

February 2015

Spiritual Link

Science of the Soul Research Centre

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Spiritual Link

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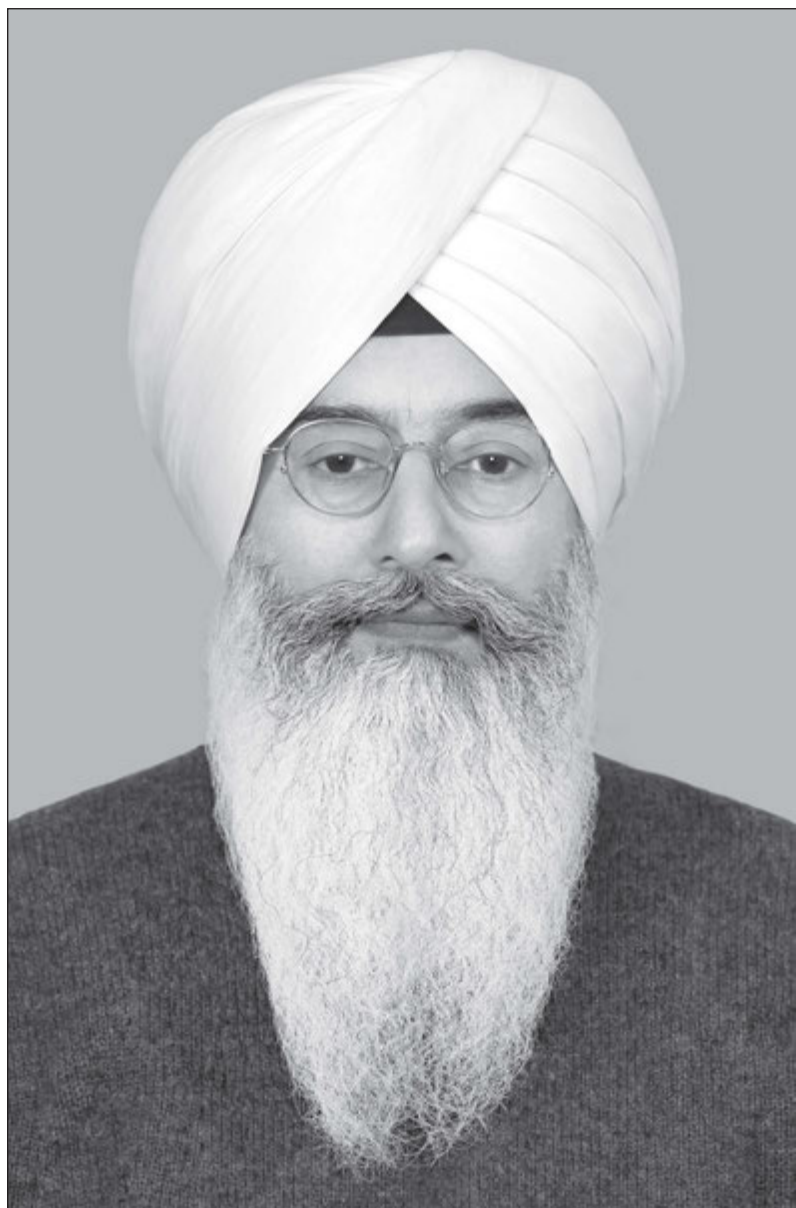
Yours Affectionately

The Lord's gate is open to all. He loves to meet us even more than we can possibly long to meet him. It is he who creates in our hearts the desire to meet him.

The Sant Mat programme is very simple: One merely abstains from animal food, alcoholic drinks and other bad habits, endeavours to lead a pure and chaste life, and gives two and a half hours daily to meditation in the way which is taught at the time of initiation.

The feeling of loneliness that you experience is, in fact, a blessing in disguise. In the life of everyone there comes a time when he feels and realizes that there is none in this world whom he can call his own. Throughout our life, we select different people and try to make them our own, but after some time we realize that something is still missing. In the end, our experience tells us that all these loves are selfish – one is always demanding something from the other. This feeling of loneliness will vanish only when our soul returns to its source, the Lord himself. As a matter of fact, this feeling is the outcome of the thirst of the soul for its Lord, and should be welcomed. If correctly employed, it will lead our footsteps to the palace of the Lord.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Quest for Light*



All that Matters

Like moths attracted to a flame, genuine seekers of the truth find themselves at the feet of a true Master. And when the Master in all his mercy and grace ignites that divine spark, it paves the beginning of the soul's journey back to its source.

Until the ultimate destination is reached, casual observation tells us that most practitioners of Sant Mat come to the path while leading normal lives. Many have families and loved ones, with responsibilities and duties to fulfil. They have businesses to run, jobs and careers to attend to – all the while working hard to make ends meet. For rest and relaxation, it is not uncommon to pursue some hobby, take a holiday, or visit the Dera to listen to inspiring discourses by the Master and get spiritually re-charged.

To achieve a balance between their spiritual objectives and worldly responsibilities, disciples focus on adhering to the principles of Sant Mat. They strengthen their faith by attending satsang regularly and maintaining a 'support-group' type fellowship with other initiates.

However, the Masters always emphasize that there is no substitute for meditation; spiritual practice cannot be replaced by anything – neither by good deeds and social work nor by the chanting of hymns or by reading holy books. Not even by seva. Though admirable and fulfilling, none of these can replace inner worship, nor can they bring us face to face with God. Only the internal practice of Sound and Light can take us to our destination; this is what all the great saints and mystics have advocated since time immemorial, whatever their caste, creed or religious background may have been.

When he was asked whether there is any short cut other than this slow and tiresome way of meditation, Maharaj Charan Singh used to

say that a great and overwhelming love for God can pull the attention inside with irresistible power. But then he would always add that such a love is found in very few seekers of God. Ultimately, this very love would lead the disciple of a living Master to the vision of his inner form and to the experience of the Word of God within.

Until that unconditional and divine love can be developed, the time of meditation should be our most precious time of the day because it awakens the love within us and makes it grow. It is an intimate and personal time that the disciple can spend exclusively in the presence of his beloved Master within.

When the Masters refer to this intense and selfless love that is achieved through meditation, they do not hide the fact that the path leading there is long and arduous, and not meant for the faint-hearted. It calls for the bravery of a warrior. To meditate for two and a half hours daily demands of us not only rugged determination, selfless sacrifice and dedicated discipline but also the shunning of our ego-centred pursuits and worldly attachments.

And at the same time, we need to be wary of our own mind, as it can be a deterrent on our spiritual journey. Maharaj Charan Singh often advised that the best way to protect our spiritual life is to win over our mind as a friend so that, instead of putting obstacles in our path, it will urge us on to perform the most important task of our life – our spiritual exercises.

One of the most common complaints that disciples have after being on the path for years is the misguided impression of not achieving spiritual progress. Sometimes disciples are overwhelmed by feelings of dryness, dejection and despair, but the Masters caution that this is simply a play of the mind. They lovingly assure us that however discouraged we may feel, in Sant Mat there are no failures. Just as a diamond-cutter painstakingly chisels away the roughness of a raw

diamond bit by bit for it to sparkle, the Master slowly but surely moulds us as we go through our karmas to become fit and pristine to experience the Ultimate. In fact, we are his ‘work-in-progress.’

What counts is not immediate, instant success but sincere, dedicated effort. Success will come when we are ready and when the time is ripe. We fail to realize that being on the path and adhering to the principles is a form of progress. Moreover, there is no set time period allotted for spiritual progress. One cannot calculate love and devotion. The Masters convey the truth when they say that treading the spiritual path is a life-long struggle, perhaps even that of several lifetimes.

It takes years of dedication to become a worthy disciple of a perfect Master. In spirituality, it is a fallacy to expect quick results. The Masters never tire of cautioning us against evaluating our efforts on the basis of tangible results. The process of stilling the mind is indeed slow, comparable to licking a dry stone. It is no easy task, especially when we consider that for millions of lives we have been succumbing to every provocation and lure of the senses.

With every warning, however, the Masters also offer words of comfort to help us persevere on our long and gruelling journey. These moments of encouragement come to every seeker on this path and are most inspiring.

