

The Stranger of Galilee

*The Sermon on the Mount and the
Universal Spiritual Tradition*



RUSSELL PERKINS

The Stranger of Galilee

by the same author

The Impact of a Saint
Meetings with Kirpal Singh
and Ajaib Singh,
1963-76

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Universal Spiritual Tradition*

RUSSELL PERKINS

Sant Bani Ashram
Sanbornton, New Hampshire
1994

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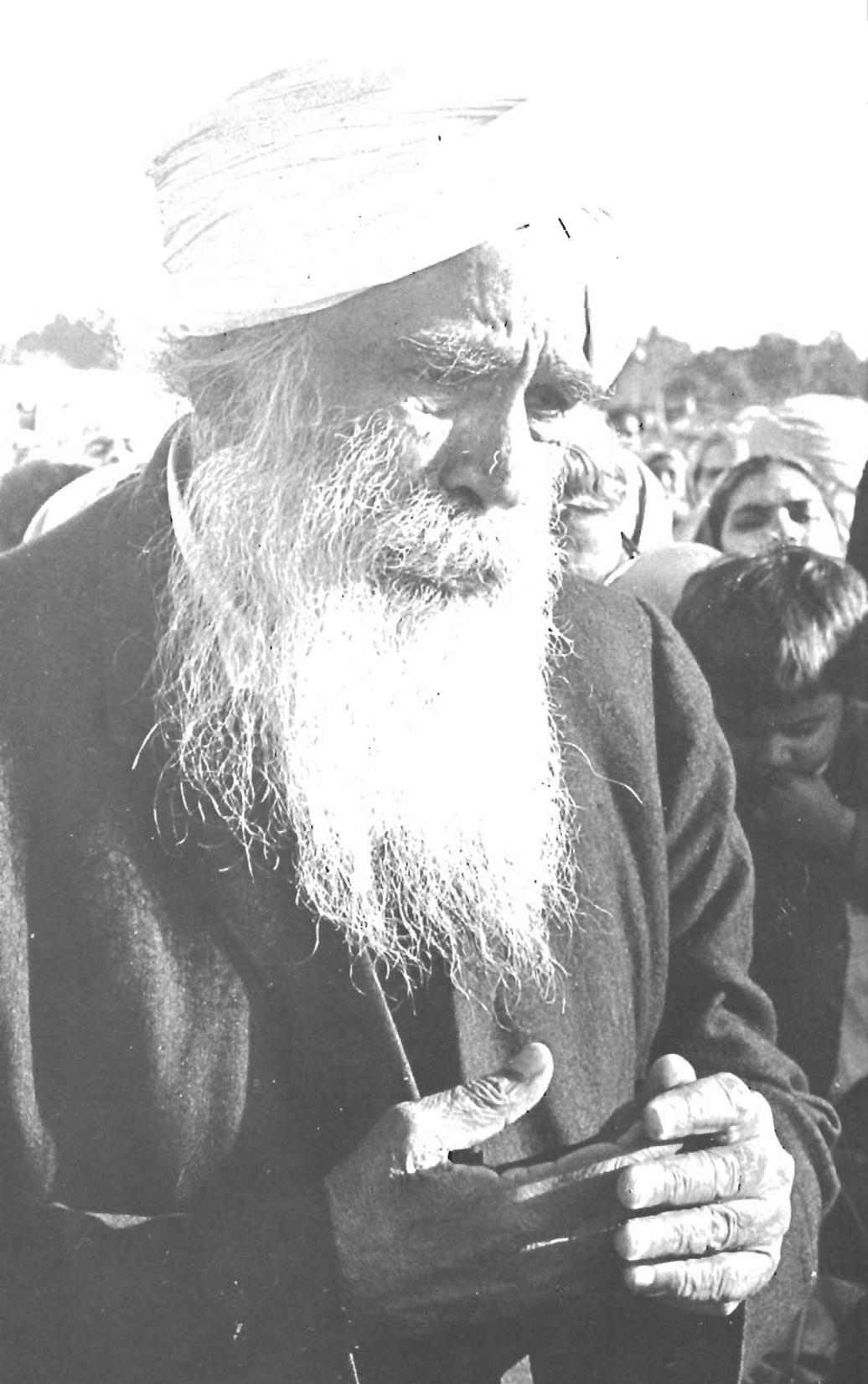
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It is remarkable that, notwithstanding the universal favor with which the New Testament is outwardly received, and even the bigotry with which it is defended, there is no hospitality shown to, there is no appreciation of, the order of truth with which it deals. I know of no book that has so few readers. . . .

Thoreau: *A Week on the Concord
& Merrimack Rivers*



To My Lord

KIRPAL

*who showed me the life
in the teachings of Jesus*

Preface

The title of this book is from a gospel song I heard sung at the Revival Tabernacle, Roxbury, Massachusetts, on February 22, 1953, by a middle-aged woman with a pockmarked face and a glorious voice. I have never forgotten it.

I owe a great deal to a great many people. First and foremost is my spiritual teacher and Master, Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, to whom this book is dedicated and without whom it wouldn't exist. Master Kirpal left this world in 1974, but death has no power over him: he continues to guide me both directly from within and through the form of his successor, Sant Ajaib Singh Ji, whose encouragement through the long months of preparation has made all the difference. My indebtedness to both of them will be obvious to anyone who reads this book.

On another level, I am deeply grateful to my teachers at Harvard Divinity School, particularly the late Rev. George W. MacRae, S.J., the Charles Chauncy Stillman Professor of Roman Catholic Studies at Harvard and worldwide authority on Christian origins. His course, "Gnosticism and Early Christianity," which it was my privilege to take in the spring of 1984 (the last time it was offered), was a delight and a revelation from start to finish. In the course of the semester, Professor MacRae and I had two long talks on the subject of early Christianity, Gnosticism, and India, and at his request I loaned him a copy of the book, *The Ocean of Love: The Anurag Sagar of Kabir*, then just published; after reading it, he asked me if he could keep it, remarking, "It is clearly the same teaching. I had not realized that this teaching existed in India also." Later,

in the last class session, he said, "In this course [devoted to the Gnostic movements of the second century] we have been studying a very small slice of a very large pie," and proceeded to list a number of other places where the same teaching might be found—among which were the Kabbalah, Sufism, etc.—and included Kabir's *Ocean of Love*—which, he said, he had come to know about "thanks to one of you"! Tears came to my eyes as I reflected on his humility, his generosity, and his willingness to keep on learning, even though he was at the apex of scholarly knowledge at the time.

Father MacRae died, to the sorrow of all who knew him, little over a year later in the autumn of 1985; a gentle, loving, brilliant man, totally dedicated to his Jesuit order and to the fearless pursuit of knowledge. I am grateful to have known him and to have been his student.

I am also extremely grateful to Professors Helmut Koester and Dieter Georgi, both of them students of Rudolf Bultmann who went out of their way to share their knowledge with their students; and to Professors Margaret Miles and Clarissa Atkinson, with whom I studied Christian history and who introduced me to Margery Kempe; all of these people were very kind to me. Of course, they are not responsible for the conclusions I have come to, or the uses to which I have put the things they taught me. I owe a great deal also to Pamela Chance, then Managing Editor of the *Harvard Theological Review*, for her infinite patience and kindness with me, and her willingness to show me the ropes of what sometimes seemed to be a difficult and forbidding institution. She was the best of fellow students, especially helpful to me in mastering Greek—not that I can be realistically said to have come close to anything like mastering Greek.

The thirty chapters of this book were originally talks given at Sant Bani Ashram, Sanbornton, New Hampshire, as part of the regular Sunday morning Satsang, between April and December 1991. Many people played a part in the subsequent transformation of those talks into this book, but the one who did the most, had the most belief in their potential, who worked the hardest, and without whom the book would not exist, is

Twila Tate, elder sister, retired English teacher, and best editor in the world. My gratitude to her is enormous; my debt unpayable. To study the literal, unedited transcripts of the talks—lovingly prepared by my sister, Helen Perkins, to whom I am also very grateful—with their characteristic rambling long-windedness, and compare them to the graceful concise sentences that emerged under Twila's careful pruning, is to see what "editing" really means.

There are others, too: Twila's husband, Don Tate, whose encouragement, willingness to let Twila engage her full capabilities in this work, and faith in the worthwhileness of it all, made it possible; a great number of brother and sister Sat-sangis from around the world who took the trouble to let me know how important this book was to them—among whom Angela Fazio and Jack Dokus were particularly helpful; Dick Shannon of The Sant Bani Press who has overseen the whole cumbersome process of publication; Rebecca Shannon who typeset tirelessly during the last weeks and without whom it would have dragged on and on; and my family, particularly my wife Judith who has always been there for me and whose love and gentle prodding kept me going when all else failed.

RUSSELL PERKINS
Thanksgiving 1994

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The Stranger of Galilee

*The Sermon on the Mount and the
Universal Spiritual Tradition*

Introduction

The bulk of this book is a commentary on the so-called Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) from the point of view of the esoteric or universal spiritual tradition, which understands Jesus of Nazareth as part of what has been called a “cosmic apostolic succession” of great spiritual Masters of common purpose which began with the appearance of human life and continues to this day.

The esoteric tradition:

The terms “esoteric” and “exoteric” are fundamental to an understanding of this perspective, so I will begin with definitions. Both terms are from the Greek and mean “inner” and “outer” respectively. But they have come to stand for two opposing views of the nature and meaning of what we normally call “religion”: “exoteric” (Sanskrit *dharma*) refers to institutions, rituals, outer appearances, and doctrines and beliefs—although not necessarily to the original meaning of those things; “esoteric” (Sanskrit *moksha*) refers to what Aldous Huxley called “the perennial philosophy”^{1*}: the transcendence of the human condition (in the terminology of India, “the liberation from the cycle of births and deaths”) and the methods which lead to that. This transcendence is a process of

* The numbered references are to Notes beginning on page 38.

becoming, rather than believing or performing, and can exist within any given institution, set of rituals, or belief system, or within none of them. From the esoteric point of view, most exoteric preoccupations are irrelevant.

My guru, Sant Kirpal Singh Ji, has explained the conclusion of the esoteric “process of becoming” in this way:

And what comes last? You become one with God. You lose all individual consciousness, like a drop of water which, when it unites with the river or the ocean, becomes one with the ocean. . . . This is the ultimate consummation of the soul with God: you become one with God; you see He is in you and you are in Him: “I and my Father are one.” This is the ultimate feeling. Feeling? No, seeing. It is not even seeing—seeing remains in the third stage. The ultimate is that you become one with Him. It is becoming. (“Marriage: Outer and Inner,” *Sant Bani*, May 1987, Vol. XI, No. 11, p. 13)

Students of the esoteric tradition have pointed to the Greek and Egyptian mysteries, the Yogic and Tantric systems of India, the schools of Mahayana Buddhism, the Jewish Kabbalah, the Christian Gnostic schools and their successors, the Islamic Sufis, and the *Sant* tradition of India (*Sant Mat*), which incorporates features of all of the above, as the principal esoteric schools.² Others, such as the post-Constantine Christian monastic orders, have adjusted to orthodox institutional demands more or less happily. In connection with Judaism, e.g., consider the remarks of Dr. David Sheinkin:

Within the Western world, several different spiritual traditions have flourished. . . . Also, within each spiritual tradition, an exoteric and a more or less separate esoteric path can be identified. For instance, the Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Jewish religion all have well-defined and well-established paths, as well as secret paths historically known to only a very few. (*Path of the Kabbalah*, p. 8)

If these schools or paths have been successful, then of course some people must have graduated from them; there must, in other words, be historical records of people who have "become one with God," in Kirpal Singh's words just quoted. And so there are. P. D. Ouspensky puts it this way:

According to tradition, the following historical personages belonged to esoteric schools: Moses, Gautama the Buddha, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato; also the more mythical—Orpheus, Hermes Trismegistus, Krishna, Rama and certain other prophets and teachers of mankind. To esoteric schools belonged also the builders of the Pyramids and the Sphinx; the priests of the Mysteries in Egypt and Greece, many artists in Egypt and other ancient countries; alchemists; the architects who built the medieval "Gothic" cathedrals; the founders of certain schools and orders of Sufis and dervishes; and also certain persons who appeared in history for brief moments and remain historical riddles. (*A New Model of the Universe*, p. 30)

There are many other lists of historically known Masters of esoteric knowledge, some of which correct Ouspensky's somewhat Eurocentric rendering. Shiv Dayal Singh of Agra, known in India as "Swami Ji Maharaj," who flourished in the mid-nineteenth century, gives the following list of Indian and Iranian Masters:

Names of some of the perfect and true Saints, Sadhs and Faqeers who manifested themselves during the last seven centuries are given below: Kabir Sahib, Tulsi Sahib, Jagjivan Sahib, Gharib Das Ji, Paltu Sahib, Guru Nanak, Dadu Ji, Tulsi Das Ji, Nabha Ji, Swami Hardas Ji, Surdas Ji and Raidas Ji, and among the Mohammedans: Shams Tabriz, Maulana Rumi, Hafiz, Sarmad, and Mujaddid Alif Sani. Their writings reveal their spiritual attainments. (*Sar Bachan* I:39)

Sant Kirpal Singh (1894-1974) has included a number of lists in his writings, one of which, while brief, is especially interesting, both because it connects Ouspensky's list with Swami Ji's, and also because it comes much closer to our time than Ouspensky's does:

All Masters, such as Jesus, Mahavira, Buddha, Kabir, and Nanak, etc., of the past, and Ramakrishna, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, Sadhu Vaswani, etc., of recent days, radiated this divine luster [i.e., humility and simplicity] from their personalities. (*The Way of the Saints*, p. 341)

None of these lists is meant to be exhaustive, and in other places Kirpal Singh and other writers have mentioned many other Masters whose lives and teachings embody the universal spiritual tradition, including a number of women, as the contemporary Indian mystic, Sant Ajaib Singh, makes clear:

Kabir says, "Bhakti [i.e., the devotion of God] is the ball on the playground. One who is strong can make his ball reach the goal." You know that in the game of football the referee doesn't give the ball to any particular person. He simply puts it in the center and one who is clever and strong takes it to the goal. In the same way, in this field of devotion no one is given any concession or preference. No particular religion or sex has the rights controlled for this game of realizing the Almighty. Those who say that women cannot become Masters are under a grand illusion, as they do not know how far the difference of sex exists. Sehjo Bai, Mira Bai, and Rabia Basri were perfect Saints Who practiced and preached Naam. There is no difference in the inner world. God has put the same type of arrangement within the woman for His realization as He has put within the man. (*Streams in the Desert*, p. 295)

The question of the inclusion of women in the highest rank of

spiritual Masters is one of the recurring marks of the esoteric tradition, and one of the ways to distinguish it from the exoteric, which generally assumes that religious distinction is a male prerogative; but, as *The Gospel of Thomas* shows, some of Jesus's most advanced disciples and the ones who understood him best were women, although this has been largely blotted out in the New Testament.

"Who made me a divider?"

It is obvious from all this that one of the hallmarks of the esoteric tradition is inclusiveness or universality: the schools, paths, and Masters mentioned above come from all religious systems, organized or otherwise, and this is intentional. Sant Kirpal Singh Ji, addressing the Third World Religions Conference (of which he was President) in Delhi in 1965 makes it very clear:

Without taking any more of your time, I would like to emphasize one thing: that all religions are profoundly good, truly worthy of our love and respect. The object of this Conference is not to found any new religion as we have already enough of them, nor to evaluate the extant religions we have with us. . . . The most pressing need of the time, therefore, is to study our religious scriptures thoughtfully and to reclaim our lost heritage. "Everone has in him," says a Saint, "a pearl of priceless value, but as he does not know how to unearth it, he is going about with a beggar's bowl." (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 198-199)

Representatives of exoteric religious bodies have often scoffed at the idea that the great mystics in their traditions would have agreed with this understanding; and it is true that until fairly recent times, when most religions were more or less isolated from each other, this is not a major theme in spiritual writing. There have always been pointers in this direction, however. The Bible, for example, shows us Abraham and Moses sitting

at the feet of Melchizedek and Jethro respectively, both of whom were non-Hebrews (Genesis 14:18-20; Exodus 18:1-27); calls Cyrus, the Persian Emperor and a member of the Zoroastrian religion, a messiah (Isaiah 45:1); makes a non-Jew, Job, the protagonist of one of its most spiritual books; refers to the Temple in Jerusalem as “a house of prayer for all peoples” (Isaiah 56:7)—a prophecy quoted by Jesus (Mark 11:17) and already partially fulfilled in our time as Jews, Christians, and Muslims all consider the site of the Temple a very holy place of pilgrimage; shows God turning the prophet Jonah’s life upside-down in order to save the (non-Jewish) Ninevites (Jonah 1-4); and not only commands, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:17), which everyone knows, but extends the very same command, using the very same words, on the very same page, to the foreigner, the alien, the stranger, the one not like us:

When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:33)

Certainly the Bible contains points of view which are very different from this, also; that is part of the problem of relying too heavily on any scripture, a problem we examine in more detail below. But it should never be forgotten that the inclusiveness cited above reflects the esoteric tradition, and it too is there; as Rabbi Johanan (died 279 C.E.) says so beautifully:

The ministering angels wanted to sing a hymn at the destruction of the Egyptians, but God said: “My children lie drowned in the sea, and you would sing?” (Quoted in Victor Gollancz, *Man and God*, p. 34)

In more recent times, Muslims like Kabir, Sikhs like Nanak and his successors, and Hindus like Ramakrishna and Gandhi have

made the spiritual validity and worth of all religions a major part of their focus. And this point of view has also found its way back into Christianity, where it was in the very beginning: in addition to the well-known inclusive sayings of Christ (e.g., Matthew 5:44-48) included in the New Testament, there is this heartfelt plea and prophecy from the Gospel of Thomas:

A [person said] to him, "Tell my brothers to divide my father's possessions with me."

He said to the person, "Mister, who made me a divider?"

He turned to his disciples and said to them, "I am not a divider, am I?" (Thomas 72)

This is the spirit in which the great twentieth-century Bavarian Catholic stigmatist and mystic Therese Neumann responded to the visit in 1935 by the Hindu mystic Paramhansa Yogananda, who tells the story:

Dr. Wurz greeted us cordially at his home: "Yes, Therese is here." He sent her word of the visitors. A messenger soon appeared with her reply.

"Though the bishop has asked me to see no one without his permission, I will receive the man of God from India."

Deeply touched at these words, I followed Dr. Wurz upstairs to the sitting room. Therese entered immediately, radiating an aura of peace and joy. She wore a black gown and spotless white head-dress. Although her age was thirty-seven at this time, she seemed much younger, possessing indeed a childlike freshness and charm. . . .

Therese greeted me with a very gentle handshaking. We both beamed in silent communion, each knowing the other to be a lover of God. (*Autobiography of a Yogi*, p. 369)

He goes on to describe her weekly stigmata and vision of the crucifixion of Christ, *which he was able to share*.

Even more recently, the Virgin Mary, appearing to a group of Croatian (Roman Catholic) young people in Medjugorje, a village near Mostar in what was soon to become war-torn Bosnia, had a very interesting message. One of the visionaries, Mirjana, is being interviewed by Father Vlastic, a local priest, about 1985:

Mirjana: . . . She [the Blessed Virgin] also emphasized the failings of religious people, especially in small villages— for example, here in Medjugorje, where there is separation from Serbians (i.e., Serbian Orthodox) and Moslems. This separation is not good. The Madonna always stresses that there is but one God, and that people have enforced unnatural separation. One cannot truly believe, be a true Christian, if he does not respect other religions as well. You do not really believe in God if you make fun of other religions.

Father Vlastic: What, then, is the role of Jesus Christ, if the Moslem religion is a good religion?

Mirjana: We did not discuss that. She merely explained, and deplored, the lack of religious unity, "especially in the villages." She said that everybody's religion should be respected, and, of course, one's own. (Quoted in Wayne Weible, *Medjugorje: The Message*, p. 59)

Compare this with Kirpal Singh's citing of the Indian Buddhist Emperor Ashoka (third century B.C.):

The royal monk, Ashoka, in one of his rock edicts, tells us: "He who reveres his own sect but disparages the sects of others, does great injury to his own for he lacks the essentials of a religion." (*The Way of the Saints*, p. 258)

The fact is that in this twentieth-century hell that we call the world, this is a message that we need to hear. As long as we are convinced of our own spiritual, ethnic, social, or gender

superiority, we are imprisoned in our own self-righteousness. But the great mystics of all traditions, both past and present, do show us a different way. Kirpal Singh has said:

Dear brothers and sisters, the people are crying for peace. How can we have it? Peace should start from our hearts. We should give out peace as prayed by Guru Nanak: "Peace be unto all the world over under Thy Will, O God." And for this, naturally, there must be a spiritual revolution.

The world is already in revolution; but this revolution should be different. This revolution should not be of the body, but against the evil propensities of the mind which keep us away from God. This will be achieved if we give right understanding to the people at large, which will result in right thoughts. First comes understanding; then come right thoughts, which result in right speech, and right speech will result in right actions. The whole thing starts from right understanding. . . .

So this is the first right understanding: We are living in Him, have our being in Him, He is in us, outside us, above us, below us. . . . So this is right understanding: that we have this thing—God resides in every heart—and that all is holy where devotion kneels, all are born with the same privileges from God—no high, no low, no East, no West. And this will result in right thoughts. ("The Coming Spiritual Revolution," *Sat Sandesh*, March 1973, Vol. VI, No. 3, pp. 4-5)

And this:

It is the fake ego-self that gives rise to the sense of discord and separation. When the illusion of ego is broken, one feels, "I am not apart from others, but others are parts of the One . . . and all of us are engaged in the same service of God."

Each one of us is unique in his own way. There is

a divine purpose behind the life of everyone who comes into the world; no one has been created for nothing. We have something to learn from everyone. This is the mystery of humility. (*The Way of the Saints*, p. 344)

The role of the Masters:

The work which the Masters of esoteric knowledge do has been described variously, but it comes down to this: to show those human beings who want it their own real nature and position in the universe. A famous story from the Indian tradition is told by Kirpal Singh:

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

The Master is indeed such a lion. He comes to stir up the soul from its slumber and, presenting it with a mirror, makes it behold its own innate glory of which, without his touch, it would continue unaware. However, were it not itself of the essence of life, nothing could raise it to spiritual consciousness. The Guru is but a lighted candle that lights

the unlit ones. The fuel is there, the wick is there, he only gives the gift of flame without any loss to himself. Like touches like, the spark passes between and that which lay dark is illumined and that which was dead springs into life. As with the lighted candle, whose privilege lies not in its being an individual candle but in its being the seat of the unindividual flame that is neither of this candle nor of that, but of the very essence of all fire, so too with the true Master. He is a Master not by virtue of his being an individual master like anyone else, but he is a Master carrying in him the Universal Light of God. Again, just as only a candle that is still burning can light other candles—not one that is already burnt out—so only a living Master can give the quickening touch that is needed, not one who has already departed from this world. Those that are gone were great indeed and worthy of all respect, but they were preeminently for their own time, and the task they accomplished for those around them must, for us, be performed by one who lives and moves in our midst. Their memory is a sacred treasure, a perennial source of inspiration, but the one thing their remembrance teaches is to seek for ourselves in the world of the living that which they themselves were. Only the kiss of a living Prince (Master) could bring the slumbering Princess (soul) back to life and only the touch of a breathing Beauty could restore the Beast to his native pristine glory. (*The Crown of Life*, pp. 174-176)

A story from Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav also explains, in a somewhat different way, why the Master (called *tzaddik* in the esoteric Jewish tradition) and the disciple have to be on the same plane at the same time, and how the Master works:

A prince becomes mentally ill and feels that he has become a rooster. He insists on sitting "naked beneath the table to eat pieces of bread and bone."

The king and his physicians despair of curing him, but a wise man comes along and offers to heal him. The latter takes off his own clothes and sits under the table with the prince. When the prince asks him what he is doing, the wise man says that he too is a rooster. "And they both sat together until they became used to each other." Finally the wise man asks for a shirt, telling the prince, "You think that a rooster cannot wear a shirt? Even though he is a rooster, he can wear a shirt." And both of them put on shirts. After a while he asks for pants and soon both of them are wearing pants. The same process is used to get the prince to eat regular food and, finally, to sit at the table. Nachman concludes his story by saying that every man who wishes to come closer to the worship of God is a "rooster, that is enveloped in grossness." By the above technique, however, the tzaddik can gradually lift up the man, and bring him to the right way of serving God. (Herbert Weiner, *9 1/2 Mystics: The Kabbala Today*, p. 219)

But what does all this have to do with Jesus? It is the thesis of this book that Jesus historically did precisely this work and that everything he said fits into this context; and this is the way he is understood by the esoteric tradition; including its heirs in his own religion, the Jewish Kabbalah:

It is important to remember that Jesus never wrote anything in terms of a text; his teachings were all oral. As is true for Judaism, there was undoubtedly an oral part to his teachings meant for all and a more secret part—a kind of Christian Kabbalah—which was reserved for a select few. Was Jesus a Kabbalist? His teachings suggest that he was a Kabbalistic adept and that much of his message was rooted in the Kabbalah. (David Sheinkin, M.D., *Path of the Kabbalah*, p. 15)

Certainly Mark 4:11-12 suggests that Dr. Sheinkin is correct.

But does this way of looking at Jesus not detract from his glory? What about his uniqueness, as expressed, for example, in John 14:6 and Philippians 2:6-11? Is this not the essence of Christianity?

The simple answer to that is: No, it is not. "Christianity," per se, like any other religion, has meaning only on the exoteric level, and the theological dogma of the uniqueness of Christ—not, it is important to note, the glory or cosmic stature of Christ—exists only on that level. On the esoteric level, the concern is not with religions, but with Masters and disciples, and with what passes from one to the other. If we understand Jesus and his work in this way, then John 14:6 and Philippians 2:6-11 become, in context, expressions of the fact that any genuine Master is the only way for the disciples he or she has taken responsibility for, and the corollary fact that the disciple when he or she has progressed within far enough, does indeed see his or her Master as God.³

Classical arguments for the uniqueness of Jesus are astonishingly chauvinistic; consider the following from C. S. Lewis:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. (*Mere Christianity*, pp. 55-56)

This is a powerful and compelling statement, and I agree with every word of it. But the astonishing thing from the esoteric

point of view is not what is said, but what isn't said. Even as wise and spiritually aware a person as C. S. Lewis somehow does not know that in every religion and spiritual tradition there are other people about whom the exact same point could be made. What about them? Some of these people might even be alive in the world of today; some of us might even have sat at their feet, and had experiences comparable to those of the disciples in the Gospels. Is there any room in exoteric Christianity for this? Must the other great spiritual Masters of the world be categorized as madmen or devils in order to preserve the uniqueness of one of them? Or is it not time for exoteric Christians to recognize a larger universe and a more gracious God—one Who loves all of His children, even those who are not responsive to the Biblical message as it has been presented to them—than they have hitherto had room for?

This is not to deny that there are false teachers and prophets in the world, that some of them might be madmen and some possibly devils; Jesus certainly warns against them, and so do all Masters. But to assume that the reasoning that C. S. Lewis applies to Jesus should not be applied to others who make the same claims is to substitute theological dogma for human reality. It is not worthy of us as children of God to reject out of hand those messengers whom our Father sends us to show us something of Himself; or to assume that those messengers have stopped coming because one or another religion has been founded.

The role of the disciples:

In the beginning, the job of the would-be disciple is to search. Jesus's words in the Sermon on the Mount are crystal clear:

Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)

In other words, anyone who wants Truth can have it. Thomas Merton, the twentieth-century Catholic mystic, comments:

In the end, no one can seek God unless he has already begun to find Him. No one can find God without having been first found by Him. (*The Silent Life*, p. vii)

Kirpal Singh explains further, in response to a question about whether the questioner was ready or prepared enough to be initiated:

I tell you, I tell you. The man* in whose heart this question of the mystery of life has entered *is fit*. It is God's grace that this question has arisen. That day is the greatest in a man's life on which the question of the mystery of life enters his heart. It cannot be stamped out unless it is solved. That this question has arisen shows that God wants to give you what you hunger for. "There is food for the hungry and water for the thirsty." . . . (Talk given by Kirpal Singh, January 23, 1964, quoted in Russell Perkins, *The Impact of a Saint*, p. 65)

It has often been argued by mainstream exoteric religious institutions that the esoteric tradition is "elitist," since only a few people are fit for initiation and spiritual growth. But Kirpal Singh's answer given above should show the falsity of that argument. In fact, the esoteric tradition is universalist: its understanding of the nature of human beings (that they are literally children of God, with the Name or Word of God as their essence) and its view of the present condition of the human soul (stuck in the cycle of births and deaths) both demands that everyone must ultimately be saved (which parent would see his/her children lost to him/her forever, if she or he could do something about it?) and

* The use of the word "man" does not imply any gender bias. As we have noted above, the genuine esoteric teaching views men and women as equal. English was not Sant Kirpal Singh's native language, and he used the words "man" and "human" absolutely indiscriminately, often using "man" to specifically refer to a woman—as in this case, since the questioner was female.

explains the universe in such a way that it is possible: the cycle of births and deaths, while not viewed as positive, does have the advantage of allowing plenty of time for us to come to the conclusion that we want to find God. Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, speaking from within the Mahayana Buddhist tradition, explains it this way:

The ethical incongruity of an eternal Heaven for the elect among human beings and an eternal Hell for the damned finds no place in the Doctrine of the Buddha. So long as there is one being, even the lowliest, immersed in suffering and sorrow, or in Ignorance, there remains one note of disharmony which cannot but affect all beings, since all beings are the One; and until all are Liberated there cannot possibly be true Bliss for any. (*Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, p. 11)

Even the famous Gnostic definition of souls as *pneumatic*, *psychic*, or *hylic* (i.e., spiritual, mental, or physical), understanding the pneumatic to be people who instantly respond to the esoteric message, the psychic to be people who are capable of responding after some thought, and the hylic to be people who will never respond, loses its “elitist” sting when we realize that this is a description of souls at any given moment, not an ultimate statement about them. All esoteric schools either teach reincarnation—the cycle of birth and death—or something like it (e.g., “the pre-existence of the soul”). Such a cosmic view allows for some *scope* in the dealings of the soul with God and some opportunity for the soul to learn, digest, and profit from its experiences in any given life. This view makes the meaning of Jesus’s parables in Luke 15 crystal clear, while the exoteric understanding of those parables, when coupled with the dogma of an eternal hell based on the beliefs of one life, makes a mockery of them. Thus within the esoteric tradition, the hylics can easily change their status as their experience makes it possible, and the psychics who don’t want to respond at first can learn differently. As Luke 15 and many other writings of the Masters

make clear, God is searching for us, and He will find us—sooner or later—when we want to be found.

Consider the following question asked of Kirpal Singh, and his answer:

Master, will everybody eventually find a perfect Master and go back to God?

Surely . . . He looks after everyone. . . . ("It is He Who Sends, It is He Who Gives," *Sant Bani*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, September 1983, p. 32)

P. D. Ouspensky sums up the whole idea of searching and its relation to the spiritual in this way, using the word "superman" in the same way as Nietzsche and Shaw:

Man finds superman within himself when he begins to look for him outside himself, and he can find superman outside himself when he has begun to look for him within himself. (*A New Model of the Universe*, p. 129)

And Swami Ji Maharaj (Shiv Dayal Singh) of Agra adds:

God is within every one, but nobody knows Him. People commit sins while He looks on, but He does not prevent them, and makes them go through Chaurasi [the cycle of births and deaths]. What good then, is this God to us? But when we meet a Satguru [Master of Truth] and He explains to us in what form God is present in our hearts, then we are informed and avoid bad deeds, and escape Chaurasi. Hence it is necessary to seek a Satguru, for He is the God manifest, and the search for the unmanifested God is not possible without the help of a Satguru. Those who don't do so will neither find God nor escape Chaurasi, but waste this precious human life. And whoever seeks the Satguru will surely find Him, for the Satguru is an incarnation eternally present upon this earth. (*Sar Bachan* II: 208)

The role of scripture:

One of the sharpest differences between the esoteric and exoteric understanding of religious ideas lies in their attitudes toward scripture. Exoteric religion ascribes to scripture great authority, sometimes ultimate authority, although this is often modified by “liberal” factions; the universal spiritual tradition, while recognizing that scriptures contain esoteric truth (sometimes a lot of it), never assumes that a book can take precedence over a realized human being. The attitude toward scriptures prevalent in exoteric religious circles, particularly those circles in any religion called “fundamentalist,” strikes the esoteric tradition as idolatrous—“bibliolatrous,” to be precise. But this does not mean that scriptures are considered valueless; quite the contrary. Kirpal Singh explains the position in detail:

The term “Gyan” or “Jnana” is derived from the Sanskrit root “gna,” which is equivalent to the English word “know.” [Also the Greek “gnosis.”] In common speech, Gyan or knowledge is taken to mean thinking at the intellectual level, embracing within its fold all knowledge recorded in and derived from books, ancient or modern, spiritual or secular. . . . A part of it, called scriptures, includes the theory of the science of spirituality. All scriptures—the Vedas and Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Smritis, Shastras, Puranas, and the Six Schools of Philosophy; the great epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata; the Holy Bible, the Holy Koran, the Adi Granth Sahib, and all others—form part of this branch of knowledge and come within the range of *Apara Vidya*, or the knowledge that comes through the senses. They form a wonderful record of the spiritual experiences of the rishis, prophets and saints of old, and inspire in us a longing to have similar experiences of our own. They also contain ethical truths of great value, which pave the way for an ethical life; and if followed scrupulously, they

**lay a solid foundation for a spiritual superstructure.
So far, so good. But beyond this they are of no avail.
(*Naam or Word*, p. 285)**

But beyond this they are of no avail. That's the point. When Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism, was asked for esoteric teachings, he replied, "What I can tell you is not esoteric. If you turn your light inward, you will find what is esoteric within your own mind." ("The Sutra Spoken by the Sixth Patriarch," *A Buddhist Bible*, p. 505) The outer teaching given by the Masters, including the scriptures which may have been written by them, *is only for the purpose of directing us inward*, or persuading us to go within and see what we find there; it has no value other than that. Ajaib Singh has written:

**But it is a pity that whenever a Mahatma leaves this world, people begin doing rituals in His name; and whatever book He may have written, they understand it as the order of God or the voice of God, and begin to worship it—even though we all know that books are written by bodies, and the Mahatmas also write books only after assuming the body.
(*In the Palace of Love*, p. 41)**

That which makes a Master a Master—his identity with the Word—cannot be conveyed via a book; neither can the only outer instruction that is genuinely esoteric, *the specific knowledge of how to enter within ourselves in order to become what we were born to be*. The point of view of the Master, his priorities, can be conveyed that way, insofar as language and our limitations allow. But the contact with the Word within ourselves can never come via a book, and so, from the esoteric perspective, to worship a book as an infallible authority is a disastrous mistake.

To complicate the matter further, particularly regarding Christianity, scriptures can be classified into three kinds:

1) Scriptures which are indisputably accurate records of what the prophets or saints said. Here the only problem is

whether what is said is worth having faith in or not, not whether the prophet or saint(s) in question actually said it. The Koran, the Adi Granth of the Sikhs, the Book of Mormon, Mrs. Eddy's *Science and Health*, the authentic Epistles of Paul, and most of the Prophetical Books of the Bible fall into this category.

2) Scriptures which have emerged over a long period of time as a kind of consensus of the community involved. These books have a kind of authenticity, albeit different from the first category, because a large amount of authentic spiritual tradition is in fact incorporated into them, along with much else. The Vedas of the Hindus and the Hebrew Bible (what Christians call the "Old Testament"), both of which took shape over a period of a thousand years or so, fit this category; and with some stretching, so do the Gospels, which took shape over a much shorter period but do represent a consensus of sorts, and also incorporate authentic spiritual ideas.

3) Scriptures which are imposed on the community (or which have had essential components deleted) by executive fiat, even though there is neither a consensus on the part of the community nor any assurance that the books represent accurately what the prophet or saint said. This is the status of the New Testament *as we now have it*, although not, as we have already noted, of some of its parts.

But if, for example, the New Testament contained the Gospel of Thomas and did not contain the Pastoral Epistles, its total impact would be very different.⁴

It was perhaps because of a subliminal awareness of all this that the attitude toward the Bible, particularly the New Testament, that I encountered in evangelical circles in the days when I was a "born-again" Christian was always troublesome to me, and the more I learned about it the more troublesome it became. The attitude that a given book is absolutely infallible strains credulity by definition, and the more we learn about how it was put together the more difficult it becomes to believe it. This is especially true when we realize that the mainstream church, especially the Protestant variety, has always

ranked faith in the New Testament as a whole as more important than faith in the words of Jesus per se—even when that requires abandoning Jesus’s words; even though the New Testament in anything like its present form, as we have seen, did not exist for two hundred years⁵ and some of the earliest Fathers considered the written word distinctly inferior to the oral tradition.⁶ Further, the earliest New Testament book (Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians) was not written until twenty years after Jesus’s death, and the earliest canonical Gospel (that of Mark) for another twenty or more years after that. Certainly there were collections of Jesus’s sayings compiled earlier: one of them, called by scholars “Q” (for the German *quelle*, “source”), made its way into the Gospels of Matthew and Luke; it contains most of the Sermon on the Mount. Another, the Gospel of Thomas, although it contains much of the same material as “Q,” did not find its way into the New Testament, even though, as Ron Cameron says,

Most of the sayings in the Gospel of Thomas have parallels in the “synoptic” gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke in the New Testament. Analysis of each of these sayings reveals that the sayings in the Gospel of Thomas are either preserved in forms more primitive than those in the parallel sayings in the New Testament or are developments of more primitive forms of such sayings. (*The Other Gospels*, p. 24)

In other words, Thomas has at least as good a claim—if not a better—to authenticity than the “canonical”* gospels we are used to. Why then is it not in the New Testament? According to Professor Koester:

... the Gospel of Thomas proposes an interpretation of the sayings of Jesus which has no futuristic eschatological component, but instead proclaims the presence of divine wisdom as the true destiny of human existence. The message of the Gospel of Tho-

* That is, a member of the “canon” or officially recognized group of authoritative sacred books.

mas is fundamentally esoteric and is directed to a limited group of elect people. . . . Eschatological change means nothing but insight into the divinity of the self. (Helmut Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity*, p. 153)

That is, instead of understanding the historical Jesus in terms of his crucifixion, resurrection, and possible "second coming," which is what the New Testament means by "eschatological change," Thomas understands Jesus in the light of his own words, spoken in his lifetime, which Professor Koester identifies as "esoteric."

Since the esoteric understanding of the teachings of Jesus became politically incorrect when the particular sect later known as "The Great Church" triumphed after Constantine's conversion, the Gospel of Thomas, regardless of its early composition or claim to authenticity, was out. Had it been included in the New Testament, the understanding of Jesus from the point of view of the esoteric tradition would be far from controversial; it would be orthodoxy.

Nothing in the above should be taken to deny the very real esoteric component in the canonical Gospels as we have them. To quote Ouspensky again:

Nor will esoteric ideas, that is, ideas coming from higher mind, say much to a logical man. He will ask, for instance: where are the proofs that the Gospels were written by people of higher mind?

Where indeed are the proofs? They are there, everywhere, in every line and in every word, but only for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. . . . (Ouspensky, *New Model*, p. viii)

Indeed they are. Why then is it not more obvious to most people? For two reasons: first, because the New Testament as a whole, and each book in particular (to a greater or lesser degree) has been carefully edited from an exoteric point of view so that the esoteric component, while not eliminated, seems to mean something else; and second, because the way of interpreting the New Testament, the understanding of it that

most of us are brought up with, has been determined to a much greater degree than most of us are prepared to believe, by the mainstream church—Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox—that is, by people whose understanding is confined to the exoteric. Those within Christianity who saw deeper—e.g., Meister Eckhart in the Catholic tradition, Jacob Boehme or William Blake in the Protestant—are labeled as “heretics” and forced out of the main stream; whereas exoteric theologians like John Calvin labor mightily to show to what extent God can be reduced to an arbitrary tyrant and how ridiculous the scriptures can be made to appear, as even a cursory study of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* will show.

My professors at Harvard Divinity School taught me that we each “make our own canon”—that is, each of us, while no doubt professing “belief in the Bible,” in fact choose some parts of it as of more value than others. I am making a case for choosing those parts which reflect the esoteric tradition, and reading the rest in the light of them. The mainstream church has always made a case for doing the exact opposite. That is the difference.

The Ali Baba method:

Before going on, I want to consider two instances of how what I call the “Ali Baba method” works. Why Ali Baba? If you remember the story, a house is marked for future identification by putting a cross on its door. The owner of the house, observing this, does not remove the cross from his door; he can’t; it’s carved in. So he simply puts an identical cross on all the other doors. It works perfectly; you can take your choice. One is as good as the other—as far as anyone can tell.

Something very like this happened with the New Testament. The esoteric statements have not, by and large, been removed; but other statements, with opposite meaning, have been placed in juxtaposition with them, so that we tend to interpret the esoteric by the others. There is no real reason why we can’t do the opposite; but this is where the heritage of Calvin and his fellows comes in: we don’t, because that’s not the way it’s done.

The most obvious example in the New Testament is the inclusion of the Pastoral Epistles (I-II Timothy and Titus) in the canon

and their relationship to the authentic epistles of Paul. The scholarly consensus against the authenticity of the Pastorals is overwhelming; Professor Koester says that they “do not appear in the oldest extant manuscript of the Pauline epistles” and adds:

Doubts about their authenticity were raised as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century; more recent scholarship has accumulated such a large number of conclusive arguments against authenticity that Pauline authorship can be maintained solely on the basis of tortuous hypotheses and the accumulation of historical improbabilities. (*History and Literature of Early Christianity*, p. 298)

And another scholar says that they

are almost certainly pseudonymous. Of course, the evidence is not conclusive . . . but the evidence to the contrary is so overwhelming that it is doubtful whether anyone would continue to defend the traditional position apart from reluctance to admit that a deliberate fiction could have been accepted into the New Testament canon. (Wayne Meeks, *The Writings of St. Paul*, p. 132)

The relevance of this to the esoteric tradition is that, among other things, the Pastoral Epistles take careful aim at five key points that are distinguishing features of the esoteric point of view and were, in fact, points held by the esoteric Christians called Gnostics in the second century, when they were written:

- 1) the use of myth as a means of conveying truth (I Timothy 1:3-4);
- 2) the equality and spiritual worth of women (I Timothy 2:9-15);
- 3) celibacy and vegetarianism (I Timothy 4:3-5);

4) abstinence from alcohol (I Timothy 5:23);

5) the esoteric view of “scripture,” here of course the Old Testament (II Timothy 3:14-16).

Following the Ali Baba method carefully, these are mixed in with much that is spiritually valuable; but invariably these are the points that will be focused on by a reader who is unaware of the true genesis of these writings. The section on women, for example, is truly vicious and mean-spirited, a gross distortion if not contradiction of the point of view of Paul in his authentic letters (cf., e.g., Galatians 3:28; also Romans 16 with its list of female co-workers and fellow apostles, although the full import of this chapter is lost in most English translations) and an outright betrayal of the point of view of Jesus. The section on scripture is the complete opposite of Paul’s known views on this subject: if II Timothy 3:14-16 is read in conjunction with II Corinthians 2:4-18, we will see the difference. The verse on vegetarianism is cited over and over again by naive readers to show that “the Bible is against vegetarianism,” without regard for Genesis 1:29-30, Isaiah 11:6-9 and 66:3, or the practice of vegetarianism by James the Just, Jesus’s successor in Jerusalem, and in the early church, attested by Eusebius and the Gospel of the Ebionites, and reflected in Romans 14:1-23. The writer of the Pastoral Epistles did his work well, and those who feel compelled to believe as an article of faith that the entire canon of the New Testament is authentic, without regard for historical plausibility or what some parts of it do to other parts, will remain unable to claim that which is rightfully theirs. Of that writer, one can say what Jesus said of other spiritual authorities: “Alas for you lawyers who have taken away the key of knowledge! You have not gone in yourselves, and have prevented others going in who wanted to.” (Luke 11:52)

“The other gospels”:

If the Pastoral Epistles are a prime example of what was added to the New Testament, then what was subtracted from it? We have already looked briefly at the Gospel of Thomas,

discovered in 1945 at Nag Hammadi in Egypt (site of the first Christian monastery, founded by St. Pachomius), and considered briefly why it might have been excluded from the canon when the chances of its being an early record of authentic sayings of Jesus are so high. This Gospel is a truly amazing document, and the most important single extra-canonical source for the esoteric understanding of Jesus, but it is not possible to do justice to it in brief; it demands a book in itself.⁷ There are, however, two other gospels, actually fragments of gospels in both cases, which are of extraordinary interest in this connection: The Secret Gospel of Mark, and The Gospel of the Ebionites. Let us look at each of them briefly.

The Secret Gospel of Mark was discovered by Prof. Morton Smith of Columbia University in 1958 at the monastery of Mar Saba, near Jerusalem. All that we have of it are two brief fragments, incorporated (as quotes) in a letter of Clement of Alexandria, who, of all the recognized Fathers of the Church, was the most open to the esoteric tradition. But this discovery, as Prof. Ron Cameron says,

has made us privy to new and unparalleled information about the various editions of the Gospel of Mark, and has brought to our attention the widespread esoteric tradition among the earliest believers of Jesus. (*The Other Gospels*, p. 68)

This is what Clement has to say about the secret gospel:

As for Mark, then, during Peter's stay in Rome he wrote an account of the Lord's doings, not, however, declaring all of them, nor yet hinting at the secret ones, but selecting what he thought most useful for increasing the faith of those who were being instructed. But when Peter died a martyr, Mark came over to Alexandria, bringing both his own notes and those of Peter, from which he transferred to his former book the things suitable to whatever makes for progress for knowledge [Greek *gnosis*]. Thus he composed a more spiritual Gospel for the use of

those who were being perfected. Nevertheless, he yet did not divulge the things not to be uttered, nor did he write down the hierophantic teaching of the Lord, but to the stories already written he added yet others and, moreover, brought in certain sayings of which he knew the interpretation would, as a mystagogue, lead the hearers into the innermost sanctuary of that truth hidden by seven veils. Thus, in sum, he prepared matters, neither grudgingly nor incautiously, in my opinion, and, dying, he left his composition to the church in Alexandria, where it even yet is most carefully guarded, being read only to those who are being initiated into the great mysteries. (*The Other Gospels*, pp. 69-70)

Clement then quotes from the Secret Gospel a story, meant to follow Mark 10:34 in the New Testament, which appears to be an early version of the story of the raising of Lazarus found in John 11, but which ends with the initiation of the resurrected youth:

And he [the youth raised from the dead] remained with him that night, for Jesus taught him the mystery of the kingdom of God. (*The Other Gospels*, p. 71)

Professor Cameron points out that “the canonical (or ‘public’) Gospel of Mark appears to be an abridgment of the *Secret Gospel of Mark*” (*The Other Gospels*, p. 68). This would explain many anomalies about our present canonical version of Mark, including the notable absence of any of Jesus’s teaching, the abrupt ending (or lack of ending), and references such as Mark 4:11-12 which have no context as they stand but make sense as (in Professor Cameron’s words) “vestiges of the secret tradition still visible” (p. 69).⁸

A vegetarian gospel?

The Gospel of the Ebionites is the gospel used by the Christian sect called by that name, and the importance we assign to the gospel is determined by how we define the sect. The fourth-

century heresy hunter Epiphanius, who has preserved the only fragments of this gospel that we have, considered that the Ebionites were followers of a heretic named Ebion; but he was wrong. His ignorance of Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus and his followers, and the vast changes that had occurred in the Christian church in the intervening three centuries, did him in. Hugh Schonfield explains that, while the term "Nazarenes" is often used "to designate the early Christians,"

It was not what they called themselves. Apart from general terms they specially took the name of Ebionites (*Ebionim*, the Poor). The Church Fathers [none of whom spoke Aramaic] found the name still employed by later generations of Jewish believers, and were hard put to it for an explanation. . . . (*The Jew of Tarsus*, p. 69)

The Ebionites, in other words, were the direct descendants of the original Jewish disciples of Christ—the ones who remained in Israel and (after the fall of Jerusalem in 70) in adjacent territories, while the Greek-speaking Gentile church spread through the Roman Empire; and the Gospel they used has a number of distinguishing characteristics connected with the fact that these people continued to see themselves within the framework of Judaism. Among other things, and perhaps most interesting from the point of view of the esoteric tradition, it presents both Jesus and John the Baptist as vegetarians.

Now, there is a kind of consensus among most (though not all) first-rate New Testament scholars that the Secret Gospel of Mark is authentic; that is, that the letter of Clement in which the quotes are found is indeed a genuine letter of Clement, and that in the letter, he is presenting the truth as he understands it. No such consensus exists regarding either the Ebionites or their gospel; most scholars would probably agree with Jean Danielou that

They should not be confused purely and simply with the heirs of the first, Aramaic-speaking, Christians who fled to Transjordan after the fall of Jerusa-

lem in A.D. 70, and who were perfectly orthodox.
(*The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, p. 56.)

Of course, as we have seen, Hugh Schonfield does make this identification (or "confusion") and so, as Danielou points out in a footnote, does H. J. Schoeps; but still, Danielou seems to speak for many scholars in rejecting the Ebionites' own self-understanding. Because there is no doubt that this is how the Ebionites saw themselves: as direct spiritual descendants of Jesus via the man they saw as his successor, the mysterious and enigmatic figure known as James the Just, "the brother of the Lord." To understand both the Ebionites' self-understanding and the rejection of that self-understanding by modern scholars with preconceptions of their own, we have to consider both the figure of James the Just and the question, raised by Danielou, of "orthodoxy."

James is referred to in the New Testament on a number of occasions,⁹ but never (in the way we would expect) in the Gospels. Both Paul and the author of the book called *The Acts of the Apostles* take for granted his pre-eminent status (the later Church referred to him as the first Bishop of Jerusalem), and the presence of the Epistle of James, attributed to him, in the New Testament canon also points to the respect and esteem with which posterity viewed him. Further, the title "brother of the Lord," which is found in the New Testament (*Galatians* 1:19) attests to some sort of intimate connection with Jesus; yet he is, apparently, totally missing in the Gospels, except as part of Jesus's family who are routinely pictured as not understanding and opposing his work. What is this?

Any assessment of James has to begin with our oldest detailed account of him, found in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book II, writing in the fourth century but quoting a much earlier writer, "Hegesippus, who belongs to the generation after the Apostles," and who "gives the most accurate account of him speaking as follows in his fifth book:"

The charge of the Church passed to James the brother of the Lord, together with the Apostles. He was

called the "Just" by all from the Lord's time to ours, since many are called James, but he was holy from his mother's womb. He drank no wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat flesh; no razor went upon his head; he did not anoint himself with oil, and he did not go to the [ritual] baths. He alone was allowed to enter into the sanctuary, for he did not wear wool but linen, and he used to enter alone into the temple and be found kneeling and praying for forgiveness for the people, so that his knees grew hard like a camel's because of his constant worship of God, kneeling and asking for forgiveness for the people. So from his excessive righteousness he was called the Just . . . (Kirsopp Lake, ed., Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Volume I, pp. 154-55)

To this should be added the following from the Gospel of Thomas, not an Ebionite document *per se*:

The followers said to Jesus, "We know that you are going to leave us. Who will be our leader?"

Jesus said to them, "No matter where you are, you are to go to James the Just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being." (Thomas 12)

The "followers" who ask this question are the same people who are routinely referred to as "apostles" elsewhere: Peter, Matthew, Thomas, along with Mary Magdalene and Salome who are (in this gospel) on the same level as the men. Yet they are being told—by *Jesus!*—to go "no matter where you are" to James the Just! In the light of this, the little phrase "together with the Apostles" in the second line of the Hegesippus quote above, has all the earmarks of a gloss added to protect the "orthodox" view of the pre-eminence of the "Apostles" we are familiar with from the canonical gospels.

So we have here a towering figure, considered his successor by Jesus himself, and seen that way by later writers (with some modifications) also; a figure with an overwhelming reputation for holiness, who, like the Ebionites who honored his

memory, saw himself within the context of Judaism (as, of course, Jesus always did) and who was a strict vegetarian and abstainer from alcohol. Certainly the Ebionites' Gospel with its depiction of Jesus and John the Baptist* as vegetarians, if it does date in its present form from later than James's time, reflects his understanding of Jesus's message and practice; and is James a witness who can be easily discounted? Could he have, immediately after the death of Jesus, introduced radical changes into the gospel which all of the disciples would have known were radical changes? Or is it more likely that the original Jewish disciples including James were vegetarians because they had learned that from Jesus?

Echoes of the original tradition of vegetarianism remain in the New Testament and in patristic literature: Romans 14 reflects a dispute between a vegetarian (probably esoteric Jewish) and a non-vegetarian faction in the Roman Christian community that is being mediated by Paul. It cannot be said that Paul, despite his openness to the esoteric understanding of Jesus (reflected in the high esteem he and his writings were held by the Valentinian Gnostics and the Marcionites, among others, in the second century), really understood this part of his teaching; still he refrains from condemning vegetarianism and seems to be very aware that many Christians consider it important. This is no longer true, as we have seen, of the later pseudo-Paul who, writing in a very different church climate, has no hesitation in doing, in I Timothy 4:3-5, what the real Paul had not done.

There are other echoes, too: Acts 15, the only place in the New Testament (apart from his epistle) which features James prominently, shows him being very insistent that eating blood and the meat of strangled animals be avoided by all Christians (Acts 15:29); Louis Berman, in his *Vegetarianism and the Jewish Tradition*, shows how this prohibition in the Jewish law is intimately connected with the vegetarian ideal.¹¹ It is

* If James was Jesus's successor, John the Baptist was certainly his "guru," at least in the sense that Jesus was initiated by him: this is the whole point of Matthew 3:1-17 and Mark 1:1-14, although the relationship is seen differently in the parallel accounts of Luke and John.¹⁰ See also Thomas 46.

quite possible, in the light of what we have learned about James from other sources and of Romans 14, that this incident is an exoteric reflection of a vegetarian original.¹²

Other echoes include the continuing tradition within the church of the value of vegetarianism for those who are serious about spiritual practices, itself part of the esoteric accommodation made after the triumph of the "Great Church" (i.e., the particular Christian sect which, by virtue of its association with the Emperor Constantine and the power of the Roman state, was able to stamp all the other sects as heretics during the fourth century). Thus we find that St. Anthony and his spiritual heirs, the Desert Fathers and Mothers, were all strict vegetarians, and that when this spiritual impulse was codified in the western church in the Rule of St. Benedict, that too was vegetarian, a practice followed by the stricter Catholic orders (those, that is, that put emphasis on meditation and "interior prayer") to this day.¹³

Other interesting reflections occur in Justin Martyr, who seems to assume a communion service with bread and *water*—not wine—an assumption found also among the Ebionites;¹⁴ and in the stories of the Grail Quest from the Middle Ages, stories in which the esoteric point of view is intermingled very comfortably with the practices and traditions of the Cistercians, at that time one of the vegetarian orders.¹⁵ There is also the Clementine Homilies, another Jewish Christian text, which describes Peter as "using only bread and olives, rarely vegetables," and Matthew partaking of "seeds, and fruits, and vegetables, without flesh" (Danielou, *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, p. 372). But perhaps the most interesting of these testimonies is found in the same Eusebius who preserved for us Hegesippus' account of James the Just: earlier in Book II of his *Ecclesiastical History* he quotes a long passage from Philo of Alexandria, the distinguished Jewish philosopher who was a contemporary of Jesus but almost certainly never met him (they were in different places), on the Therapeutae, a Jewish ascetic sect. Now it is thought by most contemporary scholars that the Therapeutae are a branch of the Essenes, and that the time that Philo wrote was too early for Christians in Alexandria; but Eusebius assumes that they are early Christians, on the grounds of their asceticism, which includes (among other things) vegetari-

anism! (Eusebius, Volume I, pp. 145-157; the vegetarian reference is on p. 155.)

Now none of this proves that Jesus taught vegetarianism, or that the Gospel of the Ebionites is authentic; but the tenacious survival of a practice which goes very far back, to the very birth of the church or even beyond, certainly has to be taken into consideration. It is my belief that James was the successor of Jesus, designated as such by him, and that he faithfully handed on what he had been given. Later currents in the church found the survival of those practices heretical; but it was not the Ebionim who changed.¹⁶

“Christ lived before Jesus”:

Sant Kirpal Singh Ji used to often relate the following, based on a visit to the Unity Temple in Los Angeles, where he had been invited to speak:

The other day I went to a Unity Church. I asked the minister, “What are your teachings?” He gave me a pamphlet, I read it; it said there, “Christ lived before Jesus.” And what is Christ? . . . Christ is the God Power or Guru Power which continues to come from time to time, for the guidance of child humanity. It came even before Christ Jesus, before Buddha, or Guru Nanak or anybody. We are all His children. How can He disregard His children? . . . So that God Power continues—the Sonship continues. (Quoted in A. S. Oberoi, *Support for the Shaken Sangat*, p. 123)

Before we jump to the conclusion that this point of view, which is consistent with that of the universal spiritual tradition as a whole, is unbiblical, let us take a fresh look at the Prologue to the Gospel of John:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being

through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. . . .

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. . . . (John 1:1-5, 14, New Revised Standard Version)

This concept of the Word is a universal one, and it is central to the esoteric understanding of life. The concept is found in all religions, almost always referred to in terms which suggest something expressed or audible (Word or *Logos*, Name or *Naam*, Sound Current or *Shabd*, *Kalma*, *Udgit*, *Tao*, etc.; see Kirpal Singh, *Naam or Word*, for a wonderful comparative study of this concept as it is found the world over). It is also invariably linked with creation and redemption both; the same Power that has created us accepts responsibility for us. And the way that it manifests that responsibility is *to become like us*—to “become flesh and live among us”* so that we will be able to connect with it through the line of least resistance, as we connect with anyone we know and love. The Word is metaphorically referred to as “a father’s only son” because no matter how many times the Word incarnates (and as we have seen, according to the esoteric tradition, the Word is continually incarnating) it is still only the one Word which is present. It is the Christ which lived before Jesus, and after too: it is the agency through which we came down into this world making itself available for us to go home by it. This is the meaning of John 1:51: “Very truly I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man”—the allusion being to Jacob’s stairway in Genesis 28:12. The Word made flesh, the human being who has united with God and through whom the Word is reachable, becomes our stairway by showing us how to reach and make use of the Word within us.

Strictly speaking, of course, we are all “Word made flesh,”

* Actually, the Greek word used here for “lived” literally means “to pitch a tent”; it could happily be translated “the Word became flesh and camped out among us!”

as the Gospel makes clear: none of us would have life if it were not for the presence of the Word. Furthermore, if from one point of view, the Master or Redeemer is someone who has descended from God for our sake, from another he is someone who was like us once, but has realized his full potential. Kirpal Singh used to say, "What a man has done, a man can do," and "Every Saint has a past, every sinner a future." I was present on January 19, 1964, at the Friends Meeting House, Washington, D.C., when he put it this way:

Follow the beauty of the sayings, I tell you. Live up to them, each one of you. You must be an ambassador, I tell you. Whoever has got the human body has the birthright to become God, I tell you. There is no exaggeration about it. But the pity is that we don't follow it. (*Sat Sandesh*, March 1975, p. 11)

If we have the Word of God dwelling within us, and if that Word is by definition our very life and light, then when Jesus said, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), he was only reminding us of our birthright. It's not at all paradoxical, really; it's as clear as daylight, if we assume that the Prologue to John *means what it says*.

Each Gospel, we may note, begins the story of Jesus at the point where it assumes "Christ" begins: Mark at Jesus's baptism or initiation, Matthew and Luke at his conception and birth, and John at the creation of the universe.

Conclusion:

It is not my aim with this book to convince anyone who does not want to be convinced of the truth of the understanding of Jesus of Nazareth that is presented here. The talks that follow were originally given with one purpose in mind: to show Christians who were initiates of a living Master that they were doing exactly what the disciples of Jesus did when he walked the earth. If those talks have a wider application, I am glad; and I have written this Introduction to provide a bridge between the conventional view of Jesus and the esoteric one presented here. How we view these matters is necessarily a

question of faith, and in matters of faith it is not possible to prove or disprove anything. Those of us who have had our lives transformed through the contact with a living Master will have a different view than those of us who have not. But if we can remember the words of Kirpal Singh already quoted, that right understanding begins with the realization that God is in every heart and that everyone therefore is worthy of respect, then we can read the talks that follow and derive some value from them, whether we agree with their basic premise or not.

Notes

1. See Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy*, or for a briefer but quite wonderful explanation, see his Introduction to the Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood translation of the Bhagavad-Gita (*The Song of God: Bhagavad-Gita*). For an excellent explanation of the idea of esotericism and its historical manifestations, see P. D. Ouspensky's *A New Model of the Universe*, pp. vii-x, 12-21, 24-41, and, with special reference to Christianity, 131-185. And for a beautiful study from the point of view of the central esoteric idea of the Name (Sanskrit *Naam*), Word, or *Logos*, see Kirpal Singh, *Naam or Word*.

2. For these schools and their teachings, see the relevant books in the Bibliography.

3. Cf. Kabir, *The Ocean of Love*, pp. 124-126, or almost any devotional hymn by any disciple in the esoteric tradition: Rumi's *Divan of Shams-i-Tabriz* or Ajaib Singh, *Songs of the Masters*, puts Philippians 2:6-11 in the context from which it came. See also Ajaib Singh's commentary on Sehjo Bai's hymn, "Of God and the Guru," *Streams in the Desert*, p. 63 ff. Diana Eck, *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Benaras*, pp. 93-97, is excellent on John 14:6, and on the question of the "uniqueness" or "exclusivity" of Christ in general.

4. There is a vast scholarly literature on this subject, much of which is completely unknown to most Christians; I will mention only the most important. Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, published in Germany in 1934, and available in English since 1971, is an absolutely seminal work by the greatest Greek scholar of his generation; a revolutionary book which has only increased in value with the passage of time. I rely heavily on

its main thesis: that the so-called "Great Church," the direct ancestor of today's Christian main stream in all its branches, was only one of many sects all claiming authenticity and apostolic succession, until Constantine the Great, Emperor of Rome in the fourth century, put the power of the State behind it after his conversion. Other more recent works, which are able to draw upon discoveries of ancient manuscripts unknown to Bauer, include my teacher Helmut Koester's magisterial two-volume INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, particularly Volume II: *The History and Literature of Early Christianity*; and his *Ancient Christian Gospels*. John Dominic Crossan's *The Historical Jesus*, and the writings of Elaine Pagels and John Dart also shed much light on this subject.

5. Cf. Koester, *History and Literature*, pp. 1-15. The Muratorian Canon, the earliest list of New Testament books, is usually dated around 200, and differs from our New Testament in interesting ways: it includes two books (the Revelation of Peter and the Wisdom of Solomon) which are not in the present-day N.T., and it is missing Hebrews, II Peter, and III John.

6. Particularly Papias of Hierapolis: see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. I, (LCL), p. 293. Cf. Koester, *History and Literature*, p.3.

7. There are, actually, several books already existing that are totally devoted to the Gospel of Thomas. The best is Marvin Meyer's masterly translation and commentary, *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus*, which includes an interpretation by Harold Bloom which is in itself worth the price of the book. Others include Hugh McGregor Ross, *Essays on the Gospel of Thomas*; Stevan L. Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*; and the Concord Grove Press edition, *The Gospel According to Thomas with Complementary Texts*, which includes other early Gnostic writings as well as articles on the Gnostic Transmission, etc. In addition, the Gospel text is found in several collections: *The Other Gospels*, edited by Ron Cameron; *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, edited by James T. Robinson (this is the same Thomas O. Lambdin translation used by Cameron, with an excellent introduction by Helmut Koester); *The Other Bible*, edited by Willis Barnstone, which uses both the Lambdin translation and the Koester introduction; and *The Gnostic Scriptures*, edited by Bentley Layton, with his own translation, introduction and notes. In addition, the Gospel is discussed extensively by Helmut Koester in *Ancient Christian Gospels*.

8. The complete text of the fragments of the Secret Gospel of Mark, and Clement's letter which contains them, with an introduction by the editor, is found in Ron Cameron, *The Other Gospels*, as indicated; the main sources are Morton Smith's own writings: *The Secret Gospel*, an account of his discovery, including the text of Clement's letter and the fragments of the Gospel in English; and *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, which goes over the same events from a more scholarly perspective and includes the original Greek text with a detailed analysis. The Secret Gospel of Mark is also discussed authoritatively, with a careful examination of how it connects with canonical Mark, by Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, pp. 293-303; and, equally carefully, with an acute awareness of the problems this particular text has raised, by John Dominic Crossan, *Four Other Gospels: Shadows on the Contours of Canon*, pp. 91-121. Both of these discussions are valuable. For Clement of Alexandria and his connection with the esoteric tradition, see Henry Chadwick, ed., *Alexandrian Christianity*, which includes a helpful introduction to Clement and the complete text of Books III and VII of his *Stromateia* or "Miscellanies," which include much relevant material.

9. See, e.g., I Corinthians 15:7; Galatians 1:11-2:14; Acts 15:1-29.

10. See Helmut Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity*, p. 73: "That Jesus was baptized by John—this report should not be doubted—proves that Jesus was a disciple of John." For baptism as initiation, see Danielou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, pp. 316-23; Kirpal Singh, *Naam or Word*, p. 173; cf. Kabir, *The Ocean of Love*, pp. 98-99.

11. See pp. 21-27 in particular, but the theme occurs throughout the book.

12. Danielou seems to be aware of this possibility; see *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, pp. 370-72.

13. See Owen Chadwick, *Western Asceticism*, p. 58, and, for the Rule of St. Benedict, p. 317: "Except the very weak, no one shall eat meat at any time."

14. See Alfred Loisy, *The Birth of the Christian Religion*, pp. 237-38, together with the note 25 on p. 399.

15. See P. M. Matarasso, ed., *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, p. 146.

16. The Gospel of the Ebionites is found in its entirety, such as it is, in both *The Other Gospels*, edited by Ron Cameron, and in *The Apocryphal New Testament*, edited by M. R. James. The best discussion of James the Just that I am aware of is in Geoffrey Ashe, *The Virgin*, which places him in the context of Jesus's family in a very plausible and convincing way.

Chapter 1

Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

The Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus's teaching in general, is not Christianity at all; it's not even esoteric Christianity. It is esoteric Judaism. We should recognize clearly that Jesus came within the Jewish religion, taught within the Jewish religion, and defined himself as being sent to the people of that religion and that generation. His words in John 9:5 were, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world," and in Matthew 15:24, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."

Both these statements, as well as others to be considered later, are in direct conflict with the institutional assumptions of the Christian religion. *The Gospel of Truth*, by the Gnostic Master Valentinus, attests to the fact that esoteric Christianity did exist by the second century: a mystical system which worked within the framework of institutional Christianity and accepted its dominant beliefs; but Jesus was teaching within the framework of institutional Judaism, and nowhere is that more evident than in the Sermon on the Mount. It's true that he does not hesitate to point out where the current "establishment" or exoteric understanding of the doctrine was wrong or incomplete. He revealed the problems with the traditional interpretations, but he did it from the point of view of esoteric Judaism, a perspective that he never left.

Those of us who believe in the universal spiritual tradition,

the Perennial Philosophy, or as it is called in India, *Sant Mat*, must realize that Jewish writers who have listed Jesus as a great Kabbalistic Master are correct.* He was a Master who came and taught the Path in the language of his day, with the presumptions of his time, in the same way that modern Masters come and speak within the context of our day. This is the way all Masters have worked and for very practical reasons: they want to take us Home. They don't really care how it's done, as countless stories by Jesus and others indicate. They must do it. They work within the limits of the physical world, and they accept those limits.

When the Ultimate Creator, the owner of the entire universe, comes into the fallen physical world, the world of the Negative Power, as an uninvited guest, He comes as a victim. He is as vulnerable to the stresses and strains of the physical universe as we are, and this is the transcendent meaning of incarnation. We are victims, we are vulnerable, and when God descends and enters our plane of existence He also becomes a victim and vulnerable. That is His supreme mark of respect for us. He does not suspend the laws and play the game as if it were only a game.

This premise is hard to grasp, but it is the fundamental truth that underlies the Crucifixion, and the deaths of many Masters. In California, in 1972, someone asked Master Kirpal Singh why Jesus was the only Master who died for the sins of the world. He laughed, and said, "All Masters have died for the sins of the world." It's part of their job. They make themselves vulnerable in order to help us. There are many reasons for this and they have to do with the nature of the Supreme God and the nature of the Negative Power behind this fallen universe of cause and effect, punishment and reward, and the craving for selfish advantage.

The perfect Positive Creator, our Source, the One Who has given us life and co-exists with us and Whose love is innate in us, comes into the fallen universe and submits to the same

* "Was Jesus a Kabbalist? His teachings suggest that he was a Kabbalistic adept and that much of his message was rooted in the Kabbalah." David Sheinkin, M.D., *Path of the Kabbalah*, p. 15.

arrangement of reward and punishment that we experience. The only difference is that in His submitting there is a transcendence: because of what is accomplished by it, the whole process becomes meaningful, especially if we participate in what He does.

In many ways the Sermon on the Mount is like the teachings of all Masters, but it is held in particularly high esteem not only in the Christian domain but throughout the world. Mahatma Gandhi, for example, considered it his favorite of all scriptures. It is not a law in the sense of the Negative Power's laws: "Do this and you will be rewarded and not punished," etc. It does read like a law in places where Jesus indicates what will happen if we do certain things or fail to do them; but *it is essentially a glimpse of the reality of the universe which we ignore at our own cost*. We do ignore it because it runs against what seems to be the human grain but which, in fact, is the *fallen* human grain.

When punishments or rewards are mentioned in the Sermon, they are like those a father might point out to his child: "if you go out into the road when traffic is heavy, you will probably be run over, so please don't do it." Jesus is explaining the nature of both the Negative Power's fallen universe and the original, unfallen, real universe that reflects the Positive Power, the God of mercy and love. The only way to make sense out of the fallen universe is to live in it from the perspective of the unfallen. The only way to make sense out of the world in which justice and law and reward and punishment predominate is to live in it from the point of view of love.

If we live that way, we invoke that love into ourselves. That is why Jesus says that if you forgive others, your heavenly Father will forgive you; it is not because God is interested only in forgiving us when we have learned how to forgive others, but because the act of forgiving others invokes its like. By loving we bring love into us; by forgiving we bring forgiveness into us. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount we are given a map of the unfallen universe and the way it interacts with the fallen one. It instructs us how to live so that we may make the fullest possible use of our human life.

The very first clause in the Sermon (Matthew 5:3) is:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

and the third clause is probably a restatement of the first; it is a quotation from Psalm 37:

Blessed are the gentle (meek) for they shall inherit the earth.

It is thought that these are not separate clauses because “the poor in spirit” and “the gentle” seem to mean the same thing.* Jesus is saying that the poor in spirit have heaven, and then he quotes the Psalm to point out that they also have earth. He uses the scripture as a support, just as Sant Ajaib Singh Ji often makes a statement and then quotes Kabir or Nanak to back him up.

What is meant by the poor in spirit? The Greek word for “poor” (*ptochoi*), which is used here, acquired an almost technical meaning later as a translation for the Aramaic *ebionim*, which means literally “the poor ones.” The early Jewish followers of Jesus in Jerusalem were known as the Ebionim, as we have seen. In Luke 6:20, where a similar passage is found, it reads, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” Then accompanying it (Luke 6:24), “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.” This is obviously not a commandment but a statement of reality. It has to do with the vulnerability, the “victimness” of human beings on this planet, and with seeing things as they really are.

The more we are cushioned and protected from reality by security, money, comfort, and other aspects of worldly-wealth, and the more we assume that that is the norm, the more vulnerable we are in fact. The poorer we are and the more we realize our weakness, the stronger we become. So the way to deal with vulnerability is to recognize it. When we understand that we don’t control *anything* on this physical plane, we have a chance to become strong. We can become really rich in the true sense of the word; we can inherit both heaven and earth—

* Compare the note in the New Jerusalem Bible for this verse.

the kingdom of God first. When we admit that the power we thought we had over our environment, our circumstance, or our life is actually an illusion, we are on the way to having real control. It becomes possible.

There are many stories that various Masters have told to illustrate these truths, and in Sant Ajaib Singh Ji's book, *In the Palace of Love*, he tells the story of Dara Shikoh and Sarmad. Dara Shikoh was a very spiritual person and an initiate of Sarmad; he was also the eldest son and heir of the Mogul Emperor Shah Jahan who built the Taj Mahal. Sarmad was Jewish and had been brought up in the Jewish community, but he was also a great Sufi Master. Dara Shikoh and Sarmad were studying the words of Guru Nanak and they read that a person is comfortable only as long as the grace of God is upon him. When that is removed, even if he is a king he may have to eat grass and no one will give him food when he begs for it.

Dara Shikoh was astounded at this. He had been brought up in the royal palace and it had always been understood that he would be king. He said, "How can this be? I am going to be king. I'll never have to eat grass. Even if I went to beg, wouldn't people recognize me? Wouldn't they know I was the king and give me food? How can this be?" Sarmad answered, "What the Masters have written is true and you will see how it can be."

Then it so happened that Shah Jahan's younger son, Aurangzeb, imprisoned his father because he didn't want Dara Shikoh to become king. He took over the throne even before his father died, and Dara Shikoh became a refugee, fleeing from his brother. Eventually he was captured, tortured and imprisoned. At one point he was being led around in chains on an elephant:

Later he was very weak, as he had not eaten food for many days, and when he was brought near a chickpea field, he tried to eat some of the grass or leaves of the chickpea plant; but the soldiers were under the orders of Aurangzeb, not to allow him to eat anything, not even grass; so even though he tried, he could not eat the grass. At that time he remem-

bered what his Master Sarmad had said, quoting Guru Nanak's bani: "If God takes away His gracious sight, if God does not shower grace on a person, the emperor can become a beggar and may have to eat grass." So then he realized, "Once I was a king; I was going to become an emperor, but I have not become an emperor; and I cannot even eat grass. So whatever the Masters have said is true." . . .

Eventually he was taken to the place where Sarmad was kept, because his Master had also been imprisoned by Aurangzeb on the grounds that he was helping Dara Shikoh to get the throne. But you know that Saints and Mahatmas do not have anything to do with worldly power and rulers, and Dara Shikoh did not get any help from his Master Sarmad for getting the throne; it was just a useless allegation. So when Dara Shikoh and Sarmad came face to face, the Master said, "Dara Shikoh, now the door of Sach Khand is open; why don't you sacrifice your head? Why don't you give up your body, and come to the real Kingdom of God and get the real throne?" So hearing the words of his Master Sarmad, Dara Shikoh gave himself up: he sacrificed his head and went to the real home. (Ajaib Singh, *In the Palace of Love*, pp. 160-161)

When the Masters say things like this, we may feel they are being negative; but the fact is that they are pointing out the Reality so that we have the option of dealing with events from strength rather than weakness. The paradox here is that the more we see ourselves as weak in relation to the universe, the more real strength we have because the strength we *think* we have is fundamentally illusory. In fact, we cannot deal with anything that really matters except through the grace of God. If we think we can, we soon discover that we can't. Life is difficult and that is why those people who understand they can't do anything without God are blessed and inherit both heaven and earth.

A Hasidic rabbi has said that everyone should have two pockets. In one pocket is written, "I am earth and ashes," and in the other pocket is written, "For my sake the universe was

created.” Both statements are true, and the entire doctrine of humility and poverty of spirit is predicated on the simultaneous grasping of these two sayings. The universe was created for our sake. We have the birthright to become God, Kirpal Singh has said. Once we become God we are God—that potentiality is ours. At the same time, those who have reached that state make it very clear that from their perspective they themselves are not very important. Both understandings have to be simultaneously present or a great distortion occurs.

Involved in all this is the fundamental reality that the way in which the unfallen, positive universe of love interacts with the fallen, negative universe of karma, judgment, and “justice,” is through weakness. This is a paradox that is worth exploring, and it is what underlies the teaching of humility.

In Philippians 2:1-10 St. Paul writes:

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God

as something to be exploited,

but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave,

being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

he humbled himself

and became obedient to the point of death—

even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name

that is above every name,

so that at the name of Jesus

**every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord
to the glory of God the Father.**

Here it is made clear that the exaltation, the glory of Jesus, is made possible by his willingness to be a slave and to accept a death which was unworthy even of a slave because it was a criminal's death, comparable to the electric chair of modern times. If we have trouble understanding how this shameful death affected his disciples and followers and why they found it so hard to understand why their Master would let himself be crucified, just reflect how we would feel if our Master, whom we know and love and depend on for spiritual guidance, were sentenced to death by a court and made to die in an electric chair. Our pain would be comparable to theirs.

Jesus was willing to accept all that as part of what was required of him. Why? It has often been postulated that the loving God was a mean, tyrannical Father who demanded that His child sacrifice Himself; and this does follow from the traditional Christian belief. But in fact it was because the nature of the fallen universe demands that those who come into it to subvert it and liberate its people by showing them their true potential, have to submit themselves to the fallen universe's demands in order for the plan of escape to work.

Masters have often explained this in connection with karma. Before the Master can take us back home, something has to happen to our karma. The Master cannot simply say, "It doesn't exist any more," because in the fallen universe it will not disappear. So the Master agrees to pay off our karma, because he loves us. Consequently, we should live in such a way that we produce as little karma as possible and thus make it easier for the Master; whatever karma we *don't* earn he doesn't have to pay. We also have to pay some of it, but there is a limit to what we can bear; there is no limit to what he can bear, and so he suffers for us. That's the secret of the crucifixion and it's the reason Kirpal Singh said that "All Masters have died for the sins of the world."

It is the Master's willingness to pay off our karmas that makes him vulnerable, but our understanding of our own weakness and our willingness to live from his point of view coincide with his purpose and therefore serve to help him in his work and to help us reach our own destiny.

St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, Chapters 11:16-12:10, is one of the most interesting passages in the entire New Testament, and it should be considered in connection with our present subject. The background for this passage is that many people have been complaining about Paul because they think he is not powerful enough; they want a different kind of person who does miracles and has a message of strength and power, and Paul refuses to comply.

As I said before, let no one take me for a fool; but if you must, then treat me as a fool and let me do a little boasting of my own. What I am going to say now is not prompted by the Lord, but said as if in a fit of folly, in the certainty that I have something to boast about. So many others have been boasting of their worldly achievements, that I will boast myself. You are all wise men and can cheerfully tolerate fools, yes, even to tolerating somebody who makes slaves of you, makes you feed him, imposes on you, orders you about and slaps you in the face. I hope you are ashamed of us for being weak with you instead!

