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# Spiritual Link

Science of the Soul Research Centre

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## **Spiritual Link**

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# If You Serve the Guru

*Listen, O innocent devotees,  
repeat your simran without a break  
and all your bad deeds will be burnt.  
If you can serve the guru  
this age of darkness won't harm you  
and you'll come to know liberation.  
The guru –  
treasure-house of knowledge,  
mountain of courage –  
he will ferry your boat to freedom  
if you practise his simran.  
He is the force of life at the core of creation.  
Where he is, there is liberation.  
If you practise his simran  
all the gods and goddesses will be yours.  
Glory to my guru – my father and mother –  
who helps me quit this coming and going,  
this living and dying in countless forms.  
Concentrating in the innermost heart,  
Bodhla has come to see his own Being.*

Mankoji Bodhla, in *Many Voices, One Song*





# What Becomes of the Broken-Hearted?

The music, poetry, art and literature of every culture throughout history tell stories of loss, separation and desolation of some sort or another. Often these stories end with redemption. They're stories about the loss of love, mourning for its loss and coming through that experience transformed. They're stories of being human, being separated from love and longing for its return.

Artists, musicians and dancers tell these stories. But only mystics can tell us the story behind the story: why we feel separate and alone, how we got that way and how we can return to the love we have lost – to return not to all our substitutions for love but to our one true love, the Lord of our soul. Only mystics can show us the road to redemption, the road to return and union.

They tell us that the most basic part of us is not the cells or molecules or DNA that make up our bodies, but something more lasting, more real, although the senses can't perceive it. The core of what we are is the soul.

Mystics have noted that the soul is not something we have, but something we *are*. It is of the same essence as God, the dynamic power, the loving intelligence that created all that exists. Another name for this power is Shabd or Nam.

Every soul, by its nature, longs to be reunited with the power that created it: this Shabd, this Lord. Actually, the soul is part and parcel of the Lord already, but in our current state we feel separation, not union.

Maharaj Charan Singh explains in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. I, that the Lord “himself implants in us his devotion or his yearning or his

longing for himself... No possible logical explanation can prove the existence of the Lord.”

Hazur continues:

*But he gives his own proof when he creates that loneliness within us, and we find that this feeling of loneliness doesn't leave us, no matter what we may achieve in this world. That is actually the inclination of the soul towards its own origin. It will not rest unless it goes back to its own source, its own origin. So the very soul in the body proves the existence of the Lord.*

So this loneliness, this longing that we feel, is nothing but the soul wanting to return to its source, and it is the essential human experience that makes its way into every song, story and religion of mankind. An American gospel song says:

*Lord I feel like going home.  
I tried and failed and I'm tired and weary.  
Everything I ever done was wrong,  
And I feel like going home.*

Charlie Rich, “Feel Like Going Home”

“I tried and failed and I’m tired and weary. Everything I ever done was wrong.” That pretty much sums up how many of us feel a lot of the time. We’re tired and we’re weary – of the bright lights and loud music of this world, and the false promises the world hands out like lottery tickets.

The mind and senses trick us into believing that we can find love and satisfaction and contentment here, but our hearts get broken over

and over in this world, no matter how hard we try to pursue pleasure and avoid pain. A pop song from the 1960s captures this feeling:

*But happiness is just an illusion  
Filled with sadness and confusion.  
What becomes of the broken-hearted  
Who had love that's now departed?*

Jimmy Ruffin,  
"What Becomes of the Broken-Hearted"

Sooner or later, we just want to go home. But even then, we get it wrong. What is a soul to do? Maharaj Charan Singh explains in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. II:

*We are all blind, groping in the dark. He is the only one who can show us the light out of this darkness. And he has his own ways and means to show that light to us.... We are just helpless.*

We wonder why we feel like such failures, why we feel, as it says in the gospel song, that everything we do is wrong. Maybe the answer is that this is the nature of any process that involves growth and ascending to higher levels. Sometimes when you climb a mountain, if it's really steep, you can't go straight up. You go on switchbacks to reduce the steepness. It means the trail zig-zags to reduce the incline. On a switchback trail, sometimes it seems that you're going back toward where you came from, even though you're always heading upward.

In the same way, in any difficult endeavour, this appearance of going backward is necessary to go forward. When you see manuscripts of famous songwriters and poets and novelists (if they write in longhand), you see that their paper is filled with cross-outs. Gymnasts

miss their mark. Athletes fall. Think of learning to ride a skateboard, or surf or ice skate. You have to fall over and over and over to get the feel of the board or the skates, to learn how to balance your weight. Designers and engineers have to be free to fail in order to refine their computer code and designs. It's only when you make mistakes that you can see how to improve your design, your painting, your poem, your dance routine.

There is no endeavour – no skill, no craft, no job – in which you can get it right without first getting it wrong, over and over. Getting it wrong, failing, falling, is part of how we grow and learn. So much of our sense of failure is just a false perception. We mistakenly believe that we don't have what it takes to follow this path. But the Masters tell us that there are no failures in Sant Mat.

Hazur always used the example of learning to walk to show us the proper attitude toward our discipleship. In *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. II, he says:

*The mother wants the child to learn to walk, but the child falls. He has scratches and bruises, but he gets up again. Again he tries to learn.... So similarly, we also have our own human failings when we are on the path, but if we get up again, and again are steadfast in trying to succeed, we may fall again, but again we try to succeed. Naturally those failures are an attempt to go forward, not backward.*

And failing keeps us humble. We would never become aware of the mercy of the Master if our lives were smooth sailing. Our so-called failures are a window through which we can get a peek at the Lord's mercy. How else would we realize our own helplessness? Without a



sense of our own helplessness, when all our efforts fail, how else would we realize that we are completely dependent on the grace of the Lord?

Maybe we have to fail a lot before we can admit that we can't achieve spiritual liberation on our own. We humans naturally try to achieve our goals through our effort and control, and this is just as true in our meditation as it is in digging a ditch or writing a report. Gerald G. May, a psychiatrist and spiritual counselor, writes in *The Dark Night of the Soul*:

*We may yearn to “let go and let God”, but it usually doesn’t happen until we have exhausted our own efforts. There is a relentless willfulness in us that seldom ceases until we have been brought to our knees by incapacity and failure.*

And then he says, “God’s grace flows through the ruins of our failed attempts, softens our willfulness and takes us where we could not go on our own.” So all our own imperfections and failed attempts to do what the Master asks of us are part of our road home, part of our liberation. Leonard Cohen, poet-musician, wrote in the song “Anthem”:

*Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything  
That’s how the light gets in.*

The light that gets through the cracks in everything is the Master’s grace. That light, not some mythical perfection of ours – forever beyond our reach – is what pulls us to him.

By focusing on what is divine and perfect, that is, the Master and the Lord who sent him, and by strengthening the relationship between him and what is divine and perfect within us – our soul – we are doing all that is within our power to do.

We implement this focus, this process of bridging the gap between our own imperfection and the perfection of the Master, simply by obeying his instructions: meditating to the best of our ability and following the four vows we take at the time of initiation.

Of course the irony is that once we begin this process in earnest, once we dedicate ourselves to this way of life, we realize how wide the gap is between our imperfection and his perfection. We realize that the only way out of this dilemma – no matter how sincere and disciplined our effort, no matter how strong our desire – is the Master's grace. And then our journey becomes one not of failure but of gratitude. The gratitude we then feel makes us realize that it's not that we are small, but that he is great.



