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# Spiritual Link

Science of the Soul Research Centre

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## **Spiritual Link**

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# True Is the Lord

*True is the Lord, true is his Name,  
and infinite are the expressions of his love.*

*All living beings pray: "Give, give,"  
and the Giver goes on showering his gifts.*

*What then could we offer him  
for a glimpse of his court?*

*What words could we utter  
that would move him to love us?*

*In the ambrosial hours of early dawn,  
meditate on the true Name,  
and reflect on his greatness.*

*Through past actions  
we attain the robe of the human form –  
through grace, the door to liberation.*

*Thus we come to realize, O Nanak,  
that the true One is all there is.*

*Jap Ji: A Perspective*





# The Path of Love

Sant Mat is a path of love. So why are we always wondering about our love? Wondering if we really have any or how to make it grow. We are always conscious of a sense of separation. No matter how hard we try, our mind still feels that the Master is a million miles away from us. There are moments of effort and moments of laziness, and there are long periods of time when it seems that our spiritual development has nothing whatsoever to do with us. It all just seems impossibly distant, and we feel like children longing to be grown up.

But as time goes by, we are growing up a little every day. The Master's love works a subtle spell on us. With time, even the way we see the Master changes. Rather than a deeply loved distant figure, he becomes more of a familiar presence, a friend.

Great Master, Maharaj Sawan Singh, put it so lovingly:

*Your worries and cares are Master's worries and cares. Leave them to him to deal with. Having become carefree, your business is to cultivate his love.*

*Spiritual Gems*

The gentle influence of his grace continues whether we are conscious of it or not. At a certain point, we start to realize its importance. The sense of being loved becomes a recurring emotion. We feel the sweetness of gratitude and want to respond. The desire to love him through the practice of our meditation grows.

We experience progress in subtle ways; it seems to relate mostly to our attitude, our view of things. The grace is so unexpected, and yet it is somehow delightfully familiar. In the end, we don't have to go

anywhere; it is all happening inside us. We feel deeply loved and so very much in love with the Master.

Maharaj Charan Singh said these beautiful words about our attitude:

*If we can learn to be indifferent to pleasure and pain, so that they do not take us away from our path, it would not only lessen the weight of our karmas, but they would also be paid off in much less time.*

*If you can take what comes to you through him, then, whatever it is, it becomes divine in itself; shame becomes honour, bitterness becomes sweet, and gross darkness clear light. Everything takes its flavour from God and turns divine; everything that happens reveals God. When a man's mind works that way, things all have this one taste, and therefore God is the same to this man, alike in life's bitterest moments and its sweetest pleasures.*

*Spiritual Discourses, Vol. I*

This was echoed by the present Master, who recently suggested that for some of us, the whole of life is parshad. When he said these words, you couldn't help but feel the presence of his Master, or fail to be awed by the loving humility of one perfect being towards another.

Sooner or later the simple truth comes home to us. We don't have to love anyone as much as we love the Master. We want to be with him. He is our lover, our father, our mother. We may be hard-hearted, stubborn, and proud, but the sheer relentless weight of his grace, raining down on us day after day, cannot help but affect us.

Meditation is the only way we can accelerate the process. It is the only way to find the peace we need, to give expression to our spiritual love. It is the ultimate positive step. It allows us to focus all

our efforts on dispelling the nonsense of life. It definitely changes our attitude toward life.

When we are meditating, we have the potential to experience a warmth, a satisfaction, which is so personal, so unaffected by others that we wonder why we don't meditate all the time. We feel relaxed. We feel safe. No one can touch this inner feeling. Sitting in meditation, we realize we don't have to be perfect, clever, popular, good-looking, rich or successful. Here, we can find sweetness that is its own reward.

Our simran and bhajan is our struggle to find that still place where we can be alone with our love. When we meditate, we are trying in our own small way to be real disciples, and then we know what it really means to have a Master, to want him, to know him, to be so close to him – and that's when we experience spiritual peace and love.



*Beloved, take me to that Station  
where You Are,  
and I am not.*

Sheikh Abol-Hasan, *The Soul and A Loaf of Bread*,  
as rendered by Vraje Abramian

# Lesson from My Master

*My Master taught me a lesson:*

*“Any moment you are negligent  
in remembrance of God*

*is a moment spent in denial of God.”*

*These words opened my eyes to reality,  
and I fixed my attention on the Lord.*

*I then placed my soul in his protection –  
such was the love I cultivated in my heart.*

*Having thus bequeathed my soul to him,  
I died before death – to live in him.*

*Only then did I attain the goal of life, O Bahu!*

*Sultan Bahu*

“Any moment you are negligent in remembrance of God is a moment spent in denial of God.” With this powerful statement, Sultan Bahu cuts right to the heart of the matter – right through the everyday worries, right through periods of doubt and longing, right through our concerns of “What do the Masters say about this? About that?”

First, he tells us that this lesson comes from the Master. This reminds us that the Master is the beginning and end of this path. What he says is what we need to do, no matter how daunting, no matter how difficult. The Master’s lesson, Sultan Bahu says, is this: The reason we are here is to remember God – not just in morning meditation, not just at bedtime, not just in times of trouble – but every moment. Anything less is a moment spent in denial of God.

How hard this is, yet we are told it is possible. We are addicted to thinking. Yet, like all addictions, this constant mind chatter is self-destructive. Of all the thoughts that go through our minds, most are unproductive – worrying, going over and over things that have already happened, stressing about what will happen or might happen, imagining scenarios of one kind or another. It seems unproductive to spend time in unhappy and stressful thoughts. We could be spending that time in bliss and stillness and peace. But we have forgotten happiness and have become habituated to suffering – self-inflicted suffering. Sultan Bahu reminds us that these moments of mind chatter are moments when we are in denial of God.

Have we forgotten that we came from God, that we basically are made of God-stuff, and that remembrance of God is remembering ourselves, our real selves? We are lost here, lost in the illusion that we belong to a world of pain and suffering, that we belong in a life where love is temporary and imperfect. We have forgotten that not only do we belong to a place of love and ever-growing bliss – in fact we *are* ever-growing bliss. We are God, we are that perfection, but we have forgotten this. And we have forgotten it so thoroughly, so completely, that remembering it is an intense effort, a struggle, the hardest thing we will ever do. We talk about living in the world of illusion, but we don't really believe it. We have forgotten that it is just illusion. Our thoughts are illusion. Our lives, our past memories, our future hopes and fears are illusion. There is only God. We strive to remember God because we think we don't know who he is. But we do know him; our true self knows him. We've only forgotten.