Paul is, of course, referring to the so-called "Super Apostles" who feel they are more spiritual than Paul and who are relating to the people in the way a worldly master would treat his slaves.

But if anyone wants some brazen speaking—I am still talking as a fool—then I can be as brazen as any of them, and about the same things.

Hebrews are they? So am I. Israelites? So am I. Descendants of Abraham? So am I. The servants of Christ? I must be mad to say this, but so am I and more than they—more because I have worked harder,

I have been sent to prison more often, and whipped so many times more often almost to death. Five times I had the 39 lashes from the Jews, three times I have been beaten with sticks, once I was stoned, three times I have been shipwrecked and once adrift in the open sea for a night and a day.

Constantly traveling, I have been in danger from rivers and in danger from brigands, in danger from my own people and in danger from pagans, in danger in the towns, in danger in the open country, danger at sea, and danger from so-called brothers. I have worked and labored often without sleep, I have been hungry and thirsty and often starving. I have been in the cold without clothes, and to leave out much more, there is my daily preoccupation, my anxiety for all the churches. When any man has scruples, I have had scruples with him. When any man is made to fall, I am tortured.

If I am to boast, then let me boast of my own feebleness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, bless him forever, knows that I am not lying. When I was in Damascus, the ethnarch of King Aretas put guards around the city to catch me, and I had to be let down over the wall in a hamper through a window in order to escape.

Must I go on boasting, though there is nothing to be gained by it? Then I will move on to the visions and revelations that I have had from the Lord.

I know a man in Christ who, 14 years ago, was caught up, whether still in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows, right into the third heaven. I do know however that this same person, whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows, was caught up into paradise and heard things which must not and cannot be put into human language.

The King James Version here reads: “. . . heard the unspeakable words of God which no one can utter.” “This person”

that Paul refers to is universally considered to be himself; he is speaking in the third person because his concern here is to contrast physical weakness and willingness to be weak with the rewards that can result. He continues:

I will boast about a man like that but not of anything of my own except that of weakness. If I decide to boast, I should not be made to look foolish because I should only be speaking the truth. But I am not going to in case anyone should begin to think I am better than he can actually see and hear me to be.

In view of the extraordinary nature of these revelations, [that is, the experiences mentioned above,] to stop me from getting too proud, I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan beat me and stopped me from getting too proud. About this thing, I have pleaded with the Lord three times for it to leave me, but he has said, "My grace is enough for you. My power is at its best in weakness."

So I shall be very happy to make my weakness my special boast, so that the power of Christ may stay over me, and that is why I am quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and the agonies that I go through for Christ's sake. For it is when I am weak, I am strong.

That is the crux of the matter and the underlying truth that is beneath all of this; it is also why the doctrine of humility is so pervasive and so misunderstood. The strength of God lies in the weakness of human beings, but paradoxically it can manifest only when human beings are *aware* of their weakness. There is something about our awareness of it that allows God's power to work. The Masters themselves, in their physical lives, are the best examples of that principle; and certain people who are not Masters but who are spiritual, holy people who have come with a special mission, also reveal the truth of this in their lives.

Kirpal Singh, in his talk on "Humility" covers this ground from a somewhat more personal view. There seems to be a

problem of communication between the Masters and us when they say, for example, that true humility is not a forced kind of lowliness. We tend to discount or forget that Master Kirpal stated this very clearly; and when Sant Ji says in his bhajans, “I am a sinner,” or “I am nothing,” we sing the words and we try to mean them, but we don’t really feel like that. The real value in singing the bhajans lies in a kind of surrender that occurs when, as we sing them, we allow the Master’s perspective to supercede our own for a while. We don’t pretend that something is true when we don’t really believe it, but by surrendering even that much we allow the Master’s point of view to influence us for that moment even if we haven’t reached the point where we can share it fully.

However, as this passage will make clear, seeing ourselves as *nothing* comes from a vision of the rest of the universe, ourselves included, as *something*. It’s a matter of perspective and proportion. It never works when we put ourselves down just because we think we ought to, and it almost invariably makes us feel rebellious because no one can live like that. The humblest people are the ones who feel best about themselves. Thinking we are rotten is *not* being humble; it’s a perverse kind of egoism. Understanding that we are a child of God and the brother or sister of everyone else in the universe and an integral part of the whole—but not more than that—is what Master is telling us. Therefore the kind of self-importance that we often have which causes us to assume that what we want is right and to ignore others’ pain and needs as we exploit or manipulate them in our relationships, comes from not seeing from the perspective of the whole.

Master Kirpal says:

Yes, the branches of a fruit-laden tree bend of their own accord. Even so, the one who, losing himself, finds God, finds Him everywhere and in everyone, bends before all, offers homage of his heart to all. This is true humility; it is not a forced sense of lowliness. Such a one lives in unity with all. He is in others, and others are in him. It is the fake ego self that gives rise to the sense of discord and separation. When the illu-

sion of ego is broken, one feels, "I am not apart from others, but others are the parts of one, the Master, and all of us are engaged in the same service of God." Each one of us is unique in his own way. There is a divine purpose behind the life of everyone who comes into the world. No one has been created for nothing. We have something to learn from everyone. This is the mystery of humility.

Notice the paradox inherent in this statement that is one of the most famous that Master Kirpal ever made. It is a powerful and accurate maxim, but note that "the mystery of humility" has nothing to do with denigrating ourselves. Quite the opposite. "No one was created for nothing," and "There is a divine purpose behind the life of everyone who comes into the world," refers to us as much as to anyone else. Again, we see that "Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*," not only means that our neighbor *is* ourself but it also implies the requirement to *love* ourselves. It is the sense of the whole—of the reality and the majesty and the purpose of everything—that enables us to feel good about ourselves as a part of that totality.

The reading continues:

The truly humble person does not compare himself with others. He knows that none of us, however evolved, is perfect; none of us is complete in himself. The humble person does not regard one as better than the other; he believes in the divinity of each. If one says and asserts that he is better than others, then he is not perfect as yet.

The beautiful paradox sustains itself here again. "The humble person does not regard one as better than the other," means that he also does not regard anyone as better than he is. He knows that each is the same; we are all children of God; we are all brothers and sisters. From this perspective we see that no one, including us, is more important than anyone else; but we also see that no one, including us, is less important than anyone else. We believe in the divinity of each.

The reading continues:

It is only when one realizes his nothingness that God comes and fills him with Himself. Where man is, God is not; where man is not, God is! God cannot enter the heart of a self-seeking person. He who is full of himself considers himself as above others and so puts a limit on himself. God is without limit. How can the limitless enter the limited?

When Master says "Realizing one's nothingness," he does not mean seeing one's self as a failure but rather as one part of the whole. Then he makes a direct reference to the problem of interaction between the fallen and the unfallen universe, the invasion of the one by the other. The hallmark of the unfallen universe is eternity, infinity, and limitlessness. That limitlessness can be manifested in the fallen universe only by rejecting its comparisons, criteria, and measurements. When we sink into the trap of ego measurement, we prevent the limitlessness of the unfallen universe from influencing us.

The reading continues:

A man may strive to be humble, but for all his efforts, may become all the more proud. There is such a thing as the pride of humility; it is a very dangerous thing, for it is too subtle to be discerned by the inexperienced. There are some who will take great pains to be humble; they make humility impossible. How can a man be humble who is all the time thinking of how best he can be humble? Such a man is all the time occupied with himself; but true humility is freedom from all consciousness of self, which includes freedom from the consciousness of humility. The truly humble man never knows that he is humble.

"Humility," says Lacordaire, "does not consist in hiding our talents and virtues, in thinking ourselves worse and more ordinary than we are, but in possessing a clear knowledge of all that is lacking in

us, and not exalting ourselves for that which we have, seeing that God has freely given it us, and with all His gifts, we are still infinitely of little importance."

So the truly humble man may accept sometimes the praise which men give him, and quietly passes it on to God, keeping nothing for himself. (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 344 ff)

Master Kirpal's whole message about true humility is a beautiful description of what it is like to live at peace because it is through the possession of inner peace that the inheritance of heaven and earth comes about. Of course there is always the problem we have all recognized at times: the Masters tell us what to do, but they don't really tell us *how* to do it. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." How do we become poor in spirit? Master Kirpal has written beautifully about humility, which is the same thing Jesus meant by "poor in spirit," and he has told us what humility is and is not. But how to achieve it?

There really is no *how*. To participate in an angle of vision is possible only by a connection. This is the meaning behind the pervasive teachings about love for the Master. If we love someone who has a particular point of view, the law of Nature will allow us to share that view with that person. If we love the Master who lives in perfect humility, that love will lead us to see things in such a way and to do things in such a way that gradually, little by little, his point of view will become ours.

It will happen without great mental anguish on our part. We may have to learn about our own vulnerability as St. Paul did; many of us have already learned how limited our sphere of control is and how fragile we are. Our willingness to recognize that we can be wrong and that we can do unkind things and fail to be understanding at crucial times will slowly but surely teach us the humility of spirit that Jesus urges us to.

The love for God working through a living Master brings about a participation in His angle of vision, and that participation in turn brings about a greater love for Him. It's like the two wings of a bird. Jesus on the mountain, as he instructed

his disciples in how to live and how to love, was opening their eyes to his own perspective and inviting them to share it so that they could also live in peace and love and teach his Gospel to others.

Chapter 2

Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

We have seen that the teachings of the Masters in general and the Sermon on the Mount in particular should not be understood as commandments or laws telling us what we must do but as glimpses of reality that make us want to follow their suggestions. When the Masters instruct us, they aim us in a direction that will eventually coincide with our own soul's uttermost yearning.

The next beatitude in the Sermon is Matthew 5:4:

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Instead of the word "blessed," which is the literal meaning of the Greek *makarios*, some translators prefer the word "happy," which results in the interesting paradox, "Happy are those who grieve, for they shall be comforted." In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus clarifies this somewhat: "Blessed are you who weep now for you will laugh," and later he says, "Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep." (Luke 6:21, 25)

What we are being given here is both paradoxical and complex, but it is a universal doctrine which all Masters, of all traditions, have taught. Many of us have experienced this truth, at least in part: before we can progress, we must have a sense of the reality of what we are doing. Much of our so-called

happiness is based on illusion, forgetfulness, and pretense, and unless these are stripped away we cannot proceed toward self-knowledge and knowledge of God. The stripping away process hurts, and that causes grief. Moreover, this is not something that happens only once on the human journey; we will see that it happens over and over again—perhaps on different levels—and has to be repeated until the very end.

In the Gospel of Thomas, verse 2, Jesus says:

**Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds.
When he finds, he will become troubled; when he
becomes troubled he will be astonished, and he will
rule over the All.**

“Becoming troubled” is the key phrase. First we seek, then we find; when we find, we don’t always like the implications of what we find. It troubles us. It makes us unhappy, it makes us weep; but with the weeping comes an astonishment at what lies beyond, and that takes us directly to triumph. That triumph is what Jesus referred to in Luke when he said, “You will laugh later,” or when he said, “You will be comforted.”

In the Gospel of John 16:20-23, there is an interesting comment on this passage in which Jesus explains more clearly what he means:

**Truly, truly I say to you, You will weep and lament
but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful
but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is
in travail (giving birth) she has sorrow because her
hour has come; but when she is delivered of the
child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy
that a child is born into the world. So you have
sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts
will rejoice and no one will take your joy from you.**

The last comment pertains to the disciples’ grief over their separation from the Master which Jesus was talking about at that moment. John 16 is one of the farewell chapters in which he says goodbye to his close disciples and tells them he is

going to leave them for a while. Such separation is one of the causes of the grief that later makes us happy, and Jesus explains how this works: the more intense and direct and real the sorrow is, the more it leads straight to the joy of reconciliation or reuniting. It isn't the only cause, however. The reason Masters lay such stress on this mourning and grieving is that there are layers and levels of separation. First, when we begin to seek we understand that we are separated; when we find what we are seeking, we have a much clearer understanding of how far-reaching our separation is. Then as we go along the way, at each point where separation is demanded of us, it becomes even harder to deal with. The Masters have been very explicit about this process.

Master Kirpal Singh has given a moving discourse on this subject of grieving called "The Heart's True Yearning." Much of this talk has to do with the idea of "ruling passion," and when Jesus says a little later in the Sermon, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," he is stating the same idea in different words. Master Kirpal comments on a hymn by Guru Ramdas:

The Lord's arrow of love has pierced my heart.

There is a certain type of arrow which has a hooked head, and when it enters the target it cannot be removed. The Master is explaining that his yearning for the Lord has become a consuming desire, a tormenting yearning of devotion and love which has developed within the heart, and like the hooked arrow is there to stay. When this arrow strikes, one cannot remove it even if he wants to. . . .

No one else can know of the suffering of the soul that is separated from the Lord, except the Lord Himself; or one who is also suffering similarly.

I can tell you of my own condition, around the year 1914. Background does have some bearing on one's life. One in whom this yearning for God takes root has some impressions from the past which come to the fore and develop during this birth. In those days while working in the office, tears would flow

without reason, spoiling the papers on the desk. Within myself I would ask, "O God, what *is* happening?" At home the family also could not understand what was happening. . . . What can other people know of the condition of one's heart? If the enigma of the mystery of life enters the heart, the person knows no peace until it has been solved. The questions continue to repeat: *what is life? who am I?* . . .

There are many tears for worldly things, but who cries for the Lord? People who have never done so do not realize what kind of torment that is. It is not something within our control—it either comes or does not. It is pain—black clouds which bring the promise of rain; the blossoms of the fruit tree which bring the promise of fruit to come. This tormented condition indicates a heart wherein lies the hope of the Lord's coming—you can say it heralds His coming. And Guru Ramdas says that only the Lord Himself knows the pain of that heart, the inner torment.

Guru Amardas once said, *One second without You, O Lord, seems like fifty years.* . . . Tears are very necessary for without them the deeply buried *sanskaras* [karmic impressions] of eons of births cannot be washed away. The water from the eyes has a marvelous cleansing power. Maulana Rumi has a very beautiful way of putting it when he says that if one wishes to do the *Haj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), then he should go by the "waters of the sea, for the road by dry land will never take one there." The "waters of the sea" are the tears, flowing down in torrents from the eyes. (*Sat Sandesh*, April 1973, pp. 4-6)

However, it is not only before we meet our Guru that these tears are necessary. Sometimes they come when we first encounter the Word within—the Sound Current or the Light—or when we first meet our Master, either outwardly or inwardly. But the reason for the tears is always the same: when we come face to face with reality, we break through the glass bubble we have built around ourselves, and the shattering is very painful. Our tendency to build on illusion is constant; until we begin to

find truth, until we begin to feel the separation and yearning for God, illusion helps us survive. As long as we remain within a dream, we can convince ourselves we are happy. When we begin to want something more and come out to face reality, it causes grief. The levels of self-deception are manifold and the further we go the more we find that we have, through eons of births, created layers and layers of delusion.

In the biblical Book of Job, Job was a good man and he was happy; he worshipped God but he felt no sense of separation. According to the poet William Blake, that happiness and so-called peace with God was basically an illusion; and when the veil was stripped away, Job made what is known as "the descent into ashes" and was reduced to nothing. In that nothingness he eventually met God; then the "descent" was reversed and he ascended to reality rather than to illusion. Job's life can be understood in this way and the intense, all-consuming grief that he suffered, coupled with the uselessness of his friends' advice, illuminates both this beatitude and the second verse of Thomas.

Sometimes we feel this grief after we have come in contact with the Reality within. Somehow the glimpse of what is required, or the knowledge of how illusory our life has been, or how deeply we have dug ourselves into our individual pit, is very hard to take. Margery Kempe, a great Christian English mystic of the fifteenth century, is known in mystical history for her "gift of tears." In Chapter 3 of her book, she tells of her experience with the Sound Current that caused her to weep copious tears. (She refers to herself throughout the book in the third person as "this creature.")

One night, as this creature lay in bed with her husband, she heard a melodious sound so sweet and delectable that she thought she had been in paradise. And immediately she jumped out of bed and said, "Alas that ever I sinned! It is full merry in heaven." This melody was so sweet that it surpassed all the melody that might be heard in this world, without any comparison, and it caused this creature when she afterwards heard any mirth or melody to shed very plentiful and abundant tears of high de-

votion, with great sobbings and sighings for the bliss of heaven, not fearing the shames and contempt of this wretched world. . . .

And after this time she never had any desire to have sexual intercourse with her husband, for paying the debt of matrimony was so abominable to her that she would rather, she thought, have eaten and drunk the ooze and muck in the gutter than consent to intercourse, except out of obedience. . . .

Then on Friday before Christmas Day, as this creature was kneeling in a chapel of St. John within a church of St. Margaret, weeping a very great deal and asking mercy and forgiveness for her sins and her trespasses, our merciful Lord Christ Jesus—blessed may he be—ravished her spirit and said to her, "Daughter, why are you weeping so sorely? I have come to you, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross suffering bitter pains and passion for you. I, the same God, forgive you your sins to the uttermost point. . . .

"Therefore, I command you, boldly call me Jesus, your love, for I am your love and shall be your love without end. . . . But also, my beloved daughter, you must give up that which you love best in this world, and that is the eating of meat. . . . I shall cause so much grace to flow into you that everyone shall marvel at it."

Later she meets her teacher, the Blessed Julian of Norwich, a famous anchoress who lived in England at this time:

And then she was commanded by our Lord to go to an anchoress in the same city who was called Dame Julian. And so she did, and told her about the grace that God had put into her soul . . . which she described to the anchoress to find out if there was any deception in them . . .

The anchoress, hearing the marvelous goodness of our Lord, highly thanked God with all her heart for his visitation, advising this creature to be obedient to the will of the Lord and fulfil with all her

might whatever he put into her soul, if it were not against the worship of God and the profit of her fellow Christians. For if it were, then it were not the influence of a good spirit, but rather of an evil spirit. "The Holy Ghost never urges a thing against charity, and if he did, he would be contrary to his own self, for he is all charity. Also, he moves a soul to all chasteness, for chaste livers are called the temple of the Holy Ghost . . .

"Any creature that has these tokens may steadfastly believe that the Holy Ghost dwells in his soul. And much more, when God visits a creature with tears of contrition, devotion or compassion, he may and ought to believe that the Holy Ghost is in his soul. St. Paul says that the Holy Ghost asks for us with mourning and weeping unspeakable; that is to say, he causes us to ask and pray with mourning and weeping so plentifully that the tears may not be numbered. No evil spirit may give these tokens, for St. Jerome says that tears torment the devil more than do the pains of hell. . . ." (*The Book of Margery Kempe*, Chapters 3, 5, 17)

Margery Kempe is known for her "gift of tears," which lasted all her life and caused her much sorrow because people refused to believe she wasn't "faking" her tears; but she couldn't help feeling as she did. From the perspective of the universal spiritual tradition we can see that she was doing everything right. She heard the Sound Current which caused her to feel this way; she wanted to be chaste; the Lord Himself told her not to eat meat; and she earnestly sought the advice of holy people more advanced than she was. Her "gift of tears" after connecting with the Sound compares well with the tears mentioned by Kirpal Singh above, and with Sant Ajaib Singh Ji's tears shed after his Master, Kirpal Singh, left the body.

We often hear from the Masters about these tears of separation when their own Masters leave the physical plane. We should realize that those people closest to the passing Master are the ones who are afflicted most severely. Rusel Jaque's book, *Gurudev: The Lord of Compassion*, contains a descrip-

tion of the Bhandara in the memory of Baba Sawan Singh in April 1959; Jaque stayed in Delhi with Master Kirpal for six months at that time.

The April 2nd Bhandara to the memory of the great Master Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj began with evening Satsang on April 1st. With the Blessed One serenely seated on the dais, the Pathi sang a bhajan in the poignantly sweet and sorrowing refrain of a bereaved lover's voice. This perfect tribute had come from the heart-heated pen of the Master addressed to His Master!

"Sometimes, eyes well up, heart aches, whenever I recall Master! Should I die or keep alive? The heart weeps, eyes well up. I got this when I loved you! Sleep flies away. Come home or call me to Yourself. Miseries have come upon me. The world is dark without You.

"I yearn for Satguru's form. The thirst of eyes cannot be quenched without seeing You. I would like to sacrifice myself to behold Your form. Your countenance is like sweet music. Many days have passed since I saw You. Blessed is the place where You are! . . ."

THE MASTER: "To meet some Master in our lifetime is a great blessing. You might ask, 'Why are you so sad?' The reply can be had from a person who has loved. People sacrifice their lives for love. To sacrifice one's life is to have it forever. In worldly love, history says, people have sacrificed their lives. What can we say then about the person who has loved God with his soul?

"When I wrote *Gurmat Siddhant* and when I came to write the chapter on 'Loneliness' (absence from the Master), I felt very sad. When we love a human being, we feel grieved on separation. But when we love a man who is connected with God, the intensity of His love is much greater. Someone may question: 'When the Master initiates His pupil, He sits

inside the pupil's soul and remains always with him. So why this feeling of sadness?' The reply is that inside we get one sort of enjoyment and when we see Him in the body, we get two enjoyments! To live after the Master's death is the greatest misfortune. . . .

"When tears well up in eyes, while remembering one's Master, all his sins are washed away. Christ said: 'As long as a branch continues connected with a tree it brings forth fruit. And when it is cut off, it brings no fruit. I am the vine and you are the branches. Go on connected with me if you wish to bring forth any fruit.'" (*Gurudev: The Lord of Compassion*, pp. 52-53)

Sant Ajaib Singh Ji has said, "God lives within us but the soul doesn't know that the Oversoul is within," which gets to the core of the issue, because the fundamental cause of grief is that in our "descent into the ashes" we experience realization after realization that we don't know the truth of what we are. Masters tell us that we have the birthright to become God and we believe them; then we act as though it weren't true because we can't help it, and we are forced to recognize that once again we have built up a web of illusion that has become very hard, like crystal. We can look through it but we can't break out of it and our entrapment is the cause of great grief to the soul. The soul agonizes as we realize that we allow ourselves to be imprisoned by our illusions over and over again.

In the Tibetan tradition, Marpa the Translator, the famous Lama who was the Guru of the great Saint Milarepa, once found someone weeping by the side of the road. He said to her, "Why are you weeping? There's only one thing worth weeping for, and that is that all human beings can become the Buddha and they don't even know it. If you weep for that, weep forever."

There is a section in Master Kirpal's *Morning Talks* (pp. 31-34) that summarizes this whole subject beautifully:

When rain comes the clouds precede. If there are no clouds, there is no rain. If a fruit bearing tree has blossoms, there is hope for fruit. If there are no

blossoms, then there is no hope for fruit. The blossom and the rain clouds are the foreshadow of the fruits and the rain. Similarly, in feeling separation, crying for God, your heart becomes full. Tears rain down like anything. This is a foreshadow to show that you are nearing God. God is coming to you.

A Mohammedan saint* was asked whether he first saw God and then said his prayers or whether God came after his prayers. He said, "God comes first, then I pray." He was asked how he knew that God had come. He said, "When my heart becomes full, my eyes begin to shed tears. I then think that He has come, that He is dragging me from within, then I pray."

So this is the foreshadow of the coming of God. Now, just introspect your life and see where you stand. Are you always keeping sweet remembrance of God? Just as if a man has been stabbed and feels pain, so should you feel pain for God. If that is not developed, we are nowhere. We are wasting our human life. . . . So this is the criterion, now you decide where you stand. Do you remember God always, never forget Him? Do you feel a pain in your heart? Does your heart become full and your eyes shed tears? These are symptoms to show that you have got love for God. Such a man who has got that love within him cannot speak. The tongue of love is mute and dumb. Only tears from the eyes show that he has got that love. . . . All reading of scriptures, rituals or outer performances, bear fruit only when your heart becomes full in the sweet remembrance of God and the eyes begin to shed tears. . . .

As Master Kirpal said above, "This is a foreshadow to show that you are nearing God. God is coming to you." Then we shall be comforted indeed!

* The Saint is Rabia, the well-known woman saint, as Sant Kirpal Singh makes clear in *Sat Sandesh*, May 1973, p. 9, where he tells the same story.

Chapter 3

Blessed Are Those Who Hunger for Righteousness

We cannot emphasize enough that the Sermon on the Mount—like the writings and sayings of all Masters—is not a set of rules but an attempt to show us *what the demands of reality are*. By living in conformity with those demands, we will be blessed or happy.

We are considering Matthew 5:6:

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

What is meant by “righteousness”? Master Kirpal used to define it this way:

Zoroaster was once asked what is wanted to know God. He said, “Righteousness.” He was then asked, “What is Righteousness?” He replied, “Good thoughts, good words and good deeds.” The whole thing depends upon your attention, or surat as it is called, which is the outward expression of your soul. Wherever you keep it engaged or attached, those very thoughts will always be reverberating within you. . . .

So what is Righteousness? It is not to attach yourselves to outside. You are not to leave the world of course, but you are to make the best use of the outward things. If you go to a garden, you enjoy the flowers and various plants. You may enjoy them the whole day and nobody will question you. But the very moment you cut the flowers, the gardener in charge will take you to task and report you to the police. So we are here to make the best use of all outward things, but not to be attached to them. We should make them a stepping stone to reach the Higher Self. (*Morning Talks*, pp. 150-151)

So the requirement for blessedness is righteousness, by which is meant more than just “doing the right thing,” although that, too, is essential. The word in Greek is *dikaiosyne* and it is difficult to translate it into English without leaving something out. It is sometimes translated “uprightness.” What is “right” is part of the meaning, and so are justice and fairness, but basically the word conveys the sense of the priorities of God, or the point of view of God, which Kirpal Singh refers to in the above quote.

So we can read this as, “Blessed—or happy—are those who hunger and thirst for the priorities or the point of view of God, because they will get what they want.” It should be clear by now that all of these beatitudes are different ways of saying what is fundamentally the same thing, and they all relate to each other. We cannot really understand this clause without referring to the one before it, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted,” and to the one before that, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

All three of these “happinesses” or “blessings”—poverty in spirit, mourning or weeping, and wanting with all our heart to make God’s priorities our own—are connected. Each statement leads to the following one and that is also true of those which follow these three. Moreover, it is difficult to discuss them in isolation because there are so many facets of each one that reflect or rebound off the others in the series.

Swami Prabhavananda says, in connection with this particular verse,

To those who asked him how to realize God, Sri Ramakrishna would say, "Cry to him with a yearning heart and then you will see him. After the rosy light of dawn, out comes the sun; likewise, longing is followed by the vision of God. He will reveal himself to you if you love him with the combined force of these three attachments: the attachment of a miser to his wealth, that of a mother to her newborn child, and that of a chaste wife to her husband. Intense longing is the surest way to God-vision." . . .

There is a story of a disciple who asked his teacher, "Sir, how can I realize God?"

"Come along," said the teacher, "I will show you."

He took the disciple to a lake, and both stepped in. Suddenly the teacher reached over and pressed the disciple's head under water. A few moments later he released him and asked: "Well, how did you feel?"

"Oh, I was dying for a breath of air!" gasped the disciple.

Then the teacher said: "When you feel that intensely for God, you won't have to wait long for his vision." (*The Sermon on the Mount according to Vedanta*, pp. 24-25)

Sant Kirpal Singh Ji often told that story, and we can find in it a dimension of seeking and finding, of grieving or mourning, and of concentration or singlemindedness. In the novel *Pilgrim's Inn* by Elizabeth Goudge, there is a conversation that touches on this subject:

"But I've always thought of single-mindedness as a sort of concentration," said Sally.

"Yes. Contraction. Everything gathered in for the giving of yourself. The whole of you. Nothing kept

back. No reservations. No loopholes of escape. Like a diver taking the plunge or a man banging a door shut behind him that locks itself so that he can't go back."

"And you couldn't do that without repentance," said Sally thoughtfully. "I see that. You'd have to humble yourself before you could let go like that. Pride can't let go. But compassion?"

"That's at the root of all giving, don't you think? At the root of all art.

"You can't hoard the beauty you've drawn into you; you've got to pour it out again for the hungry, however feebly, however stupidly. You've just got to." (p. 143)

We said that in Swami Prabhavananda's passage there were elements of singlemindedness or concentration, grieving or repenting, and seeking and finding; all of these come together in what Master Kirpal called "ruling passion." They also carry with them a teaching which can be very dangerous, although all Masters, including the Lord Jesus, Master Kirpal and Sant Ji, have taught it. It is the doctrine of "discrimination" or "nonattachment," and it seems to be very difficult for us to grasp. The reason it can be considered dangerous is that it is easy to make self-serving mistakes in connection with it. The most extreme example of this teaching is in the Gospel of Luke, 14:25-33:

Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to wage

war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions."

Perhaps the most authentic and clearest expression of this part of Jesus's message is in the Gospel of Thomas, Verse 101:

Jesus said, "Whoever does not hate his father and his mother as I do, cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever does not love his father and mother as I do, cannot become a disciple to me; for my mother [gave me falsehood],* but my true mother gave me life."

Here Jesus discriminates clearly between loving our father, mother, wife, and family members as extensions of ourselves and loving them for the God we see working through them. That is one of the points of this passage. As long as we "love" those people—or any others in our ambit—for our own purposes and for what we can get out of them, we are not worthy to be disciples. This is also true of other things we love in that way, some of which could come under the heading of "possessions." It is a form of exploitation even though it may not seem so to us. This kind of attached relationship is never compatible with real love and it has to be ended if "hungering and thirsting after righteousness" is to take its place.

The Gospel of Thomas version is preferable because it includes the clause, "Whoever does not love his father and mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me." Jesus clarifies that we must stop loving in the inferior way, which is not real love at

* The words in brackets represent a guess on the part of the translator, Thomas Lambdin; as Marvin Meyer says, "The text cannot be restored with confidence." He suggests "gave me falsehood" as "one possibility." (*The Gospel of Thomas*, p. 105)

all, and replace it with love for the God working within the people around us. This true kind of love includes respect, empathy for the other person's angle of vision, and awareness of the priorities of the point of view of God. His perspective usually comes to us through other people, not just the Master but also through our brothers and sisters, our children, and other people who may theoretically know less than we do.

Another point of this passage is touched on by Marvin Meyer:

“my true [mother]”: perhaps the holy spirit, who may be described as the mother of Jesus in such texts as the Secret Book of James, the Gospel of the Hebrews, and the Gospel of Philip. Thus the conundrum presented in the saying (hate parents and love parents) is resolved by positing two orders of family and two mothers of Jesus. (*The Gospel of Thomas*, p. 105)

This goes to the heart of the paradox: The loved ones to whom we become so attached are in fact reflections or shadows of the Reality working through them, which is the real object and source of our love. If our attention is occupied by the reflection, who is there to look at the Reality? Therefore it is essential that our attention be taken away from the shadows—that we “hate” the shadows, in Jesus’s koan—in order to see what lies behind them. It is imperative that we understand this because the danger exists that, in the guise of following this instruction, a disciple may seize the chance to disengage him- or herself from family members he or she does not really care for anyway; he or she might then simply refuse to consider them and push ahead as his or her ego dictates, regardless of what suffering this might cause.

“To hunger and thirst for righteousness” is another way of conveying the idea expressed in Luke 9:23:

Then he said to them all, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

Or as Kabir has often been quoted by the Masters, "If you want to approach the wonderland of love, you have to carry your head upon your palm as an offering." Many people do not like these sayings and prefer not to think about them. They cannot be blamed for not understanding them or for feeling it is asking too much of them to be willing to cut off their heads or bloody their feet (by walking on the razor's edge, in another famous image) or climb the cross. Yet there are occasions when severe sacrifices are demanded of us, and at such times it can be comforting to recognize, "Oh yes, this is what the Master meant." Then we might even be grateful that we had learned this ahead of time.

Master Kirpal Singh commented on this difficult subject in a talk called "Why Don't You Follow the Guru?" (quoted in *Sant Bani*, January 1985, p. 21-22) based on a hymn by Swami Shivdayal Singh Ji Maharaj:

"Wife, children, friends are the thieves who rob us of everything.

Why are you sleeping among them?"

Swami Ji Maharaj pulls us out of a sense of deep stupor and awakens us to the naked reality of the great illusion. He tells us that if an honest person happens to be among pickpockets, there is every possibility of his being robbed. As we are all sleeping soundly in the company of cutthroats, how can we be safe? Now who are these dangerous miscreants? They are no other than one's children and kith and kin, the loving relations, to whom we are so devotedly attached all the time. You may be a little surprised to hear this. Just think calmly for a moment. If a dacoit comes and takes away all our goods, yet we are saved. Another comes and plunders everything and also breaks our legs, and we are still saved. The third one comes and takes away our life as well. Who is the most dangerous of all these? Surely the third one.

Our children and our dear ones always command

our attention, which is the outward expression of our soul. They keep us always engaged in one form or another and leave us no time for the spiritual way, so they are the most dangerous dacoits in this form. Does this mean that we have to leave our hearths and homes and lead the life of a recluse in the jungle? No, it is not so.

Please realize that it is your inner craving and fondness that keeps you bound hand and foot, as it were, to your dear ones, and this attachment or infatuation makes you worried and miserable all the time. You see, the very ties of affection which should be a source of happiness become fetters of bondage, as you are always in the grip of fears which, to say the least, are imaginary and baseless. The heart, as you know, is the seat of the Lord God. It is an asset entrusted to us for a higher purpose of life, viz., Self-knowledge and God-knowledge.

Where the heart goes, everything follows on its own. So herein the Master warns us against our attention being directed always toward our worldly relationships, which always cause distraction and disturbance. You know very well that the impediments which stand in the way of the child disciple and recklessly intrude upon him in the precious moments of holy meditation are the family ties that drag us down, again and again, from the seat of the soul, the eye focus. We have of course to live in the world, yet in a completely detached manner just as a lotus flower which grows out of mud holds its head aloft and above the muddy pond, retaining its pristine purity.

Similarly, we are to attend to the mundane duties entrusted to our care without being concerned with the worries and cares of our relations who, apart from us, are sufficiently protected by the gracious Master Power.

You can very well understand it by a simple example. A man traveling in a train has a box beside

him on the berth. Now both the man and his box are being carried by the train. If the man were to put the box on his head, he would surely be a fool, for he would break his neck for nothing. This is exactly the state of affairs with the worldly wise. We generally lack faith in the gracious Master Power and unnecessarily create problems for our bondage, as otherwise everything would progress smoothly in the well established divine plan. You might well have noticed that disturbed waters do not reflect.

Always try to resign your precious little self in favor of the gracious Master Power, while sitting in your holy meditations, and thereby prepare a receptive ground for the inner divine grace to descend within you and fill you in abundance.

Even the very clear teaching of inner attachment to our families, etc., as a problem standing in the way of single-mindedness is usually read differently by people in the West than it is by people in India or the East, because families and our relationships with our families are understood differently in the West. In the East, people are very attached to family relationships as a way of defining themselves, of determining their identity or their success as persons. This means that they find it very difficult to grasp the point of being detached from their family: How can they be detached? It is extremely *important* to have a son, for example—it makes a difference as to whether you are a man or not. Similarly with wives and husbands—for both sexes, personal fulfillment is largely identified with being successfully married. In the West, the problem is to keep families together; people leave and go looking for someone else at the drop of a hat. But in the East, it is exactly the opposite.

So we should realize that statements like Luke 14:26 are meant for *people who have managed successfully to be family people*. They are not meant to justify not being able to make it with our families. A eunuch cannot be chaste; a coward cannot be non-violent. We can only give up that which we already have, not that which we have never been able to get. There is a succession of steps: First we have a family, and we do well in it;

we are a good father, mother, husband, wife, whatever. Then, when we have succeeded in that—*not* when we have failed—we go beyond that point. Implicit is the fact that family life is meant to be a help on the Path, but in itself it does not and cannot lead to fulfillment. If we fail in our family life, and we don't understand this teaching correctly, what do we do? We look for another family—another kind of situation on the same level as the first, which we think is going to be fulfilling. But it isn't. We cannot expect the kind of fulfillment that our soul demands from our partners, from our children, from our parents, from our friends, because they cannot give it to us. By definition, by the reality of their natures and ours, they cannot do it. What we *can* get from them, and what they can get from us, is a detached (meaning that we don't clog up the relationship with our desires and fears), peaceful, calm love which accepts other people's faults and errors and does not worry about them; which does not look to them to provide us with a fulfillment which we can only get somewhere else, but which provides an environment in which that fulfillment happens in the only way it can happen—through the joining of the soul with God. That is the purpose of family life.

Suppose the Master is holding satsang somewhere within driving distance, and I want to go see him. I get in my car and drive to where he is, but when I get there I don't get out of the car: I like it too much. I keep driving around in it and never see the Master at all. It is a perversion of the use of the car.

The family is like that car. It is a conveyance, a vessel, which God has given us to enable us to work through our fate karma and to rise above it. When I get out of the car, I don't throw it into the junk yard: it's there for a purpose, and as long as we use it for that purpose, it will serve us well. And it is exactly the same with our families.

The meaning of these passages is obviously dependent on our definition of love. The Master's teaching is that the love within us, which is our essence and the core of our soul, is awakened by Him as a gift of grace; and that kind of love requires, of itself, that it be shared with others. In this context Master Kirpal has said,

We never lose anything when we give. When you

give love, do you find that you have less love in your heart? On the contrary, you are conscious of an ever greater power of loving, but no one can be convinced of these things till he has applied them in a practical way. An ounce of practice is worth tons of theories. (*Sant Bani*, February 1987, p. 15)

Obviously the two aspects of Jesus's statement do not contradict each other. The problem lies in the meaning of the word "love." We often use love when we mean attachment; we think we are doing what is good for another person when, in fact, we are doing something from which we will eventually benefit. This is where the danger of being self-serving lies, and it's important to be aware of the difference between the two meanings and of our own motives.

If we are consumed by the need for *dikaiosyne*—the righteousness of God, God's point of view, God's priorities, or in other words real love—if we must eat and drink that love, we will be granted it. Then all the self-serving kinds of attachments that from our perspective we call love will vanish and be replaced by genuine love, comparable to the love of God we can experience in the person of the living Master. The way he cares for us is an example of what all Masters have urged us to learn, and he is able to relate to us in this special way because when he was a disciple—and this refers to all Masters—he suffered this "hungering and thirsting for the righteousness of God's way." That experience awakened him and opened the way for the real love within him to come out and benefit everyone. As Elizabeth Goudge said, "You can't not give that once you have it, but we have to have it before we can give it."

When we see other people as extensions of ourselves, when we measure our own well-being in terms of what other people do for us, it is not good for us or for them and we are not able to express real love. Such attachment causes much harm in the world. Both Kirpal's and Sant Ji's views on child-raising are entwined with this understanding of love: we do not raise our children to please ourselves but bring them up in a way that will unlock and release the love of God that is within them. Then they are not made in our own image but are left free to be

expressions of God as He would want them to be. If we get out of the way and treat children as human beings worthy of respect, we avoid myriad errors of doing things "for the child's own good" that are really self-serving manipulations. If we care more about the righteousness of God than anything else, other people have to be seen as a part of that righteousness, that whole.

In a talk published in the January 1971 *Sat Sandesh*, Master Kirpal tells a story about true devotion:

There is an instance in the life of Namdev, whose grandfather was a devotee of idols and would daily take milk as an offering. Everyone was familiar with his daily journey to the temple with the milk, and he would say, "I am going to take the milk for the gods to drink." One day he had some affairs in another town, and he called Namdev and told him, "You do the puja, and take the milk while I am away." The child knew that his grandfather took the milk for the gods, but did not know that his grandfather himself drank the milk, according to the custom. So, the following day, Namdev performed the puja and then placed the milk before the idols. He closed his eyes and prayed that they may accept the offering of milk, but when he opened his eyes the milk was still there. Again he prayed, but the milk remained. He wondered why they were not drinking it. (I am telling this story to illustrate the difference between a prayer by routine and a true prayer.) Namdev then said to the idols, "Every day you have been drinking the milk, what has happened today?" On receiving no reply, he became very unhappy and bothered and cried, "If you don't come and drink the milk, then I am going to cut my throat!" and he took out his dagger. At once the Lord appeared and drank the milk.

In another section of this same talk, Master Kirpal relates ruling passion, grieving, and the quest for God in a beautiful way.

The papiya (sparrow hawk) is crying in anguish.

Guru Amar Das explains that the papiya's heart-rending cries liken to those of his own heart, during his long search for the Lord. . . . How can such a person have peace unless he sees his Beloved? There is just deep despair and yearning in his soul. On this subject, one poet has observed, *Oh mathematicians, you have calculated how long the day, the night, the year; How long is the night for that anguished heart which cries for its Beloved?* One cannot expect fruit on the tree when even the flowers have not yet formed. . . .

We must all pass through this condition. Ramakrishna Paramhans has said that if a man could remember God every second for three days perpetually, then quite definitely that would be his last day on earth. After all, He is residing within us, and if He sees that the child desires Him so intently that it is writhing in agony, then what would a loving Father do? He makes the arrangements that the child may come into contact with Him, wherever He is manifested. . . .

So there is no cure for such a pathetic state, but the sight of the Lord Himself.

If someone feels, "Well, I can't do all these things. This is very far from where I am. I'm not like these people in the stories," he should bear in mind that these are not commandments from the Masters. Jesus did not say, "Thou shalt hunger and thirst after righteousness or you will go to Hell." Nothing like that has been said. These are not laws. Not once in any of the readings was it said, "You have to do this or you will be punished."

The point is that we are given these glimpses of reality, and as Master Kirpal said, this is a condition that we all have to pass through. We may not have passed through it yet, or we may have passed through part of it, but in the course of our growth the anguish and the pain of separation have to be gone through. We must grow because we have committed ourselves

to growth and that commitment must be honored. God does lead us and no matter how things appear to us at any given moment, our growth must happen. We will see for ourselves that we must make the righteousness of God our main concern and experience the grief and the ruling passion.

We have observed that in the Book of Job, Job was a good and successful man who was very happy in his love for God. Then suddenly, for no apparent reason, he lost everything and was forced to make the "descent into ashes." He grieved and cursed the day that he was born; but in the midst of his agony he was consumed by the desire to see God if only to argue his case to Him. Finally he did see Him and nothing he had lost was important any more. Then immediately everything was restored to him because his family and possessions were no longer his means of identifying himself. His ruling passion and his grief had freed him to find the reality of God.

So we can't say, "I just can't do this." We have to do it. When we find ourselves in the position where, in order to survive, we have to hunger and thirst to see God, we realize the truth of what the Master says. We go through the agony, we experience it, and we understand what is happening to us because the Masters have prepared us for it. We recognize the grace of God working and we are consoled. If we don't go through this period of intense longing and pain of separation, we realize that something is lacking. We are not able to bear full testimony to the Master's teaching because we have not passed through these very important stages of painful growth.

So far as we can tell, it appears that in Sant Ji's life the culminating experience of intense weeping and suffering occurred when his Master Kirpal left the body. He was already a very advanced soul and had been given the authority to take people back to God, yet he had this final chapter to go through. So these teachings are not meant to make us feel bad or inadequate, nor are they meant to force us to adopt a certain attitude because we think we "should." It's an accurate description of a facet of reality that is absolutely necessary if we are to get that which we want more than anything else; and because we really want it we will, sooner or later, have to pass through the trial.

Then we will be blessed—this is the blessing that Jesus promised to those who have been chosen to have these experiences. We “shall be filled, be satisfied.” It will not be through any merit of our own, but God will extend His grace if we have a ruling passion to grow toward Him.

Chapter 4

Blessed Are the Merciful

It is interesting to note that the next beatitude (Matthew 5:7)—

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

—has an exact parallel in the Babylonian Talmud (“Tractate on the Shabbat,” 151b):

Whoever has pity on people will obtain pity from heaven.

It is another indication that Jesus was teaching spiritual or esoteric Judaism.

Like the other beatitudes and like the teachings of the Masters in general, this verse is not a commandment. Rather we are given a glimpse of the reality that “If we can do this, we will reap a certain result.” The blessing works within the Law of Karma and it also cancels out the Law of Karma; this is a feature of all the blessings and the Masters’ teachings, but it is especially clear in this verse.

How does this work? If we have mercy on people, then as we sow so shall we reap. Within the Law of Karma, it works. At the same time, the Law of Karma is basically merciless. The law of the Negative Power depends on the absence of

mercy; if mercy is shown, karma cannot work. In the Hindi language the Negative Power is referred to as Kal and the Positive Power as Dayal, which mean "time" and "mercy" respectively. The chief characteristic of the Negative Power, the Lord of Judgment, the Lord of Karma, is time. The characteristic of the Positive Power, the Ultimate Creator, the Source of our own essence, is mercy.

Time, by definition, is merciless. Anyone who has lived for even three or four years must recognize that truth. When mercy enters the world of time, it short circuits it, stands it on its head, and presents a paradox. It introduces a point of view that fundamentally does not mesh with the world of time; and that is why, when—working within the Law of Karma—we show mercy to others, we begin to get mercy back. At the same time, by showing mercy, by not demanding what fairness or justice would demand, we begin the process of short circuiting or canceling out the Law of Karma in our own lives; and if enough of us did this consistently, we could cancel karma in the life of the universe as a whole.

In *The Way of the Saints*, p. 352, Master Kirpal Singh explores the underlying reason why this is so:

Next comes LOVE—love for one and love for all. "Love thy neighbor," for love is the fulfilling of the law of God. "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." A little leaven of love will leaven the whole lump and infect all those who are around you. Again, "perfect love casteth out fear." Whensoever there is the least fear lurking, know it for certain that love hath not yet perfected in that heart.

Naturally enough, from love spring forth the ideas of service and sacrifice. Love believes in giving—giving away the best you have and not accepting anything in return, for that would be a barter and not love. "Service before self" is what love teaches. By love serve one another, is what the Apostle Paul taught to the Galatians, and through them to all mankind. If we look critically, we will soon realize that all service which we seem to be doing to others

is not to anybody else, but to the ONE SELF-SAME SELF, pervading everywhere and in all, including our seemingly individualized self clothed in raiments of flesh and bones. This being the case, there is no ground for claiming any credit whatever. Loving service must therefore flow freely, fully and naturally, as a matter of course, refreshing all hearts, for it will convert the otherwise dreary and desolate earth into a veritable garden of Eden; for which we so earnestly pray every day, but find it receding from us, the more we wish it.

The underlying truth behind all the beatitudes or blessings is this: We have mercy on others and we thereby obtain mercy because the "others" to whom we give mercy are, in fact, ourselves. There is no difference. When we have mercy on others, we have mercy on ourselves.

Note this very similar passage from Master Kirpal's address at the Third World Religions Conference in 1965 in Delhi. He delivered it in Hindi but it was translated into English and later published under the title "The Essence of Religion" in *The Way of the Saints*. It constitutes a very basic part of the Master's teaching. Consider its relation to the passage above, which was originally found in a Circular Letter sent only to his initiates; this is from a talk given to approximately 150,000 people, including world religious leaders from all different sects:

With the yardstick of love (the very essence of God's character) with us, let us probe our hearts. Is our life an efflorescence of God's love? Are we ready to serve one another with love? Do we keep our hearts open to the healthy influences coming from outside? Are we patient and tolerant toward those who differ from us? Are our minds coextensive with the creation of God and ready to embrace the totality of His being? Do we bleed inwardly at the sight of the downtrodden and the depressed? Do we pray for the sick and suffering humanity? If we do not do any of these

things, we are yet far removed from God and from religion, no matter how loud we may be in our talk and pious in our platitudes and pompous in our proclamations. With all our inner craving for peace, we have failed and failed hopelessly to serve the cause of God's peace on earth. Ends and means are interlocked and cannot be separated from each other. We cannot have peace so long as we try to achieve it with war-like means and with the weapons of destruction and extinction. With the germs of hatred in our hearts, racial and color bars rankling within us, thoughts of political domination and economic exploitation surging in our bloodstream, we are working for wrecking the social structure which we have so strenuously built and not for peace, unless it be peace of the grave; but certainly not for a living peace born of mutual love and respect, trust and concord, that may go to ameliorate mankind and transform this earth into a paradise for which we so fervently pray and preach from pulpits and platforms and yet, as we proceed, it recedes away into the distant horizon. (pp. 193-194)

Again Master uses the same image of the receding paradise, the retreating Garden of Eden. It is leaving us because we don't grasp that we must have mercy on others because they are ourselves; when we give mercy to them, we are giving it to ourselves.

There is another dimension of this which is also of great importance: having mercy on others implies power over others. We usually use the terms mercy or pity interchangeably concerning the people over whom we have power. We ask someone with more power than we have in a given situation to have mercy on us, and we show mercy to those who do not have as much power as we have. Obviously this blessing, and the Masters' teaching it reflects, implies that we will be very aware of our position whenever we have this kind of authority over others. That is precisely the point at which we must be very careful.

The poet William Blake deals with this in two of his most famous poems. The first one, "The Divine Image," is from *Songs of Innocence*:

**To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.**

**For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God, our Father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is Man, his child and care.**

**For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.**

**Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.**

**And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too.**

This beautiful poem clearly invokes the teaching that "Mercy has a human heart" and "Pity a human face." One of Blake's principal messages, one that he shares with the Masters, is that in the long run God has to work through the people around us. In the corresponding poem called "The Human Abstract," from *Songs of Experience*, Blake shows how this usually works. The first two verses are especially relevant:

**Pity would be no more
If we did not make somebody Poor;**

**And Mercy no more could be
If all were as happy as we.**

**And mutual fear brings peace,
Till the selfish loves increase:
Then Cruelty knits a snare,
And spreads his baits with care.**

The poem goes on to describe the way most of us are, unfortunately, most of the time; and it throws a sharp light on the fact that mercy and pity can come only from someone who has power over a person who is relatively powerless. If we truly had mercy, we would abolish the distinctions of authority that separate human beings from one another, or we might say living forms from one another, since animals are very much the objects of our power or our mercy. However, the only way to abolish those divisions would be for everyone to show mercy indiscriminately; then those power divisions would be canceled out. The Garden of Eden or the Paradise Master Kirpal spoke of would be created, the ultimate goal to which all these things are leading.

As we go through life we will sometimes be in a position where power will be exerted over us and sometimes we will be the ones exercising power over others. The psychology of it usually works in such a way that when we absorb the consequences of other people's power over us, we then display that in our dealings with those over whom we have control. This is precisely the sequence of events that has to be canceled out. It has to stop somewhere and it can only stop at the point where we are the ones exercising power. We cannot influence those who have authority over us except by being merciful to those over whom we have power. If we show mercy to those who are dependent on us for mercy, then, according to karmic law and according to the cancellation of the karmic law that this implies, those with power over us will eventually show us mercy. Sooner or later they will do it.

All of this is what lies behind the Masters' teachings on raising children. The group of people over whom adults have the most consistent power is certainly children; they are sub-

ject to our whims, our decisions and our desires every minute of the day and night. The May 1990 *Sant Bani* is one of the most important issues ever published because it contains both Master Kirpal's and Sant Ji's views on bringing up our children. The following extracts from Master Kirpal's letters are found in that issue though they were originally published in the June 1971 *Sat Sandesh*:

The raising of children is a virtuous duty. The young ones imitate their parents, who should reflect peace, harmony, and sobriety by leading a disciplined life full of spiritual beatitude [blessing]. The assertive attitude of dear — shows the greatness of his soul. Self-assertion is the innate attribute of soul which is all divine in miniature scale. This kind of sentiment is predominant in promising personalities who inherit congenial environments most helpful for their spiritual progress. . . .

Satsangi parents who have trouble with self-assertive children should bear this in mind. Master is saying that people, including children, who are self-assertive, are living the way they should be living. In other words, their soul is accurately manifesting itself. When we do what the psychologist Alice Miller calls "poisonous pedagogy"—breaking the spirit of children, teaching them to obey, teaching them to leave aside their own point of view and conform to ours—we are doing precisely what Master says we are not to do.

One way of showing mercy is to let other people's souls manifest themselves. "Self-assertion is the innate attribute of soul, which is all divine in miniature scale," a condition which is meant to be. People who are born into situations where they can progress spiritually, into homes that allow for growth, are going to be more self-assertive than others. The Master is sending this kind of person as a gift to us. If we don't know how to deal with the child, that's another thing, but Master's meaning is clear. Self-assertion predominates in "promising personalities who inherit congenial environments most helpful for their spiritual progress."

... So far as his demands are concerned, these should be met with lovingly as far as possible, so far as these are legitimate and within the scope of his raising. The young sentiments should not in any way be injured. It is the unbounded love of the parents for the children which makes them bold, brave and adventurous in their lives....

Of all the sentences that any Master has ever said about this subject, this seems to be the most important. As parents, we want it both ways. We want our children to be carbon copies of what we think and what we are, on the one hand; but when they grow up we want them to be bold, brave, and adventurous. The first does not produce the latter. Boldness, bravery, and the willingness to take chances is produced by the unbounded, infinite love of the parents for the children. Why is this so? It's because "perfect love, infinite love, unbounded love, casteth out fear," as Master has just quoted from the Bible in the Circular Letter above.

... You must be an affectionate and bravely stern mother so far as your love and discipline is concerned toward your children. Your good action of sitting with them regularly for listening to the Sound Current is appreciated, and will be helpful for their spiritual growth. Please convey my love to them.

Note that the Master does not say that children should not be disciplined nor that they should be allowed to run free and do anything that appeals to them. There are times when it is not good for children to be allowed to do anything they want, and somehow parents have to be wise enough to determine what is crucial to their growth and what is not. The important thing is that we must operate from the basic understanding that self assertion is the innate attribute of the soul which is all divine in miniature scale, that it predominates in promising personalities who inherit congenial environments most helpful to their spiritual progress, that our children's demands should be met with lovingly and their young sentiments not injured, and that

it is the unbounded love of the parents which makes them bold, brave, and adventurous. If we raise them with that understanding always in mind, then when discipline is necessary to prevent them from doing something self-destructive, it will be the exception to the rule and it will still come within the bounds of mercy.

Master Kirpal's second letter is in some ways even more revolutionary than the first:

... you may please try to lavish the things for her which she is prone to steal. You will find that when everything is procured for her, the tendency to obtain them by stealing will be overcome in due course. Simultaneously, you can ingrain in her mind that anything and everything she is desirous of having will be provided for her.

The understanding and compassion and knowledge of human weakness that these few words reveal is perhaps not surprising, considering who wrote the letter. After all, he was the living Master of the universe at the time he wrote it, and why should he not see things this way? At the same time, this particular passage is breath-taking because it is a practical instance of having mercy on others so that mercy will be given us. When we treat our children—including our stepchildren, the children we teach in class, the children we baby-sit, or any children we come in contact with—in accordance with the philosophy of this letter, we “ingrain in her mind that anything and everything she is desirous of having will be provided for her.”

We thereby take away what can be called *the existential fear of being alive*, which is what Mastana Ji calls “the sin of birth” in his bhajan, “Nach Re.” We eliminate the reasons which cause the person, in this case the child, to act in what seems to be a negative and anti-social manner; the motives for such behavior are removed. When we do that, we don't lose the child; she remains bound with us in a loving, mutually reliant relationship through which a great deal of mercy is shown. For we must realize that parents need the child's mercy, too. Later

in life the tables will be turned and when our children become older, they will have power over us. They will usually give us what we have given them. If we have shown mercy to them, they will have mercy on us.

The psychologist Alice Miller, who was mentioned earlier, has expressed a psychological theory that underlies the Masters' teachings in this regard, and in her book *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware* she states a revolutionary point of view:

If there really should be a loving God, he would not burden us with prohibitions. He would love us as we are, would not demand obedience from us, not feel threatened by criticism, not threaten us with hell, not fill us with fear, not put our loyalty to the test, not mistrust us, would let us experience and express our feelings and needs—confident that this is what we need if we are to learn the meaning of a strong and genuine love, a love that is the opposite of fulfilling one's duty and being obedient and that grows only out of the experience of being loved. A child cannot be raised to be loving—neither by being beaten nor by well-meaning words; no reprimands, sermons, explanations, good examples, threats, or prohibitions can make a child capable of love. A child who is preached to learns only to preach and a child who is beaten learns to beat others. A person can be raised to be a good citizen, a brave soldier, a devout Jew, Catholic, Protestant, or atheist, even to be a devout psychoanalyst, but not to be a vital and free human being. And only vitality and freedom, not the compulsions of child-rearing, open the well-springs of a genuine capacity to love. . . .

Children who are respected learn respect. Children who are cared for learn to care for those weaker than themselves. Children who are loved for what they are cannot learn intolerance. In an environment such as this they will develop their *own* ideals which can be nothing other than humane, since they grow out of the experience of love. (pp. 96-97)

Alice Miller also talks about Jesus's parents' relationship with him, and in this context we are reminded that Sant Ji has often mentioned that his parents raised him with love. His article in the same May 1990 *Sant Bani* that contains Master Kirpal's letters discusses child-rearing and tells how his parents treated him with respect and love. Just as children who are capable of self-assertion that reflects the divine attributes of their souls are born into families where they have an opportunity to develop spiritually, so too we can assume that the souls of Masters are sent into families where their purposes can be fulfilled.

We can also assume that a Master who is destined to achieve perfection in his lifetime, or has even been born already perfect, will follow the laws of human psychology since he has come to share our human condition. The parents of Masters have had a great deal to do with their being Masters, even though the parents often don't fully understand what is happening to them. Sant Ji invokes Master Kirpal's father's and mother's names in many, many bhajans—"Blessed is Hukam Singh," "The sangat congratulates Gulab Devi,"—because they played an important part in Master Kirpal's life.

So it is not a small thing to rear our children carefully in the way the Masters teach us. The more we observe the tenets they have laid down for us, the better our chances of having children who will be the kind of adults we want them to be: bold, brave, adventurous, respectful and loving. It is our unbounded love that creates such qualities, so when we give them love and respect and accept them just as they are, we are showing them the mercy that will come right back to us. Nothing is more disheartening and defeating than having one's children turn against one, and it can happen all too easily. In the teen-age years it happens almost as a matter of course, but if we have shown them mercy and love and respect in their early years, there is hope. The necessary differentiation they feel as they become adults, if modified by the remembrance of loving mercy in their childhood, will end in a healthy relationship. If we did not show them mercy, then? As adolescents they are very much in our power and they need our mercy more than ever; if it isn't

there, our chances for a happy adult relationship are not strong.

The teaching obviously applies to anyone or anything we have power over, not just to children. There's a story in the Tractate Ketubot of the Jerusalem Talmud with very interesting implications:

The thirteen of the seventeen years that Rabbi Judah Hannasi lived in forests, he suffered pain in his teeth. [He had a toothache for thirteen years.] During all those years, there was no case of a woman dying during childbirth or suffering a miscarriage in Izret Israel, the land of Israel. What deed might have brought this on him, this pain in his teeth? Once he passed and saw a calf led to the slaughter. It bowed and said to him, "Master, save me." But he replied, "This is what you were created for." In the end, what merit caused his relief? Once he passed and saw some people about to kill a nest of mice, and he said to them, "Leave them alone. His mercies are over all His works." (Quote from Psalm 145)

That's the whole story. He passed and saw a calf led to the slaughter; it bowed and said, "Master, save me." But he replied, "This is what you were created for." In other words, he might have said, "This is your karma. You were born for this. You obviously earned this fate in some previous manner, so why should I cancel out the Law of Karma?" But that was what was required of him at that point; he had to show mercy to that calf.

We should remember at this point that neither the Jewish nor the Christian tradition is responsible for the negative, non-caring, utilitarian attitude toward the creatures of nature that is held by most of the Western world. The very first chapter of the Bible—in both the Hebrew and Christian versions—commands humanity not to kill animals. The command is repeated at various points throughout the Bible; it's mixed up with many other things, it's true, but still that first chapter command is there and holy people in all religions have understood

it and have assumed that animals also matter to God. Master Kirpal applied "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" to the animal world and asked, "Are these animals not your neighbors?"

Here in this story the Talmud is making the same point: You have power over these forms of life; mercy is also required for them. When Rabbi Hannasi refused to show mercy to the calf because he thought he should not interfere with its karma, he was also shown no mercy and had to accept karma—thirteen years of toothache—which he had earned for other reasons. Later, when he saw people about to kill a nest of mice, a form of life that many people kill without thinking twice, he said, "Leave them alone. His mercies are over all His works." He knew we should have mercy even on mice; they also matter, and they also don't like to suffer or die.

By showing mercy to the mice, the karma he had incurred from the previous incident was canceled. Mercy was shown to him because he had shown it to other creatures; he had opened the gate to allow the mercy to come into him. Moreover, the pain he suffered for not interceding for the calf was excessive, so because he was a holy man, the benefits of his over-payment were applied to other people. That is why no miscarriages or deaths in childbirth occurred during his thirteen years of suffering. He was able to suffer for others, but he still had something to learn.

This powerful story should remind us that when someone asks for or needs mercy from us we should not even think the words, "No, you deserve this. Everyone has to undergo his karma. Why should I intervene? This is the way of the world." As Master Kirpal said in Delhi in the passage quoted above, our hearts must bleed for those who are suffering; we have to care. It has to matter to us that people—or any living creatures—are suffering, especially when they come into our personal orbit, our span of attention. If they don't have this effect on us, if our heart doesn't bleed because of their pain, we are closing the door to a channel of grace. A mercy that we need, depend on, and hope for, is cut off from us because in order for it to reach us, we must have that door open.

We can think of it this way: The mercy we show to others

flows out to them via the same channel through which the mercy from God or others flows into us. Whether we realize it or not, when we block that channel, we close it from both directions. Master Kirpal explains these interconnections in His "Principles of Bhakti or Devotion," in Morning Talk #21; He tells us what we are doing when we love or worship God and why our giving and receiving mercy are so important.

I was just speaking about devotion, real bhakti. The first principle, the basic principle, and I would say the grandest of all, is to know that God is everywhere. We are living in Him and He is in us. We live and have our being in Him, like fish in the river. The fish lives in the water, its whole life depends on water. It lives in water, it lives on water, from whence it gets its food. When God wished, "I am One and wish to be many," the whole universe emanated, came into being. The whole world is an expression, a manifestation of God. Where is that place where He is not? We are in Him, He is in us and is our Controlling Power. All ensouled bodies are the drops of the Ocean of all Consciousness. When we know this, all is beautiful. God is beautiful and any world made by Him, manifested by Him, is also beautiful. Beauty comes out of beauty, not from ugliness. Anything that appears to be ugly in the world is the result of the spectacles that we are wearing. If the glass of the spectacles is smoky, you will see all smoke. If it is red, everything will appear red. If it is black, everything will appear black. Well, the world is not black, red, or smoky, mind that! So we have to change the trend of our mind, of our heart. . . .

Master Kirpal is making the point that it is our perspective which determines the nature of the world. If we approach the world from the standpoint of giving mercy wherever it is needed, we will see the world that way; and if we look at the world from that angle of vision, we will give mercy freely and we will receive mercy.

... The first principle that we have to abide by is to know that He is everywhere. We are in Him and He is in us. When you know this, you will just pay respect to everybody. They are all manifested in the man-body. When we know that He is everywhere and that He knows everything of our heart, how can we do anything that is not good or commit a sin! Our Master used to say, "When a child of five years is sitting by you, you will never dare to do anything which is wrong." When you have the viewpoint that He is within me, He is outside me, I am in Him, how can you perpetrate anything! Can you? This is the sum and substance, the basic principle. If you abide by it, everything will follow of itself. The world will be beautiful. Beauty comes out of beauty. If the world appears to be ugly or not beautiful, that is the result of the spectacles you are wearing. . . .

Obviously Master knows, and has often said, that the world can be a very difficult place to live in. We can certainly objectively see things in it that would seem to contradict his words in this Morning Talk. Yet he is simply asking us to approach the world with the conviction, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall have mercy." If we approach the universe from that perspective, we will bring into it the point of view which is God's because this is the way God in Sach Khand looks down on the fallen universe. He looks at it with nothing but love.

He sees us as embodied souls who want to come Home, and He loves us as souls who are His children. He loves us this way because that is how He sees us; He does not see us as mean, petty, unworthy people. We may see ourselves that way and the Negative Power certainly sees us like that, but that is not the way the God of love and mercy sees us. If He did, why would He want us?

He comes down into this world, subjects Himself to its laws, suffers for us, and undergoes infinite humiliation. Why? He wants to take us back to Him because we are worthy of it. If we were not of infinite worth to Him, why would He bother? It's because we exist that He loves us, and He wants us to be

happy, so what He is saying here is, "Please look at the world the way I do. Please see it the way I see it. It will make my work easier and it will make life much easier for you. If you relate to other people as I relate to you, if you see the world from My point of view, you will come to know things that you will otherwise never be able to understand."

... If you will cast out evil thoughts about others, all are friendly. If somebody has played any hell against us, we simply retaliate, we harbour those very thoughts within us. Saints have been coming to the world and the people cry, "O God, send us some man to save us." God said, "Well, I have sent you many men to save you, but how have you treated them? They came to give you a right understanding of the whole show, which is that all Creation is the manifestation of God. That you are all my children, drops of the Ocean of all Consciousness. That I am your Controlling Power. You live in me and I live in you, but you have forgotten." To forget is delusion, or what is called Maya. If you go to somebody whose eye is open, even if you speak ill of Him, He still tries to bring you out of the abyss of ignorance. If He gives you something, you should develop it. When you see inside, your whole angle of vision will be changed. Even outside you will see that it is all the manifestation of God. It is so, and when we meet a Master, we begin to see that it is all His manifestation. (*Morning Talks*, pp. 123-125)

We have said the Sermon on the Mount, and these blessings in particular, are glimpses of reality, and Master Kirpal Singh Ji has just described that reality. Each of the seven beatitudes can be understood as a glimpse of God's truth that He is everywhere, that He is in us and outside of us, and that the world is His manifestation and therefore beautiful. By seeing His world as He does, we tend to make it beautiful. If we see beauty, it's there; if we don't see it then we have prevented it from being there—for us.

The Master's view is that all children of God are of infinite worth and therefore we must have mercy on everyone because they are trapped in the fallen universe. But the universe is fallen only as long as we are trapped. Once we escape—through Master's grace—it is no longer fallen for us or for anyone who comes under our influence. That is why, if we have mercy on others we are definitely blessed and we do receive mercy in return.

Chapter 5

Blessed Are the Pure in Heart

The beatitude expressed in Matthew 5:8 is:

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

We have seen that each of these blessings or beatitudes includes all the others and each one represents a slightly different way of looking at the whole. The Sermon on the Mount, in its entirety, is a series of glimpses of reality, an attempt to convey what it might mean to see from the perspective of the Masters. These blessings are even greater glimpses; they are like a prelude and an epitome of the Sermon as a whole.

Each one could be called a conditional kind of law. It's not really law at all but a way of representing what the reality is. "If you do this, then that will follow"; "Such and such leads to this and this." Jesus the Master is saying, "It may not be clear to you that this is true, but in fact it is. I can see it, and if you become blessed you will also see as I do."

The key Greek word for this verse (*katharoi*) is the root of "catharsis"; it means both "clean" and "pure." The idea is the same as the line in one of the bhajans, "Clean us, O God, clean us." "Cleanliness" and "purity" are synonyms referring to the absence of dirt, which is defined as anything that distracts from the purpose or gets in the way. In Psalm 24, there is a beautiful section where the same point is made:

The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it,
 the world, and those who live in it;
 for he has founded it on the seas,
 and established it on the rivers.
 Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
 And who shall stand in his holy place?
 Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,
 who do not lift up their souls to what is false,
 and do not swear deceitfully.
 They will receive blessing from the LORD.

The basic idea is that of ritual purity, internalized and transcended and applied to inner matters. In all rituals—the Hebrew ritual that underlies the mission and sermons of Jesus, the Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim ceremonies that form the background for the teachings of Master Kirpal and Sant Ji—beneath all these rituals is the understanding that their real meaning lies in transcending the outer acts and applying them to inner matters. Just as “being ritually pure” requires such things as cleaning our bodies, abstaining from sexual relations, and fasting, so in the same way our inner selves must be cleansed and purified.

The underlying idea is that of “undividedness,” which, as Master Kirpal said in *The Crown of Life*, p. 5, is the meaning of “individual.” We considered this idea when we looked at the verse, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Hungering and thirsting after righteousness is what the Masters refer to as “ruling passion,” which means that we want so much to reach our spiritual goal that we let nothing stand in our way. In this passage the idea is very similar: The “pure in heart” is the one who is so undivided in the core of his being that whatever he wants comes of itself. There are many references to this in the Masters’ writings.

Master Kirpal often referred to this beatitude, sometimes in connection with chastity and sexuality, sometimes more generally. In His talk, “On Lust and Anger,” He refers to this verse several times both explicitly and implicitly:

"A perfect man *must* be pure in every word and in every action in his own life. The Holy Spirit comes to him from the day he becomes pure." You know the *utmost necessity* of being pure in thought. That is why Christ said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for *they* shall see God"—not others. (*Sat Sandesh*, June 1975, p. 6)

In *Morning Talks*, Master Kirpal refers to this particular blessing many times. In Talk #33, "What Is Love?," he says that purity comes from giving God your whole heart; he also expresses what all Masters have said so often about the crucial importance of our acquiring the viewpoint of the Masters and making their priorities our own. He says:

What is love? Everybody says that I love God, I love the Master, but what is love? Love is the fruit of a tree, it is the ultimate goal which develops and comes up within us. We should love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength. Is the heart one or two? The heart is only one, and you can only give it to somebody whom you love. If you give away your heart to somebody, then what remains with you? You will think in the same way that He thinks, not in your own way. This is the ultimate goal. Lord Krishna said, "O my disciple, the heart is only one and that Lord Krishna has taken away." If your heart has already been given to the God-in-man, then nothing remains to be given separately to God. So first, our heart should be whole, not broken into pieces. When it is complete, only then can you give it.

Our Master was once giving a talk, and He said, "All right, if any of you can give your heart, you can go straight to heaven. One man stood up and said, "Well, I give my heart." The Master asked him, "Have you controlled your heart?" "No," replied the man. "Then how can you give it?" said the Master. You

can only give something which is under your control, that is in your possession. The heart is led away by the outgoing faculties here, there and everywhere. Unless it is concentrated, how can you give it? We have no control over our heart. It is dragged away in so many ways.

So I was just talking about love. Love is the ultimate fruit of a tree. We wish, we like to have something but it is only a wish. The heart is given only when you withdraw it from all outside things, and it is under your control. So there are steps leading to this control. What we have got is only—"We wish, we like, let it be done like this or that"—but it is not yet done. So there are steps leading to this and the first step is, "If you love me, keep my commandments." What are these commandments? "Love thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength." The word heart is there. With all thy heart, not a heart that is cut into pieces, here, there and everywhere. So let it be complete, first of all. We love God out of some liking, some wishful thoughts, you might say. So the ABC starts from "Heed my commandments." For instance, in the West, when the policeman in charge over there says "stop," even the people stop. I saw it myself when I was over there. If the Master or anyone whom you love says "stop," then stop there, don't take a further step. But do we keep His commandments? We don't, then where is our love? We hanker after love, we have wishful thoughts to have love, but we have not yet got love. We have not laid the first stone of the building of love. The foundation starts when you keep His commandments. Then He says, "All right, devote regular time to your meditations. Weed out all imperfections within you from day to day." We say that we have got no time to keep the diaries. We have not even started as yet, what to speak of love. Further, if we wish to have thoughts of somebody, love of somebody, we shall always be thinking of

him. It is told of one Majnu (he was a great lover of Laila), that once he was seen hugging the feet of a dog. The people asked him, What are you doing, are you going mad?" "No, no," he replied, "I have sometimes seen this dog going into the street of my Laila, whom I love." If we love somebody for the Master's sake, or for the sake of God, this is a sign that you are growing in love for your Beloved, for your Master. These are the foundation stones, not love as yet, mind that! Love is given away of your heart. The heart is one and when it is given away to somebody, then what remains? Maulana Rumi says, "When you have accepted your Master once and for all, even the Prophet and God both are there in Him." So our respect goes to God once we have given our heart to where He is manifested. (pp. 203-205)

In Morning Talk #38, "How to Develop the Attributes of the Master," Master Kirpal tells a beautiful story of what it is like to be pure in heart. It is about the woman Shivri, a very low caste *Bhilni* woman who violated Hindu ritual law by pre-tasting some berries to be sure they were sweet enough to give Lord Rama.

Lord Rama was exiled for fourteen years, and one woman called Shivri, who was living in the wilderness to where Lord Rama was exiled, heard that he was coming. She thought to herself that he would be coming bare footed and that the thorns would prick his feet. So she began clearing the way of all thorns. Love is developed not necessarily by seeing, but also by hearing. She also wondered what she would offer him to eat. In the wilderness there wasn't much, only berries. So she started picking the berries, tasted each one of them, and kept only the sweet berries. There were also some great yogis living in the wilderness but Lord Rama never went to them first. He went to Shivri, who cleared the way for him so that the thorns would not hurt his feet,

and who had kept the half eaten berries only for the sake of knowing those which were sweet and those which were sour. So love knows no law. After Rama had been to Shivri, he went to visit the yogis. There happened to be a pond where the yogis lived which was full of insects and the yogis asked Lord Rama to wash his feet in the pond, so that the insects would be cleared out. Lord Rama declined and said, "No, you are great yogis, it is better if you wash your feet in the pond, and it will then be cleared." All of the yogis put their wash water into the pond but it was not cleared of the insects. The yogis then said, "You are Lord Rama, if you wash your feet in the pond it will surely be cleared." "All right," said Lord Rama, "We'll try it." He washed his feet in the pond but it still was not cleared. Lord Rama then told the yogis to wash the feet of Shivri (whom they disliked) and when they washed her feet and put the wash water into the pond, it was cleared.

Those who love God, love the Master, the God in Him of course. It is no matter of show. That very Power is within you and knows every act of yours, what you are doing and why. He knows the very trend of your thoughts. Love knows no show. Love knows service and sacrifice. The outward symbol of love is a sweet tongue, imbued with humility. When you have developed that love, what should you do? You must have patience, perseverance and go on with it. Just like a moth which burns itself on the flame of a candle but never makes any sound. So those who want to love God should not care for their name or fame, honour, this or that thing. They should leave every greatness that they have got physically outside, and lay down at His feet. If they lose their life in sacrifice, even then they won't mention it. So this is a very delicate question, I would say. Those who have love for God, or the God-in-man, well, this is a relation between you and the God in Him and nobody else. You have to develop it. For

that you must have perseverance. It takes time. The work of the servant is to do work, that's all. It is for the Master to see what He has to give to him.

Once a very nice Arabian horse was given to Guru Har Govind, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs. Guru Har Govind said that whoever should recite from the Jap Ji with no other thought intervening during the time that the verse was being recited, would be given his heart's desire. One man came forward and said that he would recite. He began reciting and just before he was nearing the end, he thought to himself, "I wonder what the Guru will give me?" He remembered the Arabian horse that had been given to the Guru and thought that it should be given to him. When he completed the recitation, the Guru ordered that the horse be given to him. He then turned to the man and said, "You poor fellow, you did not know what I was going to give you. I was going to give you my very own place." So it is not for you to judge things and request what you want, it is for Him to see what is really in your best interests. (pp. 245-247)

In Morning Talk #39, Master Kirpal presented a criterion for prayer that he referred to often:

What sort of prayer will succeed? First, you should ask your heart what it wants. It does not consist only of what you speak through your mouth or what you think in your brain. Sometimes you want something and think that it will be good for you, but your heart wants something else. There is no unity. There should be unison between the heart, the tongue and the brain. The prayer which comes from the heart and is expressed intellectually, will be heard. Christ said that if you pray to God, you may be answered, but there is some doubt. If you will ask of God in my name, the chances are even greater that he will hear you, but if you will ask me, you shall have what you want. What does this mean? If

you pray to God and you are not confident that He exists, or that He is fully competent to grant your prayer, then how can your prayer be heard? Further, that prayer should go out from your heart, and your brain and mouth should express the same thing. They should differ and such a prayer will be heard. So when Christ said if you pray to God, perhaps He may give you what you want, or if you pray to God in my name, your chances will be better, He put even greater emphasis on the fact that a prayer directed to Him would be answered. A man who prayed to Christ when He was on this earth was fully confident that Christ existed because he saw Him. For the same reason, he could be fully confident in His competency.

So if we have got full conviction, full faith in the Master and in His competency, and pray to Him from our heart, our prayer must be heard. Masters who came in the past said that if you would offer such a prayer, God would catch you by the hand and say, "All right child, tell me what you want." Do you follow me, what I say? God will listen to such a prayer because He sees that your heart, mouth and brain are in accord, and that you have full conviction in his competency to grant it. (pp. 249-250)

In Morning Talk #40, Master describes "The Condition of the Lover of God":

Who is the lover? The lover becomes the beloved and the Beloved becomes the lover. All differences of mind, body and soul are swept out of the door. This is, in a few words, who is the Guru and who is the sikh. So try to be wholly and solely a follower. I think you will then have what you are after without asking for it. So this is the subject referred to today. We should be awake from within to God or to the God-in-man and asleep from outside. That will come only, will result only, when your whole attention is absorbed in Him. The outward expression of the soul is attention and

we are attention, is it not so? With one attention of God, the whole Creation came into being. God said, "I am one and wish to become many," and lo! the world was formed. If we withdraw from the outside world and become absorbed in Him, we are micro-gods. These things are not given so vividly in the books, because it is a practical question. So try to be a true follower wholly and solely, in mind, body and soul. You will become Masters. You will see one day that you are not what you were before. Even now, if you will take a cursory view of the past, you will see that you are better than you were before. Now, you are not what you want to become one hundred percent, but you are ten percent, twenty percent, fifty percent, but improving. So go on to be a true follower of the Master, so much so that you absorb yourself into Him. Then you won't know who is in you, whether it is you or He, or He or you. You will have become, "It is I, not now I, but Christ lives in me." . . . This is the ultimate goal of love and you are just to see where you stand. It is a great good fortune to have a living Master, a true Master. There are many masters, a hundred and one, a thousand and one, yet they are all only acting and posing, or on the way. Anybody who follows them is led away. Furthermore, they do not derive the full benefit of coming to a true Master. So that is why I say, if you love the Master, you must keep His commandments. The ABC starts from this. If you become like Him, He is always with you, talking to you, going around you. Kabir says, "I am now so pure at heart that God is after me, calling my name—'O Kabir, O Kabir'—Kabir is going forward and God is following Him." God is seeking somebody who is awake to Him and asleep outside, that's all. (pp. 257-258)

It is clear that many ways of understanding the beatitudes come together with this concept. The two parts of the saying "Blessed are the pure in heart" and "because they shall see God" are important because not only does the adage imply that

it is possible to become pure in heart but also it is possible to see God. This belief is well known in esoteric teaching. In the esoteric Jewish tradition out of which Jesus came, and in all forms of mysticism, seeing God is the goal. "Being awake," as the Master explained, is another way of saying the same thing.