*Were my whole body festooned with eyes,  
I would gaze at my Master with untiring zeal.  
O, how I wish that every pore of my body  
would turn into a million eyes –  
then, as some closed to blink,  
others would open to see!  
But even then my thirst to see him  
might remain unquenched.  
What else am I to do?  
To me, O Bahu, a glimpse of my Master  
is worth millions of pilgrimages to the holy Ka'ba!  
Sultan Bahu*

# Fire of Devotion

In *Spiritual Heritage*, a story is told by Maharaj Charan Singh that illustrates several beautiful aspects of the path. One of these aspects is the fact that Masters create the kindling for fires of devotion in their disciples and then light those fires.

This point is beautifully illustrated in a chapter titled “Devotee by Maharaj Ji’s Choice,” where we read that during an evening meeting at Dera, someone asked Hazur, “Who was Shadi?” In response, Hazur related the tale of a dacoit, who broke into people’s homes to steal and also sometimes stole cattle. He used to sit on the road leading to Beas and harass people going to see the Great Master, sometimes even stealing their belongings. Many satsangis complained to the Great Master, but he “would just smile and keep quiet.”

Finally, one of the respected men in Shadi’s village stopped and asked Shadi why he was always trying to frighten people. He also spoke to him of Maharaj Sawan Singh. As Hazur related, Shadi slowly began to listen and then one day decided to go to the Dera himself. Great Master was giving satsang when he got there, and Shadi heard him say to the sangat, “You will have to pay for what you are doing.” In telling this story, Hazur explained that Shadi was a Muslim and didn’t believe in karma. Hazur then said, “But the words of the Great Master had taken root in his heart and would not leave him.”

Shadi couldn’t forget those words and eventually begged the village elder to take him to the Master; there he asked for initiation, which he was granted after promising to repay everyone he had stolen from. He gave away his house and everything he owned and moved to the Dera.

Shadi then became a very devoted disciple, living for years as the Dera blacksmith and Great Master's personal attendant. In fact, he never again left the colony.

Great Master lit a fire inside Shadi, just as the Master is lighting a fire in each one of us. We fuel his fire with meditation, with simran, and with our efforts to become better human beings. Isn't it lovely to feel the warmth of his flame? Isn't it deeply satisfying to see that, yes, we are actually becoming, ever so slowly, through his grace, satsangis rather than simply initiates?

Maharaj Charan Singh continuously told us that our meditation is nothing but a way to make us receptive to his love. As we become receptive, we begin to experience life differently. We shake our heads and laugh a little more; we endure pain and sorrow differently, remembering the Giver. We copy him as we try to cultivate a tiny portion of the compassion and patience for others that he shows us.

Even though the changes may be slow and may feel small, they are no small thing. These are signs of our growing relationship with the Master. The Master says that this is not a path of sound and light; it is a path of love, and we are blowing on the flames of that love every day in our meditation, blowing those little flames into a roaring fire of devotion.



*I made a close and careful search  
And found that worry for the future is useless.*

*Kabir the Great Mystic*

# Our Scatteredness

Perhaps most of us don't think we are anywhere near the still, focused and peaceful disciples we once thought we might be by now. A Sufi poet, Shaikh Abil-Kheir, describes our plight.

*One moment, You are all I know, Friend.*

*Next moment, eat, drink and be merry!*

*Another moment, I put every beast in shame.*

*O' Friend, How will this scatteredness that is me  
find its way to You?*

*Nobody, Son of Nobody, renditions by Vraje Abramian*

This is a good question.

The mystic poets understand the human condition. The teachings of the saints in every mystical tradition are straightforward; they tell us the kingdom of God is within us. We must turn our attention away from the transitory pleasures of the world and focus our attention inward. It all sounds simple enough: quiet the mind; focus our attention; “Be still, and know that I am God”; the Master will be our ultimate friend and companion; he waits for us at the eye centre. All we need to do is just follow the four vows and do our meditation every day.

And sometimes, when we are in the presence of our Master, or when we remember him, we do say, “Yes, you are the one I want to give my time and attention to.” But then, as the poet notes, the next moment we are out frolicking in the creation. We pursue the sense pleasures – looking for the best vegetarian desserts, the most enticing

distractions, the latest high-tech gadgets – and we wonder why the world isn't providing us with more happiness and satisfaction.

Thus Abil-Kheir asks a central question on behalf of everyone who has not yet realized the Shabd form of the Master within: "How will this scatteredness that is me, find its way to You?"

That question is also asked by others. Sarmad, a seventeenth-century Indian saint, observes in *Sarmad, Martyr to Love Divine*:

*Sometimes I seek the world.  
Sometimes spirit ...  
I am drowning in the sea of shame and regret.  
My only wish is that even for one breath  
I may not forget You.  
But alas! with every breath I am negligent.*

Sarmad, speaking on behalf of every struggling soul, says: I'd like to focus on you, God, with even one breath. And I can't even do that!

We try to focus. We try to give our attention. We listen for advice in satsang about how to have more disciplined lives, how to have a better attitude and for ways to trick the mind into doing more simran. And the results aren't very impressive. Hafez asks:

*Who resides inside my weary heart?  
I remain silent full of passion and fight!  
Discord rules my heart: Oh, where are you, musician!  
Sing your tune; bring harmony to this patrician ...*

*Bereft of sleep, heart breaking with empty thoughts,  
Hung over for a thousand nights! Where is the tavern?*

*The Poems of Hafez, translation by Reza Ordoubadian*

Where indeed, is our treasure house, the source of comfort, what Hafez calls “the tavern?”

All the good advice on how to meet and find God isn't providing us with what we long for – hearing and merging with the Shabd within. Maharaj Charan Singh used to say that if you are hungry, your hunger will not be satisfied by reading recipe books.

It is perfectly correct that the Masters tell us that we must sit in meditation with no expectations. Our task is to be obedient to the vows we have freely taken. Out here in the world, we are to pay off our karmas and follow the spiritual practice with gratitude. We can be appreciative that we have a spiritual path that promises to take us to our true home. We can be grateful for good companions and the grace to attend satsang and to sit in meditation.

But meanwhile, we remain unsatisfied. And the mystics and saints maintain that our sorrow and dissatisfaction are gifts from God. Sarmad does not suggest that we consult a doctor to see if our broken hearts can be mended. He writes in *Sarmad, Martyr to Love Divine*:

*Every moment, and everywhere,  
I am aware that your grace and forgiveness,  
Outweigh my transgressions ...  
My dark deeds cannot outdo your compassion....*

*My feet have worn these chains for a lifetime.  
But even if I'm imprisoned by countless sins,*

*I have hope for a thousand salvations,  
in a single act of his grace.*

Hazur says in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. III, “In our life, there’s a miracle at every step.” But do we know that? Do we understand how close the Master is to us and how perfectly he is guiding us? If a disciple asks, “How will this scatteredness, that is me, find its way to You?” What does the Master say?

Here are five hints of encouragement.

First hint: Let go, trust him. This is his play, and he will bring about our transformation in his way, on his schedule and according to his plans. He is coming for us. Our loving, divine parent will never abandon us. When we let go, we are letting go of the ego, of our own delusions of being in control.