Maharaj Charan Singh used to explain that when a disciple progresses on the path, he reaches a point where he is quite unable to resist the “pull” inside. When this time comes, his only wish will be to meditate. Progress does not matter. Results do not matter. Success does not matter. All that matters is adherence to the instructions and obedience to the Master.



Something to Think About

We meticulously make elaborate arrangements when we have to undertake any journey on earth. But to our last journey which we may be called upon to undertake at any time – in childhood, youth, or old age – we never give a moment's thought. How wise are we!

Maharaj Jagat Singh, *The Science of the Soul*



In order to perform our practice successfully, it is necessary to have satsang. It is a natural tendency of the mind to be influenced by the company it keeps. By association with the people of the world, we develop worldly tendencies; and by keeping the company of spiritually inclined persons we become spiritually orientated. It is therefore clear that if one desires to advance on the path of spirituality, one must necessarily keep the company of those who are on that path, for association with them will enable one to imbibe their noble tendencies.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, *Philosophy of the Masters*, Vol. 1



Argue with the mind thus: When you are asleep, you forget all activities of the world. What do you lose at that time? If it does not affect you adversely then why do you indulge in worldly thoughts now? If you do not recall affairs of the world during meditation, will anything go amiss?

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Words Divine*

Only in the Human Form

Human life is a precious gift. Saints say that every breath is invaluable and should, therefore, be employed for the sole purpose of God-realization. This world is a shadow show – fleeting and evanescent. It is like an inn where travellers stay for the night and go their different ways at daybreak. The phenomenal world is encompassed completely by the chain of cause and effect, action and reaction; the soul thus remaining forever bound to the prison house of the body. Its liberation can be effected only by the merciful intervention of a perfect adept who is himself a God-realized soul.

Life has two ends: man is at one end and God is at the other, and the distance between the two is infinitesimally small. Therefore saints advise us to travel within while we are still alive. The human body is ephemeral. Uncertainty is the hallmark of human life; good health or illness come seemingly without meaning, but always in accordance with one's karmas.

We look upon our body as our real self. The mind to an average man is a vague entity. And as for spirit – few people have faith in it. But the saints tell us that the human body consists of three concentric layers – the physical, the astral and the causal. The mind and the soul inhabit it. Within the body are to be found entire creations – all the mental and material worlds, all the spiritual worlds and all the gods and goddesses. Within it also is the Supreme Lord.

No one can become aware of the existence and true nature of those worlds within the body unless a perfect Master teaches the process of going within. One can then rise upwards through region after region, kingdom after kingdom, till one reaches the highest spiritual region and sees the Lord – rather, becomes one with the Lord.

Saints say that the body is made of five elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether. These elements are at constant war with each other, but are held in harmony by the power of Nam or the Word. Withdrawal of the Word, or Holy Spirit, means death and brings about disintegration; the elements then go back to their source. That is their inherent nature.

At birth we are allotted a certain span of life, and we can use it for any purpose that we please. We may dissipate our vital energy in the five passions or use it for achieving excellence in sports. We may employ it in studying the mysteries of the material world, and add to our knowledge of such sciences as physics, chemistry or botany. We may harness it to become skilled artists, sculptors or writers. But best of all, we can use it, through the grace of a perfect Master, to practise spiritual meditation and meet the Lord. Saints say that luckiest is he who gives priority to matters divine and learns to 'die while living' in order to attain union with God.

Man is the top of all creation, the perfect handiwork of nature in all respects. He contains within himself the key to unlock the mystery of the universe and to contact the Creator. It is the greatest and highest good fortune to be born a human being, but our responsibilities are correspondingly great. Having come to the top of the evolutionary ladder, we should now step on the ladder of Nam and tread the spiritual path that will ultimately lead to our divine home. As Maharaj Jagat Singh has said (quoted in *The Science of the Soul*): "It is only in the human form that the soul can realize God and trace its footsteps homewards."



Peace of Mind

All it takes is one thing – one unexpected event or one crushing disappointment – to turn our entire world upside down. It could be the sudden death of someone we love, a serious illness, a financial disaster, a dishonest spouse or a child in trouble – it could be anything. It only takes one shocking episode for the human mind to go into a tailspin. The endless thoughts and horrific possibilities that are generated by the mind can turn a perfectly sane and happy person into a crumpled heap of misery.

But, as Sant Mat teaches us, life happens and all this is nothing new. The mystics have always told us that this is the nature of human existence. The law of karma operates in such a way that it is simply not possible for anyone to be happy and trouble-free all the time. Even if we have all the material comforts in the world and our bank accounts are full, it does not necessarily mean we will be happy and untroubled.

A young man once drew up a list of all the things he considered good in his life: he was in perfect health, he was good looking, he was extremely talented and he graduated from a top university. His family came from a position of wealth and power and he was well known throughout his country. He proudly showed this list to a wise man. When the old man read the list, he said to the young man, “This is an excellent list. But my good friend, you have forgotten the most important item of all and without this, all these things on your list will become a heavy burden on you.” And when the young man asked what was missing from his list, the wise man replied using three simple words: “peace of mind”.

As disciples on the spiritual path, each of us knows only too well what our peace of mind means to us. Without some level of peace

within us, it is impossible to meditate. And yet this is the irony of our situation. Sant Mat teaches us that meditation is the means to obtain peace, but we are like sick people who know we are ill but will not accept the medicine that is prescribed to make us well.

The mystics explain that it is easy for the mind to be at peace when everything is going well. An Olympic swimmer can conquer the length and depth of any swimming pool, but the real test is to see how he copes when he has to face the unpredictable currents of the ocean. Similarly, only when we come face to face with the shocking events of life – when waves of fear and panic engulf us, do we realize how sick we really are. Only then do we understand what the Masters mean when they say that even two and a half hours of meditation a day is not enough.

Everyone in the world has emotional conflicts, insecurities and problems. No matter how happy we all look to each other on the outside, everyone has some stress, some worry and some anxiety. To be able to face all these on a daily basis without breaking down or losing our balance, we need strength and courage. We need that inner calm and spiritual stability to help us accept our fate; to help us understand that our karmas are of our own doing and we have to face them.

But this state of mind is not easily attainable. The saints explain to us that this level of peace can only be obtained by going within. Every person has to find his own peace from within – that potent and powerful kind of peace that allows him or her to be unaffected by outer circumstances. We all want this kind of peace – it is more precious than all the wealth and success in the world – because when we have this peace, no matter how shocking, how disturbing, how unexpected our karmas might be, we will remain cool, calm and collected.

The Masters have said that there is always a way out of every problem; there is always a way to accept and understand any situation no matter how bad it might seem. But we can only find that way if we are level-headed and composed. Then, instead of indulging our emotional reactions, we can think clearly, accept that we have to deal with the situation and find the solution.

All we have to do is look at our own Master and see what we can one day become. No matter how much responsibility is thrust upon his shoulders, he is the perfect picture of calm composure. He deals with every challenging situation, every setback that comes his way with a quiet dignity that is clearly a reflection of his inner condition.

Saints not only teach us by their words but they are also shining examples of how to live happy, carefree lives, which we may easily forget amidst all the hustle and bustle. Their wisdom is profound yet simple:

We can have peace within ourselves only when we are in tune with the Lord, when we are nearer to our destination, when we are nearer to him.

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



“Bring Me Your Failures”

As explained by Maharaj Charan Singh

Failure means that I have done my best to attend to meditation but I couldn't succeed. Failure doesn't mean that I never attended to meditation. That is not failure – that is not even attempting.

Failure means I have done my best, I have given my time, I have lived the way of life while I have been trying to build my treasure. From every point of view I have been keeping myself clean, but I have not achieved anything within myself. So this is my failure. That effort will not be lost – that is what is meant by failure. Failure only comes when we are attempting to achieve something and we have not been able to achieve it. When we never attempt to achieve it, then where is the failure? If the child does not even try to learn to walk, he will never learn to walk. If the child is trying to learn to walk, he is bound to fall here and there and get bruises. But he is attempting to learn to walk. So our attempt is there, our efforts are there, but the result is not in our hands.

Naturally those failures are an attempt to go forward, not backward. Every failure reminds us of our success, of where we are lacking. So we should go on putting in our best effort, and then if we fail, we should not be so dejected, but we should try to follow the path again. But if we just fail and do not try to make another attempt to succeed, then of course the Master will not love the failures.

Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. II

The Wings of His Love

As long as you are proud, you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

There is an old fable about a tortoise that became very tired of his humble abode. Admiring the two ducks gliding across the sky, he too longed to soar to great heights and visit unknown lands. His great desire led the tortoise to call upon the two ducks for help. The two kind-hearted ducks explained to the tortoise that the best way for him to travel would be for the tortoise to grasp the middle of a stick with his mouth, while the two ducks would hold on to the two ends and lift him up. The tortoise followed their instructions, and held on tightly to the stick with his mouth. It was quite a sight to see, the two ducks flying the tortoise towards the clear blue sky. Everyone looked up in awe commenting at how fortunate the tortoise was. But the tortoise, unfortunately, became very conscious of all their praise. A crow flying just below them exclaimed: “This must surely be the king of tortoises.” Looking down at the crow, “Why certainly!” began the tortoise, but just as he opened his mouth to utter such vain and foolish words, he lost his grip and fell to his demise.

We too long to soar to greater heights on the wings of our Master’s love – and as we embark on our spiritual journey with this true yearning, the Master pays heed to our cries. Kind-hearted and merciful, living saints often grant us our soul’s deepest desire to know them – and they reveal to us just a tiny glimpse of their true nature. In their own subtle way, they allow us to discover that they are the

guiding force that weaves the very fabric of our existence, and they open our eyes to the daily miracles that take place in front of us at all times. This awareness that they grant us is a gift. It is nothing that we could have possibly earned on our own merit, but we are told to digest it and persevere in silence and let the Lord do the rest. Like the tortoise, all we need to do is hold on tight and enjoy the ride.

However, the ride is so beautiful and the lessons learnt are so inspiring that we are awed by our own discoveries. Flying on the wings of his love is like nothing we have ever experienced before, and we often feel the need to share our newfound understanding and joy with others. Unfortunately though, pride creeps up on us in the most inconspicuous of ways. Maharaj Ji once cautioned a disciple against speaking about inner experiences. He lovingly explains in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. II, “It is not in one’s own interest to share one’s inner experiences with anyone, because unconsciously there is always ego in it. We definitely become a victim of our ego, and the moment you become a victim of the ego, your progress stops and you lose what you have.” On another occasion he went on to explain, “Unnecessarily people start giving you importance, and the moment any importance is given to anybody, there’s always the danger of his falling.” Like the tortoise, we start to see ourselves as superior to others – and so long as we are busy looking down, we lose focus on what is above.

Falling from grace hurts, and losing consciousness of his divine presence in our life can be the most painful experience a disciple can ever go through. So how do we protect ourselves from the latent dangers presented by our ego? Like all valuable treasures, the Lord’s precious gifts to us must be kept secure and hidden. In the olden days, during times of war, when people had to flee their country overnight and leave all their belongings behind – and whatever little they could carry would be rummaged through for valuables – they would swallow their precious stones and diamonds to hide them somewhere

where nobody could possibly find them, deep within themselves. Maharaj Ji has often told us that we too need to digest our love. And the secret, as he so beautifully explains, is that:

The more you digest, the more you get. The more you feel, the more it grows. Keep it to yourself. You see, love is only shared with the beloved, not with anyone else. It should remain between the two of you. It has to grow in secret.

Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. II

How extraordinary it is that the Lord is inviting us to be his secret lover. And what could be a better time and place to meet than in the stillness of the night, deep within, at the eye centre? Our relationship with our Master is indeed a very intimate one – and words can never adequately express how we truly feel. So why waste them? Maharaj Charan Singh explains in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. III, “Words are a very poor expression for the lover. He doesn’t want to waste words unnecessarily or even express them. His expression is not by words. He has another way of expressing his love. It is his tears and eyes.”

We seal our lips and our eyes swell up with tears when we are truly humbled by his immense generosity. In reality, just like the tortoise, we did absolutely nothing to deserve this precious opportunity and we are simply being carried on the wings of the Lord’s grace. True lovers of the Lord never forget this – they know that but for the Lord’s mercy, they would not have even an ounce of love in their hearts.

The disciple will never love the Master unless the Master plants that seed of love in the heart of the disciple, unless he nourishes that seed in the disciple, strengthens that seed in the disciple,

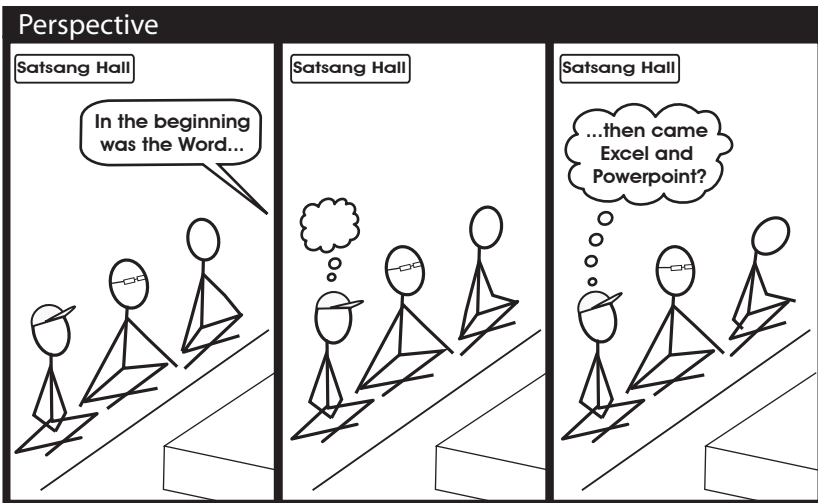
pulls the disciple towards him. His inner hand of strengthening that seed of love is always there at the back.

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

How foolish then to forget for even a second that the only love we have is the love that he has bestowed upon us; the only importance we have is the importance that he has planted in our hearts and that ultimately, we are just fortunate souls who have been given the opportunity to soar alongside greatness. When all we seek is his love, we need to learn how to protect it – and as he has so clearly explained to us, the best way to do so is to digest it within.



SPIRITUALISTICKS®



The Lighter Side of Wisdom

A traveller was walking aimlessly when he met a shepherd along the way. He asked the shepherd, “What kind of weather will we have today?”

The shepherd replied, “The weather I would like.”

The traveller was astonished and asked him again, “How do you know it will be the weather you will like?”

The shepherd answered: “I have always found out, sir, that usually I do not get the things I like, but, nevertheless I have learned to like the things that I get. So I am pretty sure we will have the weather I like.”



A man was praying in a temple. He was unemployed and had no money. He cried out loud, “God, can you please give a hundred dollars to take care of my necessities for the week? I promise I will get a job and will start donating money to you.”

An elderly man sitting next to him, heard his plea and felt very compassionate towards him. Even though he did not have much money, he put fifty dollars in an envelope and handed it to the young man by saying, “God told me to give this to you.”

The man ran home and opened the envelope. On seeing the fifty dollars, he started praying to God again, “Oh God! Next time you send money, send it to me directly, not through any old person. He has already taken half of it as commission!”

The Invaluable Gift

There was a general hush from the crowd as the video came to life on the screen before us. It was the movie on organ donation – *The Invaluable Gift*. No matter how many times one may have seen it, it never fails to capture the attention. A stillness fell among the sangat as they watched, absorbed in a story that is both touching and thought provoking.

This story of selfless love for humanity is an ideal that not many of us can live up to. The film aptly concludes with the feelings of the man who received the kidney donation. Even though the identity of the donor was never revealed to him, he considered the donor to be an image of God. For only God is capable of such a compassionate and selfless act. In the Bible, Genesis 1:27, it is written that ‘God made man in his own image’. He has placed within man, the very attributes and likeness of himself. He has given us all the capacity and capability to be like him.

It leaves one to wonder, what was the ‘invaluable gift’? Was it the gift of the organ donation? The gift of life? Or more importantly the gift of the image of God?

As in many other events in life, one can see Sant Mat in the situation. We too have been saved from a spiritual death. We are totally unaware of the hopelessness of our predicament. The moment the Master accepts us as his disciple, he protects and safeguards us on this spiritual journey. He lights that flame of love within and puts us in touch with that inner Shabd.