The way to become pure in heart is through the use of Simran, the process of remembrance. Why? When we substitute the over-riding, inclusive, sweet remembrance of God for the distracting, lesser, everyday thoughts that fragment us, we take a long step toward becoming one with Him. In Master Kirpal's talk, "What is True Living?" given in Los Angeles in 1963, (published in *Sat Sandesh*, October 1975, pp. 6 ff.) he explores these ideas in an interesting way:

If your hearts are pure, you will feel that little things will affect you. For that reason, because it is the temple of God, we have to keep the body clean. And also keep it clean from within by giving it food that does not go to defile it and by living a way which is pure. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." . . .

Tulsi tells us, "Just cleanse your heart, your mind." And what is the cleansing of the mind? Let no other thought other than that of God strike there. Even if you are living in the world, amongst your children, your families, your friends, the needle of your compass should be towards God. It is God who has given; it is God residing in them. If you always think: all men are alike; they have the same privileges from God and are born the same way; they are the same embodied souls, and the very same God-power is controlling them in the body; their bodies are the true temples of God; then, naturally, you will have respect for all. So this is the purity required for being able to progress from day to day. . . .

We had a similar event in our Satsang meetings at Delhi. About 2,000 people were sitting there; and while I was giving a talk, one cobra, a little cobra, came out and stood on the stage just like that [Master demonstrates] in front of me. And the people said, "A cobra

is coming!" I said, "Never mind; go on with it. Let him come and stand here."

And he—that cobra—stood for one full hour, hearing the talk that was going on, looking at me. When the talk was over, he sneaked away, and the people said, "Let us kill him." "Why? He has not done anything. Why kill him?"

So this all is meant to say, if you have love for all, even snakes won't harm you. We have got a proverb: "Be wise like snakes." Snakes are very wise, mind that. When you see a snake and think, "Oh, kill him!" the very thought goes out, and he safeguards himself by attacking. If you have no evil thoughts for anybody, they won't do any harm to you. So, I am telling you, thoughts are more potent. . . .

Now, you will find that "an ounce of practice is worth more than tons of theories." Of what use is it to know the principles, if one does not live up to them? If you say, "Tell the truth," and you don't tell the truth; if you say, "Love others; don't think evil of others," and you still think evil of others; what is the use of knowing that? That's holding information in your brain. "Such and such scriptures say such and such; such and such Masters say such and such." Well, what is that to you? We should learn to live up to them. A learned man with no practice is no better than a beast of burden carrying a load of books, of scriptures, that's all. So it is infinitely better to practice than to preach. First live, then say. Otherwise, even though you may be a scholar and you may have written commentaries on certain subjects which sound outwardly very religious; even though you read scriptures and preach them to others; if you do not live up to them, then what is the sense of that? Truly, suchlike preaching does not carry any effect. Only the arrow that is drawn to the chest goes to the target. The words that come out of our heart, as we live up to them, carry effect by radiation to others' hearts. . . .

Mind that, if you don't live up to what you say, those words won't carry any effect. I think there is so much preaching going on nowadays: perhaps in the olden days nobody even dreamt of it. And with all that, how many lovers are coming up? How many Saints are there? With all our preaching, our lives have not changed. What is the reason why? The preachers are themselves not living up to what they say. Mind that, any wind that strikes a burning fire and passes by it, those men who are sitting on the other side of it will have hot winds. And if there is some ice—mounds of ice, tons of ice, heaps of ice—and if any wind passes by it, the man who is sitting on the other side will have cold wind.

So whatever thoughts are in our hearts and any words we give out come charged with those very things that are already there. If a man openly is very good—"I am a very good man"—and his heart is full of passions and he is not living up to what the scriptures say, naturally whatever words he utters—even though they may be very sweet words—will carry the effect of heat. And if there is a heap of ice and you put a black blanket over it which does not appear to be very cold, even then, anyone who strikes that heap of ice, apparently covered by a black blanket, will receive cold. Do you follow my point?

This is what is required. A spoon passing through a sweet dish does not have any taste of it. This is just the way it is with persons who have so much knowledge at the intellectual level, but don't live up to it.

As I told you, an ounce of practice is worth more than tons of theories. This is one thing. And above all, I would say, as I told you before, a pure heart is most essential for spiritual progress. You cannot expect a king to enter a filthy cabin. Even a dog does not sit in an unclean place: he cleans the place with his tail. How can you expect God to appear in a

heart full of passions, greed, pride, attachment or egotism?

So, what is a Saint? He is a man like you, but he is developed in that way. A little word of his carries more effect than hundreds of lectures given by others.

Chapter 6

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

Matthew 5:9 is the next to last Beatitude:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Peacemaker” is a compound word in Greek, as it is in English. The word for peace—*irene*—is the same word that is a proper name in many languages. It means peace in all its aspects: the absence of war, the absence of fear, the absence of polemics, and the absence of fighting among ourselves. It is the presence of inner serenity and of unification, and in this sense it relates directly to the Beatitude preceding it: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” The two blessings are intimately connected.

In Greek the word for “maker” comes from the same root as the word “poet”, but the Greek word means not just a maker of beautiful words and verses but a maker of anything. In English the word “poet” has come to be specialized, but if we consider it in the Greek context we can think of the children of God as the poets of peace—not in the sense of writing about peace but in the sense that Master Kirpal meant in the following story:

One pundit, Guru Dutt by name, was a disciple of Swami Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj.

Somebody said to him that he should write the life story of his Guru. "All right," he said, "I'll write." Two months, three months passed, and they asked him what he was doing. He said, "I am writing." Six months, a year passed and they wanted to know what he was doing with it. He replied, "Oh, I am writing very hard." Another two years passed and they again asked him how much he had written. "Oh, I am writing very hard," he said. What is the writing of a Master's life? It is just to have the very qualifications of the Master in our own life. (*Morning Talks*, p. 212)

Like many things Jesus said, this Beatitude has its counterpart in the wisdom books of esoteric Judaism; in this case we also find it in mainstream Judaism. In the Talmud, in the Tractate called "The Wisdom of the Fathers," (*Avot* 1:12) it is written:

Hillel says, "Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving mankind and drawing them to the Torah."

There are a number of commentaries on this statement, including the following:

Whoever establishes peace on earth is accounted by scripture as though he had made it on high. . . . A man must love his fellow man and show him proper respect. If the ministering angels, in whom there is no evil impulse, respect one another, all the more so men, in whom there is the evil impulse. (Judah Goldin, *The Living Talmud*, pp. 65-66)

A question arises: Who can bring this peace? And a further question arises: Are we not already children of God? Do we become children of God only if we can make peace? The Masters tell us that we are all children of God, no matter what we are or what we do; and God loves us and wants to bring us back to Him no matter what we deserve or merit. On the other

hand, we are *recognized* as children of God when we bring to others the peace which we have access to.

In other words, this is a blessing specifically addressed to initiates who have access to the Ocean of Peace—the Positive Power—which moves among us in the physical world through the agency of the living Master. The Beloveds of God are those who become one with Him, and they bring peace to the rest of us. When we become more like them we also bring peace to others. Whatever the Master gives us, we are supposed to give to others, and we are able to do that only to the extent that we have access to it within ourselves.

The following is a brief commentary on this beatitude from Swami Prabhavananda:

There is a passage in the Bhagavata, a popular devotional scripture of the Hindus, which reads: "He in whose heart God has become manifest brings peace, and cheer, and delight everywhere he goes." He is the peacemaker Christ speaks of in the Beatitudes. I am reminded of a life that I have seen—the life of my master, Swami Brahmananda. Whoever came into his presence would feel a spiritual joy. And wherever he went he brought with him an atmosphere of festivity.

In one of our monasteries there were a number of young postulants, not yet trained, fresh from school. When they had been together a short time, their old tendencies began to assert themselves, and the boys formed cliques and quarreled. A senior swami of our order went to investigate. He questioned everybody and soon discovered the ringleaders. Then he wrote to Swami Brahmananda, who was the head of our order, that these boys were unfitted for monastic life and should be expelled. My master answered: "Don't do anything about it. I am coming myself." When he arrived at the monastery, he did not question anyone. He just started living there. He insisted on only one thing: that all the boys should meditate in his presence regularly every day. The boys soon

forgot their quarrels. The whole atmosphere of the place became uplifted. By the time Swami Brahmananda left, two or three months later, perfect harmony had been established in the monastery. No one had to be expelled. The minds and hearts of the postulants were transformed.

When I first came to our monastery at Belur, two young boys quarreled and came to blows. Swami Premananda, the abbot, saw this and asked Brahmananda, his brother disciple, to send the boys away. My master told him, "Brother, they have not come here as perfect souls. They have come to you to attain perfection. Do something for them!" Swami Premananda said: "You are right!" He called all of us monastics together and brought us to Swami Brahmananda. With folded hands he asked my master to bless us. Swami Brahmananda raised his hand over our heads, and one by one we prostrated before him. Speaking from my own experience, I can only say that that blessing was like a cooling spring to a fevered body. It gave one an inner exaltation which could be felt but not described. All our troubles were forgotten, and our hearts were full of love. This is how a real peacemaker affects us. When our hearts are uplifted by his presence, we no longer have any desire to quarrel, because we are engaged in the love of God. (*The Sermon on the Mount According to Vedanta*, pp. 29-31)

Similar things have happened in connection with Master Kirpal and with Sant Ji. One incident I observed personally occurred in India at the Third World Religions Conference in February 1965. A number of delegates to the Conference—holy men, clergymen, etc.—had come to the Master's house at Sawan Ashram for tea and he was entertaining them. One of them was a yogi with a shaven head, wearing saffron robes. His name was Surya Dev which means "Sun God," and his eyes were very strange. He was obviously a person of some power, but I felt a little afraid of him; I had seen him around

quite often and I didn't want to get too close to him.

On this particular occasion he just exploded. I don't know what happened; they were all speaking Hindi and Surya Dev began shouting. I remembered what Master Kirpal said about very angry people "foaming at the mouth," and it seemed as though that was what he was doing. Words were tumbling out of him like a stream going down a mountain, and he looked as though he was going to come apart. Master just went up to him and ran his own hands over his face and down onto his body and spoke the most consoling words you can imagine—of course in Hindi—and it was as though a faucet had been turned off. He calmed right down. Whatever had motivated him to behave that way was simply gone.

Later I asked Master why a yogi who had spent so much of his time in spiritual practices and presumably had accomplished something would act like that. Master's answer was, "Well, ego, the sense of I-hood, is the last thing that goes. And until that goes, this kind of thing is possible." It was a very important lesson to me and should be for anyone who might be assessing how spiritually advanced he is. No matter how much we are given, unless that sense of ego is gone, we can fail badly, and we often do. That was a warning to me—unfortunately a warning that I often forgot and still forget.

Another incident occurred at a session of the Conference that Judith and I did not attend, but we were told about it. There were many people on the platform who had been invited because they were important delegates, well-known representatives of this or that sect; and at the end of the afternoon session as the Chairman was closing the meeting, a man who was sitting at the back of the platform became very excited, jumped up and grabbed the microphone away from him, and said that he was going to speak. He said he had been kept from speaking all afternoon, nobody had allowed him time to speak, but now he was going to be heard. This was in front of a large audience, and other delegates on the platform became very angry at him, telling him to shut up and sit down. He refused, and confusion reigned.

The Princess Narendra was one of those who told us about the event, and she said everyone was dismayed that the saints

were ready to fight each other over who was going to speak and who wasn't. Master Kirpal Singh, who was the President of the Conference but who didn't often take an active part in any given session, preferring just to sit and listen, stepped forward and took charge. He put his arm around the man, put him in front of the microphone, and said to the others, "He is right. Let him speak." Everyone calmed down and the man spoke.

Obviously the Master is able to do this sort of thing because of the peace that he himself is, but one is reminded of the advice Master Kirpal gave to the parents of the girl who was caught stealing. Master had an acute understanding of what causes the lack of peace, the ferocious desire, which leads to such events. Like the parents of that child, like the delegates at the conference, our first human instinct is to deny such desires; but if we are people of peace, if we can look a little deeper into the situation, we will know that we should affirm in these contexts.

Clearly it takes someone who is able to act not according to rule but according to the subtle needs of a situation to know what to do to make things peaceful. That is why it's incumbent on all of us to develop as much as possible spiritually so that we can promote true peace and harmony without merely acting a part. We are all children, after all, on some level or other; and we have our desires and our fears which, between the two of them, put an end to peace. Then the Master comes to calm our fears and to grant us our desires although it often doesn't seem that way because we may have so many cravings it would take four or five lifetimes to grant them all.

Still the Master does grant them so that we can get past them. A line in a favorite bhajan says, "All I ask is that you grant all my desires," and we sing that with a whole heart because it's what we all want. To an astounding degree the Master does grant them but never in cases of hungers so self-destructive that they will work against our own best interests.

Another aspect of the ability to be peaceful and without fear is found in the Gospel of John (14:8-31) wherein Jesus teaches his disciples that they must first trust their Master. The English translation of the Greek word *pisteuein* into "believe" does a

disservice to the Greek; it does *not* mean having an intellectual assent or a belief. The word is properly translated "trust"—Jesus is telling His children to *trust* in Him. Master Kirpal knew this passage by heart (as it appears in the King James Version) and quoted it often, as in the following section of his talk, "How I Met My Master," given in Washington, D.C., in January 1964 at the close of his Second World Tour:

All Masters, whenever they came, said the same thing. The tenth Guru [of the Sikhs] said, "Hear ye all; I tell you the truth. Irrespective of whether you belong to one religion or the other, that makes no difference: through love alone you can know God." All others also said the same thing: "Those who do not know love, cannot know God." Christ said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." What did he say? "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you again." If two men, four men, love the same man, that is a point for consideration. True love is where there is no question of competition. When there are two lovers of the same Master, they compete: one says, "I should be in front," and the other says, "I should be in front." But love knows no duality, no competition, no anger, and no coming-to-the-front.

Just judge your love for the Master. Why does all this conflict remain among the followers? Because they have not got real love, I tell you. If they've got real love, love knows no competition. Each one will be happy the more he can put his shoulders to the wheel for the same Cause. Christ said further: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance,

whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace will remain with you forever."

So, as I told you, love knows no competition. When two followers of the same Master do not agree, one says, "I am in the forefront," and the other says, "I am in the forefront." What is the result? To me, apparently such a follower has no love for the Master—true love. He has love for the Master for selfish motives: he wants to come near to him, to the forefront of him. So, love is the remedy for all things: "Love and all things shall be added unto you." That's the pity: we don't love.

And then Christ said, "As the Father hath loved me, so I have loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I kept my Father's commandments, and I abide in his love." He loved his Master, his God. He said, "I give you a new commandment: love one another." There we are wanting, I tell you. I have been pressing this point very much, ever since I've come. This is the only remedy for all our ills. If one man goes ahead, it is His grace. (*Sat Sandesh*, July 1975, pp. 15-16)

A brief excerpt from Master Kirpal's circular, "Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit," is very relevant here:

Again, perfect love casteth out fear. Whensoever there is the least fear lurking, know it for certain that love hath not perfected in that heart. Naturally enough, from love spring forth the ideas of service and sacrifice. Love believes in giving—giving away the best you have and not accepting anything in return, for that would be a barter and not love. "Service before self" is what love teaches. "By love serve one another," is what the Apostle Paul taught to the Galatians, and through them to all mankind. If we look critically, we will soon realize that all service which we seem to be doing to others is not

to anybody else, but to the ONE SELF-SAME SELF, pervading everywhere and in all, including our seemingly individualized self clothed in raiments of flesh and bones. This being the case, there is no ground for claiming any credit whatever. Loving service must therefore flow freely, fully and naturally, as a matter of course, refreshing all hearts, for it will convert the otherwise dreary and desolate earth into a veritable garden of Eden; for which we so earnestly pray every day, but find it receding from us, the more we wish for it. (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 352-353)

Sant Ajaib Singh Ji has said something in his discourse, "On Fear and Freedom," which is one of the most helpful sayings in the writings of any Master. It connects directly to what Master Kirpal said above:

Now He [Nanak] says that fear is written in the fate of all jivas when they are born. If there is anyone fearless, who is not involved in fear or affected by it, it is the Timeless Almighty Lord. And Guru Nanak says that those who become the beloveds of that God neither frighten anyone nor are afraid of anyone.

In the beginning, at the ashram in 77RB, one of our western dear ones asked me, "What is the greatest sin?" I replied, "To be afraid of anything is the greatest sin." (*In the Palace of Love*, p. 35)

Because they are His children they partake of His nature, and He is the God of love, mercy and forgiveness, the Dayal as opposed to the Kal. When Sant Ji refers to Him as the Timeless Almighty Lord, He is drawing a sharp comparison between *Akal* which means "timeless" and *Kal* which means "time." Those who become the beloveds of the Timeless God of love and mercy do not frighten others, nor are they afraid; fear has no place in the way they behave.

In May 1984 Sant Ji referred to this from the standpoint of the disciples:

The principle of Sant Mat is this: don't be afraid of anybody and don't make other people afraid. One should not allow oneself to be intimidated by anybody and one should not intimidate others. ("The UPI Interview," *Sant Bani*, June 1984, p. 12)

People who are truly fearless will not affect others through fear, and that is really the way to bring peace; that is the peace we are to make. These are important points, perhaps too easily forgotten because they do not fit in with people's preconceptions of what the spiritual/religious life is. But this is how peace is created and these are the ways in which we can have access to it. The peace is there; the Master has it and offers it to us via channels through which the peace that he both has and is can flow into us. The channels are such things as being in his company ("having his darshan"), keeping his remembrance, putting into practice whatever he teaches us, and singing his bhajans which allows us to participate in his point of view. "After coming he cooled the heated hearts"—is that not what we are talking about? Peace comes when the heated hearts are cooled. In so many ways he offers a channel through which peace can flow into us; all we really have to do is to keep the channel open.

In Morning Talk #3, Master Kirpal speaks about the mechanics of creating peace on a daily basis; and he makes a strong connection to the Beatitude just preceding this one: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." After all, it is those who can see God who can bring peace. All of the blessings connect with each other in just this way: each one depends on the one preceding it and makes possible the one following it. They form a ladder proceeding further and further into the heart of God. In this talk, "Don't Think Evil of Others," Master touches on a point that Jesus makes several times in the Sermon on the Mount—the power of thought—and talks about several aspects of making peace.

Never hurt anybody. We hurt others by thinking ill of them. We think ill of others, we scheme. This is wrong, as thoughts are very potent. When you think

ill of others that reacts to them like a telegraph wire. You may not be telling anybody anything but if you think of them, radiation is there.

Once Akbar, who was a great Emperor of India, was told by his minister [Birbal, a well-known figure in Indian history] that thoughts were very potent and that great care should be taken in what we think of others. Akbar asked his minister how he knew this. The minister said, "All right, I will give you a concrete example. Let us go outside."

So both of them went outside and they saw one man coming towards them at a distance of a few furlongs. The minister said to the king, "Look here, just think something about this man in your mind and when he comes near, you might ask him what crossed his mind at that time. You are only to look and think." The king thought in his mind that this man should be shot. The man approached the king and the king asked him, "When you saw my face, what thoughts crossed your mind?" The man said, "Emperor, excuse me, but I thought that I should beat you with my fist and break your head."

So thoughts are very potent. If you think evil of others, the other man will react. You should be careful how you speak to people. If you speak ill to another and say, "You are a fool!" and things like that, or if somebody calls you a name and you react in the same way, what is the result? There will be a flare-up. A man calls you once, twice, and that results in a fight. This is by words; their very root is the thought. A man speaks out of the abundance of his heart. Whatever is lying there [in his heart] those things take the form of words, then words lead to fighting. So don't hurt the feelings of others, in thought, word or deed. Even in very religious places, if a dozen men are working together they start thinking evil of one another, with the result that the thoughts radiate and react in another's mind. You follow my point?

The heart is the Throne of God. The body is the Temple of God. If you defile the Throne where God is, then who will sit there? So blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Purity mainly lies in not thinking evil of others, in thought, word, and deed. There are other factors, too, but this is the main factor. Wherever you sit, even in an Ashram, if one man thinks of somebody else, that goes round like anything. That is just like a plague, an infection. A rat infested by plague goes around and spreads that infection everywhere. So this is a very strict condition, "Don't be the unpaid apprentices of the C. I. D. of God. Don't take the law into your own hands." If you think good of others, you will radiate good. If you purify your mind, you will purify the minds of others. By thinking ill of others, we spoil our own Temples of God first and then defile them. Outwardly, we are all right, quite clean, but our hearts are impure. We are defiled by thinking ill of others. We are all parts of the same machinery. If even one part is out of order, the machinery will stop working. So that is why it is said, "Wanted—reformers, not of others, but of themselves." Charity begins at home. We should first reform ourselves. Example is better than precept.

So today's subject is, "Don't think evil of others, in word, deed, and mind." If you think of anybody else, always think good of them. Why? Because they are your brothers and sisters in God. God is active in every heart. Our bodies are the Temples of God. If we think evil, first we defile our Temples, then we defile others. Instead we should think, "Peace be unto all the world over, under Thy Will, O God." This is what Guru Nanak gave out in His prayer. Let all the world be happy. How can it be happy if you defile everybody! So the foremost thing is, not to think evil, speak evil, or hear evil of others. If you come to know something, then it is for you to just keep it to your own self and try to privately tell

others concerned for their own well being. We should not become reformers of each other. We should reform ourselves first. If we have sympathy for others, we should tell them privately what we think that they are doing wrong. Then the other person will care to listen. If a blind man is there, and you say, "O Blind Man," he will take it to heart. If we simply say, "Well, dear friend, when did you lose your sight?" the purpose is served.

The "purpose," apparently, is to speak delicately to the blind man about something he would prefer not to speak about. Master used this example often and when he would ask, "Well, dear friend, when did you lose your sight?" he would say it with such love and compassion that one realized a man might even be willing to discuss his blindness if addressed in such a way. Put in a psychological context, we all have blind spots, things that we do without knowing they are wrong. If someone has to make us see our actions clearly, or if we have to make someone else see their errors, the more compassionate and loving we are the more peaceful the situation will be.

There are ways and means to express. So speaking, you might say, is an art. The same words that carry a loving and peaceful effect can also create fire. This is what we have to guard against. So we should not think evil of others at heart, in mind, word, or deed.

God is not difficult to meet, but it is difficult to be a man. Man is in the make. God is seeking after a man who is a man.

The word here that Master is using, which he invariably used in this context, is *insaan*, an Urdu word which is gender-free and, by the standards now generally recognized, should be translated as "human being." As we pointed out in the Introduction, Master Kirpal used the English word "man" in a very elastic way. But *insaan* is not only gender-free; it means, literally, "one who is bubbling over with the love of God." This is what human beings are meant to become, what they were born to be. And what he is saying here is that God is

seeking that kind of human being.

A man once went to Lord Buddha and began to insult Him like anything. He went on in this way for one, two, three hours, until it got dark. When night fell, he wanted to go away. So Lord Buddha said, "Well, dear friend, just tell me one thing." The man asked what Buddha wanted to know, to which Buddha replied, "If anybody brings some present to somebody and if that person does not accept it, with whom is it left?" The man replied, "With the person who brings that present." "Well," said Buddha, "the present you have brought, I don't accept it."

So these are the things to be developed in us and lived up to. If you live up to them, your thoughts, your radiation will change. It is not a matter, I think, of acting or posing; it is a matter of living. The Masters used to say, "Those who live up to what I say, I am their servant, they are my bosses. I will serve them to the best I can." Truly any son, who would be obedient to his father and would do all things what he wants, naturally he is most dear to the father. This is not done by mere outward assent, acting or posing, because the mind radiates. The Master knows the mind, not the outward things. (*Morning Talks*, pp. 14-19)

Master Kirpal and Sant Ji have both told the story of Namdev, the great saint from Rajasthan, who once went to the village in the Punjab where, hundreds of years later, Baba Jaimal Singh was born. Namdev wanted to go into the Hindu temple there and praise God, but he was a low-caste man, a Shudra. In the Hindu religion, Shudras are not allowed into temples, and the people would not let him in. So Namdev peacefully went behind the temple and sat down and began to praise God there. God was so pleased with his prayer that He turned the temple around so that the door faced Namdev.

This story sums up everything Master has just said: when peace is there and we don't accept the "presents" of peoples' anger or enmity, God can turn things around if He wishes to.

The name of the village became Ghuman, which literally means “to turn around”; the story is that it was named for that incident which humbled the pride of the villagers.

The Masters have made it plain that world peace is the outcome of individual peace; those who have peace can give it and those who have access to peace can create it between others. We are not really talking about the kinds of things that win people the Nobel Prize, but Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa and others like them were able to affect others because they had access to the peace within themselves. Sant Ajaib Singh Ji, like all Masters, is very concerned with peace in the world and does his best to promote it; which is natural, considering that Masters are the embodiments of the God of Love in a world that is ruled by the god of justice.

When Jesus said to His disciples,

I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. (John 14:30-31)

He meant that the people who were coming to get him and hang him on the cross were the agents of the ruler of this world, Kal or Dharam Rai (the Lord of Law). This and many Biblical references to Kal are a far cry from the subsequent theological concept of Satan. As Jesus explained, Kal does not have direct power over the Master, but it is the Father’s will that when the Masters are here in Kal’s world, they obey his laws. So if they are condemned, they are condemned; if it is required that they be ignored or put aside or whatever, then that happens.

In the following pre-meditation talk that Sant Ji gave in Rajasthan on New Year’s Day, 1991, just prior to what became the “Gulf War,” the Master is praying for peace on behalf of the world. He is doing so as the agent in our time of the God of love and mercy and peace. He is doing it with all of his attention and all of his strength, and because he is the embodiment of peace in our time, these words carry great weight:

Good morning! I wish all of you, your families, your country, and all the human beings on this world a very happy New Year.

I wish and pray to God Almighty that the clouds of war which are hovering over this world may be removed with His grace and that all of this world may have a very happy New Year.

This whole world is the home of the Master. This whole world is like the country of the Master, and you know that if one child in the home is unhappy or suffering, the father is affected by it, he is also unhappy, he also suffers. In the same way, if there is any trouble anywhere in the world, the Master is also affected. So I pray to God Almighty, again and again, that He may protect all of us, giving us His gracious hand, that in this Iron Age, He may protect these souls of the Iron Age. I bow down in front of Him again and again; I lay myself down in front of Him again and again with the prayer that He may protect all of us.

At present, as you know, everyone in this world is frightened; as you know, the superpowers are standing on piles of dynamite and you never know what is going to happen. If at this time, God does not shower His grace upon us, if He does not protect us, then you can very well imagine how much the human beings will be affected and how much loss can happen if He does not shower His grace upon the people. So once again, it is our prayer in front of God Almighty that, giving us His support, He should cool down the minds of the people and He should shower grace on all the people, and He should bring peace to the world. (*Sant Bani*, January 1991, p. 16)

Chapter 7

Blessed Are the Persecuted

Matthew 5:10-12 concludes the beatitudes, or blessings, which are the prologue and epitome of the Sermon on the Mount:

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The first of these seven blessings was, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," and that is also promised here to "those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." It was mentioned before that all of these beatitudes are different aspects of the same thing, and it is clearer here than anywhere else. Those who are poor in spirit are those who are pushed around on the earth, and when that involves a spiritual oppression, it is almost exactly the same thing as being persecuted for the sake of righteousness.

Here the Greek word for righteousness is *dikaiosyne*, the same word Jesus used when he said, "Blessed are those who

hunger and thirst after righteousness.” As we saw earlier, *dikaioyne* encompasses a much larger meaning than our word “righteousness”; it refers to the whole desire to find God. So the sense of this is, “When our desire to find God puts us in a situation where we are persecuted for it, then we will find God.” This is a principle that is very strong in the teachings of all Masters in the universal spiritual tradition, and it is the opposite side of their instruction against judging and criticizing others. Here Jesus is looking from the point of view of the people who are judged or criticized and made to feel inferior; he is telling them, “This in itself is part of what you want.”

Before going further, we should reiterate that Jesus was speaking within the Jewish tradition, as the reference to the prophets makes clear. There were within Judaism then two points of view about which people God favored. The exoteric view is that those who are wealthy, happy and successful are the ones beloved by God; but the esoteric point of view is the opposite. The Book of Job was written from the esoteric viewpoint, and the lives and books of the prophets bear this out. In the Babylonian Talmud, the Tractate Shabbat 88b, it says:

They that are reviled but who do not revile; they that hear themselves being put to shame but do not answer back, concerning them the Scripture says, “But they that love Him shall be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.”

The scriptural reference is to the Song of Deborah (Judges 5:31), and the Talmud is saying that “those who love God” (or “the friends of God” in the NRSV) are those who are reviled and shamed but who do not revile or shame others in return. Those are the friends of God.

It is a powerful teaching, and all Masters of all traditions have emphasized it. There are many facets to consider and most of them would probably fit more appropriately under the headings of “non-judgment,” “non-criticizing,” and “forgiveness,” but we will approach them from the standpoint of the sufferer, the persecuted one.

To begin with, we should note that the word “falsely” in verse 11 may not have been in the original saying. Many ancient manuscripts omit it: “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you on my account.”

Why would that make a difference? The karmic aspect of all these statements is very important. We don’t know what karma we have coming to us, and when our soul cries out that we must do good deeds, when we try to get closer to God and the response we get is pain and suffering, we go through our karmic debts very, very fast. Otherwise it may take lifetime after lifetime. There is something inherent in the search and the process of coming closer to God that requires our karma to get burned up faster than otherwise; and as the Masters have often said, “When the duration is diminished, the intensity is increased.” Therefore, we do lay ourselves open to be treated this way and if we are aware of what is happening we can deal with the suffering better.

Another aspect of this has to do with the karma of the other person. As Sant Ji has explained many times, when people criticize or persecute us, the benefit of their meditation becomes ours; and they in turn take on karma that we would have earned from doing whatever it was they criticized us for. This is why the word “falsely” may not matter much: if we are criticized or judged by other people for anything, it wipes out whatever wrong we did and they take on the karma for it. That is why the doctrines of forgiveness and not judging others are so central to the teachings of the Masters. The critic, the judge, the persecutor are engaging in the most dangerous of all activities, while for the person being persecuted there are great blessings in store. However, it does not follow that it is ever a good thing to persecute, even though the recipient benefits with blessings. It may seem logical, but logic often fails us.

Jesus covers this very specifically as he talks about children and makes his principle statement on child rearing in Matthew 18:6-9:

“If any of you put a stumbling block before [other translators say, “If any of you offend”] one of these

little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. [Sant Ji often uses the powerful image, "a garland of stones around your neck."] Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! [Or offenses.] Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes!" [Other translations read: "Offenses must come, but woe to him by whom they come!"]

Difficult things arise in everyone's life; karma demands it. Sometimes a person's spiritual growth demands it, but that doesn't mean that the person who provides the difficulty is helped by doing so. In fact, he trades whatever pleasure he finds in judging or criticizing or persecuting for the blessing given to the one who receives his behavior. Now there's a very important principle here which we must understand: By itself, being persecuted or suffering is not helpful. That is why Jesus warns against it so vehemently for the children's sake. We have seen already that the Masters' teaching regarding the raising of children is that generally what we do to children they will reciprocate. If we persecute or offend them, they will grow up learning how to do that; too often they will judge and treat other people the way they have been treated. That's the law.

This is true with other people, too. We are all children from this point of view. In general, if someone mistreats us we will mistreat him in return and thereby lose whatever blessing we might have received. That is why the Masters go into this in such detail and tell us how it works. It's very important to grasp the element of grace that's present here; it has to do partly with the way in which we grow and partly with what happens when God comes into the lower worlds. We have seen in the lives of the Masters that God comes into the fallen universe as a victim; in the New Testament as well as in the Hebrew scriptures, "God as a victim" is a very strong concept. If we understand and are consciously aware of it, we can participate in His "victimness" and share His point of view and this is the overall purpose of the Sermon on the Mount.

We saw this to some extent when we considered the first of the blessings—"Blessed are the poor in spirit"—because there is a great overlap. Then we read St. Paul explaining how he tried to be strong but could only be weak; no matter what he did he was whipped, beaten, imprisoned. And when he prayed to God for strength to be other than this, God answered, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." (II Corinthians 12:9) There was no way he could do things differently and he came to understand that that is the way through which blessings come to us. The reason is that the Masters, the prophets, and all holy people have come to earth to manifest the nature and principles of the God of love. When those people are here in this universe, they are vulnerable. Because they are bound by the nature and limits the God of love has laid down for Himself in the fallen universe, they are susceptible to whatever the Negative Power wants to put them through, although they have infinite power and strength within that perspective.

When we are allowed to participate in all that, the benefit is great; but in order to get that benefit, we have to be aware of what the Masters have said in this regard and keep it firmly in mind. If we do not, we feel resentful and react accordingly and then we lose it. But we can see it from this point of view: "Yes, this is what happens to the Masters. This is the nature of the God of Love, functioning within the confines of the fallen universe. This is the way it has always been and now I am a part of it." If we can see from that perspective, it can be a great consolation for us, a great blessing, as Jesus said.

Perhaps never has this process been stated more clearly than by Plato in the "Allegory of the Cave." The allegory also illustrates another point that Jesus made at the very beginning of his ministry about winning entrance to the Kingdom of God. The very first thing he said, echoing his Master, John the Baptist, was: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven has come near." (Matthew 4:17; cf. Matthew 3:2). The Greek word for "repent" is *metanoia*, which literally means, "Turn yourselves around!" or "Change your mind!" Jesus is telling us that the Kingdom of God is so near that we can have it if we change our angle of vision.

This is of course the whole point of the Sermon on the Mount and of the teachings of Jesus in particular and all Masters in general: He is showing us *how* to do this, *how* to change our minds so that we can indeed reach the Kingdom of God. Socrates, who is the speaker in this extract from Plato's *Republic*, is doing the same thing:

Next, said I, here is a parable to illustrate the degrees in which our nature may be enlightened or unenlightened. Imagine the condition of men living in a sort of cavernous chamber underground, with an entrance open to the light and a long passage all down the cave. Here they have been from childhood, chained by the leg and also by the neck, so they cannot move and can see only what is in front of them, because the chains will not let them turn their heads. At some distance higher up is the light of a fire burning behind them, and between the prisoners and the fire is a track with a parapet built along it, like the screen at a puppet-show, which hides the performers while they show their puppets over the top.

I see, said he.

Actually it is very hard to "see" what Socrates is saying here; he is describing such a complicated image that modern readers are almost completely lost. F. M. Cornford, the translator, comments here: "A modern Plato would compare his Cave to an underground cinema, where the audience watch the place of shadows thrown by the film passing before a light at their backs." Plato's point is that the fallen universe we live in is that of Maya; it is illusory, and what we think we see is not what really is, and vice versa. He gives a long description of what the cave is like and goes into much detail about how everything is not what it seems to be. Then he says:

Now consider what would happen if their release from the chains and the healing of their unwisdom should come about in this way. Suppose one of them

set free and forced to suddenly stand up, turn his head, and walk with eyes lifted to the light; all these movements would be painful, and he would be too dazzled to make out the objects whose shadows he had been used to see. What do you think he would say if someone told him that what he had formerly seen was meaningless vision, but now, being somewhat nearer to reality and turned towards more real objects, he was getting a truer view? Suppose further that he were shown the various objects being carried by and were made to say, in reply to questions, what each of them was. Would he not be perplexed and believe the objects now shown him to be not so real as what he formerly saw?

Yes, not nearly so real.

And if he were forced to look at the fire-light itself, would not his eyes ache, so that he would try to escape and turn back to the things which he could see distinctly, convinced that they really were clearer than these outer objects now being shown to him?

Yes.

And suppose someone were to drag him away forcibly up the steep and rugged ascent and not let him go until he had hauled him out into the sunlight, would he not suffer pain and vexation at such treatment, and, when he had come out into the light, find his eyes so full of radiance that he could not see a single one of the things that he was now told were real?

Certainly he would not see them all at once.

He would need, then, to grow accustomed before he could see things in that upper world. At first it would be easiest to make out shadows, and then the images of men and things reflected in water, and later on the things themselves. After that, it would be easier to watch the heavenly bodies and the sky itself by night, looking at the light of the moon and stars rather than the Sun and the Sun's light in the day-time.

Yes, surely.

Last of all, he would be able to look at the Sun and contemplate its nature, not as it appears when reflected in water or any alien medium, but as it is in itself in its own domain.

No doubt.

And now he would begin to draw the conclusion that it is the Sun that produces the seasons and the course of the year and controls everything in the visible world, and moreover is in a way that cause of all he and his companions used to see.

Clearly he would come to that conclusion.

Then if he called to mind his fellow prisoners and what passed for wisdom in his former dwelling-place, he would surely think himself happy in the change and be sorry for them. They may have had a practice of honouring and commending one another, with praise for the man who had the keenest eye for the passing shadows and the best memory for the order in which they followed or accompanied one another, so that he could make a good guess as to which was going to come next. Would our released prisoner be likely to covet those praise or to envy the man exalted to honor and power in the Cave? . . .

Yes, he would prefer any fate to such a life.

Now imagine what would happen if he went down again to take his former seat in the Cave. Coming suddenly out of the sunlight, his eyes would be filled with darkness. He might be required once more to deliver his opinion on those shadows, in competition with the prisoners who had never been released, while his eyesight was still dim and unsteady; and it might take some time to become used to the darkness. They would laugh at him and say that he had gone up only to come back with his sight ruined; it was worth no one's while even to attempt the ascent. If they could lay hands on the man who was trying to set them free and lead them up, they would kill him.

Yes, they would. (Cornford, *The Republic of Plato*, pp. 227-231)

And Socrates goes on to explain the parable more fully.

The same basic statement that we have just read in Matthew also appears in the Gospel of Thomas, verse 68, where Jesus says:

**Blessed are you when you are hated and persecuted.
Wherever you have been persecuted, they will find
no place.**

Then Thomas adds something that is not in the Bible:

**Blessed are they who have been persecuted within
themselves. It is they who have truly come to know
the Father. (Verse 69)**

That verse is best understood in connection with what is required to get out of the cave and go on up. When we try to make a real, fundamental change in ourselves, something we may be incapable of achieving without the helping factor of grace, we must not underestimate the turmoil and unhappiness our efforts may produce in us. The Masters promise us peace, both within us and around us, but in the very first verse of the Gospel of Thomas Jesus lists the steps we have to take in order to reach that goal. And one of them is *trouble*. We can't just say, "Yes, I am now peaceful." It's not that simple. We have to go through some amounts of persecution; some of it comes from outside, some of it from inside. That is why all the Masters have said, as Master Kirpal often did, "No pain, no gain."

So it is true that we do have to suffer this form of persecution, but we don't have to worry about it if we are connected to the Naam. If something hurts, it hurts. We should not blame ourselves for suffering when things that produce pain are done to us; we have to accept that it hurts and understand that it is all part of a great purpose. The consolation lies in seeing the distress as part of the whole, not in pretending it isn't there. Those who have been persecuted within themselves are the ones who are going to see the Father and everyone will have to experience this kind of suffering.

Master Kirpal writes in this connection:

I had been feeling for many months the great hardships that you were facing. It had been my constant worry and you have always been in my mind. I hope you will now write fully about all that. When the Lord wants to make a great poem of a man's life, He sends him or her to the school of privations, worries, and difficulties, and all the time He keeps extending His protective hand over him or her to pass through unscathed. (*Spiritual Elixir*, p. 202)

“Passing through unscathed” means that it will all turn to our advantage. It does not mean that we do not feel those privations, worries, and difficulties, or even that we are supposed to overlook them. The more trust we have in the Master the more we can be happy even as we are simultaneously feeling the pain. The image that may be most helpful to our understanding of this is the crucifixion or the deaths of any of the Masters; it is a misunderstanding to think they don't mind what happens to them. They do mind. They feel the pain as anyone else would; otherwise the system wouldn't work. They are paying off karma for us and for the whole world and in order to accomplish that, in order for the Negative Power to be satisfied, they really have to feel it. But at the same time they recognize why they must suffer and how it all fits together, and they know who they are doing it for and the purpose behind the entire process. Similarly, by giving us these teachings, the Masters allow us to recognize and not deny our own pain, suffering, fear, or hurt, and at the same time understand how it all works together. If we can learn to see it from their perspective, many things become clear and beautiful that are otherwise murky and baffling.

In Sant Ji's great book, *The Jewel of Happiness*, there is a story that illustrates how being persecuted by others fits into this context or, looked at another way, as a lesson in not judging others. If we look at it from the perspective of the widow in the story, it connects with what we have been considering.

Once there was a king who had no children. Somebody told him that if he would perform a *yajna* or Hindu ritual, he might get a son. So he performed a big *yajna* and invited many rishis and munis and other religious people. But it so happened that a snake came and left its poison in the food which was cooked for all the people who were invited there. And when they ate the food, they all died.

Of course this story is a parable, and in any parable valuable points are made. Here the point is: This is the way the karmic law works. In the fallen universe the terms "just" and "fair" (which are sometimes applied to karma with some truth) are very limited definitions. The king invited the people to the *yajna* and served them the food, and although he did not put the poison in the food he is still karmically responsible for their deaths. It is this aspect of karma that demands our forgiving other people; by forgiving, we open the door to wiping out this "unfair" aspect of karma. This idea will be developed later in the section on forgiveness in the Sermon.

The king was very sorry for them, and he became very sad. He thought, "I am the cause of the death of all these people; it is better for me now to give up this kingdom and go into the wilderness and do the devotion of God, so that I may become free from the sin of their death." So he went into the forest.

On the way he stopped in a village to spend the night. In that village there was a widow who was not respected by the other people in the village. She was a good woman but she was an outsider and did not "fit in." So when the King came there and asked the villagers if there was a place where he could spend the night, they told him, "Yes, there is one home here in which lives a widow; you can spend the night there." The people thought that if this man, who was very young, spent the night with her, they would have more excuses for criticizing the widow whom they were already giving such a hard time.

So the king went there, and he did not know that she was not respected. When the widow saw that someone was coming towards her home, she became very surprised and happy, because nobody liked her. Everybody thought that she was a bad woman and nobody paid any attention to her.

So when the king came and asked her to allow him to spend the night there, she said, "Yes, you are welcome, my brother." And she called him her brother and he called her his sister, and he spent the night there; and this gave the people one more excuse to criticize both of them. They started saying, "The widow is a very bad woman; now the young man has come and they are enjoying," etc.

Next morning, before the king got up, an angel of God came to him. The angel told him, "The entire burden of sin which you had of killing those people who attended your *yajna*—now all that is removed from your head; and all the people who have criticized you, now they have that burden. And since all the people in this village have criticized you and this widow, they have a lot of sin on their heads and they will have to be punished—so they are all going to be burned alive. You should leave this place as soon as possible and take this widow with you. As soon as you leave, the village will be burned and everyone here will die, because this is the punishment which the critics have earned, and God has decided to do this."

When the king got up, he told that widow all about why he came there and what had happened. He told her the whole story about the *yajna*, and he said, "If you believe in me, if you take me as your brother, let me tell you that now I am free from all that sin, and the angel of God whom I can see although you cannot, is telling me to leave the place with you, because this village is going to be burned, and everyone will die."

As soon as they left, the village started burning

from one end and the people went there to extinguish the fire, but then they realized that there was also a fire on the other end. When the fire surrounded the village they were all caught and burned alive. Guru Nanak Sahib says that those who are criticizing others are the worst sinners and get the worst punishment from God.

The law applies to everyone. Nobody should ever think that because he or she is a satsangi this law doesn't apply to him or her. No. The law is for everyone. And the ones who know about this law, if they commit any mistake, if they incur any guilt, they are liable for more punishment than the one who doesn't know about the law. (*The Jewel of Happiness*, pp. 279-280)

This story is about karma but we learn from the widow's example that blessings can result from being persecuted, reviled and hated by other people. The king who came to the village was like a Master who took her out and saved her from the fate of the rest of the town. The blessing came to her because no matter what she might have done, it was long since wiped out and removed to those who were criticizing her and persecuting her. It is a common situation, and the Master makes it clear that it is a dangerous one for the people who are doing the persecuting; but if, like the widow, we do not respond in kind, we will be rewarded and blessed. We will get what we ultimately want: the kingdom of heaven that Jesus promises.

In the same book, Sant Ji talks about the point of view of the Masters who are being criticized:

When Kabir Sahib was in this world, there were two big religions—Hinduism and Islam—and both of them were against Him.

Once the learned pundits who were jealous of Kabir Sahib announced that Kabir was hosting a lunch for all the people and everyone was invited—even though Kabir knew nothing about it, and He was poor and unable to give food to many people.

But the pundits said, "He is called a Saint, let us see if we send people to His house whether He will feed them or not."

So many people went to Kabir Sahib's to get food on that day. There was no food in the house, and Mother Loi (Kabir's wife) didn't know what to do. But Kabir Sahib said, "Don't worry about anything. If we are defamed and lose our reputation, we should not worry because it is of God; and if we are praised, we should not feel we are praised, because it is God Who will be praised. Take this basket and remember God, and go on serving those who come." And, with the grace of God, everyone who came to the home of Kabir Sahib was well fed, and hundreds of people went, eating well from the house of Kabir. And they started praising Him; but He said, "I have not done this nor can I do this: No one's body can do this thing which my God has done." He said, "Instead of praising me, praise the Almighty God."

So at that time Kabir Sahib taught the critics by saying, "Oh dear ones, criticize me, criticize me."

*Criticize, criticize, criticize me, O people:
Criticism is very dear to me;
Criticism is my father, criticism is my mother. . . .*

*If one is criticized, he goes to the heavens,
And the Naam can be manifested within him.*

*If one is criticized, his heart is purified:
Critics wash our clothes (sins).*

Saints see God in both enemies and friends, and that is why They never criticize anyone, nor do They even allow Their disciples to criticize anyone. So Kabir says that if we criticize someone who doesn't see any difference between enemies and friends, who sees God in both, then his heart becomes pure and ours is defiled.

*He who criticizes us is our friend;
My attention is always in the critic.*

Kabir Sahib says, "Those who criticize me are my friends, and I'm always worried about them. I don't want my critic to get sick, or to have any problems; because if he does, he will not criticize me, and that means he will stop doing my work." . . .

*Kabir says, How is the criticism good?
The critic is drowned and we go across.*

Now he asks, "How does criticism help us?" By criticism, our critic takes the burden of our sins, so that we are able to cross this Ocean of Life easily; but the critic, who takes on the burden of our sins by criticizing us, is drowned in the Ocean of Life.

Kabir says the critic will be drowned, but ultimately, of course, everyone will make it to liberation; the Masters are clear about that. God cannot rest until every expression of Himself is brought back to Him; there's no way to avoid that, so Kabir's statements should be understood within the realm of the present fallen universe. Within this universe, this is the way things work.

However, the Law of Karma works in such a way that when God comes in the form of Masters and Saints and prophets for the purpose of taking us out of this world, they possess qualities which allow them to subvert the law from within and help people escape from it. That is what these stories point to, and that is why the Masters inform us that we are blessed if we are persecuted by others. We have to feel the pain but if we can remember not to retaliate and create more pain, we will be doubly blessed. Similarly if we can refrain from causing pain to other people, that particular aspect of the karmic law does not apply to us.

As the story of the widow indicates, we can be persecuted and reviled without being put to death, although that is often what happens to the Masters themselves. Pain can often be

purely psychological, and "when we are persecuted within ourselves, we will see the Father." How this works is explained in Sant Ji's discourse, "The Pain of Separation," which continues the adventures of the King of Balkh Bokhara who was awakened, went to Kabir and served him for six years. He was tested by having garbage dumped on his head and finally became a Master himself. After he left Kabir, he:

was taunted by one man who asked him, "Have you ever experienced happiness since you gave up your kingdom?" The King replied, "Yes, twice after giving up my kingdom I have felt a lot of happiness and joy. Once I was traveling on a ship, and there was one very wealthy merchant who had some servants who, in order to please him, were putting on a show and doing imitations and different kinds of comedy. Because I was the lowest person on that ship and I was very poor, after doing all types of comedy and funny things, they would come to me and hit me on the head; and at that time I was feeling a lot of joy, because that gave them pleasure and that merchant was pleased when I was hit on my head. And later, when the ship was having trouble, the captain said, 'The load is too heavy and we have to throw one man in the ocean if we are to save our ship.' So, because I was the only person there who was not having any heir or any family, they chose me to throw in the water. And at that time I remembered my God; and since there was no more danger to the ship, I experienced a great happiness.

"And once, when I went into a mosque to spend a night there, the Kazi of that mosque, looking at me, got very upset and thought, 'Who has come in this mosque to spend the night?' So he pulled me by the leg, and threw me out of the mosque. And when he was pulling me down the stairs, and my head was hitting on the steps, at that time my inner vision was opening and I was getting the secret of God from inside. As my head hit one step I got one se-

cret, and as it hit another one I got one more, and in that way, on every step I got the knowledge of God. But when I reached bottom I felt very unhappy, because I thought that if there had been more steps, I would have got more knowledge of God." (*Streams in the Desert*, pp. 192-193)

The story of the King of Balkh Bokhara illustrates Master Kirpal's message quoted above, that when we serve others we may think we are serving separate entities, but the Reality is that we are only serving the Self-same Self of which we are all a part. There is another aspect of this: by rising above his personal angle of vision and identifying with his persecutors, the King was able to forgive them. That is why he got so much benefit from that kind of persecution. "Since there was no more danger to the ship, I experienced great happiness." This happiness could only come about because he realized he was the Self-same Self as the ship-owner and the captain who threw him overboard.

Similarly, "At that time I was feeling a lot of joy, because that gave them pleasure and that merchant was pleased when I was hit on my head." This seems masochistic and most of us are not at a level where we can feel that this is an appropriate response, but the King was seeing it from the perspective of the other people, along with his own pain. It is basically what was happening to Jesus when He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Neither was pretending there was no pain—it's important that we understand that. Nothing works when we are in denial.

If we pretend we are not feeling pain when we are, if we say, "I am above this because I'm spiritual," we won't be able to benefit from this teaching. The Masters feel their own suffering, but they have the perspective of what it all means; and their sense of purpose, their overall view makes everything bearable. It is even pleasurable to them because what they want is so important that they don't mind what they have to pay. If, as Master Kirpal has affirmed, all Masters die for the sins of the world, they do it because they love us; and what we do out of love we are happy to do regardless of the cost.

Chapter 8

Let Your Light Shine Forth

Matthew 5:13-16, the passage following the Beatitudes, is a very important one. It is still an introductory part of Jesus's address to his disciples, and the "how" and the "what" are still to come; but it sums up what all Masters seem to expect of us:

You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Most of us have come to realize that "From those to whom much is given, much is expected." When we are initiated and connected with that which is the essence of the Master, namely the Word (Naam or Shabd), He allows us to participate in that. The Master is Word made flesh and when we are given the privilege of absorbing his essence, it follows that we should let others share in what we have received.

Obviously we are not to teach others or do things we are not able to do. We are simply to do what the Lord Jesus says here: let the light the Master has lit within us radiate in such a way that anyone we come in contact with will know it is shining. If we do that, it will follow that people will not give thanks to us, they will not praise us, but they will praise the Father from whom it comes. We won't be doing anything; we will simply be getting out of the way so that what the Master has given us will take precedence, not ourselves.

The Masters have often talked about this; it is the basis of the teaching that if someone loves us and we love the Master, their love for us will go straight through us to him. It is the underlying reason why the Master can come and take care of people at their death time even if they're not initiated. If they are loved ones of ours who genuinely love us, and we are connected with the Master and love him, their love will go right past us to him. We have heard Master Kirpal Singh and Sant Ajaib Singh Ji explain this many times: the more love people have for those who are connected to the Master, the more their love will go to him and they will get the benefit as though they were loving him directly.

This is one way to share what we have been given and "let our light shine forth." The Master's interest lies in taking us Home—all of us, initiated or non-initiated, good or bad, eager or indifferent. His aim is to liberate as many as he can; we could say, in human terms, that it is an obsession with him. He really *has* to do it, not on the level of "belief" or this or that, but on the level of *being*; and reaching people through us is one of his best means of working.

He has given us so much love and protection and caring that it is important for us to live that way for others. By being as lovable as possible or by simply being nice to others, we can help him in his work. The quality of not judging others—that all Masters have stressed so strongly—is an important part of this. When we don't judge others we allow them scope to receive what the Master wants to give them; and when we do judge or criticize people, we come between them and the Master. Being loving and uncritical is a very important part of helping him in his work.

Sometime shortly after my Initiation in 1958, long before I ever met Master Kirpal, I wrote him a very long letter telling him all the things I had been doing wrong and saying that I wanted to help him in his work. I was new on the Path and it was a very naive letter, but his reply dated June 27, 1958, was extremely kind:

To cherish the hope of being useful to the Master in His holy work is noble and I appreciate it. It will, however, be seen later on. But wherever you are, please keep on to a clean and pure spiritual life as enjoined, and progress spiritually well enough to help the Master's work. Each single individual grown into a sweet spiritual flower will be a living example of the Master's noble work to all those who come in his/her way. I shall be glad if you grow as that one.

His beautiful image makes the same point that Jesus makes about letting others "see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Sant Ajaib Singh Ji sheds additional light on this subject:

Do you think that the Master who is within you and who is always watching over you, does not care for you? He knows about your thoughts even before you think them. He knows every single action you do. He knows every single feeling, every single thought which you have. Even without your asking, He knows everything you want; and since He cares for you, He wants you to leave your body and go back to the real Home. That is why He always works for you. Sometimes when the disciple is doing bad karmas, the Negative Power makes him [the Master] feel embarrassed and he asks him, "This is the person to whom You gave initiation? Was he worthy of getting the initiation?" At that time Master has to keep silent, but still he says, "No, he is my dear son and he is innocent; he does not know what he is

doing. Gradually he will understand his mistakes and will come back." He has enormously huge amounts of patience with Him. That is why he always patiently waits for us to come back to the real Path, because he knows that one day we will definitely come back.

So that is why the Master who is sitting within us cares for us and always protects our meditations, because he has given us initiation and he knows that when we have become free of our karmas, when we will give up doing the bad karmas, our soul will go up to the real home very soon. As a bullet is shot from a gun, in the same way our soul will go up, riding on the Shabd to our real home. Our bad deeds and karmas are the only things which keep our soul in the body. Otherwise there is nothing which stops our soul from going back.

About four years ago the soul of an initiate of Master Kirpal Singh was pulled up within, and he reported that he was getting a beating from the Master because he used to sell vegetables and he was deceiving the people by putting more water on the scales so that he could weigh the water along with the vegetables. So Master pulled his soul within, and he told people he was getting a beating from the Master and Master was telling him that he was doing a bad thing. After some time he came to 77RB and asked for forgiveness. I told him, "The Lord who is going to forgive you is within you. Now if you will take a vow that you will not cheat people as you have been doing, then you can be forgiven." He repented and took the vow. He is still alive and he still does the same business, but now he is honest in his business.

Generally Saints do not do things like this, but sometimes in order to make people know that Master is aware of our every single action, They perform such miracles.

So we should know about our good and bad deeds which we do during the day. When we sit for writ-

ing the diary at the end of the day, we should know how many good deeds we did today, how many bad deeds we did today, and why we did the bad deeds. And we should know why we only meditated for this much time today, why we were lazy. We should fill up the Diary honestly so that we may know where we stand and what it is that is keeping us from progressing.

You people are Satsangis, you follow Sant Mat, and you have the Master. That is why your life is insured. Your Master is determined that He will definitely take you back to Sach Khand; there is no doubt in this fact. But just imagine the condition of the other people in the West and all over the world—how the flood of pleasures and lust and all those things are doing harm to them. People do not understand how serious this thing is. They just take it as a very ordinary thing and that is why they do not make their lives pure. They stain their life. . . .

The question which was asked was, "How do we know whether it is our Master who is holding our progress and not showing us, or is it the cause of our shortcomings or our outer life that we are not progressing?"

You know that when it rains or snows, the wind which blows through that place where it has rained or snowed becomes cold and spreads coolness everywhere. In the same way if you have maintained a pure life, if you are living a pure life, Master is no doubt definitely aware of it because he is sitting within you. So when you are living a pure life, not only will you be aware of your progress, but even the people who are living around you will know about your purity and they will also say that you are a pure man or woman.

Once in the army there was a theft and many guns were stolen. They said that it was because of the carelessness of the guards and the commander and everybody was very upset because they could not find out who had done that. They were going to

punish many people; many innocent ones were going to be involved. They did not know how to find out the truth. In the army, often they used to call me Bhai Ji or Gyani Ji, and they knew that I always spoke the truth, so they used to appreciate and respect me. Our commander told everybody in our group, "Come and touch the body of Gyani Ji and say that you are sincere and that you do not know anything about this theft." Out of fifteen hundred people, there were only four people who were involved in that theft. Only they were not able to touch my body and say that they were true and that they did not know anything about it. I did not tell them that I was pure; and I did not threaten them; I did not do anything. It was only because of my purity that they did not dare to touch my body and lie. The people who were sincere had no problem. They came and touched my body and said that they did not know anything about it. But when the real thieves came near me, they started trembling.

So I mean to say that when you are living a pure life, when you are pure from within, your purity is such a great thing that it will spread everywhere and even the bad people will not dare to come before you and lie. Purity is a very great thing. Do you think that when you live a pure life, your friends, your neighbors, and the people living around you will not be aware of that? They will definitely be aware of it because purity spreads like a fragrance and those who have their nose open always smell it.

In the army it was very unusual for a person not to eat meat and drink wine, and I was one of those who were not doing those things. People knew everywhere that I was not eating meat and drinking wine. I have often said that even while serving in the army I never visited any city. Even for buying small things, I would ask my friends to buy them for me because I was very religious-minded. I would spend my time in the religious places and lived a pure life. Only because of that purity I was known everywhere. I have often

said that the house we live in, or the land on which we live, at least that land or that house should be proud of us, that such a good person is living on me. Your Master is very pure and very holy. He is above the dirt and the bad things of this world so why should not you also rise above the dirt of this world and become as pure and as holy as He is so that He may manifest Himself within you and be proud of you, that His disciples are so pure and holy. (*Sant Bani*, July 1984, pp. 29-30, 31-32)

The Master lives in exactly the way Jesus asked his disciples to live, like a lamp giving light to all and doing good works in the name of his Father. The Master also gives us the guidance and love that makes it possible for us to reach the same goals. If we live in such a way that his gifts shine through us, and if we do not get in the way of other people's seeing what Master has given us, we will help to bring about the Spiritual Revolution that Master Kirpal so much encouraged.

That revolution is based on the recognition by each of us of the God within the other: the people we come in contact with, the neighbor we love as ourself, and the brother or sister we must love if it is not to be a lie when we say we love God. God is within each one of us; we are all children of God; we are brothers and sisters in God. From this, everything else follows, and the way people can come to realize this truth is for those of us who have been awakened to wake up.

We cannot say we are awake, but we can say that we have been awakened. There is a difference. The Master does the awakening but we have to wake up; a great deal depends on it. When we are truly awake, that part within us which is not us but God—our true essence—will shine forth and other people will see His light. They will not mistakenly assume that we are great, but they will understand on some level that they are recognizing something more than any individual. They will give thanks to the Father in heaven, and they will come to His representative on earth sooner or later.

Our job is to remember Him and let Him use us as a channel to touch others with His love and light.

Chapter 9

The Eternal Torah

I

The next set of verses, Matthew 5:17-20, is the turning point of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

It will be valuable to consider the different levels on which this works, and how it fits in with the teachings of other Masters, both ancient and modern. On its simplest level, what Jesus is doing in this passage is verifying and witnessing to the

truth of the Masters who came before him because they are the ones who produced the Law and the Prophets.

In Greek the word for law is *nomos*, which is the word used in the New Testament, but the word that Jesus used would not have been *nomos* because he was not speaking Greek. He would have used the Hebrew word *torah*, which does mean “law,” but it also means a lot more than that: it stands for the entire revelation of the Masters who preceded him in the Jewish esoteric tradition.

“Esoteric” becomes “exoteric”—that is, the “inner” becomes “outer”—when something lower tries to understand something higher. In other words, when that which comes from God comes down into the fallen universe and we who are fallen and limited try to comprehend it, we run into problems. The simplest thing that happens is that we reduce it to something we can easily understand—often a caricature of Reality.

The Masters know that we are limited and they know that we do not have the capability of transcending the dimension in which we are stuck, so they try to take that which is One—which is hard for us to grasp—and emphasize each facet—sometimes simultaneously, sometimes consecutively—so that we can get it all. Furthermore they talk to us simply, often through parables or stories; and the events of their lives serve as parables of another kind too.

All of these things they do in order to help us comprehend what is fundamentally incomprehensible to us as long as we are trapped in the realm of the mind. The mind cannot really grasp that which comes from the spirit, just as Time cannot really grasp Eternity; it’s impossible for the mind to take it in. This is what St. John meant when he said that when the light came into the world, the darkness comprehended it not. It could not. It tried to, but it could not. That in us which is not darkness, that which is of the same essence as the light, *can* comprehend it; but in order for that to happen, the essence of the light within us has to become dominant. We have to rise above the darkness. Then we can grasp what the truths of God really are.

One of the ways in which the lower misunderstands the higher is in the teaching of Law and Grace, or we can say Law

and Love. On the one hand, Love cancels out Law. Love is positive and esoteric; Law is negative and exoteric. Baba Sawan Singh's favorite statement that Master Kirpal Singh often quoted, "Where there is love, there is no law," means that love surrounds and encompasses law, and that wherever love is manifested, law has outlived its usefulness; it has become irrelevant. Law is the Negative Power's echo of certain aspects of love; it is the best he can do, and it can contain truth, maybe a lot of it, but it doesn't work *when it is separated out from the love which is its source*. As William Blake put it,

**When Satan first the black bow bent
And the Moral Law from the Gospel rent
He forgd the Law into a Sword
And spilld the blood of mercys Lord.**

When people first hear the Master's message (what is called in the New Testament the Gospel or the Good News) that *God does love us*, it seems too good to be true. When we hear that we are connected with Him in ways we cannot imagine, that we are His children, that we are of His essence, made in His image, and that He has come into the fallen universe for the specific and single purpose of taking us back Home, then we sometimes jump to the conclusion that these facts cancel out everything else, including the necessity to pay any attention to the law.

In the history of mysticism this misunderstanding has resulted in what is called "libertinism," or sometimes "the left-hand path." In the Tantric school of India and Tibet and in various other schools of mystical thought, this has sometimes come up. Some of the Gnostic groups that formed after Jesus's time also taught this: "good" and "bad" are irrelevant terms and it does not matter what we do.* This is *not* the teaching of the Masters and Jesus is emphasizing that fact: "No, that is not true. The Law stands, but you have to see it in perspective, in

* See *The Ocean of Love: The Anurag Sagar of Kabir*, p. 11, for the esoteric truth behind this distortion.

relation to the Love of which it is an echo, so that you can grasp what is important in it.”

The rest of the Sermon on the Mount, as well as the events of his life so far as they are known (such as the “cleansing of the Temple” and the forgiving of the woman taken in adultery), can be understood as a commentary on the Torah in which he explains this. But through a great irony this belief that the Law doesn’t matter and that when the Master comes he saves us from having to obey it, has become one of the principal tenets of Christianity. Not just so called heretical, mystical schools, but main-stream institutional Christian groups believe this: “Jesus has saved us by his death from the consequences of our sin.”

In Mahatma Gandhi’s autobiography he expresses his reaction to this particular belief. When he was first in South Africa he met a number of Christians, all of whom tried to convert him to Christianity; most of them he appreciated and respected, although he did not convert:

Many of the contacts for which Mr. Coates was responsible were good. Most struck me as being God-fearing. But during my contact with this family, one of the Plymouth Brethren* confronted me with an argument for which I was not prepared.

“You cannot understand the beauty of our religion,” he said. “From what you say, it appears that you must be brooding over your transgressions every moment of your life, always mending them and atoning for them. How can this ceaseless cycle of action bring you redemption? You can never have peace. You admit that we are all sinners. Now look at the perfection of our belief. Our attempts at improvement and atonement are futile. And yet redemption we must have. How can we bear the burden of sin? We can but throw it on Jesus. He is the

* A fundamentalist Christian (Protestant) sect; its most famous and influential member was the Rev. C. I. Scofield, D.D., responsible for the Reference Bible that bears his name.

only sinless Son of God. It is His word that those who believe in Him shall have everlasting life. Therein lies God's infinite mercy. And as we believe in the atonement of Jesus, our own sins do not bind us. Sin we must. It is impossible to live in this world sinless. And therefore Jesus suffered and atoned for all the sins of mankind. Only he who accepts His great redemption can have eternal peace. Think what a life of restlessness is yours, and what a promise of peace we have."

The argument utterly failed to convince me. I humbly replied:

"If this be the Christianity acknowledged by all Christians, I cannot accept it. I do not seek redemption from the consequences of my sin. I seek to be redeemed from sin itself, or rather from the very thought of sin. Until I have attained that end, I shall be content to be restless."

To which the Plymouth Brother rejoined: "I assure you, your attempt is fruitless. Think again over what I have said."

And the Brother proved as good as his word. He knowingly committed transgressions, and showed me that he was undisturbed by the thought of them. (M. K. Gandhi, *Autobiography*, pp. 124-125)

That Jesus died to free us from our sins is the standard Christian belief. It may be considered the central Christian belief if Christianity is understood as the organized, institutional religion which has come down to us; but that dogma is directly contradicted by what Jesus says here. It's true that entrance into the kingdom of heaven is not confined only to those who obey the Law. The ones who don't obey and teach others not to obey will be called "least" in the kingdom, not kept out of it. On the other hand, our righteousness has to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees!—so it is clear that Jesus *wants* people to at least do their best to obey the Law. It's as though he understood very well that people, in his Name, were going to teach this doctrine and he is saying, "It isn't true." Actually

there are a great many places in this Sermon where we can see the same thing happening, where Jesus is saying things which later came to be abandoned by the exoteric, institutionalized Church. We will notice each one of them as we come to them, but this is the first.

If the Christian Church maintains—which it does—that belief in Jesus implies that we need not obey the Law because we cannot, Jesus is saying, “No.” In a sense He is saying, “What Gandhi wants is what I want.” The effort to be redeemed from sin itself, from the sin of thought, from the wish to sin, is what the Master is leading us to. It is through the method that he gives us—the Naam or Word with which he awakens us—that it becomes a reality.

It is certainly true that the Master—any Master, including the Lord Jesus—does take onto himself the consequences of much of our sin. But he doesn't do it so that we can misbehave and then be saved anyway; he does it to help us to do better. If we have to bear the burden of the consequences of all the things we do wrong, we stagger under the load and we are not able to keep to the Path; it's too much for us and we are crushed. The Master understands, and out of his unfathomable love for us, he takes that which we cannot bear. This is what is meant by Grace, and this is what is meant by Isaiah 53, where the process is described exactly.

Underlying all this is the particular view of the Torah that Jesus is taking here. By including the Prophets with the Torah (Matthew 5:17) he is pushing us away from understanding the Torah as primarily a code of ritual sacrifice (or even as a code of social justice) and is emphasizing the esoteric or spiritual elements present in the Torah but easily drowned out by the exoteric elements. Later in his ministry he focuses on the essence of the Torah:

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all

your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:34-40)

This is a famous passage, but not all Christians realize or remember that the two commandments quoted here—and as the New Revised Standard Version, by virtue of its typography, makes clear, they are quoted—are from the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, respectively); Jesus did not make them up. Not only that: as a fully realized Master in what became the Kabbalistic tradition, with his predecessors and successors, his point of view here, while articulated very clearly and compellingly, should not be understood as existing in isolation. The Talmud, which incorporates in itself another strand of the Jewish spiritual tradition, and which was beginning to take shape even as Jesus spoke, also attests to this understanding of the Torah:

Six hundred and thirteen commandments were addressed to Moses . . . David came and reduced them to eleven principles, which are listed in Psalm 15 . . . Isaiah came and reduced them to six . . . (Is 33:15). Micah reduced them to three: "What does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Mi 6:8). Isaiah subsequently reduced them to two: "Thus says the Lord, keep justice and do righteousness" (Is 56:1). (Makkot 24a, quoted in *The Talmud: Selected Writings*, p. 28)

The Talmudic Rabbis or *tannaim*, like Jesus the heirs of the prophets and the ancestors of the Kabbalists, share with him the basic understanding of the Torah as rooted in the love of God, and not comprehensible apart from that love. We have noted already many parallels between the Sermon on the Mount and the Talmud, and there are many more. One point on which they are in agreement, and on which they walk firmly in the

footsteps of the prophets, is on the negative importance of the laws concerning the sacrificial ritual. The uninformed reader who picks up the Bible and starts from the beginning is apt, by the time he gets into the third book, Leviticus, to be totally turned off by the very vivid and detailed prescriptions given to the worshiper on precisely the right way to slaughter animals in order to atone for one's sins and to please God. That these prescriptions were not part of the original Torah given to Moses, and play no part whatever in the Jewish spiritual tradition, is clear from the prophets:

**Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom!
Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of
Gomorrah!**

**What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says
the LORD;**

**I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the
fat of fed beasts;**

**I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or
of goats.**

**When you come to appear before me, who asked this
from your hand?**

**Trample my courts no more; bringing offerings is
futile; incense is an abomination to me. . . .**

**When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes
from you;**

**even though you make many prayers, I will not
listen; your hands are full of blood.**

**Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the
evil of your doings from before my eyes;**

cease to do evil, learn to do good;

seek justice, rescue the oppressed,

defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

(Isaiah 1:10-17)

**I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight
in your solemn assemblies.**

Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and

**grain offerings, I will not accept them;
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals
I will not look upon. . . .**

**But let justice roll down like waters, and righteous-
ness like an everflowing stream.**

**Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings the forty
years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? . . .**

(Amos 5:21-25)

This last question is of the utmost importance; it is clear that the prophet is asking a rhetorical question, and he assumes that everyone knows the answer is, "No. We did not." But the Torah, *as we have it*, includes in fact detailed descriptions of the portable tabernacle that was built precisely so that the Israelites *could* "bring sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness." Amos was prophesying about 750 B.C.; his Torah obviously did not include those sections, nor was there any oral tradition to that effect. Most Biblical scholars have concluded that those parts of the Torah, along with other sections detailing laws of animal sacrifice and ritual purity (known collectively as "the Priestly Code") were added to the Torah several hundred years later (estimates as to the exact date vary). Jesus and the Talmudic Rabbis would not have known this in this way, probably; but that they had a very good sense of what in the Torah is authentic and what is not can be seen by reading their comments on it.

As the second of the two commandments that Jesus quoted ("You shall love your neighbor as yourself") implies, it's also true that Masters—all Masters, including the Lord Jesus—teach us that judging or criticizing or condemning others for breaking the Law is in itself a major infraction of the Law; and to set an example for us, they accept and love and forgive sinners and people who have broken society's laws, and they have taught us that we are to do the same: we are to forgive everyone. We are to put our attention on removing our own flaws and recognize that the sins of others are between themselves and God alone. And, as Jesus makes very clear as the Sermon on the Mount continues, this too is part of the Law that is not going to pass away.

Baba Sawan Singh used to tell a story about an initiate of Baba Jaimal Singh (his Master) who was seen by a fellow initiate riding in a tonga,* drinking and in the company of a prostitute; the brother was horrified and rebuked him, saying, "You are the initiate of such a great Master, and you are acting like this!" The man said, "Yes, my Master *is* great; He is great enough to forgive me!" Later, when the critic complained to Baba Sawan Singh, the Master said, "It is easier to forgive him for what he did than to forgive you for what you did." It does not imply that the man was right to be drinking and keeping the company of a prostitute, but in those kinds of sins, there is often (as in this case) a sense of having sinned; whereas people who accuse others invariably see themselves as being right. Therefore the most difficult things for the Master to pardon are the unwillingness to forgive others and the tendency to judge others.

That judgmental arrogance which Master Kirpal told us was "the last to go" is so stubborn and so difficult to deal with that we tend to discount it when we compare ourselves with others. That is why other people's sins loom very large before us and ours shrink away to nothing; we don't realize that the very act of seeing their sin and dwelling on it is a violation of the Law that we are expected to keep.

However, this is only one part of what Jesus meant in these verses. We have seen that when Jesus spoke these words he would have used the Hebrew word *torah*, which is the equivalent of the Sanskrit word *dharma*. Both can have the meaning "Law," and both can mean outer religious practices. Esoterically, however, they both refer to the ocean of original Love which is the totality of revelation, including that manifestation of it that is called "Word." The Torah and the Dharma are conceived as the Word of God, one aspect of which crystallized in written form and became the scriptures. The real Torah is not that which is in the Holy Book but that which is proceeding from the living God.

* A small horse-drawn carriage, popular in India, in which the person riding sits facing backwards at a downward slope—thus making it easy to accost or talk to someone while riding.

Any written book, as the Masters have pointed out over the years, is subject to corruption; it can be altered and tampered with by the Negative Power. But Jesus knew very well that, for example, the sacrificial ritual parts of the Torah were no longer valid. He knew it because even as he was teaching, he was aware that the temple was going to be destroyed very soon. The “cleansing of the temple” (John 2:13-22) was symbolically prophetic of that destruction; and, because the merchants whom Jesus prevented from doing business were absolutely essential to the operation of the sacrificial ritual (a point often lost in Christian readings of this story, which tend to focus on “money-changers” and commercialism, while missing the main point), it also taught his disciples the correct understanding of the value of ritual sacrifice.

It’s important here to bear in mind what the Masters mean when they declare they don’t change religions and they don’t found new ones, because this is another aspect of what Jesus is saying. We must remember that Jesus was Jewish and he has to be understood as a Master in the esoteric Jewish tradition. He had his predecessors and he had his followers. Whenever a Master’s coming results in the founding of a new religion, the esoteric aspect of his career gets lost. This is true with Buddha, with Mohammed, with Guru Nanak, and many others; it is also true with Jesus. Much of what he is saying in this passage is meant to emphasize his connection with the Masters who came before him in the esoteric Jewish tradition.

The reason why Masters don’t found new religions, and why they don’t want us to change our religion, is that when the outer, ritual, symbolic aspects of what we call religion become hardened and solidified in an exoteric way, they drain all the attention away from the inner to the outer. The Masters have spent a great deal of time talking about this. In Sant Ajaib Singh’s book, *In the Palace of Love*, this is a very important theme. When we take our emphasis away from the inner and put it on the outer, we forget why the symbol exists. The reason religions fight each other, Sant Ji says, is that we are concerned with the outer: we think our rituals or beliefs (or the founders of our religions) are better than other people’s, so we fight and we destroy them or they destroy us or we come to a

dead heat. In any case, the placement of the attention is all wrong.

Perhaps the most important point of the relationship between Law and Love is this: in the Torah, just before the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-3) it says:

Then God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

The reason why the true God, the Positive Power, has a claim on us, and why He can ask us to obey Him, is precisely this: when He initiates us He does indeed bring us "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." When Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15), he was stating the same idea. The real God of love and forgiveness liberates us when He wakes us up. Therefore He has the right to ask us to obey Him, and we have an obligation of love to pay attention to what He says.

His command to obey only Him is not arbitrary and is not meant to make things hard for us; on the contrary it is given to us as a tool to use for our own liberation. It is because He loves us that He gives us this order, and it is because we love Him for setting us free that we want to obey. If He did not "bring us out of the house of slavery" our obedience would be an empty gesture. Here lies the true distinction between grace or love or mercy, and Law, because the grace/love/mercy has to come first; then the real Law (command) that benefits us proceeds from that.

Some may argue that the identification of the liberation from Egypt with the liberation of the individual soul is reading too much into the Biblical scriptures, but Professor Gershom Scholem shows that the esoteric Jewish tradition has always held this view:

The historical aspects of religion have a meaning for the mystic chiefly as symbols of acts which he conceives as being divorced from time, or constantly

repeated in the soul of every man. Thus the exodus from Egypt, the fundamental event of our history, cannot, according to the mystic, have come to pass once only and in one place; it must correspond to an event which takes place in ourselves, an exodus from an inner Egypt in which we all are slaves. Only thus conceived does the exodus cease to be an object of learning and acquire the dignity of immediate religious experience. In the same way, it will be remembered, the doctrine of "Christ in us" acquired so great an importance for the mystics of Christianity that the historical Jesus of Nazareth was quite often relegated to the background. . . .

"The Mystic," says Charles Bennett in a penetrating essay, "as it were forestalls the processes of history by anticipating in his own life the enjoyment of the last Age." . . . The consensus of kabbalistic opinion regards the mystical way to God as a reversal of the procession by which we have emanated from God. To know the stages of the creative process is also to know the stages of one's own return to the root of all existence. . . . (*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 19-20)

In an earlier passage, Scholem touches on the heart of the esoteric teaching:

Speech reaches God because it comes from God. Man's common language, whose *prima facie* function, indeed is only of an intellectual nature, reflects the creative language of God. All creation—and this is an important principle of most Kabbalists—is, from the point of view of God, nothing but an expression of His hidden Self that begins and ends by giving itself a name, the holy name of God, the perpetual act of creation. All that lives is an expression of God's language,—and what is it that Revelation can reveal in the last resort if not the Name of God? (*Major Trends*, p. 17)

The word *Naam* that the Masters of the Sant Mat tradition use means “name”; and they use it precisely as the Kabbalists use it in this passage: to mean that aspect of God which created the universe and which is also the way back to Him, a reversal of the process of creation. The *Dhunatmak Naam*, according to Sant Mat, is the ultimate and real Name of God: it’s the Name Which creates the universe and exists within our own selves, giving us our existence. If we grasp it we can go back to Him, reversing the process of creation. The *Varnatmak Naam* is the reflection of that Name which finds expression in our speech; it refers primarily to the Basic Names of God (as manifested in human speech) specifically in the practice of *Simran* or Remembrance, but secondarily whenever we call upon Him with our whole heart.

An article by Master Kirpal Singh called “Never Dance to the World’s Tune,” which was reprinted in the February 1991 *Sant Bani*, says much that is relevant to this subject:

Who speaks the truth without fear? Either an established enemy or a true friend, although the enemy may make a mountain out of a molehill, because his intentions are dishonorable and he exaggerates. A true friend will never broadcast one’s shortcomings, but with love will try to explain where you are going wrong, with your interests at heart. Imbibe the virtues of truth, and with love encourage better understanding in others. And what is more important, do not fail in your own good intentions and principles because of hearsay or rumors. Some tongues are led by selfish motives with little respect for truth. There is purpose behind everything, which may be obvious or hidden. Do not therefore be a puppet to the tunes played by others; you will do harm to yourself.