When we let go, when we admit that this journey has nothing to do with our strength, our virtue, or our capacity, then we can relax. Then we become aware of his presence.

Second hint: Or in this case, much more than a hint because this is a direct command: We have to meditate. He begs us to do our meditation. Why? The simplest answer is that we are told that our efforts in meditation please the Master. Whether we believe our meditation is successful or not is completely irrelevant. As the poet Hafez notes, “Hafez, your duty is uttering prayers, that’s all: never mind if He hears it – or not.”

Great Master, Maharaj Sawan Singh, wrote to his Master with questions about his meditation. When we read the replies of Baba Jaimal Singh in the book, *Spiritual Letters*, it is astonishing how many times he calls the Great Master, “My obedient son.” Apparently his obedience is critical. And even a Master in the making, needs to be reminded of how important meditation is.



Baba Jaimal Singh writes:

*Bhajan and simran are to be done daily, my son. This is a command for all of you, because you mark your presence in the court of the Lord when you listen to the Shabd-dhun every day. The sound of the Shabd-dhun is the spiritual cord of the Anami Being. It is doing everything through its presence within the body of each individual. He who has met with a perfect Master ... and has been handed the cord of Shabd-dhun – his daily effort is registered in Sach Khand, every day.*

The third hint is that “we should never lose heart.” Those are Hazur’s exact words in a letter in *Quest for Light*. Hafez reminds us, “On the way, what comes to the disciple is blessing: in the straight path of truth, no one is lost!” We can trust that the Father will find us.

The fourth hint is that our anguish, our confusion and our bewilderment are gifts. And rather than being a barrier to the Lord’s presence, they are a mysterious part of our way home. We might have assumed that our sins and our sorrows are terrible obstacles between us and the Lord. We don’t yet know that there are no barriers to the power of love. Nothing in us, no shortcomings of our heart or mind can prevent our Master from taking hold of our hand.

Which brings us to the last hint. The only way our scatteredness will find its way to the Radiant Form of the Master within is through his grace. Our prayers for grace rise out of our need. Our need is real. We feel far away. Remember the words of the mystic, Sarmad,

*I have hope for a thousand salvations,  
in a single act of his grace.*

What does Hazur have to tell us about grace? He says:

*Everything happens by grace. Without his grace, nothing can happen. Unless he wishes, nobody can reach him. We are all blind, groping in the dark. He is the only one who can show us the light out of this darkness....*

*His guiding hand is always there, whether we are conscious of it or not conscious of it. For our spiritual development, he is always there to help us in every way.*

*Spiritual Perspectives, Vol. II*



*Within the heart itself the Master's light is seen.  
To see the Master's light,  
Why should I wander searching?  
He can be known inside everyone –  
Being quiet at home is the way to see him.  
To the true, Paltu, he is near,  
But from the liar distant.  
Within the heart itself the Master's light is seen.*

*Paltu, quoted in Kabir, the Great Mystic*

# Faith, Doubt and Effort

Each of us has our own story about how we were brought to this path. Maybe we were born into a satsangi family. Maybe great suffering or a feeling of emptiness – of “is this all there is?” – drove us to seek something more. There are as many stories as there are satsangis. However, when we first come to the path, we all hope that the teachings and the Master will fill the emptiness in our hearts and give meaning to our existence. But beyond that hope, we find that the teachings make sense to us – on both an emotional and an intellectual level. About intellectual conviction, Maharaj Charan Singh says in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. II:

*Without faith we don't make any progress at all. But first we have to build intellectual faith in the philosophy. And in light of the philosophy, we have to weigh the Master.*

When we come to the path, we have intellectual faith in the teachings, and we feel attracted by the Master – his words, his eyes, his voice, his way of explaining reality to us. We feel the Master's love and that we are under his protection, as if our Master is holding us lovingly in the palm of his hand. So we receive initiation. We try to live the Sant Mat way of life and do our meditation as we promised our Master. We feel a sense of faith, and based on that faith, we begin our practice of meditation. Hazur says in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. II:

*Faith has to start with the mind. Without faith in the mind you cannot experience the faith of the soul.... Soul always has faith*

*in the Father. Soul is always yearning to become one with the Father.... It is the mind which is holding it back.*

But while aiming to leave this world behind, we have to live here. While our goal is high, our weaknesses don't automatically disappear at initiation. So, we stumble. We get up. We get upset with ourselves because our meditation isn't perfect. We may fall again. When we fall down, we can get up again. As a Chinese proverb says, "The glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time you fall." Through it all, we try to keep our faith and keep going. But our faith will be truly validated by the Master's grace and our meditation.

Masters tell us that the one constant that will help us develop faith is meditation because meditation will ultimately allow us to go beyond the mind. And what is meditation? In the simplest of terms it is focusing our attention at the point where the sound and light of the Shabd are ringing, while letting go of our awareness of the body and outer world. It is through meditation that we begin to see this world for what it is – an illusion. In *Many Voices, One Song*, Narhari says:

*A painter strokes his brush on a wall –  
this is the world, nothing real here.  
Children build houses of sand,  
then knock them down and go home.  
Everyone does their work here –  
they love it as their own  
so they take it to be true.  
If you really want  
to achieve something real,  
just repeat the Name, says Narhari,  
and stay close to the mystics.*

Narhari's advice is that we should "stay close to the mystics" and "repeat the Name." This means we must take some action if we want to experience reality and thereby grow our faith. And these efforts, which are inspired by the mystics, evoke the grace of the Lord. Maharaj Charan Singh says in *Quest for Light*:

*The more we strive on the path, the more help we receive from the Master. Those who do not make an effort of their own have no idea of the blessings that are being showered on us every day in our life. The rewards that are received by a disciple are far greater than one could ever expect or even dream of, and this realization comes only when we are doing our part of the duty.*

The saying goes, "Slow and steady wins the race." When we think of how huge the journey is that we have undertaken, it's no wonder it takes such a long time. Some of us may have thought that once we were initiated, that it would be a simple and quick matter to reach the eye centre. We had no idea! But the Masters are always encouraging us, letting us know that they are always with us and will never desert us.

If there is any doubt in our minds, it usually shows up as fear or worry. Life is uncertain, so we all have fear – fear that something will happen, worry that something won't happen. Fear and worry are huge weapons in the mind's arsenal. Although the mind is basically powerless, by conjuring up fear we think it wields tremendous power. We become afraid of what is going to happen and create all sorts of scenarios of what will go wrong. Most of the time these things never come to pass. Sometimes we become so paralyzed with fear or worry that we feel we can't do anything. When fear comes, when worry comes, we can work through these feelings if we hold on to meditation and just remember that we are not alone and that we don't need to

take all these problems on our shoulders. Hazur recommends in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. III:

*If we throw our worry on the Lord, live in his will, accept what comes and think that whatever comes is best for me, naturally we are happy and relaxed. When we take all the worries on our shoulder, we will never be able to solve those worries.... Only when the mind relaxes can we become happy. And the mind will relax only when it is attached to the Shabd and Nam and when we learn to live in the will of the Lord.*

Hazur is advising that we “accept what comes and think that whatever comes is best for me.” Acceptance means looking at all that comes to us as the Lord’s gift to us. He knows best. Our ability to accept what comes to us depends a lot on how we define ourselves. If we think we are the body, then acceptance is difficult. Masters tell us that we are spiritual beings, housed in this body, but we are not this body. Staying true to the discipline of meditation is vital, because it is only through meditation that we can know who we really are. And it is through meditation that we can develop this attitude of acceptance.