The first verse of the Adi Granth is called the Mool Mantra, the root mantra. The verse begins: *There is but one God.*

One God – that’s all there is: one God, only God. In the footnote to this line in *Jap Ji: A Perspective*, the translator explains that “There is but one God” doesn’t mean only that there is one, rather than two or three or four gods, but that *nothing else exists besides or outside of God*. Master often quotes this and similar lines in his satsangs. This is the most important thing to know – and not only *know*, but to live – to remember every moment of our day. We are what we think. The Buddha says:

*We are what we think.  
All that we are arises with our thoughts.  
With our thoughts we make the world.  
Speak or act with an impure mind  
And trouble will follow you ...*

*Speak or act with a pure mind  
And happiness will follow you  
As your shadow, unshakable.*

*Dhammapada: The Sayings of the Buddha,  
rendered by Thomas Byrom*

Happiness doesn’t lie outside of us. And misery doesn’t either. Suffering does not come from our relationships, our illnesses or our life situation. No event can make us happy or sad. Happiness lies within us. We can choose to be happy by thinking positive thoughts, by focusing our attention on the oneness within. Or we can choose to be miserable by thinking negative thoughts, by trying to control our outside world rather than our inside world. Now this choice, too, is an illusion – happiness and suffering are illusions. In reality, we are one God, one love, one Shabd, but because we are so strongly

associated with the duality of illusion in our lives, we need to work from where we are.

It may help to understand why we are enmeshed in this illusion. We are stuck in this cycle of thinking and suffering because we think that by scheming and stressing we can keep control of our lives.

It's been said that every thought we have is an attempt to defend our ego. This seems extreme – but think about it. Sometimes we are being productive, planning and thinking to achieve a goal, to produce something, but this is to make money or do something that will win us esteem or give us pleasure. Most of the time we are thinking unproductive thoughts in the lame attempt to defend ourselves – thinking about how someone did this or that to us, how someone was unfair, how we were hurt or persecuted, what we can do to counterattack, what we should have done or said, and what we will do or say next time. We all have listened to the rubbish our mind puts out. We know how illogical and absurd and inefficient it is – just the same hurts or disappointments and anger and worry, over and over. What do we have to do to stop this endless vicious cycle? We just have to stop it! And we have the tool our Master has given us to stop it: we have the gift of simran.

Once at Dera a young man talked to Baba Ji about his failure to do simran during the day. He said that he starts out with this firm intention to keep his attention in simran. He leaves the house, locks the door, and then drops his keys, and there goes the simran. He said he has tried and just can't do it. After bantering back and forth with the Master about whether or not he could do his simran, the young man finally said, very softly, "I can do it."

We are all like this young man. We have tried and failed, tried and failed. But our Master doesn't care about whether we succeed or fail. He only sees our effort. We *can* do it, though maybe not today, maybe

not this year, maybe not in ten years. When another young man complained that his mind was so strong, his thoughts were so strong, that he couldn't control them, Baba Ji just laughed and said something like: You think your mind is strong? It is nothing compared to the power of the Shabd!

Master will see our struggle and effort and unleash the power of the Shabd, but he can't do it too soon because the mind will then think *it* has done it.

The Master often asks something like: What's so difficult about meditation? You just sit down, close your eyes, and let go! But how do we let go? How do we deal with our psyche's natural need to hold on to our thoughts, to defend and protect ourselves?

Sultan Bahu gives us a clue:

*... and I fixed my attention on the Lord.  
I then placed my soul in his protection –  
such was the love I cultivated in my heart.  
Having thus bequeathed my soul to him,  
I died before death – to live in him.*

So what do we have to do? We have to fix our attention in the Lord and place our soul in his protection.

The only way to escape our thoughts, to identify with our quietness rather than our ego, to let go of the need to defend ourselves, is to put ourselves under the protection of the Master. This is why the Master is the be all and end all of the path. Our ego knows only how to defend, and our only recourse is to put ourselves – our safekeeping – in the hands of the Master. And how, exactly, do we do that? This short prayer by Saint Teresa of Avila was found on a prayer card in her breviary after her death:

*Let nothing disturb you;  
Let nothing dismay you.  
All things pass;  
God never changes.  
Patience obtains  
All that it strives for.  
He who has God  
Finds that he lacks nothing.  
God alone suffices.*

Once we truly put ourselves under the protection of the Master, we have everything we need. Everything. We start to build an unbreachable fort, where *nothing* can hurt us, where all we need is God, where God alone suffices. We see everything in life as a gift from our Master. We don't fight our fate but truly live in his will and remembrance, and truly find it sweet.

All we have to do is to follow the advice of Sultan Bahu, who followed the advice of his Master: fix our attention on the Lord and place ourself under his protection – one-pointed attention on one God, one power, one love.



# What Did You Do with the Gift I Gave You?

There is a story about a farmer who offered a drink of water from his well to a thirsty man, who was lost. The man refreshed himself with the farmer's water and told him that he would return. The farmer thought little about it.

A few days later, the man did return. The farmer then realized that the man was a great and powerful king. The king smiled at the farmer, got down from his horse and placed a small bag with a seed inside into the farmer's hands, smiling kindly at the farmer and telling him that it was a gift in return for his kindness. The farmer thanked the king.

The farmer was very excited that a king should give him a gift; his family was also overjoyed. The farmer sat and wondered what to do with his gift. Finally, after much mental debate, he took the seed and placed it in a fine sandalwood box with a velvet interior. It was the most valuable belonging the poor farmer owned – he then placed that box upon the mantel above his fireplace, so that all could see this gift from a great king.

And so, time passed; the farmer grew old. One morning, there was a knock at his door; he slowly opened the door, and here was the very king who had given him that gift so many years before. The expression on the king's face was one of confusion. He asked the farmer, "Why are you still living in this hut? I would have thought you would have been living in comfort by now in some palace."

The farmer now seemed very confused. He asked the king, "Why would I have moved? There's been no good fortune that has befallen me." The king then asked, "What did you do with the gift that I gave you?"

The farmer rushed to the fireplace and showed the king his seed in the nicely carved sandalwood box. An expression of great sadness came over the king, and he said to the old and tired farmer, “My dear friend, I gave you this gift to use; you are a farmer, you know that a seed must be planted, it must be watered, it must be fed. This is what guarantees the crop. I gave you a seed of the finest of seeds. Had you used it, planted and fed it, you would have received such a yield as to give you wealth beyond your imagination. This was the intent. Instead, you have received none of the benefits from my valuable gift. In addition, you’re old; you have not much time left in this life, even now, to benefit from my gift. It saddens me that you have denied yourself the riches and comfort that were meant for you.”