His heart becomes clean who does not indulge in vice, bad habits, deceit, hypocrisy, etc., and leads a chaste life in thought, speech and actions. We aim to realize God, that God which is in all beings, whom all worship as One, though He may be given many

different names. He is the great Controlling Power which keeps all souls in the body; which, when He withdraws, we also must leave. When a person truly understands these facts, how can the question of hatred for others arise? Whom will one hate? Out of right understanding, true thoughts and actions develop and follow naturally. God is in everyone—if you know that someone is unhappy or in need, go and help them. If they are hungry or thirsty, share whatever you have. Because of God, do service to His children. This does not mean bondage, but rather it is a helping factor. Bondage lies in forgetting Him and tying oneself to the world and its environments. . . .

I have kept no sect here (in Sawan Ashram)—nor will any be started at any time. You should stay in your own social bodies and religions, speak your own languages, keep your own customs, apparel, emblems and identifying labels. All religions demand an ethical and righteous way of life. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." It is also said, "Clean the core of your heart for the Arrival; Sweep all impressions away so that He may sit there." That heart is truly clean in which no other thought remains save that of the Lord. You may ask, "How can we do this while we are in the world?" It is written in the Gita, "He who sees everyone in Me and Me in everyone, is My most loved one." If you have children, or father, mother, wife, husband, see the Light of God in them. He has united you in this relationship, not merely for an outer bond but to see and serve God in them. If you do so, there will be no bondage in your relationships. Bondage occurs only when the I-hood steps in and the Lord is forgotten. So you can do all the world's work, but live like a compass whose needle always points in one direction. Keep your attention on the Lord, for if the direction changes, then? "The Giver is forgotten, the gifts become loved, and miserable Man forgets

the approaching death." Man is fully enwrapped in the world—he is all "me and mine," and wherever "me and mine" are, there rules Illusion. "Me and mine" have some bearing on one's life, but the Lord Himself has arranged it, and when everything is seen in the correct perspective there will be no binding effects. If the children make mistakes, appeal to their finer instincts, with love and careful understanding. Losing one's temper, shouting, and taking violent action will only confuse them; they will not know what they have done wrong. Take time to explain, even three or four times, and it will eventually have effect.

This necessity of cleaning the heart has been advised in all religions. You will find it in the Sermon on the Mount, in Buddha's Eight-Fold Path, and in other teachings. But we deceive ourselves by sprinkling a little fragrance on our pile of dirt; how will the smell leave like this? We would like to dye our filthy clothes, but how will the color take? Even with a little color, a clean cloth will dye beautifully. If a room is perfectly clean, a single flower will fill its atmosphere with refreshing fragrance. Even if the disciple has been given the experience and continues the practice but does not make good progress, you will find that this very thing is at the root of the trouble. (pp. 6-8)

Another talk by Sant Kirpal Singh, "Masters Come to Fulfill," is relevant. He says:

So Masters come to fulfill and not to destroy. Man is a social being. He must have some social body to live in. If you break one, you will have to form another. It is but natural. So stay where you are—the first step is all right. The next step is to know yourself—on account of which the body is working, and the Power is controlling you in the body. Make the best use of the body. This is the teaching of all

the Masters in the past.

This is the illusion we are all in. Masters come to revive the Truth. . . . Many simple things appeal to everybody, I think. They are facts. It does not mean that we are against "isms"—they came into being for a purpose. Do you know what history shows? Islam came into being 1500 years ago, after Mohammed. Christianity came into being after Christ, Sikhism came up after Guru Nanak, Buddhism came only after Lord Buddha. So today let me only say why they came into being: Those who met the Masters themselves solved the mystery of life. They realized the very unity I am putting before you in words. But when they left the scene these schools of thought were formed, the labels of which we are carrying, to keep their teachings alive. That school is better which turns out perfect men, is it not? The buildings may be very good buildings, a very big playground might be there, and good dress also. But with all that, if no student passes the exams of the school, then? It is a credit to the society to which you belong if you know those things for which it was formed.

So you see, Masters have love for all. They do not come to destroy but to fulfill. The first step is social being. You must have a social body to live in, which you are already having. Why make a new one? When Kabir came, there were only two bodies. Now there are more than 700. Is it not right to come to somebody who teaches the very Truth we have forgotten? It is no new thing. I think it makes common sense to everybody. These are hard facts. (*Sat Sandesh*, November 1972, pp. 4-5)

When Masters leave the world we may forget the eternal truth they taught us, but others come to remind us that we must live by the Law of love and forgiveness and mercy. As Jesus said, ". . . until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished."

II

The section of the Sermon on the Mount immediately following Matthew 5:17-20, the passage we have been examining, is a very famous one. In it Jesus takes, in succession, five or six commandments from the Torah; and without changing their meaning or contradicting them, he brings out their esoteric implications and orients them toward the *purpose of entering the kingdom of heaven*. These sections that are coming up are some of the most renowned parts of the Sermon, and we will consider how they connect with the overall purpose of all Masters who have come. They represent a concentration on those aspects of the Torah which are precisely the ones Master Kirpal Singh was concerned about when he formulated the self-introspection diary: Non-violence, Truthfulness, Chastity, Universal Love and Selfless Service. If we read these next sections of the Sermon carefully, we will see that these qualities are what they're about; they also contain a very strong warning *against self-righteousness*, a warning that is built into Jesus's commentary on each verse.

Let's consider the term "the kingdom of heaven," which occurs three times in Matthew 5:17-20. Sometimes in the Gospels Jesus refers to "the kingdom of God" and sometimes, as here, to "the kingdom of heaven;" there may be subtle differences between them, but there are two basic meanings when any Master uses these terms.

First, the "kingdom of heaven" in the Greek is in the plural—*basileia ton ouranon*—the "kingdom of the heavens." It's customary to translate it as "heaven" and it fits the exoteric understanding of it if it's translated that way, but in fact the Greek refers very specifically to the multi-layered inner universe that is explained to seekers after Truth—then and now—when they are initiated into the mysteries of the beyond. There are indeed a number of heavens inside (see II Corinthians 12:2) and the point is that to become one with God and to fulfill our purpose on earth, we have to enter into them. We start at the bottom and the Master takes us up. This is a very central teaching of the Path, familiar to all initiates;

and if we didn't analyze Jesus's words, we would not know that this is what he is also talking about.

Another meaning of the "kingdom of the heavens" or the "kingdom of God" is that of the gateway, or way in, to that kingdom which is, in fact, the living Master. So when Jesus refers to the kingdom of God manifesting on earth, he is talking about that gateway also. The term can cover both. For example, the celebrated verse Luke 17:21, "The kingdom of God is within you," can equally well be translated (and usually is in modern translations), "The kingdom of God is among you." Both translations are correct: the Greek *entos* means both. The kingdom of God *is* within each one of us; and it is also among us in the person of the living Master, the outward expression of, and way into, that kingdom.

In the Gospel of Thomas, Saying 3, Jesus is very explicit: the parallel comment there reads:

Rather, the Kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living Father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty.

It is both that which you find when you go within and also the person of the living Master outside who, after all, is the means by which we can go within. There is a very interesting passage in the Gospel of Mark (9:1-4) which illuminates this. It begins:

And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."

This verse is usually understood to refer to the so-called "Second Coming," the *parousia* in Greek, when Jesus is supposed to return in full power and glory, coming from the sky. It is so universally understood by the Christian establishment to mean this, that people don't understand how Jesus could have said it.

The question often reduces itself to, “Did he know what he was talking about? How can this be?” Obviously the kingdom of God, according to this “Second Coming” interpretation, did not come with power before all the people in his audience had died.

So what could he have meant? The Gospel is really very clear. In verses 2 through 4 it says:

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves.

When Master Kirpal commented on this verse, he always explained that this Mount of Transfiguration was within, referring specifically to the sixth chakra or third eye.

And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.

This is, as many initiates know from their own experience, a description of the Radiant Form of the Master.

And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Here the continuity of Jesus with the line of Masters before him is made very clear. And, since Moses is the one who gave the Torah or Law, and Elijah was the first of the great public prophets, together they represent the entire esoteric Jewish tradition—“the law and the prophets.” The disciples see the three Masters—the two from the past and their own—together. As usual in the Gospel of Mark, they don’t know what it’s all about and Peter gets nervous—“terrified”—and says meaningless things. But this is obviously what Jesus meant by, and what the evangelist St. Mark wanted us to understand that Jesus meant by, “the kingdom of God coming with power”: the entrance within and the seeing of the Radiant Form of the Master in the company of Masters of the past, an experience which can still happen today.

Matthew 5:20 also requires some examination:

For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

What did Jesus mean? We considered the term "righteousness" when we looked at Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness." We saw that the Greek word is much wider in meaning than the English, and that it has the sense of "the search for God," or one might say, "the thirst and the hunger for God." The point that Jesus is making is that the disciples of the living Master, who have committed themselves to finding God while living, have to want to find God more than the representatives of the exoteric religious establishment do, even though those people are the religious authority of the day.

This is what is meant here, and underlying it there is an attitude toward the exoteric religious establishment which is important for all of us who are committed to the universal spiritual tradition to understand, because sometimes we have to deal with people who are satisfied with conventional religious doctrine and who may be hostile toward that tradition. Genuine Masters in any esoteric tradition have a clearly articulated attitude toward church authorities which is by no means one of contempt or of disdain; rather, they respect the ideals of the establishment if not always the practices.

This attitude of respect is obscured a bit in the Gospel of Matthew, which sometimes shows Jesus being very angry at the scribes and the Pharisees (cf. Matthew 23). But this is misleading. By the end of the first century, when the Gospel of Matthew was being written, tension had arisen in some places between the Jewish religious leadership and some of Jesus's followers, and many authorities believe that that tension was projected back into Jesus's words. Other parts of the New Testament (see Acts 5:33-42, 15:5, 23:6-10; Philippians 3:4-6) give a somewhat different picture of the relationship between the followers of Jesus and the Pharisees; and Jesus's words in the passage we are considering seem very different if we do

not read Matthew 23 into them. We should also realize that the *tannaim* or Talmudic Rabbis who, as we have seen, were also heirs to the Jewish spiritual tradition, were all Pharisees. But this does not mean that all Pharisees were *tannaim*; most were not, and the term could be used, as Jesus uses it here, to mean the exoteric religious establishment—*any* exoteric religious establishment, but primarily the one that he was confronted with.

Now what is it that we are supposed to do better than the scribes and the Pharisees? There are a couple of things in Matthew 23 that are of the utmost importance. In verse 2 of that chapter, Jesus says:

The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses's seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach.

Jesus is talking of the principle known as “apostolic succession,” by means of which exoteric religious institutions trace their authority back to a charismatic founder, and justify themselves accordingly. He has nothing against that principle; he is simply pointing out its implications.

Master Kirpal Singh wrote in *The Way of the Saints*, p. 50, speaking of a Master helping us to go into the kingdom of God, “The heads of various religious bodies were intended to do just this, but we may judge for ourselves their efficacy today.” He was making exactly the same point. The office has value and is to be respected, but we should not be under any illusion as to the spiritual competence of the people who hold the office. They sit on Moses's seat, but they don't live up to the full implication of what Moses taught. Therefore, we have to do better than that.

In Matthew 23:13 we find:

**But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven.
For you do not go in yourselves, and when others
are going in, you stop them.**

In Jesus's time the Greek word *hypokrites* (of which the English "hypocrite" is a transliteration) did not have its current meaning. In the later development of the Greek language, it did come to mean "actor," and by derivation, someone who, as Master Kirpal would say, acts and poses. But at the time of Jesus it did not mean that. It meant someone whose attention is in the wrong place; someone who is paying attention to that which is not important as opposed to that which is important.*

If we understand these differences in the meaning of the word, we see the invective against the Pharisees in Matthew 23 in a different perspective. Jesus is not saying that they are hypocrites in our sense of the word; he is saying that, by and large, their attention is in the wrong place. What they think is important is not important.

Jesus's next words indicate what *is* important:

**For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven.
For you do not go in yourselves, and when others
are going in, you stop them.**

His meaning couldn't be clearer. The point of the Torah, the point of the prophets, is to enter into the kingdom of the heavens that is within ourselves and find God. The authorities in the exoteric Jewish, Christian, Islamic and other traditions, all stand in the way instead of helping people. They say, "No, no, you don't have to do anything like that; it's not necessary. All you have to do is believe in this or that, or do this or that, and you will be saved."

Jesus is making the strongest possible statement here that this is the error of errors, the ultimate perversion of purpose. "You lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. You don't go in yourselves and when others are going in, you stop them. When people are trying to do what God wants them to do, what Moses and Elijah want them to do, what I want them to do, what every Master who has ever lived wants them to do, you get in their way." This is the real problem, and it does not apply only to the particular religious establishment figures of

* See THE ANCHOR BIBLE, Vol. 26, *Matthew*, pp. cxv-cxiii.

Jesus's time: people who sit in the "seat of Moses" and lock people out of the kingdom of heaven are a universal problem, one that exists in all times.

In the Gospel of Luke the same passage is rendered with a very interesting difference:

Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.

The key of knowledge is the key of *gnosis* in the Greek, and it means ultimate knowledge, esoteric knowledge, *para vidya* in the Masters' terminology as opposed to *apra vidya*.* The lawyers—the professional interpreters of the Torah—have locked the door to the kingdom of the heavens against people by throwing away the key of *gnosis*, of esoteric knowledge, that would allow them to enter.

This is what Jesus is talking about, and this is the way in which we have to do better. The law that counts—the eternal Torah—is given with the understanding that because God has led us out of the house of slavery, He has a claim on us. When the Lord Jesus or any Master initiates us into the mystery of the kingdom of the heavens within (Matthew 13:11), he begins the process of doing just that. Our responsibility is to see the Torah in the light of the love of God and the key of *gnosis*, and to use it for its proper purpose.

The eternal Torah is supposed to be kept, and if it is kept it makes it easier to go within. All of this is implied in this passage, and we will see in the following verses exactly how Jesus makes this clear. He takes one after another of the elements of the law—non-violence, truthfulness, chastity, universal love and selfless service—and shows how they are to be kept in such a way as to *preclude the possibility of self-righteousness*.

Avoiding self-righteousness is in itself an important part of the Torah, and Jesus lays great emphasis on it later in the Sermon. Unfortunately, people who have been brought up

* See Kirpal Singh, *Naam or Word*, pp. 285-298.

with the conventional Christian viewpoint have been taught to view Jesus's attitude toward the Pharisees with a simplistic, triumphalist attitude which defeats the whole purpose. They believe that, because the Pharisees were the spokesmen of the Jews and the ancestors of the Orthodox Rabbis, Jesus's attitude toward them proves how much better Christianity is than Judaism. This is a complete misunderstanding of what Jesus is saying. The people he was addressing—the responsible leaders of the religion he was born into—were missing the whole point of the tradition to which they were heirs, but were completely convinced that they were right. Does anyone doubt that if Jesus were to come back as a Christian, he would have the same attitude toward the responsible leaders of that religion? Does anyone doubt that the Christian leaders of our day—indeed of the last two millennia, with a few honorable exceptions—sit in the same seat as the Pharisees?

When Master Kirpal began the monthly magazine *Sat Sandesh* in January 1968, the very first issue contained as its first article his "Message of the Masters." In this message, he deals with this question of how the Masters, and the esoteric spiritual tradition in general, relate and interact with the exoteric religious tradition—how they evolve in connection with each other and how the meanings and the purposes of the Masters can be misunderstood:

Dear Ones, I am sending you *Sat Sandesh*, the message of the Lord, all saints and prophets have been bringing from time to time for the guidance and uplift of man. Kabir says, "I am the knower of the true home of the Father and have come to give you the message of God."

God's message is:

"I am the Lord of all creation. Man is the highest in all creation. He is next to Me. I have given equal privileges to all mankind. They are born in the same way and with the same outer and inner construction. This is the golden opportunity you have been given to know Me. Ever since you were sent down to the world, you have not returned to Me—the True

Home—but have stuck fast in the enjoyments of mind and outgoing faculties so much so that you have forgotten even yourself, what to speak of Me. I sent saints and prophets to awaken and to bring you back to Me but you did not care to come. Instead of appreciating their services, you have been molesting them.

“I sent Christ the Word made flesh—who reminded you vehemently: change your mind, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Religions came into being to keep the teachings of all such Masters afresh. Religion in its pristine beauty means a living reality. It is a state of universal God-consciousness, in which you live, move and have your being in My loving presence. All your activities or institutions should have been inspired by love of Me. Then there would have been left no stranger, no alien, no hatred, and strifes would have been unknown.

“If you like to seek Me, conquer all fears; this you can achieve only when you shake off attachment for wealth, family, body, as one and all are Mine, and have been given to you to make the best use of them to reach Me. This detachment of heart can only come when you love Me ‘with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.’ This is true renunciation which is the highest expression of religion.

“All saints and prophets I sent to the East or West; their lives were filled with the rapture of the vision of the unity of all races and religions in the spirit. The outer world is the expression of the mind. Unless you first establish unity in your hearts, you cannot develop unity of all men.

“There are two methods by which you can achieve this end. One is the interior method of meditation to go into the silence of the heart where flows the fountain of My love, all bliss and joy. You must be reborn; except you be reborn (or twice born) you cannot enter into My Kingdom which is within you. Those who have once drunk the water of life from

this fountain are intoxicated forever and love flows out from them in all its joy and gracefulness to all humanity—overflowing as they are with the love and intoxication of Me—giving vent to 'peace be unto all the world under Thy Will, O Lord.' Mind that it is not religion that failed you; it is you who have failed religion.

"The second method is to understand the meaning and the purpose of knowledge which in one single thought is 'service' to all My creation—men, beasts, birds, etc. The meaning of true life is service and sacrifice.

"So long as you want, first and foremost, to be blessed yourselves and you expect others to minister to you, you will remain a stranger to the way of spirituality. When you will wish others to be blessed, you will begin to speed on your way back to Me.

"Let you not be a reformer to whip others into goodness, but be a witness of the Great Love radiating all love in thought, word and deed. Be an example rather than give precepts to others. You are indulging in oceans of talks but how many ounces of action? An ounce of practice is more than tons of theories. 'Wanted: reformers—not of others but of themselves.'

"Religion decays when forms and ritual become more important than Me [God]. The inner light within you fades away giving place to intellectual acceptance of dogma or creed which you hold tenaciously, for the vindication of which you willingly lay down your lives. Religion further decays when neither Me [God] nor the Church rules you, but you become slaves to mammon and material power of the once virile religion; only the form remains ending in selfish ends by the so-called defenders of faiths and contractors of religions.

"You are all dear to Me, sweet children; I advise you all, residing anywhere, to sit together as brothers and sisters and understand each other. Dissolve all differences and misconceptions—you are already

one as man, as soul (conscious beings), as followers of the same Master Power, and I reside in each one of you as the Controlling Power keeping you in the body. Remove all duality and otherness. You will be able to sit together only in My name and will realize this unity in Me in the company of saints." . . .

Chapter 10

The Fire of Anger

Matthew 5:21-48 contains the main substance of the Sermon on the Mount and deals with the five cardinal virtues referred to by Sant Kirpal Singh Ji: Nonviolence, Chastity, Truthfulness, Universal Love, and Selfless Service. Jesus deals with these five virtues from the point of view of going within and finding God; and he does this in the form of a commentary on certain verses from the Torah.

In Matthew 5:21-26 he says:

You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not murder"; and "whoever murders shall be liable to judgment." But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say "You fool," you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be

thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Although this forms one section, or paragraph, and it is a commentary on one commandment of the Torah—the one usually translated, “Thou shalt not kill”—there are several more or less separate parts that can make it confusing.

First, it is a statement about anger. Master Kirpal Singh has said that the five cardinal virtues are the opposites of the five passions (what in India are referred to as the five dacoits or bandits) which are the corresponding, negative sides of them: lust, anger, greed, attachment and egoism. It's clear enough that non-violence corresponds to anger, and chastity to lust. The other three may not be so obvious, but if we think about it we will see that greed corresponds to selfless service, attachment to universal love, and ego to truthfulness. We will see that it does work out this way, allowing for overlap.

And there is overlap because, as Master Kirpal has explained, all of the dacoits are expressions or facets of desire. Furthermore they all lead to attachment which is always accompanied by fear: we are afraid we will lose that which we are attached to, and that is why attachment is the opposite of love. But here Jesus is taking the commandment from the Torah, “Thou shalt not kill,” and showing that in order to really follow that commandment, in order to live up to it in such a way that it will be certain we will not break it, we cannot even become angry. Anger in itself is another form of the sin of killing. This has often seemed extreme to people, and in fact all the statements Jesus makes in this section about these virtues and dacoits seem extreme. It is as though he is taking something anyone can follow—not to kill, for example—and then raising the ante so high that no one can follow it. However, the reason Jesus and all Masters have taken this extreme position is that they are very aware of the continuum that begins with one and goes to another.

Jesus actually goes quite a ways beyond anger. He is proceeding backwards along the spectrum: on one end is killing, before that is anger, before that is insulting a brother or sister, and before that is calling someone a fool. If we examine care-

fully that particular trajectory, we will see that it has to do with a way of looking at other human beings which denies them their status as children of God.

Another passage in the New Testament—I John 4:16-21—is relevant here:

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from Him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Now that's a very strong statement, and something like it is implicit in the passage we are considering. If we start at the beginning of the trajectory and proceed, we will see that when we call or think of someone as a fool, it may seem innocuous, but in fact we are denying that person the dignity of his or her stature as a child of God, and everything else follows from that. We are saying, in effect, "You are not worth anything. You're a fool." We are arrogating to ourselves the right to make that kind of value judgment about another human being who is made in the image of God; and that is the way of looking at another person that proceeds directly to deciding that it's okay to take her or his life.

Of course, in every instance it does not go that far. A great many of us think of others as fools, or discount them, or even get angry at them, without killing them; but this is the trajectory all the same. When we start at one end, the other end is implied in what we are doing; we are starting down the road. When God, or the Master, looks at us and sees where we are,

He sees both ends of the trajectory. He sees where that which we are doing will lead, so it's important to Him to make that point clear to us also.

The word "fool" in Greek is *more*, which is cognate to the English word "moron"—a strong and insulting word in both languages; but there is a Hebrew word, which when transliterated into Greek, is spelled the same way and which means "rebel against God," and it is quite possible that the word carries both meanings. So in the text as we have it, when you call someone a fool you may also be implying that he has rebelled against God. But as Professors Albright and Mann put it, "The epithet is in any case derogatory. It is a value judgment, and as such the man who uses it is attempting to act in the place of God." (*Matthew*, p. 61) We are denying him his status as a child of God—his latent Godhood—because he isn't worthy of it, and we are denying it to him because in our eyes he has rejected it. Of course the term is used as an indication of a state of mind. If we look at other people from that point of view, it almost doesn't matter if we say it or not. Just as the saying is as bad as the doing, so the thinking is as bad as the saying.

The point is that this attitude, this way of looking at other people, is deadly to our own spirituality. It takes us in precisely the wrong direction. That is why non-violence is one of the categories to be kept track of in the self-introspection diaries, and that is why the Masters lay such stress on anger as a negative quality that will take us away from where we want to go. Something else is implied in all this, too. Just as the commandment is given, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," with the ultimate reason being that our neighbor *is* ourself, so too we know that if we treat our brother or sister in anger it is really ourselves we are treating that way. According to the law of karma, whatever we give out we will definitely get back; we are sowing those seeds.

Next Jesus says, "When you are offering your gift at the altar and you remember your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother or sister and then come and offer your gift." The reasoning here is that of I John: "You can't

love God if you don't love your brother or sister." If something is there between us and some other person, God will not accept our offering directly to Him. He requires that we deal first with that which we can see; then it may be said that we can have a direct connection with Him.

Throughout this section there is a very strong message against self-righteousness. Jesus is wiping out any reason a person has to feel superior to other people. Implicit is, "Do you feel superior to those who kill? Then you'd better never get angry, you'd better never insult your brother or sister, and you'd better not ever think of them as fools or worthless. All these things are on the same spectrum, and if you're feeling superior to someone who has killed, then you're not in very good shape unless you have completely risen above all parts of the spectrum." This ethic is a strong component of this part of the Sermon and a very important one from the viewpoint of the Master. Sant Ajaib Singh Ji has said, "This or that may be a sin, but to judge others for it is worse than committing it." This is a strong statement and if we didn't have great support for it—if all Masters who have come had not said the same thing—it might be harder to swallow. But in fact this is the same point Jesus is making throughout this Sermon.

The final section sometimes strikes people as strange, and irrelevant to what has just been said: "Come to terms quickly with your accuser [adversary] while you are on the way to court with him, [the words 'to court' are not in the Greek] or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny." This is a reference to survival in a world that is dominated by karma. Who is our adversary here, our accuser? If we think about it we will see that our adversary is our mind; the judge is Dharam Rai or Kal, the Lord of Judgment; the guard or the officer is the *Yamdut*, the Angel of Death; and the prison is whatever particular karmic punishment we have coming to us. The point is that we have to deal with that part of ourselves—our adversary, our mind—that causes us to do harmful things. We've got to do it while we're on the way, in our lifetime. This is up to us.

Both Sant Ji and Master Kirpal have given discourses on Swami Ji's famous hymn about making friends with the mind, and this is what they were talking about. We make friends with our mind; we come to terms with him. We deal with him in such a way that his power over us is short-circuited and lessened and ultimately taken away. We have to do that. If we don't, we're living in a dream world. As we said above, some commentators think that this may not be part of the original Sermon. They have missed the inner context of the Sermon, and do not understand the cosmic framework that underlies it; if that is understood, this section makes a great deal of sense. In the terminology of Sant Mat, it's the "third blessing."

Master Kirpal and Sant Ji have said that there are three blessings: the blessing of God, the blessing of the Master, and the blessing of our own self. The blessing or gift of God is our human birth, and we have that. The blessing or gift of the Master is initiation, and we can have that if we want it. The blessing of our own self comes when we have mercy on our self and put into practice and make real that which the Master has given us. Part of that process is what Jesus is describing here: coming to terms with our mind.

It should be noted that when Jesus here refers to the "hell of fire," he is using an Aramaic term transliterated here into Greek as *Gehenna*—not *Hades* which is the Greek word for the afterworld, commonly but not accurately translated into English as "hell." *Gehenna* refers to a huge garbage dump outside Jerusalem which was kept perpetually on fire; it is a physical finite place, and there is no indication whatever that Jesus is talking about eternal punishment. What is being said here is that if we don't correct this fault, if we persist in seeing people who are made in the image of God as fools, and if we persist in insulting them and getting angry at them and killing them, we will make ourselves liable, for a time at least, to a punishment similar to being subjected to a burning garbage dump. We know the Masters have often referred to parts of the inner planes where this kind of thing happens.* If we deny the Godhood in others, we make ourselves vulnerable. But this doesn't imply anything

* See, e.g., Kirpal Singh, *The Wheel of Life*, pp. 42-45.

about eternity or punishment going on forever or never having any hope. As we saw in the Introduction, the esoteric tradition teaches universalism: that everyone will ultimately be reconciled to God. Why is this so? Every form of life in existence comes from God, and “the restoration of all things” the great church father Origen speaks of (basing himself on St. Paul—cf. Romans 5:18) occurs when God has drawn back into Himself everything He originally projected. We are all a part of Him, and the Universe will end only when we are all restored to Him. No one will be left out of that restoration. No one *can* be left out of it because we are all from God, but along the way we are subject to the law of action and reaction.

Certain passages from the Masters illustrate what Jesus is saying in this section of the Sermon. In Morning Talk #3, Master Kirpal says:

Once Akbar, who was a great Emperor of India, was told by his minister that thoughts were very potent and that great care should be taken in what we think of others. Akbar asked his minister how he knew this. The minister said, “All right, I will give you a concrete example. Let us go outside.” So both of them went outside and they saw one man coming towards them at a distance of a few furlongs. The minister said to the king, “Look here, just think something about this man in your mind and when he comes near, you might ask him what crossed his mind at that time. You are only to look and think.” The king thought in his mind that this man should be shot. The man approached the king and the king asked him, “When you saw my face, what thoughts crossed your mind?” The man said, “Emperor, excuse me, but I thought that I should beat you with my fists and break your head.”

So thoughts are very potent. If you think evil of others, the other man will react. You should be careful how you speak to people. If you speak ill to another and say “You are a fool” and things like

that, or if somebody calls you a name and you react in the same way, what is the result? There will be a flare-up. A man calls you once, twice and that results in a fight. This is by words, their very root is the thought. A man speaks out of the abundance of his heart. Whatever is lying there, those things take the form of words, then words lead to fighting. So don't hurt the feelings of others, in thought, word or deed. Even in very religious places, if a dozen men are working together they start thinking evil of one another, with the result that the thoughts radiate and react in another's mind. You follow my point?

Evil is a heavy word, but bear in mind what Jesus has just said. "Thinking evil" includes discounting others, considering others as fools, and thinking it's okay to insult them and get angry at them because in our hearts we think, "They don't count." All of us have people we put into this category; we do it almost without thinking. It's part of the fallen human condition to have such thoughts, which is why the evil is so insidious. Some of us are better at controlling it quickly than other people are, but very few of us do not do this.

In the talk, "On Lust and Anger," Master Kirpal Singh refers to the whole question of anger and explains how the five passions work together and how they are all rooted in desire:

All these five passions practically mean the same thing; they hinge only on *desire*. To be desireless is to cut off, to exterminate, the very root of other things. Many Masters have come and said this. Lord Buddha said, "Be desireless." The tenth Guru of the Sikhs said, in his own language, "Be desireless." When you have no desire, there is no question of anger. What is anger? When you want to do something or have something and someone appears to be standing in the way—either directly or indirectly—that impediment to the achievement of your desire causes anger.

We become angry because they prevent us from having what we want. This is the other side of the coin from seeing people as objects of desire. There is really no difference psychologically. In either case we are denying their humanity. If we want them sexually or for financial reasons, if we want to exploit them or somehow use them for our own purposes, we deny their humanness, their children-of-Godness. If we are angry at them because they are preventing us from getting what we want, then we are also denying their humanness, their children-of-Godness.

This denial is the reason why lust and anger go together so uniformly all over the world. Sex and violence are constantly coupled because through either of them we reduce another human being to something less than human. We deny that person the status that is rightfully hers or his, that is God-given. We are saying, "I refuse to see you as a child of God, as my brother or sister; you are less than that. You exist only for my convenience or pleasure."

When there is anger, what happens? You cannot speak slowly. Take the example of a little rivulet or ordinary canal flowing strongly in a narrow channel. When there is no impediment in the way, it flows on smoothly. But if you put a big stone in it, the water retards and strikes against the stone, and two things happen: one, there is froth and foam, from the striking; and the other, there is noise. Similarly, those who become angry cannot speak slowly, and there is foam in their mouths. Then when there is any wish: "Oh, I must have it; there is no reason why I should not have it." He puts in all efforts at having it; he makes parties, and this and that. When he achieves it, he does not want to leave it; he is attached. This is called attachment. And then he enjoys it.

So all five passions hinge on the one thing: desire. (*Sant Bani*, June 1987, pp. 21-22)

Notice that along with denying the humanness and child-of-

Godness of the other person, the effect is that we also deny it to ourself because we become less than we are supposed to be. Speaking personally, I have a problem with anger; all my life I've struggled with it. With the grace of God working through the living Master, it's better than it used to be, but I know what it's like to be fully in the grip of anger. People who don't have this problem don't know what degradation and loss the angry person experiences nor what the fury leads to. A great many murders take place when people get angry, just as Jesus indicates in the Sermon. There are premeditated murders, of course, but an enormous number of killings occur because a person has lost his temper, he has provoked another person to do the same, and someone reaches for a weapon. There is a tremendous loss all the way around because when we deny humanness to our brother or sister, to one who is made in the image of God just as we are, the denial to that other has to result in the denial of humanness to ourself.

Sant Ajaib Singh Ji gave a wonderful talk on this subject of desire and anger at Sant Bani Ashram on May 7, 1977, during his first world tour. He reminded us that the Masters' teachings are basically about survival—our own survival. Are we going to make it through? He comments on a hymn of Kabir and begins with a quote from that hymn:

*This world is a wooden house in flames.
One who remains in it burns himself.
That Sadhu survives who takes himself out of it.*

This is the bani of Kabir Sahib. He says that the key to Sach Khand is Naam, and we can manifest that Naam with purity. Accompanying the mind, our soul has become very dirty. She has forgotten her origin, her real home. . . .

Kirpal Singh has said,

Saints give a very simple definition of sin as "forgetting one's origin" (or God-head). (*The Wheel of Life*, p. 37)

When we forget who we really are, that we are children of God made in His image, meant to reflect His glory and His love and His beauty the way the Masters do—when we forget that, we do things which are called sins. But the sin lies in the forgetting, and in our becoming less than we were meant to be. All of these individual “sins”—lust, anger, etc.—are dangerous because *they cause us to forget.*

... What is the dirt which has defiled her? The dirt of lust, the dirt of anger, the dirt of greed, attachment: these are very great evils. And among them, there are two that are most great: lust and anger. Lust lowers the soul in the body, and with anger, the soul is diffused in the body. Neither the unchaste man can do the bhakti of devotion, nor can the angry man do devotion.

Anger is spontaneous madness. Just as the bamboo fields are burnt with the fire which is coming out of the bamboo itself, in the same way, the fire of anger is also coming from within us, and is burning us.

So Kabir Sahib says that this world is made of wood, and within it the fire is burning. The human body is also one building made of wood, and within it fire is burning. And you already know that if you set fire to a house of wood, you cannot save that house. Similarly this fire is a very bad fire in our body—it is a very dangerous fire. Controlled by anger, and because of this anger, one community or religion is fighting with another community or religion; because of this anger one brother is berating the other brother like anything. And unless we take our soul up above this fire of lust and anger, we cannot escape it; because the physical knot of lust, anger and all these evils is behind our two eyes, and the astral knot is in Trikuti.

This is a point which is also made in the Sermon on the Mount later on: the only real way to rise above such evils is to rise above them. We have to take our attention to a place where

these things do not affect us; and until we transcend them, we cannot really escape them. This is the way the Master gives us; this is one purpose of the Path of the Masters. One of the reasons Jesus and all Masters are so specific about what these evils consist of is that they are eliminating the illusion that comes when we think we have avoided them. In the self-righteous mode, we think we are okay because we don't kill, but we don't realize that our position on that particular trajectory is also a problem. We don't see what's at stake as clearly as a person does who has killed someone and is repenting his action. The statement that a sin may be bad but judging someone else because of it is worse, deals with the relative nature of how we see ourselves and how illusion and reality come together.

There is no question of surviving lust, anger, attachment, greed and evils like that, as long as we are below the second plane. So that is why Kabir Sahib says that those who are below the second plane, are dying from that fire. Sometimes they are burning themselves in the fire of lust, sometimes of anger, sometimes of other evils. And one who rises above, and goes into Daswan Dwar or the third plane, he is called a Sadh and he is saved from these fires.

*The fire of anger is burning in all, all the world is consumed in this fire;
Through the company of a Godman one can be free from this fire.*

Now Kabir Sahib says, how can we say that the fire of anger is within one man and not within another man? All the world is suffering; all the world is burning, because of this fire of anger. Hazur Maharaj Sawan Singh used to tell a very interesting story of one angry man. When he was in the army, this man started making tea, but he couldn't light the fire because the firewood was wet. So he became very angry with the fire, and he went and lay down on his bed, saying, "All right, if you don't want to

burn, don't burn." While he was lying on the bed, again the anger came into his mind, and he got up and destroyed that fireplace. After that he again went and lay down on the bed. And again the anger came upon him. So he poured a bucket of water into that fireplace; then he again went to the bed. Again the anger came upon him and he got up. And then he urinated on what was left of the fireplace, saying, "Now, you burn!" Still he was very angry. Now the shed was made of wood and thatch. And he set fire to the shed, saying, "Now you will burn!" Then he set fire to his home. His home was being burnt, and the fire station was called and told, "The cantonment is burning." And then he went again to his bed. In Satsang when Master Sawan Singh was telling this story, that man was also sitting there. And Master Sawan Singh would say, "You go and ask him, if you don't believe me.

When Sant Ji told this story in 1977, the Satsang hall was rocking with laughter; it was very, very funny the way he told it. But I didn't think it was all that funny because I have been through exactly this chain of thought. When someone is completely under the control of anger, his perception of reality is extremely skewed. What we think is happening and what we think we're accomplishing has nothing whatever to do with what is really happening. It's a weird and bizarre place to be in and I have been there many times. It's a pitiable state and it's very far along the way of the trajectory Jesus was talking about. It's a degradation of the human condition.

Later versions of the New Testament read (in verse 22), "if you are angry with your brother or sister *without a cause*," but that is not what Jesus said nor is it in any of the best manuscripts. Some copyist decided that it was too extreme to expect people not to be angry, period, and changed it to imply it was all right to be angry if we had a cause. This defeats the whole purpose of the teaching: there is always a "cause" to the person who gets angry.

So this is the condition of anger. That is why Kabir Sahib says it is a very bad fire. You see the condition of your own home, how it is controlled by anger: the husband is displeased with his wife and they are tearing each other apart; the children are not obeying the parents, and parents are suffering because of their children. Now He says, if you want to survive, go into the refuge, take the protection of some Mahatma and, according to his teachings, collect all the thoughts from your body and concentrate at the third eye. It is not true that there is no medicine for the disease. The disease is within us, and the treatment, the remedy, is also within us.

The speed of the stream of Shabd is faster than the speed of the stream of our thoughts. (*Streams in the Desert*, pp. 53-54)

This is an important and very hopeful statement. It means that if we really want and ask for help we will get it because the Sound Current, the Word of God, the projection of God that carries His power and His love, can overtake that trajectory of anger. If we can remember to ask for help with trust and faith, it will reach us before the conclusions or the consequences of our anger.

The speed of the stream of Shabd is faster than the speed of the stream of our thoughts.

Chapter 11

The Revolution Within

Before approaching the next section of the Sermon on the Mount, it might be helpful to review some of the major ideas we've already covered. The purpose of the Sermon is to change our point of view from our customary angle of vision to one which allows for growth, growth being understood as the transformation of the self. The aim of all Masters, including the Lord Jesus, is to help us with that growth, that transformation. It's what they come to do; it's their purpose on earth. All of the things they talk about—remembrance, “waking up,” love and recognition of the living Master, meditation—are means to this end—to effect the transformation of the way we are.

It's difficult to do justice to this subject. Even the Masters can only talk about one facet of it at a time, and we can only hear it one facet at a time if we can hear it at all. We cannot hear something until we are ready to hear it; a statement will go over our heads many, many times and then we are brought face to face with it and it is suddenly grasped. The reason, perhaps, is that somehow within ourselves the conditions have been created that enable us to hear. There are levels of our ability to hear, and there is the additional fact that even at best it is difficult for the Masters to say everything at once about anything.

We have seen how, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus equates “killing” with “getting angry.” We saw that there is a

trajectory that leads from one to the other and that even when the anger exists only in thought, it has an effect. The reason for this is that the way we perceive the trajectory is far removed from the way it actually is. When the Masters look at us, they see the whole process—both that which we have begun and that which we will end.

The word “trajectory” originally meant the path of an arrow. If someone shoots an arrow, he pulls back the arrow and lets it go; the arrow leaves the bow and a second later it hits the target. Wherever it is aimed, it will go. Nothing is going to stop it, and that’s the idea here: when we loose the arrow, it will definitely reach its target. From our point of view it may be a long time between the two events, but the Master sees both things happening at once and that is why he refers to it the way he does.

Many people find the next section of the Sermon, Matthew 5:27-30, to be heavy and hard to accept, and it can sometimes lead to misunderstandings. But we must understand what Jesus is implying about human nature.

You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.” But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

This is not a bad translation; but the Greek version is a little different. It reads literally: “But I tell you that everyone seeing a woman *with a view to desire her* has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (italics mine). It is seeing someone as a sex object, rather than as a daughter or son of God—a fellow human being, made in His image—that begins this particular trajectory.

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into Gehenna.

Gehenna, as we have seen is the Valley of Fire, the burning

garbage dump outside of Jerusalem, often mistakenly translated “hell” in English versions, but which carries with it no connotation of eternal punishment. However, there is a connotation of a difficult, unpleasant time.

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into Gehenna. (Matthew 5:27-30, NRSV)

This is so difficult for people to hear that it is almost completely ignored, and that’s very understandable. Someone has said that it would be laughable of God to make demands on us that we can’t keep. So what is going on here? What does Jesus mean?

There are several points worth considering. One point is that the first statement presupposes and assumes the value of chastity. It has sometimes been said that Jesus didn’t really teach the value of chastity, that this was added later by St. Paul and others in the early church; and it has been implied that those people were not very healthy-minded. But this is not true. Jesus did advocate the value of chastity and it is implicit in this section.

But it is necessary to make a careful distinction between the English words “chastity” and “celibacy.” Sometimes they are used almost interchangeably but they do not have the same meaning. “Celibacy” refers to complete abstinence from sex of all kinds. “Chastity” refers to being faithful to your marriage partner and to being reasonably self-controlled, not obsessed or dominated by sexual desire. There is a difference between the two conditions, and the Masters generally advocate chastity for most people and celibacy only for a few. Some Masters have not been celibate by this strict standard (a number of Masters in various traditions have married and had children, including Kabir, Nanak, and in modern times, Sawan Singh and Kirpal Singh) but they view the relationships between men and women always in the light of Genesis 1:27:

**So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;**

male and female he created them.

It is extremely important at this point to understand that because of the way Jesus has phrased these instructions, it is not so much a teaching on chastity—although it presupposes its value—as it is a teaching on self-righteousness; the clue lies in the way he has worded it. If viewing another person as a desirable sex object is the real problem, and if that is tantamount in the eyes of God to the consummation of that desire, then who can possibly look at another person and find fault with him or her? This is why the passage is worded the way it is.

Further, Jesus makes the same point about self-righteousness elsewhere—both in the Sermon on the Mount and in other parts of the Bible—in connection with sexual affairs and other aspects of ethical behavior. Eliminating self-righteousness has been emphasized by all Masters, especially in connection with sexuality, because this is the easiest way for illusion to conquer us. It involves the placement of the attention, as Master Kirpal has explained:

I have seen men, foremost preachers in [the temperance] society, who preach, "Don't drink, don't drink," but privately, they do drink. I have seen, I tell you, "Don't drink, don't drink," and all the time they are drinking, are they not? Maybe the word "don't" is there, but drinking is also there. Then you say, "all right, let's see what it's all about." So "as you think, so you become." ("Little Little Things," *Sat Sandesh*, February 1973, pp. 7-8)

A great part of the Sermon on the Mount and the writings of all Masters, especially Sant Ji's, has to do with not judging or criticizing others. The area of sexuality is particularly dangerous in this regard because we may think we have conquered our own lust and then allow our attention to dwell on what other people are doing and thereby make ourselves equally culpable. Where our attention is, there we are. The Masters have been very strong in their statements about this. Kirpal Singh often quoted the famous passage in the Gospel of John (7:53-8:11):

Then each of them went home, while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

The value of chastity is presupposed in this passage also. Jesus does not say, "You did not sin" to the adulteress, but he does imply that there is a hierarchy of dangerous sins. It is clear from this story, as well as the wording of the verse from the Sermon on the Mount, that *condemning others for committing a sin is more dangerous and destructive for us than committing the sin itself*. This is the gist of the message Sant Ji gave Judith and me in Delhi in June 1991:

"Whenever we forget the teachings of Sant Mat we hold divisions. According to the teachings of Sant Mat we are to improve our own life. We are to see our own faults instead of seeing the faults and weaknesses of others. The best thing is that we keep an

eye on our own faults, we concern ourselves with our own things rather than seeing the faults of others because Paltu Sahib has also said, 'Why are you concerned with others? Your concern should be your own self.' Because those who sin sexually, they are committing one type of crime, and those who are taking it wrongly, those who are showing some sort of hatred or animosity toward them, they are perhaps committing a greater crime. Because those who sin sexually, when they come to know that this is wrong, well, many of them may be seeking inside the pardon of the Guru, begging Him to excuse them, telling Him, 'We are sinners. Kindly save us from all this.' So they would be put in an advantageous position. And those who are taunting them, they think, you know, as if they are absolutely right. They are making the karmas with the result that they will be losing much of their own."

(Sant Ajaib Singh to Russell and Judith Perkins, private interview.)

It couldn't be more clearly put, and it is absolutely essential that we understand the message. Master Kirpal said, "To hate others because they eat meat is worse than eating meat." He made that statement without giving the slightest indication of loosening the commandment about not eating meat. We have to keep the commandments our own selves and refrain from judging and criticizing others. We have to do both because we have to grow, and growing—the transcendence of the self—cannot happen as long as we are fooling ourselves in these matters.

To look at others and judge or criticize what they are doing when we are doing the same thing within ourselves is the essence of all illusion, and that is why Jesus has laid so much stress on this principle. That is why he did not say that adultery is unimportant; he considered it very important. But we won't get anywhere unless we understand that the problem lies with the angle of vision from which we are looking; and one problem with the angle of vision we usually have is that we think because we have dealt with one facet of ethical

behavior, we are then better or more spiritual than others. That point of view is deadly and it is why the Masters don't allow it to exist.

In connection with the second part of the verse, many people find it too heavy to follow: "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away." And as it stands, without any context, it is hard to follow. What on earth does Jesus mean? The translation of Gehenna as hell doesn't make it any easier to understand either, although his use of the word indicates that he's not talking about an other-worldly punishment. However, in terms of what the Master comes to show us about doing our inner work, these words are very important.

At one time or another all of us have understood that it is absolutely necessary to do something very difficult that is being asked of us: breaking an attachment or a habit of long-standing, denying ourselves indulgences we crave, or perhaps submitting to a relationship we want to control or to end. Many times when people give talks after returning from India they say that they have been required to do something almost impossible for them to do, yet they have been given the insight to know it is the right thing for them to do. Ordinarily we can't even be sure it's right when something like this is being asked of us; but when it is we are faced with a sort of existential choice, and our existence depends on how we respond. If we respond correctly, we can change and experience great growth. If we respond incorrectly, we get another chance.

The following excerpt is from an article written by Sharlene Sherwin, based on a question-and-answer session with Master Kirpal Singh in December 1969. The question is asked: "Do the inner experiences have anything to do with the past karma? Is it the karma that makes the veil so heavy to lift?" Master Kirpal answers :

"Yes. Each one comes with his own past background. The past karma, the time and effort have all to deal with experience. But even a person who puts in regular time and perseveres, with bad background, can progress further than one who has good background and doesn't try. So it is by earnestness and perseverance that we become Saints. Every Saint has his past

and every sinner a future. There is hope for everybody. Even you can become a Saint."

We should remember that this is a sort of sub-mantra; Master Kirpal used to say it often. The point is that *we can do it*. The Master comes for that purpose: to help us do it, to enable us to do it. "Even you can become a Saint." He can't put it more clearly than that.

"We should tithe our time for meditation, putting in one tenth of the 24 hours at least—the tradition has been that way for so long in all religions. Put in two to three hours at least.

"Water, water everywhere, but we haven't got a speck of it. We are digging so many pits instead of digging a well. What we need is a ruling decision in life. Decide what you want, and then live for it wholly and solely.

"Go inside to sit for meditation sweetly and buoyantly, freshly, as though you are going to meet a good friend.

"God is alone and He wants you to come all alone. Go alone to meet God.

"Be regular, persevere, and keep your diary. Introspect your life. Be critical not of others but of yourselves. Evaluate, meditate on your past, present and future situations and attitudes.

"Meditate at times you are not needed for worldly matters that have to be taken care of.

"Master makes the union between married couples stronger. One soul in two bodies united by God. No one should disunite whom God unites. Give love, more love. When love is perfect, there will be no problems. . . ."

I would like to do something about my emotional nature, Master. "Construct a house of bricks, leave no opening. Put them (emotions) in there to steam, then go to meditate." Did you say to leave an opening, Master? "No, no opening, steam will escape." (*Sat Sandesh*, June 1972, pp. 19-20)

This is the same teaching as, “If your right eye offends you, cut it out and cast it from you.” What can this mean in practice? We cannot do these things until we are able to do them, and the way we become able to do them is to be receptive and open to the grace of God that is constantly trying to reach us. The simplest way is through the spiritual practices that we are given at our initiation. In addition, we must remain in a state of what Masters call “the sweet remembrance of God” by spending as much time as possible in the physical company of the Master. The underlying premise throughout what Kirpal Singh said in that passage and what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, is the necessity for change. We have to become more than we are.

Some schools of psychotherapy often seem to have a different message, but they are not necessarily correct. The following is an excerpt from *Lost Christianity* by Jacob Needleman:

Imagine, I said, that you are a scientist and you have before you the object known as an acorn. Let us further imagine that you have never before seen such an object and that you certainly do not know that it can grow into an oak. You carefully observe these acorns day after day and soon you notice that after a while they crack open and die. Pity! How to improve the acorn? So that it will live longer. You make careful, exquisitely precise chemical analyses of the material inside the acorn and, after much effort, you succeed in isolating the substance that controls the condition of the shell. Lo and behold, you are now in the position to produce acorns which will last far longer than the others. Acorns whose shells will perhaps never crack. Beautiful!

The question before us, therefore, is whether or not modern psychology is only a version of *acornology*. (p. 56)

The Master does not want us to be unhappy. He wants us to be happy, but as one bhajan says, “We can be the king of the whole world and still be unhappy,” because being king of the

whole world does not represent any change in our state of being. It's only an extension of our present ego-selves. But to meditate on the Naam and become one with God is what we were born for, and happiness will elude us until that happens or until we begin to take positive steps on the way.

A little further on (p. 58), Needleman says, "Has it ever occurred to anyone that the whole corruption of religion, and therefore of civilization, begins when the work of self-knowledge becomes subjectively less interesting than sexual fulfillment? . . . And when this fact isn't squarely seen and accepted?" This question zeros in on the reason why chastity is part of the teachings of all Masters. It has to do with the attention, of which we have only so much. This is also why not judging others is taught by all Masters. Again it is a question of our attention: where are we going to put it? As we think, so we become. Just as the Master says we should go to meditation with enjoyment, as though we are going to meet a good friend, the teachings on chastity and sexuality are underscored with the premise that genuine pleasure and happiness come only when we fulfill that which we were born to be. The squandering of the attention on pleasure objects outside of ourselves only makes our situation worse. There is a saying of Sufi origin (also found in *Lost Christianity*) that seems to summarize this difficult passage in the Sermon: "When the heart weeps for what it has lost, the spirit laughs for what it has found."

Master Kirpal Singh's talk about "the spiritual revolution" complements what we are discussing. The revolution within us is another aspect of the Biblical phrase, "the Kingdom of God," that was mentioned earlier. There are two aspects of the phrase to consider. The "Kingdom of the heavens" (as we saw, the original Greek is in the plural) refers to the many inner planes within us which ultimately lead to what can be called "The Kingdom of God" proper, or Sach Khand: the unfallen creation. The phrase also refers to the presence of the Master on earth because he is the Gateway through which we can get to the Kingdom within us. Both of those aspects are true ways of looking at "the Kingdom of God"; but there is also a third meaning which directly ties in with what Kirpal Singh calls the

Spiritual Revolution. Implicit in this meaning is the fact that the Spiritual Revolution dethrones the present king—who is our ego, our negative sense of self—and enthrones the real king, who is God.

When that happens within each heart, the Kingdom of God exists both inside and outside, as the Gospel of Thomas says. We have to make that happen first; it is required. In his famous circular letter, "The Psychology of Mysticism," Master Kirpal refers to what it is like when we begin doing these things, when we begin to "throw away our right eye or our right hand" if they stand in the way of our achieving the goal we must reach. He says:

... Your main task as disciples, as initiates, is to cultivate these qualities [love and self-surrender] to the very utmost and leave the rest to the Master. There will, of course, be moments of doubt and of questioning, but if you can pass through them with your love and your faith unscathed, you will find the spiritual road within steadily unfolding itself before you and all things being added unto you. The path is certainly not easy, but for one who has made such love the cornerstone of his life, nothing could be easier or more certain. Jesus never promised the peace and comfort with which the world is familiar. It was the cross he offered. We have to suffer; to reshape ourselves, to destroy the old and forge the new....

It is this capacity that you must cultivate and develop if you really wish to make substantial progress in the spiritual field. I repeat that the path is not easy. You must crucify your ego and lay your selfhood at the altar of love for your Master. Rome was not built in a day and the True Abode of the Lord is not to be attained with a few weeks labor. Most seekers want quick results. They want miracles and sudden transformations. But the seed generates rapidly only in thin soil and then withers away. The seed that must grow into the life-giving tree must

grow more slowly. The science of spirituality as it has been taught by all Masters and as it has been given to you, is a perfect science. Its truth has been demonstrated by some initial experience. The rest depends on your effort. The Divine Grace is ever ready to pour itself into the vessel, but the vessel must first be ready. The power to perform miracles is not very difficult to acquire, but it is not to be confused with true spirituality, which must be paid for with complete self-transformation and self-surrender. (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 310-311)

That is the Spiritual Revolution. The Master has sometimes asked disciples to drink what seems to them to be a cup of poison—that is, to do something that is very difficult for us to do—and those disciples have testified that when they drank it, it became a cup of nectar. From our point of view that's what happens, but remember that from the Master's point of view it was nectar all along. The only thing that changed was our angle of vision, and it changed only because in that instance we did what he asked. That act of submission is what is meant by tearing out our right eye if it prevents us from having what we want. What we are required to do may seem dreadful but in fact it is not. The cup of poison turns out to be the cup of nectar. Similarly, if we don't drink it—a choice which we often make in this situation—we learn, as Ravidas taught King Pipa in the story of "The Washerman's Daughter," that what we thought was poison was really the elixir of Sach Khand. We learn the truth too late to benefit from it, but still we get another chance. The Master never gives up on any of us. If we fail one hundred times, on the one hundred first time we will succeed.

The Spiritual Revolution is primarily the revolution within each one of us when we throw down the dictator Ego from the throne of honor within us and put the true King, our ultimate Self, in His rightful place. We don't have to see any of this as outside ourselves; it is an inner process. We are replacing what Master Kirpal called the "fake ego" with that part of ourselves which is real—the spirit. The following is from a talk Master

Kirpal gave in Miami at the end of the 1972 World Tour, called "The Coming Spiritual Revolution":

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the people are crying for peace. How can we have it? Peace should start from our hearts. We should give out peace as prayed by Guru Nanak: "Peace be unto all the world over under Thy will O God." And for this, naturally, there must be a spiritual revolution.

The world is already in revolution; but this revolution should be different. This revolution should not be of the body, but against the evil propensities of the mind which keep us away from God. This will be achieved if we give right understanding to the people at large, which will result in right thoughts. First comes understanding; then come right thoughts, which result in right speech, and right speech will result in right actions. The whole thing starts from right understanding.

That is the reversal of the trajectory that is being talked about in the Sermon on the Mount. This is really the way to undo it, and we start with "right understanding." If we realize that other human beings are not appropriate objects of desire or impediments in our way, if we realize that this in itself is a blasphemy against our Creator Who made us all in His image, we can begin to understand that the difference between thinking this way and acting this way is non-existent from the Master's viewpoint.

So you will find right understanding first lies in recognizing that there is a Maker of the universe Who is the Controlling Power and Who permeates all creation. This world did not come out of itself; there is a Maker, and scientists lately have come to this conclusion, that the whole creation is controlled by some Power which is conscious. So this is the first thing: the whole world is the manifestation of God, no East and no West, the earth below and the sky overhead is His manifestation. Guru Nanak went

to Mecca. At night he was lying down with his feet toward the Kaaba, the house of God. The clergymen over there rebuked him, "Why are you lying with your feet toward the house of God?" He politely told them, "Dear friend, I see God all around, there is no place where He is not. If you think there is any side where God is not, you may turn my feet that way." You see? So Masters say, "all is holy where devotion kneels." This is the first right understanding. . . .

So this is the first right understanding: We are living in Him, have our being in Him, He is in us, outside us, above us, below us. Like fish we have our existence in Him. That is right understanding. And further: God made man with equal privileges, all born the same way, no high, no low; all have got the same outer concessions—eyes, ears, etc.—and all have the same inner concession: we are kept in the body by some higher Power which is the same for all. So this is right understanding: that we have this thing—God resides in every heart—and that all is holy where devotion kneels, all are born with the same privileges from God—no high, no low, no East, no West. And this will result in right thoughts.

Intellectually we can grasp this and lose it again ; the habits of a lifetime will reassert themselves. But if we really believe that there is such a thing as the grace of God, and if we know which direction will take us to our goal, there definitely is hope. We reverse the trajectory by recognizing that our basic premises are false. *All human beings are children of God. God made us all in His image.* Therefore it is not appropriate to view other human beings as objects; they exist within their own selves and in their own right. They exist as children of God, not in relation to what we want or don't want, what is convenient or inconvenient for us. This is the underlying fallacy upon which we build our illusions and it is why so much of our attention and energy is dissipated in nothingness when we don't understand the worth, the value, and the enormous importance of other human beings.

Then the Master discusses the inner work which comes up later in the Sermon on the Mount:

Everyone has a secret chamber within himself which is called the closet of the body. That is higher than the mind and heart both, and provides mind with understanding to a certain extent, and the heart with feelings of love. This chamber is the Kingdom of God within us. This is the crest jewel, the pearl of great price. The Saints, when we come in contact with them, open this chamber by withdrawing all our attention from outside. The test of a true Master is the fact that in his company, the smallest realm opens up within us, and the Light, Divine Light, the expression of the God-into-Expression Power, is seen. Christ said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Prophet Mohammed said, "The light of Allah is found where? In the human temples." Why am I quoting these things? Because right understanding was given by Saints and Masters coming from time to time. Lord Krishna said, "I will give you divine light and you will see my glory within." Buddha said the same thing: "Every man possesses the bright mirror of illumination." This, all the Buddhas realized. Buddha further proclaimed that, "The way of the illumined ones is the growth of snowdrops behind the eyes"; and then Christ came, and it was as if a few crocuses opened their hearts to the winter sky. But now the time has come when we can have a rebirth; this is what Christ spoke of when he said that the poor in spirit shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

So Springtime is upon us now. There will be more fragrant Saints, I would say now, who will come up and give us through the grace of God a contact with the God-into-expression Power. And this is the revolution, the spiritual revolution which is coming up—an awakening all around. (*Sat Sandesh*, March 1973, pp. 4-7)

Chapter 12

On Marriage and Divorce

In the section of the Sermon on the Mount dealing with adultery, Jesus said that anyone who looks at someone with “a view to desire her” has already committed adultery in his heart. In the section before that he said, in connection with killing, that if we are even angry with another, we are liable to judgment. In both cases there is a trajectory which connects the desire with the deed, and according to the Masters we should not just chop off the deed at the end of the line but eliminate the trajectory altogether by not starting it.

As we have seen, the only way we can avoid this chain of events is to change our point of view and see things the way the Master sees them. When Jesus says at the beginning of the Gospels, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near,” (Matthew 4:17) the Greek word translated “repent,” means, as we have seen, “Change your point of view.” One problem we recognized is that we usually do not even consider our angle of vision until we have completed an act and it’s too late to change anything. Another serious problem is that when we are struggling very hard not to be lustful or angry, it is extremely difficult not to be critical of others who do transgress; and the fault of judging others and criticizing them is, as Sant Ji says, worse than whatever it is we are judging them for.

All of these factors are intimately connected and we could say they constitute the psychology of Jesus; it is a way of

looking at the human psyche, the human internal mechanism, that teaches us how to escape the tyranny of the trap of Maya or illusion. By definition this psychology differs from “acornology,” which we looked at in the last chapter.

All the Masters’ teachings aim at eliminating suffering by changing “being,” and this sometimes, although not always, conflicts with the avoidance of suffering in the here and now. The Master does not want us to suffer. He loves us; he wants to save us as much pain as possible and he will very often take our pain on himself because he knows we can’t bear it. At the same time, we must grow; we must. Our whole being *demands* that we grow, and sometimes that means breaking through whatever shell we have created for ourselves. That can be very painful, as many of us know.

The next section of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:31-32) bears on the points we have just reviewed; and it’s important to understand how each of Jesus’s statements fits into the overall teaching of the Masters, the esoteric tradition; the purpose of which is to take us out of this fallen universe back to our true home, back to where we belong in the lap of our Father/Mother Who loves us. Jesus again quotes from the Torah and again points out its spiritual implications:

It was also said, “Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.” But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

This passage has often been seen as oppressive and heavy, especially when we are in the middle of a bad situation; but we can understand it better by considering Jesus’s comparable statement in Matthew 19:3-9:

Some Pharisees came to him, and to test him they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?” He answered, “Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning ‘made

them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

They said to him, "Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?" He said to them, "It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery."

In the parallel passage to this in Mark 10:1-12, Jesus also states it from the woman's point of view—that a wife who divorces her husband is in the same position. This is interesting because it is not clear from the Torah itself that women of this society at that time had the right to divorce their husbands. It does seem that Jesus is recognizing that as a right, although we don't know for sure.

We can understand these particular teachings better if we remember they are based on the Masters' vision of what human beings are, originally and potentially: that we are children of God, made in His image, and we have the birthright to come into that heritage and that destiny. Master Kirpal called this the right understanding that is the very beginning of the Spiritual Revolution; from this perspective we look at others as entities of great spiritual value, not objects to be used at our convenience for pleasure or advantage. We view them in a nonexploitative way, giving each human being complete respect as a child of God; we see the Master, or God, in everyone. Moreover, we can learn to perceive all relationships, circumstances, and situations—which are, by definition, fluid and dynamic—from the Master's viewpoint, leading us to greater understanding of how each situation relates to our ultimate purpose.

Master Kirpal once wrote to me: "Please know it for certain that whatever comes to your account is in your best spiritual

interest." The Masters say that whatever we have in front of us, whatever situation we find ourselves in, is the one we are supposed to be in; and true gain results from making the best use of it. But this does not give us the right to decide the rightness or wrongness of what other people may do, and none of us can ever say that someone else should have done this or should have done that. Nor is there anything to be gained by feeling regret about past situations because, after all, the whole point of the teaching is to grasp the present moment and make use of the particular dynamic that now exists.

There are many things to consider here. For one thing this teaching has a much wider application than just marriage and divorce; and for any of us caught in what seems to be a destructive and oppressive situation, while it may indeed be that, it may also be the kind of situation which, if we trust in the Master and see things through, can strengthen and enrich us. There is a famous story about Guru Arjan and Bhai Gurdas that illustrates this dilemma.

Bhai Gurdas was writing learned hymns presenting the idea that when the Guru tests the disciple, he should be happy to be tested and then pass the test to please his Master. Guru Arjan wondered if he was really that advanced, so he sent him to Kabul—in what is now Afghanistan—to buy horses from the Pathans who were very fierce mountain people, very dangerous people to cross. Bhai Gurdas went off with a sack full of gold to buy horses, and when he got there he selected some horses and went into his tent to get the gold. When he opened the sack he discovered the bag was full of rocks, and he did what almost anyone would do: he made a hole in the back of the tent and ran away. The Pathans waited for him to come out, and after a long time they went inside and there was the bag full of gold. They took the gold that was due them, left the horses with Bhai Gurdas's people, and rode away. Sooner or later Bhai Gurdas learned what had happened after he ran away, and for a very long time he was too ashamed to go back to Guru Arjan.

This was a hard lesson and it is very difficult to pass such tests; most of us fail them most of the time. It would not have been easy to take the rocks outside and hand them to the

Pathans as though they were gold. It takes the kind of trust that comes from *knowing* God is not going to ultimately betray us and that He will stand behind us; at the same time it's important for us to understand what can be gained by staying in a bad situation and seeing it through. The problem in thinking about our failures and successes in such areas is that if we really succeed, we may not even know it because we were never aware of the alternative. If Bhai Gurdas's trust in his Master had been strong enough, he would not have seen the gold as rocks in the first place. No one else did. It was his own vision that was at fault, and that's the point. The only thing that will take us past our own faulty perception of a situation is what we call grace, because we do need help. It's not possible to do it by ourselves.

Four days before Sant Kirpal Singh Ji left the body, he met with the western disciples who were staying at the ashram for the last time. He was obviously very ill:

A young American then asked the first question, "Master, why don't you heal yourself? You are all-powerful." Master repeated, "Why don't you heal yourself. . . ?" Then a radiant smile appeared on His face and He asked so sweetly, "Anyone whom you love, if he gives you something, would you refuse it? Tell me. What does he hope for you? He should gladly accept it." (*Sat Sandesh*, September 1974, p. 5)

In 1989 I had a stroke (the doctor told me that the term "stroke" is short for "stroke of the hand of God") which left me totally paralyzed on the left side. My first reaction was to deny it, which was not difficult since it came on gradually. When I finally faced up to what was happening, I lost it: I gave way to total despair. I did *not* want to be paralyzed for the rest of my life. As it happened, I wasn't; within an hour after I gave up, I began getting my left side back, and twelve hours later I was ninety per cent restored. My total period of paralysis was thirty-six hours from start to finish. But of course at the moment of despair, I didn't know that. I rejected the gift the Master was giving me because I didn't want to be paralyzed

for the rest of my life. Obviously, this is understandable; but as the teaching on divorce implies, and as the Master explained to me later, there was a price: because the real test that was being given was whether or not I could see the gold as gold. I couldn't.

Such stories demonstrate why no one—least of all a Sat-sangi—should judge someone else's situation and say, "He should have done this or she should have done that," because only the person involved can know if he or she is being tested and what the cost is. We don't know what is going on in someone else's life. The Master loves each one of us and he tests us for reasons known only to him. He also understands—from his angle of vision—how we have dealt with those tests, and he continues to love us.

This is the way it is in a marriage situation, too. Jesus's quotation from the beginning of Genesis is very much to the point: from the point of view of God, the institution of marriage originated in the very beginning, and once two people are joined together, they are joined. The usual understanding that people today have of behaviors like infidelity, promiscuity and unchastity—prevalent today but present from the beginning—is based on an incomplete view of sexual relations.

From the point of view of the Masters, the karmic connection that a man and woman (or two men and two women) have when they join together sexually is firmly established whether they are married or not. From the point of view of the Law of Karma, once the sexual act has taken place between two people, they are married. (The point of the outer marriage ceremony, supported by all Masters, is to make it easier for us to consciously recognize this and live up to it.) Therefore, if someone has sex with one, two, forty, fifty, or two or three hundred partners, then, in lifetime after lifetime the karmic implications of that have to be worked out; and where has liberation gone? What is happening internally and astrally is much stronger than we are able to tell. It is part of the trap of Kal or Maya; we are caught at our most vulnerable point.

Once I was present when Master Kirpal was asked a question about unwed mothers; He said, "There is no such thing." The people with him were embarrassed by his answer, and

they said, "No, no, Master. There are unwed mothers. Not everyone that has sex is married." He said, "How can that be? There are always two partners." From his perspective, if you have sex with someone you are committed to that person. You have become one flesh, and that connection remains.

Now if you are a Master and you see the whole picture and you want to take people Home and give them what they are really searching for underneath all this promiscuous activity, you will naturally present things in the way Jesus does here in Matthew 19:10-13, right after his last statement on divorce:

His disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

But he said to them, "Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given."

This statement has many meanings, too. Among other things it applies most directly to people who have committed themselves to finding God in this lifetime; the Sermon on the Mount and most of Jesus's other teachings are addressed to such people. On another level he is saying that we never know where another person is in his life; we don't know what that person can or can't do. We cannot know why she has been put in a particular situation, and at a very deep level it is none of our business unless we can help her. Jesus continues:

"For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can."

This is the true teaching on chastity, of which remaining faithful to one's marriage partner is the first step. Underlying it is the view of marriage and relationships we have just summarized, and it is a very heavy teaching. Masters present it in the full understanding that many people cannot live up to it—"Let anyone accept this who can"—but if anyone really wants to find God, if that person wants to achieve what his or her

inmost soul longs for, then such a one will take the Masters' teaching seriously and do his or her best without judging themselves or others inordinately.

For repentance does not mean that we should lacerate ourselves forever with guilt over one or two acts. It means that we should change the perception of our lives out of which those acts came. The Master tries to help us do that, and that's what meditation is for. By collecting ourselves at the eye center, at the sixth chakra, and by surrendering to the Master in this way, we put ourselves in a position to surrender to him completely and so make his angle of vision ours. His priorities do become our priorities, and because we love him we do begin to keep his commandments. It can and does happen. Failures also happen, but failure is education.

Just before these passages about marriage and divorce, Jesus told, perhaps with special reason at this juncture, the following story (Matthew 18:21-35):

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents [i.e., nine million dollars] was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him that debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii [fifteen dollars]; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until

he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Here the emphasis is on forgiveness, but it is very relevant to the whole question of marriage and divorce because the problem is always this: We don't see things the way God sees them, the way our inmost, higher Self sees them. We are fooled by circumstance, by habit, by long eons of wandering in the cycle of births and deaths; and when the way out is shown to us, we are not able to recognize it. We cannot do what God knows would be in our best interests, but we must not condemn ourselves for failing, nor must we ever criticize anyone else for failing. In other words, we must not make other people's paths more difficult, which means making the Master's work more difficult.

There is an interesting point here in connection with the question of forgiveness as applied to divorce; in both the sayings of Jesus quoted above, we saw that he made an exception to the general prohibition of divorce in cases of "unchastity" or adultery, and this is in accord with ancient law in general. But the fact is that in the parallel statements in Mark 10:11 and Luke 16:18, this exception is not there. In both cases, Jesus simply prohibits divorce on any ground. And this is in line with the esoteric tradition, which advocates forgiveness or non-judgment of our partner even in this.* Sant Ajaib Singh tells a beautiful story illustrating this point, and showing in a quite extraordinary way how it connects with the forgiveness of the disciple by the Master:

* Cf. THE ANCHOR BIBLE, *Matthew*, p. 65.

When Supreme Father Kirpal left the body of five elements . . . He came in the Will of God and He left in the Will of God; but when He left His physical body this poor Ajaib wept very much in His remembrance. When I was weeping, one person came to me and said, "You have always said that you should never cry or weep when anyone leaves the body, because just by weeping or crying for someone you cannot bring that person back. You have always said that, but now you yourself are crying. You are a wise person; why are you crying?" At that time, I was in deep pain, I could not talk very properly, but still I told him the story. It was like this.

I told him that there was once a king who decided to go on a tour to some other states, to some other kingdoms. He told his queen that he was going on the tour. When he went . . . he did not really go on the tour; after some time, he just came back, canceling his tour. But his wife the queen was in love with another man, and when the king had gone for the tour she had already made arrangements with this man she loved, saying, "The king has now gone on tour and he will not come for some days, so you come and we will enjoy." But when the king came back, at that time the queen and the other man were enjoying and sleeping together. When the king came there he was surprised to see that there was another man with the queen . . . How could another man come into the palace? But when he saw that the other man was with his wife and they both were sleeping naked, he did not get upset. He did not show that he was there and they did not know that the king had come back. The king simply took off his shawl and covered them with it, and he went into the other room.

Now when both of them woke up, the queen was terrified to see the king's shawl over them, and she thought that now the king would give her punishment because the king had seen all that they had

done, because this was the shawl of the king and nobody else would have come and covered them with the shawl except him. So when the queen thought of that she became very afraid. But the king did not mention anything about that to the queen; even though they met many times after that and lived together for many years, the king never mentioned anything about that to the queen.

After some years, when the king's end time came, he called his sons and gave the successorship to the sons, and then he told his sons that they should respect their mother and obey her. "Take good care of her, she is a good woman; do whatever she tells you." And then he transferred some property and things for the expenses of the queen also. But when the king was saying all these things to his sons, that they should take care of their mother etc., the queen started weeping and went on weeping very bitterly.

The king asked her, "Why are you weeping now? I have transferred so much property in your name and you will be comfortable when I die. What else do you want, why are you weeping?" She said, "I am not weeping for any wealth. I am crying because now, when you are leaving, who will come and throw the shawl over me? Who will hide my faults?"

So I told the dear one that that was why I was weeping. I told him that when the beloved Master was in the physical form He used to hide my faults, He used to forgive me for my faults. Even now when He has gone back to Sach Khand in His Radiant Form He is showering grace on me and He is forgiving me and hiding my faults. But when you have the physical form of the Master in front of you, you can express what is in your heart, you can go and weep at His feet. (*Sant Bani*, June 1986, p. 30)

He has pity on us; He has mercy on us. If we fail in any way He forgives us. We saw in the eighth chapter of John that when they brought the woman who had committed adultery

before Jesus and told him that according to the Torah she should be stoned, he forgave her and said that those who had never sinned should cast the first stone. If, in that famous story, he forgave the capital crime of adultery, why would he not forgive divorce? In fact he did, and so does the living Master. All Masters forgive us when we fail, and they don't require us to live the rest of our lives doing penance. They do request that we try to understand how any difficult situations we are in might help us to break through to a higher level, and how we might use our present circumstance as fuel for "the fire that purges and purifies."

If we are unable to learn and grow in a given situation, He will try another way; and because He forgives us, we must also forgive each other. Forgiveness is the way the God of mercy works in the fallen universe. The world we are in is fueled and fired by justice, fairness, and "giving each person his due." This is the way of Kal or Dharam Rai, the Lord of Law. The Masters have told hundreds of stories, like the parable of Jesus just quoted, that prove we don't know where we stand in connection with such a system. The only way any of us can be saved is through forgiveness. The grace of God shines down like the sun breaking through a black cloud, and on the physical plane God's grace manifests as forgiveness. We are forgiven. What is asked of us is that we help God by forgiving others as He forgives us. But we must remember that if we could see a given situation through the eyes of God, it would not appear the same as it does to us; and if we find ourselves pointing a finger at another person, we are missing a chance to do as He would do.

In George MacDonald's *Lilith*, a disciple is talking to his Teacher who has just given him some instruction:

"I will try to remember," I answered; "—but I may forget!"

"Then some evil that is good for you will follow."

"And if I remember?"

"Then some evil which is not good for you will not follow." (Chapter 17)

And that's exactly how the Master works.

In *The Light of Kirpal*, pp. 9-11, the Master discusses marriage and male/female relationships and makes the same point that Jesus makes. He also gives a further explanation of the idea that two who come together become one; the uniting is real and it has to be dealt with, not ignored or discounted.

Strictly speaking, husbands and wives should have equal rights. But they must be one soul in two bodies. Otherwise there's no good family life. God has united them as a matter of reactions of the past. Now I'm speaking very strictly according to principles. You don't mind that? According to principle when a man takes a wife and they want to leave each other, then even if the wife remarries or the husband remarries, they are both adulterers. These are the words of Moses.* We fall short of these commandments. And there's real happiness only when one is attached to one person throughout life. In India this has been proverbial. In the West there are divorce courts. Every day if some trouble arises, "All right, I'll go (for a divorce)," the wife or husband says. So where's the peace? No peace. After six years just see them. One son has been born here, another is born there. Who claims them? Very difficult situation, I would say. . . . Divorced people think they are advanced. To my mind, they have degraded themselves by this level of thinking. So there is actually no permanent peace, union, or integration. You follow me? We also have divorce courts in India now—not many, but still they have been started; it is the nation's loss. In the West you'll find that trouble arises every day. There are very few who are sincere to each other. God has united you as a reaction of the past, so let God disunite. Both of you should go together as equals; both united together, not as slaves—I don't mean that—but as equals, both

* Apparently Kirpal is finding the same implications in Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 (considered to be part of the Torah or Law of Moses) as Jesus did.

united. So marriage means taking a companion in life who will be with us in weal or woe in our earthly sojourn, and we should help each other to meet God. One duty may be of begetting children. But if divorce comes, they say: "This is my son; you can keep that son." All this trouble is going on. First a son is living with his father; two years later he is living with his mother. Excuse me if I say, there is no sincerity. . . . If a man considers he has to, he will adjust. In my letters, you'll find the advice, "Try to adjust, please." And many couples, after having applied for divorce, have returned to each other. Now they're living a good life. When once you think that you have to carry on, you'll adjust. Otherwise one will go this way and one that way, and there will be no peaceful home. So I always tell them, "Be polite to your wife, be truthful, be loving, adjust, control yourself." And to the wife, "If your husband hates you, *you* must be sincere." I've found in many cases they've come back to a normal life. So everyday, try to adjust.

. . . I'm pointing this out from the spiritual point of view. So these are very strict orders I am giving you; if those who are divorced remarry, both are adulterers. You see you cannot stamp out good or evil altogether, but we have to take such a recourse in which there is *more* good as compared with evil. Married couples should say, "You and I have to carry on somehow; we haven't adjusted yet. We will try to adjust." But if one partner threatens divorce, then the other will retaliate. That's not the way; there will be no peace with all these frivolous thoughts haunting your brain. . . . There are some genuine cases too, but they are very few, very few, not like what goes on now. Now everybody with a little excuse can say, "I am going to divorce you." How can you love two men at a time or two wives at a time? After all, there are some obligations. I'm not talking deep philosophy, only common sense. There's more peace that way.

In dealing with these ideas, it is important to remember the perspective from which the Master is speaking and the reasons for his saying these things, especially if they contradict our own perceptions and the views of people around us. His main point is very clear: the spirit of the times is against the teaching that will give us true spiritual peace. He also specifically mentioned exceptions, and the fact that those exceptions exist is one reason why it is extremely important not to concentrate or worry about what other people are doing.

Moreover, we cannot undo what has been done. Wherever we are now, whoever we are, whatever our personal history has been, we should heed the Master's words from this point on; and if we fail, we fail. We will learn something, and the Master will forgive us. From whatever position we are in as the result of failure, He will take us up. We don't become unloved by Him, nor do we become bad people because we have failed. Everyone fails at times although not always in the same way.

Another aspect of it came up in a question and answer session in Rajasthan in 1980. The questioner asks:

Sant Ji, over and over I have heard this problem and I would like you to answer it directly. A man and a woman marry, and later they become initiated. One of the partners wants to be very chaste—a hundred percent—and the other person in the marriage is not yet in sympathy with that. The person who wants to be chaste is very strict about it and is afraid to be loving and affectionate for fear that it will lead to lust, and the other partner is lonely and hurt. What is the best way to handle this?

