a village in the Rawalpindi District of India. The child was christened "Kirpal," meaning the "Gracious One," an apt and prophetic name for One Who was to become filled with the Grace of the Supreme Being. When a Saint comes into incarnation, even the names of His parents have bearing upon His destiny. The father of Kirpal Singh was named S. Hukam Singh—"the bearer of the Divine Will—and his mother's name was Gulab Devi—"the Goddess of Roses." Appropriate appellations for such privileged parents, He Who was destined to manifest the Divine Will would carry His Spirituality as the fragrance of rose is carried in the blossom.

Kirpal Singh manifested the Gifts of Spirituality from an early age. Even at the age of four He had evolved a technique of meditation and would be lost in His own inner spiritual travels, while other children around would be playing together. At certain times this inner spiritual vision would cease, and for two or three months the child would feel restless and fretful. Then these transports of the soul

would commence once again, and the young Kirpal would be immersed in rapt contemplation of the glories of the higher world.

Intuitively, He knew that absolute purity was a prerequisite of the ability to ascend to the highest planes of being. In order to keep His physical vehicles untainted by flesh-eating, He maintained a strict vegetarian diet, even in the face of repeated requests to eat meat "for His own good" from His father. To such entreaties He would quietly reply that He would not make a "burial ground" of His body.

His childhood experience was one of miracles and visions. He would report the impending demise of relatives and friends even when far away from them. He had the gifts of transvision and clairvoyance, and would report distant events as they happened. None of these things pleased or satisfied Him, however, and He entreated God, in His prayers, that He should be normal as other men. As the spiritual preceptor of many people in the East and West today, He places an emphasis on living a normal life in the society and the environment in which one is born. He warns His disciples not to seek psychic gifts or occult powers. In consonance with the teachings of the Nazarene, He states, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and all these things will be added unto ye!" He stresses obedience to God and surrender to His Will.

At the age of twelve, He was reading a book on the life of Ramanuja, a classical Indian Saint. It recorded that immediately after Ramanuja received His initiation, He called the people of the town to Him and told them that He would divulge all the knowledge that His Master had bestowed upon Him. A bystander remonstrated with Him for His foolishness and told Him that He would go to hell if He disregarded the instructions of His Master to keep this initiatory knowledge secret. Ramanuja replied that He would not mind going to hell if His actions thereby saved

the assembled people.

The youthful Kirpal was deeply affected by this simple story. That its message was a prelude to His later liberality in bestowing the gift of spiritual initiation on so many people throughout the world was patently obvious. In spite of the heavy burden that the mechanics of conveying initiation to all and sundry, who truly desired it, brought to the organism of the Master, Kirpal Singh seldom refused a plea from the heart; and such a refusal was made only when the Master was fully certain that the time was not ripe. He has been described as "bestowing the Gifts of God with both hands extended," and this has proved a truly apt description of His ministry of love and compassion.

As a schoolboy, He impressed a visiting bishop with His ready desire for the wisdom and knowledge of God. The dignitary of the Church prophesied a remarkable future for the young Kirpal. Across the span of years Kirpal Singh was to bring the inner essence of the Gospel of Christ to many clerics, priests, ministers, and high dignitaries of numerous Christian denominations. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of Light," is an oft-expressed truism from the New Testament. Only a Master of the highest grade can truly show how "the eye can be single" and reveal the Kingdom of God. Kirpal Singh was such a Master.

At the age of fifteen Kirpal Singh was invited to attend the inner circle of a group of metaphysical students who followed certain lines of thought. When the leader of the group had finished discoursing on the practical values in physical life, Kirpal inquired as to what became of the soul after death. The leader replied that the soul remained after the body’s disintegration but, eventually, it also disintegrated and became extinct. Kirpal, in gentle and clear tone, informed the leader and the group that the soul did not disintegrate but, in fact, assumed a more etherial and refined

form. Few people, He told them, had any idea of the subtle and spiritual nature of the human soul. Such was the wisdom of a child destined to become a great Saint.

A few years later the young man, brilliant in intellect and with great creative gifts, was faced with the choice of worldly fortune or self-knowledge and God-realization. He chose God. Throughout His life He would teach that the highest purpose of man is to know God. "We develop physically and intellectually, but of our own true self we know nothing," He constantly stated. "Yet only by developing spiritually will we find true happiness. Spirituality—knowing the self and knowing God—is the only hope for the world. Once we have attained this realization, then, we will truly know that we are the children of God."