Until we go beyond the realm of mind we have some doubts. In a way those doubts are an honest acknowledgment that we don’t have firsthand knowledge of reality – that we are still perplexed by life. That perplexity, in a way, is what drives us to find a spiritual path – so that we can find the truth. That puzzlement about life is his gift to us. If we embrace that feeling in a positive way, it can energize us to put in more effort in order to find the truth within. And then that effort will bring faith. All we need is the strength and determination to keep on the path, to never give up. We can’t fail as long as we are putting in the effort.

Hazur says, in *Legacy of Love*: “In Sant Mat, there are no failures – because you are trying to follow it. So even if we lose in this battle of love, we still win.”



*By his slightest glance  
the bound are liberated;  
on meeting him  
one knows the Knower.*

*He ignores both high and low  
in giving the gold of liberation;  
he is the guide to vision  
for those who see within...*

*With the cool touch of his grace  
the day of realization dawns  
in the darkness of ignorance.*

*By the gentle drops of his grace  
the poison of ignorance is transformed  
into the nectar of infinite knowledge.*

Dnyaneshwar, in *Many Voices, One Song*

# The Happiness of Meditation

The desire for happiness is universal. It's the root of all our ambitions, all our searching and all our struggles. Maharaj Charan Singh says in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. III, "Everybody wants to be happy in this world."

Happiness is the core of our true nature. It is not an elusive goal achievable only after death. Spiritual teachers come into this world and teach us that real happiness is already within us, and we can be happy while living in this world in this very body. Their words and their guidance put everything into a new light. We begin to become conscious of those actions and attitudes that poison our awareness of the happiness within us and those actions that bring us in touch with our true self. Hazur says in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. III:

*As long as our attention is rooted in this world, we will never be able to get happiness. Even if we achieve all the comforts of the world, we cannot be happy... We will get peace while in this world only when we are really devoted to the Lord within us. When we are working our way up, we are in tune with him, and we will also get happiness in this world. If we forget him, this whole world becomes a place of agony and misery for us. We will get happiness only in his devotion.*

Hazur very powerfully points out that it's a matter of where our attention is rooted; if our attention is rooted in worldly things, we won't get happiness. This is 180 degrees different from how we are conditioned to think. Generally we believe that we can find happiness in wealth, comfort, entertainment, achievement and the





respect of others. Saints say this is all wrong. Happiness is already within us, but if our attention is rooted in external things, our inner awareness will be clouded.

Saints resoundingly say that true happiness cannot be achieved and sustained if based in external conditions. A Buddhist writer, Bhante Henepola Gunaratana, calls the search for external happiness “the happiness of favourable conditions,” explaining that the Buddha considered this to be the lowest form of happiness. He explains that it is unwise to base our happiness on such a weak and transitory foundation – whether it’s wealth, family, sensual pleasures or anything of this world. He says in his book *Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness: Walking the Buddha’s Path*:

*Why did the Buddha consider them part of the lowest form of happiness? Because they depend on conditions being right.... They are unstable. The more we trust them, seek them, and try to hang on to them, the more we suffer. Our efforts will create painful mental agitation and ultimately prove futile; conditions inevitably will change. No matter what we do, our hearts will break. There are better more stable sources of happiness.*

Masters teach us to seek happiness in a source beyond the external world. Hazur says in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. I:

*Happiness doesn’t lie outside at all. It is a self-deception to think that I can be happy here, I can be happy there. If I have this, I’ll be happy. If I have that, I’ll be happy. It is a self-deception. And the moment comes in everyone’s life when we do realize that nothing belongs to us, and we don’t belong to anybody at all.*

Meditation is the road to happiness that the Masters teach us. Why is meditation so vital? In *Light on Sant Mat*, Hazur says:

*We feel the ills of the body and the shocks of the world in proportion to our attachment. By meditation ... we increase our love for the real and the permanent, and loosen our attachment for the impermanent.*

Through meditation we come into conscious contact with the Shabd, the light and sound of God within us. Masters explain that contact with this Shabd is so enjoyable that, when we have this experience, we automatically begin to lose interest in the external things that we had previously looked upon as the source of our happiness. Then our whole perspective changes. Hazur says in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. II, “You can only break strong attachments by experiencing joy, joy from becoming one with the sound and light within.” Spiritual joy is needed to pull us out of this world and unite us with the Lord. The Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin is quoted in the book *Between Heaven and Mirth* as saying, “Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God.”

Meditation becomes the most precious part of our lives. By practising meditation we are aligning ourselves with the Master who initiated us, and we begin to travel on the path of becoming one with him. These Masters are Shabd personified and they are happiness personified. Maharaj Charan Singh often explained that if we go to a happy person, we also become happy. Isn't that the experience we get when we are with the Masters? They radiate happiness. Their presence uplifts us. Their lives are a lesson in how we should behave. And being one with the Lord, they exude humility. When we look at the lives of the Masters, we invariably see that their full energy is

devoted to a life of service. They put the needs of others before their own comforts, and they do so with a sense of joy and happiness. It has been said that humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. The Masters demonstrate this real humility because they see the Lord within themselves and within everyone. In *Treasure Beyond Measure*, Hazur says, “I am the servant of the Lord and the Lord is in everyone.”

Masters teach us to lead a relaxed and happy life – not a life of worry and stress – and they tell us we can only do this if we remember the Lord as we go through life. Being glum and negative is not helpful if we want to pursue a path that leads to permanent bliss and happiness. Hazur says in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. III:

*If meditation makes you sad and morose and miserable-looking, I don't think that is what meditation means. Meditation should make you absolutely light.... You see, you have a servant in the house who may not even talk to you, but is always looking relaxed, smiling while moving about. You always like him. Another person is always looking miserable. He may be working harder, but when you see the misery on his face, you just shudder. Whom do you like better? We are all servants of the Father – whom would he like? He is pleased by the grateful person, the person who is happy to be his child.*

Masters appreciate our grateful hearts, and we also feel happy when we are grateful. We undermine this sense of gratitude, and we dissipate the joy that it produces when we have unfulfilled expectations of achieving certain results in meditation – of seeing light and hearing sound or reaching certain spiritual levels. When we have these expectations, we are applying a worldly approach to

our spiritual life. We are so used to basing our happiness on what we consider favourable external conditions that we apply the same approach to our meditation. Masters say that this will never help us. They clearly explain that our job is just to put in the effort in meditation and to do this without analyzing results because the analytical mind will only block our experience of inner truth. It's the Lord's job to decide what to give us and when to give it to us. Hazur says in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. II:

*You see, we start analyzing ourselves too much: "How much love do I have? Now I have no more faith, yesterday I had too much faith." Every day we judge ourselves. We are the judge, and we are the accused before the judge. The mind is just always running in a circle like this. This self-analysis doesn't lead us anywhere at all. Self-pity – it depresses us sometimes. Let the Lord judge. Let him know what we need. Our work is to do our duty. Our duty is to knock; it's for him to open the door. We can't take on our shoulders his responsibility also.*

The beauty inherent in this attitude is reflected by a monk and teacher who writes:

*... the person who exerts himself or herself with dignity, without worrying about results and without giving in to disappointment, is a true practitioner, a true person of the Way. I believe that just this is the form of true human well-being.*

Soko Morinaga, in *Novice to Master: An Ongoing Lesson in the Extent of My Own Stupidity*

It is fashionable for some of us to say that we've made no progress even after having been initiated for ten, twenty, thirty, forty or more years. When we proclaim that we have made no progress, it's really the analytical mind that is reaching this conclusion. But that aspect of our mind will *never* experience the Shabd; it is incapable of tasting even just the fragrance of meditation. The analytical mind is merely a tool for functioning in this world – nothing more. It's a mistake to allow this activity of the mind to sit in judgment over our level of spiritual attainment.