Love is a gift from the Lord. Unless the Lord wishes, we can never think about him. Unless he pulls us towards himself, we

can never search for him at all. We think we are loving the Lord, we think we are finding the Lord. Actually he is the one who's pulling us from within, giving us facilities, opportunities, environments, creating all that atmosphere within us so that we think about the Lord and try to make a search to go back to the Father. He is the one who is giving all that to us. Without him, we can never think about the Father at all. So it is a gift given to us by him.

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

We need to live in this world and go through our destinies, but it is almost as though he has bubble-wrapped us from the karmic blows. We can feel the effects, but they are less painful than they would have been.

We have no idea how protected we really are. No matter what circumstances our karmas have created for us, the Lord makes sure that we have the opportunity to find him. He places himself in our minds and hearts so that we never feel alone when facing the painful situations that come before us. He carefully arranges events, people and places so that in our lifetime we are able to attend satsangs, get the opportunity to see him, and live in that atmosphere surrounded by his love. We can attribute all these happenings to coincidence – or we can realize that it is his loving guidance.

We have to do our best under the circumstances. When we are sincere, the Lord comes to our aid, and nature also helps us in our environment, in our atmosphere, in our circumstances. The Lord's guiding hand is always there, whether we are conscious of it or not.

We have to depend entirely upon his grace for guidance, real guidance. And, if we are sincere, I assure you, he puts us on the right path.

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

The Master's presence in our lives is the greatest gift of good fortune. His grace and love lift our souls out of their worldly stupor, waking us up to our true nature.

The ray has its root in the sun. It comes from the sun and merges back into the sun. It is the sun. Potentially, every soul is God, but we have to realize that potentiality and become God, to be one with the Father.

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

We are surrounded by the Lord's innumerable gifts, and more often than not, we take it all for granted – the bodies that we are born with, our senses, our intellect and all the parts that allow us to function and subsist in this world, even our parents and family who love and nurture us to adulthood. We forget the value of their love and encouragement in our life, until it is too late. We forget how precious each facet of our life is, until we lose it.

And most importantly, we take for granted our invaluable gift, our image of God, our Master.

It is a cruel reality that is hard to accept, but nothing is permanent on this physical plane. Which is why the Master urges us not to waste our life in trivial pursuits, to realize our true purpose and begin our journey homeward.

Every breath that we take without thinking of the Lord is time wasted. Every day is a step nearer to the end of this life.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Quest for Light*



Genesis

In the beginning...

These famous words have fascinated us and motivated us to think about our origin; about the creation of our universe, and the cause of our very existence; about questions and concepts that practically every religion, philosophy and science have tried to grasp. And while some have rejected the possibility that the existence of a creation implies the existence of a Creator, the majority of our human race do believe that there was a beginning, or genesis. And we also mostly believe that if man can comprehend what triggered the start of creation, then we could achieve a more profound truth about ourselves, and attain knowledge and wisdom that could somehow elevate us as a species. But is that really the case? Is this obsession with knowing and comprehending the beginning really valuable and useful?

There is no doubt that at an intellectual level, knowing the true nature of the beginning of this creation is a wonderful and lofty goal. The trillions of dollars spent on space exploration and sub-atomic research are testimony to this. And yet, even presuming that man might someday somehow fathom a truth so deep, so inclusive and all-encompassing, the question remains if we could truly derive benefit from such knowledge.

To be truly beneficial, this knowledge must help us achieve nothing less than the ultimate objective of life. It must assist us in achieving the vital goal that perfect Masters tell us about: spiritual immortality and freedom from transmigration. The Masters tell us that death is the inevitable and definitive frontier we all face, and conquering it is man's most sublime purpose. But can such a purpose be fulfilled simply with the knowledge of how and why the creation began? Does it help a

man who is trapped in a deep ditch, to know the details of how he fell in? How does it really matter what happened in the beginning?

What is important is to understand our true current situation. Perfect Masters teach us that this is a story of spiritual beings who are immortal, yet trapped in this creation, suffering physical death repeatedly. And the key to life's grandest objective lies not in the history of how it happened, but in the process of escape – in the method of emancipation.

Perhaps it is only curiosity that compels us to seek an understanding of the beginning – some might even argue that it is harmless. But the mystics remind us that our time here is limited to the human life span, which is finite and uncertain, and that it is simply good advice to put aside our intellectual curiosities for the moment and to focus on the solution to our problem instead.

This solution is the key to overcoming death, and spiritual Masters tell us that it has existed from the beginning. They explain that the solution lies in utilizing the greatest power we possess, to achieve the highest potential of our being. That great power is love, which the Masters teach us how to unlock through the process of meditation. And that supreme potential is the single greatest event that man can ever experience – to merge into the Creator himself.

It is ironic that our fascination is with the beginning of creation, whereas it should perhaps be upon a different beginning – another type of genesis. It is the moment we embark on the spiritual journey, protected by the Master's care and guidance. It is the instant we take that first crucial step, with faith and obedience. It is that incredible day we are initiated by a perfect living Master into this path of love – the only true beginning of real value in our lives.



Letting Go

Two monks were walking down by the river when they saw a woman waiting to cross to the other side. She was in a dress, and it was obvious she did not want to get her dress wet. The older monk, without saying a word, picked up the woman, carried her across and put her down. The two monks went on their way in complete silence. About an hour later, the younger monk threw out a series of judgments to his older counterpart: “How could you have touched a woman? You know we took a vow never to touch a woman! And you did not even seem to care to contemplate it! You just walked right over and picked her up!” The older monk listened to everything the other said and replied simply, “Brother, I put her down an hour ago; why are you still carrying her?”

For most of us, letting go is probably the most difficult thing to do. If someone uses a harsh word against us, or if we disagree with a friend or experience any sort of negativity, we tend to carry it around with us for days, weeks and sometimes even years. We are either focused on what has already happened, or what will happen in the future, and we allow these thoughts to rent space in our mind for the longest time.

If someone were to throw a piece of hot, burning coal at us, we would instinctively move out of the way because we know, without even having to think, that the piece of hot coal will burn. Yet, when we experience anything negative, we tend to dwell on it and hold on to it in our thoughts, not realizing how harmful it is to our mind, body and spirit. We don't understand how this way of thinking adversely affects our health, and more importantly, our meditation.

What can we do to change situations of the past? Are we able to turn back time and make outcomes any different? We do not even know

how many breaths are assigned to us, so what is the point of worrying about an uncertain future?

The spiritual path encourages us to look forward with a positive attitude.

*When your mind is attached to the Shabd and Nam within,
then you don't think about the past or worry about the future.*

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

Following the Master's advice, we can remind ourselves that every time we think negatively or are troubled by our circumstances, rather than carrying it around with us like the younger monk in the story, we can learn to focus our thoughts and energies inwards. The first step to doing this is replacing each negative thought with our simran. This is perhaps the most effective method in training our mind towards meditation, and letting go of worldly troubles.

*We do simran to eliminate thoughts from our mind because
the mind is in the habit of always thinking about something or
another.*

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

Slowly but surely, we will be able to rid our mind of all its worries and tensions. When we allow our mind a taste of peace, we will be able to let go and understand that everything happens according to our destiny. The only choice we have is to leave everything in the hands of the Lord, put our efforts into our meditation, and become like the older monk, fulfilling all of our worldly duties and obligations, but with a detached mind and loving attitude.



The Master Answers

A selection of questions and answers with Maharaj Charan Singh

Q: *Some often have difficulty to do simran right without being side-tracked by the mind, but when the mind is occupied with a beautiful thing, or what I think is a beautiful thing, like listening to concert music, it seems to be easy to do simran and rise to beautiful heights. Now, is this a good idea?*

A: Brother, your mind is the same; when it is occupied with the music, how can you be attentive to simran? Because the mind enjoys that music, so you align yourself with the music, rather than with simran. No, simran is independent of music. The mind definitely enjoys music, and music gives us some sort of concentration, too, but it doesn't lead us anywhere. It's food for the mind but not for the soul.