[Sant Ji replies:] In all families, people have different types of minds and different natures. Every person is the slave of his mind. Every person is dependent on his own nature. *Chastity can be maintained in married life only if both man and woman agree. . . . If they are not cooperating with each other in this matter, then they start having conflict between themselves and get to the point when they think about getting divorced.*

In other words, within marriage, in order to prevent divorce, it is of the utmost importance that *each partner consider things from the other's point of view*. What the other needs, each partner should give. This is the easiest thing to forget within a marriage. Usually, after we have been married for a while, the person in all the world we take most for granted is our partner; and the one whose needs we consider least is our partner. Another thing that has frequently come up in connection with this is that, if two initiates reach a point where divorce is looming, it is never appropriate for one of them to use the Master's teaching against the other as a reason not to divorce. It doesn't work because the concept of trajectories applies here; divorce comes at the end of a long series of behaviors and attitudes resulting from differing points of view. If one partner stops just before the divorce and says, "Wait a minute! Master says not to do this, so we must not. I don't want a divorce so I'm a good guy; and if you insist on going through with it, you're a bad guy,"—that partner is using the Master's teachings as a club and it never works. It also never pleases the Master. What does please him is for the partner who wants the marriage to continue to be so lovable and make the other partner so happy that he or she no longer wants the divorce.

There are also dangerous elements of self-righteousness and dishonesty in using the Master's teaching as a threat in such a situation. We are denying our own part in helping to create the conditions leading to divorce, and Master knows that. He does not blame either partner and he loves them both. He would like them to stay together, but if they don't he never stops loving them. Sant Ji continues:

Lust is a spontaneous madness, and when lust comes, it doesn't matter whether it comes within a man or a woman, it makes the person senseless. If at that time the lust is not satisfied, if it is within a woman, the woman will all day long keep fighting with the man, and if it is within the man and he is not satisfied, then he will also find excuses to fight with the woman. In that way they will always have conflict.

Those who have this disease of lust, if they medi-

tate more, and when the lust comes within them, if they sit for meditation right at that time, they can succeed in getting rid of this disease. Kabir Sahib says that when the current of lust comes within the man, lust wakes him up, even when he is sleeping deeply. That is why Kabir Sahib says that we should always remain awake, because when you're sleeping, the thieves are coming. . . .

But don't think that Kabir meant that lust comes only when we go to sleep. Saints say that we are sleeping in respect to God, and are awake only in respect to the world. That is why They tell us to remain awake always.

. . . If you have intercourse with your wife only for procreation, only for creating a baby, then you will be called a celibate—not unchaste.

But what is our condition? Kabir Sahib says that a dog is unchaste only for thirty days in a year; otherwise he is chaste. Even though the bitch lives near him, still he never indulges with her. But men are always unchaste. For all the six seasons and twelve months, they are unchaste. They don't maintain chastity even for one month. (*Streams in the Desert*, pp. 431-433)

In regard to Sant Ji's reference to animals "in heat," it's safe to say that with a few possible exceptions, the whole sweep of the animal kingdom feels sexual desire only when procreation is possible. The connection is very clear. With humans it has been argued that we have evolved past the animals in this regard so that we can enjoy sex for its own sake and that this is a sign of our superiority; but the Masters say, "No. This is a symptom of the fallen condition of human beings. We confuse the pleasure that comes from satisfying the deep deep desire of our soul to find the true meaning of our essence with the pleasure of physical sexual indulgence. It is that misplacement of experience that is the cause of much trouble."

Each of us has his own weaknesses. People have different orientations of their sexual desires and they have differing

degrees of ability to control them. Before sitting in judgment we should remember that anything we do sexually that is not for the purpose of bringing children into a marriage situation is less than is expected of us; so how many of us could cast the first stone at anyone else? It's very easy to overlook our own faults and criticize the weaknesses of others, and great harm has been done in this way. As we have seen, the Master says, "People who are sinning may indeed be wrong, but they may also recognize they are wrong. Those who criticize them may feel so superior they never repent and never change."

This is why Jesus made his statement about adultery in such stark terms. If the fantasy, the desire, exists in our hearts, we have no right to sit in judgment of another person's behavior, no matter how bad we think it is. Only Someone who is completely above all such things can see clearly enough to judge anyone, and He is not at all interested in judging. He is interested only in helping all of us escape the trap and come out of this fallen universe.

The Masters have said a great deal more about these problems that is valuable and important; but it would be well to conclude with a paragraph that sums up extremely well what the Masters teach. It's from a talk given by Fletcher Lokey at Sant Bani Ashram in 1974 when he returned from being with Kirpal Singh in India:

And that same understanding was then brought back to what Master has said so often, that meditation is the answer to all these problems. And it had just never occurred to me that what he meant was: It will not answer your questions, it won't solve your problems, it won't pay the mortgage—but what it does is to put those problems in their proper perspective. Those questions are questions at their own level; if you see even a smidgin higher than that level the problems don't go there. The things that we go through in physical life are not useless and purposeless—if they were, we wouldn't be going through them—but they belong in one place; and if even for a moment you can be disentangled from

them, then for that moment they would vanish. Then when you see them again, you say, "Ha ha, problem, I saw you vanish; I know you're not real!" For as long as we see clearly, *it's so clear*; and when we remember that clarity, we can have the benefit of it. If we forget, then we simply work again from that level and again the problems are real, they cause pain, they cause worry, they make us unhappy. (*Sat Sandesh*, June 1974, p. 22)

This is the break-through of the kingdom of God into this world—the Spiritual Revolution. Through meditation and the grace of God working through the living Master, we are opened up almost in spite of ourselves and a higher perspective of marriage, divorce, and all our problems is given to us. That is the way up, and once we have a glimpse of the true way we can use it, we can remember it, and we can come back to it again.

Chapter 13

Truthfulness

We have recognized that to understand and make use of the teachings of Jesus, we must change our perspective—a process which the Masters refer to as “waking up.” The Masters consider our so-called “normal” viewpoint as being asleep in respect to God and awake in respect to the world. To shift our attention from the world to God is, in a sense, to awaken from a very vivid and convincing dream. The question inherent for us in the teachings of Jesus and all the Masters is: Why is the Master bothering to tell us about this; why does he care? If he is already awake, why should he bother about us?

There is one answer to that question, one which should sustain us if we find these teachings difficult or demanding: he loves us and his very being requires that others join him in his love. The Master is not satisfied with being the only one of his kind; that is not his happiness. Sant Ji has often quoted a couplet of Kabir—

**The tree never eats its fruit, the river never drinks
its water.**

**In the same way the Sadhu has taken up the body
for others.**

—to show that the Master lives for others, his essence is giving, and the only thing required of us is to be as receptive

as possible to what he is trying to give us.

The commandments and laws are important, but we please the Master most by waking up. We have learned that to shift our point of view to see from his standpoint means, in practical terms, to see from our neighbor's angle of vision. This is why "loving God with all our heart, strength, and mind," and "loving our neighbor as ourself," are connected; it is because one implies the other. In reality, they are not two different commandments. The Master wants us to experience life on the level that he does; he wants us to become like him. Otherwise, his life makes no sense. His aim is to bring us home at all costs, and to do this he tries first one way and then another.

Discourses like the Sermon on the Mount and other talks of the Masters give us a unique view of reality that is not what we expect; that is why their laws/suggestions often strike us as "heavy" and why we feel guilty if we can't follow them. But to feel this way is a complete misuse of what the Master is giving us. He is showing us what is required if we are to become that which we were born to be, and always underlying and undermining the austerity is his love. Seen from the perspective of his love, his statements are not harsh; they are simply based on an astonishingly radical view of the universe. Once we grasp that vision in its fullness, everything makes perfect sense.

These comments are in preparation for Jesus's statements in Matthew 5:33-38:

Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord." But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be "Yes, Yes" or "No, No"; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

In our society, the kind of swearing Jesus is forbidding here rarely occurs. Most of what we call "swearing" involves the

use of obscene language, words that relate to bodily processes not spoken of in polite company. But Jesus is talking about something else, something which in our culture exists mainly in courtrooms: invoking some power to support our statements or to make clear that we mean what we say. Perhaps we are bearing witness to something we have seen or heard, perhaps we are promising to do something in the future. We call it taking an oath or making a vow. In Jesus's day, when lie detectors and breathometers did not exist, this was how people determined whether or not you were telling the truth. You invoked a power, and because people believed in the reality of the power and the possibility of invoking it, they took you seriously.

Jesus specifically says that he is not talking about swearing falsely here; what he is saying is that the process of swearing is itself suspect. He is also making a point about "speaking truth": the universe is not as we think it is; therefore, when we speak as though we control it, we are making assumptions which are not valid. This applies to everything from the highest and most stupendous down to the smallest thing.

Years ago a friend was in India with Master Kirpal Singh, and some people were visiting him who wanted someone to use their camera to take pictures of them with the Master. So Master asked, "Does anyone here know how to use this camera?" My friend thought, "Well, I've never used this particular kind, but I'm pretty good with cameras," so he said, "Sure, I can do it, Master." The camera was handed to him and everyone lined up, including Master Kirpal, and he tried and found he couldn't work it. He had assumed he could do it but he was wrong. He diddled and fiddled, and of course everyone was standing there and looking at him. Finally the Master walked over to him from the group, took the camera away from him very gently and said, "If you can't do it, don't say it." The picture never did get taken.

That's basically what is being said here. If you can't do it, don't say it. There is a fundamental violation of truth involved; we don't usually think of it as lying, but it *is* lying. He said, "I can do this," but in truth he couldn't. He didn't mean to be untruthful, but the net result amounted to a lie; and this is why

we are not supposed to swear, even by our head. Few people presumably did that particular kind of swearing, but some may have thought, "I can't swear by God because God is out of my control; I see that. And Jerusalem and other holy places on earth are out of my control, but surely I can swear by my head! Who cares about that?" But even the power that goes into making our head is absolutely beyond our comprehension, Jesus is saying to all of us, and therefore, don't assume anything about it.

Now how much more does this apply to situations involving other people? We live in this world, this fallen universe, making assumption after assumption, usually with the underlying belief that we are in control. This is the essence of Maya. When the Masters sometimes speak strongly about the absence of free will, it is not meant to discourage us but to convince us that our sense of "being in control" is illusory.

What is truth? When we speak the truth, what are we doing? A person who doesn't lie always speaks in accordance with the universe as he perceives it. When we give an eyewitness account of something that happened—so and so did this, someone did that—we "tell the truth" if we don't alter it consciously. Yet we know that if two people are involved in a situation, their reports will vary enormously; neither one is lying with conscious intent, but they are not telling the same story. A very large part of dealing with truthfulness and speaking in accord with truth is to recognize our limitations in regard to it. Thus Jesus emphasizes that we should not say more than we need to; we should confine ourselves to saying "Yes" or "No." "Anything more than this comes from the evil one." Even yes or no may sometimes become a problem.

Here we have a built-in connection with the whole concept of judging others (the other side of the coin of our self-righteousness) that runs through the Sermon on the Mount like a thread tying everything together. In the *Sar Bachan*, Book II, Section 94, Swami Ji Maharaj says:

Indulging in criticism or praise is sinful because no one can be described as he really is. If we must praise anyone, we should praise our Guru, and if we

must find fault with anyone, it should be with ourselves. This does us good. Criticizing or praising others is only a waste of time; but it is permissible under one condition, and that is, if some friend has been or is being misled by another, he should be told that he would derive no benefit from that person and that he is being duped. This involves no sin. But you may not say this to everyone.

This is an extremely profound summation of what we are talking about. Indulging in criticism or praise is sinful because it is basically *untruthful*. We *can't* evaluate anyone as he really is; therefore, no matter what we say, we're being untruthful. We may be saying good things or bad things but they have nothing to do with what really exists. Swami Ji says that if we must praise anyone, it does us good to praise our Guru; but even that presents its problems because we can't describe our Guru as he really is, either. Many of us know that when we return from seeing the Master we can tell someone how he has reached us and touched our hearts, but when we start to praise him we are reduced to clichés and words that sound hollow. We can't describe him any more than we can anyone else.

Similarly, if we are obsessed with our own faults, we run into the same problem: we don't really know what's going on. We self-introspect, keep the diary, practice remembrance, and do our best to weed out faults; but we are much more than our faults. If we overemphasize them, we tend to deny that fact and make it seem as though we are worse than we are. The point is that if we have to praise or criticize, we will be safe in criticizing ourselves and praising the Master, but even that is not the highest goal. What we must reach for is the understanding that we don't really know the Master or ourselves enough to praise or criticize either, and then proceed to learn everything we can about both.

The last part of Swami Ji's statement—that we may tell a friend he or she is being misled or duped by another—is also very relevant. Sometimes there are situations in which we see clearly that someone we love is trusting a person who does not have his or her best interests at heart. However, this is often a

source of confusion: "I'd better not say anything to warn him because I'll be criticizing or judging someone." Swami Ji says that under certain conditions we *can* warn; it's not the same thing as criticizing. We can't be this frank with everyone, however, because most people won't listen to our advice. At another place in the *Sar Bachan* (II:112) he says that it's better to avoid giving advice on the grounds that people don't want to hear it. So only if we see clearly that the person will hear what we have to say, will we be able to do the seva of helping him. It remains a very tricky business.

This whole subject of criticizing or praising has to do with our inability to recognize truth and express it. In connection with this, in Matthew 12:33-38, Jesus talks about truthfulness as *unity*, a fundamental teaching of the Masters: what comes out of us is irrevocably determined by what is within us.

Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure. I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

Things that don't seem to matter—like fiddling around with that camera—are important. They're important because they come out of what we are, and in order to transform ourselves as the Masters request, to reach the goal of "waking up," to change our angle of vision, as the Sermon on the Mount requires, we have to come to grips with this fact. Basically it's the problem of Maya: we don't see things as they really are. We can't criticize or praise people because we don't know them in their totality; we can't invoke the power of God or holy places or even our own heads because we have no control

over such things. To do so is to be fundamentally untruthful.

It is not always easy to understand what the Masters say about how the tongue interferes with our living a spiritual life and to what extent verbal untruthfulness can harm us. In all these passages it is assumed we will not tell conscious lies; we are being warned against the kind of untruthfulness we are not even aware of. There is a very telling passage in a letter written by James, who was called "the brother of the Lord." Whether he was Jesus's physical brother or not, he was certainly his successor in Jerusalem, as we saw in the Introduction. Called James the Just, he was a strict vegetarian and was highly regarded—a truly towering figure. He was eventually put to death around the year 60, but one letter attributed to him has been included in the New Testament, and it is of great value. He says here:

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits in the mouths of horses to obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature [literally, the "wheel of birth"], and is itself set on fire by hell [i.e., Gehenna]. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness

of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grape vine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh. (James 3:1-12)

And later he says, in a direct reference to the verse we have been considering:

Above all, my beloved, do not swear. Either by heaven, or by earth, or by any other oath, but let your "Yes" be yes and your "No" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation. (James 5:12)

Much of Master Kirpal's discourse "What is True Living?," given on December 11, 1963, in Los Angeles, deals with this subject. Avoiding idle, careless words is a form of remembrance, and remembering takes us on the path to waking up; sin is essentially forgetting:

The first thing is, we should observe truthfulness. What we mean, we should say; whatever we say, we must mean. Our hearts and tongues and brains should all agree with what we give vent to. This is what is called truth or truthfulness.

You will simply find that we have no control over the words of our mouth that go to express what lies in the heart of our hearts. The two things should agree: What is in your heart and what you are giving out with your tongue. If these two agree, then there is one thing to test the usefulness of the truth you are telling; that is, if your truth goes to harm anyone. Say only that much that is required so as not to harm anybody else. Don't do the work of the unpaid apprentices of the C. I. D.* of God. Don't carry tales.

* Confidential Investigation Dept., the Indian equivalent of the American F.B.I.

If somebody tells you something, mind your own business. What are you after, really? You are after knowing God and adopting certain ways which go to help you on the way. If you see something wrong somewhere, just point it out to the person privately—heart to heart. Don't broadcast it like anything. A true friend is one who sees others to be on the right path. But there are ways and ways to say something. In the case of Father Abraham—I read his life story and it was given there—he never spoke lies but told half truths. By a half truth is meant only that part of the truth which does not go to harm anyone.

This is one very important thing. If your heart and tongue and brain agree, your brain will test what you are going to say. Your intellect is to test whether what you express goes to the benefit of others or to harm others. If it is going to harm others, then don't speak. Then wait. Better set it right then and there.

As I told you before, don't work like the unpaid apprentices of the C. I. D. of God. It creates much trouble, first within your own hearts; because you have those things, which you don't need, in your own way. Those things go to stand in your own way, in the way of your own progress. The first thing is, we must be true to our own selves: what we think at heart we must give out. But before giving it out, think twice: What are you going to say? What will be the result of it? There you will use your intellect. And the only criterion is, not to give out anything that goes to harm others. This is the first thing. . . .

I remember a case of one woman who brought her little child to Gandhi. She said, "This child eats too much sugar." And Gandhi told her, "All right, mother, bring this child back after three days." She went away, and she came back after three days. Then he told her child, "Well, child, DON'T EAT SUGAR."

And the mother said, "Well, Gandhi, if you have

only that much to say, why didn't you say it the other day?" He said, "Because I was eating sugar then."

Mind that, if you don't live up to what you say, those words won't carry any effect. . . .

What do the Masters say further? They say, "Silence is golden. Speak as little as possible. SILENCE IS GOLDEN. SPEAK AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE. When you speak, speak in the most kind and gentle manner. Don't lose your temper over anything. Always keep your tongue under control." This is one thing. The wound given by a sword will be healed in a month or so, but the wound given by the tongue is not healed. All through life, whenever you remember again, it becomes fresh. (*Sat Sandesh*, October 1975, pp. 3, 10, 14)

Almost everyone who has been wounded by someone else's tongue will bear witness to the fact that the pain does remain fresh. Moreover, if we have wounded some one else and later become aware of it, that special pain can also remain fresh. We remember things we said many, many years ago—carelessly, idly, without thinking of the consequences, perhaps just being funny—that return to our minds in a hot flash, making us wonder how we could possibly have said such hurtful things. Then we realize how much pain that other person experienced and may still be feeling because of our thoughtlessness. That is why Jesus says, "Let your word be 'Yes, yes,' or 'No, no'; anything more than this comes from the evil one." When we go beyond that which we really and truly know, we are opening the door to all kinds of harm and pain.

Baba Jaimal Singh wrote many letters relevant to this subject to his beloved disciple destined to be his successor, Sawan Singh. Sawan was living the life of a military engineer in what we would call an officer's camp, a cantonment in India, and Baba Jaimal Singh wrote a phrase which should be very helpful to us: "We should at least do that which is in our power." This is the reason why the Masters are so strict about the vegetarian diet: it is something within our power to control.

We can try to do other things and invoke the grace of God to help us, but we should at least do that which we can do. This is from Letter #79:

And you are strictly enjoined to spend all your leisure from official work in Bhajan and Simran, and not to waste time in meeting people or talking to them. We should do at least that which is in our power. A Satsangi should always keep his mind humble and fix it inside in the Shabd Dhun [Sound Current] with 'surat' and 'nirat' [seeing and hearing aspects of the attention] and inner devotion. The way of a Satsangi is always to look at his own defects and on the merits of others. This is the way that one should walk in life so that at the last moment (of death) the mind and 'surat' may not go astray. . . .

Notice that this section of the Sermon and these readings from the Masters are not really about judging others, but about being untruthful. They specifically point out that judging others is a form of untruth. We never know the true picture; only God knows, and what other people do is between them and God, the Master.

Chapter 14

The Reality of Non-Violence

Matthew 5:38-48 is a long section of the Sermon which is a complex grouping of thoughts:

You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

We have observed that the key to understanding the Sermon on the Mount lies in the angle of vision from which we can grasp reality. If we can understand that our normal way of doing things is based on illusion and oriented away from seeing the universe as it really is, if we can perceive things from the view of an inner reality, then the suggestions/commandments Jesus is making become a creed we can live by.

We have also seen that this first chapter of the Sermon is a commentary on the Torah from the esoteric Jewish point of view; and the last verse, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect," is the climax of that commentary. However, traditional mainstream Christianity tends to ignore this verse on the premise that it's not possible for anyone to be perfect: it is theologically correct to say that we are flawed, "totally depraved," as the Calvinists phrase it. But Jesus is very explicit, and the word "perfect" means just that. The Greek word is *teleios* and has several connotations, but the clear, unequivocal meaning is "perfect," "complete," just as God is perfect and complete. Incidentally, a secondary meaning of *teleios* is "initiated"; the word was used technically for the Greek mysteries, and in carrying that connotation it leads into the next part of the Sermon (Matthew 6) that deals with the method of going within and the attitudes that lead to successful meditation.

In this passage, "perfect" abstracts the result of looking at the universe in the way Jesus has been teaching throughout this "Great Instruction": if we see the universe and other people as he does, we will become like God because this is the way God sees. He loves us all, even though we may not be very good. If we love only our neighbors who look at things the way we do, and hate our enemies, then we are imitating Kal, the Negative Power; but if we love both friends and enemies and make no distinction between them, we are manifesting the attitude of the God of love who loves everyone simply because we exist. He comes down lifetime after lifetime to take home everyone who will come with Him, regardless of their worth. This teaching has great importance because if we practice those aspects of God's mercy and love, we open the door to receive them from Him.

Of course, nowhere in the Torah are we commanded to hate our enemies. But Jesus is accurately quoting the law as it was generally understood, with some justification. Certainly, the concept of having enemies was never challenged in the Torah. But the viewpoint of the esoteric tradition in the Torah is very close to Jesus's here. For example, in the book of Leviticus, in the section called The Law of Holiness, there is a whole new understanding of how human beings should relate to each other which is very much the same as Jesus's and is part of the esoteric tradition he is drawing from:

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. . . .

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God.

You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning. You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

. . . You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

When an alien resides with you in the land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:1, 9, 13, 18, 33)

The viewpoint here is very close to that of Jesus in the Sermon. We are to be holy because God is holy, just as we are to be perfect because God is perfect; both commandments and

the vision of humanity they express ultimately go back to Genesis 1:27. It is not just our neighbor but also the “alien” (which in practical terms usually means “enemy”) that we are to love as ourself; it is not just people who can benefit us that we are to consider, but the total outsider: the poor, the blind, the deaf, the ones who are and have nothing by exoteric standards. And the laborer we hire is not primarily someone who works for us, but a child of God in his own right. Therefore we should pay him what we owe him as soon as he earns it; that’s a biblical and also an esoteric principle. It may be that in this modern, advanced world we’ve constructed a society so complex that such a practice is not feasible, but it is our loss; the perception of human worth implied in these verses is the correct one.

The idea of not resisting an evildoer and of turning the other cheek when someone strikes us does not mean we should allow others to intimidate or manipulate us. It is in fact exactly the opposite: if someone wants to use force against us, the most important thing from the Master’s perspective is that we not allow his attitude to become ours. We do not allow him, in other words, to manipulate or intimidate us to respond in kind. We keep our own point of view, which is (hopefully and ideally) God’s, and stubbornly refuse to deal with him on the level of his lowest manifestation. We insist on relating to him on the level of what he really is in the essence of his soul. That’s the root of the way this principle works, and it has great power. If we put it into practice we will see that it opens many doors for us; if we fail, we will learn from our experience and get another chance.

The Lord Buddha explains this precept very clearly:

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a person speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the wagon.

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a person speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow

that never leaves him.

"He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me,"—in those who harbor such thoughts hatred will never cease.

"He abused me, he defeated me, he robbed me,"—in those who do not harbor such thoughts hatred will cease.

For never does hatred cease by hatred here below; hatred ceases by love; this is an eternal law. (Dhammapada 1:1-6)

Master Kirpal often told this story:

It so happened that somebody came up to Lord Buddha and began to call him names, like anything. Sometimes you find such opposition comes up because there are rivals or parties. He came in the evening and he went on this way into the night. When a man is in an angry mood, he forgets everything all around him. It got dark, then he thought, "Oh, it is getting dark; I have to go back." As he was turning away, Buddha told him, "Well, look here, dear friend." "Yes, what do you have to say?" "Look here, if somebody brings a present and the person for whom he has brought it does not accept it, with whom does that present remain?" "Well, naturally, with the one who has brought it." "Well, whatever present you have brought me, I do not accept." (*Sat Sandesh*, February 1975, p. 26)

Non-violence has sometimes been confused with cowardice. If someone weaker than we are is being attacked and we are in a position to do something about it, but we say, "Well, no. I believe in non-violence," and don't help that person, this is not a good thing.

Baba Sawan Singh, in an important letter, points this out and then goes on to explain the inner teaching:

All Saints, including Lord Jesus, give us the Word, the practice of which would lift man up from Pinda

[the physical plane] to Anda [the astral plane] and higher regions, thereby generating in him the strength to conquer the evil in him and attain Salvation, which is the object of human life. When the key—the Word—is missing, the doctrine of “non-resistance to evil” remains a dead letter. It has been said in previous letters that our viewpoint on life changes rapidly with every little travel on the spiritual journey within ourselves:

The senses are detached from the objects; the mind no longer runs through senses; the attention is held by the Word within; the evils—lust, anger, and so forth—run out from within, finding the place too hot for them, . . . not secretly but declaring openly that in the presence of the Word they cannot remain within.

When the evils have been conquered and turned out, their place is taken by the positive qualities; then strife and struggle give place to peace and tranquillity. And the higher the rise is within, the greater is the harmony with the Word and His creation. Then the doctrine of non-resistance to evil, or putting it positively and at a much higher level as the doctrine of charity, mercy and love, is seen as the handmaid of the Word, and comes into action automatically. And when it becomes dynamic and dominating, the doctrine of non-resistance to evil acquires a new meaning.

The evil is seen as a mere weakness which is easily tolerated in the hope that, properly handled, it can be overcome. The parents’ love, with their gentle but firm handling of their children, gives them good breeding. The teachers’ love and handling makes them good citizens. The church does its bit. But the Saints’ love and handling makes them Saints. Parents, teachers and church work in very narrow spheres and have their limitations. They teach toleration and do good work but do not eradicate evil, and without its eradication, the strength

“to love your enemies and them that hate you and use you spitefully” does not develop.

The whole beauty, therefore, lies in the Word and its practice. Because the Saints are rare and the Word cannot be had except from a living Saint, and the practice of the Word is no joke, and without the grasp of the Word there is no awakening of the soul, no victory over the mind and senses, no development of the positive qualities and no banishment of evil; the man, no matter how intellectual, remains an animal. He imitates Saints without the strength of Saints, glibly talks of their doctrine but cannot live up to it, with the result that there is a clash in the doctrine and the facts of daily life. . . . (*Spiritual Gems*, pp. 358-359)

As with all things connected with the Sermon, there is a paradoxical element here: we must begin to practice all the things Jesus presses upon us before we can change our angle of vision. We can change that angle only when we go within and learn to understand things from his viewpoint, but going within and seeing from that perspective demands that we first practice looking from his point of view. To a great extent we can override the paradox by being in the presence of the living Master and receiving his darshan, and this is why Saints come in the human body and dwell among us. To an even greater extent we learn to change our angle of vision through the grace he gives when we ask him for it—if we ask for initiation, every thing we need is given to us if we bother to put it into practice.

However, the pull of the world is strong, the habit of seeing things in accordance with Maya is also strong, and even when we realize the Master has given us everything we need and were born to have, we allow ourselves to forget that now we must put it to good use. Most of us have had the experience of forgetting, soon after our initiation, what we are supposed to do; and we then experience a continual series of “forgettings.” People looking from the outside might say, “Well, why? If the Master is real and you have been given this pearl of great

price, this key to the meaning of life, and you are able to go within and change your point of view, why on earth did you forget?"

There's no answer to that question except that most of these things seem easier to do than they actually prove to be when we try to put them into practice. As Baba Sawan Singh has just said in his letter, the shifting of the point of view is no small thing; it's no joke and it's difficult to make it happen. The grace of the Master makes it possible, but our part is to contribute that which is called "remembrance." Forgetting is so easy to do, and according to the Masters it is the definition of sin: "sin" equals "forgetting." Being initiated and showered with grace by the Master does not mean we are cured of forgetting. We may remember most of the time, but the one time we do forget may color the rest of our day, or many days; that's the way life is.

The temptation to imitate outwardly, which Master Sawan referred to in his letter, is constantly present and must be avoided at all costs. Imitation doesn't work and the Path doesn't work unless we are absolutely honest with ourselves. This is what the self-introspection diary is for: it gives us an opportunity to be continually honest. When Sant Ji tells the story of the crane and the swan,* he is making this very point: A crane saw some swans and wanted to be like them, so he decided to do just what they did. He gave up eating fish which was his natural diet and tried to eat pearls which, according to Indian mythology, swans live on. He couldn't do it because the pearls were not digestible for him, and eventually he broke his beak in the attempt so that he could no longer even eat fish. He then starved to death.

Sant Ji's point is that we cannot imitate the Masters by trying to do something that is beyond our power to do. We have to start slowly and work upward. When a person is about to be violent toward us or treat us in a way that is hurtful or inappropriate, if we can see the God in him and recognize him even briefly as a child of God, we will have adjusted our angle of vision for that brief moment. But the change of viewpoint

* See *The Jewel of Happiness*, pp. 22-23.

will not last until we have practiced going within consistently enough to make it permanent.

There are great men and women who have done this, at least partially: Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day, Mother Theresa, are all people of this century who, while they may not have been full-realized Saints in every sense of the word, learned the great skill of living in a loving, non-violent way without forgetting to see others as children of God. Because they perceived the God in others, they could successfully refuse to be intimidated by them and go on with their work. Their publications and the stories of their lives provide valuable examples, but for most of us the strength and staying power for sustaining such an angle of vision will come only from going within. For this reason the Sermon on the Mount begins immediately after this section to deal with prayer: what true prayer is and how God answers our prayers according to the way we have treated others.

We just have to do our best to stay in remembrance and slowly come to Master's angle of vision. Oftentimes the path of any human being who is moving toward God seems very difficult, and what is required seems more than any one can do. If, after all, we have to respond to being whacked by offering that person the chance to whack us again, it does seem to be more than most of us can handle. But the Masters say that we simply have to do our best in consonance with whatever perspective we have developed up to that point. If we are successful, what really happens is that we do not allow someone else to drag us down. We do not "accept the gift," in the words of the Buddha in Master Kirpal's story.

If we accept that gift, we are allowing the other person to intimidate us, to dictate how we must look at the universe; we allow him to manipulate us into getting angry at him. If we accept his hatred or contempt for us by reciprocating it, we allow him to determine how we act. On the other hand, if we can sustain a perception of him as a temporarily misguided child of God, then sooner or later, according to the law of non-violence, we will influence him as he would influence us if we allow it. These precepts are admittedly difficult to grasp, and when the opportunities arise for us to

use them it often seems beyond our competence to put them into practice.

With all that, the Masters do really require on a very immediate daily level this practice of non-resistance or turning the other cheek.

In my personal experience there was a time when I was brought face to face with this in a way which I had never experienced before. The story also reveals the complex responses and feelings that arise when we feel we are being attacked unfairly.

In January 1967, there was a neighbor of Sant Bani Ashram who was a part owner of land that was bordered on three sides by the ashram, and which had no road frontage. He offered to sell us the land at what were then high prices, although it would have been a tremendous bargain in today's market. Of course, we couldn't see that at the time and refused to buy, so he started coming through the middle of the Ashram with all kinds of snowmobiles, claiming it was his right of way. This "right-of-way" went between the big house and the present meditation hall, which didn't exist then, down by the pond, which didn't exist then, across from Master's house, which didn't exist then, and up into the woods to his ten acres.

The first time he came through was just before Satsang on Sunday morning; I heard a tremendous racket and ran out. There were twenty-five snowmobiles coming down from the woods! I ran out and stopped them, and our neighbor explained that it was a local snowmobile club that was considering buying his land—and if they did, they would be using his right-of-way. I didn't know what to make of that; I stared at him, genuinely speechless. That night he came to see Judith and me, offering to sell us the land instead. We felt that we were being intimidated—"extorted"—and refused. From then on, snowmobiles coming through that "right-of-way" were a regular phenomenon.

When the snowmobiles started coming, I lost it. The idea of somebody claiming a right-of-way through the middle of the ashram—which at that time I completely identified with (and which at that time Judith and I personally owned, although that has not been true for a long time)—seemed so terrible it was beyond speech. Although none of those buildings existed then,

I was aware that one day they or something like them probably would be built. So I forgot all about the teaching on non-violence, and I went to a lawyer. He told me that we should file suit to "remove cloud from title," and I thought, "That's all right; we won't exactly be suing *him*."

When I filed suit, suddenly everything seemed to shift up several gears. The man went berserk, and any time of the day or night, snowmobiles were coming through the ashram. I went berserk also; I jumped right in there with him. I couldn't bear it. I would walk the road at night, holding a lantern, waiting for them to come; I would do meditation and hear the sound of snowmobiles; it was absolutely an obsession with me. I would wonder, "Where is the Master? Why is the Master not here?" It seemed to me he just wasn't there for me.

We eventually got a chance to go south. Judith's aunt invited us to stay at her house in Florida for a while, and in late February we went down; I just wanted to stay away until the snow melted. I didn't know what I would do then. Just before we left, I wrote a letter to Master Kirpal in which I presented the situation, putting me in the best possible light, and making him out to be a totally bad guy because of what he wanted to do; I told Master what I had done about filing suit and everything. He replied with this letter, dated March 10, 1967,—in my life a major piece of scripture:

Worry and hurry are the chief causes to dwell on by the mind. If you could just eliminate these two by resigning to the Divine Will and Pleasure of the gracious Master Power working overhead, you will be relieved of the undue strain and stress. Please note it for certain that whatever comes to your account is in your best spiritual interests . . .

In context, that last sentence is extremely revealing. It has often been quoted as part of Master's teaching, but bear in mind that what was coming to my account at that particular time was the worst possible thing I could imagine. I did *not* want to believe it was in my best spiritual interest; it seemed very clear that I should do anything to stop those snowmobiles. Master's letter continues:

... and becoming a fit receptacle for the divine grace you have to inculcate a sense of self abnegation and effacement without involving your mind. The more you are relaxed, reposing and receptive, more of ineffable bliss and harmony will fall to your lot. Just rise so high in the loving lap of the Master Power to consider yourself as a child, who would relish: "Thy will not mine be done." . . .

As regards the Sant Bani Ashram land dispute, it could have been better if you could have discussed it in all loving politeness with the party concerned. It would be still advisable to seek cooperation of Mr. — — through some common friend which may straighten the affairs with the grace of the Master. Such like impediments do obstruct sometime and cause disturbance. Howsoever patience, humility and loving kindness pays in the long run. You should play your part in as noble a manner as you possibly can do, and leave the rest to the Master Power.

That letter hit me like a nuclear bomb. I was in Florida when I got it, and I instantly saw that I had been wrong. It was one of those moments when you suddenly realize that everything you've done within the past few months—or perhaps within living memory—just isn't making it. I instantly tried to do what Master said: I withdrew the lawsuit, and I contacted a mutual friend who was extremely unhappy about what had been going on. She was very, very grateful that I wanted to take a different tack and she arranged a meeting with our neighbor.

The first thing I said to him, because I was aware of what Master wanted from me, was, "I'm sorry. I've withdrawn the suit and I'm sorry that I caused you inconvenience, and you can use the right-of-way whenever you want."

He said, "Well, I'm sorry I caused inconvenience for you, and I don't want to use it anymore."

I said, "No, that's all right. You can use it! It's O.K."

He said, "No, no, I don't want to. I promise you, I'm not going to use it."

We shook hands, and he kept his word. He never used it, and furthermore, a few months later he moved away.

Now I saw this dispute as an on-going thing that was going to happen. I thought I was going to have to defend my land forever. The lawyers had talked to me this way—this is the way lawyers think. As Master Kirpal once said, “Even God is afraid of an attorney, I tell you.” I did what the attorneys told me to do, but the funny thing is that a lot of other people had advised me in the same way because it seemed so obviously the thing to do. My father, a near neighbor who hated what was happening and thought we were being bullied, and many other people gave me the same advice. All those people were absolutely astounded, both at what the Master had told me and at the result. I met the neighbor at the store one night and she asked how things were going, and I told her that the Master had asked me to withdraw the suit and I was not going to sue him any more, and I was going to let him do whatever he wanted. I also said he had promised not to do anything and the snowmobiles had stopped completely. She was amazed. Of course, I was, too. When I had finally got around to caring about what the Master’s advice would be, I had also been astonished. But the fact is that this is an old, old doctrine, based on solid ground. When we operate from God’s special angle of vision, it really does make a difference. We can eat pearls. We may not be swans forever, but we find that pearls can suddenly become digestible, at least for a while. We catch a glimpse of something higher, a perspective we might be able to grasp securely. It does take courage, and the reason I could be brave in this particular instance was that Master had been very specific in showing me the viewpoint I was stuck in. He eliminated the Maya, showed me the reality and the direction to go in, and only then was I able to receive his grace.

After I got his letter I realized why I had felt the Master was not with me during the time of my obsession with the snowmobiles. He *had* been with me, but I had my back turned to him; it was as though I wouldn’t let him into the picture. I was too attached to my angle of vision, and there was no way he could reach me until I wrote him. Then, even though my letter was self-serving and essentially untrue because it painted me

in the best light and the other man in the worst light, even then when I turned toward him just that much, he was able to change the whole situation. We should never underestimate the power of the Master in these areas.

Loving your enemies and turning the other cheek are valuable steps on the upward path, but we need the guidance and strength and protective help of the living Master because it is not an easy climb. Only with his help can we do these things that Jesus, Buddha, and all the Masters have asked us to do. When the Masters of the past set these goals, they knew they could be reached only with an inner connection and they gave that connection to the disciples who came to them. The living Master of today does the same thing for his disciples.

It's out of fear that we fail to love our enemies. It may seem paradoxical, but if someone behaves violently toward us, it is fear that provokes us to retaliate with violence. It takes great courage not to resist with force. It also takes inner strength to refuse to "accept the gift" of an angry person and to deny him the right to determine how we will behave. Sant Ji's maxim that in Sant Mat we do not intimidate others nor let them intimidate us really says it all.

One or two things mentioned in this passage seem to imply that we *should* let others intimidate us, but that is a misunderstanding due to translation. For example, "Do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you," has created controversy based on the Greek word that is used for "borrow," which has the technical meaning of "interest." In context and with a close examination of the Greek, what is really being said here is: "Don't refuse anyone because he can't pay interest." There is a complex argument for this translation and it is a valid one; accordingly, we don't have to lend to anyone who demands it, but the determining factor should not be his inability to pay interest.* Better yet is Master Kirpal's suggestion that we neither borrow nor lend, but share what we have with each other. Then we will rise above the duality of this issue and live according to what Jesus is advising here.

Similarly, the statement, "If anyone forces you to go one

* See THE ANCHOR BIBLE, *Matthew*, pp. 69-70.

mile, go also the second mile," comes out of the context of Roman-occupied Palestine. There the citizens of the land were often drafted by soldiers to do things for them such as carrying a load in a direction that was perhaps a mile out of their way. It was customary for the Roman soldiers to do this and the people of the land naturally hated it and did not want to obey; but Jesus is saying here that it is better to comply in these matters. Why? First, because every person who went a second mile helped another person to escape being drafted. Second, because of the whole issue of the Roman occupation of Palestine and the natural patriotic and religious feelings of the people. What no one knew at that time was that a Jewish rebellion against the occupation and Roman retaliation would lead to the destruction of the Temple and the Dispersion of the Jewish people just forty years later. So there is a very profound meaning beneath the surface of this statement, which if followed could have saved an enormous amount of suffering.

II

Perfect?

In studying this great Sermon on the Mount we continually run the risk of taking too superficial a view of certain aspects of it, and the last five verses of the passage we just discussed merit more attention. They constitute the conclusion and climax of the first of the three chapters of the Sermon, and they also set the tone for what follows.

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if

you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:44-48)

Probably the single most important verse in the entire three chapters of the Sermon is that last one, verse 48: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." However, there is some controversy over how to translate that verse. As we have seen, the Greek word *teleios* means "perfect" or "complete," with an auxiliary meaning of "initiated into the mysteries."* But there is some scholarly argument that *teleios* didn't fully mean that at this time, and that what is meant here is something else. The Anchor Bible version reads, "Be true, just as your heavenly Father is true." The New Jerusalem Bible reads, "You must therefore set no bounds to your love, just as your heavenly Father sets none to his." There is truth in these versions, and there is no doubt that what Jesus is saying here encompasses those two ideas; but to translate the verse in either of those ways falls short of the truth.

The command is clear: We are to be perfect. Yet this does run against the whole exoteric mainstream of Christian thought that it is impossible for a person to be perfect—which of course underlies the scholarly objections we have just mentioned. Yet the exoteric mainstream is wrong. Implied here is our children-of-Godness. We are supposed to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us so that we may be children of our Father; this is what we are born to do as children of our Father. This is what our nature implies: we are born to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. We have this capacity within us because we are children of a Father who does just that, "for He makes his sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

It's sometimes hard to reconcile this passage with a whole host of images in the Bible and other spiritual writings in which God is pictured as doing just the opposite, punishing the

* See Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 809.

wicked and rewarding the virtuous; and even in this Sermon, both before and after this section, we find Jesus using language that seems to indicate that God does this. But the fact remains, and Sant Ji has made this very clear, that when we are punished and rewarded, it is not God who is doing it. We can say that it's God if we take the viewpoint that God is the only Doer and that everything that is done is done by Him, and certainly in that real sense He is doing it. But in reality, it's our karma, as it is administered by the Lord of Karma, the Negative Power, that we are paying off; and we should be very clear on this point.*

We attribute what comes to us to grace, and we appreciate it and say it is God's gift. That's a good attitude as long as we don't assume that when something bad comes to us it is God being mean to us. Sant Ji says very clearly that when something good happens to us it's because of our karma; when something bad happens to us it is also because of our karma. The Master's role in all this is to help us use whatever comes to us in order to rise above the whole concept of duality, the understanding of things as "good" and "bad." Underlying everything is the fact that no matter what happens to us, no matter what our karma is, God loves us. He makes the sun rise whether we are bad or good; He sends rain to us whether we're bad or good. From His point of view, the badness or goodness is irrelevant.

What He sees can only be called "good." He loves us. When we list the various reasons why He loves us, we must also remember that He loves us because we are a part of Him. When we say we are His children, we are a part of Him in the same way that our own children proceed from us. They are themselves, but they are also us; we are encapsulated in them along with a lot of other things, just as we also came forth from our parents. There is a real sense in which we are *literally* children of the Positive Power, the God of love and mercy: we are His children because we are a part of Him. Therefore He loves us because in loving us He is loving Himself, just as when we love

* For a Biblical example of these two ways of understanding this, compare II Samuel 24:1 with I Chronicles 21:1.

our neighbor we love ourself. There is no difference.

If we love those who love us—everyone does that. If we greet those who are connected to us, who on earth does not do that? Jesus is saying that as initiates (*teleios*), more is expected of us. Master Kirpal said, “There are good people everywhere, but you are selected to be good people.” We are supposed to be good people because although everyone is a child of God, those of us who are initiated have begun to have that child-of-Godness manifested within us in a way that is not open to those who have not yet taken the initiation. It is imperative that we live according to that special gift. This is what is meant by, “Be perfect therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

There are many commandments which seem to be asking too much; many we have already considered because they are found right here in the Sermon on the Mount. There is a whole school of thought within Evangelical Christianity that asserts that the point of the Sermon is to prove that we can’t do it—that Jesus set the stakes so high to make us realize that the only alternative is to believe in him and let him do it for us. This is an incorrect understanding; the Masters do not tell us to do things that we can’t do. The great Christian philosopher Erasmus, reacting to precisely this understanding as set forth by Martin Luther, put it roundly:

If what is commanded be not in the power of every one, all the numberless exhortations in the Scriptures, and also all the promises, threatenings, expositions, reproofs, asseverations, benedictions, and maledictions, together with all these forms of precepts, must of necessity stand coldly useless. (Quoted in Gollancz, *Man and God*, p. 7)

It is certainly true that we can’t do them always and at all times, and that we can’t do everything at once. There is an underlay of movement here, of what we have been calling “trajectories.” The direction in which we move makes all the difference because once we begin moving in the right direction, we will finish at the goal.

So what is implied here in Jesus's statement is, "Yes, we are to be true as God is true; yes, we are to eliminate the boundaries of our love just as God has no boundaries on His love. We are to become like Him because, in essence, we are Him. And becoming like Him, becoming perfect as He is, is in the long run the only thing that will satisfy us. It is the only thing that will give us real happiness and peace. It has to be like this because our essence demands it; there is no way out." It's not really a commandment at all, in the traditional sense. It's a statement of the human condition.

St. Paul, in a famous passage, comments on some of the difficulties involved:

For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:14-25)

It's clear enough. "Sin dwelling within us" is Kal, the Negative Power, who dwells within each one of us in the form of our mind and influences us in ways that are against our own ultimate best interests. "In our inmost self" we all "delight in the law of God," because of what our inmost self is, but the

problem is that the mind, or “sin dwelling within us,” gets in the way. What Jesus gives us in the Sermon on the Mount is a way out of the mess. “Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect” is possible if it is really true that in our inmost self we love the law of God, because it is our inmost self that we are dealing with here. In a way, all of these things he is saying are ways in which our inmost self can also become our outer self. We can become theocentric, God-centered.

Master Kirpal Singh speaks of perfection as a viable option for human beings:

The very idea of attaining spiritual perfection is a happy augury and a prelude to the greatest venture in one's life. It is the Divine Mercy which, when stirred, brings about such a sublime thought. (*Seven Paths to Perfection*, p. 20)

Despite the fact that our present state is one of self-complacency and abject misery, both of which are two facets of not seeing things the way they really are, the point is that “the very idea of attaining spiritual perfection is a happy augury.” It's a good sign, and it means that once we have the idea, we are going to do it because everything starts there. Master Kirpal has said elsewhere that the greatest day in a man's life is when the idea of going back to the Father occurs to him, and that that idea cannot come to us through our own powers. That is a gift of grace. But the fact that the idea is present means that it will be accomplished; it has to be accomplished.

Chapter 15

Rewards and Rewards

Jesus begins his comments on piety and prayer with this passage, Matthew 6:1-6, and we will consider some of its implications:

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

This is a powerful and important teaching, eternally a part of what the Masters tell us. It's actually part of the Initiation Instructions, for although the Initiation words are different, the idea is the same. We must learn that it is death to us if we think of ourselves as "spiritual people," and if we want others to think of us as spiritual people it's two deaths. The quality of our own personal Path depends on our not thinking of ourselves this way. This cannot be emphasized enough.

If we trade the real thing which is given to us within for the approval and praise of the world and for the pleasure we find in worldly activities and objects, then we are giving away something very valuable in exchange for our ego's enjoyment. This is the most important reason why we are not supposed to talk about our spiritual experiences to other people, or parade the fact that we do spiritual practices before them. No matter how we do it, if we talk about our experiences to others, we are giving them the impression that we are spiritually advanced. They will look at us as though we are and we won't be able to handle it; if we keep that up, something will give. We will lose. We may lose the experiences or we may lose something else, but we will definitely lose. We get our reward the minute we "act spiritual" in front of others or think of ourselves that way. If we want other people to think of us as spiritual, and they do, then that's what we get, that is our reward. But it's not the real thing, nor is it what we are after.

Sant Ji says in one place that it's just as well if other people don't even know we're initiated. Not that we are to deny our Master or pretend—out of fear—that we're not initiated; but the point is, why should it matter what other people think of us? Yes, they're supposed to love us, but they're supposed to love us because we make it easy for them to do so by being lovable. That's another thing entirely.

Master Kirpal Singh tells a story in *Morning Talks* which is relevant:

Those who are initiated are done so by the special grace of God. The purpose of Initiation is for our soul to go back to the lap of our Father through the Light and Sound Principle which emanates from Absolute God. Further special grace is given when

an initiate is selected for some job to help carry on the work. It is those who want to be nearer to the Master who are given some special job to do, some duty to perform. If the person to whom the job is given does it selflessly, with no ego in him, it will bear forth fruit. When you see that everything goes according to the Will and Pleasure of the Master, then naturally, you will be one with Him. You will have no will of your own. His Will is your will and His Will is God's Will. So each one of you should be thankful that you have been initiated. You have been put on the way back to Absolute God. When He has selected you for some particular duty, you are still more fortunate, but perform it with full faith, devotion and selflessness. If you do this, what will He give you? He will give you His very own place.

Guru Har Govind, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, once asked somebody to recite from the Jap Ji, which is part of the Guru Granth Sahib, the scripture of the Sikhs. He said, "Whoever will recite this with single-minded attention, may ask me for his heart's desire. But there should be no other thought intervening. It must be done with single-minded attention." So one man began to recite from the Jap Ji. He went on with single-minded attention and when he was coming near to the end of the recitation, he thought of a very beautiful horse that had been given to the Master, and wished for it. At the close of the recitation, he spoke up and asked for the horse. The Master gave him the horse and then said to him, "Well, look here, if you had not wanted that horse, I would have given my very own seat to you." You follow me? Those who work selflessly, with single-minded attention, will become one with the Master. The Master wants to bring you to one with Himself. Those who want something else, well that is given of course, but selfless service for the Master is the highest good fortune, I would say. But who does it? He to whom God sends His grace. (*Morning Talks*, pp. 147-148)

That man had his reward. Failure comes in all shapes and sizes and this is an easy way to fail: to see incorrectly and underestimate what the possibilities are, or what we are losing. It's the opposite of humility when we sell ourselves short, usually because of fear. We are afraid to go for the whole thing; we settle for something less and in so doing we cut ourselves off from having that which we could have, that which is the very core and essence of the universe.

This is a kind of failure that most of us are extremely familiar with, having experienced it many times. It's always there. We can get what we want, but what the Master wants to give us is so far beyond our imagining that we must allow him to dictate the terms. Selfless service is what is wanted, Master has said, not other kinds. Service that is not selfless brings a different kind of reward, one that cannot compare with what he wants to give us.

Basically, real prayer is meditation and meditation is real prayer, and the whole business of meditating or praying privately has to do with not letting people know how "good" we are. If we are around initiates or people who are doing the same thing, then of course it's helpful to meditate with others; but if we are the only one doing it and we insist on doing it publicly, with the result that it makes other people feel inferior to us or somehow less than they might be, then naturally we will reap the reward of that. It isn't going to work right. They may think that we are very holy and good, and we may like them to think that; but that is the reward we will get, whereas if we actually go within, we will get a very different kind of reward.

There is a brief collection of letters written by Baba Sawan Singh between 1923 and 1932, to one person; the manuscript was received from the disciple to whom the letters were written. These excerpts are very specific messages about meditation:

I am glad to read that you have grasped the significance of service to the Sound Current and justice to yourself. Guru Nanak, a great Saint of the sixteenth century and founder of Sikhism in the Punjab, says, "If one can concentrate his attention in the Third

Eye, then he has done all the pilgrimages, devotions, kindnesses and charities." The soul is hungry, its food is the Sound Current (called WORD by Christ). It finds no rest without it. Its wandering will continue as long as it has not merged itself in the Current.

You appear a bit concerned with your slow progress. The power of the Guru is within you and is very busy in making matters easy for you. That power is far more anxious to meet you than you can possibly think. The Karmic debt of many an intricate nature is to be paid and it is proper that it should be paid while in the physical frame, so that there is no stop on the way within. Your duty is to sit within and knock at the door, and the door will open. The power within does not err. It will open when it will find that the time is come. You increase your love and devotion and entrust yourself entirely to its care. The Power within is not ignorant of what you are doing. It is with you and constantly watches you and guides you. When your love for that power exceeds your love for yourself, and the "I-ness" has been replaced by "Thou-ness" the form of the Guru will make its appearance visible within.

I am glad you have located the star. You may now fix your attention in it and when this is fixed in it and becomes steady, the star will burst and you will cross through it. Pain and pleasure of the devotees are in the hands of the Master. He arranges them as He sees fit. The devotees should take delight in pain, for that also is a gift from Him. A real devotee makes no distinction in pain and delight. His business is devotion.

The cluster of stars does not disappear. It is the shaky mind that wavers and loses sight of them. The spirit goes within and returns. The sky and stars that you see and the voices that you hear now

are on the way to the date within. Within you will hear much sweet music, hearing which the spirit will waken up and the mind will sleep. The music that we hear in the world outside dulls the spirit but awakens the mind. On hearing this inner music, a spirit would not care to touch the throne of a monarch. As for anger, passion, attachment, greed and pride coming under control, that point is not reached (yet)—but when you see the astral form of the Master and when your spirit will stay in that form, the state will be yours. That music spontaneously attracts you and pulls you up.

The stage of the inward journey that you are crossing now takes rather a long time. This is the transition stage. Spirit is accustomed to stay out and you are forcing it within. The spirit is permeating in every part of the body. It takes time to collect it. When this stage is crossed the path beyond is easy; purified spirit is attracted by the magnetic music within. . . .

Other minor troubles will disappear. The Sound will come. There is a combination of ten sounds here at the eye focus. Out of these catch the Bell Sound. Whatever you may see within, please keep it to yourself. If somebody offers you anything within, please do not accept it. The negative powers frequently mislead. Avoid pride and do not be flattered. Humility is the armor of the Saints and their devotees. (*Sat Sandesh*, April 1971, pp. 21-23)

If we fall into the trap that Jesus and Baba Sawan Singh are warning us against—of seeing ourselves as “spiritually advanced”—we make ourselves terribly vulnerable on any level. “Humility is an armor,” “not taking ourselves too seriously” is an armor, a protection that works outwardly and also inwardly. All of these things—keeping our spiritual experiences to ourselves, not acting in such a way as to draw attention to how

holy and good we are, and not thinking of ourselves as “spiritually advanced”—lead up to the kind of strength that enables us to know when the Negative Power is misleading us inside. He will always flatter us even as he did Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11) and if we like his flattery, if that’s what we want, then we’ll get that reward but at a terrible cost.

Our pole-star must always be: “Humility is the armor of the Saints and their devotees.”

Chapter 16

The Lord's Prayer

We have reached the section of the Sermon on the Mount known as the Lord's Prayer, which is the focal point of the Sermon. On the surface, the Prayer appears to be a series of requests which Jesus says we don't need to make because our Father already knows what we need. So perhaps a better way to understand the Prayer is as a series of shifts in point of view which lead to the state of mind from which genuine prayer comes. Jesus tells his followers:

When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then in this way:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.**

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

**And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven
our debtors.**

**And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue
us from the evil one.**

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:7-15)

Entire books could be written about Jesus's words here, but we will very briefly consider, phrase by phrase, what the Master means and what he is calling us to. For out of this Lord's Prayer, real prayer comes. Real prayer, called by the mystics, "interior prayer," "prayer of the heart," or "spiritual prayer," has to do with a state of being. How to get into that state of being is the question, and this is what the Lord's Prayer leads us into.

"Our Father in heaven" is a phrase that has long since lost its original thrust. What is actually meant and who is being addressed? Children usually assume it is a male God living in the sky; that's who it seems to be talking about. But use of the word "Father" does not indicate maleness in any objective sense because the Bible itself, in the first chapter of Genesis, tells us that God is both male and female since all people were made in His image. ("In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:27) The word indicates a relationship; it's not a theological statement about gender. For Jesus it was very helpful to refer to God as his Father; to him the word meant someone who was loving, nurturing, caring, and forgiving. Other people find it helpful to relate to God as Mother. The esoteric tradition has room for both. As Guru Arjan wrote in his famous hymn: "You are my Father, You are my Mother, You are my near relative, You are my brother." Only in the fallen universe from the third plane down is there differentiation of sexes. What is important is the loving and caring relationship between God and the soul. We are *children* of God—that's the point.

Master Kirpal Singh has written in this connection:

The inescapable consequence of this [the hierarchy of the spiritual planes within so that some mystics go further than others] is that we encounter descriptions of the Absolute that, after an allowance for

differences of figurative language has been made, fail to agree. Jesus speaks of the Divine in Its paternal aspect; Sri Ramakrishna in Its maternal one. The Sankhya mystics speak of God, Prakriti and Atman as forever separate; Ramanuja as related but never merging into one; while Shankara sees them as of the selfsame essence, their separation being not real but only an illusion. All this means a mass of confusion to the common reader. But should he meet one who has reached the highest realm and is familiar with the experience of each of the inner planes, all contradictions would vanish, for he can demonstrate that though the six blind men made apparently the most contradictory statements about the nature of the elephant, yet they could all be finally reconciled by one who could see the whole elephant. (*The Crown of Life*, p. 243)

Another expression to look at is the “in heaven” part of the phrase, “Our Father in heaven.” As we noted above, the Greek word translated “heaven” is actually plural: what Jesus says is, “Our Father in the heavens,” a reference to the hierarchy of spiritual planes Kirpal Singh mentioned above. But where are these heavens? Jesus says in Luke 17:21 that the kingdom of God is within us. We have seen that although every Church Father and ancient authority assumed that that *is* what he said, recently scholars have come to take the other meaning of the Greek word, namely “among,” and say that it means “among us,” in the person of the living Master. The Gospel of Thomas affirms both meanings. But the point is, either way, that the kingdom is very near. (Matthew 4:17) So our Father, our Mother, our Loving Parent, Who loves us and cares for us more than we can imagine, is as near as can be. In the Koran it says that God is nearer to us than our neck artery—the jugular vein through which comes the life-giving blood. God is nearer to us and more vital than that.

Master Kirpal says that it’s essential to understand just how near God is; otherwise we get mixed up and praying becomes something other than what it’s supposed to be:

In worldly matters we do seek the help of persons who are more intelligent and capable than we are. We also offer prayers for aid to God—the greatest power conceivable—and that, no doubt, is a correct approach to the difficult and baffling problems which confront us every day in the course of our lives. But to regard that Omnipotent Power as something separate and apart from us, and to appeal to Him as to an outside benefactor, is assuredly a sorrowful mistake which is made by us; for He is the very soul of our soul, and is ever working within and without us, and we, in fact, live and have our very being in Him. The secret of success lies in direct prayer and appeal to the power within, as these bear sure fruit and in abundance. We do a great injustice both to Him and to ourselves when we think of God residing on snow-capped mountains, or under the depths of sacred rivers and water-springs, or in temples and mosques, or in churches and synagogues, or in this or that holy place. Limited as we are in time, space, and causation, we try to limit the Limitless within the narrow grooves that imagination can conceive of. Such belief on our part and consequent frustrations that result therefrom not infrequently tend to make us skeptical of Him.

When the reservoir of all power is in each one of us, we can, by a dip therein, become spiritually great and powerful. As physical exercises make us robust and strong physically, so do spiritual exercises awaken in us latent spiritual powers. By means of these we can pull up the sluice-gates and thus flood our very being with Divine Currents. When a person becomes Divinized or Divinity Personified, the very Nature, which is the hand-maid of God, begins to dance at his beck and call to fulfill all his needs and requirements.

A strong will does forge ahead and make a way for itself. We do, at times, by praying to some supposed powers without, succeed in our endeavors.

Such success is in fact due to a little concentrated effort on our part rather than to any outside agency. In this way we not only deceive ourselves, but gradually perpetuate the self-deception to the extent that in course of time it becomes a part of us, and we cannot but look upon God as something extraneous to us, and the worst of it is that we do not at all come in contact with the untold treasures of Divinity that lie within us and constitute our own heritage. It is only after the inner contact with Him has been established that we can truly understand His pervasiveness in the Universe and see His glory everywhere. Without this direct perception and first-hand experience of Him within, our conception of God is just hearsay or bookish and hence erroneous, and our prayers to Him a meaningless jargon. (*Prayer*, pp. 15-17)

The phrase "Hallowed be your name" can be translated, as in the New Jerusalem Bible, "May your name be held holy." What do we mean by "name" here? This prayer and this Sermon, and in fact the Gospels in general when we look at them with an unbiased eye, are full of the terminology of the esoteric Judaism of the day which Jesus, as a fully-realized Master, was teaching. "Hallowed be your name" refers to our recognition and acceptance of the importance of God's Name in both the *Dhumatmak* and *Varnatmak* forms. The *Dhumatmak Naam* is the power of God which created the universe, the Real Name—*Sat Naam*—of God—God naming Himself—and that is the ultimate meaning here. Our recognition of that Name, our holding that Name holy, is the beginning of everything. That is the *Naam* the Sant Mat tradition speaks of, and that Name is what will take us back to the Named.

Now the *Dhumatmak* name of God—the Word, the Logos, and other terms which have been used for it—cannot be expressed in language, but can be referred to, at least to some extent. That reference is called the *Varnatmak Naam*, or the Basic Names of God. It is not the same as the Real Name or *Sat Naam*, but it is connected to the Real Name by Masters

who have experienced it. The *Varanatmak Naam* (or outer Basic Names) varies from language to language, but it is the foundation of all real prayer; the use of the Basic Names of God, which are connected to the Real Name within, constitutes that foundation.

How this works is described by Martin Buber, a contemporary Jewish philosopher of great stature, who comments on the connection between the Hebrew Basic Name for God and the Arabic *Hu*, which is also a Basic Name of God used by the Sufis. The Hebrew name is the Tetragrammaton, a four-letter Hebrew word—YHVH—which is the origin of the English name “Jehovah” (and is “translated” as LORD in most English Bibles). According to orthodox Judaism, YHVH is not to be pronounced at all, because it is considered to be a Basic Name of God and is not to be taken “in vain.” (Exodus 20:7)

Martin Buber connects this word YHVH with the Arabic *Hu* via a well known hymn by Maulana Rumi:

“Possibly the name [i.e., YHVH] is in some degree only an extension of the word *hu*, meaning he, as God is also called by other Arab tribes at times of religious revival—the One, the Unnameable.” The Dervish cry *Ya-hu* is interpreted to mean, “O He!” and in one of the most important poems of the Persian mystic, Jelaluddin Rumi,* the following occurs: “One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call. He is the first, He is the last, He is the outward, He is the inward. I know no other except Yahu (O He) and Ya-man-hu (O He Who is.” . . .

The “true” name of a person, like that of any other object, is far more than a mere denotative designation for men who think in categories of magic; it is the essence of the person, distilled from his real being, so that he is present in it once again. What is more, he is present in it in such a form that anybody who knows the true name and knows how to pro-

* A poem quoted on several occasions by Kirpal Singh. See below, p. 411.

nounce it in the correct way can gain control of him. The person himself is unapproachable, he offers resistance; but through the name he becomes approachable . . . the essential thing in the last resort is that the speaker shall recognize this essential being in the name and direct his full attention upon it. Where that happens, where the magical work requires an aiming of the soul at the being meant, . . . the fuel is provided into which the lightning of a religious experience can fall. Then the magical compulsion becomes the intimacy of prayer, the bundle of utilizable forces bearing a personal name becomes a Thou, and a demagisation of existence takes place. (*Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant*, pp. 50-51)

In other words, the traditional magical idea that by knowing someone's name you gain control of him is, in reality, a popularized degeneration of the esoteric truth as it was known—the idea of the Basic Names of God. God names Himself. The Name with which He names Himself—what we call the Sound Current or the Logos, the “words” with which He said, “Let there be light,” in the very beginning—that Name, which is also the way back to Him, is the only way we can experience Him. That Name or Word is the central fact of the universe, the central fact of ourselves because it is the core of our being. It is in that sense that God is present within each one of us, and those Names which, while they are put into language, are connected to actual experience of the Name within, are the Basic Names of God. True prayer has to involve the use of them. When it does, that intimacy Buber speaks of happens, and we get what we are supposed to get from being in a state of prayer.

Prayer in English has largely come to mean “requesting”: “Do this for me, please.” Master Kirpal said that every prayer reduces itself to this: “Please let two and two make five.” So it is probably better to use the term “remembrance,” which is the translation of the word *Simran* that is used in Sant Mat. Remembrance is what the Lord's Prayer is aiming at; this is the psychological meaning of “holding His Name holy.”

“Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in

heaven." The phrase "on earth as it is in heaven" refers to the three things preceding it: "Holy be your Name" and "Your kingdom come" and "Your will be done." Our work is to manifest on earth that which is latent within us in the spiritual dimension within us which we may call "the heavens." It is our purpose on earth to be channels through which the Divine can work; this is true of every human being born; and while it is especially true of those of us who have taken initiation, it is not less true of others. This is what we were born for: to make His kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in the heavens. The inner must transcend, transform, and totally illuminate the outer.

We are called to share in that work, according to the wording of this prayer. If we really want it to happen, it will happen within us. Each person in whom it happens, each person within whom the will of God begins to work, adds to the number of people who will produce what the Master calls the Spiritual Revolution. Though many people think this prayer is eschatological, meaning that it refers to the end of the world, most of the Church Fathers who have commented on it do not agree. Rather it seems preferable to understand the Spiritual Revolution as the way in which the Kingdom of God can come among us. As we know, the Spiritual Revolution hinges on the inner transcendence of each person. If each one of us does what he was born to do, the Revolution will happen and the world will be a different place. It will be a place of love, and the Masters welcome that as a goal. It will be reached when enough people are turned around.

"Give us this day our daily bread" does not mean what it seems to mean. The Greek word *epiousion* that is translated here as "daily," exists only in two places in the whole range of Greek literature: in this verse in Matthew and in the parallel verse in Luke. The Church Father Origen, who had many interesting things to say about the Lord's Prayer, considered that the Evangelists had coined this word, because it does not exist in Greek anywhere else. Modern scholars have come to think he was right; they probably did coin it. This would mean that it is an attempt to represent an Aramaic word that conveyed the same idea.

So what does *epiousion* mean? Most meanings in the Greek language, or any language, are derived from comparing usages, and in this case there is no usage to compare it with. But apparently it is connected with the word meaning “being,” and Origen translates it as “the bread of daily being,” or “bread for being”—that which keeps us what we are. He did not think it referred to physical bread.* When St. Jerome translated the Gospels into Latin, he translated this word as “super substantial,” that is, “above substance.” He followed Origen on this point, and both of them considered that it meant “the bread of life.” Origen gives three different possibilities for the meaning of the phrase. One is the Word, or the Logos, the Name, the same Naam that we just talked about; another is the Tree of Life mentioned in Genesis, which probably also refers to this; and the third is the idea of Wisdom, most notably presented in the Book of Proverbs but also in Job (and in the book called *The Wisdom of Solomon*). All three actually refer to the Naam or the Word.

The fundamental Biblical verse is Deuteronomy 8:4, where Moses said (and Jesus quoted): “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” This is the idea, and what we are praying for here is to be in the position where we can contact Naam daily—exactly what the Masters tell us we should be doing. In that way, the sluice gates that Master Kirpal referred to above will be open and the floods of the Divine Current will overpower us, drown us out as it were. That which is our Real Being will take precedence over that which is a very limited caricature of our Real Self—the ego. The point of the Prayer is to receive the Bread of Life. (John 6:48) We are being instructed how to put ourselves into a mode of receptivity, so that the Bread of Life nourishes us daily.

However, the next line is the pivotal point: “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” We know this is the main point because it is what Jesus comments on when the Prayer is over: “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not for-

* See Origen, *On Prayer*, (CWS Edition), pp. 137 ff.

give others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” This is such a crucial point. William Blake understood it as the main teaching of the Gospel, and he was right. “Mutual forgiveness of each vice, such are the Gates of Paradise,” Blake wrote. The Masters agree with him, and if we read the writings carefully—the Bible, other sacred scriptures, and the writings of the modern Masters—we will understand that although God is the Doer and in most things we are powerless, there is one area in our control. We do what we are compelled to do by virtue of our karma, which is what the debts we want to be forgiven consist of. Until they are forgiven, they are compelling; they force us to do that which is required to pay them off. Yet while we are powerless in most things, the teaching of all the Masters is clear: in the case of forgiveness, it is up to us.

And here we really do have power: power over our own life and power over the lives of others. *We can forgive.* That’s our option, at any point and at any place. This is given to us to decide for ourselves. We forgive or we don’t forgive. As for power over the lives of others, any one of us who has been in a position where we have not been forgiven will instantly recognize what kind of power that is; and if we have been forgiven, we can recognize that power, too. Similarly, the main point of what is being said here is that forgiving others also amounts to forgiving ourselves. We create the gateway through which the Positive Power, the God of Love, the God of Forgiveness, the God of Mercy, works in the fallen universe. It is through the willingness of each one of us to forgive the people with whom we have contact, that He can work through us.

We are not to forgive only the people who have wronged us. There is a famous story, found in the Gospel of Luke, which is often called the “Parable of the Unjust Steward” (or “Dishonest Manager”):

Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager [or steward], and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ Then the manager

said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.' And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. . . ." (Luke 16:1-8)

This is an incredibly interesting story, one that many people have puzzled over. The point of it appears to be that it is good to be crooked, but in fact what Jesus is talking about is forgiveness: a refusal to allow the fallen universe to cloud the real view of what a human being is.

In other words, the "owing" is real enough within the context of the world of the Negative Power, but it is not real in the eyes of the true God. So when the steward, whose "real boss" is God, sees what people owe and refuses to accept their debts (even though they're owed to someone else) he falsifies them. Then God, the owner, accepts his action because *in truth the debt isn't real*. It's only real as long as we all agree that it is. In a sense the whole Law of Karma works on a kind of "Emperor's New Clothes" principle: we're all in this together and if we see each other as bad guys, as people who put each other down, then bad guys we will be.

But if we grasp the essence of this parable and see that the steward wrote down less than the people owed and thereby pleased his master, we understand its message: it is the Master's work—in this case the owner's work—to forgive the debts. Thus the owner was pleased when the steward did that on his

own. To put it in the context of our own lives, whenever we forgive other people what they owe to God, we are doing God's work. This is a very radical teaching and it's easy to misunderstand.

For one thing it does not involve "not seeing." The accounts are deliberately falsified and this falsification is what the forgiveness consists of; but the steward's action doesn't come from ignorance or from refusing to see what the debt really is. He knows what the people owe—he makes a point of finding out—and he consciously decides to cut their bills in half; in so doing he benefits them, he benefits himself for the reason given in the parable, and he also pleases his master. If he did not realize how much they owed, no forgiveness would be possible.

When we see each other as flawed human beings, we violate the Masters' cornerstone principle of non-violence which demands our constant remembrance of what humans are in their essence regardless of what their behavior makes them appear to be. Similarly, right understanding, Master Kirpal says, begins with this recognition: human beings are the children of God, God is within them (and us), and if we focus our attention on that rather than on what they're doing as such, then we can forgive them. Now just as it does in the parable, this comes close to what is called "being in denial" or refusing to see what is really there. But this is not what the Master is calling us to. The point is, what does "really" mean in this context?

We may see very clearly what a person is doing, but we can still hold to the knowledge that his behavior is not what he really is, and therefore forgive him. *The Master shows us how to do this because this is how he relates to us.* Many of us feel this is the single greatest benefit of having a living Master and spending some time with him and observing how he forgives us. Each of us has had a personal experience of his forgiveness. The Master doesn't really forgive *us*, he forgives *me*, he forgives each one of us personally; and he does this by not allowing what we think we are and how we usually behave to stand between him and our real self.

He sees our real self and at the same time sees the rest of us,

too; he knows how we misuse what we have been given and he knows what we really are and he knows that we act unworthily, but he does not let that stand in the way of his assessment of us. Many of us can say that the forgiveness of the Master when we know we have done something bad—"made a mistake," to use his term—is our greatest blessing. He always uses the term "mistake," but mistakes are not made in a vacuum; when we make a mistake we hurt people and ultimately we hurt him. He knows that and he forgives us anyway. This is the basic foundation of the Path: the Master's forgiveness of us and our being asked to reflect that forgiveness in our dealing with others. If we love him we won't hurt others because we will be hurting him, and if we refuse to forgive others it is as though we are refusing to forgive him. This is absolutely fundamental.*

"Do not bring us to the time of trial." This is the verse that is often rendered, "Lead us not into temptation," which is incorrect. "Do not put us to the test" or "Do not lead us to the time of trial" is the correct translation. God does not tempt people; He may put us to the test, but He doesn't tempt us. Temptation comes from other sources and from within our minds. To pray to not be put to the test is important because we should never ask for something which we can't do or carry through. It's an aspect of truthfulness that we have previously discussed.

"And rescue us from the evil one" is a very overt and explicit reference to Kal, the Negative Power in personal form who lives within us in our mind; as we have seen, St. Paul referred to this as "sin that dwells within me." This is a plea to protect us from that entity which is very real and very much with us, so that the other things we have asked for can happen.

Like Jesus, Master Kirpal often spoke urgently about forgiveness. In 1963 he was asked a question about what we could do to promote harmony among the disciples, and he said:

**First of all, we should forgive and forget the past.
That is the foremost necessity. As I told you in my**

* For an excellent discussion of the parable of the Unjust Steward, see P. D. Ouspensky, *A New Model of the Universe*, pp. 179 ff.

talk last night, many misunderstandings creep up and the majority of them are due to hearing through the ears of others and seeing through the eyes of others. Take it as if they had not told you. Then you will be all right.

Whatever has been done—if it is at all true that it happened—cannot be mended now. We have to forget. I tell you, the man who can forget is a very strong man. The majority of men cannot forgive. Forgiveness requires a very big heart. And how can those who do not like to forgive others expect forgiveness from God?

We wish that we would be forgiven. We pray for that, is it not so? He will forgive us only if we forgive others, too. If we don't forgive the God in others, how can the God, who is there in others, forgive us? Do you see? (*Sat Sandesh*, February 1975, p. 24)

We should remind ourselves that this is the one facet of life over which we have been given power. We do have freedom in this area. Master has said in this connection, "God Himself cannot change a man who does not want to change," and this is what he is talking about—whether or not we can forgive others. This will not be forced on us; and furthermore, we can't use the teachings of the Master as a club to beat the other person with and say, "You've got to do this because Master says so." We can't compel others to forgive us on these grounds. It is up to them and they have to want to forgive us; that part is not always in our control. But what we can do is allow the stream of forgiveness to flow through us and refuse to blame other people for anything. We can understand that whatever the problem is, they are not to blame; we don't have to see them as being at fault.

Psychologically speaking, it has been said that power is something we all want. We want control; we want to control our lives and some of us want to control the lives of others. A person who has real power within himself, a person who is sure of himself, does not mind if other people also have power; he or she can live comfortably with those who are exercising

control. And there is no real way to exercise power or control in life except through forgiving—everything else is illusory. We will realize this if we learn to forgive.

Master Kirpal, in his book *Prayer*, addresses the question of spiritual prayer, interior prayer, that which the Lord's Prayer is pointing toward. He begins with a long quotation from Swami Ji:

Listening to the Sound Current, the mind gets
stilled,
None of the myriad of ways can work this miracle.
The yogin practices yogic exercises,
The Jnani is immersed in Jnana.
The hermit tires himself out in lone solitude,
The anchorite does endless austerities.
Those who meditate on the mental patterns,
They too suffer from a great delusion.
Learning and knowledge are of not much avail,
For the wise in the end have to rue their wisdom.
The Pundit engages in the recitation of the Vedas
But all his sacred lore fails to take him any nearer
to God.
No other means are of any consequence whatever,
The only beneficial way is that of Shabd.
When a Master of the Sound Current appears on
the scene,
The disciple too begins to feel the yearning of the
new birth.
With the practice of the Surat Shabd Yoga,
The mind-stuff gradually sinks within itself till
nothing remains. (Swami Shiv Dayal Singh)

When once this contact with Naam is established, the *Sadhak* always feels the presence of the Higher Power and the Power remains forever with him wherever he may be. . . . Reveling in the greatness of that Power he leaves all his cares to Him and becomes indifferent to everything around him. He cheerfully accepts whatever comes his way as coming from Him

for his benefit alone. He consciously sees the Divine Will at work and smilingly surrenders himself to it with words of genuine gratitude on his lips. He has no longer any wishes and desires of his own except what may be of God. . . . He sees all creatures, high and low, just as tiny specks set in an orderly harmony in the immense Universe surrounding him. He now divines a procession which is orderly, an order which is harmonious, obeying a Will infinitely above him and yet infinitesimally careful of him. In this way is established a complete harmony between the soul of man and the soul of the Universe. At every step he cries forth, Let thy Will be done! . . .

Saints always live in this state. Being one with His Will and conscious co-workers with Him, prayer of itself becomes a heresy for them and savors of scepticism. Nature's forces simply wait on them. However slight a thought may arise, it must, like an immutable law, prevail. God is ever with His devotee and looks after him with more care and attention than any loving mother would give her child. . . .

Kabir, describing the condition of his mind, tells us that it has, like the water of Ganges, become so transparent that even God has become enamored of him:

*Kabir, thy mind is now as clear as the Ganges water.
Even God Himself restlessly follows thee shouting,
"Kabir, Kabir." . . .*

Guru Arjan draws a wonderful pen-picture of this state of perfect satiety:

*Deathless is He and I have nothing to fear,
He being Immortal, I have not to wail;
He is not poor and I have no want,
He being above sorrow and pain, I too have none;
Besides Him there is no destroyer, He and I live
eternally,*

*When He is free, there is nothing to bind me,
Both of us are above the stage of bondage;
He being Immaculate, I too have no stain,
He being within me, what taint can I have?
He has nothing to think of and nothing is left for me
to think,
Neither of us has anything to gloss over;
Desireless is He and I too desire nothing,
He is spotlessly pure and so am I,
I have no existence apart from Him, for He alone is:
O Nanak! through the Master has this delusion
disappeared:
Having dipped in Him, we are dyed in one color.
(Prayer, pp. 76-80)*

Chapter 17

The Essence of Religion

The teachings on forgiveness are often coupled with those on chastity because they form a kind of reverse side to lust and anger. Master Kirpal Singh once gave a discourse called “Chastity and Forgiveness,” (included in *The Night is a Jungle*) and he stressed—as he had when he talked about chastity—that forgiveness does not work if we are pretending. We must be thinking very clearly and honestly if forgiveness is to make a difference. We cannot be chaste if we think we are chaste already and in fact are being controlled by lust; and neither can we forgive if we refuse to see what is plainly there to be seen. In other words we must not enter what the psychologists call a state of denial.

Forgiveness is not denial, and in the same way that chastity is not repression, we have to see what is actually present in a situation—just as the “Unjust Steward” did—before we can deal with forgiveness effectively. But once we see, and do not pretend that conditions are different from what they really are, we do have the choice to forgive. That choice is given to us, and it is genuine power; it strongly affects everyone. Our willingness or non-willingness to forgive can determine the course of our life and the course of others’ lives, and it can determine whether the Master’s work is made easier or harder. That’s a powerful thing.

Along with all this, it's important to remember that we must do the opposite of not seeing enough. *We forgive because we see more.* The more we see of the whole picture of the universe and the more we are able to stay in a state of remembrance, the easier it is to forgive. For that matter it is also easier to love.

Forgiveness, after all, is only one part of the phenomenon called love. The Master forgives us because He loves us. He comes to find us, He connects us with Himself—with His own essence—and He takes us up, because He loves us. Forgiveness is involved in that process: in order to take us up He has to forgive us, but He forgives because He loves. We can do the same to the extent that we are aware of His forgiveness of us and of His Presence in others. As Master Kirpal put it very bluntly, "If we don't forgive the God in others, how can we expect the God in others to forgive us?"