Just as the farmer appreciated the gift from the king but did not put it to use for his benefit, so might we appreciate our gift of initiation from the Master but not put the teachings into practice. Maharaj Jagat Singh explains in the following quote that it is only when we go within and meet the Master in his Radiant Form that we truly appreciate the gift of initiation:

*I am glad that you appreciate the value of initiation, but the real appreciation comes only when by simran (repetition of the holy names) you vacate the body and go in. It is then that you will know what it is to have a Master and you will see for yourself what he does for his disciples. The real aim of initiation is to go in and contact the Master; then, with his help, and under his guidance, to complete our spiritual journey which begins from the toes and ends at the top of the head.*

*The Science of the Soul*



# Practical Submission

Judging by the number of questions asked of the Masters over the years about the subject of submission, there seems to be some confusion on our part. What exactly are the saints trying to teach us when they talk about submission? What good is it? Can it be experienced by all satsangis, or is submission something that can only be experienced by highly advanced souls?

In the book *Spiritual Letters*, Baba Jaimal Singh gives Maharaj Sawan Singh some very important and practical teachings on submission. He says:

*Nothing is going to help the individual except the Satguru, the Shabd-dhun, and his grace and mercy. So do your worldly work with the body, and the work of your real home with the mind and the inner hearing and seeing faculties of surat and nirat. Do the Satguru's real work, bhajan and simran, and do not let the pride of anything enter the mind that is yours. No! Even if you become the king of the universe, you must realize that "I have no share in it. I am merely a labourer. Whatever is there belongs to my Master. I am nothing."*

We might say, "That advice might be good for Great Master, but he was destined to be a saint. That advice wasn't meant for me." However, one could argue that Baba Jaimal Singh's advice gives deep insight into the nature of our suffering and offers a practical way to help us escape that suffering.

It may sound harsh, but Baba Jaimal Singh has accurately described our condition in the world. It is amazing how easy it is

to spend an entire day, or an entire month, involved in thoughts of me and mine, and to seldom turn our attention to the Guru, apart from our morning meditation practice. Even in our meditation, thoughts of me and mine are difficult to still, largely because of the momentum that those thoughts have acquired during the day. We have given them free reign and empowered them with our attention. When we examine our lives, moment to moment, it is easy to see our self-perpetuating predicament and the scope of the task before us. We can't do anything about the past days or months of heedless thinking. Thoughts can only be dealt with one at a time, in the present moment. And the only time to do this is now.

The Buddhists have a practice called “skillful means” that implies we can keep our attention in the present moment and be mindful of what thoughts are arising in our minds from moment to moment. Baba Jaimal Singh is proposing just such a “skillful means” practice, one that any of us can accomplish. When we can be mindful of the thoughts and images that arise throughout our day, we can see that most of them concern ownership. Thoughts of my body, my career, my possessions and my family can fill our minds most of our days. Baba Jaimal Singh tells us that each moment we spend entertaining one of these thoughts, “That very moment we turn our back upon Shabd-dhun.”

Apart from the spiritual reasons for wanting to control our minds, there is also a very practical and worldly reason. Our thoughts of me and mine bring us suffering. Worrying about our families, health or careers brings anxiety and depression. Thoughts of material acquisition and sensual pleasure bring cravings, inappropriate actions and suffering of many kinds. Even the experience of pleasure brings craving for more and the clinging fear of loss of what we have. Ultimately, our obsession with me and mine makes us unhappy.

The good news is that each moment brings a new opportunity for happiness. Within each moment we can bring the Master to mind. It really is as simple as that. On the one hand, bringing the Master to mind invites us to a place of peace, on the other, bringing our problems to mind causes painful feelings. Why do we keep choosing the suffering of me and mine to the peace of the Master? It doesn't make good sense. It isn't practical.

As we spend more time in meditation contemplating the Master, this contemplation begins to be accompanied by happiness. When the saints tell us that the Master is always present, they are reminding us that to turn our face toward the Master is to bring his form to mind. Just to remember him brings an end to suffering in that moment. A thought is nothing, really. It arises, like smoke and fades into the same nothingness that it came from. When we entertain a thought we give it the power to make us miserable. We give it power over our minds. If we let it naturally fade, what Buddhists call "self-liberate", it has no power over us. Bringing the Master to mind allows thoughts to self-liberate. Bringing the Master to mind ends suffering in a heartbeat. This is the power and grace of the Master. This is why the Master is indispensable on the mystic path.

Baba Jaimal Singh continues in *Spiritual Letters*: "It is a fact, my son, that except for Shabd-dhun nothing is our own. Believe firmly: 'I am nothing; my Satguru is everything.'"

The Lord knows our minds are troublesome. That's because we take ownership of our bodies, minds and possessions. We really believe we have acquired our possessions by our own efforts, and we personally claim them, until the day comes when we realize that everything really belongs to the Master. Until that day, we might have to imagine that everything is his. Let's imagine that everything belongs to the Master.

When there is a problem at work, we can tell ourselves it is in the Master's hands and not worry. When we have financial difficulties, we can have faith that the Master will provide everything we need, and not worry. When we have problems in our families, we can believe everything is happening according to the Master's grace, and not worry. When craving for sensual pleasure arises, we can ponder whether or not satisfying the craving would bring us closer to the Master.

Why do we have to imagine? It is easy to say that we don't have a claim to anything, but if we watch our minds, our thoughts betray our true attitudes. Until we actually realize the unity of creation, we have to imagine. We can say we *believe* that everything belongs to the Master, but if we behave differently, what good is that belief if it is only another thought? So we have to have faith that everything is in the providence of the Master until the truth is realized, and the truth will be realized through our simran and bhajan.

All this imagining can get complicated at times. We can get confused and even forget to use our imagination in this positive way. Worries and anxieties then can overwhelm us. What should we do? Bring the Master to mind, begin our simran. Maharaj Charan Singh said, "The Master never leaves us. He never leaves a disciple." How do we access the Master who is always with us? If we can visualize his form, so much the better, but it isn't necessary. Just the act of remembering the Master can free us from the thoughts that are making us unhappy. In the blink of an eye, a tormented mind can be set free. The antidote for the poison of ego is always available to us, but we have to take advantage of it. Simran is the key to this remembrance. Remember the Master, remember the simran. Simran itself is an act of remembrance. The true gift of the Master is the Master himself. It is only through his grace that the Lord can be realized.

It is simpler than we think. Remember the Master. The act of remembrance will free us in any moment. Let not a moment pass without remembering him, and that eternity is all peace and bliss. Constant vigilance and constant remembrance will ultimately lead to union with the Lord. Very simple, but we can only do it right now, moment to moment.