Die to Live

* * *

Q: *Master, why is Sant Mat and the experiences of the initiate so esoteric, so secretive? Why cannot an initiate compare notes with another initiate? It is my understanding of Sant Mat that it is the science of the soul; and any scientist, to test the validity of his findings, would like to compare notes with somebody else.*

A: Brother, there is always danger of ego coming in. When you share your internal experiences with anybody, you are inclined to give yourself airs, and lose what you have. Also, when people know that you are spiritually advanced, they may try to take advantage of you, of your powers. Then you may be tempted and thus lose what you had gained.

The Master Answers

Q: *I heard someone talking about sitting in meditation and looking at his watch. How can one sit in meditation and avoid looking to see how much time has passed?*

A: Actually, what is meant is that when you are sitting in meditation, you should concentrate all your thoughts in meditation and not always be conscious of how much time you have been sitting, wondering when it is going to be one hour and when it is going to be two hours. You may not always be looking at your watch, but you are always wondering whether or not you have sat more than your allotted time. When your mind is thinking of how much time you have to sit and how much time has already passed, then you are not concentrating. You are always thinking about that. Therefore, you should eliminate all thoughts of the world and just put your mind in simran.

Die to Live

* * *

Q: *I've read that if we knew the effect of anger, we would never become angry. Could you explain that?*

A: Try to look at your face in the mirror when you are angry. Then perhaps you wouldn't want to become angry. The pity is that we don't see our face, our expression when we are angry. So many changes take place, so many expressions come and go. Nobody wants to show themselves in a poor light. If we knew how we looked, we wouldn't want to get angry. We lose our balance. After all, anger doesn't solve any problem. It has not reformed anyone. We just hurt our own self and hurt another person, nothing else, with no gain for anybody.

Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. III

Why Marriage?

One evening meeting at the Dera, a man asked Baba Ji whether it was all right for him and his girlfriend to live together without getting married. Since marriage has been devalued to such an extent, what, the man asked, was the point of getting married? The vow that was solemnized between two people as a commitment for life, that was considered sacred within the context of one's religion, in these days seems hardly worth the paper on which it is written. Where then, he said, was the need for a formal ceremony?

The Master was clear in his reply. He said that by not getting married, the gentleman was simply avoiding his responsibilities. Baba Ji quickly put before us a vivid picture of the chaos that would ensue when none are clear about their responsibilities. We saw a world of confused and distressed people – adults and children – in which no norms could be established; a world in which everyone was going in different directions – each in the way he or she wanted – and no one was ready to compromise his or her desires. We saw a world in which everyone's priority was maintaining his or her individual rights and personal freedom. But without a commitment to something beyond oneself, who would decide what was right? How quickly would such a world become a lonely nightmare of disappointment, anger, bitterness and frustration?

Marriage is one of the key institutions of civilisation. If we are to understand why it is important, we need to remind ourselves of two things in particular. First, no one can function as an island. Without cooperation and compromise, without mutually respected rules of conduct, who would decide what gets done? If I am going to pursue what I want at all costs, it may well be that what I want does not suit or

appeal to you. Second, we have to remind ourselves of the simple and self-evident truth that nothing can be achieved without commitment. We have to put our roots down deep if we are to draw sustenance from life's depths – and this cannot happen if we keep changing focus. We need to think through these issues. In a world where values are not shared, on whom would we be able to depend? How could we raise children? Don't children absorb their values from within the family during their early years? If our early environment is stable and positive, it nurtures positive values within us. Has the science of human behaviour shown us a better way to learn the important lessons of life other than in the context of a loving family? And in a world where the family unit does not exist, how would we transmit positive values from one generation to the next? Where there is no emotional and social stability, not only is life traumatic for the children, but it affects us too.

Our code of conduct creates order and stability out of potential chaos. It reflects our fragile spiritual understanding and provides a refuge from the confusion at the surface of life. By representing more than our immediate interests, it helps us contain our actions so that we can experience the deeper truths of life. The institution of marriage is a significant element in our moral code for it provides a structure within which to grow and meet our responsibilities. Our destiny has already been written – as Jesus says in Saint Matthew, we “shall not escape from here” as long as even one “jot” remains to be paid.

When we come into a physical relationship with a person of the opposite sex, when we act in accordance with one of the deepest forces of the creation and give birth to children, whose responsibility are they if not ours? If the union does not produce children, do we think this means that no responsibilities ensue? If we devalue the physical act of creation by treating it as a means of pleasure alone, then it can

only point to our blindness: even if we do not have children, our involvement with each other runs deep through this union, so the consequences and responsibilities are commensurate and will surely have to be met one day. When we have relationships outside marriage, we are looking for the pleasures of a partnership without the responsibilities. We do not even give ourselves a chance to experience the responsibilities, for without a supportive framework it is easy to think they are not there. No sooner do we feel trouble brewing, than we are on our way – looking for happiness elsewhere.

It is a myth of our present times that happiness comes with the right partner. This suits the mind – it is always looking for variety. But we need to remind ourselves constantly that it is our mind that is our problem. It is the mind that prevents us from going beyond the physical. It alone keeps us from experiencing the inner music of the Shabd. Our mind is rooted in the layers of impressions from our previous actions and thoughts that sit like thick sound-proofing around our soul.

How far are we going to let it take us? And if we are not ready to make the commitment needed for marriage, how can we imagine we will remain committed to the journey of our soul that lies ahead? How, without commitment, can we ever experience the depths of life? We will spend our entire lives skating about on the surface. In our relationships, we may not even get to know our partner before we get disappointed or frustrated and look to change. Our problems may well manifest themselves in our relationships, but they do not originate there. We do not see that we have got things back to front, that it is for us to find happiness first within ourselves, and only then can we *build* a partnership of two happy people learning to live together in tolerance and love.

Marriage is a public statement of a commitment. By making our partnership public, we cement it. By institutionalizing it, we further cement it. No partnership is easy, and marriage is no different – so we need all the help we can get. Marriage provides a framework to hold two people together, so that in times of trouble they don't split or drift apart. It gives a reference point beyond two minds, and creates space within which their differences can exist.

Some people may argue that a private commitment to each other is sufficient. In many countries this is acceptable by law, for taxation or other purposes, so who needs a piece of paper? But if we reflect a little, we will discover this is a way of avoiding commitment. Whatever the intellect may say, who would deny that legal marriage is a significant step, even if it is no more than the simplest of ceremonies? That is maybe why the proponents of this argument wish to avoid it: legal marriage *is* binding.

If we look just a little beneath the surface, we will see that in spite of modern attitudes, most people are not really happy with what is known as a common-law marriage. The parents of the couple are often disappointed or unhappy with the situation, one or other of the partners may feel insecure, and the children are shy or embarrassed among their peers, insecure and fearful of ridicule. Like the separation or divorce of parents, it can be a private agony children harbour in their hearts, and they are powerless to do anything about it. Generally speaking, parents hold the key to the happiness of their children, and every society on earth recognizes this by having its own ways to establish a couple as a unit, the basis and backbone of the family.

Commitment, responsibility, steadiness, a concern for the well-being of others, all are aspects of love. We should think of love as a *verb*, something we *do*, not just something that happens by chance. How many

times does the Master point out that we do not even understand what love is. He explains how our difficulties arise because we confuse love with the physical. Love is beyond the physical, he keeps telling us; true love is constant and unconditional, true love does not alter with change.

We call ourselves *satsangis*. *Sat-sang*, ‘truth’ and ‘association’. It has been our good fortune to be brought into association with truth. In our essence we are the truth, the reality, for which we yearn. Call it God, call it truth, call it love, call it the Word; it is the essence of life and it is the life-force of you and me. By initiation into the practice of the Word, we are given the key to find this treasure within ourselves. It is for us to use the key. For this, too, we need commitment. We need commitment, steadfastness and courage – not every day is a sunny day on the spiritual path. We need to be clear about our priorities – but we keep forgetting them. We start to think our interests lie in our relationships, in emotional happiness right now. So easily we lose sight of the bigger picture.