As a child He refused to be drawn into feuds between His close relatives and other people, even when asked to do so in the name of "family loyalty." "Your friends will be my friends," He once informed a senior member of His family; "but it is not necessary that your foes be my foes, as your enmities may be based on misunderstandings. I have not come to have enmities and hatreds; I have come to love all mankind."

Years later in the great city of Chicago, He was to echo these early ideals at a crowded public meeting. "The answer to religious prejudice and the conflict between man and man is not less religion," He told the audience, "but more and yet more religion. The more one truly enters religious thought, the more universal it appears to one. Religion in its essence is not a means for dividing man from man; but, by its very meaning, is a mode for binding him back to his Source: God! The ethics of religion is not based on hatred but on love; and it is on non-violence and disciplined righteous living that it bases the search for God within this human temple, for God dwells within us all."

And again He affirmed: "He who claims to love the invisible God and yet has no regard for his visible brother is lost in the deepest error. To love and revere our fellowmen is to love and revere God." In the Western world He has constantly proclaimed the same lesson by pointing to the Judeo-Christian scriptures. "Love thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy strength, and with all thy soul. And since God resides in every heart, love thy neighbor as thyself. These living Truths of the Oneness of God and the Oneness of humanity must be revived in this day and age."

Kirpal Singh always stressed the need for performing selfless service to others. After the first World War, during epidemics of influenza and bubonic plague, He organized a Social Service Corps and fearlessly attended the sick and the helpless in the hour of their need. With no thought of His own safety or comfort, He would administer medicine at all hours of the day and night, consoling the afflicted ones in their pain and suffering.

During His early life Kirpal Singh met many spiritual teachers and yogic practitioners. He held all these in deference and respect, but knew that He Himself would have to seek a Satguru—or spiritual teacher of the highest grade—in order to fulfill His own destiny. At the age of eighteen, He met a Muslim fakir who was gifted with certain occult powers. While sitting on the ground, this fakir would levitate himself until he was raised three feet above the ground and would stay in that position for some time. He was an aloof and unapproachable man, but he immediately recognized some of the inherent greatness of Kirpal Singh and informed Him that He could be his constant companion if He so wished.

Three years later, Kirpal Singh was visiting Dera Ismail Khan, a district in the North Western Frontier Province, now a part of Pakistan. A friend informed Him

that a very learned person had arrived at the town and expounded the scriptures of the Sikh faith—the Holy Granth—with great wisdom and competence. When Kirpal Singh inquired what yardstick his friend used for establishing the correctness of the learned gentleman's interpretations, his friend replied, "The learned man takes a verse from the Holy Granth and interprets it in five or six different ways." Kirpal Singh shook His head. If the learned man gives more than one interpretation of one verse, then I am certain that all his interpretations cannot be correct," He asserted, "for he himself is not certain of the correct interpretation. Master-Saints always describe Reality, which They have experienced and analyzed. They experience this Reality in definite terms and all Their scriptural verses refer to the one true aspect of that which They have seen. This learned man, who gives so many different interpretations, has neither analyzed himself nor experienced the sublime reality. Consequently, he is floundering in the dark and misleading both himself and his audience."

Often in later years Kirpal Singh would be called upon to clarify the teachings of the world religions. Once, whilst at work in His office, He asked a young Christian colleague if he could tell Him the significance behind ringing the bell in Christian churches. The young man was nonplussed and later sought clarification from the Bishop of Lahore. The Bishop told him that bells were rung in order to call the people to worship. Kirpal Singh listened to this answer and then informed the young Christian that bells were also used in the temples of other faiths. In Hindu shrines a devotee has to ring a number of bells before offering his obeisance. In fact, the chiming of bells is the first significant sound that one hears when traversing the inner planes of life. The bells and gongs in churches and temples are but symbols of the inner spiritual sounds and lead the devotee to remembrance and dedication to the inner life.

The abstract, spiritual sound has been mentioned by all the Masters of the past. Moses heard the Divine Sound when he stood alone on Mount Sinai. Christ heard It when His Supreme Father manifested to Him in the desert wilderness. The same supernal sound is portrayed as the flute of Lord Krishna. The Lord Shiva, whilst in deep spiritual contemplation in His Himalayan cave, heard the same Sound. The true Masters can give Their disciples the experience of this Sound. Few were vouchsafed the experience in the past, but times change and many receive today what used to be considered a highly esoteric experience for a small band of advanced devotees. The Gift is indeed bestowed with both hands extended.