When other people wrong us, as they often do, we don't think that it's the God in them that's wronging us; but if we look carefully, we find we cannot separate people from the God in them. Full vision is required to realize that we are forgiving God when we forgive other people; Master Kirpal made it clear that we are forgiving God in a very real sense.

Another way of looking at this principle is from the point of view of the astonishing story in the Gospel of Matthew that we have already considered:

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents [nine million dollars] was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I

will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii [fifteen dollars]; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you, do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart. (Matthew 18:21-35)

The reason is not that God likes to torture us, but that by not forgiving, we close the door to the forgiveness of God. This fact is plain from the discourses of all the Masters, and from our point of view it may be the most crucial part of the entire teaching. It is through our own forgiving that the door to Grace is open to us. If we refuse to forgive, we set ourselves up for the Law of Karma to take over. "Seeing fully" means not only seeing God in others and having a sense of what the Master has done for us, but recognizing that what others owe us—or how they wrong us—may be only a fraction of what we owe to the universe or to God. By forgiving the tiny bit that is owed to us, we allow ourselves to be forgiven the enormous amount we owe.

This parable and these teachings are important because most of our personal difficulties in betraying the Master, in causing him pain, and in making things hard for others, come from a complex of attitudes which revolve around non-forgiveness.

While forgiving others is the central theme of the Sermon on the Mount, there is also the construct of eliminating self-righteousness and setting the record straight—changing the point of view—so that we see our relationship with others more honestly.

All this is what Jesus is doing in this Sermon, and it is also what the Masters do in all of their teachings. It is a question of love. If we don't forgive, and if we maintain a perspective in which we are right and others are wrong, we are closing the door to a better point of view, one that will give us what we want: peace, forgiveness, love, and happiness.

Sant Ji says that our Father is our real Father, and He is happy in our happiness. He wants us to forgive. He wants us to have joy and peace so He gives us those things, but our acceptance of them has to take the form of giving them to others. If we refuse to do it, or if we cannot see that this is what our acceptance of the Masters involves, then it implies that He is not reaching us. The door is shut; He bounces off our outer edge, so to speak. So to say that teaching forgiveness is an important part of the Master's work is a ridiculous understatement. The Masters come for just this purpose.

Several selections from the writings of various Masters make this point very clear. First, let's consider Master Kirpal's statement of what our full attitude toward love should be, in "The Essence of Religion":

All the religions agree that Life, Light and Love are the three phases of the Supreme Source of all that exists. These essential attributes of the divinity that is ONE, though designated differently by the prophets and peoples of the world, are also wrought in the very pattern of every sentient being. It is in this vast ocean of Love, Light and Life that we live, have our very being and move about and yet, strange as it may seem, like the proverbial fish in water, we do not know this truth and much less practice it in our daily life; and hence the endless fear, helplessness and misery that we see around us in the world, in spite of all our laudable efforts and sincere strivings

to get rid of them. Love is the only touchstone where-with we can measure our understanding of the twin principles of Life and Light in us and how far we have traveled on the path of self-knowledge and God-knowledge. . . .

Note that Master says very clearly that love is the touchstone by which we measure. How much do we understand what Life and Light mean? How far have we traveled on the path of God-knowledge and self-knowledge? *We can tell by how much we love.* This is his point: How much we love is the measure of how much we are accepting what the Master wants to give us.

. . . God is love; the soul in man is a spark of that love, and love again is the link between God and man on the one hand and man and God's creation on the other. It is therefore said: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." Similarly, Guru Gobind Singh says: "Verily I say unto thee that he whose heart is bubbling over with love he alone shall find God." Love, in a nutshell, is the fulfillment of the Law of Life and Light. All the prophets, all the religions and all the scriptures hang on two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Questioned as to our attitude toward our enemies, Christ said: "Love thine enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father in heaven. Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

With the yardstick of love (the very essence of God's character) with us, let us probe our hearts. Is our life an efflorescence of God's love? Are we ready to serve one another with love? Do we keep our hearts open to the healthy influences coming from

outside? Are we patient and tolerant toward those who differ from us? Are our minds coextensive with the creation of God and ready to embrace the totality of His being? Do we bleed inwardly at the sight of the downtrodden and the depressed? Do we pray for the sick and suffering humanity? If we do not do any of these things, we are yet far removed from God and from religion, no matter how loud we may be in our talk and pious in our platitudes and pompous in our proclamations. With all our inner craving for peace, we have failed and failed hopelessly to serve the cause of God's peace on earth. Ends and means are interlocked and cannot be separated from each other. We cannot have peace so long as we try to achieve it with war-like means and with the weapons of destruction and extinction. With the germs of hatred in our hearts, racial and color bars rankling within us, thoughts of political domination and economic exploitation surging in our bloodstream, we are working for wrecking the social structure which we have so strenuously built and not for peace, unless it be peace of the grave; but certainly not for a living peace born of mutual love and respect, trust and concord, that may go to ameliorate mankind and transform this earth into a paradise for which we so fervently pray and preach from pulpits and platforms and yet, as we proceed, it recedes away into the distant horizon. . . .

Of course Master Kirpal was talking on several levels at once here. He was giving this address at the Third World Religions Conference as the President of the World Fellowship of Religions, and a large number of so-called religious leaders were present. It was for their ears that he was saying this, but nothing he ever said can be separated from what his disciples need; and certainly this talk contains the idea that these remedies work *both* for world peace *and* for individual peace in our families, in our homes, and in the various relationships in our daily lives. Both large governments and individuals can benefit from them.

... Where then lies the remedy? Is the disease past all cure? No, it is not so. "Life and Light of God" are still there to help and guide us in the wilderness. We see this wilderness around us because we are bewildered in the heart of our hearts and do not see things in their proper perspective. This vast outer world is nothing but a reflex of our own little world within us. The seeds of discord and disharmony in the soil of our mind bear fruit in and around us and do so in abundance. We are what we think and see the world with the smoke-colored glasses that we choose to put on. It is a proof positive of one thing only: that we have so far not known the "Life and Light of God" and much less realized "God in man." We are off center in the game of life. We are playing it at the circumference only and never have a dip in the deepest waters of life at the center. This is why we constantly find ourselves caught in the vortex of the swirling waters on the surface. The life at the circumference of our being is, in fact, not different from the life at the center of our being. The two are, in fact, not unidentical, yet when one is divorced from the other, they look dissimilar. . . .

This is the essence of maya. What is meant by illusion is simply this: that the two things that constitute our selves—the surface life and the essential life—are pulled apart so that we cannot see they are the same. The two are not different; yet when they are separated, divorced from each other, they *look* different and we *think* they are different. This is what prevents our point of view from being that which the Master is advocating.

... Hence the strange paradox: the physical life though a manifestation of God is full of toil and turmoil, storm and stress, dissipation and disruption. In our enthusiasm and zest for outer life on the plane of the senses, we have strayed too far away from our center, nay, we have altogether lost sight of it; and worse still, have cut the very moorings of our barque and no wonder then we find ourselves

tossing helplessly on the sea of life. Rudderless and without a compass to guide our course, we are unwittingly a prey to chance winds and waters and cannot see the shoals, the sandbanks and the submerged rocks with which our way is strewn. In this frightful plight, we are drifting along the onrushing current of life—Where? We know not.

This world, after all, is not and cannot be so bad as we take it to be. It is a manifestation of the Life Principle of the Creator and is being sustained by His Light. His Love is at the bottom of all this. The world with its various religions is made for us and we are to benefit from them. One cannot learn swimming on dry land. All that we have to do is to correctly learn and understand the basic live truths as are embodied in our scriptures, and practice them carefully under the guidance of some theocentric saint. These scriptures came into being by God-inspired prophets, and as such, some God-intoxicated person or a God-man can give us a proper interpretation of them, initiate us into their right import by reconciling the seeming discrepancies in thought and finally help us inwardly on the God-path. . . . (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 192-196)

This understanding of the world, including the fallen world, as fundamentally a manifestation of the love of God, is part of the Masters' doctrine and co-exists with our understanding that it is also the world of Kal or Time, the Negative Power, full of pain and suffering and struggle. The ability to see the unfallen universe—the spiritual planes—in the fallen universe is in itself the solution to the paradox. Master Kirpal goes into this in Morning Talk #21 and in other essays; all the Masters have talked about the duality of the world of Kal as a place of pain and struggle.

The thing that makes the difference, the thing that allows us to see past that pain and struggle, is the love of God for us. We can think of God's love coming into the fallen universe as a shaft of light coming down through clouds, and if it falls on us

we are enraptured by it. It changes the whole picture. That brilliant love is what makes it possible to see that despite the outer surface, there is love inherent in the world.

There is nothing more important in understanding the love of God for us than in trying to grasp the full mystery of incarnation, of God becoming a human being like us. There are many stories told about this, and in Luke 15 the Lord Jesus gives several parables on the subject.

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him [Jesus]. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:1-10)

Then Jesus goes on to tell the story of the prodigal son; an absolutely basic story which Master Kirpal Singh used as the basis of his wonderful talk, "This World Is Not Your Home," which he gave at Sant Bani Ashram in October 1972. His title may seem to contradict the statement we just read "that this world is not as bad as we take it to be"—but the two thoughts

are connected. If we understand that this world is *not* our home and we get a sense of what the truth is—that we have the birthright to a much higher level of existence—then that knowledge illuminates this world and shows us its real value. We can see it as it is, not as we project it to be for our own needs. Master Kirpal says:

So what have you learned today? This world is not your home—have you learned it? Try to bring home this question: *this world is not your home*. You have to go! When? That you don't know; but the time is fixed. So if we don't know what time is fixed for the examination, we should be ready every moment. That's right; we should have foresight. We have it, you see; we have discrimination; we should make the best use of them. Masters don't care what label you are carrying; they see you are Man [human beings]—conscious entities. You reside in the human body, and He also resides there. He loves you all. But He says, All right, how long will you continue to be just wandering away from your home? You know the parable given by Christ? Masters sometimes give parables, sometimes straight talks. This is a straight talk being given to you; if you would like a parable, let us go to this one Christ gave:

He says that a man had some sons. He was a very rich man. One son was very naughty: he said, "Father, give me my portion of the wealth. I am your son: give me!" His father said, "All right; you have it." He gave it to him—this is the beauty—whatever his share was. He went away, enjoyed, spent all that he had in frivolous enjoyment. The result was that he had nothing left—no food to eat or clothes to wear. He was in very much trouble . . . agony . . . "What to do now? There is no hope." Then one night, he said, "My father has so many servants in his home; let me go there; at least if he hires me I will get something to eat." He turned his way back to his father. So his father came to know that his son had

come. He was overjoyed. When the lost son is found, will not the father rejoice? He said, "All right, bring him in, give him a bath, give him good clothes to wear"—he began festivities in the house. The other sons said, "Father, we have been so obedient to you, you never were overjoyed so much. Here you have this son who has spoiled all your wealth, and you are rejoicing!" The father said, "He has returned, he has come back." So God also, you see, rejoices when you come back to Him. Therefore He sends, from time to time, His messengers to bring you home. . . .

God is our true Master; He has sent a messenger to bring us home—"Don't care what the world says; go back home please." Because He has sent him. You will find that there are eggs laid under ducks and under hens too. And when the children come out then they go to the side of water—just like this pond. The duck children plunge into the water. The chickens and hens begin to cry, "Oh! Drown! Drown!" But really they are not drowning; they have gone back to the nature of ducks.

Similarly, Masters do come; those who follow them, some people say, "Oh, they are drowning!" So don't care what people say: when you see what is what and you testify what is before you and you see for yourself, why be led away by others? (*Sat Sandesh*, January 1974, pp. 29-30)

There is an extraordinary story in the Sant Mat tradition, told here by Sant Ajaib Singh:

Masters are without enmity; they have no enemies because God has showered a lot of grace on them and has given them a lot of love. They see God working everywhere, and they are very gracious: whoever has their darshan gets liberated in the Court of the Lord. The Negative Power doesn't accept such souls who have had the darshan of the Master.

Master Sawan Singh Ji used to tell the story very

often about a merchant who went to a village to reclaim the loan which he had given to a farmer. That farmer was very poor and he had nothing to give to him. So the merchant took all his belongings and made the farmer homeless. The farmer was so upset that he told him that he would not help him in taking his things to the nearby town from where that merchant had come. Looking at his condition, the other farmers also thought that there was no need to help that man, because he was very cruel. "Today he has mistreated our brother, tomorrow he can do the same thing with us, so we should boycott him and not help him."

That merchant needed someone to take his luggage to the town, so he was looking for someone but no one came up to help him. There was one Mahatma there who was seeing all this, and he felt very gracious on that merchant and said, "I will help you in taking the luggage to the town, but there is a condition: either you tell a story to me and I will nod—I will say, yes, yes—or I will tell you a story and you should listen to it, very carefully."

That merchant thought there could not be any cheaper bargain than this, so he said, "Okay, Mahatma Ji, you carry the luggage and tell me a story, and I will listen to it, and pay attention to it."

The Mahatma was very gracious—Masters are always very gracious. They tell us stories; the meaning of their telling stories to us is not that they want to entertain us—they tell us a story so that we may listen to the story and see what faults we have. That Mahatma told him many stories, and through his stories he told him what faults he had. So gradually, as he was going on telling him stories, that merchant realized his faults.

When they came near the town that Mahatma told him, "Okay, now take your luggage and go. But let me tell you one thing: You have realized that in your whole life you haven't done a single good thing, you

have no good karma, and you will not get any fruit of good karma. You have done only one good deed—you have spent this hour with me. And you will get the benefit of it. When you go to the Lord of Judgment they will ask you if you want to enjoy the fruit of this good karma before going to hell, or if you want to do it later. You should tell them that you want to come to me before going to hell, and when you come to me then you will realize how very important it was for you to be in my company. Because this is the only good deed which you have done.”

When that merchant died he went to the Lord of Judgment, and the Lord of Judgment looked at his account and told him, “Well, you don’t have any good karma in your account except for one thing: you spent one hour with a Mahatma. Because of that you will be allowed to go and see him once again, but only for a few moments. Do you want to do that before going to hell, or do you want to save that until later?”

The merchant remembered what the Mahatma had told him, so he said, “Who knows when I will come out of hell? Let me go to see that Mahatma and express my gratitude to him, before going to hell.” So the Lord of Judgment sent the angels of death with him and told him that he could go to the plane where the Mahatma was living; and since the angels of death were not allowed to go there, he should go there alone, and after two moments when the angels of death tell him by signs that his time is up, he should come back.

So when that merchant came to the Mahatma, Mahatma said, “Dear one, so you have come.” He said, “Yes, Mahatma, I have come, but I’m afraid that I will have to leave very soon because the angels of death are waiting for me. They have told me to come back after two moments. So what should I do? I am very afraid.” So the Mahatma said, “Don’t worry. Keep quiet. Sit down here. Don’t worry about

them, don't pay any attention to them, because they cannot enter this place."

Then that merchant realized how very important it was for him to be in the company of the Master. Because, when he came in the company of the Master, he was allowed to see Him once again for two moments; but because that Mahatma was very gracious and loving towards him, He forgave him all his sins and paid off all his karmas, and liberated him from all the sufferings of hell.

So when the Masters give us their loving, gracious darshan, at that time they are showering a lot of grace on us. The company of the Master is always valuable. We people don't realize how much we are getting by coming in the company of the Masters, but we will realize it when we go in the court of the Lord. (*The Two Ways*, pp. 193-195)

When we consider this story, it is important to note that the Master wanted to save that merchant even though he had not done one good deed in his life. He was a cruel man and the farmers were right: he would have foreclosed and evicted any of them. Despite that, the Master wanted to save him. He had no redeeming qualities, no merit, no goodness; but the Master's job is to save people. He loved him despite what he had done because he was a human being. He forgave him, and the merchant accepted the forgiveness by obeying the instructions the Master gave him. Had he not obeyed them he would not have been taken up even though the darshan had been given to him. He remembered what the Master had told him and although he may logically have felt it would be nice to have something to look forward to during the first half of his sojourn in Hell, he did just what the Master told him. Consequently he was completely forgiven.

Earlier, we looked at Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav's story about the rooster.* If we are absolutely convinced that we are roosters, or whatever we think we are, the Master does not

* See above, p. 15.

whack us over the head and say, "No, you're not like that." He comes down and lives as we do; this is what is called "sharing our joys and sorrows, our pains and pleasures." It's what the Master does for us. He allows us to think he is like us in order to entice us to become like him. That's the way the process works, and basically his forgiveness takes these forms. He forgave that merchant and then gave him an opportunity to put that forgiveness into practice.

He forgives us in the same way, and if we take the Master's commandments as a whole, we find that the entire teaching on forgiving, on not judging, on not criticizing, on not placing ourselves over others, or comparing ourselves with others, is central for this reason: When we forgive, we share in the Master's work. This is true not only when we forgive initiates but when we have compassion for other people as well.

The Masters say that countless stories are reported to them of people who were helped by a Master even though they did not know him and had never seen him. There is a remarkable story of a man who was the business partner of an initiate; he was killed while working heavy equipment, and his wife saw the Master take him up. Neither the worker nor his wife really knew anything about the Master; they knew of him only vaguely as the Guru of the business partner. Yet when Master was told of the event, he was not a bit surprised.* Now how does that work? Sant Ji has often explained that when we love others and they love us, if we love the Master, their love for us goes right past us to the Master.

Similarly, when we forgive others and are open to their love, it is as though the connection is between him and them. When we forgive them, in other words, it is as though he forgave them. This is the point of the parable of the Unjust Steward: our forgiveness really works. It enables the Master to affect others. It helps him to get his work done, and that is what gives him happiness—to do that which he came on this earth to do. His purpose is to forgive people, love people, and take them home again.

* See Paul McKlentin, "He Knew About Me," *Sant Bani*, April 1981, p. 20.

Chapter 18

“Who Made Me a Divider?”

Before Jesus taught his followers the Lord’s Prayer and, through it, how to reach that meditative state of being that is real, spiritual prayer, he warned them: “Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.” Now he warns against another form of ritual designed to impress others with how holy we are:

And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:15-17)

We have already considered this subject of impressing others from the standpoint of self-righteousness and of trading our spiritual gains for the recognition and praise of others. We learned that spirituality and adulation are incompatible; if we opt for the praise of other people, we trade our spiritual benefits for that praise.

We have also learned that we must forgive others if we want to be forgiven for our offenses because the God of love, the soul of our soul and essence of our essence, works in the fallen universe only by forgiving. Justice and fairness belong to the law of the Negative Power, and the true God operates in this world only by forgiving His children whom He loves no matter what we do. When we accept others exactly as they are, we open the gate through which we allow Him to work in the fallen world. Forgiving others is also our way of affirming control; according to the Masters it gives us power over our lives and the lives of those we forgive. By forgiving them we do God's work on their behalf, and this is genuine seva.

At this point in our study of the Sermon on the Mount it will be valuable for us to consider all these subjects from the point of view of *divisions* because in all religious traditions it is most often the problem of ritual, and intolerance of others' ritual, that divides one people from another. Human beings create divisions in lots of other ways too, but the Masters come only to unite. As we saw above,* Jesus says in the Gospel of Thomas, "Who made me a divider?"

As we look at the whole question of being divided by ritual, there are many important aspects to consider. One is the way in which we set ourselves up so that other people will look up to us, which then encourages our own complacency and our sense that we are okay but they are not. Masters have spoken very bluntly about this, and Sant Ji explains the problem very carefully:

In Sant Mat, the Masters lovingly explain to us that we should mold our lives according to the laws of Nature. If God Almighty has showered grace on us we should not show it outside; we should not tell people that we have been given such a grace by our Master. The fact is that we should not even let the steam come out if God Almighty has showered grace on us. If He has given us some experience, some

* See above, pp. 9-13.

grace in meditation, we should keep that within and we should not go on showing it outside to people because when we do not keep these things to our own self, when we go on telling people, "I am something," or "I have got this thing," then whatever we have gained, we lose. Up until now, those who have said that they are something, those who have become egotistic about their achievements, have always been reduced to a pile of bones and ashes: because in the palace of love one has to be very quiet, and only when he is quiet can he enter that palace of the Lord. In that palace there are many of our dear friends, dear souls who have reached there. We can become one of them only if we make our heart like theirs. We do not know how many dear souls have reached the palace of love, or how superior they are to us; but we can become one of them only if we become like them. Guru Nanak says, "In the palace of the Lord there are many souls who are superior to others, who are superior to me. O Lord, who knows my name over there?"

He is not a satsangi, or a dear one, or a real lover, who keeps accounts with the Shabd Guru, Who is our real Master. If some comfortable moments, some happy moments, come in our life, and we glorify and thank the Master, but when, according to our karma, a bad or painful moment comes and we blame Him—that cannot be called discipleship; that cannot be called love for the Master. (*In the Palace of Love*, pp. 193-194)

This way of looking at things from the focus of ritual, of looking at spirituality as something we do by which we can accumulate merit and superiority and therefore have the right to judge others, leads to the attitude of "accounting" that Sant Ji is talking about here. The practice of thanking the Master for everything that comes can be very valuable, but often we don't realize that what happens to us is due to our karma and has nothing to do with the Master. What does have to do with Him

is the grace—the strength that we get from Him to deal with it whether it is good or bad. That is what we can thank Him for and if our attention is where it ought to be, we will get it from Him. Again it is a forcible turning of the vision from the outer to the inner.

These rituals that Jesus talks about in the Sermon and which he contrasts with forgiveness as a way of dealing with the universe, are not bad by definition. In fact the whole point of what he says about them is to differentiate between one way of doing them and another way of doing them. If we meditate and tell other people about it or use it as a club to make other people do things we want them to do, then even meditation can become negative. Master Kirpal Singh defines rituals that are helpful as “whatever goes to help us remember God.” If they don’t help us to do that, they are pointless and they can also become very divisive. Sant Ji goes into this question also:

We were religious-minded people: the Saints and Mahatmas told us about the importance of doing the meditation of Shabd Naam, and They also told us many other things to do, but we misunderstood Them and started performing rites and rituals; whatever They told us, we forgot. We did not understand the reality, and we started doing the outer rites and rituals, which were originally given for our own benefit. For example, They told us it was very good for us to keep our body clean, and we should bathe—it maintains good health if we bathe daily—but we misunderstood them and started bathing, thinking that bathing will give us liberation; and in that way we did not understand the teaching of the Masters and we started performing outer rites and rituals, believing that by doing them we could achieve liberation. And these rites and rituals, these outer practices, became the cause of our jealousy and dispute with other communities. We fight with the people of the other community because their outer practices are not the same as ours, and we say that our practices are superior. We do not recognize or ap-

prove of other people's rites and rituals, so we fight and are jealous. (*In the Palace of Love*, p. 175)

Lest anyone think this is no longer a problem, that this is something only from the past, bear in mind that in India itself between Hindus and Muslims, in the Middle East between Muslims and Jews, in Northern Ireland between Catholics and Protestants, and in Yugoslavia between Croats (who are Roman Catholic), Serbs (who are Eastern Orthodox), and Muslims, people are ready to kill each other because their rituals are different. It is as simple as that. People who are so closely related as to be ethnically identical divide themselves on the basis of religious ritual and in some cases on the basis of belief; but as has often been pointed out, the psychological difference between ritual and belief is almost nil.

Belief serves as a divider in the same way ritual does. Belief in efficacy of ritual is called "orthopraxy"; belief in efficacy of belief is called "orthodoxy." The two are psychologically the same. In any case when we indicate that we are superior because we act or think in a special way, other people are excluded. Masters come to reverse this procedure. In fact, they are—and the Lord Jesus is a prime example of this, although you would never know it from Christian history—*radically inclusive*. This is Master Kirpal's story of Moses and the shepherd boy, from the *Masnavi* of Maulana Rumi, a work that Master Kirpal loved:

It is said: "O man of wisdom (Moses), thou were sent to knit people unto me (God)—And not to lead my people away from me."

Once a shepherd boy leading his goats to pasture in a meadow sat under a tree and lovingly began to commune with God in this wise: "O God! I wish that both of us should live side by side. I shall not make Thee uncomfortable; should Thou fall ill, I shall attend Thee day and night. Should Thou get tired I shall massage Thy hands and feet. I shall bring Thee barley bread and spinach to eat and give Thee goats' fresh milk to drink. I shall pick up lice

from Thy hair and give Thee a hair wash with milk and curd . . .”

The shepherd boy was deeply absorbed in these thoughts when the prophet Moses passed that way. He shouted at the boy and said, “O fool, why art thou blaspheming? God is altogether unlike thee and shall not eat thy barley bread and spinach nor shall He ever fall ill or get lice in His head.” The boy was stunned to hear this, and began to tingle in every nerve and inquired, “Perhaps I am wrong. . . . I ought not to have talked like this. . . . Will the great God be annoyed with me?” With these thoughts within him, he began to cry. As he sobbed he felt comforted and in harmony with the higher power. In that blissful state he had a vision of God. The celestial Visitant consoled him with the words, “I shall accept all thy offerings for I am well pleased with thee.” In the meanwhile, Moses, having reached the heights of Mt. Sinai, sat in meditation and felt within him the voice of God saying, “O Moses, I am thoroughly annoyed with thee. Thou art guilty of breaking the heart of that shepherd boy, who was communing with me with all love and affection.” The prophet was surprised and said, “O God, his words were not of love but were blasphemous.” The great God replied, “Thou knowest that the world of that boy contained nothing else but barley bread, spinach, goat’s milk and lice. I gave thee wisdom and had thou utilized it thou wouldst not have spoken like this. I sent thee into the world that thou mayest knit me to those who are separated from me and not that thou shouldst rend asunder loving hearts that are one with me.” (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 25-26)

Now Moses was a Master. That’s very clearly recognized throughout the Bible and the Masters’ writings. Just as Dharam Das was a Master who sometimes forgot, so did Moses forget; but it does not alter the fact that God definitely sent him. In

this story Moses symbolizes the way in which all of us who are called to do God's work can forget what we're supposed to do and do exactly the opposite. Instead of bringing Him people who are already ripe to be brought to God, we can tear asunder those very people who are yearning for Him. So we have to be very careful. The question of dividing is of the utmost importance.

We have just seen that Master Kirpal says, "Are we patient and tolerant towards those who differ from us? Are our minds coextensive with the creation of God and ready to embrace the totality of His being? Do we bleed inwardly at the sight of the downtrodden and the depressed?" We often start from the assumption that we "know" and the other doesn't, or that we "are" and the other isn't; human beings are extremely eager to find causes for division. But we should make no mistake: the Master's message is that the Spiritual Revolution begins with the right understanding that God exists in every heart. *Every* heart, including people we don't like, people who differ from us in ways that we object to, and people whom we are used to considering inferior. The Master says, "God is in those hearts and if you feel superior to them, you will have to find me in those forms."

To illustrate this point, both Master Kirpal and Sant Ji tell this story:

There was an old woman who worshiped idols. With all her love and devotion she would burn incense and perform the ritual. One day a thought came to her: "Today I will not eat any food until God accepts some part of it." So she sat there with this determination in her mind. She had some milk in a golden cup, and some other food also, and she offered them to the idol, and sat there waiting for God to accept some part of it. Now God Almighty thought, "Look at the determination of this woman!" You know that idols cannot speak or eat; so how was that idol going to accept any food? But God Almighty was pleased with her devotion, so He came in the form of a very old, crippled man, knocked at her door, and asked her to

give Him some food. He said, "I am in difficulty; I need clothes and food; why don't you give me something?" She replied, "I do not have any food. Whatever food I had, I put it in front of this god, and I cannot give you anything unless He accepts part of it." So He went away.

Again God Almighty came in the form of a poor old man—poorer than the other one—and He said, "I have pain in my stomach; if you would make me some tea, the pain would go away and I'll be very grateful to you." She said, "I do not have any milk to make tea. I only have the milk which I have placed before God, and unless He accepts part of it, I cannot do anything with it and I cannot make tea." So He also went away.

Now just imagine: if that woman had known that God Almighty resides in every being, in every creature, she would not have refused both those old men, who in fact were God Almighty. She would have given them food and tea. But she did not know that God Almighty resides in every being; she did not have that understanding; that is why she did not oblige. She did not give food to the living God, because she was waiting for the idol to accept it. (Ajaib Singh, *In the Palace of Love*, pp. 66-67)

One of the ways in which division occurs is historically called "racism." When Master Kirpal was asked about "racial karma," he made this comment:

Karma, besides being individual vis-a-vis society of which he is a member, may, as well be racial or national and in this sense may be called collective *karma*. Races, like individuals, have their own prides and prejudices; pride of colour as the whites generally have against what they call coloured people, and this prejudice of theirs they manifest in diverse ways: by raising all kinds of colour bars for denial of civic and social rights, political privileges and legal rem-

edies, all of which in course of time redound upon the perpetrators of social indignities and inequalities causing unrest leading, at times, to bloody racial wars. Again, some races boast of superiority of blood in their veins and on that score think they form a privileged class by themselves favored by God to rule over and exploit others; but, as is usual in such cases, they are sooner or later overtaken by Nemesis—for they that rule by the sword very often perish by the sword. (*Spiritual Elixir*, p. 41)

Abraham Lincoln understood the Civil War in this country in just this way—as a war fought because of the collective karma (although he didn't use this term) that the white race in the United States had brought upon themselves by enslaving the blacks for over two hundred years. He felt the war had to be fought in order to expiate that karma. Consider the words of his Second Inaugural Address (March 4, 1865):

... Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid with another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Of course Western Imperialism worked—perhaps still works—in just the way Master Kirpal describes in the above extract, and as a lifelong resident of a "Third World" country, he was very aware of the perspective of those who suffered from it. Another division that Master mentioned is "nationalism," which goes even beyond racism. He always distinguished between patriotism and nationalism; the love of one's country is a good thing but it must never be at the expense of others' countries.

From the Master's point of view we are all one, and this is why he said in "The Essence of Religion" that "Peace cannot be had by warlike means." War is another historic way of dividing, and of course all these methods are concerned with power which, in the fallen universe, is fundamentally illusory. Real power comes only from not seeing the divisions, or in seeing past them—going within and seeing from the Master's point of view. In the outer world this is expressed by forgiveness; in the story of the "Unjust Steward" it meant making the accounts less than they would appear to be.

Another form of dividing is what we call "sexism," and the Masters have often spoken very strongly against this. Sant Ji comments:

In India, especially in the past, women were treated like sandals on the feet of men. They were considered as lowly beings, and were always confined to the home. No matter how good the woman may have been, she was always treated as a slave. This is because in the olden days, scholars, writers, and "great people" were always men. But whenever Saints and Mahatmas came into this world, They gave equal status to women: for Them, it does not make any difference whether one is man or woman. They give the same respect and appreciation to women as they give to men.

Guru Nanak Sahib discussed this with the pundits, who argued with Him a lot about the status of women. They said, "How is it possible for women to be of the same status as men? How can they be pure? Every month they lose their dirty blood!" [Definition by ritual: If you define things in the way that is to your advantage, you can easily exclude the other.] So Guru Nanak Sahib lovingly told them: "No doubt they have their monthly periods, but still you cannot say that they are not pure. We are all impure if our attention is not towards God. Any time we look away from God Almighty, we have

become impure. Our mouth is impure, our eyes are impure. Anything which diverts our attention from Almighty God is an impurity."

Kabir Sahib says, "O Kabir, only those people are pure who understand the reality and live up to it."
(*In the Palace of Love*, p. 166)

Another kind of division that has been very difficult to deal with is the question of "class," or as they say in India, "caste." ("Caste" is not an Indian word; it's a Portuguese word which was introduced into the language because the Portuguese explorers were the first Europeans in India.) There are two Indian words for it. The traditional Sanskrit word is *varna* which means "color" and there is no doubt that, at least in the past, caste has largely been determined by color of skin.

The other word is *jat*, which categorizes a community of people pursuing the same livelihood. Of course, as long as no one uses it against anybody, there is no harm in that term. But Sant Ji, in a discourse given on December 31, 1985, spoke very strongly about how such things are used to divide us, to prevent us from doing what we came to do, and to keep us asleep. If we think we are already doing the right thing, if we think we don't have to wake up, then the Negative Power is winning over us. The Masters come to wake us up and to unite us, to show us that we are, in fact, all one. If we don't do that much, if we don't start the waking up process and understand that we are supposed to move in the direction of knowing that God is present in everybody, no matter what particular dividing lines may be important to us, then we are not doing the Master's work. This is what Sant Ji said:

Ever since this world was created there have been two kinds of people who have come into it. One kind is those who have been sent by Almighty God and who are free from the imprisonment of karma, and they have always told us that only by doing the devotion of the Lord can we finish the pain of birth and death.

Those Beloveds of God came and gave us the mes-

sage of God. They told us not to get involved in superstitions. There is only one Light of God which is working within all. It may be called by different names, but there is only one Light and it is one and the same thing.

Such people came into this world because the Negative Power also keeps sending his people, who have come and divided the whole creation into four different categories. They divided all mankind into *Kshatriyas, Brahmins, Shudras* and *Vaishyas*.

Those of us who came into those divisions never thought about our own progress, and according to the categories created by them, we started doing the work. They told the Shudras, "It is your work to do cleaning and low quality jobs; you should not think beyond it, you should not do any other thing other than that kind of work." [In India the Shudras aren't even allowed to go into temples or to learn to read the Vedas, because they're not considered good enough.] To the Vaishyas they said "It is your job to do farming and business; you don't have to do anything else." To the Kshatriyas, who are stronger than other people, they said, "It is your job to protect your country, and you should become soldiers." But they themselves were the clever ones and they said, "We are the Brahmins, the pundits, and only we have the right to education; nobody else has that kind of right because we are the real devotees of God. Only we have the right to do the devotion of the Lord, and all of you should give us a share from your earnings because we are higher than you." . . .

In the time of Kabir Sahib in India there were two strong religions, Muslim and Hindu. Kabir Sahib was born in the Muslim religion, but still the Muslims became His opponents, and the Hindus also opposed Him a lot.

Often I have said that Saints do not criticize anyone's religion. They appreciate and respect all religions and they understand all religions as their

very own. But the only thing is that they do not practice the rites and rituals in their Path which most other religions do. So when the Saints do not practice rites and rituals like other religious people, we people start criticizing them and we oppose them.

In those days they used to consider untouchability so bad that if any low-caste person was walking and he came across a pundit or a high-caste person, and the wind was blowing toward that pundit, he could not pass that pundit. If he did, the pundit could give any punishment to him, saying that he had made him dirty.

Once it so happened that Kabir Sahib went to the river Ganges and a person of low caste also had gone there to bathe. And there was a pundit who was taking a bath over there. It so happened that a drop of water from the low caste person touched the body of the pundit, and he got upset. He said, "You have made me dirty!" and he started beating that low-caste person. Many people gathered there and saw what was happening. Kabir Sahib also went there and He said, "Look here, he is a human being and we all are also human beings. So what if a drop of water from his body touched your body? You have not become dirty just by that." But the pundit said, "I don't have any other shirt and I cannot take another bath and he has made me dirty." When Kabir Sahib tried to explain to him that in that way people do not become dirty, he did not understand, and since Kabir Sahib was born in a low-caste *julaha* or weaver family, he said, "From where have you come, o weaver, to give me the teachings?"—because in those days people used to consider this high and low caste very much.

Kabir Sahib then told that pundit, "Look here, dear one, if you say that you are the son of a Brahmin, then why did you take birth the same way we did? If being Brahmin makes you higher than us, you should have taken birth some other way. But

since we are also born from our mother and we have both come through the womb, how can you become Brahmin and I Julaha? Let us cut each other's body and see if there is any difference. Let us see if milk comes out from your body and blood from mine."

Kabir Sahib says, "It does not matter, O Man, if a person is from the east or west, from this country or that country. All human beings are born in the same way and all die in the same way. If anyone is suffering from malaria they are given the same medicine. It is not as if one is given one medicine and the other something different. So how can you say that you are a Brahmin and I a Julaha?"

This was the only "fault" in Guru Nanak: that Guru Nanak said, "We are all the same and we all have one God, we are all equal." This is the "fault" Guru Nanak had, so that when he said that, people said, "He is the one who misleads people and takes them from the Path"; and that is why He was given a hard time. (*Sant Bani*, May 1986, "The Question of Caste," pp. 5-6)

This is also why Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated: he gave precisely the same message.

The story about God who came as a beggar so that the householder did not recognize Him, assumes great relevance when we realize that the Masters often come in precisely those bodies that other people think are the most worthless. The Julahas were just the slightest rank above the untouchables; yet Kabir, the greatest of all Masters, the one who started all the lines of Masters, chose to come—in this *Kali Yuga* or Age of Darkness when people feel these divisions most acutely—in the body of a Julaha.

Similarly, the great Mahatma Ravidas chose to come in the body of a cobbler although cobblers, because they work with leather, are considered dirty by definition in Hindu ritual thought. Mirabai and Sehjo Bai were women. So it is clear that Masters have come in both sexes, all religions, all races, all classes, all kinds of strata. If we are prejudiced against rich

people, we can discover Masters who have come in that social status; if we are prejudiced against poor people we find they have come in that status. No matter what prejudice we have, it may well be that a Master will come in precisely that form to see if we can recognize Him.

Toward the end of this discourse on caste, Sant Ji told about his experiences in Rajasthan with caste differences:

Many people came to me, deputations of the pundits, and told me, "Everything is fine—your teachings, your sayings—but there is only one difficulty: That you bring people from different castes and walks of life and make them sit and eat together." There was a pundit who came as the leader of one deputation. . . . He used to smoke tobacco, so I told him, "Punditji, these souls whom you call low caste are not as bad as your tobacco."

But then he said:

But I have often told Russell Perkins that while all my life I have hated tobacco, I have never hated anyone who smokes tobacco; because in that person is the soul. (*Sant Bani*, May 1986, p. 9)

Sant Ji is referring to something that happened on a flight to India a number of years ago. The "No Smoking" seats were set up in such a way that a man who smoked was sitting right beside me. I lost my temper, gave him a hard time, embarrassed all the satsangis who were on the plane with me, and spent the rest of the trip repenting it. When I saw Sant Ji it was the first thing I told him because I was so ashamed, and he told me what he has just said: that he didn't blame me for not liking the smoking, but that it was absolutely wrong to use this as a divider between people. What truly matters is that the person has a soul.

One of the points about forgiving or not forgiving what other people do is that if we don't accept their behavior, if we insist on placing blame, we often end by blaming the wrong person; and that creates a whole different kind of karma which

we then have to deal with.

To blame someone for smoking, for example, is to leave aside the whole question of why that person smokes. What is it that drove him to do that in the first place? So it is with everybody and everything; there is always a reason for what a person does, just as we can justify anything we do. We can say, "Oh, if they only understood; if they knew what I know; if they'd been through what I've been through, they would know and they wouldn't blame me." We all do that.

In just the same way, the people we blame and refuse to forgive can justify their behavior. In Umberto Eco's novel, *The Name of the Rose*, a monk called Brother Salvatore is describing how he had at one time been a member of a group called the Shepherds who, in order to avenge the taking of Jerusalem by the Infidel, went through Europe attacking Jews.

And they killed all the Jews they came upon here and there and stripped them of their possessions.

"Why the Jews?" I asked Salvatore. He answered, "And why not?" He explained to me that all his life preachers had told him the Jews were the enemies of Christianity and accumulated possessions that had been denied the Christian poor. I asked him, however, whether it was not also true that lords and bishops accumulated possessions through tithes, so that the Shepherds were not fighting their true enemies. He replied that when your true enemies are too strong, you have to choose weaker enemies. (p. 192)

Most of our separating into divisions and refusing to forgive others comes under this category: we pick weaker enemies. Who is the real enemy? It is the Negative Power who is working within us in the form of our own mind. That's the teaching of the Masters: The real division, the only division that matters, is within ourself, between that in us which wants to go to sleep, to do things comfortably, and to forget, and that in us which wants to wake up, to take the painful consequences of waking, and to remember. That part of us sees that no other course of action is worth anything. This is what the Masters

come to tell us, and the pain that waking up causes is counter-balanced by the love they give us. Their love makes it possible for us to go through whatever is required to become fully awake.

Sant Ji concludes this discourse by relating caste to karma:

To be born into low or high caste, or to be born into a very rich family, is all because of our karmas of the past. If we have done good karmas in the past we will be born into a rich family, our intellect will be good, and we will become successful. If we have done bad karmas in the past we will be born into a poor family, our intellect will not be so good. But as far as liberation is concerned, it does not matter whether you are born into a rich or poor family, whether you are of a high caste or low caste. For achieving liberation you will have to go to the Master, and if you will mold your life according to the instructions of the Master and follow the Path of the Master, only then will you get liberation.

In the eyes of the Saints both men and women are alike. It does not matter if one is poor or rich. As far as the vision of the Masters is concerned, they are both the same. Because their vision goes very far, they always look from the highest place and that is why they see everyone alike. When we remove the physical, astral and causal covers from our soul, and go in to Daswan Dwar, from there we can see the whole creation very clearly because then we are on the top of it. When we reach Daswan Dwar, there is no difference between male and female, poor and rich, low or high caste. For us, everyone is alike; because a person who reaches Daswan Dwar sees everyone alike and does not see any difference between people. He does not hate anyone because he sees everyone alike. That is why Saints always say, "Go within and come to that highest place from where you can see everyone clearly." It is as if someone is standing on top of a mountain; he can see everything which is under that level. He can see it

all very clearly. But if someone is standing on the flat ground he cannot see all things clearly. That is why Saints always emphasize going within and reaching Daswan Dwar, from where you can see the whole creation very clearly; then it will not make any difference to you whether one is poor or rich, male or female, because for you everyone will be the same. (*Sant Bani*, May 1986, pp. 10-11)

That is the teaching of the Masters. By loving everyone regardless of any dividing factor that may be present, we are doing His work. By seeing another's point of view, by hearing his or her story, by understanding that there is always a reason for everything, by forgiving even those things that are done against us—in these ways we are doing the Master's work. If we love Him and want to do His seva, this is what we must do.

In 1959 Master Kirpal Singh wrote:

To attain this Goal, purify your nature by living a good life. Manifest truth, purity, love, selflessness and righteousness in your life and activity. Give up all hatred, eradicate egoism and anger. Eschew violence, pledge yourself to love, sincerity, humility, forgiveness, and non-violence. Abandon war. Abandon lust for power. Fill thy heart with compassion, mercy, and universal love. Let the law of love prevail amongst you, which should be radiated to all nations and races. Let true religion of heart be the ruling factor of your lives. Love God, love all, serve all, and have respect for all, as God is immanent in every form. Preach the gospel of oneness. Spread the message of oneness and live a life of oneness. There will be peace on earth. This is the mission of my life, and I pray it may be fulfilled. (*Spiritual Elixir*, p. 327)

When we abandon public rituals and other divisive issues, including admiration for our own piety and general correctness, and “let true religion of the heart be the ruling factor of our lives,” our “Father who sees in secret” will surely reward us.

Chapter 19

The Treasure of the Inner Light

The following integral passage is the midpoint of the Sermon on the Mount, and it holds the key to *how we can do it*: how we can put the radical instruction the Lord Jesus is giving us into practice.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! (Matthew 6:19-23)

This passage forces us to examine our point of view: What is it that we value? What is our treasure? Jesus is making a strong statement on behalf of the treasures of heaven—which he identifies with the inner Light—and all Masters have made it clear that what we amass on earth will not go with us but how we gather it will. What we take with us is the impressions of all

the effects we have caused: that is what constitutes our karma and that is what we have to work through, one way or another—either in the next life or the next several lives or in an intermediate state between lives.

Contrary to the way it seems to us while we are collecting our worldly treasures, what we amass is not what counts. The Masters tell us that the wealth we acquire in this life is already fixed and that there are actually three sets of things that are predetermined: wealth or poverty, health or sickness, and pleasure or pain (sometimes this last is listed as fame or anonymity—or ignominy, as Master Kirpal says in one place). These three sets of possible destinies are part of our fate karma. What we do about them in this lifetime does not affect them, but our efforts to circumvent or change our fate karma can definitely result in our having a much better fate karma or a much worse one in our next lifetime. The main point is, as Master Kirpal used to say, “As you think, so you become.” What we desire, we are. If a certain thing is what we want, then that is what we turn ourselves into. If we truly desire the heavenly treasure, then our lives can be defined by that.

So how to do it? Throughout this Sermon and throughout the writings of all the Masters, we find the constant reminder to change our angle of vision, to see differently, to see from the point of view of the Masters, to make their priorities our priorities. How can we do that? We can do it partly by wanting to change; we can do it partly by spending time with a Master so that we can understand what his point of view is; and we can do it partly by reading and studying the Masters’ writings. But ultimately we can do it only by being revolutionized from within, and the key to that is in verses 22 and 23: “The eye is the lamp of the body, so if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.” The Greek word translated here by most modern translators as “healthy” is *haplous*, which means “single,” and “single” is how it should be translated; as it is, for example, in the King James Version. It is implicit, anyway, for the word “eye” is in the singular. *Haplous* does have a secondary meaning of “healthy,” just as our word “health” is connected with “wholeness” or “undividedness.” But the primary meaning of *haplous* is “single” (see Bauer,

Greek-English Lexicon, p. 86), and the fact that most modern versions do not translate it that way is an example of how translations are affected by prevailing theological considerations. The fact is that most people, including those who work on the modern translations, don't really understand the point of this verse, which is essential to any serious attempt to live up to the Sermon on the Mount.

If our eye does not become single and we don't recognize the Light that is within us, we are, in effect, rejecting that which is our own essence. Initiation gives us the chance to come into full contact with our full Self. "Self-knowledge precedes God-knowledge," Kirpal Singh said, more often perhaps than any other single statement. It is a very existential point because it starts with our existence, with what we are. The fact of our existence is what counts. When Master says "Self-knowledge precedes God-knowledge," he means that what we are has to come first. "Know yourself; then the knowledge of God will follow from that." If we are able to bring into full manifestation the Light we were created from and that still exists within us, then anything becomes possible. This is our first job.

The parallel passage in the Gospel of Luke is a little different:

Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy [or single], your whole body is full of light; but if it is not healthy [or single], your body is full of darkness. Therefore consider whether the light in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be as full of light as when a lamp gives you light with its rays. (Luke 11:34-36)

These verses are important because Christian thought has often maintained that Jesus was not talking about real light here, but was using the term metaphorically; but by including that last verse, St. Luke makes it clear that that's not true. We will actually see that Light, which is realer than real. This is the way Master Kirpal, who often quoted that verse, always understood it.

The first five verses of the Gospel of John are also relevant here because they explain why there is Light within us in the first place.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being that has come into being. In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. . . .

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. (John 1:1-5, 9)

Kabir has said:

*God first created the Light;
We are all children of the Light;
The whole creation sprang from the Light;
Why then dub anyone as evil? (Quoted in Kirpal
Singh, *The Way of the Saints*, p. 354)*

This is the same understanding as in the Gospel of John. The Word, which is the Creator, expresses itself both through Sound and through Light and incarnates itself as the living Master. That Word is also present in the form of Sound and Light in every living being; it enlightens everybody. "In him was life, and the life was the light of all people." That Light is what is available to us; it is our own essence.

We can say that this is very basic Sant Mat teaching. But it is important to understand that this is not a new idea originated by Masters of recent times. Baba Sawan Singh, Master Kirpal, and Sant Ji exerted great energy in pointing out that this teaching is primordial and universal.* It is the means by which everything becomes possible. We are supposed to have a con-

* See especially, among many other references, *Naam or Word* by Kirpal Singh.

nection with the Light; our whole body is supposed to be full of it. That is what we are called upon to experience as initiates.

It's important to be clear that this idea has also been understood within Christianity. It is true that many people, including the translators of the New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible that we have been quoting from, have not fully understood this verse. But in the Anchor Bible edition of *Matthew* which was recently published by two leading scholars, the meaning is grasped:

To lay hold of treasure in heaven, the disciple must have his inner eye healthy. The idea expressed here is that just as the body is illuminated by the eye, as though that organ were a window, so there is a spiritual eye through which the whole spirit of man is either illuminated or in darkness. (W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew*, p. 81)

From the very beginning, some people within the Christian church have understood this Light within us to be the same Light of God that created the universe. The well-known Cistercian monk Thomas Merton discusses the Hesychast system of prayer in the part of Europe—Eastern Europe, Russia, Greece—that has been influenced by Eastern Orthodoxy, in connection with the principal monastery of that branch of Christianity, Mount Athos:

Athos in the Middle Ages was the center of a powerful mystical revival—the so-called hesychast movement. The hesychasts were contemplatives, solitaries for the most part, who followed a tradition supposed to have originated on Mount Sinai and which later flourished in Russia. The term hesychasm has had a very bad press in the west where it has been grossly misunderstood. St. Gregory Palamas, a monk of Athos who later became Archbishop of Salonica, was the chief defender of hesychasm, in the fourteenth century, against a Greek from Italy called Barlaam of Calabria. . . . Barlaam, in practice, considered all mys-

tical experience more or less illusory. At best, it was only a product of refined aesthetic fervor enkindled by symbols. St. Gregory Palamas, on the other hand, defended the thesis that the "divine light"—the same light that was seen by the three Apostles who saw the vision of the Transfigured Savior on Mount Thabor—could be experienced directly in this present life. He held that this light was not a mere symbol of the divinity, but an experience of the "divine energies"—though not of the divine essence. Barlaam was formally defeated in the lists of theological controversy and the Oriental Church upheld the teachings of Palamas. At this, Barlaam withdrew to the west and went over to Rome (or rather to Avignon)—not so much because of devotion to Church unity, as because he found the climate of nominalism in the west more congenial to his own mentality. (Thomas Merton, *Disputed Questions*, pp. 77-78)

Unfortunately the western church did not accept the belief of St. Gregory Palamas that divine Light could be experienced directly in the present life, which means that most of us with Catholic or Protestant backgrounds do not have this heritage; even though mystics in both Catholic and Protestant traditions have understood it.

Now if, as the Bible and the Masters teach, this light which is present within us is also present in everyone else, we must not only find our own inner Light but we must also recognize that every other human being is similarly blessed. This is the reason Masters lay such stress on "right understanding," which begins with the awareness that all human beings (in reality, all living creatures of any kind) are created from the same Light as we are, and have within themselves the same Light that we have.

We are supposed to enjoy our own inner Light; the Masters teach that it is a thoroughly enjoyable practice to go inside, contract the attention, bring ourselves into the eye focus, and make our inner eye become single or healthy. If we do enjoy it, our chances of experiencing the fullness of Light is much

greater because we will become so involved that we will forget everything else. Similarly the joy that contact with our own inner Light brings will radiate outward, and we will become aware that other people also have this Light even though they may not know it. Then we will *have* to recognize them as children of God and treat them with respect. We will not be able to do otherwise.

In *Morning Talks*, Kirpal Singh talks about this process, this basic attitude of the disciple toward his practice:

I was just speaking about devotion, real bhakti. The first principle, the basic principle and I would say the grandest of all, is to know that God is everywhere. We are living in Him and He is in us. We live and have our being in Him, like fish in the river. The fish lives in the water, its whole life depends on water. It lives in water, it lives on water, from whence it gets its food. . . .

This is exactly the same as the way we live in the light and on the light from whence we get our food. Man lives not by bread alone according to Moses and Jesus—but “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

When God wished, “I am One and wish to be many,” the whole Universe emanated, came into being. The whole world is an expression, a manifestation of God. Where is that place where He is not? We are in Him, He is in us and is our Controlling Power. All ensouled bodies are the drops of the Ocean of all Consciousness. When we know this, all is beautiful. God is beautiful and any world made by Him, manifested by Him, is also beautiful. Beauty comes out of beauty, not from ugliness. Anything that appears to be ugly in the world is the result of the spectacles that we are wearing. If the glass of the spectacles is smoky, you will see all smoke. If it is red, everything will appear red. If it is black, everything will appear black. Well, the world is not black, red or

smoky, mind that! So we have to change the trend of our mind, of our heart. . . .

This is what we have been calling “changing the point of view or angle of vision.” In the New Testament we have seen that it is called *metanoia*, usually translated as “repentance,” but which literally means what Master has just said: changing “the trend of our mind, of our heart.”

The first principle that we have to abide by is to know that He is everywhere. We are in Him and He is in us. When you know this, you will just pay respect to everybody. They are all manifested in the man-body. When we know that He is everywhere and that He knows everything of our heart, how can we do anything that is not good or commit a sin! . . .

Masters define sin as “forgetting,” so how can we forget, once we know this truth? And the only way we can really know that God is in everyone is to first experience that Power within ourselves.

Our Master used to say, “When a child of five years is sitting by you, you will never dare to do anything which is wrong.” When you have the viewpoint that He is within me, He is outside me, I am in Him, how can you perpetrate anything! Can you? This is the sum and substance, the basic principle. If you abide by it, everything will follow of itself. The world will be beautiful. Beauty comes out of beauty. If the world appears to be ugly or not beautiful, that is the result of the spectacles that you are wearing. (*Morning Talks*, pp. 123-124)

The Masters do present a very different point of view of the world. We live in a fallen universe, but Master Kirpal is saying here that the action of Grace in the fallen universe is such that by changing our angle of vision and tapping into that which is already within us, we can make it an unfallen universe. If

enough people do this, it will create the Spiritual Revolution which the Sermon on the Mount is aiming at. If we take the Light that is within us—the Light that gives us joy and makes us love God—and develop it as fully as we can with the help of the living Master, if we come to understand—really understand—that that Light is not only our source, but the source of every single living being in the universe, we can effect change amounting to a revolution.

This view explains many of the Masters' teachings. For one thing it explains, "Go jolly!" Why should we not go jolly? Why should we be unhappy? If we see what is really there, how can we not be happy? It explains, "Loving our neighbor as ourself." It explains why the Masters are so strongly opposed to our thinking or doing things that will divide us. Why are they so particular about our minimizing the differences among human beings, especially among initiates—and about not focusing on negative factors that separate us? Why do they ask us to concentrate on the quality we share with every living thing, namely the Light of God within us? This is what the Master does, and it is what we can do by adopting his point of view and strengthening that Light within us.

In this context, we should note that the phrase, "Your whole body will be full of light," while not a bad translation, literally reads, "All your body will be shining." In addition to the connotation of inner Light, this phrase also means that we will be affecting others: this is very important in connection with the Sermon as a whole. Our body will shine; we will be lovable in other people's eyes. We have often made the point that the Master is served when we act in a way that allows other people to love us. Why? If we are connected to him and our attention is on him, the love of other people for us will go right through us to him and he will be able to reach them.

If our body is shining, if we are on fire with his love and light, it will show and it will attract the love of others. Not that we should work openly at bringing others to the feet of the Master; it might even be better if other people don't know we're initiated because our bodies won't shine when we are full of thoughts of ourselves. But if our body is full of light and is shining, that will attract the love of others. They may

not know who they are really loving or what it is that attracts them, but we will know and he will know. Master Kirpal has explained carefully that this is how it works: it goes straight through us to him, and that's an enormous help to him.

In Master Kirpal Singh's talk, "The Coming Spiritual Revolution," which we have already examined, he quoted the section of the Sermon on the Mount we are discussing and tied it in with "right understanding" and how we are to apply that which is within us to that which is without. He explained how we can come to see that a world which is created from beauty is truly beautiful. Granted that it is a fallen world; granted that the outer form does not appear to be what was intended, as we know from the writings of the Masters; granted that Kal—Time, the Negative Power—exists. Can we short-circuit all that? We have, within each of us, the capacity to do so and that is a genuine revolution, which is another way of understanding that word *metanoia* usually translated as "repentance." "Turning around" is a literal revolution: "Turn around, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

In this talk the Master says:

So this is the first right understanding: We are living in Him, have our being in Him, He is in us, outside us, above us, below us. Like fish we have our existence in Him. That is right understanding. And further: God made man with equal privileges, all born the same way, no high, no low; all have got the same outer concessions—eyes, ears, etc.—and all have the same inner concession: we are kept in the body by some higher Power which is the same for all. So this is right understanding: that we have this thing—God resides in every heart—and that all is holy where devotion kneels, all are born with the same privileges from God—no high, no low, no East, no West. And this will result in right thoughts.

Please note, because this is important and very easily misunderstood, that Master Kirpal defines "right understanding" with the utmost specificity. "This is right understanding: to know

that God resides in every heart and that all is holy where devotion kneels and that all are born with the same privileges from God." The Master says that this three-fold understanding is the beginning of everything else.

Satsangis often misunderstand what the Master means, but if we take the trouble to discern his true message we will see that this is what he wants. The whole plan for relating to other people is covered here, and naturally it implies that we must act accordingly. We are not just to *tell* people that God resides in every heart and that all is holy where devotion kneels and that all are born with the same privileges from God; we must *act* as though these are basic truths. We must behave toward others in the light of this understanding. Otherwise, as Master Kirpal said elsewhere, the plan won't work; the revolution will not occur.

Now, just as Lord Jesus did in the Sermon on the Mount, the Master becomes specific about how to contact the Divine Light within:

Every man has a secret chamber within himself, which is called the "closet of the body." That is higher than the mind and heart both, and provides mind with understanding to a certain extent, and the heart with feelings of love. This chamber is the Kingdom of God within us. This is the crest jewel, the pearl of great price. The Saints, when we come in contact with them, open this chamber by withdrawing all our attention from outside. The test of a true Master is the fact that in his company, the smallest realm opens up within us, and the Light, Divine Light, the expression of the God-into-Expression Power, is seen. Christ said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Prophet Mohammed said, "The light of Allah is found where? In the human temples." Why am I quoting these things? Because right understanding was given by Saints and Masters coming from time to time. Lord Krishna said, "I will give you divine light and you will see my glory within." Buddha said the same

thing: "Every man possesses the bright mirror of illumination." This, all the Buddhas realized. Buddha further proclaimed that, "The way of the illumined ones is the growth of snowdrops behind the eyes"; and then Christ came, and it was as if a few crocuses opened their hearts to the winter sky. But now the time has come when we can have a rebirth; this is what Christ spoke of when He said that the poor in spirit shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

So Springtime is upon us now; there will be more fragrant Saints, I would say now, who will come up and give us through the grace of God, a contact with the God-into-Expression Power. And this is the revolution, the spiritual revolution, which is coming up—an awakening all around. (*Sant Bani*, February 1984, pp. 11-12, 13)

This inner revolution will lead us to the treasures in heaven that Jesus said we are to work for. When we have changed our minds about what to "store up," our hearts will be there also; and our angle of vision will begin to change, so that we see more rather than less. If our body is full of light, it will give us much greater vision; we will see much, much more. And if our eye is healthy, we will be a little bit more like the Master who can see all our faults but loves us anyway and forgives us, totally and completely, dispelling the darkness.

Chapter 20

Why Worry?

Jesus's instructions to store up treasures in heaven rather than on earth are followed by this verse:

No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24)

There is a parallel section in the Gospel of Luke, where some very interesting material is added:

Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" [In the Gospel of Thomas 72, Jesus's answer is, "Who made me a divider? I'm not a divider, am I?"] And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger

ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods, laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God." (Luke 12:13-21)

Then follows essentially the same instructions as these from the Sermon on the Mount:

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all of these things will be given to you as well.

So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today. (Matthew 6:25-34)

In the Gospel of Luke at this point, Jesus says:

Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

We should remember that the basic, underlying theme of this great Sermon is that this universe can be looked at from an angle of vision that is completely divergent from our normal one, an angle of vision that makes everything look very different from the way it usually looks to us. A section from Baba Sawan Singh's famous letter "On Karma" has often been read to illustrate this point:

There are two ways of looking at this creation: 1) From the top, looking down—the Creator's point of view; 2) From the bottom, looking up—man's point of view.

From the top it looks as though the Creator is all in all. He is the only Doer, and the individual seems like a puppet tossed right and left by the wire puller. There seems to be no free will in the individual, and therefore no responsibility on his shoulder. It is His play. There is no why or wherefore. All the Saints, when They look from the top, describe the creation as His manifestation. They see Him working everywhere.

Looking from below, or the individual viewpoint, we come across "variety" as opposed to "Oneness." Everybody appears to be working with a will, and is influenced by and is influencing others with whom he comes in contact. The individual thinks he is the doer and thereby becomes responsible for his actions and their consequences. All the actions are recorded in his mind and memory, and cause likes and dislikes which keep him pinned down to the material, astral or mental spheres, according to his actions in an earlier life in the cycle of transmigration. The individual in these regions cannot help doing actions and, having done them, cannot escape their influences. The individual acts as the doer and therefore bears the consequences of his actions.

As stated above, the observations differ on account of the difference in the angle of vision. Both are right.

1. The individual, clothed in coarse material form, sees only the external material forms. His sight does not go deeper than that.

2. If he were to rise up to Sahansdal Kanwal [the astral plane], the same individual would see the mind actuating all forms. The form would be only secondary; mind would be the prime mover in all.

3. The same individual, from Daswan Dwar [the super-causal plane], will see the Spirit Current everywhere, and will see how the mind gets power from the Spirit.

4. From Sach Khand [the pure spiritual plane], the whole creation looks like bubbles forming and disappearing in the Spiritual Ocean. (*Sant Bani*, July 1981, "On Karma" [letter to Dr. and Mrs. Brock], pp. 12-13)

This perspective described by Master Sawan Singh underlies the philosophy of life that Jesus is presenting in this section of the Sermon—a philosophy based on the idea of *trust*. The Greek noun *pistis* is translated here (as elsewhere in the New Testament) as "faith," but a much better rendering is "trust." For one thing, the verb *pistuein* usually ends up as "believe," since there is no English verb form of "faith"; and this is way too intellectual a connotation. The Greek word is both a noun and a verb, just as "trust" is in English, and it essentially means *not to be afraid*, but to trust.

Sant Ji has commented in *In the Palace of Love* that "the greatest sin of all is to be afraid"; and the definition of sin as given by the Masters is *forgetting*, specifically "forgetting of our origin—Godhead," as Master Kirpal said in *The Wheel of Life*. So we come to understand that fear is what causes our forgetting: we are afraid, therefore we forget. What Jesus is describing in this passage is the angle of vision we are entitled to by our origin, and it is our forgetting that prevents us from understanding him. We have a right to this angle of vision,

Kirpal has said; it is our birthright to become God.

We are supposed to be able to take hold of the Master's little finger and walk without worry wherever we are led. The absence of worry amounts to the absence of fear: we worry because we are afraid of what is going to happen as a result of our actions. It may be worth repeating that the Masters say there are six things—actually three fundamental things with two variants each—that are fixed by fate. Those are the things we usually worry about: wealth or poverty, health or illness, and pain or pleasure (happiness or discomfort). Those are in our fate karma; we have no control over them. Because they are fixed before we are born, in a very real sense it is true that we will be taken care of. We will get whatever our fate karma has in store for us.

What is not controlled, of course, and what is not in our fate karma, is *how we respond* to that which is predetermined. This is an underlying point of the Sermon and of the Masters' writings on this subject. What do we bring to a confrontation with our fate karma? "Go jolly!" means, "Go trustingly!" If we respond with trust to whatever happens to us, with the understanding that this is in our fate karma so this is what is best for us, we can make the best possible use of that which is given to us. By using the little freedom of will that we have, we can produce an enormous change; and that is why the Masters go to so much trouble to tell us all this.

It is very hard for people to grasp the beauty of what is meant here. It is not easy, and there is the built-in danger of the crane trying to be a swan. We must truly sense the comfort and safety of trusting the Master before we dare to give ourselves completely into His hands, but we can do it if we understand the two points of view: one from the top down, the other from the bottom up. As Baba Sawan Singh said, "Both are right." Both are accurate, valid descriptions of the universe; one is not worse than the other.

It is just that by seeing the view from the top down, we begin to participate in the liberating qualities of that perspective; and to do that we must trust in the One, the Master, who tells us about it. This is what He is leading us toward, and this is what Jesus is clearly saying here in the Sermon: this is the

way the rest of creation lives; they may be lesser creatures than humans in some ways, but they trust. Birds of the air and lilies of the field don't do anything to make it happen, but they are more beautiful than human beings in fancy clothes. If they are taken care of, why should we not be?

Sant Ji told a story in 1980 when he was at Martha's Vineyard that reminded me of this passage in the Bible. Guru Nanak and Mardana were walking along somewhere and Mardana was eating some corn, and Guru Nanak said, "Mardana Ji, you won't be able to finish that corn. One of those kernels is meant for a hen in Lahore." Mardana laughed and said, "But I'm eating it! How is it possible?" Just at that moment, he swallowed wrong and one of those grains of corn went up into his nose and he couldn't get it out. Guru Nanak laughed and said, "Well, we'll see." Some weeks later, they were walking near Lahore and there was a hen by the side of the road. Guru Nanak said, "That's the hen that was supposed to get that grain of corn you were eating." Mardana said, "Well, how could she get it now? It's stuck in my nose. I can't get it out!" And just at that moment he sneezed and it came out and the hen ate it.

Just as Sawan Singh said, it seems to us that we are doing it all; and as long as it seems that way to us there is a very real sense in which we are doing it all. But there is a lot that we don't control, a lot that we can't control; and though we may think that that loss of control is also caused by human beings, the truth is we just don't know. We are not privy to the inner workings of the universe in that way. That is what Sant Ji's story illustrates.

This talk was given at Sant Bani Ashram on May 26, 1977; Sant Ji is commenting on a hymn of Kabir:

*O Kabir, why should I worry?
What will I bring about by worrying?
God worries about me, I have no worries.*

If you want to accomplish anything in this world the first thing required is to have faith, to have belief. When we are traveling in a train, going over rivers on the bridges built by engineers, we have

faith in those engineers that their bridges will not break down. We surrender our precious lives in their hands and travel in the train without any worries. Fearlessly, we sleep all night while the train crosses bridge after bridge. In the same way, when we fly in the air, we go up miles above the earth. We surrender our lives to the pilots and the engineers because we have faith in them that they will take us to the right place and that they are able to take us where we want to go.

Similarly, when we enter into Sant Mat, in the beginning we need much faith in the Master. If we have any doubt, we cannot progress and the way to Him will not be open to us. We can deceive and misguide the people, but we cannot deceive that God Which is within us; we cannot play tricks on Him. In the beginning we need to build up faith outwardly and, after that, when we go within and see with our own eyes, we realize that we need not worry about anything: because the God Who is residing within us is concerned about us and He is doing everything for us.

We read in the history of Bhagat Namdev that he had a very beautiful hut and his neighbor was very jealous of it and wanted to destroy it. Once it so happened that his neighbor did destroy it. But Bhagat Namdev was not unhappy with him; he sat in meditation and said, "I am not worried about this hut; if God wants me to sit in a hut He will make it for me." And while he was sitting in meditation, his Satguru came and made him a hut—much more beautiful than before—and that had been the best hut in the village. His neighbors asked him, "Namdev, who has made this hut? If the same person will come and make our hut, we can pay him more than you have paid." But Namdev replied, "He will ask for much more than you can pay." What payment does He ask? He tells us to detach ourselves from our family, and all our attachments; when we give Him this payment, then there is no need to call Him. He will

come by Himself.

Bhagat Namdev was a cloth dyer by profession, and he was not working hard at his trade; he was not a good businessman. He would come home and his family would ask him, "What are you doing? Why are you not making money?" He would say, "I don't find any customer to whom I can sell my clothes." Then his mother told him to sell his clothes on credit if nobody was ready to pay cash. So he took his clothes, went outside, gave some of his clothes to the beggars and put the rest on some stones there and came back. His mother asked him, "How is business?" He replied, "Yes, I have all the clothes on credit." His mother asked, "When will you get paid for them?" He replied, "They told me that whenever they have it, they will come here and pay us." Then he sat for meditation. Some people told Namdev's family, "Nobody is going to come here to pay you: brother Namdev has given his clothes to the beggars and he has put some of them on the stones, and they will not give you any money." So God Himself came in the form of a man, and brought some money. He said, "Namdev has given me some clothes; here is the payment." Bhagat Namdev was sitting there, in meditation, while his God, his Master, came there in the form of a man.

Master Kirpal Singh also used to tell this story, and people would often get very upset with it. The late sixties and early seventies was a time when many people felt that earning one's living was unworthy of a person with higher aspirations. They felt it was much better just to float around and not worry about it, and they would cite this kind of story in support of what we then called the "hippie ideal." A great many Satsangis subscribed to this ideal in those days, and those who did not, who worked hard for a living, used to despair when they heard it. "Why does Master tell stories like this?" they would say. "This just gives those people fuel for their laziness, and they won't ever work!"

What is required here is the understanding that it's a ques-

tion of mental attitude, of point of view. Namdev knew he would be taken care of. He knew it was not necessary to worry, and whatever he did was in accordance with his own inner vision. And it worked. He was taken care of. Of course we have to earn our own living. We have to do whatever is required to support ourselves and our families if they are dependent on us. There is no doubt about that; it is an important part of the Masters' teachings. But our attitude must be that we will not worry about it because we know we will be taken care of just as Namdev was.

However, if we do worry about it we must remember that in Sawan Singh's letter he said that it is the taking on of responsibility that makes us responsible. In other words, if we really think that everything depends on us, it really will depend on us and we will not be taken care of. It is not easy to adopt this "don't worry" attitude but if we can even come close to it, it is very liberating. That's the point of it. Matthew 6:24 said that no one can serve two masters because we'll be slave to one or the other. If we are slaves to our fears and desires, we will be ruled by those fears and desires, but we can escape them by being slaves to the Master Who is ultimately our own highest Self. This concept corresponds to the "gurumukh-manmukh" idea that we can be either the mouthpiece of the Guru or the mouthpiece of the mind. We can choose.

Sant Ji's discourse continues:

But what are we people doing? We are worrying for our own self, and we are always concerned that if we do not do this thing, we will not be able to get that and this work will not be done. Because we are always thinking for our own self, we are suffering. We do not have faith in that God Who has given us birth, Who has brought us into this world. We sometimes even forget that He is concerned about us and we think that He will not give us food, He will not give us that which we need. But what are Saints and Mahatmas doing? They don't worry about anything and they leave everything to their Satguru. That's why their Satguru always fulfills their needs. Guru

Nanak says, "Look at God, how He has created the creatures who live in the ocean. There is no market there, no shopping place. But still, God is providing them food and whatever they need. Everything is provided there, under the water."

Sadhus never save money, they accept only what is needed.

For the future, God is there; when they ask He gives.

Now Kabir Sahib says that sadhus never collect money in banks, because whenever they need it, God or their Master Himself provides it for them.* If they do get some money from the sangat, they use that money for the benefit of the satsang: they will set up a free kitchen or make any necessary building for the sangat. In that also, if they need more money for those purposes, God Himself comes and gives that money: because God, or the Master of that Saint, is always worried about that Saint, and whatever he needs He provides him with that. I have seen that Baba Bishan Das never kept any money with him. But still—I don't know how he did it—the langar was provided for the people who were coming there, and nobody had to worry about where the money would come from. When Hazur first came to our ashram, a lot of food was brought there, but I don't even know who the man was who brought that food in his truck. I tried to investigate and find out who the man was who brought all that, but I was never able to find out. At three o'clock in the

* A footnote to the text of this discourse was inserted at this point in Sant Ji's book. It reads: The following is from the Dehra Dun *North-ern Post*, April 2, 1971: "His Holiness Sant Kirpal Singh, who is celebrating 'Mankind Day' tomorrow at . . . beautifully constructed 'Manav Kendra' on 25 acres of land, told the Post about His further programme. . . . The tall and cheerful saint, when asked how many centres he intends to build . . . gleefully laughed and said, 'God is my budget—I am going on like wildfire' . . ."

morning that man came in his truck and told my sevadars, "This is for your ashram." And my sevadars took it, and the next morning they told me that somebody had come and given it to them. I mean to say that if we have faith in our Satguru, we have everything; because Satguru knows everything.

Don't worry, remain worryless: The Giver is competent.

He gives even to animals, birds and insects who neither have anything in their hands nor any store.

Now Kabir says, Why do you worry? You should have only one worry and that is about meditation: because that God Who has given you life, He is worried about you—very much. Look at the birds and animals. They don't have any bank balance; they don't have any source from where to get money. But, still, God provides them with food by one or another means. (*Streams in the Desert*, pp. 91-94)

This subject is one that surfaces again and again throughout Sant Ji's book, *In the Palace of Love*. The following excerpt is from Chapter 20, called "Understanding the Will of God":

Once a gurmukh dear one came to Guru Angad Dev and asked Him, "Master, is there any disciple of yours who understands the will of God in its real meaning? Is there anyone who, even after knowing everything that will happen in his lifetime, still remains content in the will of God? Is there any disciple of yours like that?" Guru Angad told him lovingly, "Yes, dear one, in Gujrat, there is an initiate of mine named Bhai Bukhari. Go to him and you will find all these qualities in him."

So that gurmukh dear one went to Gujrat, and when he arrived at Bhai Bukhari's house, he found him weaving a mat. Bhai Bukhari welcomed him there, but he continued his weaving. After he fin-

ished, he asked that gurumukh dear one, "Yes, now tell me, why have you come?"

So the gurumukh dear one told Bhai Bukhari, "I was told by Guru Angad Dev to come and see you, so I have come to have your darshan." Bhai Bukhari welcomed him to his home, but he told him he was very busy because his son was going to be married soon. Bhai Bukhari showed him all the sweets which they had prepared for the people who had come there to attend the wedding. He also showed him the clothes that they had made for the bride, and the jewelry and ornaments that they had prepared and collected for the wedding. After showing him all this, Bhai Bukhari also showed him a white piece of cloth which usually people use to cover dead bodies and he showed him a piece of wood. Bhai Bukhari told him, "After my son gets married, in a few days he will leave the body; so I have kept ready this white piece of cloth to cover his body, and on this piece of wood I will take him to the cremation ground."

Now that gurumukh dear one who had come to see Bhai Bukhari was very surprised; he thought, "Maybe Bhai Bukhari is saying all this just for the sake of saying it; maybe what he is saying is not true,"—because usually when we do not have faith in our own selves, we do not have faith in other people either. We think that other people are like us, and they are not saying the truth. But since that dear one had come all the way just to see reality, he thought, "I should wait here and see what happens and see how real the words of Bhai Bukhari are."

So after a day or so, the wedding of his son took place and they had the wedding procession. The groom went to the bride's place, and everything happened according to Indian tradition. The parents of the bride did everything as they do in weddings, and after all the rites and rituals, the bride came to Bhai Bukhari's home; and after a day or two, his son

left the body. Since Bhai Bukhari had everything all prepared, it was not difficult to do what needed to be done: he took the body of his son to the cremation ground, and after the body was cremated and they came back home, they sat on the mat which he had been weaving when that gurumukh dear one had first seen him. In India, it is a tradition that when people come back from the cremation ground, they sit in sympathy and mourn the death of the person. The people sitting there were talking according to their own understanding, saying, "It is very bad that your son left the body. If God wanted to take him back, He should have taken him before he got married. Why did He let him get married? And you spent so much money on the wedding!" But Bhai Bukhari did not say anything. He just kept quiet.

After some time that gurumukh dear one took Bhai Bukhari into a corner and asked him, "Dear one, what is all this play? I don't understand what is happening. If you had known from the very beginning that all this was going to happen, why didn't you try to avoid it? Since you go within and you knew that your son would first get married and then leave the body, and you made all these arrangements beforehand—even this mat on which people are sitting to mourn the death of your son—if you had known all this from the beginning, and you were going within, why didn't you do something to avoid it? Even if you were not capable of doing that, at least you should have told the Shabd Guru, Guru Angad Dev Ji Maharaj—He is all powerful, and if you had requested, He would definitely have done something so that you wouldn't have to go through all this suffering." Bhai Bukhari replied, "Look here, dear one: the disciple who tells the Master to put life into a dead body—the disciple who tells the Master to change the will of God for him—is not in fact a disciple of the Master. If he is doing the devo-

tion of God only for fulfilling his own interests and desires, he cannot be a devotee of the Master."

So here in this hymn Guru Angad Dev is talking about the qualities of the lovers of the Master: He says, "If one is a servant of the Master, he will not make any excuses; he will remain content and happy in the will of God." A servant of the Master cannot make excuses. If a devotee is doing things for the Master only for fulfilling his own desires, his own self-interest, he cannot be called a lover of the Master. Such a disciple, such a servant of the Master, can never please Almighty God.

Saints and Mahatmas live in this world according to the laws of Nature, and they tell their disciples also to live according to the rules and regulations and laws of Nature. They tell us, "If you have stepped onto this path of devotion, and you want to become successful, then you should always accept the will of the Lord . . ." Pain and comfort, sickness and health, poverty and riches—these six things are written in our fate even before our body is created. All the things which are going to happen in our life must happen—and they do happen on the exact time, and there is no way we can avoid them. Tulsi Sahib says, "O Tulsi, before this body was created, our *pralabdha* or fate karmas were written down. This is a very unique play, but our mind does not become patient." . . .

Not even worldly parents are happy looking at the pain of their children. How can we expect our Master to be pleased when He sees us in a painful condition? The Masters have love of more than thousands of parents. They do extend feasible help, but we people do not know what we should ask of them, what kind of help we should seek from them. (Ajaib Singh, *In the Palace of Love*, pp. 199-202)

If we put it all together—everything from the Bible and from the Masters that we have read—we see that President Roosevelt

was right in the early days of the Great Depression when he said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." It is the fear of what is going to happen that causes us to worry, and it is the worry that causes us pain. The Master's point is that what is going to happen is already fixed; what isn't fixed is *how we deal with it*. If we deal with it from the vantage point of love rather than fear, of trust rather than worry, the whole process will be short-circuited. The karma will still happen, but we will not be touched by it.

The underlying factor about this non-worry attitude is that if we realize God is going to provide for us, if we continue to trust and love, we can come through almost anything unscathed. Of course, we may not like what is provided, and that's when it is hard to sustain an attitude of acceptance. Suddenly something happens, we don't like it, we lose our faith, and we begin to worry. That is our loss. But if we can hang on and trust in Him, He will take care of us. Outwardly we may have problems, but if we can face up to them we will be strong inwardly and that's what the Master wants for us.

This is the attitude with which Masters live their lives. One of the endearing things about Sant Ji is his honesty, his willingness to tell stories about himself in which he was wrong. Just after the section quoted above from *In the Palace of Love*, he tells this story:

Before I met Baba Bishan Das, in my childhood, I always had the habit of doing the repetition of one or another word, and I used to repeat them for eight hours at a stretch; but when I met Baba Bishan Das he asked me, "Does the one who is within you remain still?" He meant, does my mind remain still? I told him, "I don't know about that. I remember that I remain aware either in the beginning when I start doing my repetition or towards the end when I am about to finish the repetition. But I don't remember what happens in between, and I don't know whether my mind remains there or not. But I do have this ego, this pride, that I sit for so much time." (p. 203)

Well, which of us couldn't say something like that? Which of us has never been in that position? If he can be honest and admit it and come to understand it, so can we. It was because he faced up to it that he was able to go way beyond that kind of meditation and do the real thing. If we cannot be honest and trusting, it is very difficult to make progress.