By committing ourselves to live with one person, we give ourselves the opportunity to be constant and learn how to love. Marriage is “till death do us part, for richer for poorer, in sickness and health”. As we live through the years in one relationship, we learn that human love can be transformed from the excitement of romantic love and the passion of youthful lust into a deeper sort of love marked by the selflessness, compassion and generosity that come with time. When things are difficult, there is only one practical option and that is to *work on ourselves*. To achieve harmony through the ups and downs of life, we have to keep on developing. Within a marriage we can nurture friendship, so aptly and beautifully described by Hazur as a relationship “where you have a clean and clear understanding with someone – he accepts you for what you are and you accept him

for what he is. He wants to help you. You want to help him. That is friendship. It is very rare.” For a good marriage, we need big hearts filled with positive qualities – tolerance, trust, patience, compassion and forgiveness; our commitment leads us to develop these qualities within ourselves.

Marriage is a purpose-designed vessel to hold, protect and nourish earthly love. This earthly love is precious and sacred, not because it has been sanctioned by a religious organization, but because it reflects the yearning of the soul for union with its source. It can shape the order of our world and, as it expresses itself through the love of parent and child or husband and wife, it is one of the best ways we have of making the world a better place. Rightly directed, it is the same love that will take us home. In the *Mathnawi*, Rumi says:

Love is the astrolabe of the mysteries of God. Whether love be from this earthly side or from that heavenly side, in the end it leads us yonder.

Maharaj Charan Singh, after explaining at length the protective function of marriage for those with spiritual values, ended by giving us a simple metaphor: If we want the shoe to stay on, we have to tie the lace.



If Sant Mat is followed with love and devotion, it helps one to become patient, tolerant, kind and in every way improves our nature so that we become better life partners and can render better service. We are taught to do our duty first and always as a loving service, and that also applies to husband and wife.

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Light on Sant Mat*



In This Storm

Although it was mid-September, the last few days in the Dera had experienced stifling heat and humidity. So the dark clouds that greeted us in the horizon as we emerged from the satsang shed that Sunday afternoon prompted optimistic murmurs of ‘maybe the temperature will cool down tonight’. Barely twenty minutes later, just as we entered our room, we heard thunder in the distance.

Within minutes, the wind was howling ferociously and dust was blowing into our room. We quickly bolted down the doors and windows and soon it started to rain. This was not just typical monsoon rain; it was incessant and unrelenting, accompanied by lightning and thunder and an unforgiving wind that seemed determined to tear past anything that stood in its wake.

Without electricity in the room and given the inhospitable climate outside, we decided in the fading light to just sit for meditation, a continuation of our feeble attempts from the morning. Even while sitting, we could hear the savagery of the storm, with the constant rattling of doors and windows, even when shut. The storm went on for a full hour and a half, not abating in its intensity.

The morning walk to satsang the next day revealed the true power and ferocity of the previous night’s storm. The normally pristine and spotless Dera streets were strewn with branches that were severed from the trees. There were trees that had snapped in half, like twigs, and we heard that over 200 trees were knocked down, resulting in many power lines being cut. We saw the sanitation sevadars patiently and lovingly clearing the debris, one tree at a time. Many Dera residents commented they had not witnessed a storm like this before.

As we reflected upon the devastation, we came to realize that in many ways, this storm was an apt metaphor for the storms we weather in life. Indeed this 'little Dera experience' carried many a lesson for us in our everyday lives.

First, even in idyllic moments in life, when we feel things are going perfectly and we feel Master's loving protection, storms do come and shake us to our roots. They are a part of life as we go through our karmas. We never know what is around the corner and should never get trapped into a false sense of security.

Second, we noticed that it was the weaker trees that suffered the most damage. The mature trees with deeper roots stood undisturbed and proud, shining beacons having stood firm in the face of inclement weather. Similarly, we need to continually strengthen our roots through the power of seva, satsang and simran. As our roots in Sant Mat deepen through our focus on the teachings, we will be able to withstand what our destiny has in store for us and stand calmly while we are buffeted by the day to day challenges and vagaries of modern life.

Third, we were reminded that the environment matters. The trees that were in open spaces fared much worse than those that were sheltered from the elements. Similarly, even though at times it may feel dreary to hold steadfast to our four vows, week after week, month after month, year after year, they nevertheless protect us. Hazur Maharaj Ji used to tell us that a pebble in the river is still better off than a pebble on the road because at least it benefits from the cooling effect of the water. Putting the teachings we know so well into practice allows us to have that cooling effect in our lives.

Last, and perhaps most importantly, we came to realize that attending to our meditation in times of difficulty and seeking the Lord's refuge was the best protection in difficult times. Seeking our

Master inside, within the stillness, while the storm raged around us gave us the protection and security that a child needs when confronted with danger.

Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh often used the metaphor of the *palla*, a loose end of an unstructured garment like a shawl or a sari. The metaphor evokes love, protection, security and safety. His explanation, connotes taking refuge with the Master and devoting oneself to spiritual practice.

*Hold on to the Master's palla, learn the lesson and go inside –
that is the Nam practice.*

Maharaj Jagat Singh, *Discourses on Sant Mat*, Vol. II

Similarly, we should all remember that during the storms of this life, if we hold steadfast to our Master's *palla*, by attending to seva, satsang and meditation with love and devotion, then we too will be able to put on a brave face in the midst of the storm of life.



*Listen to my supplication, O merciful Lord!
I am drifting in the ocean of existence;
if it be your will, pull me out.
In this world no one belongs to me;
only you, dear Lord are truly mine.
Mother, father, family and clan –
all of them stay around for selfish ends.
Listen to Mira's plea, O Lord;
if it be your will, grant me refuge at your feet!*

Voice of the Heart

A Perfect Disciple's Longing

Bhai Manna Singh, who served Baba Jaimal Singh for several years, once related this incident. “One day I saw Baba Ji reading a letter over and over again, but I did not know what it contained or who it was from. When I asked about it, Baba Ji told me it was a letter from Babu Sawan Singh, overflowing with love for the Master and longing to be at his feet. He wanted to resign from his job and yearned to come to Dera to devote all his time to the Master’s service. Then I said to Baba Ji, ‘If he is languishing there without you and yearns to spend his time at your holy feet, why not call him here?’

Baba Ji replied, ‘He still has to fulfil his worldly obligations. But a day will come, my child, when you will see for yourself how much spiritual work Soami Ji takes from him.’”

Many times Baba Ji wrote to Maharaj Sawan Singh, “All the worldly work you are doing is service rendered to the Master. Meditation is also the Master’s service.” When Maharaj Ji asked permission to give up his job and come to Dera, Baba Ji replied: “Sach Khand is just behind the veil, not far. Why should you feel disturbed? You will definitely reach home. You have written that you want to give up service in order to devote yourself entirely to bhajan. What is yours in the home? What is yours in the service? What is yours in the money you earn? Just think, what is there in giving them up or in keeping them? All that you see is a magician’s show. The world is like a dream. What belongs to you? All this belongs to the Master. You must look upon yourself as his agent, not the owner.”

Heaven on Earth



Make It Tasty

A disciple once asked Maharaj Charan Singh: “Master, you said that we have to attach ourselves to Shabd and Nam. But if our meditation is very dry, how can we depend on the Shabd and Nam?” To which he replied:

You see, you have to make it tasty. First you have to fight with your mind to attend to your meditation, but the time comes when it becomes very tasty. When a child is sent to school, he weeps and cries and clings to his mother, crying, “I don’t want to go to school.” But when he’s forced to go to the school, he starts reading and writing, and after a while, you can hardly pull him away from his books. Mother is shouting for him to come to dinner or meals, and he says, “Just wait, just wait.” He’s the same child. So make your meditation tasty.

Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. II

Indeed, making our meditation interesting and appealing remains one of the greatest challenges that a satsangi faces. For the most part, as the question is so aptly put, our meditation is very dry and tasteless, requiring great effort to keep both our bodies and mind still. What can we do to make it tasty?

Just as Maharaj Charan Singh says in the quote, the first step is to force ourselves to do it as a child is forced to go to school. We must also force ourselves to sit for meditation regularly and punctually. This means that we need to sit in meditation ideally at the same time and at the same place every single day. Whether we fall asleep for part or even most of the time, whether we fall short of completing the session,

whether we move far too often than we want to, or whether our minds are running out in all directions, we must turn up for our duty every single day – no excuses.

This “forcing ourselves” part is critical. This is how we build a habit to sit in meditation and integrate it into our daily routine.