To reach the supreme Goal in one lifetime is beyond the punny efforts of mortal man, unless he has the good fortune of meeting a Spiritual Preceptor of the highest grade, a Living Master. This may appear a dogmatic assertion, for some will say that all paths lead to God. This may or may not be true, but few people could give a definite assurance one way or the other. Many profess and proclaim God and denounce atheism and agnosticism. But how many of these who preach and teach know the living *Reality* of God? Can one call oneself a true theist, if one has not truly experienced God? Clergymen and priests often refer to the "Holy Ghost" or the "Word" of God, and the essential meaning of these words which have such important bearing on the lives of all men have been grossly misinterpreted. The "Word," "Holy Ghost," or the "Word" of "God-in-action Power" is the Sound Current or the Audible Life Stream in which all life and creation came into being. It is the divine motivating Power behind the entire creation. It is the Source of all Truth, all Wisdom, all Reality. It is the Essence of God.

All religious scriptures refer to this "Word." The Vedas call It Sruti or *Akash Bani;* the Upanishads term IT as *Udgit;* the Hindus know It as *Naad;* Moslems refer to It as

Kalma; the Sikh scriptures call It Shabd or *Bani.* In the terminology of the Master-Saints, It is known as *Nam* or *Shabad.* Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society, referred to this sublime "Word" in "The Voice of the Silence," her most meaningful and esoteric book. The "Word" can be heard only in the silence of the soul, and this technique of "inner hearing" can be given only by a competent Master of the highest order. Kirpal Singh, Who had conversed with so many religious, yogic, and spiritual teachers, knew that very few of them possessed the Great Secret. He had to find His Living Master.

From an early age He prayed to God to lead Him to the feet of His spiritual preceptor: His Satguru. It is a fact that if the desire is true and the search tireless, constant and unceasing, the Supreme One will not fail the seeker. In 1917, seven years before Their physical meeting, Kirpal Singh began to see the radiant form of His Satguru, Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, in His meditations. At first Kirpal Singh was under the impression that the Radiant Being Who visited Him on the inner planes was Guru Nanak, founder of the great Sikh religion, Who lived in India from A.D. 1469 until 1539.

God moves in mysterious ways; and in 1924, when He was visiting the small village of Beas in the Punjab, a stranger stopped Him and asked Him if He was going to visit the Saint of Beas. Acting on the man’s directions, He accordingly made His way to the holy man’s residence in order to pay His respects. To His amazement He beheld the same exalted Personage that He was accustomed to meeting on the inner planes. "Why has Your Holiness taken so long in guiding me to Your feet?" He cried, bowing low before the white-bearded Saint. "This is the opportune moment for our physical meeting," answered Baba Sawan Singh; and smiling benevolently upon the rejoicing Kirpal, He made Him sit with Him. Kirpal Singh had found His Living Master.

THE MISSION UNFOLDED

In the terrible days which followed the partition of the country in 1947, Baba Sawan Singh Ji asked Kirpal Singh to take care of all those who were fleeing from religious persecution. Following the instructions of the Master to the letter is the hallmark of a true disciple. Kirpal Singh was entrusted with the task of escorting about a hundred Muslims, who had taken shelter in the Dera for safety. He accordingly arranged a number of motor vehicles to carry them to Beas railway station where they would set off for Pakistan. On the way to the station, the vehicles were stopped by a terrifying band of Akalis who brandished their swords at the refugees and threatened to exterminate them. The vehicles immediately returned to the Dera and the terrified refugees reported that the enraged Akalis had followed them with the avowed purpose of attacking them and wiping them out.

Kirpal Singh was in the process of conducting Satsang (Spiritual discourse), but He entrusted this to another fellow disciple and set forth alone to meet the oncoming Akalis. He was faced by an armed mob who had been whipped up to a mad fury by the emotional oratory of fanatical bigots. As they came towards Him, menancing Him with their swords, Kirpal Singh stood His ground and explained that the honor of the Khalsa—the Pure Ones, esteemed in the Akali religious faith—lay in safeguarding those who were in distress and sought protection at Their hands. Their Muslim brethren had come to them for protection, and it would be a terrible sacrilege if they were slaughtered.