*Those who reach the Truth  
do so by the Grace of the Lord and his Word,  
by the Message of his Messenger,  
by obedience to the Master, and through that effort  
which brings one to that Longing and Purity in  
Action  
in whose light one beholds the Beloved.  
Then nothing but the Beloved remains.*

Sheikh Abol-Hasan, *The Soul and A Loaf of Bread*,  
as rendered by Vraje Abramiam

# The Sun and the Shadow

Once upon a time  
the Beloved came and said:

I possess your love  
both day and night –  
but you'll never  
be my companion  
as long as you remain yourself.

I am the Sun,  
but you are just a shadow,  
walking upon the earth.

Step out of hiding  
and walk into my light –  
once you've been erased,  
then you will be  
my closest friend.

Farid al-Din Attar, in *Love's Alchemy, Poems  
from the Sufi Tradition*



# At the Very Least

There is an old story that goes like this:

The Lord said to a holy man, “Come, I will show you Hell.” They entered a room where a group of people sat around a huge pot of stew. Everyone was famished and desperate. Each held a spoon that reached the pot, but the handle was so long that it could not be used to reach their mouths. The suffering was terrible.

“Come now, I will show you Heaven,” the Lord said after awhile. They entered another room, identical to the first – the pot of stew, the group of people, the same long spoons. But there, everyone was happy and well nourished.

“I don’t understand,” said the holy man. “Why are they happy here when they are miserable in that other place, and everything is the same?” The Lord smiled. “Don’t you see?” he said. “Here, in Heaven, they have learned to feed each other.”

This poignant story reminds us that when we act on principle, when we act selflessly, no matter how dire the situation, we create an essential element of heaven in our lives. Throughout time, developing character has been a goal of parents, religions, schools and societies. Children’s books are full of morality tales where good conquers evil, doing the right thing is rewarded, and acquiring virtues is discussed in the simple language of a child. Religious tales are replete with the deeds of goodness that triumph over all and stir the heart of the Lord within us. The Masters continually remind us that the qualities needed to become a saint are the very same qualities and traits that a good human being possesses.

As initiates of a true Master we meditate, we don’t eat meat, we don’t use alcohol or drugs, and yet the Masters seem to be suggesting

that there is something more that we should be doing, since he exhorts us to also be good human beings.

Maharaj Sawan Singh, in *Philosophy of the Masters, Vol. III*, discusses the necessity of imbibing virtues and qualities that would form a solid foundation upon which we could build our spiritual journey back to the Lord.

*The Lord is the storehouse of all virtues. The soul which imbibes virtues realizes the Lord and is dear to him. Such a soul is blessed.*

Some of the most apparent virtues discussed are: not to injure the feelings of others; not to be rude; to give up desires and evil; not to talk ill of others; to do good even to evil-minded; to adopt truth, contentment, compassion and forgiveness. The list goes on and is both lofty and practical. It is almost a how-to manual for creating an internal and external atmosphere where our inner spiritual life can become strong and grow. As if to emphasize what it takes to win the favour of the Lord, Guru Arjun Dev, as quoted in *Message Divine*, says:

*That knowledge is humility, that quality is simplicity, and that precious gem is the sweet tongue. The disciple can win the favour of the Lord by putting on the garb of all these three qualities.*

Maharaj Charan Singh is quoted in the same book:

*We should conduct ourselves in a way that would be helpful in our spiritual progress. In our everyday life, we should hear and speak, read and write, do our daily chores in such a way and*

*associate with people that the total effect would be conducive to our spiritual development.*

God-realization should remain our ultimate goal and we should maintain a keen desire for the realization of that goal. Maharaj Charan Singh is quoted again in *Message Divine*:

*One who seeks to unravel the true mystery of life should first of all become a man in the true sense of the word.... He must possess the necessary virtues associated with man ... [and] put stress on the attainment of these virtues.*

The Masters are asking us to ponder over our actions before engaging in them, to act in a way that doesn't violate the principle of interdependence, and to maintain harmony in the society within which we live. They remind us that when we seek to act nobly, we awaken within the qualities which will ultimately lead us to union with him.

To love God and his creation; to not harm the feelings of others; to have compassion, contentment, forgiveness, truthfulness, gentleness, charity and kindness make us not only better citizens of the world, but more fit spiritually. It isn't the doing of one at the expense of the other. Maharaj Charan Singh as quoted in *Message Divine* says:

*All the aforementioned virtues should be so assimilated by the disciple as to become second nature.... This is possible only when one's mind has been cleansed of all impurities and has been engaged in spiritual practice with devotion for the*

*Master... With love for the Master in his heart and with regular spiritual practice, the disciple will increasingly imbibe all these virtues and will eventually attain those spiritual heights where Saints reside.*



*The One who is beyond the intellect, speech and senses,  
Who is the unborn, beyond the mind, mayas  
and the three attributes,  
That very Supreme Being, the culmination  
of pure existence, consciousness and bliss,  
Displays the exalted behaviour of a human being.*

*The Teachings of Goswami Tulsidas*

# The Café

It's a long way to the caravan *serai*  
so you stop in at a small café  
along the starry road to astonishment.  
You tie your camel and step inside ...

The sudden fragrance of rose  
seizes you with bittersweet nostalgia.  
Just a handful of dusty travelers here –  
Two drunks and a poet at first glance.

They greet you with a smile  
and a nod that says,  
“We know what you've been through  
to get this far ... ”  
then they sip wine that glows in the glass  
and makes their eyes shine  
with luminous silence that says,  
“We've already been where you're going.”

Somewhere in the back room  
a lone dervish whirls round and round  
to misty music pouring down  
from a secret sky.

You smile and pull up a chair –  
A jovial bartender sets your glass.  
And the poet fills it to the brim

with words from a wine bottle  
he keeps hidden in his shirt.

He knows you're thirsty  
for words that speak to your ecstasy,  
for words that intoxicate  
your loneliness  
and leave you forever lost  
to the world you once loved.

He knows the exact place  
on this journey  
where you threw away the schoolbooks  
you had on your back.  
There's a huge pile of schoolbooks there  
left by each traveller  
who stopped trying to make love  
by the book of arithmetic  
and began to travel light.

Oh, this poet knows  
the kind of words you need to hear  
by the time you arrive at *this* café!  
Words that make your gaze distant  
and wet with remembrance  
of the Lover you left behind  
so long long ago  
and who waits for you still  
at the end of this starry starry road ...

# One Day We Will Die

Kabir Sahib wastes no words in explaining our ultimate fate:

*Like a bubble in water  
Is our fate;  
One day we will vanish  
Like the stars  
That with the coming of dawn  
Fade.*

*Kabir, The Weaver of God's Name*

How often do we even think about the fact that we will die one day – vanish from this earth? The daily media constantly reminds us how temporary and fragile life is.