With enough time and effort, we get accustomed to this pattern of life and become comfortable. We develop associations with the time, the place, the atmosphere and even the struggle of sitting in meditation. This is no different from the other daily tasks we do, like cooking meals and going to work. Meditation simply becomes part of our way of life.

Every time we comply with our spiritual duty we give ourselves the chance to develop a taste for meditation. We allow ourselves to make this difficult task of sitting in the dark and trying to still our minds, more palatable and more acceptable. Eventually, the flavour of the once ‘dry’ meditation becomes more pleasant. And again, like the child going to school every day, we open ourselves to all the school’s attractions and develop a liking for them.

This acceptance moves us towards activities that will further improve the flavour of meditation. Doing simran throughout the day when we are mentally free helps us maintain the atmosphere of meditation.

You see, this constant simran helps our attitude towards meditation, helps to draw our mind towards meditation. That helps when we sit in meditation because we are developing a certain attitude towards Sant Mat, towards the teachings, towards the path. It helps a lot.

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

By keeping our thoughts in the orbit of our Master, we restrain the mind from the waves of turbulence associated with daily living – the worries, the passions, the obsessions. This makes our minds calm, which in turn shifts in our sensitivities, distancing us from the noise and clutter of our worldly life and moving us towards silence and solitude. We perceive the stark difference between the two worlds and inch ourselves away from being worldly to being spiritually inclined. Slowly, we cultivate an appreciation for Sant Mat – the teachings, way of life, and most especially, our Master.

Cognizant of the value of our spiritual life and with deepening love for Master, we gravitate towards our ultimate desire – to actually taste the sweetness of Nam in our meditation. Eventually we will develop an exclusive taste for Nam, to the extent that all else in this world will lose its charm. We will become absorbed like the child who was once forced to go to school but now has found true love for his studies.

Intensity is the law of prayer. God is found by those who seek him with all their heart.

Samuel Chadwick, *The Path of Prayer*

It is important to note, however, that despite all our endeavours, there still will be days when we will feel dry and listless towards our meditation. On days like these, we just roll up our sleeves and try harder; keeping up the struggle at complying with our spiritual duties. Let us all bear in mind the advice of all Masters: the antidote to dry meditation is simply more meditation!



Did You Know?

Once we realize that our Creator is one; that we are the sons of the same Father; that we are drops from the same ocean of love, there can be no discord. Peace and bliss can be the only fruit. The drop of water, with a muddy company, when evaporated to the clouds, becomes the same pure substance. 'Love' is like this drop. It is corrupted with desires of the mind. When it ascends to higher realms, it is completely shorn of its gross matter and is thus rendered absolutely pure.

Maharaj Jagat Singh, *The Science of the Soul*



In the court of the Supreme Being – in whose will and command the perfect Masters act – there is no such thing as a holiday or a recess for the Satguru, not even in his sleep. But the Great Master, Maharaj Sawan Singh, used to say that when the devotee merges himself in the Shabd or the Word within, the Word gives him such energy and freshness that he has hardly any need for sleep.

Heaven on Earth



Old age, health, poverty, richness, sickness, disease, wealth, learning, honour, dishonour and time of death are all preordained while a man is in the womb of his mother. So a wise man never worries or frets or regrets anything.

Maharaj Jagat Singh, *The Science of the Soul*

The Truth about Lying

Have you ever lied or said something that was not entirely true? Most of us would be lying if our answer is 'no'. Many forms of falsehoods such as 'white lies' have become part and parcel of our everyday life. From our youth, our parents and teachers stress the importance of always being truthful. We all know the value of truth and even preach it and expect it from others, and yet sometimes we indulge ourselves. It is astonishing how easy it is for us to lie.

On the face of it, we tell ourselves that our lies do not hurt anyone. We may just be covering our own mistakes, protecting ourselves or having a little bit of fun. But if we go to the root of the issue, telling a lie is mostly prompted by a sense of selfishness and a desire to obtain something that we would otherwise lose. We want everything instantly. Our attitude of trying to get the maximum benefit with the least amount of effort leads us to cut corners and compromise our morals and beliefs. The most basic form of this compromise is telling a lie.

One who tells lies blackens his heart; he is never fit for yoga. He acquires the habits of cowardice and shame, shirks his duty and lacks clear thinking.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, *The Call of the Great Master*

Every word that comes out of our mouth sets in motion atmospheric vibrations. Every lie that we utter goes towards creating a negative atmosphere around us. Moreover, it also adds to our load of karma. Like a boomerang, a lie always comes back to us, and more often than not, we will need to tell more lies to cover up the previous ones. Can we really be happy with this kind of circumstance?

The saints tell us that we must be absolutely truthful if we want to progress on the path towards the Lord, who is the ultimate Truth. We should try to be true in thought, speech and action. Being truthful means living by one's principles and never compromising our values. Being truthful is stating something as it is. It is being sincere and straightforward. If the truth is unpleasant or likely to hurt another, then it is best to change the topic or even to lovingly keep silent.

One who sticks to truth at all costs – that is, one who has become so saturated with the spirit of truth that never, even in sleep or dream, a false word slips from his lips – that person acquires 'vaak siddhi', that is, whatever he says comes out to be true. Truth must become your life, soul and self. It must enter every limb of yours before this siddhi is acquired.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, *The Call of the Great Master*

Truth is the law of the entire universe. When we break this law, the world lapses into chaos. Imagine if fire were to give up its heat, or water were to discard its fluidity and coolness, or the wind stopped blowing – think of what would happen to the world. Each element has to stay true to its nature. With man at the top of the creation, we also must be true to our nature, which is to discriminate between right and wrong, truth and untruth. We derive inner strength from resorting to truth. It forms a protective sheath around us.

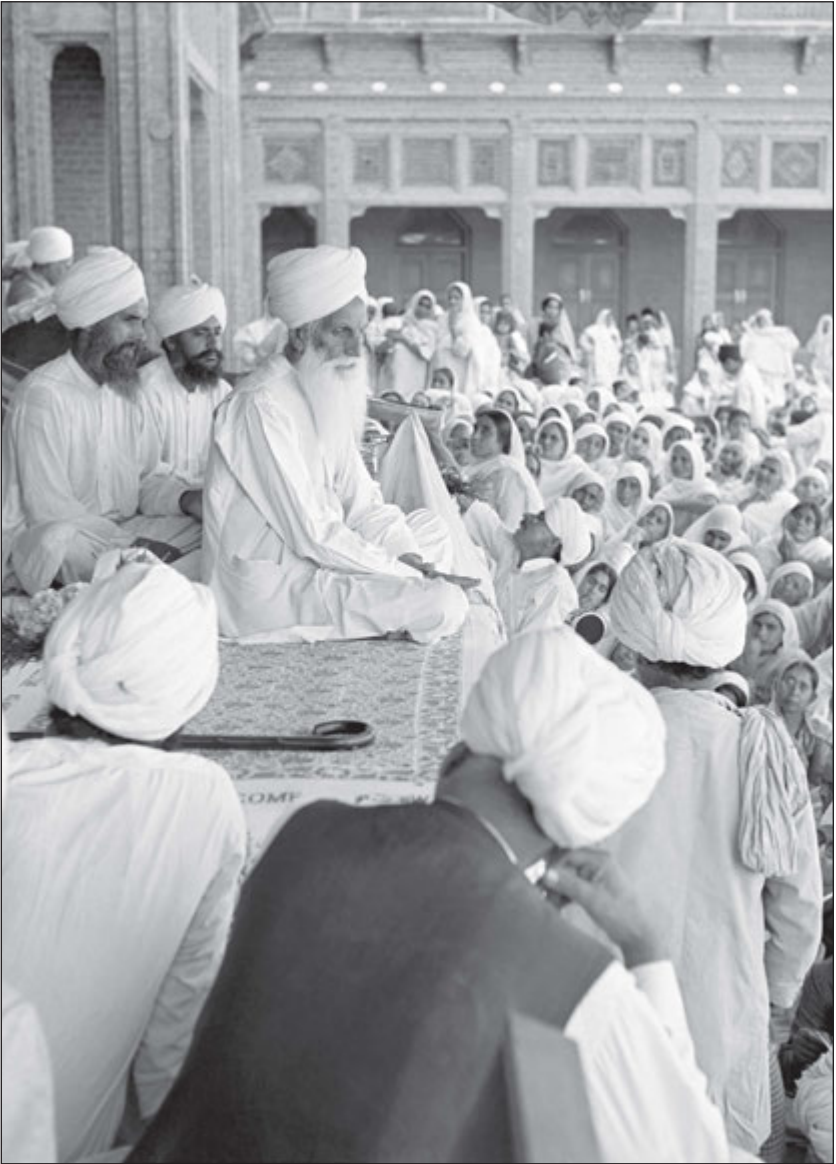
There was once a thief who wanted to reform his life and get on the path of righteousness. He went to meet a saint and asked him: “Master, I have many bad habits. Which one of them should I give up first?” The Master replied: “First, you should give up telling lies.” The man thought to himself that surely there were far worse things in life than lying, but did not argue with the Master and promised him that