Some of the aged Akali leaders of the armed band were deeply moved and ashamed of their actions when they heard these words. "We are grateful to you," they cried. "You have saved our honor from being sullied. You have preserved our Dharma. You can send the refugees forth,

and we will not molest them any more." Kirpal Singh went back into the Dera and instructed the Muslims to re-embark on the vehicles. As the motor vehicles came through the gates of the Dera, He ordered the drivers to stop where the Akalis were congregated." Brothers, these people have lived with us for a long time, sharing our joys and sorrows," He told them. "Now, in this changed atmosphere of mistrust, they are leaving their beloved homes and hearths in fear of their lives. It would be wonderful if you were to embrace them before they leave you for good."

This impassioned plea for love and compassion was listened to in complete silence. When Kirpal Singh had finished speaking, the Akalis surrounded the vehicles and then began embracing the Muslims, weeping and commiserating at their mutual sadness. This incredible change of heart in a hate-ridden mob was created through the spiritual alchemy of Love, channeled as it was through the medium of a truly God-realized man.

Sixteen years later, Kirpal Singh was to extend this subtle spiritual influence of Love, manifesting as the will-to-Peace, in the atmosphere of tension prevailing in modern Europe. In West Germany and in Greece certain political disturbances were rising to the surface. Any localized spark could lead to global conflagration. Without entering into the area of partisan politics, Kirpal Singh brought the same message to the political heads as He did to the war-like Akalis. The environment, country, and language were different, but the essential message was the same.

On the morning of December 12, 1947, Baba Sawan Singh called for His beloved disciple and informed Him of the next stage in the Great Work. "Kirpal Singh, I have allotted all other work," He told his spiritual successor, "but I have not yet entrusted the task of bestowing Naam—initiation into the mystic experience—to anyone. This task I confer on you today, so that this holy and sacred science

may flourish throughout the World." Two months later, after having inquired of the number of persons initiated by Him, He told Kirpal Singh that half of His mission had been completed. The rest, He, Kirpal Singh, would have to accomplish; I have done half of your work," said the Great Master solemnly. Kirpal Singh pledged that He would complete this mission under His Master's Divine Protection.

Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj guided His spiritual successor, Kirpal Singh, along the path of His great destiny.... "Kirpal Singh — I have raised tender saplings by sowing the seed of the Holy Word," the Master told His Beloved Disciple. "It will now be your duty to nourish them with the Waters of Spirituality and lead them to higher spiritual regions within." Kirpal Singh bowed His head in homage to His Satguru. "Master," He replied solemnly, "I shall certainly act as a channel for Your Divine Benediction, and pass on whatever amount of the Waters of Life You send from above; for mere channels without water can do nothing of themselves alone." Such is the humility of a True Disciple.

On April 2, 1948, after a lifetime spent in the service of God and suffering humanity, the Great Master Baba Sawan Singh passed from the physical world. Before His final departure, the Great Master gazed steadily into the eyes of His Spiritual Successor for several minutes. Kirpal Singh experienced a supernal wonderment and an indescribable vibration of Holiness which suffused the very cells of His body. Bowing His head in solemn adoration, Kirpal Singh stood before the luminous, Love-filled Form of His great Spiritual Preceptor. "It is all Master's own benignity," He said. Baba Sawan Singh gazed at Him for three or four minutes more, and then closed His eyes forever, leaving His physical frame the following day.

THE GREAT WORK

After the passing away of Baba Sawan Singh, Sant Kirpal Singh decided to go into seclusion for a time, in order to meditate and prepare Himself for the tremendous task allotted to Him by His Master. At such places as Rishi Kesh, in the Himalayan foothills, He contemplated the vast Spiritual Purpose before Him. This area abounds with Sadhus—or holy men—and one particular Sadhu, who was known for his aloofness and pride, surprised his disciples by rising from his seat and going forward to greet Sant Kirpal Singh, embracing Him warmly and welcoming Him to that holy place. His disciples were astounded at the unexpected courtesy that their teacher, the Sadhu, had displayed. The Sadhu, whose inner vision was highly developed, had recognized the Spiritual Giant Who walked in their midst.