Yet, many of us seem oblivious to the fact that one day we will be the one whom our friends will take to the graveyard or crematorium. We perhaps only think of death when a loved one or someone our age unexpectedly dies. Otherwise, we avoid the thought.

We instead occupy our minds with the pursuit of enjoyment, money, status and family. Maharaj Sawan Singh reminds us of this when he says:

*We are very clever about our worldly affairs and always make appropriate arrangements for their successful execution. But with regard to death, which has no time fixed for it and may come at any time – in childhood, in youth, or in old age – we have never given a moment's thought.*

*Philosophy of the Masters, Vol. I*

Mystics advise us to reflect on the temporariness of our life and to consider its end, so we can leave this world with a peaceful mind and without regrets. Sarmad, a Persian mystic, put this question to us:

*My friend, you have wandered  
through cities, towns and deserts.  
You have followed the path of desires,  
pursuing a hundred passions.  
This caravan is reaching the destination  
and the journey is ending –  
Where have you been?*

*Sarmad, Martyr to Love Divine*

Where have we been? What have all our passions and desires brought us? Are we ever satisfied? Out of fear of the unknown, we keep ourselves and our minds busy, and try to ignore the fact that we will die one day. When we do think of death, we consider it a painful event, full of suffering, fear and grief. Associating it only with the sudden end of loving relationships and the irreversible loss of possessions is part of our ignorance.

Mystics experience death in a totally different way. They describe dying as the end of suffering, as merging into light and love, as going back to the Beloved, the Lord, and becoming one with him. For them death is not a painful end of a worldly life, but just a change from darkness to light. Maulana Rum says:

*It is not the kind of death that will consign you  
to the grave.  
It is, instead, a change that will usher you into Light.  
You need have no fear of death,*

*For apart from your physical body  
you have other bodies.  
Therefore, do not be afraid to come out of this body.*

*As quoted in Philosophy of the Masters, Vol. I*

The mystics' outlook on death is different from ours. They are conscious of the fact that human life is temporary, and they prepare themselves for the end of it, like Uwais, in a short story by Anthony de Mello:

*Uwais the Sufi was once asked,  
"What has grace brought you?"  
He replied,  
"When I wake in the morning I feel  
like a man who is not sure he will  
live till evening."  
Said the questioner,  
"But doesn't everyone know this?"  
Said Uwais,  
"They certainly do. But not all of them  
feel it. No one ever became drunk on  
the word wine."*

*The Song of the Bird*

The fact that mystics realize that death may strike at any moment makes them live in a conscious way. During this precious human life, not only do they fulfil their worldly responsibilities and obligations, but they also pay attention to the purpose of this human birth: to become conscious of the presence of the Divine; to realize that we are not this human body but a spiritual being – a soul, a drop

of the Divine. According to them, this human birth gives us the opportunity to merge into that divine ocean and become one with it. As Meister Eckhart says:

*It is your destiny to see as God sees,  
to know as God knows,  
to feel as God  
feels.*

*How is this possible? How?  
Because divine love cannot defy its very self...*

As quoted in *Love Poems from God*,  
rendered by Daniel Ladinsky

In this beautiful way, Meister Eckhart explains that the destiny of all is to become God. Sant Mat teaches us that our purpose on this planet, in this physical universe, is to return home, to become one with God. Or more to the point, our purpose is to rediscover the God that we are – that we have always been – and that our souls, hearing the Lord’s call, are spiraling upward on an inevitable inner journey homeward.

The Master repeatedly tells us that what will happen at the time of our death will be the logical conclusion of what we have done during our life. So if we follow the instructions of the Master and cultivate love and devotion for God in our hearts, the logical consequence will be that our attention will be focused on him at the moment we die. If we are sincere in our meditation practice, desires for worldly things will disappear, and only the yearning to meet him will fill our hearts. How could divine love resist such an honest and loving yearning? It cannot, says Meister Eckhart, “because divine love cannot defy its very self.” Divine love will be eternally true to its own being.

Maharaj Sawan Singh confirms in one of his letters that divine love will respond to our yearning:

*We are to leave this world one day, and if we are loving, obedient disciples, and have made proper preparations in this lifetime, we do not have the transition which we call death. While others weep, the spiritually developed soul departs happy – happier than a bridegroom on his wedding day.*

*The time of death is a critical one in our experience, when our friends and relatives are helpless to render any assistance; but for the followers of Sant Mat, it is the happiest time of all. The Master appears and takes the departing soul with him, and puts it in its upward journey at the place for which it is fit.*

*There is no rendering of accounts with Kal, provided there have been love for and obedience to the Master. The departing soul is happier than it has ever been before. There is absolutely no fear of death. The Master's presence within breaks all worldly connections, and the mind is free to continue the upward journey.*

*Spiritual Gems*

The message of the mystics is clear: Recognize the transitory nature of this human life and prepare ourselves for our death. When we practice meditation regularly with love and devotion, we will not experience dying as frightening, mysterious or painful. We will experience it in the way the mystics do, as a change from darkness into light. This change heralds the end of our suffering; it heralds our merging into love, going back to our Beloved, the Lord, and becoming one with him.





# Master

*Please do not worry in the least. An initiate can never go out of the hands of his Master. His Master is always with him and is looking after his welfare.*

*Apparent progress in meditation depends on many factors. The disciple's duty is to go on meditating as advised by the Master and not to bother about the results. That is not his concern. This is looked after by the Master. Sometimes a cycle of karmas comes when meditation appears to have become a dry sort of affair without any progress, and the disciple feels as if he has been forsaken or that meditation is not bearing any fruit. Neither of these things ever happens, as the disciple is never forsaken by the Master, nor has meditation stopped bearing its fruit. Every moment that you give to meditation stands to your credit.*

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Quest for Light*

*Since the Master is the human manifestation of Shabd, and we too are part of Shabd, when we meet the physical Master he seems very familiar. We may feel we have known him forever or that we have met before. In reality, at a deeper spiritual level, he is us. How can anyone be more closely connected to us? He is our own true Self. The only difference is that the physical Master is aware that his real form is that of Shabd while we are not aware of this truth. With the constant practice of meditation, the layers of misconceptions and illusions that cloud our perception begin to dissolve, and we start to see that the outer and inner Masters are one and the same.*

*Living Meditation*

# Jaundiced Eyes

The longer we are on the path, the more our weaknesses become apparent to us. If our flaws were forthcoming more quickly when we were new to the practice of meditation, we might become extremely discouraged. When our shortcomings are revealed to us gradually, we can cope with them more easily and improve on them without throwing our hands up in despair.