If we are honest with ourselves, we know that we are making progress every moment we practise stilling our mind and being receptive. Just persisting in this effort of practicing the meditation is enough; the rest is not in our hands. Hazur says in *Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol. II:

*Daily attendance to meditation definitely gives you some bliss and peace and happiness within yourself... Even if a blind man cannot admire the beauty of flowers, definitely he can enjoy their smell, and when he'll get eyesight, he will enjoy the beauty also. So we enjoy this smell, the fragrance of meditation to begin with.*

That fragrance is evidence of his love for us. We can block even that fragrance by adopting a negative attitude, bringing in the analytical mind and grumbling about what we analyze to be our lack of progress. Instead, why not relax, be receptive and let go of expectations? Why not let ourselves enjoy the fragrance we get when we practise just being there with sincere effort in meditation? *Just that* is enough. That's the way we can experience the happiness of meditation.



# Our Business

Work is a good thing; as satsangis, we are told that we must earn our own living. When a satsangi retires from that work, there may be the hope that more time will be caught up in meditation; but we all know that wherever we go, there we are – sitting with closed eyes, within the mind. No matter what is happening from day to day, or whether the day – or the many days – are almost entirely free, karmic shackles await everywhere for everyone. However, the Master is everywhere also, and he is unshackling us with our meditation. It is through meditation that he has given us the key to help him in this task.

A story from *Tales of the Mystic East* explains what our attitude toward meditation should be even while confronting worldly obstacles.

*One day when the Great Master went to see [his Master], Baba Ji, he met two satsangis, Machhar and Ramditta, from Mandali. They were devoted to their Satguru and would not begin their day's work until they had seen his Radiant Form in their meditation.*

*Although it is a well-established fact that the Guru takes care of his disciples, it is also true that he sometimes puts them to the test.*

*Machhar and Ramditta had planted corn in their fields and it was their turn to take water from the well for irrigation. They had to go early to the fields, but their Satguru's Radiant Form had not yet appeared to them. Ramditta said:*

*"O, Machhar, I have not had Satguru's darshan yet."*

*"I too have failed," Machhar replied, "but if we do not take our turn for water, our corn crop will die out."*

*At this, Ramditta told him with fervour: “Let it die, for it belongs to the Satguru.”*

*With this attitude of mind, they both returned to their meditation. After an hour, Baba Ji manifested himself to them [in His Radiant Form]. Only then did they get up to water their crops. “The Satguru always helps the disciple,” the story ends.*

This story shows us the truth of these profound words of Maharaj Sawan Singh in *Spiritual Gems*:

*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.*

Machhar and Ramditta had the tough, exhausting, job of farming, but it did not stop their meditation. Nothing should stop ours.

Like Machhar and Ramditta, we all eventually cultivate that pure love, that sublime attachment. In *Discourses on Sant Mat*, Vol. I, Maharaj Sawan Singh says, “It is the one-pointed and steadfast love of a devotee that ripens the priceless fruit of the Divine Triune where love, the lover and the Beloved ... become one.” The Masters even say this union has already happened; we simply have yet to realize it.





# Our Spiritual Experiment

When we turn into the driveway of our regional seva site, we see a sign that reads, “Science of the Soul Study Center”, a name chosen by the Master. What does “science of the soul” mean?

Science seeks the truth through the scientific method of discovery and replication. Whether it is biology, psychology or spirituality, a scientific conclusion after experimentation is considered truth. What is the truth about the soul?

Science is our modern way of understanding truth, and the soul is a particle of divine love within each of us. The science of the soul is our way of understanding the truth about divine love. The Masters are teaching and living the truth about love, and we are their students in this scientific endeavour.

The scientific method may be understood as a method of investigation in which a problem is identified and an experiment used to test the hypothesis that intends to solve it. Our problem is suffering; our experiment is meditation; our hypothesis may be “God exists and realizing His existence ends our suffering.” We intend to prove that, while living, we can attain mastery over the passionate mind and experience divine love.

The Masters offer a scientific method of spiritual development with the ultimate goal of God-realization. We pursue the discipline of meditation and seek detachment from the processes of the mind and body through concentration at the third eye. There the soul resides, with its capacity to “see” and “hear” the divine sound current. That “seeing” and “hearing” are instruments of spiritual research within us; they are our inner “eye” and inner “ear”, and no external methods are necessary.

The natural sciences cannot verify the existence or power of the soul because there is no technology that can observe and analyze it. For instance, no brain scan can detect the soul; the soul is not physical.

A scientist of spirituality might then ask: if a student has not experienced the soul's capacity for sight and hearing, how might those capacities be developed? The Masters suggest that purity of heart is an achievement all by itself, and is essential to the development of the soul's ability to see and hear. Our hearts can be purified, the Masters assert, and then we can experience the radiant divine reality.

The Masters teach that the way to purify our heart is to practise simran, repetition of the holy names given at the time of initiation by the Master, at the eye centre and to "let go" of all worldly thoughts, feelings, passions, ambitions, regrets and worries. By practising simran we develop an inner focus that enables us to contact the Shabd – only the Shabd truly purifies us. If we are to develop our soul's capacities and thereby experience the reality of God within us, then we must empty our minds of all thought and emotion. Who can do that? Most of us believe no one can do that. How are we going to succeed in our experiment if we must let go of all that?

Knowing that we are unable to let go of all thought and emotion on our own, we seek guidance on this spiritual research from someone who has mastered his mind, purified his heart and experienced divinity. That someone is the Master.

The Master suggests we take an objective view of life and pursue our research of divinity through the experimental practice of meditation. He asks us to follow his directions, just as he follows the directions of his own Master. Like all true Masters, he communicates with his disciples through the Shabd.

Each Master is the kind of disciple who always follows the directions of his own Master. As far as we know, their obedience is implicit and

complete; they follow the scientific method exactly as directed. Perhaps we still struggle with that kind of obedience. No doubt, it is a daunting challenge in our individualistic competitive world. However, every scientist knows the experimental method must be applied precisely.

After some effort to follow the directions of the Master in this spiritual experiment, do we find more mastery of our minds and behaviour? Do we feel more peace within ourselves and more compassion for others? Does the realization of divinity grow within us? While the science of the soul is objective, it is also personal and private, so the answers to those questions lie within each of us.



*The moment I realized the oneness of God,  
the flame of his love shone within, to lead me on.  
Constantly it burns in my heart with intense heat,  
revealing the mysteries along my path.*

Sultan Bahu

# Just Relax

Masters urge us to do the work of meditation, but they also tell us to just relax. This feels like one of those dualities or confusing messages that the saints sometimes subject us to. Put in effort, but relax – empty the mind, quiet your thoughts, sit there quietly and just relax! Just relax!