After dwelling in the lonely places, in the plains, in the forests, and on the secluded banks of the mighty Ganges, Sant Kirpal Singh started working for the Super-Human Mission assigned to Him by His Great Master. He outlined the initial stages of this Great Work to His followers. His Master, Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, had always expressed the desire to form a common forum or platform for Spirituality, at which all people, although professing different faiths and religious beliefs, would be given the Principles of Spirituality and encouraged to practice spiritual discipline, thereby gaining peace and salvation here and in the hereafter.

And so, at the behest of His Master, Sant Kirpal Singh founded Ruhani Satsang, as a college of Spirituality, by the end of 1948 and established it in 1951 when the ashram—spiritual center—was built in Gur Mandi, Delhi. All seekers after Truth can receive the benefit of first-hand experience of Spirituality at this haven of the soul. No distinctions of caste, creed, nationality, color or sex operated in

this ashram. It was created in order to teach the true values of life, the everlasting and unchanging nature of the soul as set against the ever-changing panorama of sentient existence. The higher values of life and the supremacy of the spirit are taught here: the need for humility, chastity, abstinence, continence, and loving selfless service to humanity.

The ashram was named "Sawan Ashram" in memory of the Beloved Master, Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj. Sant Kirpal Singh, in a beautiful and symbolic act of deference to His Master, laid the foundation stone of Sawan Ashram with the Holy Dust taken from the threshold of Baba Sawan Singh's home. The Spiritual Center was built as a labor of love, the Master, Kirpal Singh Ji, sharing the physical tasks with His devotees. Sawan Ashram was started on June 11, 1951 and completed on July 26 that year (a day before the birth anniversary of Baba Sawan Singh Ji, which was to be celebrated on July 27). This Ashram was to be dedicated to the sole objective of presenting Spirituality to mankind in general. This presentation would be of a purely scientific nature, shorn of all rituals or ceremonies. With its inception, Sawan Ashram has been a focal point of light in a darkened world, a magnetic center which has drawn seekers after Truth from all corners of this planet of pain.

Many years before the creation of Sawan Ashram, Sant Kirpal Singh had been told by Baba Sawan Singh Ji that His great work would be extended throughout the world. He prophesied that Kirpal Singh would one day address huge congregations in Europe and America, and that He would be received by the great leaders—social, religious and political of the world. His message would be heard by all, great and small, and that His task would be even more dramatic than previous missions of the past Masters. Thus, four years after the building of Sawan Ashram, He commenced His first Western tour. He travelled throughout the United States of America, and visited England and Germany. One of the most astounding results of His talks

in churches, schools, and universities was that learned clerics and theological scholars came to Him and admitted that they had only then understood the words of the Holy Bible for the first time in their lives.

At times some dogmatic members of the Christian faith would assert that Christ was the greatest of all Masters. Master Kirpal Singh would ask them how they arrived at this conclusion. They would answer that Christ had declared His Spiritual Supremacy in the following statement, "I am the Son of God. I and my Father are One." Master Kirpal Singh would inform them that this statement was perfectly correct. But that their own interpretation of this assertion was based only on one particular scripture. If they had studied the writings of other faiths, they would discover that other Masters, too, had claimed the same high status:

"*I simply expound that which my Beloved ordains me to do."*

GURU NANAK

"*I speak nothing on my own except what I am bidden to utter."*

GURU NANAK

"The Son is dyed in the same color as that of the Father.

GURU ARJUN

"The Father and the Son work in unison"

GURU ARJUN

When the Masters refer to "the only begotten Son of God," They do not mean a physical Personality, however exalted that Personality may be. A true Master has progressed beyond the mind-borne, emotion-controlled, physical personality. Word was the only begotten Son of the

Wordless. It was made flesh and dwelt amongst us from time to time. The Eternal Word speaks through the liberated Saint, Christ—as the Eternal Word existed long before Jesus the man, and It is the Eternal Life Current which emanates from the Supreme Father. Each one of the liberated Masters is truly "the only begotten Son of God," for it is the same Word–or Christ-Power—which speaks through Them all, even though They are each using a different human Personality.

On several occasions during this American tour, Master Kirpal Singh spoke to groups of scientists and scientific organizations. Some of the scientists pressed doubts as to the potential effectiveness of the Science of the Soul as a panacea for modern man's conflicts. "You have succeeded in generating energy and harnessing it in so many ways in the service of mankind," He told them. "You are planning space flights in order to discover new facts about other planets and the outer cosmic forces. But you should know that behind all force and energy there is a Power known as *Consciousness* that directs everything and keeps nature moving in its multifarious forms. Can you produce an ounce of this consciousness—the Life-impulse vibrating throughout the Universe—in the various grades of living creatures?"