Two frailties that often reveal themselves as we travel the spiritual path are common to all of us: pride and jealousy. Guru Arjun Dev in *Jap Ji: A Perspective* is quoted:

*Goodness does not even come near the person  
who proclaims himself good.*

In another stanza he refers to a humble person by saying:

*Whoever considers himself to be lowly  
ought to be recognized as the highest of all.*

Spiritual progress is challenging when pride clouds our vision, when we start thinking of others as undeserving, inferior, insignificant or even worthless. Only someone who is humble, who considers others greater, better and more worthy can be recognized as being fit to evolve on the spiritual journey. Maharaj Charan Singh says:

*The one thing all of us on the path of Sant Mat have to  
understand is the value of humility. Meekness and humility  
are great virtues on this path and unless we acquire them and*

*do away with our ego and pride, progress is most difficult. Our ego and pride stand in our way and make the mind powerful and strong. It is humility which will rid us of our ego and self-importance.*

*Quest for Light*

When jealousy propels us to slander another person, Guru Amar Das advises us:

*It is improper to slander anyone,  
but self-willed fools indulge in defaming others.  
These slanderers, with their faces blackened,  
will fall into the most dreaded of hells.*

*As quoted in Jap Ji: A Perspective*

Jealousy is usually an underlying cause of slander and vilifying others. A jealous person might have a hard time accepting others' happiness, honour, high regard and good reputation. By slandering, a jealous person thinks he can make himself look better and make the other person look inferior. In reality the reverse is more likely. He has probably not learned the truth of the statement, "When I blow out your candle, it doesn't make my candle burn brighter." In reality, the slanderer is looked down upon and thought less of in the eyes of others. The slanderer's vision is blurred, so the merits of others seem like faults to him. His mind is weak and polluted with jealousy, tainting the way he sees the world and others in it.

The saints tell us that we see the world according to our own vision. In *Jap Ji: A Perspective*, Bhai Gurdas tells a story of two men who are sent to a town. One is asked to find a truly good man and the other to find a truly evil one. They both come back alone. Bhai Gurdas explains

that because the first man was jealous and prideful, he saw only people like himself, so he was unable to find a single good man. The second man came home alone because he saw himself as the lowest of the low, the least among human beings; therefore, he could see no one worse than himself. The two men were looking in the same town, among the same people, but they were unable to complete their task because what they saw in the town was a reflection of themselves. We see the world through our own vision, from our own perspective. If we see the world as a negative place, it is a reflection of ourselves, hence the saying, “Jaundiced eyes see everything as yellow.”

What is our vision? Are we looking through humble eyes or through jaundiced eyes? We make our own judgments of good or bad depending on our vision. The Masters ask us to improve ourselves rather than judge others through our own “yellow” lenses. When we awaken our consciousness through the Master’s grace, we would see only the radiance of the Lord in everyone.



*We are accustomed to pick out faults in other people. But this is not the way of spiritually inclined people. A satsangi or anyone keen on spiritual progress should try to find out his own faults and endeavour to give them up, one after the other, rather than find faults in other people. It is only a sense of superiority and of being above others that induces this habit in us, which is the very opposite of humility.*

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Light on Sant Mat*

# Law of Action and Reaction

In *Jap Ji: A Perspective* the author says:

When God fashioned the creation, he also established a universal system of laws to govern it. It is here that Guru Nanak explains the most important aspect of this system. He says that both righteous and sinful actions, both good and bad deeds, are not mere figments of the imagination but rather are a concrete reality.

In this world of actions and consequences, nothing happens without cause or without reason; nothing comes about by accident or coincidence. Whatever takes place here is either the consequence of a previous action or is a new action which will bring forth a new consequence. The creation is the land of absolute justice, absolute fairness. Except for the consequence of a committed action, there can neither be an award bestowed nor a punishment given. If we do not know the cause of an outcome, it does not mean that the outcome is without reason. Whatever actions an individual commits are imprinted on the mind. They remain with the individual forever. To face the consequences of his actions, an individual has to return to the creation time and time again, and thus remain tied to the wheel of transmigration.

The higher the distance from which a person falls the greater the impact. This law will not change because of a person's ignorance. One is bound to get hurt whether one jumps from a ten-story building intentionally or falls from that height accidentally. Similarly, one has to face the

consequences of an action; it is immaterial whether the action is committed consciously or unconsciously. When Guru Nanak states, “On reaching there, O Nanak, all is revealed,” he explains that those who do not believe in this law of action and consequence find out the truth when they reach the court of the lord of justice. Guru Nanak cautions us that non-belief in the law of action and consequence does not give one a reprieve from it. The universal laws apply equally and consistently to every individual. He says:

*Intemperate pleasures result in pain;  
over-indulgence leads to disease and ultimate decay.  
Without end is the suffering caused by such pleasures,  
and without submission to God's will  
one must keep revolving in transmigration.*

In *Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. I*, Maharaj Charan Singh says more on this subject in response to a question from a disciple about clearing karmas:

How do we account for our karmas? All karmas have association with the mind, and the mind is slave of the senses, so, being slave of the senses, it collects dross. The soul has already taken the company of the mind. So all these karmas have become the master. The soul has become the slave, and the slave has no option but to dance to the tune of the master. Due to these karmas, which have become our master, the soul dances from one flesh to another, from one body to another. Unless the soul becomes master in the house, it cannot get free from the clutches of the mind and become one with the

Father. Since the mind is fond of pleasure, unless the mind gets better pleasure than the sensual pleasures, the mind refuses to leave the sensual pleasures. And that better pleasure the Lord has kept within every one of us at the eye centre, which has been referred to by different mystics by different names, as you all know.

So unless we withdraw the mind to the eye centre and it comes in touch with that divine melody within and we taste that nectar, that better pleasure within, the mind refuses to leave the senses. With that better pleasure, with the taste of that nectar, slowly and slowly the mind starts leaving all the sensual pleasures and has its direction towards its own origin, that is, Trikuti. When the mind reaches Trikuti, the soul automatically gets release from the mind. The knot between soul and mind has been untied. Now the soul is whole; the soul is free; the soul shines. Now the soul is no longer under the sway of the mind. Now soul is the master, and the mind has become the slave.

You can say you have burnt all the karmas, you have destroyed all the karmas, or you have risen above the karmas. You can use any phrase. It is immaterial. You have accounted for all the karmas, Caesar has been given his due. But until the soul leaves the mind, our karmic account is not cleared at all. Only then does the soul shine and merge back into the Lord. So this process helps us to untie this knot of soul and mind.



# The Mind

Is our mind capable of seeing the reality of the universe? Albert Einstein, in *Einstein: His Life and Universe*, is quoted as having said, “Try to penetrate with our limited means the secrets of nature and you will find that behind all the discernable laws and connections, there remains something subtle, intangible and inexplicable.”