Many of us find it difficult to relax. Instead we run around frantically, feeling tense and anxious, with a mind that is always ready to raise doubts. And because of those doubts, it is really hard to quiet and tame our mind in meditation. So the whole concept of relaxation is something most of us are not used to, and we may even feel that we are not able to do it. This becomes a big challenge – just relax. And then on top of it all we try to balance the advice to “just relax” with the admonishment that we need to work hard at meditation. This can seem topsy-turvy. Maharaj Charan Singh, in *Legacy of Love*, explains very beautifully that the Masters turn everything upside down in our attitude toward life and that this is a wonderful miracle.

*The greatest miracle of the mystics is that they change the very attitude of our life, the way of our life. They turn everything upside down in our life. That is the greatest miracle the saints come to perform in our lives.*

Saints reinforce the message many, many times that the Master is here to help and support us. He is not here to judge us. So we can just relax and focus on the work that he asks us to do – without fear that we won’t “measure up.” Every human is imperfect; that’s why we are here in this imperfect world. Being imperfect, we typically don’t like

to be told our shortcomings. That could be much too discouraging! And the Master is not here to discourage or to embarrass us. In fact, he might turn an exchange into a joke rather than run the risk of hurting someone's feelings. Masters respond to us with a keen sense of humour to put us at ease. At the same time, they do not take our sincere questions lightly. Their love is boundless. That unconditional love gives us a feeling of security and thankfulness that we have such a kind Master.

The Master gives us everything we need to succeed on this spiritual path. Perhaps that's why the Master urges us to "just relax." We need to learn to just relax into our simran, and we can be assured that when we do this the Sound will follow. When we are relaxed, then everything can come in its own natural way. Even the effort we put forth can be in a relaxed manner, without tension or expectation.

The concept of relaxation is not that we get so relaxed that we are in danger of falling asleep. The spiritual concept of relaxation is to turn within to the Master – to let him take over, to stop thinking that we are in control. This relaxation is just to empty out our mind and quiet all those endless thoughts that consume us.

The Master tells us that if we relax, he will do everything. So this gives us a reason to relax! The reality is that we have no control over anything. Saints explain that while we are taught how to meditate at the time of initiation and it's our responsibility to put in effort, we should not labour under the illusion that we can control the results and expect any progress just because we put in effort. In fact, expectations are a hindrance in meditation. But if we can let go of our desire for control and subdue any expectations for results in our meditation, then we open ourselves to the Lord's love and his helping hand. If we relax, we can begin to surrender to his will – basically to let him take over. Isn't that what we committed to when we asked for initiation?

We acknowledged that we needed help. When we learn to trust and let go, then the reality that is our true self can come to the surface. Master explains that love is at our core. It comes naturally. It's there in everyone. When we relax and let go we will see that love is the essence of our being, which shines through. This love frees us from everything else in this world.

Masters are very clear that the one action they want most from us is sincere effort in our meditation. The Master wants us to succeed. We have our job – show up, make the effort to sit in meditation and appreciate everything that the Lord does for us. Then we can just relax into the meditation, and we can trust him to do the rest.



*Meditation should be embarked upon in a relaxed attitude of both body and mind. One is, of course, learning to relax completely and not interpose one's own will but to give up action and hand oneself over entirely to the Master's will. Herein lies the unique boldness and strength of this philosophy, for otherwise it would be impossible to relax one's ego so completely as to hand oneself over entirely to anyone but God incarnate.*

*In Search of the Way*

# Reflections of a Parking Lot Sevadar

The pavement is hard. The summer heat is stifling. My knees are stiff and sweat runs down my back. What a wonderful day! I am happy to be doing exactly what I'm doing, serving Master by directing traffic before satsang.

In performing this task I lose my worldly identity. No one needs to know how I earn a living, to whom I am married or what kind of house my family occupies. A tremendous sense of freedom washes over me. There is only now, only this seva, only Master to please.

As my fellow disciples pass me on their way to the venue, I see a magic spark of love and peace in their eyes. We are all undergoing a mystical transformation, even if only for a day. Today we are aware of Master's presence. Today we are striving to become more like him. Every day can be like today!

I wave my arms and point in the direction of unoccupied parking places.

"Park and leave your vehicles behind," I am thinking. "The body is nothing. Like your car it will end up on a scrap heap. Arrive and go inside. Pay attention to what matters. Let your soul become one with the Lord."

The pavement is hard. The summer heat is stifling. My knees are stiff and sweat runs down my back. What a wonderful day! I am happy to be doing exactly what I'm doing, serving Master by directing traffic before satsang.



# The Power of the Practice

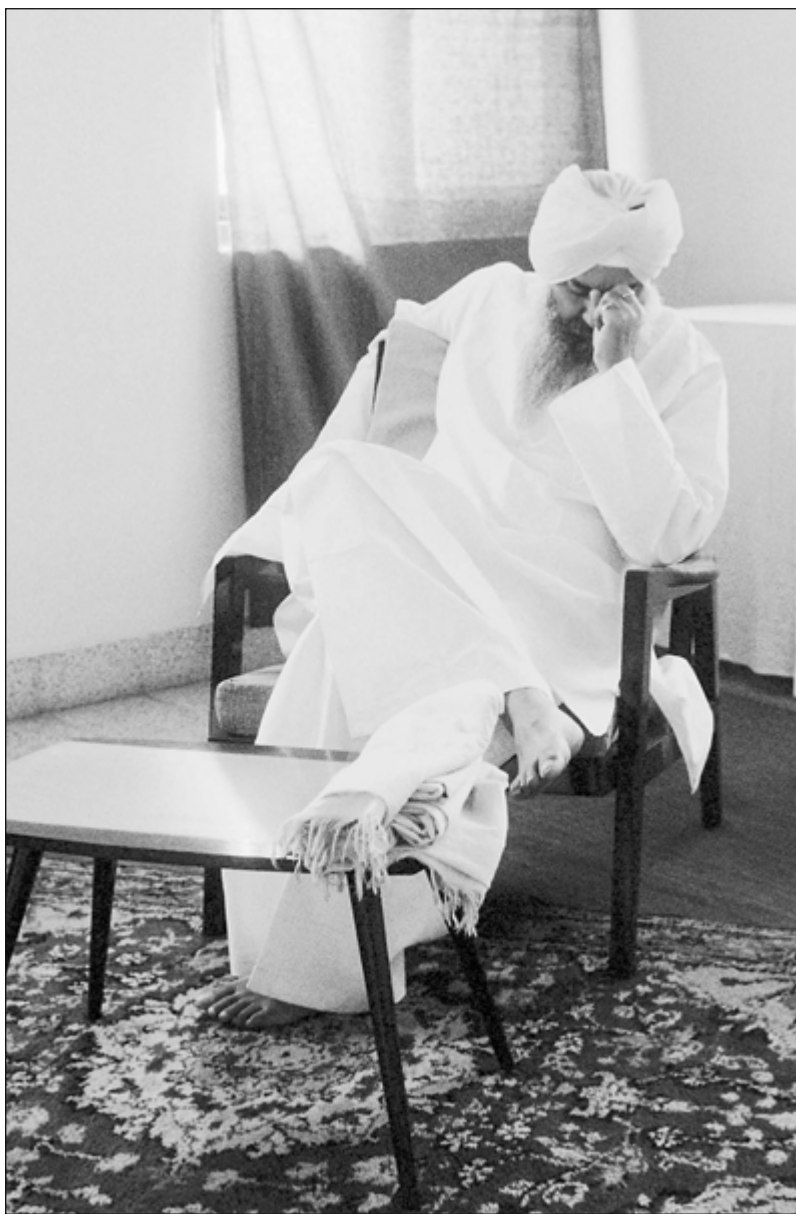
There is a well-known Irish story that goes: A traveler is lost some distance away from Dublin and meets an old man on a deserted road where he has ended up. He asks the old man the way to Dublin, and the man looks at him with pity, and says: “Well, if I were you, I wouldn’t start from here!”