"You have uncovered the secrets of atomic energy, energy generated by nuclear fission. What have you found on splitting an atom? Sound and motion in the component electrons and neutrons, and that motion is not haphazard, but is rhythmic and regular. The various constituents of an atom, as they move and vibrate, give out inherent musical tone and subtle light. This tonal light is the Power of God which underlies all creation. Man has not sufficient knowledge of this or else he would not have devised the means of his own destruction. This fiery Sound then is All-Consciousness, working within each one of us, and it can be contacted by the assistance of a truly competent Master.

Such a Master, having revealed this Sounding-Light within Himself, may be able to pass the science of this revelation unto others. The Shabd or Celestial Music— which sounds through the entire universe, and is the support thereof—is also within us all and can be consciously experienced through the grace of a Living Master."

At the town of Louisville in Kentucky, Master Kirpal Singh was invited to speak at the University Hall on how the international relations could be cemented. A large audience had assembled, many people having to be seated outside the hall. After Master Kirpal Singh had finished His address, Dr. Brodsche, the Head of the Department of International Relations, told the audience that such like Personalities were required in their University, and requested the Master to visit his department. The Master accompanied Dr. Brodsche to an adjoining anteroom where there was a gathering of students from all over the world. The students bombarded the Master with many questions relating to the efficacy of spiritual discipline, the bringing of peace into the world, and the cementing of right human relations. All these questions were answered to their entire satisfaction; and when asked if they had further questions, there was absolute silence. Deeply affected by the atmosphere of reverence in the room, Dr. Brodsche spoke in subdued and deferential tones, "Lord Buddha has come and all is Nirvana now."

Speaking at a church in England during His 1955 tour, Master Kirpal Singh informed the congregation that it was far more important to pay attention to the human body temple rather than to raise up new temples of bricks and mortar. "God dwelleth not in temples made with the hands," He quoted from the Old Testament. Then, citing the words of Saint Paul, He declared, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth within you." Many people in the West asked Him if He was going to build new temples and special ashrams

for the purpose of propounding His teachings. He replied that the real temple is the human body, and the whole world—with the earth below and the heavens above—is the temple of God, for He is everywhere. He had come to make people realize this Truth which they had forgotten. He was not after making any special ashram or temple. If the disciple saw Reality with the inner eye, he would perceive that the true Temple of God was within him.

He undertook two more world tours in 1963-64 and in 1972-73. During His travels He conferred with Pope Paul VI while in Rome, with Royalty, with diplomats, and with high government officers in scores of nations. Thousands of sincere souls seeking Spiritual enlightment benefited immensely from His holy presence in the West. Despite His old age, He underwent the physical hardships required by the extensive tours—for the spiritual welfare of the suffering humanity. Through His Spiritual discourses and the meditation sittings He gave to sincere seekers, so many people derived benefit from His Divine Grace.

World Fellowship of Religions

Master Kirpal Singh cherished a vision of a common forum where representatives of all religions could meet together and discuss the essence of Eternal Truth and the practical means of uniting all mankind in peace and goodwill. It was ever His aim to foster such a forum; and He affirmed that men of goodwill would support such a common endeavor in spite of their seeming differences in social conduct, rituals, and modes of worship. This inspired vision first took shape in 1935 whilst He was compiling the magnum opus, *Gurmat Sidhant,* a monumental textbook on Spirituality which was published in the name of the Great Master Baba Sawan Singh. He envisaged that there would one day be a unified religion, based upon the ageless tenets of spiritual science; and He referred to this concept in His Great Work. Baba Sawan Singh not only

endorsed this visionary idea, but gave it His full blessings.

The initial stage of bringing this vision into objective reality was the creation of Ruhani Satsang, a college of Spirituality. The second stage, to be effected on the wider social level, was brought into being during the first Conference of World Religions. This Conference was organized under the able sponsorship of the great Jain leader, Muni Sushil Kumar Ji. The Conference was attended by delegates from many parts of the world: U.S.A., U.S.S.R., U.K, France, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Spain, Israel, Iran, Arabia, Africa, Pakistan, Nepal, Ceylon, Tibet, Burma, Cambodia, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and India. Master Kirpal Singh was unanimously elected as Chairman of the Committee set up to create the World Fellowship of Religions. The Constitution for the World Fellowship of Religions was drawn up under His guidance.