And Maharaj Charan Singh says:

*God gave us intellect to carry on the works of this world of phenomena. Beyond that our wisdom cannot reach.... One who relies on reason alone cannot attain true knowledge (knowledge of the Lord). Reasoning is the function of our physical brain....*

*God and things spiritual can be realized only by the direct perception of the soul, through contact with Shabd. The soul can perceive clearly without going through the process of reasoning. Our mind is too feeble and limited to comprehend the unlimited and incomprehensible One. It is the Lord's will that we should rise above cold reason and fly towards him on the wings of love and faith.*

*Divine Light*

Still, we try to make sense of the world with our mind, and it persists in convincing us that its reality should be our reality. But what we seek is something more lasting, more true; we seek an absolute reality, we seek to comprehend “the unlimited and incomprehensible One.” So the problem becomes: How can true knowledge enter a deluded and ever changing mind? How can we transcend the world of relativity and duality?

The Masters explain that while the mind can be subdued for a short period of time through sacrifices and austerities, it cannot permanently be won over in this manner. Since the mind's nature is impulsive and attached to the emotions, it must find something that is permanent and that brings real bliss in order to control it.

Guru Ram Das as quoted in *Jap Ji: A Perspective* says:

*Every moment the mind rushes about in delusion  
and does not, even for an instant, stay in its home.  
When the Guru applies the goad of Shabd on its head,  
it comes back to inhabit its own mansion.*

Guru Ram Das says that the powerful mind, which is always running after material objects, beauty and sensual pleasures, can be subdued through the “goad of Shabd on its head”. This suggests that we can convert the mind that we use to operate in the illusory world into a mind that pulls us inward and upward, towards the unlimited and incomprehensible. This is not so easy because of the very nature of its duality. Kabir Sahib as quoted in *Jap Ji: A Perspective* says, “This mind is maya, this mind is a divine entity; this mind is also the essence of the five elements.” The mind is both divine and part of maya. It is when the mind becomes subdued through contact with the Shabd the individual becomes capable of seeing Reality clearly.

Kabir continues:

*When the mind realizes its essence, it is contented.  
One who knows the mystery understands the mind.  
Let no one delay the union of the mind with its source.  
One finds the Truth when one is absorbed in the Truth.  
Our business is with the mind –  
one who disciplines one's mind becomes perfect.*

When the mind merges with its source through meditation all impressions are erased and the mind becomes pure. The very mind which dominated the soul can then begin working for the soul. The mind and soul then become obedient to the will of the Lord. And what is the will of the Lord? As Maharaj Charan Singh says in *Divine Light*: “It is the Lord’s will that we should rise above cold reason and fly towards him on the wings of love and faith.”



*With both your body and mind,  
sit in the company of the Saints  
and you will receive the Nam  
that leads you to the true Lord, Satnam....  
Your breath is like a drumbeat,  
constantly proclaiming the departure  
of the caravan of life.  
Radha Soami has docked his ship –  
come on board and cross the ocean free of charge.*

Soami Ji Maharaj, *Sar Bachan Poetry*

# Crack the Nut

Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi resided in Konya, Turkey, during the 13th century (1207-1273). His Master was Shams al-Din of Tabriz (Shams), a famous saint. Shams al-Din of Tabriz met Rumi in a startling fashion. Rumi, at the time, was a traditional mystic scholar. Shams is said to have taken Rumi's books, a representation of his intellectual brilliance, and thrown them into a well to show him how he needed to *live* what he had been reading and writing. The subsequent interchanges between them sometimes lasted for hours, and sometimes, even days. Rumi's students became jealous forcing Shams to leave. When Shams returned, the intimate hours of spiritual conversation began again. While the legend varies, it is said that Shams was murdered. Many of Rumi's quatrains in *Divan-i-Shams-i Tabriz*, which were written out of love and longing for his Master, describe his inner journey, and ultimately his intimate reunion with his Master.

Rumi says:

*Don't forget the nut, being so proud of the shell,  
The body has its inward ways,  
the five senses. They crack open,  
and the Friend is revealed.  
Crack open the Friend, you become  
the All-One.*

*Unseen Rain: Quatrains of Rumi*

Who would ever think that a nut is proud of its shell? And yet, we who are spiritual beings going through a human experience tend to think that we are really the shell, the covering, or the body.

We are unaware of our true value, our divine heritage, our soul. We become engrossed in the body, its desires, its feeding and clothing, completely unaware of what is inside us, just as apparently the nut is unaware that its value is at its core, the nut or kernel within it and not its covering or shell.

*The body has its inward ways,*

As the Masters repeatedly explain, we have a way out of this material plane. There is a door, a gateway at the eye centre. This is sometimes called the tenth gate. It is possible for us to journey inward with the mind. The saints tell us that the eye centre is the seat of the mind and soul knotted together. The mind, enslaved by the senses, has been dragging the soul through the mire of Pind for many eons, but, with the help of a living Master, the mind can concentrate at the eye centre and open that inner passage to the inner planes of existence, ultimately finding its true destination at its source. We are fortunate that we are in the human form where this doorway resides, so that we can go in and find our Lord and our true home.

*the five senses. They crack open,  
and the Friend is revealed.*

Rumi is saying in this poem that when we have complete concentration and one-pointed attention on the Master, we will find him within in his Radiant Form.

*Crack open the Friend, you become  
the All-One.*

Just as we crack open the shell and find the nut, when we delve deeply into the Master – when, in essence, we merge into him on the spiritual planes within – we find that he is really the “All-One”, the Sat Purush, God himself.

This is the real wonder of the path, that the Word has become flesh, that God has come down to our level in human form and walks among us as a human being. It is when we find him within, however, that we discover – the saints tell us – that he is one with God. By merging into him we are merging ourselves into God, achieving God-realization, which is the highest purpose of human existence.

This is the road map of this path, the whole series of steps in a nutshell. But the journey of the soul is a long one, a difficult process, and Rumi describes it as sometimes seeming endless. The poem continues:

*Keep walking, though there's no place to get to.  
Don't try to see through the distances.  
That's not for human beings. Move within,  
but don't move the way fear makes you move.*

As Baba Ji has often said, the Master is in charge of our spiritual progress. We keep asking, like the little kid in the back seat of the car on a long journey, are we there yet? Rumi says, don't ask. Keep going, because doing our simran and our meditation is all we can do. Do it with love and devotion, do it with faith and hope, not with fear. Do it with determination until it becomes a habit; just do it. We have our simran, the five holy names, and the instructions given to us at the time of initiation. By following the Master's instructions, we ultimately arrive at our destination, which is union with the Beloved.

The next verse describes a night of meditation that results in that inner union. The soul is being compared to a bird. Shams is said to have been known as the Winged One because of his spiritual abilities.