Many of us may wonder, “How will I ever get from here, from where I’m at now, to even a semblance of the perfection that is my goal?” Perhaps we feel this way because we don’t yet trust the power of the practice that our Master has given us. While we have read so much about the power of simran and the power of bhajan, do we really believe it? If we did, then perhaps we would dedicate ourselves more fiercely to our meditation practice. Maharaj Charan Singh wrote in a letter to a disciple that “withdrawing of the energy currents does not result in dizziness or faintness but it does bring about many changes in the brain cells and nerves.” It changes us on the deepest level. We just have to trust in it and be faithful to it.

Perhaps we have thought that our simran would have the power to wipe out our thoughts and are dismayed with our apparent lack of success. But simran has a special kind of strength – it doesn’t extinguish thoughts with its weight, but with its lightness.

Simran is buoyant. It is lighter than air. It doesn’t engage with our desires, it just flies beyond them. Our attention is like a balloon held by the strings of our attachments. We can’t push it up, but with the practice of simran, all the strings that are holding this balloon down will automatically dissolve, and this balloon will float up to the inner sky. So we are not so much fighting with the mind as rising above it.





The Masters often tell us to just let go. Now it seems almost impossible to consciously let go of the worries and problems we face. But if we can just let the simran go, we can let go in a positive sense. We can put our complete faith and trust in the simran; we can cling to the repetition of it and let it go, let it rise along with our attention, so we can float up with it to where our Master is waiting for us.

The other power in our practice is the Sound (listening to the Shabd). Too often we may view the Sound as the goal of the practice—we practise simran to concentrate, and then the concentration will automatically lead to hearing the Sound. But the practice of the Sound is much more than that – this listening that we do is unbelievably powerful as a practice on its own, no matter how unconcentrated this listening is. *Listening* is what is important, not hearing.

The Masters speak to the power of even worldly music and suggest that if we could only experience the inner music, how we would dance!

Rumi has dedicated a section of his Mathnawi to this subject.

*The disciple pays attention, even to the call of the guitar,  
Out of longing for the true Voice of God.  
We know what it really is,  
This piping of reed or boom of drum:  
It is the trumpet of resurrection.*

Rumi is saying that we must pay attention to whatever we hear, and we do this “out of longing for the true Voice of God.” The literal Persian language says: “out of the intention to long for the true Voice of God.” We don’t even need to feel that intense love, to feel true longing, we only need to *intend* to feel love or longing. It’s interesting that attend and intend have the same root. They both come from

‘tendre,’ to stretch toward. And that is all we need to do, which means to stretch toward devotion, to stretch toward the Sound.

Rumi explains our problem:

*Encased in these bodies of water and clay  
We hardly recognize the truth.  
The sacred music, fouled by earth's sorrow,  
Sounds shrill or gross to our ears  
And can't bring true joy.*

We are not yet able to experience the bliss of the Sound, weighed down by the sufferings of this world as we are, so it is hard to believe in it. But blissful it is. Saints emphasize the beauty and joy of this Sound again and again. Kabir, in *Songs of Kabir* says:

*The flute of the Infinite is played without ceasing, and its sound is love: When love renounces all limits, it reaches truth. How widely the fragrance spreads! It has no end, nothing stands in its way. The form of this melody is bright like a million suns: incomparably sounds the vina, the vina of the notes of truth.*

And so, inspired by descriptions like this, we listen in bhajan. But for many of us, what a disappointment! Disappointment, because we have expectations, and if our expectations aren't met, we naturally feel disappointed.

Many satsangis struggle to do bhajan. Our modern age is a time of impatience, of instant gratification. We want results and we want them now. For us to sit, not just day after day or month after month but year after year, with only barely discernible results, could seem like a waste of time. We often tell ourselves that it's better to spend the

time in simran because that will bring results. We tell ourselves that it's worthless to spend the time failing to hear the Sound, or concentrating on the weak sound we hear, because we think nothing is happening.

We often tell ourselves this because we are still living by the rules of the mind, not the rules of spirituality. In the mind's world of cause and effect, we think we can control our progress: so much simran will lead to so much concentration, which will lead to better quality of bhajan. To a certain extent this is true: purer bhajan comes from more focused concentration. But we have to remember that the Masters work by different rules, by the rules of mercy, not cause and effect. No matter how much simran and bhajan we do, we can't begin to account for the karmas that are weighing us down and keeping us from hearing the pure Sound. So our simran and bhajan are merely an excuse for Master to bestow his mercy on us. Maharaj Sawan Singh says in *Philosophy of the Masters*, Vol. V:

*The realization of the divine Sound is the holy gift of the perfect Guru. The realization is not the result of one's own effort. How can hearing of the Shabd, which is limitless, be the result of one's own limited efforts? It is beyond such limits. When the unsophisticated, simple child begins to creep towards its mother, the mother lifts the child up.*

The period of bhajan is a time of doing *absolutely nothing*. It is a time to be in the silence or in whatever we hear. One reason it is so difficult is that our mind finds true rest and relaxation almost unbearable, a kind of death. With simran, though, it too is an arduous task, at least the mind has something to hold on to. When we practise bhajan on the other hand, we are practising total receptivity. Our mind is doing nothing. And this is the paradox. We

are not really learning anything in our meditation, we are merely unlearning the habits of the eons we have spent in this world of illusion. Great Master says in the same book:

*The soul is entangled in the inertness of maya or illusion. In order to free it, it is necessary to breathe the Shabd into it, so that what is hidden may manifest itself.*

So when we practise, Shabd is being breathed into our soul. Still, we wonder if the Sound we experience has anything to do with the bliss or power we have heard is its essence, and we sometimes despair. But we can believe our Master; we can trust in him and in the Sound because as Rumi says:

*Still ... some memory stays.  
We have heard this Sound before,  
In paradise, so we know what it is.  
And we know that water when mixed with urine and filth  
Gets bitter and smelly.  
But even filthy water can put out a fire!*

We know that water mixed with filth gets bitter and foul, but dirty water can still extinguish a fire! We might feel that our practice really stinks, as the saying goes, but if we keep in mind that even dirty water can put out a fire, then we have nothing to worry about. It is only when we think that it is the purity of our practice that will bring spiritual development that we run into trouble.

There is always some pull. We hear or read something that reminds us of what we are missing, and we persist, however fitfully, with however little joy we find in it. And why? Because, as Rumi says: “Still,

some memory stays. We have heard this Sound before, in paradise, so we know what it is.”

We have come from the land of Shabd, and we truly are Shabd. The “we” of our present state of consciousness has forgotten all this and sometimes we can barely stand to listen for five or ten minutes, but some part of us remembers, some part of us knows what it is. Our soul has been in paradise; in fact our soul is a stream of that music, that sound current. And “we” are really the soul, not the mind.