Manav-Kendra (Man-Center)

The first of these centers was established under the Master's care near Dehradun in Northern India, and more were planned. These centers are in furtherance of the activities of Ruhani Satsang. The aims of Manav-Kendra—to be achieved through Man-Making, Man-Service, and Land-Service—are God-realization, practice of the universal brotherhood of man, helping the needy, and to get from the mother-earth ample means of sustenance.

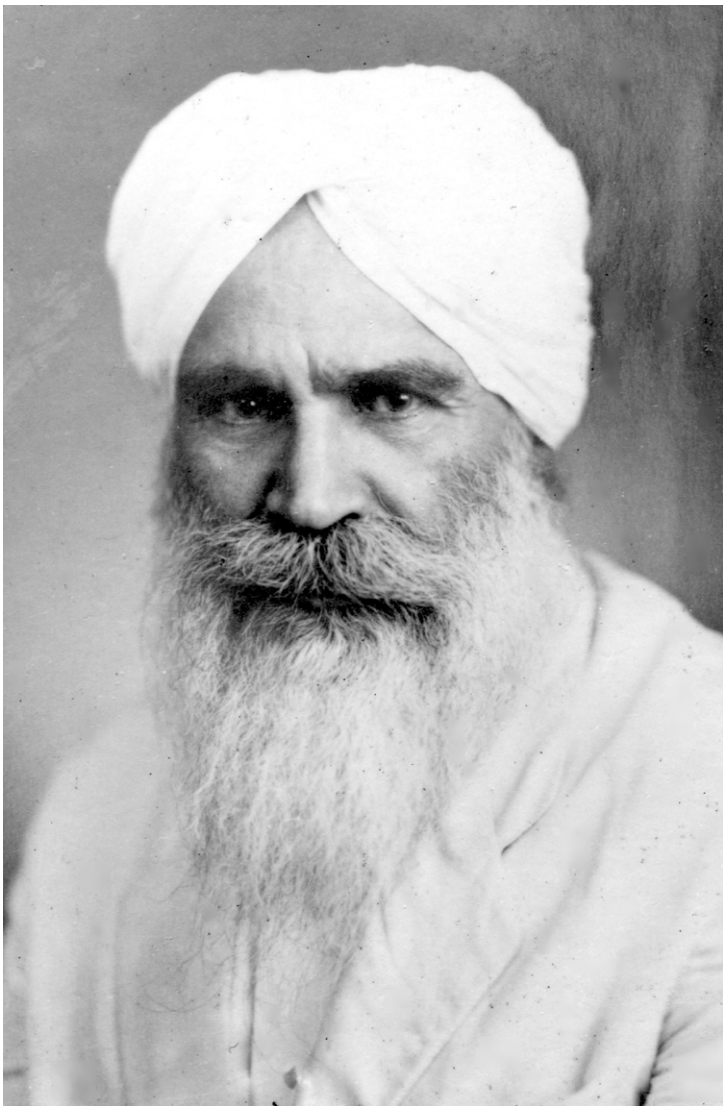
World Conference of Unity of Man

The Master, by His example and no less by His sweet exhortations, exerted day and night to bring about world unity through His teachings of "the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God" and through His universal Love. An inter-religious World Conference of the Unity of

Man was held in Delhi on February 3, 4, 5 and 6, 1974, under the sponsorship of the Master. People from all over the world and representing different faiths and beliefs came together on one common platform. While conferences at the level of particular religions have been held many times and at many places, this was the only time in modern history that men had been put together at the level of MAN—no labels interfering. The conference was a tremendous success from every point of view.

Cardinal Principle of the Word

The Great Work of the Living Master is founded on the Cardinal Principle of the Word. The Divine Melody is the living, pulsating current which connects the disciple to the Supreme One through the Grace of the Master. This Sound Current—the true Path of the Masters—takes the disciple through the higher planes of being, stage by stage, until the highest goal is reached, viz., Union with God. The life and mission of His Holiness, Satguru Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, was the living dramatization of this Great Work which has been the basic teachings of all religions.



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