he would stop lying from that day forward. That night, the man, out of habit, wanted to go out for a burglary. But before he could set his foot out of the door, he thought for a moment of the promise he had made to his Master. "If tomorrow my Master were to ask me where I had been last night, I would not be able to lie to him. What would I say? I could not tell him that I was out stealing." So he decided to stop all burglaries from that day on. Bored and with nothing to do, he thought he would go out with his friends for a night of gambling and drinking. Again the same thought came to him: "If tomorrow, my Master were to ask me what I did last night, what would I tell him? I could not lie to him, and the truth would disappoint my Master." In this way, the man realized that just by simply speaking the truth at all times, all other bad habits were gradually being eliminated by themselves.

Our deceit is not only targeted towards others: most of the time we are also lying to ourselves. We make daily promises to ourselves regarding our meditation, but do our actions support our words? If not, is that not another form of lying? Being truthful has a deeper and broader meaning than mere accuracy or honesty in speech. It means being a living embodiment of the truth. The Great Master has said that such a man is connected with the Lord all twenty-four hours of the day. Eliminating the habit of lying is the first step towards that goal.

By speaking the truth at all times, we would never have to lie to our Master. We would have taken the first step in obtaining his happiness. It is his grace and happiness which is the ultimate truth and as the saying goes, the truth shall set us free.





Maharaj Sawan Singh

Heart to Heart

During these seventy-five years the sangat has grown from two to nearly ten thousand, and with his grace it will continue to grow. From the Brocks in 1911 until today, as thousands of American satsangis individually, quietly and humbly meet the Master every morning for meditation, there is no difference but in the numbers. The numbers may grow, but we will remain just two, Master and disciple, bound together by the divine cord of Shabd, of love.

One day the disciple will be led through the maze of higher regions by following the Master's Radiant Form, listening to the Voice of our Lord, our Master, drawn by his love to become one with him. For one is the number we will all grow to be.

From the Introduction to *The Dawn of Light*



The Great Master laid great stress on giving regular time to meditation. While speaking about meditation, he once remarked, "I have hardly done any meditation; I have received from Baba Ji (Baba Jaimal Singh) his own hard-earned treasure."

Banta Singh objected, saying he had seen Hazur doing six to nine hours of meditation for days at a time, with little interest in food and sleep. "And Hazur calls it nothing!" Maharaj Ji replied, "Little do you know how precious Nam is. If one can get it by offering one's head on a platter, it will be a bargain."

Heaven on Earth



The Forbidden Rumi: The Suppressed Poems of Rumi on Love, Heresy, and Intoxication

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY NEVIT O. ERGIN AND WILL JOHNSON

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Fifty years ago Nevit Ergin, a Turkish surgeon, set out on a monumental task: to translate into English the entire *Divan-i Kebir* (also known as *Divan-i-Shams-i-Tabriz*) by Jalal-ud-Din Rumi. The *Divan-i Kebir* is the collection of all the recorded poems by Rumi outside of the *Masnavi*, comprising 44,829 verses and 1,700 quatrains.

The original manuscript of the *Divan* is in Persian, but Ergin worked from the edition and Turkish translation of the work by Abdalbaki Gopinarli. The Turkish Ministry of Culture agreed to fund Ergin's project, and twenty-two volumes of Ergin's translations were published one by one over three decades. Apparently, many of the popular English renditions of Rumi's poems by writers who do not read Persian or Turkish have relied heavily on these volumes.

Golpinarli's edition is arranged into twenty-three volumes according to poetic meter, not theme or chronology. The twenty-third volume ended up containing odds and ends, ninety-seven poems that did not fit anywhere else or were otherwise problematic, including for religious reasons. When it came time for Ergin to produce this volume, the Ministry withdrew its funding. Ergin expresses his warm gratitude to the Turkish government for its prior support. Paradoxically, he also thanks them for refusing the final volume, because he then had "to find cooperation elsewhere," resulting in *The Forbidden Rumi*. In it Ergin collaborates with Will Johnson, of whom he writes, "I'm grateful for the wonderful job he has done. Rumi's divine wine tastes better when it comes from Will's glass."

The volume comprises three sections. The first, "Songs to Shams; Songs to God," has thirty-five poems. In the first poem of this set, "He Took Me Under His Arm," Rumi writes:

*I was dead, but came back to life.
I was the cry, but I became the smile.
Love came and turned me
into everlasting glory.*

In another poem titled “Split Wide Open” Rumi addresses his Master, Shams, whose name means ‘sun’:

*You are the essence of the Sun.
I’m only the shadow of the willow tree.
When you shine down upon my head,
I get shorter, melt, and disappear.*

In one poem Rumi speaks of the pain of his separation from Shams:

*O beloved,
our union lasted only a moment,
but our separation can be counted in years.
I watched in stunned silence
as you loaded your camel.
Suddenly night came.
Pitch darkness swallowed me
as I was separated from your sun-face.*

The second group of verses, “Songs of Advice; Songs of Admonition,” contains fifty-five poems. Here Rumi addresses the wayfarer on the spiritual path, giving advice on staying focused and searching within oneself:

*Don’t go off sightseeing.
The real journey is right here.
The great excursion starts
from exactly where you are.
You are the world.*

*You have everything you need.
You are the secret.
You are the wide opened.*

He offers encouragement to the seeker to keep up the effort in spiritual discipline:

*Don't let the distance we must walk bother you.
When we reach our destination,
there'll be a wedding celebration,
and Union will embrace you.*

*The wind of joy and pleasure blows
at the very beginning of this road.
It gives strength and sustenance
to the travellers.*

Above all, he urges the seeker to grow in love:

*Choose love. Choose love.
Without this beautiful love,
life is nothing but a burden.*

The third section, "Songs of Heresy," contains seven poems, including the following verse which might be challenging to the orthodoxy, not only of Islam, but also of several other religions:

*I became Jesus to that moon.
I rose up and passed through the skies.
I am the drunk Moses.
God himself lives inside this patched cloak...*

*When Muhammad sees me drunk, my face pale,
he kisses my eyes, then I prostrate before him.*

*I am today's Muhammad,
but not Muhammad of the past.
I am the phoenix of the time,
not some small hungry bird.
I am the sultan of today, not yesterday's man.*

Rumi welcomes everyone to the spiritual path, regardless of religion:

*The fly of the soul has fallen into
this buttermilk forever.
Muslim, Christian, Jew, and Zoroastrian:
All are welcome here.*

Ergin notes that “Reading these last poems of the *Divan* is like walking through a minefield. One never knows which poem will blow the heart and mind. This kind of explosive experience is true for the *Divan* as a whole, but even more so for these last poems.”

In the concluding paragraph of this book, Ergin writes, “Mevlana is like an immense ocean. There is something here for everyone, and his relevance to our time is greater now than ever.... His message is simple and clear to those who listen: ‘Come to me,’ he says, ‘I’ll save you from yourself.’”

For those who would like to read the rest of the *Divan*, the twenty-two-volume set is available, though quite expensive. In addition to *Forbidden Rumi*, Ergin and Johnson collaborated on three other books that may be more accessible: *Crazy As We Are*, *Magnificent One*, and *Ruba’is of Rumi: Insane with Love*.



Book reviews express the opinions of the reviewers and not of the publisher.