Another thing to remember is what Sant Ji said about faith (or trust): "when we do not have faith in our own selves, we do not have faith in other people either." (p. 200) The kind of living that Jesus and the other Masters are talking about depends on our being honest with ourselves and having faith in ourselves. If we can trust ourselves and like ourselves, we can feel the same toward others. If we do not, we project onto others all the fear that is really there in ourselves, holding us back; we can't help it because that is the point of view, the angle of vision, the colored glasses we are wearing. But if we can love the Master and change our angle of vision enough to examine our inner selves honestly, we can learn to trust Him to take care of us. Only then will we lose our worry and fear, which is the greatest forgetting of all.

Chapter 21

Judged By Our Own Judgment

This passage begins the third chapter of the Sermon on the Mount:

Do not judge so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make, you will be judged. And the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye. (Matthew 7:1-5)

This is a very famous section, and its message is integral to the Path of the Masters. In fact the Masters have said so much and spent so much energy teaching us not to judge or criticize others that we could spend many hours just reading verbatim what they have said on the subject. We'll examine a few selections from those writings, but we should remember that if the importance the Master gives to something is judged by how often he says it, or how integral he considers it, then this particular teaching takes the prize. Yet as we look at our own lives and observe others' lives, this instruction is not taken as seriously as many others. We seem convinced there is always

“a good reason” to judge others. In the psychological catchphrase of the day, “We just don’t get it.”

We don’t get it, though the Masters repeatedly emphasize the point that the Lord Jesus makes here: the judgment we make is the judgment we will get. It’s as plain as anything. The measure we give is the measure we will receive. This particular teaching runs all the way through the Sermon on the Mount; it is the principal sub-strata of the whole Sermon, and it surfaces at many places. In studying other portions of the Sermon we have seen that it is our act of judging, of blaming, of accusing, of finding fault with someone else, that closes the door of Grace to us. And the judgment that we make, according to the Law of Karma, gets turned around and dumped on our own head! It’s because the Masters care about us that they lay so much emphasis on this truth. Nothing else is so dangerous to us.

Sant Ji has said many times that many things (ranging from cigarette smoking to illicit sexual activity) may be bad; but to judge others for doing them is worse than whatever is being done. Master Kirpal Singh has commented on this in connection with vegetarianism in his circular letter, “Ends and Means”:

Once we know, for example, that abstinence from all kinds of meat diet and spiritous liquors helps on the spiritual Path, it is enough that we avoid them. But to take it as an end in itself is to miss the goal. Offending others because they eat meat is worse than meat-eating itself. Hate the sin, but love the sinner. Live and let others live. Welcome those are who choose to come on the way, but we have no right to hate or offend others because they eat meat. Vegetarian diet is essentially a helping factor for those who would prefer to follow the teachings of the Master. Hafiz, a great Saint, says, “Drink wine, burn the holy scriptures, and put Kaba, the House of God, on fire. You may do all this but never offend or molest anybody.” If you are really anxious to meet God you should not offend or molest the heart of anybody, which is the dwelling house of God. . . .

I would like to add that for the aspirants on the Path it is but necessary that so long as one is in the physical body, vegetarianism should be strictly adhered to. (*The Way of the Saints*, p. 277)

Yet somehow it is so easy to point the finger of blame and it is so hard not to. Certain people and certain situations cause an almost reflexive response in us to criticize or to sit in judgment. There is something that causes pain in us when we make an effort to avoid this response.

In June 1967, Master Kirpal Singh issued a circular letter called, "By Love Serve One Another," in which he urges us to live lovingly and helpfully, reflecting our devotion to our Master:

A tree is known by the fruit it bears. Do glory unto the God-Power and you shall be glorified in return without any effort on your part. That is the law. And again, a fruit-laden tree bends with the weight of the fruit it bears. Try to cultivate and attain the divine virtues of love, humility and understanding for all. Who is there under the sun who has no failings and shortcomings? "With all our righteousness, we are but filthy rags." Be polite and courteous with all. Courtesy costs you nothing but it pays rich dividends. Human heart is verily the seat of God and must be kept sanctified at all times and at all costs, no matter what the sacrifice. Learn to live peacefully and amicably with each other, giving due regard to the feelings and sentiments of others. "By love serve one another" should be your rule in life. A loving service adorns both the server and the served alike. . . .

It hardly serves any useful purpose to cast aspersions upon anybody or assign motives to whatever one says or does, for it is not given to us to read anybody's mind when we cannot read even our own. "Judge not, lest ye be judged" and found wanting in the Divine Scales. Therefore, arraign not anybody,

much less your colleagues and brothers in faith. In the case of honest differences of opinion, which sometimes may arise, try to iron them out lovingly and in private, rather than wash the dirty linen in public meetings and public places, spreading a nauseating foul smell around you. If you cannot do so between yourselves, for one reason or another, you will do well to refer the problem to the Master for solution and reconciliation of the apparently divergent views. I, therefore, enjoin on all of you to keep loving and friendly relations among yourselves as children of the same Father and do not do anything that may make anybody raise a pointing finger at you and bring disrepute to the Highest Knowledge—the Science of the Beyond—which you have come by after an evolution through ages past. “Ye are the light of the world” and hence should keep this light aloft on the hilltop so that those who see light, even from a distance, are encouraged to seek you for advice and bless you for your sage counsel and the Master Power that helped you to it. As such, you are to help your brothers in faith, keeping them firm in their loving devotion to the Master instead of coming in between them and Master—for all belong to Him. (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 336-337)

On January 28, 1967, Kirpal Singh gave a memorable discourse on this subject of judging others, which has fortunately been preserved for us by way of notes taken at the time. The Master said:

If we realize that death is certain, then there will be a change in our life. You must remain attentive in meditation. If not, the mind will think of others, and judge their actions; criticizing, etc. Instead of the good actions of others, we take their bad actions to be our guiding factor. If you see the bad qualities of others, you will become those bad qualities. “As you think, so you become.”

God has said, "He is my loveliest child who sees me in others." Thoughts are very potent. You should see the good qualities of others rather than the bad qualities. You must have a sweet tongue; it should not injure the feelings of others. You want to love God, yet you curse others in whom God resides. Injuring the feelings of others is a great sin; it is a sin of the highest degree. If you have to face a person with such bad qualities, get on one side rather than face him. Analyze yourself and see your own shortcomings instead of seeing the shortcomings of others. Who are you to take out the shortcomings of others? "It is easy to seek God but very difficult to mend yourself." If you realize that God resides in others, would you want to hurt them? One by one, you should give up your shortcomings. This is why I insist on all initiates keeping a diary.

If a man won't give up his evil ways of hurting others, why should you depart from your sweet ways of helping others? If you must observe others, then observe their virtuous qualities. There are shortcomings in all, but also good qualities.

Swami Ji says: "I will give you a tip: If you want to see shortcomings, then look into your own self; if you want to see virtues, then see them in others." Listen to what I say and take heed; if not, you will be sorry, and then it will be too late in the day. I have selected the best piece of advice for you. Now it is up to you to follow it. God has given us this time to remember Him and not to hurt the feelings of others. (*Sant Bani*, June 1979, p. 2)

The following brief excerpt from Maulana Rumi's *Masnavi* also points out how hard this "tip" is to follow and how easily it can be forgotten:

Four Indians went to the mosque to say their prayers. Each one pronounced the invocation and was saying his prayers with great devotion when the *Mu'azzin*

happened to come in. One of them immediately called out, "O Mu'azzin, have you yet called to prayer? It's time to do so." Then the second said to the speaker, "Aha! You have spoken words unconnected with worship and therefore, according to tradition, you have spoiled your prayers." Thereupon the third scolded the second one, saying, "O simpleton! Why do you rebuke him? Rather rebuke yourself." Last of all the fourth said, "God be praised that I have not fallen into the same ditch as my three companions!" (*Sant Bani*, June 1979, p. 17)

It is not an easy thing to be non-judgmental. There is something in us that judges others as a way of avoiding what lies within ourselves; and just when it seems to us we are freest from this fault, we are most vulnerable to it. To stop judging is painful. When Sant Ji writes in the bhajans (e.g., *Rab Labhda E*) about sacrificing one's head and killing the mind, this is what he means. To remove this aspect of ourselves is very hard to do.

In C. S. Lewis's Narnia book, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, there is the story of a boy, Eustace, who habitually lived his life within the framework of blame: always and in everything, he was right and good, and everyone else was wrong and bad. As a consequence he was given the form of a dragon; as he thought, so he became. He felt very sorry once he realized that he had the form of a dragon. Eventually Aslan, the Christ-figure, came and helped him out of it. First he showed him how to rid himself of it himself, and he was able to dispose of two layers that way. Then, when he just could not do anything further, Aslan put his claws to the dragon's body and slit it down the middle, causing Eustace excruciating pain—"The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart" (p. 89)—but if that dragon body had not been taken off, he wouldn't have been a boy again. It's something like that in our experience. We get into situations like the one those four Muslims from India were in: each of us instantly sees what the other one is doing and applies the teaching to the other, forgetting that no matter what he is

doing, by judging or rebuking him we are doing something worse. No matter that the Lord Jesus and all other Masters who have come have been stronger on this point than on any dozen "moral categories" we are ready to kill others for; what they require of us in this connection hurts. It tears us so deep that it seems it goes into our heart.

Mr. Oberoi reports in *Support for the Shaken Sangat* (p. 296), that when he asked Sant Ji what retards initiates' progress the most, his answer was, "Criticism of others. While one has even the tiniest bit within oneself, the inner way will not open up." In *In the Palace of Love* (p. 35), Sant Ji has said that fear is the greatest sin. But most of us have realized, painfully and slowly over the long haul, that the two are intimately connected. We judge others because we are afraid of what we will find if we look closely at ourselves. The Masters know that this is our weakness.

There is also the question of how we relate to being judged. What should our attitude be? On May 13, 1977, when Sant Ji was at Sant Bani Ashram on his first world tour, he commented on a hymn of Kabir:

*Keep the critic nearby so your courtyard will look
beautiful;
Without water and soap he purifies the mind.*

Satsang is held daily, but nothing new is talked about. The same things are repeated: those things which are obstacles in our meditations. Just as the problems of lust, anger, attachment, greed and egoism, which are hindering our spiritual progress, are discussed, in the same way, the great problem, criticism, which is cutting the root of our spirituality, is also talked about in Satsang. If it were not, we would never even have thought about stopping this evil.

Once a man came to Master in our ashram, complaining that he was not progressing well in his meditation. Master asked him whether he was maintaining chastity and whether he was free from anger and other passions. He said, "Yes, I am free from all

these evils." Then Master asked him, "Are you involved in criticism? Are you criticizing anybody?" He said, "No, I don't have such habits." Then Master asked him, "Are you taking part in hearing criticism? When anybody else is criticizing anyone, are you present there? Are you hearing that criticism?" He said, "Yes, I have a habit of hearing criticism." Hazur used to say, "Whether you criticize or whether you hear criticism, it's the same." Master Sawan Singh Ji used to say, "If you criticize anyone, your good actions will go to his account, and his sins will come to your account, and in that way, he will get the blessing."

Mahatma Sheikh Saadi used to say, "If I want to criticize, I will criticize my mother, so that the good actions may remain in our home." Master Sawan Singh Ji used to put it this strongly: "There is no taste in speaking ill of others. There is taste or pleasure in sense enjoyments, but where is the pleasure in finding fault? But even so we do not stop it; we are always doing it." Guru Nanak says, "To criticize even your enemy is not good. To criticize anyone is very bad. We are the manmukh, and if we criticize others, the Negative Power punishes us." That's why, in this hymn, Kabir Sahib says, "If anyone is criticizing you, you should be grateful to him, because he is cleaning your dirt without using soap and water." And, further, "It would be better if you give him a place to dwell nearby you so he doesn't have to work hard while cleaning you."

*Never send the critic far away, always give him
respect and fame.*

*He purifies our body and mind and sings our glory
only.*

Now Kabir Sahib says, "If you meet any critic, you should respect him, you should love him, because he is taking away your sins without taking anything

from you." If any critic is welcomed and treated with love, then he understands in himself, "These people are afraid of me and that's why they are welcoming and loving me." Saints do not have any faults within Them, but still, Their critics go to many places and say that this Saint is like this and this Saint is like that. I have seen this; but I have also seen that Saints do not respond to these things in kind. I have seen many people who came to Master Kirpal with the intention of criticizing Him, but Master always respected them and welcomed them. (*Streams in the Desert*, pp. 71-72)

The following story from the August 10, 1977, Satsang was added to this chapter ("The Great Problem") in *Streams in the Desert* because it is on the same subject. It captures the essence of the section that we just read from the Sermon on the Mount and outlines exactly what Jesus was talking about: The judgment we make is the judgment we get. Sant Ji says:

What is criticism? To speak against anybody—not to his face, but to his back—when he is not present there: That is criticism. To exhibit our good qualities and point out others' faults is also criticism. And if we do not know about anyone, but still we speak against him, that also is included under criticism. . . .

There was a king whose name was Ajassar, and once he made a joke of a perfect Saint. He gave Him a donation of horse dung.

Saints are always gracious, and They are very humble. The Saint accepted that donation without question and without saying anything to the king.

But it is the Law of Nature that whatever you donate—if you have donated it with a whole heart—will go on increasing, and will be added to your account. So when the Saint opened that bag of horse dung, it began to increase, and, because the king had given that donation wholeheartedly, it went on

increasing and increasing.

Once when the king was passing by the place of that Saint, he saw that there were heaps of horse dung there, and he didn't see any horse. He asked the Saint, again to make a joke of Him: "Saint, I see that there is a lot of dung here, but I don't see any horse." He said, "Yes, that is true. I have no horse. But one of my disciples gave me a donation, and it is his gift which is increasing, because it is the law of Nature that if anyone gives a donation, he will get its fruit in greatly increased amount. So he gave me a little bit of dung, and now as a result of that law of Nature, it is increased, and here it is."

The king realized that he had made a great mistake, and asked, "What will happen to me, because I gave you this? What will happen to me?" The Saint said, "You will have to eat all this horse dung." The King asked, "Is there any way I can escape this punishment?" The Saint replied, "Yes, there is one way. If people start criticizing you, instead of you they will take this dung and they will eat it. If they criticize you, they will take your sins, and you will get their good qualities. So do something that will make people criticize you."

The king realized his mistake, and he didn't want to do another bad thing. But still, because the Saint had told him, he went to a pundit's house and requested the pundit to give his daughter to him. And he told him, "I will take your daughter into my palace, and there I will worship with her; but you please give me your daughter."

So when the pundit gave his daughter to the king, the king brought her into the palace, and everyone saw that an old king had brought a young woman to live with him. But he worshiped with her only, and told her to come to him daily for that purpose.

People did not know the truth about what was happening in the palace, so they started making guesses, and many people criticized the king, say-

ing, "Look at this king! He is an old man, and he has so many queens, but still he is fond of this young daughter of the pundit, and he is doing a very bad thing." People didn't know the truth, but still they criticized him.

So the horse dung which had increased started to diminish, because when the people criticized the king, his sins were counted as theirs, and their good qualities were counted as his. In this way, all the extra dung vanished. And then the king returned the pundit's daughter to her father.

But when the king came again to the place where the Saint was living, he saw the little bag of dung which he had originally donated to the Saint. He said, "I have finished off all the dung, but still this remains! What will happen to this? Will I have to eat it?" The Saint replied, "Definitely." But he added, "Go again and try to do something so that people should criticize you more—so that this will also be finished. I will tell you one thing: there is one oil merchant in your kingdom who has not criticized you; he is the only one who has not shared in this dung. Go to that oil merchant and do something so that he will speak against you."

So the king disguised himself and went to the oil merchant. He said to him, "What kind of people are you? You see your king—he is a great king, but still he has done this bad deed—he brought the daughter of the pundit to his palace, and who knows what he has done with her?" And in that way he started criticizing himself to the oil merchant. But the oil merchant was a meditator on Naam, and he knew what he would lose if he criticized—how low he would fall in his meditation—so he didn't criticize, but instead said this: "O gentleman, we should not bother about him. Whatever the king has done, he will pay for it. You should not worry about him. It is not a good thing for you to criticize anyone in front of me because I do not want to hear it."

But still the king (in disguise) kept criticizing the king, so that the oil merchant would eat the dung. So the oil merchant took out one big stick and he said, "O man! If you will not go away from me—if you will not stop criticizing the king—I will give you a very good beating."

Then the king ran away and went back to the Saint, and said, "He is not ready to criticize me. So now what will happen to this remaining dung?" The Saint replied, "Find any means, but you have to eat it. If you will not eat this dung, or find any other way to finish it, again it will increase and again you will have to do the same thing you just did."

So history records that King Ajassar had to eat that dung. He ate some by mixing it with sweets, but he finished it. "Whatever you sow, you will have to reap that." If you have sown chilies, you will definitely have to harvest chilies.

Guru Nanak has also written about King Ajassar and how he criticized the Saint and made a joke of him. After telling the story, He says, "In the end he realized and he repented." So this is the disadvantage of criticizing others.

Maharaj Sawan Singh used to say, "If you are criticizing anyone, all your good qualities will go to his account, and all his sins—all the bad karmas which he is supposed to pay off—will come to your account."

So we should try to keep ourselves safe from this very dangerous weapon. (*Streams in the Desert*, pp. 76-78)

This teaching is of the utmost importance. Yet somehow or other, because of the way we're made, because of our inability to recognize our own faults, because we're afraid not to judge and criticize others, we tend to deny that this teaching is really important. At the drop of a hat, at the first sign that someone might be doing something wrong—whether they're Satsangis or not, whether we know them or not, whether they're our neighbors or our national leaders—we criticize and judge them

without knowing the truth of the matter. We assign motives to them, presuming to read their mind when we can't even read our own, as Master Kirpal says. What do we not do, even in the light of all the Masters' words? It seems to be very hard for human beings not to judge. But we have to keep trying because this is the fulcrum on which the Negative Power gets all his strength. This is the hinge on which the Law of Karma works.

We have learned that forgiving others is the door of Grace. It is the highest teaching of Lord Jesus, Lord Buddha, and all the Masters, including Sawan Singh, Kirpal Singh, and Ajaib Singh. If forgiveness is the door of Grace, then if everyone forgave everyone, the whole system would end: the Karma would fall apart. It is our insisting—and everyone's insisting—on blaming others and demanding that they get “what's coming to them” that carves our very own dragon shell for us. When we judge someone, we give him a present—a present of dung!—and the only way we can get rid of it is to eat it. We'll be forced to eat it. We won't like it, but we will have to do it.

The Masters also teach that we are not to be intimidated by others. When people criticize and judge us, if we are gurmukhs and remember the laws behind all this, we will be happy about their criticism. Perhaps it's impossible for anyone but a Master to be this accepting and wise; but whether or not we are able to be happy about being judged, this teaching definitely does not imply that we should allow others to intimidate us. We do not have to allow our agenda to be shaped by others. That's the meaning of the story Master Kirpal often told about the man who came to the Buddha and insulted him for hours and hours. When the man finally got up to leave, the Buddha said, “Well, look here, dear friend. If you bring a gift and give it to someone and the person does not accept it, then who does that gift belong to?” The man answered, “To the one who brought it”; and the Buddha said, “Well, dear friend, I don't accept this gift you brought.”

It's really the same teaching. When we judge others and they don't accept it, that judgment stays with us. When we judge others and they do accept it, we still have to eat the results of what we've done. But we do not have to allow ourselves to be pushed around by people who think they know

better than we do what we should be doing. That is not part of the Masters' teachings.

Fear enters into this, too. I have come to believe, slowly and painfully over a long period of time, that if I examine my motives as carefully as possible—which I can't always do because it is not given to us to read our own minds easily—and I see any motive of fear behind my reason for doing something, it is a sure sign there's something wrong.

In Master Kirpal Singh's message on "Humility" he makes a subtle argument against judging by reminding us that if God is in others, we must humbly live in unity with them. How then can we sit in judgment on them?

Yes, the branches of a fruit-laden tree bend of their own accord. Even so, the man who, losing himself, finds God—finds Him everywhere and in everyone—bends before all, offers homage of his heart to all. This is true humility. It is not a forced sense of lowliness. Such a one lives in unity with all. He is in others and others are in him.

It is the fake ego-self that gives rise to the sense of discord and separation. When the illusion of ego is broken, one feels, "I am not apart from others, but others are parts of the One—God—The Master and all of us are engaged in the same service of God."

Each one of us unique in his own way. There is a divine purpose behind the life of everyone who comes into the world; no one has been created for nothing. We have something to learn from everyone. This is the mystery of humility. (*The Way of the Saints*, p. 344)

The point is that we have something to learn from everyone, even those from whom we find it painful to learn. If we are serious about what we are after, if we truly want to find God, if we believe that Master Kirpal was not joking when he told us that each of us has the birthright to become God, we will take this teaching very seriously. Then when we judge someone we will think about how that judgment is going to come

back and rest on us. If we really believe that, we will act differently. Our habits, our culture, our way of doing things, even our way of speaking and our language patterns, work against our learning this lesson. All those things make it seem impossible not to judge, and our own fear compounds the difficulty. So it's like that dragon shell or like the pile of manure: Master is saying, "To get rid of it is never easy, but you have to do it."

This week I was remembering when my son Eric was learning to ride a bicycle. I was sitting by the big house and he was trying to ride his bicycle to get down to the road where the mailbox used to be. He must have fallen off that bicycle thirty-nine times. He would get on it, start down the hill, and fall off—howl in agony, get up—get back on it and start down the hill again and fall off again. There was nothing I could do to help. He didn't want my help; he wanted to do it. Each time he fell off there were sickening thuds and smashes onto the ground but he would get back on the bike again and then fall off. On and on it went. Then finally, maybe the fortieth time, he just rode down the road. Then he forgot the pain that had gone before; it didn't matter any more, because now he could do it.

Learning the lessons of the Masters is like that for us. It's so hard to do what he asks of us, it runs counter to so much that we take for granted and assume is right, that we fail and fail and fail. We even hate ourselves for failing. There's so much pain involved; but we have to keep struggling. Everything depends on it. Then when we finally do succeed, everything is different and we find ourselves a little better able to share the Master's viewpoint. When we offer love and respect to those around us instead of criticism and judgment, the "measure that we receive for the measure we have given" will not be dung but a new vision in which everything will be crystal clear and the beauty of God's presence will be easily visible everywhere.

Chapter 22

Pearls Before Swine

Matthew 7:6 is a famous, rather strange verse that seems to stand by itself. Yet it's also a transition verse in that it is connected in meaning with the verses that come before and after it.

Do not give what is holy to dogs. And do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them underfoot and turn and maul you. (Matthew 7:6)

Jesus seems to be talking about the ability to discriminate, to be able to make fine distinctions between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Just as we must learn not to try to remove the speck from our neighbor's eye when we have a log in our own eye, we must also be discriminating enough not to give something to our neighbor that he or she can't use or assimilate. Often this is connected specifically with meditation and with the whole series of things that Jesus warned against earlier in the Sermon about trying to appear holy in other people's eyes, which we usually do just to satisfy our own ego needs. We also learned from Swami Ji Maharaj in the Sar Bachan that indulging in criticism or praise is sinful because we cannot possibly describe someone as he really is; and Master Kirpal Singh said it is not given to us to judge other

people's motives because we can't even read our own mind, much less the minds of others.

All of these things are connected to this verse because they involve misrepresenting to ourselves where other people are in their lives, in order to fulfill a need of our own which has nothing to do with them. At the very end of the Initiation Instructions, under the title of "Retarding Factors," the Master goes into three variants of this. Two are relevant here: not teaching other people how to meditate, and not telling our inner experiences to others.

The underlying esoteric meaning of this passage in the Sermon seems to be that we must not share that which is most holy, most sacred, and most private with others because it will not have the consequences we think it will have. It may seem harsh to refer to others as swine, or dogs, but the point is that when we misuse people, when we use them for our own ego purposes without regard for their needs, then we turn them into swine—from our perspective, not from theirs. They may even act like swine—again from our perspective, not theirs.

Not much has been published on these matters, but I've been present many times when either Master Kirpal or Sant Ji has commented on them. The first time was in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1963. A woman asked Master Kirpal why she couldn't tell her experiences to others. It was a crowded room and the Master looked at her very strongly and said with great force, "Try it and see. Your progress will stop."

She said, "But why? Why would it stop? Wouldn't it benefit others to know what I have experienced? Wouldn't it benefit others to know that the Path is real for me and that I really am able to achieve these things that are written about? Wouldn't it be good for people to know that this isn't just something that's in books but that I also, somebody they know, have actually experienced something like this?"

He said, "I tell you, your progress will stop."

That was all he said at that time. At other times I've heard him explain very carefully that other people cannot and will not take what we are sharing in the way we expect them to. Part of it has to do again with our inability to read our own mind. When we go within in meditation and experience some-

thing, we may think we want to tell others about it in order to encourage them on the Path. But when we talk about it to others, there is only one underlying reason: we want them to know that we are successful, and our motive will be obvious to them. They may not know it consciously and we may not know it consciously, but nonetheless that's the psychology that's at work; and they will react on that level because the play of ego is so strong.

Furthermore, every initiate knows that the Master has forbidden this, so when someone starts talking about her or his experiences, we know a commandment is being broken. Master has explained that people being what they are—human and fallible—they can't help thinking, "Well, why him or her? Why not me? Is that person so much more advanced than I am? I've seen him lose his temper. I know she doesn't do everything perfectly. I've worked so hard, why doesn't it happen to me?" In effect, the exact opposite of what that woman was saying to the Master in Louisville happens. Instead of being encouraged, people get discouraged. They say to themselves, "What kind of a thing is this? If someone like that can be successful and I am not—? What's the point of it all, anyway?"

So it's important that we be very careful about what we say because that reaction is the "turning and mauling" that Jesus is talking about here; that's also the reason he warned us earlier in the Sermon against showing off how holy we are and letting other people see us in prayer, etc. In the sixties and early seventies it was quite an "in" thing to be a meditator, and people liked to know if you meditated. It was not uncommon for initiates to sit in cross-legged positions in public places or be very conspicuous in the Bhajan position. Other people were often attracted by that, but the Masters are saying that we have to be very careful: it's not helpful to us or to others to display our "pearls" in public.

It is never helpful to give a person something he cannot assimilate, and that is what Swami Ji meant when he linked criticism and praise together as being sinful because no one can see another as he really is. When we give someone praise or criticism—both of which require making a judgment—we

are seeing him as we want to see him from the perspective of our own needs at that moment. In this process there is an element of cowardice on our part and it reveals a misunderstanding of his true essence. We all make this mistake, but it is something that will get in the way of our own progress.

Initiates understand much better now than we did in the sixties and early seventies that we should not teach other people how to meditate. When I was first on the Path and began holding Satsang here, I used to give fairly detailed instructions every week. In those days meditation was done after the Satsang, and anyone who came would sit with us for meditation. I wouldn't give the Five Names or a few other things, but I would give detailed instructions the way I had heard Master Kirpal do it on tours, thinking that if he did it that way it was all right for us to do it. There were a lot of ramifications of this that I have only gradually discovered.

Years ago Amy Sanville—a neighbor down the road who was one of our earliest initiates and who recently died—brought a friend of hers to Satsang. He was nervous and he sat through the Satsang, and when we went into meditation I gave detailed instructions for his sake. About three-quarters of the way through meditation there was sudden movement in the house and I heard the door open. I looked out the window and there was this friend running down the road as fast as he could go, away from the ashram. He never came back. It was all too much for him, and it was my fault. I had given him way too much. People are not always ready to receive what we feel they should be given, and we have to respect their position at the time.

Later on, in the Receptivity Circulars that Master Kirpal issued between 1969 and 1973, he made it very plain that people who are not initiated should not sit with initiates in meditation because it is not good for them to do so: until they are initiated, there is no one responsible for them (except the one who has given them whatever instruction they have), which means that they are not protected. At that point he shifted the meditation to the hour before the Satsang, and things have changed for the better. Still it was such a radical change of policy as we perceived it that it was hard for me (and many

initiates, especially group leaders) to believe this, and it wasn't until my next trip to India and a long talk with Master Kirpal on this subject that I really understood it; because he told me straight out about all the dangers involved when people try to meditate before they're ready and prepared. Later, Judith and I talked to Sant Ji about these same problems and he was even more explicit than Master Kirpal had been.

The part of us that enjoys the experiences we have with the Master is different from the part of us that enjoys having other people think we are holy. The sense of being spiritual and of being holy can be appealing to us, but it is also intensely destructive; and the Master will usually deflate us if we get too carried away. Once in 1972 when Master Kirpal was here, a lady was talking to him about her husband. Master asked something about him and she said, "Well, he's all right, but he's not very spiritual, Master." The Master looked at her and said, "He's more spiritual than you are."

At a darshan session on December 11, 1970, Kirpal Singh went into this subject in great detail. He says:

Don't throw pearls before swine. To those who really want, there may be two, two hundred, three hundred, the theory is explained, openly. What you have learned in the secret we're speaking from the housetops or from the stages. But for the purpose of getting that experience, only those should come up who really want it. Not everyone wants it. Some only for curiosity sake. Now when they come here for Sunday Satsang there are two, three, four, five thousand and then at three special occasions there are twenty-five, thirty, forty thousand people. I give them a sitting for one hour, all of them, whether new or old, without exception. That will do. But in that way we cannot ask each man individually about his experiences and guide him. You can tell only a few out of a large group what's wrong, what to do, but everyone does get experience. Even the new ones get experience.

Question: Master, is it all right to sit on a bus . . .

While hearing?

Question: Yes.

I think the same question has been put before. Did you hear it? In the world if you have got love with somebody, how can you have it without bringing it to the notice of others? This is something like that—your love for God. Why do you make it public? Christ said, go into the closet. For a while you can go in, then outward things won't affect you. As I was saying yesterday, solitude, loneliness, that is necessary. Let the wildflower grow in darkness. Let nobody have notice of it. When it is in full bloom then let everybody see. When the tree is laden with fruit let everybody eat it. But when it is beginning, it has not as yet sprouted forth fruit, go on doing your spiritual practices without bringing it to the notice of anybody. They say three things should be done in solitude. One—bhajan. Two—when taking food, eat all alone to your own self, that's always best. If you're with others of the same mind like on a picnic, that's another thing. But when you eat give thanks to God for the food He has given you. And the third one is when you have the worldly connection. These three want secrecy. Most everything else does not require secrecy. Deeds of darkness are committed in the dark, you see. When you have found some seclusion for the sake of some going down, then that is a sin. Don't have that further.

Question: The three things are bhajan, taking food and . . . ?

Third, worldly connections for matrimonial purpose, when needed. Married life is no bar to spirituality, if it is conducted according to the scriptures. Even the Saints had children. When They took up this role, They gave up these things—controlled it. But there are some things which should not be done in secret in addition to these three. Two things. When you want to do something all alone, and you think there is something wrong there. Or when you have

done something and somebody asks you, you have to tell a lie. These are some tips. If you are on guard you'll be saved many troubles, many things. So deeds of darkness are committed in the dark. When you do a thing, let us cover up, "Oh no, I didn't do it." You have to tell a lie. Just note these two questions, and you'll save many failures in life. (*The Light of Kirpal*, pp. 155-156)

On another occasion, Master Kirpal wrote a disciple as follows:

Do not feel discouraged in any way, but be lovingly devoted to your holy meditations. All gracious help and guidance will be forthcoming from above.

Ego is really a big enemy on the Path against spiritual progress. The love for the Master is like fire in the brick kiln. If the fire is blown out rather than conserved, the bricks do not gain their proper maturity, and so it is with all spiritual matters. The initiates should conserve and keep veiled their love for the Master, so that they may progress quietly. (*Spiritual Elixir*, p. 132)

This stricture is not always understood, and there are times when it is perhaps not the most important thing to keep our love for the Master veiled. We have to use our powers of discrimination to recognize the best way to "conserve the fire" in different situations. It is told of Ramakrishna that he had two disciples, one of whom had a very bad temper, got angry very easily, and one of whom was very laid back and calm about things. They both loved him very much. And one day the man who had the short temper was in a boat with some people who were talking about Ramakrishna and they were talking against him. They were assigning bad motives to him and he got angry. He protested, but it didn't do any good. So he jumped to his feet and began rocking the boat, almost tipping it over, threatening to capsize it. They stopped. When Ramakrishna heard about it, he rebuked him thoroughly:

"Anger is a deadly sin," he said, "you ought never to let it carry you away. . . . As for those mean-minded people who talked against me, they weren't worth getting into a quarrel with—you could waste your whole life in such quarreling. . . . See what a great crime you were about to commit, under the influence of this anger! Think of the poor helmsman and the oarsmen in that boat—you were ready to drown them too, and they had done nothing!"

As for the other disciple, the mild-mannered one, he too was in a boat on the Ganges and heard people talking about his Master in the "same sneering way." He didn't like it; but he thought about it, "and soon reflected that the speakers were not to be blamed. After all they were only speaking in ignorance; they did not know Ramakrishna personally. . . . So he remained silent." But when he told Ramakrishna about it, he was dismayed; the Master rebuked him also, exclaiming:

"They spoke ill of me without any reason, and you sat in silence and did nothing! Do you know what the Scriptures say? A disciple should cut off the head of anyone who speaks ill of his guru!" (Christopher Isherwood, *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*, pp. 221-222)

So it depends on the situation. We have to have some sense of where we are in our personal and spiritual development in order to respond properly. It isn't easy, and it takes courage; but if we are not thinking in terms of our ego needs, if we are remembering what is really happening in any given case, the answer will come to us.

The following is a letter from Kirpal Singh which connects to this subject and many things that have been covered earlier in the Sermon.

I had been feeling for many months the great hardships that you were facing. It had been my constant

worry and you have always been in my mind. I hope you will now write fully about all that. When the Lord wants to make a great poem of a man's life, He sends him or her to the school of privations, worries and difficulties, and all the time He keeps extending His protective hand over him or her to pass through unscathed.

The teachings of the Masters are for all mankind, all the human beings, the ensouled bodies and, therefore, draw no distinction between East and West. Shorn of all rituals and ceremonies, they aim at the liberation of the soul or consciousness in man from the bondage of mind and matter and it merges in All-Consciousness. It, therefore, requires a little adjustment in one's way of life and circumstances in the routine of human life. With internal development in due time, outer vacillations do not deflect one in his or her inner flight to one's True Eternal Home.

It is a happy thing to note that you have a dominant desire to better the world in which you live, and that you worry about the human race and let your Salvation take care of itself through good works and clean living. It is a very noble idea. But the practical way of effectively carrying it out is to first grow into a beautiful flower yourself and then to emit fragrance and sweetness to all, as a matter of course. You cannot clean the road completely of all the thorns, thistles and the bitter things that lay across it, but surely you can put on strong boots to save your feet from all harm. The ethical and clean life is most essential, but without some degree of inner conviction, one would generally run the risk of a lapse, under some severe stress and strenuous strain. This conviction and growth, in fullness of bloom, is necessary and the Master through His sheer grace and kindness helps to obtain it. Your welfare is as dear to me as a loving Father has for His child.

I do hope that in the thick and thin of your busy

life, you will try to snatch some time daily, and during these periods cut yourself off entirely from the outside world, your environments, your body, and intune yourself or soul, sweetly and lovingly with the celestial Light and heavenly Music and develop from day to day, so as to attain a conviction necessary to ward off the stormy onslaughts that you encounter in your daily life.

In the Divine dispensation as well, the law of demand and supply operates as much as in all other spheres of life. If anyone is benefiting by treading the Path to God, it is because of the grace of my Master which is invisibly working and helping him or her up. To be on the way to one's holy Home, is the highest of all the privileges that a human birth confers and with the grace of the Master-Power working overhead, it is possible to achieve it. It is a gift of God through the God-Man. (*Spiritual Elixir*, pp. 289-290)

The gifts of God given us by the God-Man are the pearls that we must not throw or display before people who are not yet ready to recognize and value them.

Chapter 23

Search, and You Will Find

These are perhaps the most important verses in the whole Bible:

Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

**In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.
(Matthew 7:7-12)**

There is an enormous amount to consider in connection with this passage. There are three parts to what is both a commandment and a promise. We are commanded to do three things: ask, search, and knock; and we are promised that if we do those things, we will be successful. These three parts of the commandment/promise are related to the three aspects of the search that all of us have to undergo: the physical (or geo-

graphical)—the finding of the Master outwardly; the psychological or mental (what Master Kirpal Singh always called “man-making”)—or becoming a human being; and the spiritual—the finding of God.

Of these three, the first two are the most important because success in the first two makes the third easy. As Master Kirpal used to say, “Finding God is not difficult; making a man is difficult.” Perhaps it should be repeated here that his use of the term “man” is gender free. In Urdu the word that he used was *insan*, as in the original of the title “Man, Know Thyself”: “*O insan apana apko jan*”—“O human being, why don’t you know your own self?” *Insan* translates as “human being,” and has the root meaning of “one who is love personified: . . . overflowing with love and radiating love for all.” (“How I Met My Master,” *Sat Sandesh*, July 1975, p. 13) That is what we are supposed to be and that is what we can be if we search within ourselves for that which makes it possible.

So the first two commandments (asking and searching) are the most important; and in this Sermon, since Jesus is addressing his disciples who have already found him, he doesn’t put much emphasis on the first one except in this particular passage. Overall, most of the Sermon is about the second commandment—the psychological or mental search—because that is the hardest to achieve. In a few places here and there, we have seen that he is concerned with the spiritual, third aspect of the commandment; but basically his attention is on the second part. The Golden Rule stated here is seen as a touchstone, a way to tell if we are adequately moving forward in the psychological quest: “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the Law and the Prophets.” We can tell we’re progressing if we meet the criterion of treating others the way we want them to treat us.

There are some other things to consider along with this; one is in the Gospel of John:

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:31)

The phrase, "If you continue in my word," has a double meaning. It means, "If you follow the direction I have verbally laid down for you," and it also refers to the esoteric meaning of Word as the Power Which has created the universe and is present in each of us as Light and Sound. So, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples"—not otherwise—"and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." This is the substance of both the commandment and the promise given in the Sermon. The great thing about knowing the truth is that it liberates us.

There is another section in the Gospel of John that Master Kirpal quoted very often:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?" (John 14:1-10)

Subsequent Christian theology, of course, has particularized this teaching and turned it into dogma; but we need not concern ourselves with that viewpoint. What we should know is that Jesus is really talking about the absolute necessity of our

knowing the living Master. “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?” Through the presence and help of a human being who is alive in the world at the same time that we are, who has reached God, who has accomplished the three stages of the quest—physical, mental, and spiritual—we can have the strength to do what we have to do.

In the *Sar Bachan*, Jesus’s statements about searching and finding are given unqualified support in this famous section:

God is within everyone, but nobody knows Him. People commit sins while He looks on, but He does not prevent them, and makes them go through the wheel of transmigration. What good then is this God to us? But when we meet a Satguru, and He explains to us in what form God is present in our hearts, then we are informed and avoid bad deeds and escape the wheel of transmigration. Hence, it is necessary to seek a Satguru, for He is the God manifest. And the search for the unmanifested God is not possible without the help of the Satguru. Those who don’t do so, will neither find God nor escape the wheel of transmigration, but waste this precious human life, and whoever seeks the Satguru will surely find him, for the Satguru is an incarnation eternally present on this earth. (emphasis ours) (Sar Bachan II:208)

In other words, the Master is always here, and as Master Kirpal Singh used to point out about the law of supply and demand, it is the need of the seeker which creates the presence of the Master. This process has been brought out in a number of stories. Sant Ji has told about Paltu and his friends who made a pact to search: there was not a Master on the earth at that time, but because they were searching in great sincerity, God Himself came down to earth, took the form of a human being, and initiated them. So in a very real sense the seeker’s need creates the presence of the Master, and that is why Jesus could say, “Search, and you will find,” and know the promise would be fulfilled.

The following story has to do with searching in the physical

world for the Master, but it's important to realize that we may not consciously know we are looking for Him. Some people do, but everyone's story is different. In my case, I consciously searched very hard and eventually found the Master; and in that search I was inspired and comforted by the promise Jesus gave in the passage just quoted from John 14. I knew He was with me and that He would help me to find what I was looking for; but that's not the only way to do it. People come from all kinds of different backgrounds and situations and a seeker may not even be aware that he is seeking.

This story is told of Baba Sawan Singh:

At this moment a number of Gurkha (Nepalese) Sat-sangis, who were military officers in the Bakloh cantonment about ten miles from Dalhousie, came to see the Great Master. They fell at His Feet. A lady member of the party wet His Feet with her tears and would not leave them. A member of the European [missionary] party which was also present remarked that this was an ignominious debasing of human dignity.

The Great Master said, "I have tried my best to stop these people from behaving like this, but nobody listens to me. I do not like this habit of touching the feet."

At this, the American lady, Miss E, quietly took the Bible from her missionary friend's hand and read the following passage from it:

"And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment and stood at his feet behind him, weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

"Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him, saw this, he said to himself, 'This man, if he were a prophet would have known what manner of woman this is that touches his feet for she is a sinner.'

"Then Jesus (answering) said unto Simon, 'There was a certain creditor, who had two debtors, one owed him five hundred pence and the other fifty. They had nothing to pay. The creditor frankly forgave them both. Tell me now which of them will love him more.' Simon answered, 'That whom he forgave most.' Then he turned to the woman and said unto Simon, 'Seest thou this woman? I entered thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I say unto thee, Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loved little.' And He said unto her, 'Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.'" (Luke 7:37-50).

"This scene described by Luke is of daily occurrence at the Dera," said Mr. Vir Bhan.

Professor Jagmohan Lal commented, "Christ is always doing things like that. That is the habit of all the Christs. The Great Master would stop me, but otherwise I would have related a very interesting story to you."

"We will ask the Great Master not to stop you," said the American lady. "Please tell us the story."

At this stage, the Great Master went inside the house to have a drink of water, leaving the Professor to relate the following story:

Once the Great Master went to Amritsar for Satsang. It was His custom to give a Satsang there on every Sankrant (the 1st day of every Hindu month). He was going to the Satsang Ghar on the Majitha Road in His car, and the road was very crowded. People were going to the Satsang Ghar in cars, tongas, bicycles and rickshaws, and a very large number were on foot. He was at a distance of about two furlongs from the Satsang Ghar when, at a turn in

the road, a man suddenly fell down in front of His car. The driver stopped the car, and the Great Master got down to see what had happened. A drunkard had fallen right in front of the car, but luckily he had escaped quite unhurt. The Great Master, with the help of a companion of the drunken man, tried to make him stand on his feet, but he was too drunk to walk steadily. A number of Satsangis who had gathered around helped him to get out of the way. When the Great Master left, the drunkard asked who was the Sardar in the car. For the Great Master's majestic figure could not but impress this peasant, even though he was not in his full senses. His companion, who was also half tipsy, told him, perhaps just by way of leg-pulling, that the people around said that He was God, who had come to earth to save sinners like him.

"God He seems to be, and I want to go to Him to have my sins forgiven," the peasant said, and after a few minutes he, with a half-emptied bottle of liquor in his pocket, reached the Satsang Ghar reclining on the shoulder of his companion.

The Great Master was sitting in an easy chair, relaxing Himself. We noticed this man only when suddenly, with unsteady steps, he tumbled down at the feet of the Great Master, placed his head on His feet and locked the Great Master's legs in his arms.

"You are God. Forgive me my sins," he begged.

"No, I am not God," said the Great Master, trying to release Himself from his grip. "I am a sinner like you. Now get up, my son."

"I will not rise unless you say that you have forgiven me," said the peasant.

The Great Master laughed involuntarily and with the laughter came His forgiveness.

Manohar, the Master's personal attendant, and Jamadar Partap Singh wanted to remove the man by force, but the Great Master stopped them from doing so.

"Well," He said with a smile, "this is a strange

way of getting forgiveness by force."

The drunkard began to weep bitterly.

"Say what you like, but I won't leave your feet until you forgive me," he said.

The Great Master laughed heartily and put both His hands on the man's head. "Well, rise up, for you are forgiven, my son," He said.

"All my sins? Am I saved from the hell fire?" asked the peasant, raising his head.

"Yes, your faith has saved you," replied the Great Master.

In the evening, the peasant was found standing in the queue waiting for Initiation. A few were rejected, but he was among those who were accepted.

"You will have to abstain from alcoholic drinks and animal foods in the future," the Great Master warned him.

"Wine I can never give up. It is simply impossible for me," the man replied.

"Well then, promise one thing, and that is that you would never take it in my presence," said the Great Master.

"That I do promise, Sir," said the peasant.

"How do you earn your livelihood?" the Great Master asked.

"By theft and robbery," was the surprising reply.

"That must be given up. You must choose some other profession," said the Great Master.

"I do not know any other profession," the man told Him.

"But you must start to earn your living in some other way now that you have been initiated," the Great Master insisted.

"I cannot do anything else, and have never done anything else," said the peasant.

"All right. Then promise me one thing more: that you will not steal any more than you actually need, and that you will not take anyone else with you when you go out to steal."

"That I promise with all my heart," the man replied. Before leaving he again fell at the Master's feet. The Master again blessed him by putting both of His hands on his head. After this, he committed theft only once.

Following his Initiation he went to attend the marriage ceremony of a female relative who lived in Gurdaspur district, and while there, he ran short of money. One night he entered the house of a Bania Banker and broke open his strongbox. Just as he had taken hold of a bundle of currency notes, the heavy upper lid of the iron chest fell upon his arm, wounding it grievously and holding it fast as in a trap. All his cunning and cleverness failed to release him. When after a long struggle, he finally gave himself up as lost, the Great Master appeared before him. Helping the robber to free his arm, He said, "Had you not promised me not to steal any more than you needed? Now run away to save your life, and leave everything here." After that the peasant never again committed any theft. (Daryai Lal Kapur, *Call of the Great Master*, pp. 172-178)

Gangu—the robber in the story—is a famous person in the Sant Mat tradition in India, and Sant Ji has referred to him many times, explaining his background and how he had become a robber for reasons not of his own making. The point is that Gangu did not even know he was searching but he was, because as soon as he met the Master he recognized Him and knew what to ask. Many people who seemed to live far better lives and who were more in control of themselves, did not know what the Master really was. Like Gangu, we may not know we are searching until we suddenly are awakened.

When Sant Ji was here at Sant Bani Ashram in May 1977, he asked me to do the screening for initiation. A young woman from Martha's Vineyard came and I asked, "Well, how long have you been on the diet?" She said, "Two and a half weeks." I said, "That's not long enough. You have to be on the diet for three months before you can be initiated." To which she replied:

“Well, whether I can be initiated or not, I don’t know. But this is why I’m here: I was walking on the Vineyard when a friend stopped the car and said, ‘I’m on my way to Boston to see a Saint. Do you want to come with me?’ I had never thought about this kind of thing, but the idea appealed to me, so I got in the car, got on the ferry, and rode up to the airport.” [This was the moment when Sant Ji was flying in.] “As soon as I saw Him, I realized that this was everything I had ever wanted in my whole life, and from that moment I have not eaten anything that I shouldn’t have eaten or done anything I shouldn’t have done. But before that I didn’t know.”

I talked to Sant Ji about her and he approved her application and she was initiated at that time. So we don’t always know we’re searching until suddenly we find the Master. There are many different ways of coming to His feet.

Compared to this first part (which is often a lot of fun) and to the third part (the finding of God, which is something else entirely) the second part is always very difficult. Our psychological and mental search involves the whole process of “man-making,” of becoming a human being. It is complex and it is not easy. Everything we have learned through life, all of our predispositions, preconceptions, assumptions, habits, all the things that people have done to us and all of our responses, tend to work against us in this part of the search. That’s why it’s so important to remember the criterion of the Golden Rule: we must be careful to treat others only as we would have them treat us.

In *The Message of Love*, which all new initiates are required to read, there is a famous letter by Baba Sawan Singh in which he explains exactly what is involved here:

That which may be a fact to one man, may not necessarily be a fact to another. And it will not become a fact to him until he has had a similar experience. Facts of Sant Mat are reproducible, like facts of any science, and can be demonstrated in the laboratory of Sant Mat. The laboratory of Sant Mat, as said before, is inside man. Anybody who enters this laboratory (brings his scattered attention within himself

at the eye focus) can see, feel, and realize what the Saints say, and he can repeat the experiment as often as he likes.

Sant Mat deals with facts only, not with theories or beliefs. It lays down a practical course for its devotees. It is practical through and through, and it can be executed by young or old, male or female, wise or simple-minded, while at the same time they are enjoying the fullness of home life. . . .

If people would go inside the focus and enter the upper worlds, they would become eternally happy. Empty talk would cease. They would contemplate the Grand Reality. So, first you are to control your mind and rise within yourself to the eye focus, and the other man is to do the same within himself. When inside the eye focus, you and he have both cast off the material coverings, and matter is now no longer a hindrance in your study and upward march. Neither is it a hindrance in your communications with each other, while you are both above the eye focus.

To do this, it is not necessary to leave home or country. Anybody who goes inside of his focus is independent of time and space, and he can, from his own experience, give guidance to another who has not reached so far. He who rises still higher, and has access to other and higher worlds, is capable of guiding others to those higher worlds.

As in all branches of study, a student who occasionally meets his teacher and converses freely with him has a distinct advantage over one who takes only a correspondence course. The same is the case here in Sant Mat and the development on this Path. But the beauty of it is that when you gain access to the inner Light and the Worlds of Light within, the elements of time and distance so completely disappear that you stand face to face with your teacher and Master, and He will always remain right there to instruct and to lead you as well as to strengthen you.

You need not accept anything which does not appeal to you in books, or even in my letters. You may leave aside for the time being the ultimate object of life and its how and why. You may start your inquiry from this end, and then take as your objective the attack upon the eye focus. Reach that point as best you can, by this or any other method. Draw up your own plans, if you wish. Only make and execute some plan to reach that objective. Bring your plan into action. That is the main thing. And then if you find it does not work so well, come back to this plan. The main point is to reach the eye focus somehow. You will be dealing with your own attention. If you succeed in holding it inside of the focus, you have won the battle of life.

You say in eight weeks since your initiation you have made no progress. *Sant Mat does not fix any time limit.* Let us appreciate the situation. Ever since our birth, at which time we left the eye focus and came out of it and established our connections with this world, we have not gone inside of it. Sometimes, when we have a deep intricate problem to solve, we close our eyes and try to think by holding all our attention in the eye center. We do it for a short time, but soon run out again because we have acquired the bad habit of always remaining away from the focus.

Poets, painters and musicians receive inspiration from this point. All great thinkers get their ideas clarified here. Whatever scientific progress the world has made has all been derived from this source. This focus, back of the eyes, is the fountain of all inspiration which has produced the world's masterpieces. And whatever further progress is to be made in the future, the source of information and inspiration will still be this point. Here is where Divinity comes down to meet the struggling man.

And what holds us outside this focus? Why does not everybody in the world rush, with his utmost

ability, to enter this magic fountain of inspiration and wisdom? Because our attention has always been, and is yet, attached to our bodies, to our near relations, to our homes, to our countries, and to our pleasures; sometimes to our pains and sorrows. We have so much identified ourselves with these things that we have lost our identity. Unless now we start detaching ourselves from these outside connections, begin to develop the capacity to switch our attention on and off at will, we can make but little progress on the Path.

We are to re-establish our identity, to assert our supremacy over our minds and bodies. Mind must be made to work when we wish it to do so. We must become able to enter this body when we wish, to function in this world when necessary, and then to go out of it at will when we wish to function in another world. It is the attention which is to go inside and see, and so long as it is running outside, who is to see inside? If the owner of a house sits always outside of his house and complains that he cannot see what is going on inside, his complaint is not justified.

This detaching the attention from the external connections is a slow affair. Habits become second nature. It takes time to form new habits. But slow and steady wins the race, and practice makes perfect. Follow your mind for a minute and see what keeps it away from its headquarters. Avoid whatever interferes and accept what helps in reaching your objective. I have already given you the Saints' method, based on long, long experience.

If anyone is sure that he is on the right Path, then if he takes but one step a day, he is still approaching his destination, and is sure to get there some day, no matter how distant his destination may be. You will perhaps say, "How am I to know that I am on the right Path?" I give you the means of proving it for yourself. Until you have proved it for yourself,

you must, per necessity, accept something on faith. You would have to do the same if you were building a bridge. (*The Message of Love, "The Science of the Masters,"* pp. 51-56)

The longer I live, the longer I'm on the Path, the more I see how easy it is to be misled in this whole business of "man-making," of becoming a human being. I see how easy it is for us to slip into all the mistakes the Sermon on the Mount and other great mystical writings have warned us about. It is not easy to avoid self-righteousness, for example; and when we aspire to something higher than we are, the temptation to jump to conclusions, to make assumptions, to be blind to things which work against us—all these are dangers which confront us. They are very hard to overcome and I have failed often in the course of my career on the Path; I'm sure many others have, too.

At one of the worst points, in the mid-sixties, I was having a terrible time facing up to my own inadequacy and to my own failure as a human being, as a disciple, and as a Representative of the Master, which he had appointed me to be. I wrote many letters to Kirpal Singh and he responded with letters full of wisdom which has remained with me ever since. I have continued to make the same mistakes often, but his letters have helped me to accept my failures. This is a paragraph from one written by Master Kirpal on December 2, 1966, which I included in my book, *The Impact of a Saint*.

You need not dwell much on your personal character or impurities of mind. It amounts to self-pity. You will please appreciate that by watering the seedling at the roots, the plant thrives most and blooms in abundance. The holy Naam is the tried panacea for ills of the mind. Although it is a very happy augury to be conscious of one's shortcomings, undue apprehension sometimes breeds morbidity which hampers inner progress. The conscious contacts of divinity within revolutionizes the thought pattern of the child disciple and he sees everything

in much clearer perception. Slow and steady wins the race. Your job is to be implicitly obedient and humbly dedicated. It is for him to reward you for your efforts. Patience is the noblest virtue but it is the fruit of very long cultivation. Just learn to live in the living present with undivided attention and devotion. You should train your mind in such a manner that when you do anything required of you, there is no hurry, compulsion or resentment from your side. You will find that it will be helpful to you in all spheres of life including meditations. My love and blessings are always with you. (Quoted in Russell Perkins, *The Impact of a Saint*, pp. 93-94)

Another letter, dated March 10, 1967, is on the same basic topic:

Worry and hurry are the chief causes to dwell on by the mind. If you could just eliminate these two by resigning to the divine Will and Pleasure of the gracious Master Power working overhead, you will be relieved of the undue strain and stress. Please note it for certain that whatever comes to your account is in your best spiritual interests, and to become a fit receptacle for the divine grace you have to inculcate a sense of self-abnegation and effacement without involving your mind. The more you are relaxed, reposing and receptive, the more ineffable bliss and harmony will fall to your lot. Just rise so high in the loving lap of the Master Power to consider yourself as a child, who would relish, "Not my will but Thine be done." Your deep gratitude for manifold blessings is good and appreciated. (*Impact*, p. 94)

When we begin to see where we have been wrong, where we have been blind, it is so hard not to become obsessed with our failures; but even that, as Master said, amounts to the fault of self-pity. It's another form of egoism. It's a hard lesson that

we learn and forget and struggle to learn again, but we must persist because everything in those letters has been experienced as truth. It's just that it is so easy to fall back on old weaknesses and habits. We should always remember that along with the commandment there is a promise: "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you." The Master says that if you take one step toward Him, He takes a million steps toward you. Master wrote that to me—a million. That's a lot of steps in return for just one. We are protected; when we are searching and finding on any level, the Master is watching over us. We are doing that which we were born to do. Gangu did not know, during all those years he was drinking and robbing and generally living a terrible life, that he was searching. But he was, and as soon as he met the Master there was a connection and his life was transformed. The same is true for all of us.

A French writer, Rene Daumal, wrote perhaps the most specific "spiritual quest" novel ever written, *Mount Analogue*. He died before it was finished, but in the last paragraphs he wrote, he described what it was like after the climbing party found Mount Analogue:

By our calculations, thinking of nothing else, by our desires, abandoning every other hope, by our efforts, renouncing all bodily comfort, we gained entry into this new world. So it seemed to us. But we learned later that if we were able to approach Mount Analogue, it was because the invisible doors of that invisible country had been opened for us by those who guard them.

The cock crowing in the milky dawn thinks its call raises the sun. The child howling in a closed room thinks its cries cause the door to open. But the sun and the mother follow courses set by the laws of their own beings. Those who see us, even though we cannot see them, open the door for us, answering our puerile calculations, our unsteady desires, and our awkward efforts with a generous welcome. (pp. 118-119)

That's the way of it: we are never alone in our search. As Sant Ji has often said, we think we are the ones who go to Satsang; that we are the ones who search; that we are the ones who find; that we are the ones who do meditation. But when we go in far enough, we see it's not like that at all— that truly speaking there is no "we." There is only "One" and He is the only one who does.

Chapter 24

The Golden Rule

If we review the main elements of the previous chapter, we find that the search for God that Jesus refers to (Matthew 7:7-12) is three-fold: physical, mental, and spiritual, corresponding to those three aspects of ourselves. The Golden Rule (Verse 12) is integral to our seeking, but it is less a commandment than a criterion which helps us know if we're on the right track:

Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. . . .

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:7-8 and 7:12, NRSV)

The physical search is what we call seeking the Master, and we have learned that it's not even necessary to know that we're looking for Him; but we realize we have been seeking when we meet Him and immediately recognize Him. The mental search is what Master Kirpal Singh always called man-making, becoming a human being, and it is by far the

most difficult part of our quest. The third, spiritual search, is the actual finding of God. Each commandment contains a promise as well: we will be given that which we ask for; we will find that which we are looking for; and the door to God will be opened when we knock. The ultimate promise implicit in the passage is that we are never alone in our search: when we begin to seek, He will find us.

On the whole, with very few exceptions the entire Sermon on the Mount is a commentary on the second, man-making part of the search. Everyone Jesus was talking to had already found him and recognized him, so the first part of their quest had ended; and as Master Kirpal said many, many times, it is not as difficult to find God as it is to make a man. To become a human being—that is where the work lies. Once we have achieved that, God is there; all we have to do is knock, and the Master even helps us do that. So the Sermon, like most of the teachings of the Masters, has to do with man-making; and the Golden Rule is intimately connected with this part of the search, especially if we use it as a criterion to measure our progress in becoming a human being.

Before taking a closer look at the Golden Rule, we should consider some of the feelings and desires that inspire us to seek God. Master Kirpal Singh wrote in *Morning Talks* that we will be given whatever our soul sincerely wishes for:

I was just telling the story of a king who had four wives. He was going to some foreign land and asked his wives what present they would like, what he should bring for them. Every wife had something of her own liking, but the youngest was the greatest lover of the king. She wrote to him, "Well, I want you only, and nothing else. You come back." So naturally, when the king returned, he sent the presents to his other wives and he went to the youngest wife.

This is only to show that what you really want, that you will be given. There is a saying of the Masters that God has promised to give everything that a man wants, what his soul really desires. We

simply say superficially that "O God, we want You," but at the bottom, we want worldly things. If you have got real love for God in your heart, God will come to you, He will manifest to you. But generally, we want only worldly things, here and hereafter. Those who care for the love of God don't hanker after the worldly things, nor the wealth of the other worlds. They don't even want emancipation. They would like to have only one thing. No heaven, no earthly things, not emancipation, only to be with God, that's all. If we have really got that hankering in our heart, then naturally we must meet God. God will come to us. If we take one step that way, He will proceed one hundred steps to receive us. We have to decide what we want at our heart of hearts. Are we here only for the worldly things? Are we here only for the name and fame of the world? Are we here only to have things of the other world, or heaven? Are we really after emancipation from birth and death? A real lover wants none of these things. He wants God and God alone. This is the highest ideal that we can achieve in the man-body, and in no other. So you have to decide by an honest searching of your heart, what you want. If you want God, then God will meet you, sure and certain. If you want something else, you will have it, that's all. You will get nothing short with whatever you want. But why, when you go to a King, do you want ordinary pebbles and stones? So we should judge how we stand, day by day. (*Morning Talks*, pp. 37-38)

The Golden Rule has caused problems for many people over the years, because as a commandment—as it has usually been taken—it seems to be lacking. Many people have pointed out that not everybody likes the same things, so if you do to somebody else what you would like, that may not be what he/she wants at all. What is required in that case, of course, is more sensitivity to that other person's feelings and needs. Furthermore, Master Kirpal has pointed out in *The Wheel of*

Life that to live by this as a rule is “business living”; that we should, in fact, give to other people what their soul requires whether it’s what we would want or not.

However, if we realize that the Rule is not there as a commandment but as a criterion, a means of telling whether or not we are really proceeding on the search for our own selves, then we see that it can be extremely useful because it is the final expression, in this Sermon, of the whole cluster of teachings about judging others. An implied paraphrase is: “In everything refrain from judging others as you would have them refrain from judging you.” That is a worthy criterion for our behavior.

Previously we read the story of Gangu who was a drunken bandit. He did not know he was searching, but when he met Baba Sawan Singh he fell at his feet and demanded forgiveness. Because he was so sincere, Sawan Singh forgave him and initiated him, even though he had no other way to earn his living than by being a bandit. Ultimately he turned out all right and did not continue in the old ways and habits, although he had to go to jail, where he died for his crimes. What we did not read about Gangu is the experience in his life that turned him into a drunken bandit.

When he was a young man, he was on his way to join the Indian army and he saw, by the police station in a village along the way, a police officer interrogating a prisoner by stretching him out between four posts and whipping him. Gangu was outraged and suggested to the police inspector that he not do that, whereupon the officer angrily asked what business it was of his? At that point Gangu beat up the police officer, freed the prisoner from the posts and told him to run; then he also ran, because his life was over. He was now a wanted man and there was no way he could possibly be successful in the real world, so until he met the Master he spent the rest of his life as a bandit and a heavy drinker. But somehow the fact of what he really was surfaced when he met Sawan Singh, and he asked for initiation on the same impulse that made him save the prisoner from the beating and set him free.

Now most of us would have calculated, “There’s too much at stake here. It’s not realistic to get involved. There are too

many things like this that go on.” It would also have been beyond the capacity of most of us to beat up the officer and release the prisoner, even if we thought that was a good thing to do. But Gangu saw that a brother of his was being mistreated and tortured, and he wanted to change that. He probably didn’t reason it through; he just knew something should be done for a human being in trouble and he did it. In the long run, far from being the loser, he got the Crown of Life that most people don’t get in any given lifetime.

So we should use the Golden Rule as a gauge to measure our love and caring for other people, to test our own motives: “Am I really aware of how my behavior affects others? Do I care? Have I long since blocked out their reactions and feelings because it’s simpler not to think about all that?” There’s a host of important things involved in man-making and it is never easy to become a real human being, but it’s absolutely essential to keep aiming for our own improvement.

There are some sections in the Sar Bachan of Swami Ji Maharaj (Baba Jaimal Singh’s Master) which illuminate different aspects of this. In Book II, paragraph 39, He says:

The Lord is always with us all and puts up with our conduct, both good and bad. Whenever He wishes, He will prevent one from misbehaving. Nobody will heed another’s advice. Then why hurt others? There is no harm, however, in giving advice to those who have faith and confidence in you, and such alone will accept advice.

This verse is extremely liberating. The Master is saying that whatever people are doing, whatever we think they are doing, the Lord already knows it. He doesn’t need us to act as His agents; we are not required to interfere with what other people are doing. Somewhere Master Kirpal Singh tells the story of Moses who sat down to eat with someone who didn’t say Grace before he ate. Moses was offended and was going to do something about it, when God said to him: “O Moses, who should be offended, you or I? Who is it that he has not thanked?” Moses said, “You, Lord.” And the Lord said, “Well, then, let me take care of it, please. Don’t you worry about it.”

A great many things we do that block our search and prevent us from living according to the Golden Rule come under the heading of "trying to fix it." If we can only do this or that, God will be pleased with us because we have changed things. A great deal of my own life has been spent trying to do something like this one way or another. When I met Sant Ji the first time, he rebuked me strongly for having taken it on myself to proclaim that someone else was not a Master. His rebuke was painful for me, and according to ordinary political practice people would have thought I was serving him by doing that. His viewpoint was completely different: "Who wants to be a Guru? Tell me that. Is it not better to be a disciple? Why was I dragged into this?" That was what he said to me. It was a complete revolution of my thought pattern, and I was taken aback although I very quickly understood it.

There is another brief section in the Sar Bachan concerning people with whom the Master seems to be displeased: "It behooves Satsangis to plead for one whom Sat Guru reproves and to show respect to him whom He honors." (Sar Bachan II:73) In other words, it is not any part of our job to help Master rebuke anybody. We might think, "Well, he has done something that is really bad, and the Master is going to give it to him. We don't want to displease the Master so we'll help him out. We'll give it to him, too." Whenever I have been tempted to think like that, this verse from the Sar Bachan has stopped me. We are not required to participate in such an action. What is required is that we love, respect, and never judge any human being that comes into our orbit. If we behave in this way, we'll be doing the Master's work.

In *The Way of the Saints* Master Kirpal tells the story of Krishna and Arjuna. Arjuna lost his temper because someone insulted his bow, his weapon, which was named Gandiva. (In the heroic days, weapons of great heroes had names and personalities, like King Arthur's sword, Excalibur.) He had taken a vow that if anyone insulted his bow, he would kill him; so when he lost his temper and began to fulfill the vow, Krishna stopped him and said, "Why are you doing this?"

Arjuna said, "Well, I've taken a vow to do it, and I have to live up to it. If I break my vow, I will be breaking my dharma. I must kill him because I have sworn to do it."

Krishna asked him, "Well, what's the purpose of dharma?"

Arjuna replied, "Dharma is supposed to make things happy and peaceful and better all around."

Krishna said, "Just think. What will be the result of this act? Is it going to make anyone happier and more peaceful, or the reverse?" Arjuna saw his point and desisted.

If we test our plans and our behavior by the criterion of the Golden Rule, we can avoid the kind of confused thinking that was leading Arjuna onto the wrong track. It's so easy to get mental hang-ups about what the Master wants or doesn't want or about what would be spiritually useful or harmful to us. Sometimes we just waste a lot of energy, but we can also find ourselves on dangerous ground and be like Arjuna who was actually going to kill someone in the name of righteousness. What Krishna did, in effect, was to remind him of the Golden Rule and we can also learn to think like this: "All right, no matter what is at stake here, no matter how lofty and high-minded my goal is, if, in order to achieve it, I have to do something that I would not want anyone to do to me, then something's wrong. Hold on. Wait a minute."

There are a couple of excerpts from articles in *The Way of the Saints* that make this point clearly; they are very similar to each other although they were written several years apart. We have seen both of these before. This first one is from the circular "Blessed are the Poor in Spirit," and it explains the philosophical principle of why it's harmful to do to other people what we don't want them to do to us. Master Kirpal says:

Naturally enough, from love spring forth the ideas of service and sacrifice. Love believes in giving—giving away the best you have and not accepting anything in return, for that would be a barter and not love. "Service before self" is what love teaches. By love serve one another, is what the Apostle Paul taught to the Galatians, and through them to all mankind. If we look critically, we will soon realize that all service which we seem to be doing to others is not to anybody else, but to the ONE SELF-SAME SELF, pervading everywhere and in all, including our seemingly individualized self clothed in

raiments of flesh and bones. This being the case, there is no ground for claiming any credit whatever. Loving service must therefore flow freely, fully and naturally, as a matter of course, refreshing all hearts, for it will convert the otherwise dreary and desolate earth into a veritable garden of Eden; for which we so earnestly pray every day, but find it receding from us, the more we wish for it. (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 352-353)

Master also uses the same basic image of the garden of Eden “receding from us, the more we wish for it,” in this next excerpt from “The Essence of Religion.” He uses this image—which is exactly the opposite of what Jesus promises—to remind us that we get on the wrong track and begin moving in the wrong direction whenever we forget we are all “one self-same self.” It is the easiest thing in the world to forget that everybody else, all those “others” we seem to be serving and “doing things to” are just “the One Self-Same Self pervading everywhere and in all, including our seemingly individualized self, clothed in raiments of flesh and bones.” Then we understand why it is so important not to do to other people what we don’t want them to do to us. It will be done to us. The point is that the Law of Karma demands it.

This talk was given at the Third World Religions Conference in Delhi, in 1965:

With the yardstick of love (the very essence of God’s character) with us, let us probe our hearts. Is our life an efflorescence of God’s love? Are we ready to serve one another with love? Do we keep our hearts open to the healthy influences coming from outside? Are we patient and tolerant toward those who differ from us? Are our minds coextensive with the creation of God and ready to embrace the totality of His being? Do we bleed inwardly at the sight of the downtrodden and the depressed?

Note that in our modern society the term “bleeding heart,” used with great contempt and scorn, is usually directed at

people who are sympathetic and helpful to the poor and needy. It is very clear in this passage that we are *supposed* to bleed at the sight of the downtrodden and depressed, and that a bleeding heart is not an insult but a very high mark of praise.

Do we pray for the sick and suffering humanity? If we do not do any of these things, we are yet far removed from God and from religion, no matter how loud we may be in our talk and pious in our platitudes and pompous in our proclamations. With all our inner craving for peace, we have failed and failed hopelessly to serve the cause of Gods peace on earth. Ends and means are interlocked and cannot be separated from each other. We cannot have peace so long as we try to achieve it with war-like means and with the weapons of destruction and extinction. With the germs of hatred in our hearts, racial and color bars rankling within us, thoughts of political domination and economic exploitation surging in our bloodstream, we are working for wrecking the social structure which we have so strenuously built and not for peace, unless it be peace of the grave; but certainly not for a living peace born of mutual love and respect, trust and concord, that may go to ameliorate mankind and transform this earth into a paradise for which we so fervently pray and preach from pulpits and platforms and yet, as we proceed, it recedes away into the distant horizon. (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 193-194)

Again, Master uses the image of that which we are searching for, receding from us the more we seem to get close to it. Here it is macrocosmic: the Master is addressing world leaders and he is talking about world peace. In the earlier reading it was microcosmic: he was talking to disciples and telling them how to deal with fellow disciples and indeed with anyone they come into contact with. In both cases the paradise, the Garden of Eden—that which we long for—recedes from us no matter how much we want it because we are off the track and going in

the wrong direction.

Earlier we looked at both of these excerpts in connection with the subject of divisions: the Master never comes to divide, but our mind repeatedly sets up divisions among us and does damage to our own quest. The core of that quest is the recognition that what counts in each human being is his "humanness"; nothing else matters, including how "bad" he may have been or what punishment he may be undergoing.

Master Kirpal Singh also says in "Ends and Means" that the philosophy of karma is basically a means to an end. It's there to help us understand things. It can be very helpful and many people find it so. Something happens to us and we have no explanation for it; we suddenly get sick; tremendous changes occur in our lives. To realize, "Well, it's our karma," can be very helpful; but it can also be very harmful, especially when we apply it—or misapply it—to somebody else. If we say to ourselves, "Well, you can't worry about him, it's his karma. Try to help him, maybe, but it's his karma so what can you do?"

This is not the right application of the idea of karma. The Golden Rule tells us to react to his pain as we would want him to react to ours; we are serving only the One Self-Same Self, there is no Other; and we are supposed to bleed inwardly at the sight of the downtrodden and depressed. If someone is in trouble or in pain, to say, "Well, this is your karma," may not be helpful; it may even be enough to turn him against many aspects of the Path. We should be aware that such a statement hurts him and that we ourselves do not like to be hurt. It would be a mistake to think, "Well, if it was me, I'd like to be told that it was my karma, so I'll tell him it's his." That's the way the Golden Rule can be misused and be harmful. Master says very clearly that the concept of karma is there to help us; if it does not help the situation it is better just to offer love and support.

The Path does not require us to adopt a belief system. All it requires is an internal recognition of that which we were born to be; we may not be able to put it into words or even think it through logically. When we do try to capture it as a system of belief, we formulate all kinds of ideas about the principles of karma, speculations about the inner planes, etc. All that is

necessary is to search with all our heart in the right direction, and when it is found, when it is given to us, it will be in the form of a recognition, a moment of enlightenment. Sometimes it will occur when we meet the Master physically, as it did with Gangu. Sometimes the Master appears internally to people before they even know who He is and before they have taken initiation. Both Kirpal Singh and Ajaib Singh met their Masters inside long before they met them in the physical world. It has happened this way to many other people, too; whether or not they were aware of searching, they found themselves doing things they somehow knew they had to do. The law of their being demanded it. So there are many aspects to the search, but to have a belief system about how everything should be is not required.

The Master is in charge, and from our point of view the only thing we must do is to remember the humanness of other people, the oneness of us all. When Master Kirpal gave that speech in Delhi in 1965 that we just read from, he began with the words: "My own self in the form of ladies and gentlemen." This form of address was much appreciated, and during the rest of the conference many speakers began their speeches: "Ladies and gentlemen in the form of my own self." Of course, this was exactly the opposite of what Master had said, and that's how easy it is to be mistaken in these matters. When Master was talking to that crowd of 50,000 or more people, he saw himself in all of them; he used that form of address because he saw them that way. When the Master talks to us and brings us into his loving care, he does it because he sees that we are not other than himself.

Jesus once told the story (in Luke 10) of the good Samaritan in answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" It's easy to forget the implications of this story because the circumstances under which he gave it have been all but forgotten. The Samaritans were considered by the people of Judea to be second-class; they were nothing. They were people one just did not associate with—they were the "other." In the story a man was beaten up and left for dead beside the road. A priest and a Levite, two very respectable and theoretically very religious people, were passing by but they avoided the injured man

because they didn't want to get involved. It was not convenient and it was against common sense.

A Samaritan was also passing by, but he took care of him, bound up his wounds, took him to an inn using his own money to pay the innkeeper to feed him and take care of him, and promised to look for him when he came back. All this he did without knowing anything about the injured man, never having met him before and not knowing whether, if he were conscious, he might also despise Samaritans. Very likely he would have. The Samaritan didn't care. He was a neighbor, a human being like himself, and Jesus told the story to make the point that we are to treat others in just this way.

Swami Ji makes a similar point in the Sar Bachan:

The Lord himself is present in both—friend and foe. And we should not, therefore, mind either the friendship of friends or the enmity of enemies. The Lord is the mover in both cases. But this cannot be the view of everyone. Only those who have realized the Lord within themselves can take this view. And you who hear the holy discourses should try to imbue yourselves with this idea so that no ill will may enter your minds. This state of mind may not be attained soon, but you will develop it in time if you attend the Satsang every day and regularly practice inner spiritual practice. (Sar Bachan II:129)

In the following excerpt the man-making part of the search for our human selves is described in terms of love and self-surrender. It is a section from Master Kirpal's Circular 17, "Love, Concentration and Self-Surrender: The Psychology of Mysticism":

... This ability to conquer the ego and to submit oneself to the Higher Will is as rare in the East as in the West, and wherever it can be found there you shall observe the true grandmark of spirituality.

It is this capacity that you must cultivate and develop if you really wish to make substantial progress in the spiritual field. I repeat that the path is not

easy. You must crucify your ego and lay your selfhood at the altar of love for your Master. Rome was not built in a day and the True Abode of the Lord is not to be attained with a few weeks' labor. Most seekers want quick results. They want miracles and sudden transformations. But the seed generates rapidly only in thin soil and then withers away. The seed that must grow into the life-giving tree must grow more slowly. The science of spirituality as it has been taught by all Masters and as it has been given to you, is a perfect science. Its truth has been demonstrated by some initial experience. The rest depends on your effort. The Divine Grace is ever ready to pour itself into the vessel, but the vessel must first be ready. The power to perform miracles is not very difficult to acquire, but it is not to be confused with true spirituality, which must be paid for with complete self-transformation and self-surrender.

This then is the task before you. If you aspire for spiritual salvation, then do not lose a moment in seeking to reform yourselves. Man making is the most difficult part of spirituality and if you have perfected yourself in that field, then God realization is not difficult. Let your love for the Master be absolute and your obedience to his wishes uncompromising. Work for his cause to the best of your abilities, but do not let the individuality of your limited vision inculcate feelings of opposition and resentment for your fellows. So long as one has not attained universal consciousness, differences of opinion are bound to exist. But if one has understood their cause, one will not allow them to disturb one's peace of mind. Whatever the outer opposition, whatever the opinions of others, if one has surrendered oneself completely to one's love, then nothing can ever disturb one's equanimity or obstruct one's spiritual course. He who is upset by what others have to say is without question one who is still controlled by the ego and has yet to conquer his self. He has yet to learn

the rudiments of spirituality.

Let me therefore, command you as a Father, persuade you as a Teacher, exhort you as a Friend, to turn to the reformation and conquest of the self if you seek to progress on the inner path. Try to help others and do the best for them, but be not concerned with the fruits of what you do. That is something that you must leave to the Master. Make your love for Him so complete that, beholding His Hand in everything, you rise above all feelings of enmity, rivalry and resentment. See Him present in all and remember that He is always with you, ready to assist whenever you turn your thoughts to Him. And above all do not forget that He is to be won not by words but by deeds: "If you love me follow my commandments." If you can do this; if you can conquer the self and surrender it at the Feet of the Master; if you can learn to see Him working through all things; if you can accept the fact of your own limited vision; if you can undertake a ceaseless and zealous watch over your thoughts and deeds, weeding out all evils and imperfections—then you shall not only win salvation yourselves but enable others to do likewise. Your example shall shine like a torch in the darkness, and men, even those who may first oppose you, will turn to you for guidance and help. You will find a new sense of peace surging through you, a peace that does not depend on the absence of outer disturbances, but is an inner state of mind that stands unshaken even in the most tempestuous situations. And this same quality shall enter not only your individual lives, but the larger life of the Great Spiritual movement of which you are a part. Instead of being disrupted and divided, it shall proceed single and purposeful toward its goal.

No Master has ever been interested in attracting large numbers to Himself and quantity has never been my aim. It is quality that counts and I would rather have a handful of disciples, nay even one,

who can sacrifice his ego on the spiritual altar and learn to live by love, than millions who understand not the value and meaning of these virtues. I have suggested this before, and I emphasize this again that a seeker should be studied more carefully and his/her background learned more before being recommended for initiation. If, after understanding the basic principles of the science, he is willing to undertake this complete remolding of himself that its practice requires, then and then alone can he become a fit recipient of initiation. (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 311-313)

This is what Master wants from us—a complete remolding of ourselves. That's what the second part of the quest involves: becoming real human beings by completely remolding ourselves. Master Kirpal often spoke of Swami Ram Tirath of Lahore who once put an ad in the paper: "Wanted: Reformers—not of others but of themselves. You shall have Godhead as salary." It's so easy to forget and so hard to remember what's required of us because all of our habit patterns, all our desires for comfort and convenience, push us in the wrong direction. Yet all Masters say that this is what is required, and if we really want it we will have it, absolutely. The promise will be fulfilled.