*I circle your nest tonight,  
around and around until morning*

In this illustration, the nest is the eye centre, the home or roost of Rumi's Master, Shams of Tabriz, and the circling is simran or his soul concentrated in love and devotion for his Master as he heads for the nest. Rumi knows he can find his Master when he enters the eye centre. However, it takes a very long time to concentrate the attention completely, and Rumi says his soul is circling that nest all night, "around and around until morning."

*when a breath of air says, Now,*

"Air" is listed among descriptions for the Shabd or sound current in *The Treasury of Mystic Terms*. So Rumi is saying that the sound current, the "breath of air" itself chooses the time for this union, which the Masters say is a natural occurrence when concentration is complete. Rumi continues:

*and the Friend holds up like a goblet  
some anonymous skull.*

For Rumi, the "Friend" is Shams al-Din of Tabriz. For us, it is our Master. It is common in Persian mystic poetry to refer to the Master as the Friend or Beloved. It is also common to describe the intoxication of divine love as wine.

In the book *Sarmad: Martyr to Love Divine*, there is a chapter “In the Wine Shop” that explains the allusion of Persian mystics to the image of the wine, the wine seller, and the wine shop to divine intoxication, the Master, and the eye centre:

*I bid thee drink no other wine  
but this, the everlasting fount:  
A fortune of delight to count,  
in this brief hour of the world is thine.*

*Give not this precious heart of thine  
save to the Loved One's lock, to bind:  
Scatter not life upon the wind,  
nor live one moment without wine.*

In Rumi's verse, quoted previously, he says the Friend is holding up “some anonymous skull”, like a goblet. How often have we heard that we have to give up our head, our ego, to pay the full price and enjoy union with the Beloved? Our ego, is the obstacle between us and the inner Master. We pay the full price when we merge fully into the Beloved. Here is a graphic image of Rumi, no longer conscious of himself, only experiencing his Master and about to unite with him in the intoxication of divine love. Can there be a more intimate, more compelling image of the reward for complete surrender to the Beloved?



# Book Review

## **The Soul and A Loaf of Bread: The Teachings of Sheikh Abol-Hasan of Kharaqan**

Renditions by Vraje Abramian

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Little is known about the life of Abol-Hasan of Kharaqan (often called Kharaqani or Kharqani). A farmer and gardener, he was unlettered and never left his native village of Kharaqan. Of the purpose of his life, he said,

*My body is to work and replenish this earth,  
my tongue, to speak of this Love,  
and my head to lay at my Beloved's feet  
in surrender.*

His small Sufi lodge is said to have been the only such gathering place in tenth-century Sufism supported entirely from the saint's personal income. The title of this collection of his poems and sayings comes from this verse:

*Whoever knocks on this door, feed him and ask not of his faith,  
for if he deserved a soul from his Creator, he certainly deserves  
a loaf of bread from Abol-Hasan.*

To this little gathering place came such Sufi luminaries as Abu-Saeed Ibn-e-Abil-Kheir and Ansari of Herat, who wanted to be near and learn from the saint. Several of the Sufi orders that developed over the subsequent centuries trace their lineage back through Abol-Hasan.

The overriding theme of the poems and sayings in this collection might be said to be longing for the Lord. Abol-Hasan describes a lifetime of effort, driven by his longing for union:

*Tomorrow when they ask me,  
“What were you doing and what have you brought?”  
I’ll say, “This dog of an ego,  
which I spent a lifetime watching,  
so it wouldn’t fall upon me or others,  
and this mind full of filth,  
which I spent my life trying to purify.”*

He explains how much longing is needed:

*Sit at this Gate and cry, a year, two, ten,  
twenty or thirty years. Finally, you’ll be asked,  
“What is it with you? What’s ailing you?!”*

And he describes the union that follows, in all its profundity and mystery, in just a few words:

*I found my Beloved  
where I could not find myself.*

Though his own path was that of longing, Abol-Hasan believed that the spiritual path is profoundly unique to each individual. He even said that there are as many paths to God as there are humans. To his disciple Abu-Saeed Ibn-e-Abil-Kheir, he said:

*Your road to the Beloved is one of joy and bliss,  
mine is one of Longing. Now then, you live in delight  
and leave me this Pain, for we are both doing  
the Beloved’s work.*

Attar, a great Sufi poet living one hundred years after Abol-Hasan, told of another trait in Abol-Hasan – boldness. Attar wrote, “Abol-Hasan of Kharaqan ... was the King of the Path ... owner of the secrets of the Truth and ... in boldness on the path of Love of such caliber that could not be described.” Abol-Hasan does praise boldness in his poetry:

*Don't be meek in this Love,  
be kind to people, receive the wisdom of the Prophet's teachings,  
but don't be meek in this Love;  
for God is Bold and likes those who are bold in his Adoration ...  
this Path is for the Bold, the Drunkard, and the Lunatic;  
with God, Lunacy, Drunkenness, and Boldness works.*

And his verses exemplify that boldness – particularly those that take the form of a short dialogue with the Beloved:

*The Beloved said, "Abol-Hasan, do you  
want me to tell the world what I know of your  
wretchedness,  
and watch you be stoned to death?"  
and I said, "Do you want me to tell the world of your  
Infinite Tenderness and Mercy  
and watch the world stop praying to You?"  
and my Love said, "No more of this, neither from you,  
nor from me."*

Balancing out such bold exchanges are many other passages revealing Abol-Hasan's position of utter humility and surrender before the Lord. For example,

*Choose Surrender, and your  
journey home will be short.*

And,

*Do not go to your Lord carrying your penances  
even if they conquered the seven skies,  
do not go there feeling generous,  
even if you have given away the whole world in charity,*

*and do not go there carrying your sins, for you knew  
when you committed them.  
Go there empty and broken.*

Throughout the collection Abol-Hasan gives awe-inspiring glimpses of the intimacy and loving-kindness of the true disciple's relationship with God. For example, he writes,

*Do not injure your Lord's feelings, not for fear of punishment,  
but to avoid that sorrow that will assail you  
when you realize in truth whose heart you have broken.*

And,

*Anyone I hurt once turns away from me.  
You I hurt daily, and yet, You are the One  
always there for me.*

Abol-Hasan makes clear that the Lord is ever near the seeker. In fact, the Lord himself is the one who pulls the seeker to him, and who instills the longing for union in the seeker's heart:

*The Beloved says, "I am the Road you travel,  
and I too am the Host that receives you;  
when you speak, I hear; when you think, I know;  
when you flee from me, I am your refuge;  
when you seek refuge, I am your shelter;  
your prayers I receive, and your hopes I fulfill;  
I am with you in desolation, and I am with you in your elation;  
be therefore Here, Now, in This Presence."*