Rumi explains why this practice of listening is so powerful.

*The mystical concert is food for God's lovers.  
It gathers the mind and concentrates love.  
Ecstasy sharpens  
And the image of the Beloved appears.  
The water of life, though polluted in us,  
Extinguishes our pain.*

Like Rumi, the Masters have also spoken of bhajan as food. They suggest that doing simran is like preparing a meal, and doing bhajan is eating the meal. When we don't do bhajan, it's like preparing a meal and not eating it because it's not perfect. But our minds still rebel. For some of us, the breakfast that we prepare each morning in our meditation is not just imperfect, it's barely edible. We have burnt the toast, the porridge is lumpy, the coffee bitter. How can we eat such a meal? But what choice do we have? We can eat the unpalatable meal we've prepared, or we can go hungry. Sometimes we do get frustrated and we go to the diner of the world's pleasures and taste the fare there for a while. But we return to our burnt toast and bitter coffee because we find that the food at the world's diner, however savoury it seems at first, does not satisfy our spiritual hunger. Bhajan, however, Rumi says,

“gathers the mind and concentrates love. Ecstasy sharpens and the image of the Beloved appears.”

In one of the “Thanksgiving Hymns” of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is said: “For into an ear of dust, [Thou hast put a new Word] and hast engraved on a heart of [stone] things everlasting.” Our bodies are water and clay, our ears are dust, and our hearts are of stone. There is no need to despair, though, for this Word will engrave things lovely and everlasting in our consciousness, and then our consciousness will automatically fly on wings of Shabd to our Beloved.



*Bhajan and simran are the only ways to improve ourselves and achieve our goal. This meditation will curb the negative desires and bring in the positive virtues. With the Lord on your side, nothing now can keep you away from your eternal home, which you will certainly attain one day. But you must do your duty honestly and conscientiously. Bhajan and simran must be attended to every day, regularly, with love and devotion.*

Maharaj Charan Singh, *Quest for Light*

## Why Worry?

I worry about everything -  
Family, money, health, politics ...  
Do you worry?

Only about what I can control.



What can you control?

Absolutely Nothing!!







### Enter the Quiet Heart: Creating a Loving Relationship With God

BY SRI DAYA MATA

PUBLISHER: LOS ANGELES, CA: SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP, 1998.

ISBN: 0-87612-175-X

*Enter the Quiet Heart* is a collection of short extracts from the talks and letters of Sri Daya Mata, a disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952). When only 17 years of age Rachel Faye Wright first met Yogananda in Salt Lake City, Utah, and soon after entered the monastic order of the Self-Realization movement as one of the first women to do so. Always close to Yogananda, she became known as Daya Mata or “Mother of Compassion.” In 1955, three years after his death, she became the president of the Self-Realization Fellowship in the USA and of the Yogoda Satsanga Society of India, both founded by her guru. She served in this position until she passed away in 2010.

Through this little book we gain a glimpse into the love and longing that drew Sri Daya Mata to the spiritual path, a yearning which she says every human being shares. In the preface to the book she writes,

*Every human being yearns for love. From childhood, that was the tremendous desire of my heart; to me, there is no meaning to life without love. But I had the notion that I could never be content with imperfect love. The love that would satisfy me was a love unconditional, a love that would never disappoint me. My reason told me that in seeking perfect love, I must go to the Source; I must go to the One who alone is capable of giving such love. Thus began my search for God.*

To her, the fundamental work of the spiritual path is to create a loving relationship with God. She urges us to speak to God in the language of the heart.

*Practise the techniques of meditation until you become calm and centred within. Then take one thought and go on repeating it again and again and again, to the exclusion of every other thought: "I love You, Lord. I want You; only You, only You, only You, my God." Oh! How sweet it is to talk to God like that in the language of your heart. You discover what real love is. You discover what real joy is.*

It is only the continual remembrance of God that can give us an anchor through all the turbulence of life in an ever-changing world:

*Let your mind rest constantly, or as often as possible, in the thought of God. In that thought we draw the strength, the wisdom, the great love for which our souls hunger. Be mentally anchored in that which alone is changeless in this changing world: God.*

Daya Mata encourages the reader not to give way to discouragement when the heart feels dry, but to keep at the practice until it becomes a way of life.

*Even at those times when the heart feels dry, keep trying to feel love for Him. It must become a way of life; not for just a few minutes or hours a day, and not for just a few years, but through all the moments of the rest of your days. Then you will find at the end of the trail that the Divine Beloved is there waiting for you. Each day along the way can be a day of joy, cheerfulness, courage, strength, love, when you unceasingly commune with God in the language of your heart.*

One of the pleasures in reading this book is the rich and varied range of spiritual literature that Daya Mata quotes or refers to. For example, referring to Brother Lawrence, the seventeenth-century Catholic monk who wrote *The Practice of the Presence of God*, she describes the “state you want to come to,” a way of being that is, she says, “the fruit of meditation”:

*If you follow what I am suggesting, the time comes when your consciousness remains unbrokenly in the meditative state – always with God. The devotee eventually becomes like Brother Lawrence: Whether he was sweeping floors or worshipping God before the altar, his mind was constantly engaged in Him. That is the state you want to come to; but it requires effort – it does not come by imagination. Eventually, you will find that even while you are doing your work, whenever you take your mind within for a moment, you will feel an inner effervescent well of devotion, of joy, of wisdom. You will say, “Ah, He is with me!” This is the fruit of meditation that can be enjoyed at any time, in quiet communion or in the midst of activity.*

Encouraging the reader to let go of anxiety and tension, and to settle into a “calm, quiet waiting,” she quotes the words of Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian writer who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913:

*When anxiety, tension, and restless impatience cloud your consciousness, you will be unable to behold God’s presence within. There has to be a calm, quiet waiting. Rabindranath Tagore expressed it beautifully in these words:*

*Have you not heard His silent steps?*

*He comes, comes, ever comes.*

*The devotee has to abide in the inner stillness, with an attitude of devotional, worshipful waiting. Then he begins to perceive that Joy, that Love, that Divine Presence welling up within himself: “He comes, comes, ever comes.”*

For many years she kept an inspiring quote on her desk from Canon T.T. Carter, a significant nineteenth-century figure in the Church of England, in which he details the many blessings derived from humility:

*Humility is a perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted, or vexed, or irritated, or sore, or disappointed. It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed and despised. It is to have a blessed home in myself, where I can go in and shut the door, and kneel to my Father in secret, and be at peace as in a deep calmness when all around and above is troubled.*

In speaking of the inner world, she turns to Saint Teresa of Avila's imagery of an "interior castle":

*Be more cognizant of that inner world, where you can walk with God and talk with God, and hear His silent assurance that you are His own. This blissful relationship with God cannot come in any other way than by learning to reside more within, in the "interior castle" of which St. Teresa spoke.*

She, of course, often quotes her own guru whose teachings were rooted in the yogic traditions of Hinduism:

*Love is the only Reality; nothing else in life has any lasting attraction or interest for the soul. Many years ago, I said to Paramahansa Yogananda, "There is one thing I crave in life, and that is love; but I want to receive it from God." His reply profoundly moved me: "Then I say this to you: Take that craving into meditation; meditate deeply, so deeply that your mind becomes filled with nothing but that desire for divine love, for God; and you will know Him who is love."*