Chapter 25

False Prophets

The following passage seems to be two separate sections, but they are really very closely connected:

Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits. (Matthew 7:13-20)

These two famous sections have had great resonance in Christian history and also in spiritual tradition in general. The narrow gate and the wide gate (leading to life and destruction, respectively) are the two ways that in Sant Mat are called the way of the *gurumukh* and the way of the *manmukh*. However,

they have certainly been misunderstood. In conventional religious terms the righteous person is the one who keeps the commandments and leads an apparently respectable life in the outer world; and the sinful person is one who does not. But something more is suggested here, a theme that is found throughout this Sermon and throughout the Gospels and the teaching of all Masters: the two choices are not always conventional righteousness and conventional sinfulness, though they may take that form at certain times. The choice lies between power and love: that is, between the essence of the Negative and the essence of the Positive.

The Lord Jesus, in this Sermon, has been explaining in many different ways that we can relate to other people, to our outer circumstances, or to our own selves, either through power/control or through love/surrender. The way of the Negative is the way of power; the way of the Positive is the way of love. If we think of it in those terms, much of what is in the Sermon and the Gospels and the teachings of all the Masters becomes very clear. Throughout our readings we have sensed the implicit question: "Who is it that we are following?" We may say we are following a certain person, but if we are, in our life, manifesting the opposite of what that person teaches, to what extent are we really following him?

We may want to be followers of the true God of love, forgiveness, mercy, gentleness, and compassion, and of someone who manifests that God; but if, in fact, in our dealings with others—our marriage partners, our children, or people who may be at our mercy for one reason or another—we are manifesting control, are we truly following him? The Master will accept whatever devotion we offer him, but the fact is that as long as we use power to control, we are not acting as his disciple at all but as the disciple of Kal, the Negative Power.

As with many other things, we seem to have to learn this fact from bitter experience after making the mistake often. We learn the hard way that these are the choices: it is a question of power or love, rigidity or softness, iron-bound control or letting go and surrendering. The relinquishing of our wish to control is the narrow gate that very few people can go through at any one time. (When Masters make statements like, "Few

there be that find it," they don't, of course, mean forever and ever. They are speaking in the living present, and they mean that right now, at any given moment, there will be very few who go through the narrow gate. That doesn't mean that everybody will not go through ultimately.)

In *The Two Ways*, Sant Ji talks at length about the way of the manmukh and the way of the gurumukh. *Manmukh* means literally "the person through whom the mind speaks," and the *gurumukh* is "the one through whom the Guru speaks." The mind is that part of ourselves that manifests the Negative Power. It is usually referred to in the New Testament as *psyche*, which is generally translated as "soul"; but in Sant Mat, and in the esoteric tradition in general, it is the mind which is the sense of I-hood, of ego, of wanting power and control over our life and over the people in our life. The Guru, when it manifests in us, is what we call the soul or spirit. In the New Testament it is called *pneuma*—that which recognizes and loves the God in others because It is of the same essence as itself.

At the beginning of *The Two Ways* is found the following section from the Sar Bachan. Please note how consistently the manmukh and the gurumukh are defined in terms of power and love. We often miss this because we see them in other terms: of asceticism and pleasure, for example, or of straightness and crookedness; but if we think of the concepts of power and love—the Negative and Positive—in this context, we will see how much they figure in this classic description.

We should also note two other things. First, these are not phrased or framed as commandments. Since they are presented as descriptions, we don't have to carry a load of guilt if we don't measure up to them very well. Rather they are like the diary or a road map that makes us notice, "If I'm doing that, well, I may be on the wrong track." The other thing to note is that it is easy to see these things as absolutes, but many of us may be a gurumukh at times and a manmukh at other times. It's very difficult to be perfect, and the gurumukh is basically perfect. He or she is someone capable of being a Master; he may not be functioning as a Master, but he has that capacity. Therefore, it's important to realize that we may reach for perfection, but it is very difficult to achieve it fully.

Out of mercy, the Satguru always takes care of the jiva (embodied or bound soul) and is desirous that all His disciples should have great love and faith in His feet, but the mind does not like that the jiva should attain this state. It therefore tries to draw him towards the enjoyment of sensual pleasures and wants the jiva to obey its dictates. The jivas should, therefore, continue their devotion at the feet of the Satguru, beware of the ambush of the mind and see that they do not fall into its trap.

A brief account of the ways of a Gurumukh and the ways of a manmukh is given here to enable the jiva to test and regulate his conduct. The jiva should go on applying this test to himself.

1. The dealings of the Gurumukh are always true and straight with everybody. He shuns evil and does not deceive anyone. Whatever he does, he does for the Satguru, and relies upon His mercy.

A manmukh is sly and insincere in his dealings, and will deceive others to secure his own interests. He depends upon his own cleverness and intelligence, and wishes to proclaim himself.

2. A Gurumukh controls his mind and senses and is humble in spirit. He puts up with taunting words, lends a willing ear to advice and does not seek to be honored.

A manmukh does not like his mind to be curbed. He does not like to submit to anyone or obey anybody, and is jealous of the greatness of others.

3. A Gurumukh does not oppress anybody. He is always willing and ready to serve and please and wishes to do good to others. He seeks not his own fame or honor, but keeps happy and absorbed in the thoughts of the Satguru and in His Holy Feet.

A manmukh dominates others and makes them serve him. He seeks honor and does not care for others except for his own selfish interests. He enjoys being honored and made much of, and does not remain absorbed in the Holy Feet of the Satguru.

4. A Gurumukh never gives up his humility and gentleness. He does not resent it if he is slandered or slighted or shown disrespect. He regards all this as conducive to his own good.

A manmukh fears slander and dishonor, does not willingly put up with disrespect, and solicits praise.

5. A Gurumukh works hard and never remains idle.

A manmukh seeks bodily ease and comfort, and is lazy.

6. A Gurumukh leads a simple and humble life, and is ready to live contentedly on whatever falls to his lot, be it dry and unbuttered (bread), or rough and coarse (clothing).

A manmukh always loves and craves dainty dishes. He does not like to have dry and unbuttered bread and things of low value.

7. A Gurumukh is not engrossed by earthly goods and the meshes of the world, and feels no pain or pleasure in losing them or getting them. He is not upset by unbecoming remarks made against him. He keeps an eye on the salvation of his soul and on pleasing his Satguru.

A manmukh thinks too much of the world and its goods. He feels pain if he loses them and pleasure if he gets them. If one talks harshly to him, he immediately flies into anger, forgets the grace and power of the Satguru, and does not rely on Him.

8. A Gurumukh is frank and sincere in all matters. He is liberal-minded, helps others and wishes them well. He is contented with little, and does not desire to take from others.

A manmukh is greedy. He is always ready to take things from others, but does not want to give. He always thinks of his own interest in everything and does not care for others. He goes on multiplying his desires and is not straight in his dealings.

9. A Gurumukh is not attached to worldly people. He does not crave or care for pleasures or enjoyments, nor does he long for sight-seeing and amuse-

ments. His only desire is to be at the Feet (of the Satguru), and he remains absorbed in that bliss.

A manmukh loves worldly people and things, desires enjoyment and pleasures, and feels happy in sight-seeing and amusements.

10. Whatever a Gurumukh does, he does to please his Satguru, and craves for grace and mercy from Him. He praises only the Satguru, wishes to see only Him honored, and has no worldly desires.

A manmukh has some self-interest or pleasure in whatever he does, for he cannot undertake anything which does not contribute to his self-interest. He wishes to be praised and honored, and the worldly desires predominate in him.

11. A Gurumukh is not antagonistic towards anyone; rather, he loves even those who are antagonistic to him. He is not proud of his family, caste, position or the friendship of great men; and loves devoted and spiritually minded people. He always keeps alive his love and devotion in the Feet of the Satguru, and always wishes to gain more and more the mercy and grace of the Satguru.

A manmukh is anxious to have a big family and friends, courts rich and influential people and is proud of the friendship of such persons and of his own caste. He always wishes to do things for show and cares little for the approval of the Satguru.

12. A Gurumukh is not distressed by poverty and want, but bears with fortitude any calamity that may befall him, always trusts in the mercy of the Satguru, and is grateful to Him.

A manmukh is quickly distressed by adversity and calls aloud for help. He feels pain and grumbles if he is poor.

13. A Gurumukh leaves everything to the Divine Will, and whether it turns out well or ill, he never brings in his own ego. He does not try to prove his own point nor does he try to prove the hollowness of others. He will not permit himself to be entangled in contro-

versial acts. Always watching the will of the Satguru, he passes his days singing the Satguru's praises.

A manmukh asserts himself in everything; for his own delight and gain, he undertakes things involving strife and dispute. He gets angry and is even ready to quarrel to maintain His own side.

14. A Gurumukh does not run after new and novel things, for he sees that they have their root in the material world. He conceals his own virtues from the world, and does not like to be praised. From whatever he sees or hears, he selects that point which is calculated to contribute to his love and devotion for the Satguru, and goes on singing the praises of the Satguru who is the treasure of all good.

A manmukh is always anxious to see and hear novel things. He is eager to pry into the secrets of others and to know their private affairs. He wishes to add to his intelligence and cleverness by gathering points from here and there, with a view to display his great intelligence and secure praise; and is highly pleased when he is praised.

15. A Gurumukh is steady in the performance of spiritual practices; always relies upon the grace and mercy of the Satguru and has unshaken faith in His Holy Feet.

A manmukh is hasty in everything and wishes to finish things hurriedly. In his haste, over and over again he forgets his trust in the grace and mercy of the Satguru and in His words.

16. All that has been said about the conduct of a Gurumukh will be acquired solely by the grace of the Satguru. Only he to whom He is merciful will receive this gift. Those who love His Holy Feet and have faith in Him will surely receive this gift one day. Love for the Holy Feet of the Satguru is the source of all virtues. All virtues will automatically come to him who receives the gift of Love; then all the manmukh characteristics will disappear in a minute. (Sar Bachan II:262)

If we think about all of those things from the point of view of power and love, we will see that in each case the distinguishing characteristic of the gurumukh is that he or she has learned to live his life as a way of love, whereas the manmukh is interested in power. Kirpal Singh's message of April 2, 1967, follows this list of qualities in the Introduction to *The Two Ways*, and his comments also develop the power and love dichotomy in very interesting ways.

He goes far past the whole concept of dualism because the two ways are very different in terms of their eternity. The way that leads to life goes upward and lasts forever; the way that leads to destruction goes around and around and around, and sooner or later it disappears. He also emphasizes the complete inappropriateness of using the concept of the two ways as a club with which to coerce people; because if we follow the way of life to its ultimate goal, what do we find? We see that nobody is committed to the way of destruction in their inmost self, and we see the Lord working everywhere.

Master Kirpal says:

There are two ways—one leading to life and the other to destruction; called *Sharey Marg* and *Piray Marg*. *Piray Marg* relates to objective life and appears all beautiful and easy to follow but it results in hatred and malevolence, rigid ideology and obsessive self. The way of *Sharey Marg* lies in developing inner silence, which is harder to find. It is an uphill task and takes hard work of mind and body and purification of spirit.

When you will become broad-minded and have risen to the heights of life by sacrificing everything, you will find a vision of the Lord working in all alike, in saints and sinners, in all men and in all creation, in all birds and beasts, in all religions, in all scriptures and in all prophets.

In silence we test ourselves to find weaknesses to be weeded out. We have to wrestle with darkness and develop moral muscles and receive the message of the spirit. We must be for some time at least alone

with God. When we enter more and more into silence, our desires will be eliminated, purity will be attained and the body and the mind sanctified, and we taste the Elixir of Naam Divine and know how sweet the Name is.

In silence the heart illumines; veil after veil is removed. In the heart shineth the Light, and the very silence becomes vocal giving vent to the Music of the Spheres reverberating in all creation. When the Light is seen shining within your heart and the Music of the Spheres becomes audible, you behold the Light in all, that is, outside you see the One Light in all. This is the universal vision that the One is in all and all are in One. Blessed is he, the man of Illumination, for wherever he be, he dwelleth with the One Eternal.

Such a blessed one belongeth not to this color or caste or creed; he belongeth to all. The great mystic Rumi says:

*I am neither Christian nor Jew,
Neither Gaber nor Turk,
I am not of the East; I am not of the West;
I am not of the land; Not of the sea;
I belong to the soul of the Beloved,
I have seen that the two are One.
And One I see, and One I know.
One I see, and One I adore.
He is the First, and He is the Last;
He is the outward, and He is the inward too.*

This is the ultimate goal before each one of you. I wish all who care to achieve this goal. All feasible help of the Master will be at hand. (Quoted in *The Two Ways*, pp. viii-ix)

The connection can easily be made between these readings and the section on false prophets, because the distinction between the real Master, the true prophet and holy person, and the false

one, is the distinction between love and power. The true Master is one who has followed the way through the narrow gate to its ultimate end, and the false prophet is one who has followed the way of destruction to its ultimate end. One has opted for love; the other has opted for power.

It is an enormous mistake to identify the God of love with power. We make this mistake partly because our exoteric religious background does not differentiate between the God of love and the God of power and partly because we tend to think that whatever is happening in this fallen universe we live in is due to the direct intervention of God. We must know, however, that this is not the case because the Masters (including Lord Jesus) have clearly said it is not. The fallen universe runs on its own energy, that which we call the Law of Karma, which is self-contained and self-fulfilling. The intervention comes when the God of love enters it to help us escape, which is what He does.

So the Master is One Who has entered through the narrow gate, and in obedience and conformity with the law of His essence He does not relate to other people through power, nor will His true followers do so insofar as they are really following His teachings. They will relate to their loved ones, their parents, their partners, their children, and everyone around them with love. Power is taken away and replaced by love. How do we know this? We know from our experience because both Kirpal Singh and Ajaib Singh have demonstrated it repeatedly; we have also read about it in the lives of other Masters—including Lord Jesus—from the Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and all other traditions.

Once when I was in India in 1969, we were having a darshan on Master Kirpal's porch. It was such a beautiful, lovely time, but I could hardly hear what Master was saying because there was a television set in his living room, just inside the building, that was blasting at top volume. We were on the porch trying to hear the Master talk, and that television set was booming away. We could hear him, but we had to struggle. Later when we got home and I tried to play the tape of that talk, the television noise was so loud it was embarrassing to explain what the noise was to people and it was so distracting I

almost never played it.

Why was that television set there? And why was it going when the Master was having darshan on the porch outside? It was because some disciples who were powerful at the ashram wanted it that way, and the Master didn't tell them not to. It wasn't his idea to have the set there in the first place, and it most certainly wasn't his idea to play it loudly while he was giving darshan a few feet away. Yet he didn't stop them, and that night I thought, "Why didn't the Master stop them? Why does he let that sort of thing happen?"

The point is that when the Master says to us, "I have not come to make slaves of you but friends," he means what he says, and a friend does not control his friend. A friend does not tell his friend what to do. He may make suggestions, ask leading questions for the friend's benefit, and give advice when asked for it, but he does not intervene or interfere with what he does even if it has a bad effect on others. It is up to us to ask him directly or to learn from observation. It is vitally important for us to grasp this point because the reason why "guru" is an unpopular word in the western world today is that most of the people who have presented themselves as spiritual leaders—some of them from Asia, some of them homegrown—have not understood their role. They have definitely come to make people their slaves, and this is exactly what Jesus is talking about in this passage of the Sermon. They appear in sheep's clothing and they seem to be holy, but inwardly they are as the Lord says—ravenous wolves who want to consume us.

Master Kirpal has said that people who are not particularly developed, who are just ordinary people, are all involved in a fairly strong drive for possession. This drive comes from the mind, the Negative Power as it functions in us. It is usually easily containable because we all have our defenses against it and can deal with it. Then, too, some of us have a strong desire to be possessed by someone who wants to possess us; sometimes this leads to happiness, sometimes not. The point is that ordinarily the desire to control doesn't get out of hand, but when it does, the result is crime, wars, chicanery in high places, and other negative effects.

When someone takes this destructive way to its fulfillment,

when he develops and becomes very strong in the wrong direction, the drive for possession becomes overwhelming. It is the desire of the false prophet, the false guru, to manifest power and control over others on a scale most ordinary people cannot imagine; and because he seems to be holy it is accepted until, perhaps, it becomes very obvious. Then he may lose a large part of his following, or he may not.

If we think about it, we will see that the drive for control and possession has to be the criterion for discriminating between the false master and the true. Master Kirpal has said in *The Crown of Life* that the term *Satguru*, which means "true Master," implies its opposite. The false master or the false prophet exist only because the true Master and the true prophet exist. We believe them because they seem to be real; otherwise they could have no existence. People accept their so called "reality"—their sheep's clothing, their mild, lovable clothing, and only when we get far into their control do we see that they are not at all mild and loving. Their fruits betray them.

When Sant Ji was at Sant Bani in the summer of 1990, I talked to a man who was interested in spirituality. His wife was initiated, but he had always held back because he didn't like the idea of submitting to a guru. He told me it was only by coming here and watching Sant Ji work that he realized he was not a leader in that sense at all. He said, "He's a very Taoist leader," which meant that he leads according to the philosophy of Tao Te Ching. He leads by simply being at the bottom and letting everything flow to Him. He does not push us around, and those of us who have had long-term connections with Master Kirpal and Master Ajaib, can testify that a true Master does not work through control. That is not His way; His is the way of love.

In a talk called "The Matter of Our Soul," Sant Ji tells a story that demonstrates another criterion for identifying a true Master. In the story a sadhu was famous for not eating anything. He would go into his cave for six months at a time; then he would come out and because he was very much admired, the kingdom would be waiting for him. The band would play and they would applaud him and give him tremendous praise. One day a mahatma came to the King, who told him how great

that sadhu was because he didn't eat anything.

The mahatma said, "Well, he does eat something, you see. Name and fame are his food. He needs it. It's because the band plays and people come to admire him that he is able to keep going. If that stops, you will see what happens." So the king announced that the celebration would be postponed until a week later than usual. The sadhu came out and nobody was there—and he was so disappointed that he died. It is so easy to be fooled in these things. Everything similar is not the same. That sadhu appeared to be the real thing, but, in fact, he was very dependent on the praise and the fame of being admired. (See *Sant Bani*, November 1966, pp. 5-6.)

Sant Ji goes on in that talk to tell another story demonstrating that name and fame are often sought by those who misuse their supernatural powers. The Masters do sometimes use special powers in a way guaranteed not to attract attention to themselves, but they do not use them to prove anything. When they do use them, it is only for the benefit of others. These are important distinctions, and the Masters emphasize that the display of supernatural abilities is a sure sign that somebody is seeking power over others.

Remember that the crucifixion occurred before the whole world. Jesus was crucified very publicly in front of everyone. According to the Gospel of Mark, one centurion, impressed by the way he died, thought he might actually be the Son of God. However, the resurrection—the true miracle—was secret. The resurrection was shown only to those who already loved him. Not one person was convinced to follow Jesus by witnessing the resurrection who had not previously loved him. There was nothing public about it. That's the difference. The way of power would demand—and this is the way many Christians understand the resurrection—that the crucifixion was simply a prelude to the glorious climax and conclusion of the resurrection. Ultimately there's a way of understanding those events in which that may be true, but in terms of the world at that time, it wasn't like that at all. What ordinary people saw was a crucified man, and they didn't see anything else. Only those who loved him and had the connection with him, saw the resurrection.

In "The Matter of Our Soul," Sant Ji demonstrates that true Masters operate only through love and do not use their powers to gain name and fame. He says:

Those who have supernatural powers are seriously affected by this disease of name and fame. In the hills of north-western India, now in Pakistan, there used to live Wali Kandhari and he also had many supernatural powers in him. The place where he lived is dry and Wali Kandhari lived near a small lake, and there was no other source of water nearby. Wali Kandhari had controlled that lake and he did not allow anyone to take water from it. Those who came there to take water, he would tell them, "You can drink the water and take it only if you become my disciple." Since there was no other source of water nearby, and since this was the condition which Wali Kandhari had put on the people, everyone was terrified, and people did not like to get the water because the fakir had put this condition.

Once it so happened that Guru Nanak Sahib, accompanied by his companions Bala and Mardana, came there on His tour. In those days they had no good means of transportation, so the Masters had to do their journeys walking. Guru Nanak, accompanied by His companions, did all His tours by walking. Guru Nanak went to the place where Wali Kandhari lived and liberated him. I have myself gone to that place, and even now those hills are very dry and there is no water.

So when Guru Nanak was near the place where that fakir was living, suddenly Mardana became thirsty and he requested Guru Nanak to give him water. Guru Nanak said, "There is no water here; but there is a pond up on the hill seven miles from here. Go there, and you will find a fakir called Wali Kandhari, and he will give you the water. Go there." So Mardana climbed up the hill and asked for the water from Wali Kandhari but he said, "Don't you know my condition? Become my disciple; only then

can you have the water. Your companions also must become my disciples; then I will give you the water, otherwise not." Mardana replied, "We have already become disciples of Almighty God. I am a disciple of Guru Nanak and He is the beloved Son of the Almighty, so we do not need to become anybody else's disciple." But Wali Kandhari did not give him the water. So Mardana came back down to Guru Nanak and told him what had happened.

Now you know that those who have supernatural powers and are full of ego always put such conditions, because they try to control everybody in a way, but they forget that God is above all. So Guru Nanak told Mardana that he should go back again. He said, "Mardana, maybe you did not request him enough. This time you go back and lovingly, with all your humility, you should request him; and he will give you the water." So Mardana again climbed up so many miles and went to Wali Kandhari and requested him again. But people who are full of ego will not listen to anybody's request. So Mardana still did not get the water. So he came back and when Guru Nanak heard the story and tried to send him once again to Wali Kandhari, Mardana said, "Master, I will die at your feet without water, but I will not go there again to that egotist." So when Guru Nanak saw such firm determination in Mardana, He told him, "Mardana, do the simran of the Lord—say, 'Kartar, Kartar,'—and it is possible that Kartar will send the water here." Then Guru Nanak told Mardana to cup his hands and suddenly there was a flow of water. All the water in the pond of Wali Kandhari came down to the place where Guru Nanak was sitting, about seven miles away. When Wali Kandhari saw that all the water from the pond had disappeared, and when he realized that Guru Nanak was stronger than him, in anger he used his supernatural powers and threw a very big rock from the top of the hill at Guru Nanak and His companions. Mardana became afraid and he said to Guru

Nanak, "Master, why did you disturb that fakir? Now he has gotten angry and has sent this rock to kill us. You should go and apologize to him, or we will get killed!" But Guru Nanak, who was a very mild-natured Mahatma and had faith in God, said, "Mardana, the God Who has brought us here and Who has given you water, will protect you now also. You do simran, say 'Kartar, Kartar'—and Kartar Almighty God will save your life." When that rock reached Guru Nanak and His companions, Guru Nanak stopped it with His palm; and that rock is still there.* The Sikhs have made a gurdwara there, and the pond of water is also there. I myself have gone to that place many times; at present it is in Pakistan.

So the point of this story is that whenever people develop supernatural powers and become full of ego, the perfect Saints and Mahatmas come and teach a lesson to them. Later on Wali Kandhari came to Guru Nanak and fell at His feet, and got initiation, and did the devotion of the Lord. Guru Nanak Sahib lovingly explained to him that the job of the fakirs and sadhus is to serve people and not to bother them.

Breaking his pride, Guru Nanak put Wali Kandhari on the Path of the Masters and made him His representative in that area. He told him, "Whom-ever you initiate, I will be responsible for him." (*Sant Bani*, November 1986, pp. 6-8)

The story does not simply end with a false prophet being put in his place. The story teaches that a false prophet out of his own falseness and from his own heart became a different person; and it proves Master's point that if we go far enough inside, we will see the Lord in everyone, sinners as well as saints.

* With Guru Nanak's handprint on it. See Kirpal Singh, *Baba Jaimal Singh*, p. 29.

Master's "punishment" is often to take people to the Feet of God. If someone commits a great sin, the Master is not interested in squashing him; His concern is the same as if he had not committed a great sin: to initiate him and take him Home.

Chapter 26

The Will of the Father: I

The last two sections of the Sermon on the Mount summarize and emphasize many of the themes we have been considering:

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?" Then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; go away from me, you evil-doers."

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall! (Matthew 7:21-27)

There are two aspects of the thought expressed here: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom

of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven." The most obvious point to consider is Jesus's teaching that *belief in him is not enough*, especially after he is no longer the living Master; what is required of those who would enter the kingdom is to do "the will of my Father in heaven." He has preached this Sermon to reveal what that will is; all of the things he has discussed here are the will of his Father.

In the previous chapter we observed that the two sections just before this one could be summed up by saying that Jesus was asking whether we choose the way of power or the way of love. One is the way of control, judgment, and forcing things to happen the way we want them to; the other is the way of submission, surrender, forgiveness and mercy. Those are the two ways, and they are the terms in which every single section of the Sermon has been framed. The "true believers" say to Him, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?" But that is not what he wants; it is not enough.

Many people have pointed out that the history of institutionalized Christianity—what we call the mainstream of Christian theology—represents a complete repudiation of what Jesus says here. The Christian Church has always said, in effect, "Yes, you have to say, 'Lord, Lord'; that's what counts. Doing the will is not important. What's important is saying, 'Lord, Lord' and meaning it." According to many New Testament writers and many Church fathers down through history, if you say "Lord, Lord," you will be able to prophesy in his name, cast out demons in his name, and do many deeds of power in his name. To a great extent, this has been the history of the Church and still is, according to any television evangelist.

It is obvious that Jesus understood this was going to happen, and we can thank God that his actual thoughts were preserved because much of the New Testament does work against the meaning of this verse. It is equally important to grasp what it means to do the will of the Father and how, in this Sermon and the Masters' teachings, we are offered the choice between power or judgment on one hand and love or mercy on the other. We must also consider how that works out on a day-to-day basis. In a sense the Sermon on the Mount is a series of

case studies illustrating different applications of this particular teaching. We can say, "Yes, but what if—?" and Jesus says, "Well, then this." Underlying it all is the teaching about the Positive and Negative Powers: the way the Positive Power works in the world as demonstrated in the lives of the Masters, and the way the Negative Power works as evidenced in the Law of Karma and the teaching of exoteric, institutionalized religions.

Inherent in the concept of the Negative Power is the factor of judgment; and involved with that are many other concepts such as time, worry, and fear. All of them are connected in the Indian tradition. In *The Ocean of Love: The Anurag Sagar of Kabir*, the Negative Power is called "Time" or *Kal*, and it is explained that when the Positive Power created the universe by separating various parts of Himself from Himself, allowing scope for the universe to be created, the One became many. When that happened, Time (*Kal*) who became the Lord of Judgment, was not able to stand by himself and he fell. This created the negative, fallen universe in which we are trapped.

This teaching is universal. In the Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition which shares many basic tenets with Sant Mat, the great Master Isaac Luria was, like Jesus, a Jewish Master who taught within the world view of Judaism. Luria developed the system called the Lurianic Kabbalah based on the great Kabbalistic scripture, the Zohar, in which the doctrine of God separating Himself is known as *Tsimtsum*. Luria taught that before that happened, when all aspects of God were within God, the Negative Power was not negative. When they were separated out, in order for creation to begin, the negative fell. In the Lurianic Kabbalah, he is called by the Hebrew term *Din* which means "judgment," a comparable term to *Dharam Rai*, the Lord of Judgment, which is also used in the *Anurag Sagar* for *Kal*.

In Gershom Scholem's magisterial book, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, we read:

As I have already said, the doctrine of *Tsimtsum* played an extremely important part in the development of Lurianic thought, and new attempts to for-

mulate it were made continuously. The history of this idea from Luria down to our own days would give a fascinating picture of the development of original Jewish mystical thought. Here I must content myself in stressing one more aspect which Luria himself undoubtedly regarded as highly important. . . . According to this, the essence of the Divine Being, before the *Tsimtsum* took place, contained not only the qualities of love and mercy, but also that of Divine Sternness which the Kabbalists call *Din* or Judgment. But *Din* was not recognizable as such; it was as it were dissolved in the great ocean of God's compassion, like a grain of salt in the sea. . . . In the act of *Tsimtsum*, however, it crystallized and became clearly defined, for inasmuch as *Tsimtsum* signifies an act of negation and limitation, it is also an act of judgment. . . . It must be remembered that to the Kabbalist, judgment means the imposition of limits and the correct determination of things. According to Cordovero, the quality of judgment is inherent in everything, insofar as everything wishes to remain what it is, to stay within its boundaries. Hence it is precisely in the existence of individual things that the mystical category of judgment plays an important part. (Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 262-263)

The Lurianic teaching is the same as that of the *Anurag Sagar*. If we understand that that quality of defining and limitation is precisely what Kal uses to keep us all as individuals, then to transcend the limits of the three worlds means also to transcend the boundaries of the individual. Such transcendence means to get past the possibility of judgment and the realm of Time. All those limits work for the Negative Power and when the Positive Power invades the fallen universe, he does so not by imitating the work or function or role of the Negative Power but by doing His own thing. He loves. He forgives. He has mercy. His way is the only one that can succeed. He washes away the judgment in the same way the judgment was

originally washed away in the sea that was the undifferentiated God before the creation took place.

All of this can reasonably be thought of as abstract, but in fact the Masters' teachings in general, and the Sermon on the Mount in particular, offer overwhelming testimony to the fact that it isn't really abstract at all. In our daily life we are constantly making choices as to whether we are going to partake of the Negative or partake of the Positive. If we define a gurmukh as one who, without hesitation and without worrying, instinctively chooses the Positive, we can quickly understand that most of us are manmukhs. It is, however, in making these choices that changes can occur.

Because of the way we work psychologically, it's important to realize that if we fail in these things we are not committing a great sin; it just means that we are not acting in our own best interest. We have seen that the reason we should show mercy to others, forgive others, and not judge them or be afraid of them is that by doing so we open ourselves up to grace. When grace can function through us, it not only illuminates and transfigures the one to whom we are showing grace, it also transfigures and illuminates us. We get the benefit as well as the other. The Masters would say that the great secret of the Golden Rule, the great mystery of giving love, is that because we are all part of God, when we open ourselves up to let the grace and love of God work through us to touch others, it also touches us.

Receptivity to love and grace is important and it underlies everything in this Sermon as well as most of what the Masters say. Judgment, time, fear, and worry (a minor form of fear) are all created when we fail to be receptive to the Master's grace. Sant Ji has said that fear is the greatest sin of all; Master Kirpal said the past and the future are two sprites robbing us of our pleasure in the living present; and Jesus said to his Jewish audience, "Don't worry about tomorrow—that's what the Gentiles do. Don't worry about tomorrow because your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." All such statements derive from the same basic view of the universe.

What are we afraid of? Usually we are afraid of something that may happen in the future. Sometimes we fear the future

effect of something we've done in the past, and we feel afraid and guilty because of our own actions. In any case, it's a question of Time. If we take away Time, which is Kal, and live in the living present as the Lord Jesus and all the Masters have asked us to do, we find that the problem arises only when we allow the future or the past to impinge on the present.

In the incident I have often cited, when I was in the hospital a few years ago and could not move my left side after my stroke, it suddenly occurred to me that I would never be able to move it. A fear of the future impinged on the present and threw me into despair. Sant Ji told me later that I had actually lost my faith during that time and that I would have gained a great deal if I had not lost it. At that moment of despair I was only an hour or two away from regaining all physical movement, but I didn't know it. Of course, I might not have regained it—who knows? We don't know what our karma is or what the Master is going to do with us, but it's because I superimposed my fear of the future on the present that I went into despair and lost my faith, however briefly.

Whenever we make a mistake or question a commandment, the Master simply says, "This has helped me, and it will also help you." We should not even think of them as commandments; the Master frames them as suggestions so that we won't feel guilty if we break them. It's also important to consider how his suggestions affect our relationship with other people and other forms of life; his thoughtfulness and helpfulness are examples for us to live by.

Many points in the Sermon underscore the idea of God as a victim. We don't find it a pleasant thought, but if we look at the lives of Masters from all the traditions, we see that "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3) When the Positive Power comes into the negative fallen universe, He does not come with power, at least not in an outer sense. He has power, but He relinquishes it. In the famous second chapter of St. Paul's letter to the Philippians, he says that Jesus was equal with God but He didn't hang onto that status. He relinquished it in order to come into the world and be obedient, "even unto death. Yes, death on the cross—a criminal's death."

When God comes into the world, the Positive Power enters the world of the Negative; He makes Himself vulnerable; He has all power but He leaves it so that He becomes like us. Only on those terms can the things He has to offer work in this world: love and forgiveness and compassion and mercy and understanding and caring about us. This world is made in such a way that control and pushing people around and all the things that go with power lead away from liberation and toward entrapment.

For example, when we talk about the phrase, “. . . only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven,” it is common for religious-minded people to consider it in a way that avoids the issue. We think in terms of vegetarianism, chastity, earning our living, being honest, etc., all of which are very important; but if we psychologically analyze those things, we will see why they’re important, and they are all covered in the Sermon. They are important because of the way love and non-judgment work through them rather than power. When Mr. A. S. Oberoi asked Sant Ji some very important and basic questions about the Path as he was preparing his book, *Support for the Shaken Sangat*, the theme of love and understanding the Father’s will ran through Sant Ji’s answers:

What retards progress the most? Criticism of others. While one has even the tiniest bit within oneself, the inner way will not open up. . . .

What are “must not’s” of the Path? Non-judgment of others—instead we should judge ourselves. No ill will or ill thoughts for anyone, including one’s enemies. Not causing injury to anyone by thoughts, words, or deeds. (Support for the Shaken Sangat, pp. 296-297)

Obviously these are not the only important factors. Sant Ji also lays great stress on Satsang, faith in the Guru, and love for Him; and in this same section of Mr. Oberoi’s book he explains how the Master helps us and says that it is grace that makes everything possible. But if we think of behavior as the expression of doing the Father’s will, we must recognize that

the Masters do not mean just those behaviors that are relatively easy for people involved in spiritual activities. We are being asked to meet the most difficult behavioral criteria: not criticizing or judging, not trying to control others or telling them what to do, not giving unsolicited advice, and not speaking to others in terms of “should’s” and “ought’s.” It is so easy to fail to “do His will” in these areas, but it is what Jesus and all Masters require of us.

Many, many things connect with the tenet that we are not to relate to other people from a position of power; the way our marriages work and the way our children are brought up depend on how we relate to other people. When we judge or criticize others, we are actually “putting them in their place.” The Kabbalistic Masters’ explanation of judgment as limitation or definition comes into play here. We judge others; we know all about them. They sit in our mind, and we think we’ve got them right where they belong. We stop respecting them as human beings; we stop hearing what they have to say. This happens very easily with our children as they are growing up, especially when they go into adolescence. Sant Ji has made it very plain that the parents’ role changes at that time, and it’s hard for parents to accept the fact. Power is tasty. We like controlling.

We must also guard against slipping into a power role in our marriage, and if the marriage seems headed for divorce there are dangers there, too. The Lord Jesus has explained earlier in this Sermon—as all Masters have made clear—that divorce is not pleasing to God. But to use the argument, “Master says we should not divorce,” to keep our partner from leaving us is another way of trying to use power. *We have to avoid divorce by loving our partner and being lovable ourselves.* That is our job. The same principle holds true in any other kind of relationship we have; whenever we impose power or control over anyone we are fulfilling the function of the Negative Power. We should always be aware of the grace of the Master and how he works: he controls by not controlling. He makes us love him so much that we want to do what he does and what he wants. Truly speaking there is no other way the Master controls any of us.

The Masters have talked about this kind of love at great length; it is a major theme in their writings, yet it is often misunderstood. Master Kirpal Singh's discourse, "Gurbhakti: A Lesson in Love," makes this point in the following beautiful passage:

Today we are celebrating the birth anniversary of Hazur (Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj). It would, therefore, be a fitting tribute to his memory if you resolve to make your life a continuous saga of love and service—love of the Lord and service of His creation. As you have not yet come face to face with God, then for the time being try to develop love for one in whom the Power of God is working for the good of humanity. The first step in this direction is to do what He directs you to do: "There is no difference between the Satguru and His words."

We must learn to believe and have faith in what He says. Now that we are sitting in the sweet remembrance of Hazur, it will be a great day for us, if we resolve to turn over a new leaf in our lives. For this purpose we must maintain a spiritual diary. It will enable us to introspect. At present we are unable to see the foibles lying hidden in the depths of our minds. But when you try to plumb the unconscious you will gradually be able to see them on the surface, at first in trickles and then in torrents.

"O Mind, learn to love the Lord and love Him yet more." This is what Kabir has said. In the same vein we have the words of Jesus: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul and with all thy strength." And again: "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

Asked as to what should be the Christian attitude towards wrong doers, he declared: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father-in-heaven. Be ye therefore

perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

This then constitutes the love in the teachings of all the great sages from time immemorial and it shall eternally remain the same. They all exhort us to mold our life on these lines. Courtesy does not cost you anything. All the time we are malevolently concerned with others say and do. The world would be much better if we could stop involving ourselves in the sayings and doings of others. Again, we do not confine our mistakes to ourselves, but all the time busily sprinkle folly among our neighbors with the result that we get from them a hundred-fold in return. What good does it bring after all?

On a day like this, I repeat with all the emphasis at my command that Hazur was a veritable ocean of love; and we should and must, if we love him, learn afresh our lesson in love, by following in his footsteps by diligently working at the spiritual practices that he gave out for our uplift. By withdrawing himself from the physical plane he has not forsaken us for his godly power in its full radiance still sustains within and he is, more keenly than ever before, waiting at the focus of our being to help and guide us.

God is not sitting on some throne in heaven. He is enthroned in the heart of each one of us. We must, therefore, learn to love and serve our fellow beings in distress and suffering. God Himself has declared: I love him who loves my created beings. This is the great lesson that Hazur taught us in the first instance and if we put it into practice in our everyday life, his grace shall most surely descend and help us in our spiritual progress. Let us see what Kabir says:

Poor Kabir, from his life-long experience cannot help reflecting again and again,

Self-effacement is the only way that will take you to God and to your eternal home in heaven.

Kabir says that the only way to salvation lies through love. It is by love that you rise above self and become selfless. Without transcendence of the self (the ego) in us the light of God does not dawn. When you are charged with love, love of God-in-man, you cross over from stage of duality to oneness. How can we get to the fount of divine love? Love can be imbibed from the love-laden heart of some God-inspired soul. In a few words, Kabir has provided us with the Master-key that unlocks the doors of heaven: find out a Godman and learn from him the secret of love. Try to understand what He says and then diligently practice his teachings. He commands you to be chaste and clean in thought, word and deed and to cultivate love for all that exists by the love of God. As God is not separate from His creation, you will see the spirit of God enlivening the entire universe. You will not then feel isolated from the world. Your little self, now cramped within the human mind, will expand, become universalized and embrace the totality of all beings. This is the secret of success on God's path. There is no other short-cut to it. Try to be true to your own Self and then you will not be untrue to anyone. Alongside do Bhajan and Simran (sit in sweet remembrance of the Lord with rapt attention), make it a point to give daily nourishment to the soul as you do to the body. This is the love of which Kabir has given us a description in a few words. Mere lip-service and acrobatic feats will not do.

I would explain my point by means of a parable of two gardeners. A king had a fine orchard which was entrusted to the care of two gardeners. One of them was hard-working and would silently go about his job tending to the trees and flowers with due care and attention, keeping them in proper trim. The other was lazy but had a glib tongue and strong lungs. Whenever the king would visit the garden, the former would just pick up a few flowers and

humbly present them to his royal master, while the other who did nothing would jump about and dance before the Master and sing of the Master's virtues, deportment and clothes. Now whom would the king like? You can give the answer yourself. Certainly, the one who applied himself to his work diligently and honestly without making any fuss. Similarly, the all-knowing Master looks to your innermost intentions, the sincerity of purpose in you and honesty of efforts you make in following His commandments and bestows on you the gift of His spiritual wealth according to your merits. (*The Night is a Jungle*, pp. 269-272)

In different words, Master Kirpal is confirming exactly what Jesus said, that it is not he who cries, "Lord, Lord," but he who does the will of his Father in heaven who will enter the kingdom.

Sant Ji makes the same point in his discourse, "Content in the Will of God":

There is an instance in the history of the King of Rum. When he was talking once to the people in his court, a question came up about patience and contentment. That King asked his people, "What does it mean to be patient, to be content?" He had so many people in his court who were very wise and learned, and they all tried to answer that question according to their own intelligence; but the King was not convinced. So he called his Prime Minister and asked him about it: "Tell me, what is the meaning of patience?" The Prime Minister tried to explain to him about patience and contentment, but the King was not satisfied. He asked him, "Who can give the answer to this question?" Then he himself told the Prime Minister, "I have heard that in the country of India, there is a very mighty emperor whose name is Aurangzeb; he is a very wise and learned emperor, and he has many good people in

his court. It is possible that if you go there and ask him about this, he would be able to give you the answer. But you should come back only when you are convinced, and only when you feel that you can convince me. In case they cannot answer this question, you should try to find a fakir who lives in India, whose name is Sarmad; I have heard that he is a fakir of the highest degree, and he will be able to answer this question. So you go to India and find out the answer and tell me what is the meaning of 'being patient,' and what it means to be content." So the Prime Minister came to India and met with Aurangzeb, and asked him the question about patience and contentment. Aurangzeb was very learned and he tried to explain to him, but he could not give the exact answer which the Prime Minister was looking for to take back to his King. Then he talked with the other people there, but he was not convinced by them, either, even though everybody tried his best to explain patience and contentment to the Prime Minister.

So then he asked the people about the whereabouts of the fakir Sarmad;* but they told him, "Aurangzeb is a very strict religious-minded person, and he has not allowed any fakir or Saint to live outside; he has put them all in jail, [This may seem like a non-sequitur, but the point of the story is to illustrate the difference between power and love as they manifest in supposedly religious people. Aurangzeb was a fanatical Muslim in the exoteric sense, and he did not understand the Sufis. They made him uneasy; they were not in his control, so he put them in his control by putting them in jail.] and it is very difficult to find out exactly where he is; but wherever he is, he's in bad condition. He doesn't have any clothes to wear, he doesn't get good food

* Sarmad, like Jesus and Isaac Luria, was a great Jewish Master; he had studied with the Sufis.

to eat, he gets only one cup of water to drink a day, and he gets only a few bad chapatis to eat every day. But it will be difficult to find him."

Still, since the Prime Minister had the job of finding the fakir Sarmad and getting the answer to his King's question, he went on trying to find him; and you know that when you are devoted to something and work hard for it, you definitely achieve success. So he finally found Sarmad in a very dark cell. He was naked and, as the people had told him, He was in very poor condition. Before he could talk to Him, he saw a person who had been sent by the Emperor who, without giving any alarm or explanation, suddenly started beating Sarmad; he whipped him, but Sarmad did not sigh or complain. He just patiently suffered whatever was going on there. Then the Prime Minister saw that somebody brought a cup of water and a dry chapati which was not of good quality and had only one small piece of salt on it. Sarmad accepted that in the will of God, and with a lot of contentment he ate the chapati. Then the Prime Minister of Rum asked Sarmad his question: "Tell me, what is the meaning of 'patience' and what is the meaning of 'being content?'" Sarmad said, "I will reply to this tomorrow. When you come tomorrow bring a big sheet and a leather bag full of water. Then I will answer your question."

So the next day the Prime Minister of Rum took a lot of water and a big sheet of cloth to Sarmad, who, with his gracious sight, opened the door of that prison and allowed the Prime Minister to come into his cell. Sarmad took a bath with the water which the Prime Minister had brought, and after that he covered himself with that sheet of cloth which the Prime Minister had brought for him, and then he sat in meditation. He also made that Prime Minister sit in meditation, and with his grace he took the soul of the Prime Minister up into the Court of the Lord. There the Prime Minister saw that Sarmad was with

the other souls who had reached the home of the Lord and all those great souls were asking Sarmad, "If you tell us, we can destroy Aurangzeb and his kingdom because he is giving you a hard time." But Sarmad the fakir was folding his hands to all those great souls and saying, "No, don't do any harm to Aurangzeb or to his people; just forgive him, because he does not know what he is doing."

The Prime Minister of Rum was very surprised to see that even though Sarmad was Almighty, and had all the powers of God, still he had so much patience in the Will of God that he did not want anyone to do any harm to Aurangzeb, even though Aurangzeb was giving him a lot of suffering. When the Prime Minister of Rum saw the real glory and the real position of Sarmad the fakir there, he was very moved, and when Sarmad brought him down, he told him, "Now you have the answer to your question. If you have all things given to you by Almighty God but you do not use your power, that means being content in the Will of God; and, even though you are able to do everything, if you do not do anything to hurt others, that means to be patient in the Will of God." (*Sant Bani*, September 1986, pp. 4-6)

Chapter 27

The Will of the Father: II

Although we have already considered this very important passage in Matthew 7:21-77, it should be reconsidered from additional points of view because these verses have great relevance for the disciples of any Master.

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?" Then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; go away from me, you evil-doers."

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell and great was its fall! (Matthew 7:21-27)

In this summing up, as we have seen, the Master is clearly distinguishing between an approach to the universe through power and an approach through love; the two are contrasted, as they have been throughout the Sermon. It is only those who do the will of the Father who will be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is not enough simply to say “Lord, Lord,” and believe that Jesus is Lord, though this is contrary to the opinion of the exoteric institutional Christian Church and of most members of the Christian religion. Jesus himself established a different and important criterion: humble and loving obedience to the Father. The false belief is expressed in healings, prophesying, casting out demons, and many other “deeds of power in your name.”

Here arises the whole question of supernatural powers—in India called *riddhis* and *siddhis*—which the Masters have said we are to renounce. Through our meditating and surrendering to God and adhering to the disciplines of the Path, we should eventually be able to *do* such deeds of power; but the Masters have stressed that, even though we develop that capability, we are *not* to do them. Through the ages it has been a very consistent instruction not only by precept but also by example.

When Master Kirpal Singh was a boy, he discovered he was able to foretell the future and do other things which we would consider supernatural; but he prayed that this gift be taken away from him. He did not want to be able to do such things. We can't renounce a thing until we have it, but once the power is ours, relinquishing it is necessary if we want to gain entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven.

However, we shouldn't let words confuse us. The Master has all power, and he shares it with us as his children and his loved ones; but that great power is never used to manipulate or control events on the physical plane, and if we want to emulate him we will not try to manipulate or control events either. It is a fundamental temptation because it is bound up with the way in which we relate to the world around us. If we—as most of us do most of the time—connect with the universe out of fear or a sense of our own shortcomings and unworthiness, then the temptation to compensate for that by being controlling and egoistic is very strong.

A person who really has power is someone who is willing to share it. The person who relates to the universe without fear is the person who can love. Such statements sound almost like clichés, but this is what the Master must require of us in order to give us all that he has to share; and in order to be able to take his gifts, we have to see the world around us from his angle of vision. The Sermon on the Mount emphasizes how to relate to the world as he does.

“Not judging others” is the negative way of saying that we must love our enemies—the two are the same. Both require a sense of the goodness of the human soul which can override the manifestations of the human ego—our own and other people’s—which are blocking our way. If we have a profound sense of the Godhood of each human being, including those who do terrible things to us or to people we love, that sense both of their Godhood and their temporary bondage to weakness will provide us with a vision that enables us to relate to them as the Master suggests. Only that vision will allow us to accept what the Master has to give.

When we consider the Golden Rule—“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”—we realize that people usually do to others *what has been done to them*. That is why there is such a necessity for forgiveness on our part: the person who does hurtful or even dreadful things to us is usually not able to help himself. He is expressing outwardly what has been done to him, usually as a child; he is in the trap of the Negative Power. Cosmically the pain he has suffered will be worked out through the Law of Karma, but in the here and now he simply acts out whatever he is carrying with him, what he can’t get beyond. The Master wants to free all of us from that trap and take us higher, but first we must grasp his viewpoint and understand what we have to do to accept the gift he is giving us.

The way we treat children is especially important. Both Master Kirpal and Sant Ji have made very strong statements and discourses on this subject. Generally, children are the weakest and most powerless people we know and so they are the most vulnerable. In one place (Matthew 18:6) Jesus says that it would be better for anyone who offends a little one who trusts in the Master to have a millstone tied around his neck

and be drowned in the river. He is saying that if we fall into the trap of abusing children in any way, manipulating them, or using them for our own purposes, we are subjecting ourselves to such terrible karma that we'd be better off being forcibly drowned.

Therefore it is important to understand what we should do with children. Master treats us as though we were his children and we relate to him the way our children, or any children in our purview, relate to us; so this is a paradigm, a way of dealing with all people. The underlying precept of the Sermon on the Mount* is that the human being is profoundly good *at the core*. We don't have to control others for their own good, whether they are young or grown up. We have to love them because that will reach their essence, which is love. The Masters' specific statements on children (see above, pp. 93-96), which should be read in the light of Matthew 18:6, are focused and clarified in his "Toward the New Education," issued at the opening of his *Manav Vidya Mandir* ("Temple of Human Knowledge") school in Dehra Dun in June 1972:

The tender heart of a child calls for delicate handling. In fact, education begins even before birth and therefore better care must be bestowed on every pregnant mother. It is the constant association with gentle forces which breeds virtuous persons. The child is the center of creative life. It needs to be opened as a flower is opened, gently, by sympathy, not by force. Do not let the child be imprisoned in the examination machine. Never let him be snubbed or scolded.

This is a statement about what a human being really is, but in most Western religious traditions, particularly Protestant Christianity, the idea prevails that the child is naturally sinful and has to be controlled and shaped by parents who are necessarily

* And of the New Testament as a whole, despite the contrary opinion expressed by theologians like John Calvin; see Romans 7:22 which, if read with respect for its implications, is astonishingly clear.

but inconsistently seen as all-wise and completely moral. This mistaken view comes about through a misunderstanding of the teachings of Jesus and St. Paul, and we are all more or less influenced by it. We are affected by it in ways we are not aware of even if we recognize the philosophy of the Masters.

The role of the parents and teachers is to help children open up gently, the way a flower opens up, because what is there is sublime. If it is allowed to open correctly it will be absolutely right, close to being perfect. There is no need to control children, no need to force, no need to impose our standards on them. If we are really living up to our own standards, they will imitate us without being coerced; if we are not, they will know it and will probably imitate some aspect of our behavior we would prefer them to ignore.

Along these lines, there are some classic passages from Master Kirpal's "Outer Aspects of Life" (originally Circular Letter #1) that presuppose the view of human nature we have been discussing. He issued it in May 1956 after his first World Tour and says in the introductory part, "It has come to my notice that there exist misapprehensions," which he is correcting:

SPIRITUALITY—A CREED OF LOVING FAITH: The subject of the spirit is the most ancient and the most authentic of all subjects. Its history is coeval with that of man. It is based on two cardinal principles of love and service, or in other words selfless service. "By love, serve one another," has been the slogan of all sages through the ages. God is love and He loves those who love His creatures.

*He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the Dear God, Who loveth us
He made and loveth all.*

Again, it is said,

*He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.*

We may take any scripture we like, we find an exhortation in most emphatic terms on love. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee that God manifests Himself to one who knows how to love."

IMPORTANCE OF LOVE: Loving and selfless service to humanity is the cornerstone of all religious philosophies and no man can make any progress on the spiritual path without cultivating love within him. The seed of spirituality that the Master so lovingly sows in the arid soil of our hearts, has to be nurtured with the waters of love, if quick results are desired. We must so mold our life and conduct that all our acts bespeak His love. We must transform the desert of our heart into a veritable garden of love full of lovely blossoms and luscious fruits. From our heart should spring an eternal fountain of love, so that whosoever comes in contact with it is drenched with love to the very core of his heart.

SPIRITUALITY—A DIVINE CAUSE: The cause of the Master is the cause of God. It is no religion in the commonly accepted sense of the word and yet it is the highest religion based on love alone. We cannot keep the illimitable God in watertight limited compartments. God Himself has declared, "I neither live on the high heavens nor on the earth below, yet the wonder of wonders is that I live in the heart of a *Momin* or Godman."

Again, spiritual teaching and training is a living and practical subject, quite different from secular and sectarian dogmas and so many creeds that we have today. Life, light and love coming from a living Master well out spontaneously from the heart and not from any books on theology. No doubt everything has its own value, but in a world of relativity, the values are all relative. A positive contact with the live principles of living God is something unique. It stands on a footing which is entirely different.

SPIRITUALITY AND THE COMMON MAN: In this vast creation, everyone is gifted with an individual per-

ception. The heredity, the environment and the teachings inculcated, all combine to make one what he is. We cannot blame anyone for thinking differently in his own way. Everyone has his own temperament and his own way of thinking. They must differ and they do differ vehemently. There is no help for it. It is, on the other hand, the sign of sentient life. We must not therefore, on that account, cross swords with them. Even if in their ignorance they, at times, may talk ill of the spiritual teachings and use harsh words, they cannot help it. But that should not disturb the true seekers after Truth. We must be polite and gentle and even humble in our conduct. Bandy-ing of words does not help. We may try to remove misunderstandings if any, sweetly and gently, but not in an antagonistic spirit. It is advised that individual persons (including representatives, group leaders and other old and new initiates) should not enter into any sort of discussions or disputes with any religious bodies, circles, faiths or sects, etc. If any such bodies do enter into such things, they may be directed to refer to the Master for an appropriate reply. It would be better to turn aside rather than to break your own head in an attempt and injure the great cause for which we stand. God knows His purpose well and has diverse ways to fulfill the same, without you and me. So it will not pay to quarrel with our neighbors. It is said that those who try to live by the sword, perish by the sword. The entire Christian philosophy is summed up in two memorable precepts of Jesus Christ. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"; and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matthew 22:37, 40). And, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: . . . Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:44-

45, 48), and so said all other Masters who came in the past. If we live up to these teachings, there could be no trouble at all. The royal monk, Ashoka, in one of his rock edicts tells us: "He who reveres his own sect but disparages the sects of others, does great injury to his own for he lacks the essentials of a religion." (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 255-258)

And just a short while later, in his Circular #3 ("Ends and Means") Master Kirpal revisited this subject from a slightly different angle:

It is very necessary to distinguish clearly the ends from the means. To lay too much stress on the means is likely to make us gradually forget our objective and to become fossilized. Once we know, for example, that abstinence from all kinds of meat diet and spiritous liquors helps us on the spiritual Path, it is enough that we avoid them. But to take it as an end in itself is to miss the goal. Offending others because they eat meat is worse than meat-eating itself. Hate the sin, but love the sinner. Live and let others live. Welcome those who choose to come on the way, but we have no right to hate or offend others because they eat meat. Vegetarian diet is essentially a helping factor for those who would prefer to follow the teachings of the Master. Hafiz, a great Saint, says, "Drink wine, burn the holy scriptures, and put Kaba, the House of God, on fire. You may do all this but never offend or molest anybody." If you are really anxious to meet God you should not molest or offend the heart of anybody, which is the dwelling house of God. (*The Way of the Saints*, pp. 276-277)

If we review some of the precepts we've considered over the course of this book—the greatest sin is to be afraid; judging or criticizing others is the thing that most retards our progress on the Path; we must never offend or molest the heart of any-

one—we realize that what Master Kirpal called “right understanding” is implicit in all of them. That understanding consists precisely of this: We must recognize our own position and the position of others in the eyes of God; every living thing is of infinite importance and loved by God; and God resides in every heart. It is extremely important to remember that He loves us—we must never forget it. In *The Wheel of Life* Master defines sin as “forgetting of origin”; we forget that we came from God, and as a consequence we do things that are called sins.

It’s also important to remember that the Path is meant to be helpful to us. It’s easy to begin to see the Path as something that is demanded of us. What the Master requests is, no doubt, difficult from the standpoint of living an ordinary kind of life; but we have expressed a desire for something more. We have asked to discover what is really going on in the universe and to no longer be subject to the kinds of things we have felt stifling our spirit. So we should look for joy in living in His grace and in meditating. Sant Ji has often said, “Those people will please the Master who meditate, not understanding it as a burden.” If we are not enjoying our meditations, we are not meditating correctly.

In the same way, if the Path doesn’t seem to be helping us, there is some thing radically wrong with the way we are relating to it. The Path is supposed to help us by getting us out of the trap of the Negative Power; that’s the core purpose for traveling it. Master Kirpal said in his circular on Humility, “There is a divine purpose behind the life of everyone . . . we have something to learn from everyone.” Just as Master asks teachers to open our children gently as though they were flowers, with sympathy, not force, we too are being opened up gently so that we can do the will of the Father. When we recognize the intrinsic goodness and worth of each of us and know we have been created for a divine purpose, we will really be open to His will; we will surrender to it and be ecstatically happy.

In a wonderful letter called “The Cage of the Soul,” Master Kirpal wrote about the joy and bliss that wait for us when our soul escapes the negative trap:

Man has got himself so enmeshed in mind and the outgoing faculties, that his release from them can only be brought about by struggle and perseverance. His plight is, in a way, similar to that of a bird that's been kept in a cage for so many years. Even if you should open the door of the cage, the bird will be loath to fly out. Instead it will fly from one side of the cage to the other, clinging with its talons to the wire mesh, but it does not wish to be free and fly out of the open door of the cage.

Similarly, the soul has become so attached to the body and the outgoing faculties, that it clings to the outside things and does not wish to let go of them. It does not wish to fly through the door that has been opened by the Master at time of Holy Initiation, at the threshold of which, the radiant form of the Master is patiently waiting to receive the child disciple. True discipleship does not start until one has risen above body consciousness.

It is from this point that the disciple will feel not only comfort, but will begin to experience the joy and bliss that awaits him in the beyond. He will have as his companion, the charming radiant form of the Master, who is ever at hand to impart the guidance that is necessary in order to avoid the pitfalls on the way. Until this point is reached, the disciple is, at it were, on probation, but such probation that cannot be severed. It is during this probationary period that the soul will feel some discomfort. It has become so besmeared with the dirt of the senses that it has lost its original purity of heart and is not fit to be raised up out of the prison house of the body.

Even though the door has been opened, it is so attached to the things of the outside world, that it does not wish to be free. It is only when the soul begins to regain its original purity of heart and mind, that it can at last want to be free of the desires of the flesh and outward attachments. The loving Master

tries to avoid all possible discomfort to the child disciple by explaining what are the vices to be avoided and the virtues to be developed in order to regain this purity.

In other words, we can understand the commandments as preventive medicine; just as doctors prescribe an aspirin a day to prevent recurrence of a stroke, the Masters give us directions to prevent our having pain. On the surface level, that is the purpose of the commandments Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount; but at a deeper level he foresaw the need to create a different world view from which following his instructions would be natural and easy, and because of which his followers would *want* to do as he asked.

If, for example, we know that committing adultery will cause karmic complications and damage two lives, or perhaps many more, we probably won't do it. But as long as the desire to commit adultery is there, as long as we see other people as sex objects rather than brothers or sisters in God, the danger is always present. One obviously leads to the other, so there are two levels of commandments; they are both important but if the instruction at the deeper level is kept, the surface command will not even be needed.

Unfortunately, more often than not, the words of the Master do not sink in and little or no action is taken by the disciple to amend his ways. Therefore, the Master Power must take firmer measures to bring home to the disciple the importance of the truths that have been explained in words. Hence, the discomfort that is sometimes felt by the dear ones in their day to day living. If implicit obedience would be given to the commandments of the Master, all difficulties and discomforts would vanish. If a child gets itself so dirty that the only way the mother can wash it clean is by using a scrubbing brush, can it be said that the child will feel comfortable during the scrubbing process? It will only feel comfortable after the scrubbing has ceased and it is shining clean and pure.

Help and protection is always extended by the Master to his followers. He looks after their comforts in every way, both outer and inner. Even the effects of the reactions of the past, from the gallows to an ordinary pinprick, so much concession is given. As the mother sacrifices everything for the sake of the child, even so, does the Master sacrifice everything for the sake of his children. The follower, in fact, does not dream of what the Master does for him. He fills his followers with his own thought, with his own life impulses. When we remember him, he remembers us with all his heart and soul. He is not the body. He is the Word personified, the Word made flesh. To get the full benefit of the Master Power, the disciple must develop receptivity. It is impossible to develop receptivity until implicit obedience is given to the commandments of the Master. When you pay heed to the Master's commandments, then that is a sign that you are growing in love for him and the more you grow in love for him, the more receptivity you will develop.

When you begin to develop this receptivity, all discomfort will vanish, and you will truly begin to tread the Path in the firm assurance that you are on the right way, together with the loving companionship of One who will demonstrate more and more his greatness and his power on each step of the way, until you find that it is the very God Himself who is your Guide and Mentor, who will never leave you until he has safely escorted you back to the true Home of the Father.

While on the way, one of the main functions of the Master is to wind up the back karmas of the disciple. It is through conscious contact with the Sound Current only that the karmas of back lives can be burnt away. This process is started at the time of holy initiation, at which time the disciple is given a contact with the Light and Sound Principle, or God-into-Expression Power. To avoid opening a

new account of bad deeds, the disciple is enjoined to lead a clean life and weed out all imperfections in him by self-introspection from day to day. This is the sublime principle behind keeping the diary, which the disciple is asked to maintain in order to become aware of the shortcomings which stand in his way to God.

Ego is the self-assertive principle in man that makes him feel that "I do this" or "I do that." When one rises above body consciousness and knows himself and becomes a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan he sees that he is not the doer, but is a mere puppet in the hands of God, he will cease to be responsible for his actions and will become *jivan mukta*, or a free soul. The ego in man is part of the grand delusion that he is laboring under. It will cease to act or will be nullified only when a great degree of purity has been attained by the disciple, in which all of his actions will reflect the Master in him. Like Christ he will proclaim, "I and my Father are one." (*Sat Sandesh*, September 1970, pp. 24-25)

That is what the Masters are leading us to. The purpose of all these commandments/suggestions is to open up that essence of God which is already within each of us. Just as we are all one in our essence, we are also all one in the way we imperfectly reflect the love of God, caught as we are in the trap of the Negative Power. The escape to freedom lies in living with each other with "right understanding" and loving humility, according to the will of our Father. In so doing we are building our house on rock, and the winds of Time can never make us fall.

Chapter 28

The Messiah?

St. Matthew concludes the Sermon on the Mount with a verse describing the reactions of the crowd to what Jesus had just taught:

Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes. (Matthew 7:28-29)

We will remember that Jesus's fame had spread throughout Syria and great multitudes were following him. The "crowds" referred to here, however, were those many followers/disciples who had already committed themselves to at least some degree of recognition of his power. He took them off by themselves and began teaching them on the mountain, which is why it is called the Sermon on the Mount. It is not presented as having been given to the general public, but even so, the people who had already recognized him were astounded at what he said, not only because of the content of his teaching but because of the authority with which he said it.

Analyzing their reaction requires an awareness of what a Master is, how he is perceived by the people who recognize him, how he is distinguished from an incarnation or servant of the Negative Power, and just how Jesus fits into all this. The

authority that Jesus carried with him is presented in this verse in terms of the crowd's recognition of it, not in terms of dogma or "sound doctrine." Authority is not always recognizable, but just as it is said that "it takes money to make money," it seems also to be true that it takes recognition to make more recognition. If we are not at all open to what a Master is trying to give, we will probably not be able to get much from him. But if we recognize him, even a little bit, the love he has for us will come through the crack that our awareness creates and we will be more and more receptive to him. Then we will receive more and more love from him as we do that.

As heirs to the universal spiritual tradition, our problem with understanding Christian explanations of the mission and nature of Jesus lies in the *exclusiveness* with which those interpretations are cloaked by the Christian Church or any branch of it. There is also a failure to understand and discriminate between the role of the Positive Power and the role of the Negative Power, and this leads to confusion.

The Master's mission is the source of one facet of the confusion. The Master comes down to love, and he says that all human beings come down to love; this is the role of the human and it is how humanness is defined. As we have seen, the Urdu word *insan* is normally translated as "human being," but in fact means "one who is brimming over with love." That is the essence of humanness. The Masters say that the capacity for empathy is what distinguishes humans from other forms of life: we can love each other. We can also manipulate, use, and exploit each other, but that is not what makes us human; only our capacity to love does that.

The most human of all persons is the Master; he is what we and all other human beings were born to be. Our emphasis on understanding him as a God-man sometimes leads us to see him more as God than as man, and that is a legitimate view; but we should never forget to view him also as a role model for humans. He has reversed the fall and thus he is what we would all be if we had not fallen.

The problem is, theologically speaking, that although there are many individuals and even denominations within the Christian Church who understand this concept of the Master as one

who came to teach love, mainstream Christianity has confused it with a very different idea, that of Jesus as the Messiah. The name “Christian” means “Messianist,” and is itself a statement that Jesus’s mission is defined in those terms. The emphasis on Jesus as the Messiah has been responsible for the unfortunate and completely unnecessary rift between Judaism and Christianity. It is unnecessary because to think of Jesus as the Messiah is not the most helpful way to understand his career and life history and teachings.

The concept of the Messiah, as originally developed within Judaism, is basically a Negative one. The Master comes to love; the Messiah comes to judge and to govern. He is the King of Kings and he’s going to rule with a rod of iron. Of course there are other people found in the Bible who do the work of the Positive Power, people whom we can recognize as Masters; but they really have nothing to do with the Messianic tradition, which does not embrace the idea of Masterhood. Some people in the Christian Church have redefined the term “Messiah” to mean “the Master—Jesus—who came down to love us,” but that is to ignore the fact that Jesus’s life is not the life of a Messiah. The Jewish people of his day and since have been unable to call him that because he didn’t do what the Messiah was supposed to do.

If we read the prophecies and consider how the expectations formed, we will see what happened as he went about doing the work of a living Master: the people Jesus met (who in his lifetime were all Jewish) loved him and were impressed by him and recognized his greatness. Then, although his death on the cross was very difficult for them and they ran away, when he appeared to them after his death and showed them the continuity was still there, they had to make sense of it all. Many of them—not all—then recast what they had experienced in terms of the prophecies and expectations most familiar to them and said, “Oh yes, this must be the Messiah.”

When they did that, they created a false expectation on the part of the Gentiles who became members of the Church and they also alienated the Jewish people who had not met Jesus personally. They, looking at the record of his life, saw there was no way this could be the Messiah. Why? Because the

Messiah is a king; the term means "the anointed." The Hebrew word *moshiach* comes into the English as "Messiah"; it translates into Greek as *Christos* which comes into English as "Christ," so the terms are synonymous.

The term *moshiach* was originally applied to the kings of ancient Judah who were not crowned in the way modern kings are. They were anointed with oil; oil was poured over their heads. This made them the Messiah; when that kingdom of Judah ended, the idea was established that some day a sort of Superking would appear who would restore things to the way they ought to be.

This belief is presented in a number of sections in the Bible. The second Psalm reveals exactly what the concept of the Messiah, in its original and real sense, means:

Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and his anointed [his Messiah], saying,

"Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us."

He who sits in the heavens laughs; the LORD has them in derision.

Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying,

"I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill."

I will tell of the decree of the LORD:

He said to me, "You are my son; today I have begotten you.

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.

Serve the LORD with fear, with trembling kiss his feet,

*or he will be angry, and you will perish in the way;
for his wrath is quickly kindled.*

Happy are all who take refuge in him.

(Psalm 2:1-12, NRSV)

By reputation and definition this is a Messianic Psalm foretelling the coming of the Messiah, and as such it has been applied to Jesus. It doesn't make sense to do that but the Christian Church very early adopted the policy of assuming that prophecies like these applied to his "Second Coming." Jesus would come back to earth again and this time he would really be the Messiah in the way people expected him to be: he would judge the nations, terrify the kings of the earth and everybody else, rule with a rod of iron, and break into pieces all the vessels that opposed him.

In other words, he would negate and cancel out everything he did when he was actually here; and this complete negation and cancellation of the historic mission of Jesus was done in the name of salvaging his Messiah-hood. If we follow this through to its logical conclusion, the historical Jesus who was called Christ by the nations but who in fact did not enact the role of the Christ, will only do that when he comes again. In other words, he is not really the Messiah *yet*. The distinction between that idea and the Jewish belief that the Messiah has not yet come and is still going to come, is almost nil. The distinction would mean nothing anyway because the Second Coming of the Messiah in Christian tradition has nothing whatsoever to do with the teachings of the Jesus who actually lived among us.

It's important to understand all this because most Christians assume as a matter of course that the reason the Jewish people as a whole did not accept Jesus as the Messiah was that there was something wrong with them. This misunderstanding is, of course, a basis for Christian anti-Semitism which has grown very strong through the years and has led to many other kinds of anti-Semitism. There has been a basic defensiveness on the part of the Christian Church: Why didn't you [Jews] accept the Messiah when He came? Such Christians don't know their own theology: they don't understand that the historical Jesus

could not have been accepted as a Messiah by anyone familiar with the prophecies because he didn't do the work described therein. He was not the Messiah, and Messiah-hood in regard to Jesus is a matter of faith connected with a "Coming" that has not yet happened. From the point of view of Sant Mat, the esoteric teaching and the universal spiritual tradition, all of this can be understood in terms of Positive and Negative. Within every religion (not just Christianity and Judaism but all religions) there exist the Positive and the Negative strains, and all religious scriptures reveal a combination, though not perfectly balanced, of those elements.

The concept of the Messiah found in the second Psalm is a Negative one. That doesn't mean it is evil; the idea of Satan in the Western traditions is an exoteric and inadequate image. The Negative Power is a beloved son of God and has his own work to do; but he is not concerned with us nor is he concerned with taking people Home. His job is to fix things on this earth and ultimately to keep the souls trapped here. So from the perspective of anyone trying to break free of the cycle and go back to God, the Negative Power is indeed evil because he is trying to keep us from doing that which is our life work, our birthright. But he is also conquerable because the Positive Power is stronger than he is.

The perception of the Messiah in the Jewish tradition and as the Christians have adopted it, is comparable to the Hindu tradition of the avatar. As Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, the avatar (*avtara* in Sanskrit) comes into the world in order to do a number of things, one of which is to destroy the sinners. Just as the Messiah in the second Psalm is going to break all the vessels and rule with a rod of iron, the avatar is going to do the same sort of thing.

However, in both Judaism and Hinduism there is also a tradition of the Positive, and Masterhood is known in both of those religions as well as all other religions; yet the understanding of the Negative is simultaneously present. So if we realize that Jesus, in his historical existence, did not do the work of a Messiah, that he can be called Messiah or Christ only by radically redefining the term to mean, in effect, Sat-guru or Master, then Jewish and Christian people can both

recognize that there is a line of Masters who have come in all religions, that all religions have recognized at least some of them, and that that line still continues. It did not stop at any given point in history. It endures because God loves us and cannot help coming down for the purpose of taking us back Home.

Within the Jewish tradition there has always been the idea of the suffering servant—the servant who comes out of love and takes upon himself the burdens and pain of others. Jesus's career connects directly with this concept, although the image seems to have become blurred by the Christian Church. Suffering for others' sake is one of the jobs of the Satguru; He is born to do this just as the Bodhisattva does in Buddhism. Proofs of this belief abound throughout the universal spiritual tradition. In Judaism it is expressed most clearly in the Book of Isaiah in a prophecy which was applied to Jesus after his death. But everyone should realize that this was never connected with the Messiah until the Christians applied it that way.

This passage is from chapters 52 and 53 of Isaiah; it is a magnificent section that is deservedly one of the most famous parts of the Bible. The prophet, speaking as God, says:

*See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted
and lifted up, and shall be very high.
Just as there were many who were astonished at
him—so marred was his appearance, beyond
human semblance, and his form beyond that of
mortals—so he shall startle many nations;
kings shall shut their mouths because of him;
for that which had not been told them they shall see,
and that which they had not heard they shall
contemplate.
Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
For he grew up before him like a young plant, and
like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at
him,*

*nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
He was despised and rejected by others; a man of
suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
and as one from whom others hide their faces he was
despised, and we held him of no account.*

*Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our
diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God,
and afflicted.*

*But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed
for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.*

*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all
turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on
him the iniquity of us all.*

*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did
not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a
sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did
not open his mouth.*

*By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who
could have imagined his future?*

*For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.*

*They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb
with the rich,*

*although he had done no violence, and there was no
deceit in his mouth.*

*Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with
pain.*

*When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall
see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. Out
of his anguish he shall see light;
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The
righteous one, my servant, shall make many
righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.*

Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,

*and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death, and was
numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession
for the transgressors (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)*

Obviously this perception is exactly opposite to that expressed in the second Psalm, yet both have been applied, not by Jewish theologians but by Christians, to the Messiah as understood by the Church. The first image describes power—the rod of iron that crushes people like potters' vessels, the wrathful, forceful God who laughs derisively and inspires fear. The Isaiah image describes love—the savior who suffers for our sake because he loves us. Orthodox Christians believe this is the picture of Jesus and no one else. Jewish theologians, in whose scriptures it is found, obviously have other ideas. They ascribe it to the nation of Israel as a whole, believing that the sufferings of Israel are redemptive; and it is probably true that the misery of any people who are oppressed and persecuted is redemptive in nature.

However, the real esoteric meaning of this prophecy or description is that it is a very powerful representation *of the work of all Masters*. We have noted that in California in 1972, someone asked Master Kirpal Singh why Jesus was the only Master who died for the sins of the world. Master laughed and said, "All Masters have died for the sins of the world." If we examine the record of the Masters' deaths, we will find an astonishingly high percentage of them died violent deaths, murdered one way or another. Even those who did not were often tortured or tormented during their lifetime; others had much pain or sickness during their lives and/or suffered long, difficult deaths.

All of this is part of the work of the Master. It is not all that he comes for, but it is inherent in his job because he has to give us whatever help we need. Just as it is the unbounded love of the parent that makes the child bold, brave, and adventurous, so it is the unbounded love of the Master that creates that kind of disciple and raises him up. The knowledge and recognition of that love and the ability to tap into and draw from it is

what makes everything possible for us. That is the main purpose of the Master's work.

Sant Bani Magazine printed an article called "On Carrying the Karma," which was taken from a Question & Answer session of January 3, 1990. In it Sant Ajaib Singh Ji explains that the Negative Power has to judge and assign karma and the Master has to love and forgive; they both have to do their jobs. He also warns that when we see the Master sick and helpless, we should not doubt Him:

Guru Nanak Sahib says, "When the Master gives you Initiation He forgives all your past karmas and He puts you on the True Path." So when you get the Initiation Master takes the account of your karmas from the Negative Power and then He becomes responsible for it, and for the future He puts you on the right Path, and He tells you that you should not do the bad karmas. Whatever karmas are done in the domain of the Negative Power must be paid off. Somebody has to pay them, either the disciple or the Master, and as I have often said, "The Negative Power does not spare even one karma." It is also up to the Negative Power, to choose the way of paying off the karmas. If he wants he can take the eye of the Master. If he wants he can ask for the leg or any part of the body of the Master, and if he wants he can make the Master have diarrhea or any other sickness. It is completely up to the Negative Power to decide how he wants the karmas to be paid off by the Master.

The diary form which was made by Master Kirpal is the only remedy for this disease. We have to mold our life according to the teachings, according to the principles, laid down in the diary. Once we get the Initiation, we should not do any bad karmas. We should always think about the consequences of the action before doing it; and we should mold our life according to the diary.

Saints are free from all kinds of karmas and dis-

eases, but still you know when They come into the human body how much They have to suffer. It is only the Saint Who suffers on account of other people's karma; He is the only One Who burns Himself in other people's fire. Otherwise who on the earth would want to burn in other people's fire? Who wants to carry another person's karma?

When Master Sawan Singh had carried some dear one's karma and He had become unconscious, He could not even move; then the same person whose karma Master Sawan Singh had carried was standing right there. He had the bad thoughts, bad feelings, for Master Sawan Singh and he said, "Master, is this Your own karma which You are suffering?" Master Sawan Singh just smiled and said, "No, dear one, it is not my karma, it is the karma of a dear one."

A similar kind of incident is found in Baba Jaimal Singh Ji's life also. Baba Jaimal Singh had an initiate whose name was Moti Ram; he was a tailor by profession. Because the sangat was very small in those days he went to Baba Jaimal Singh and invited Him to come and be with him for one month to do the Satsang and Baba Jaimal Singh agreed. So He went there and while they were doing the Satsang one very prominent, influential man, Hukam Singh, started coming to the Satsang.

Moti Ram wanted Hukam Singh to get the Initiation. So he requested Baba Jaimal Singh to give him the Initiation because he thought that if Hukam Singh got the Initiation it would be very good for the Satsang. He thought that other people would be attracted to the Satsang. We Satsangis always have the desire that new people who come to the Satsang should also get the same benefit that we got, and that many people should come to the Satsang. So that is why we always request the Master to give His grace and give the Initiation to the people who come there.

So Moti Ram also requested Baba Jaimal Singh to initiate Hukam Singh. But Baba Jaimal Singh said, "Well, you can make me give the Initiation to two hundred other people, but don't force me to give Initiation to Hukam Singh." But Moti Ram did not understand and he said, "No Master, You have to give him the Initiation." When he insisted very much then Baba Jaimal Singh agreed, "I'll give him the Initiation, on one condition, that I will leave this place right after giving the Initiation." Even then Moti Ram did not understand; he said, "Master, it is all right if You go back; I will come to the dera to hear the Satsang. But You should kindly give Initiation to Hukam Singh."

So Baba Jaimal Singh said, "All right, you get the tonga and put my bedding on that tonga and get it ready. I will leave right after giving the Initiation." Even then Moti Ram did not understand why Baba Jaimal Singh was not willing to give Initiation to Hukam Singh. Anyway because he was insisting, Baba Jaimal Singh gave Initiation to Hukam Singh and right after the Initiation He left in that tonga. On the way home in the train He met Baba Sawan Singh in Ludhiana.

Baba Sawan Singh used to say, "On the weekends or whenever we had holidays we would always go to the dera, and Baba Jaimal Singh would get upset at us, saying, 'You people do not look after your household work and you always run to the dera. You should not come here until I call you, or until you do your household duties.' So He would always get upset but still we were so fond of His darshan that we would take every opportunity to go to see Him. So when I met Baba Jaimal Singh in Ludhiana, I asked Him, 'Master, can I come to the dera this weekend?'"

"Baba Jaimal Singh was suffering with a very high fever at that time and He said, 'No, you should not come to the dera this weekend; you should also not

come next week, you can come two weeks later.” And afterwards He went to the dera and for fifteen days He was suffering with a very high fever. His whole body became very pale, He did not even take any medicine and he suffered a great deal at that time. Later on a doctor was called from Amritsar.

Later on He told Bibi Rukko about the karmas of Hukam Singh which He had carried. He said, “Hukam Singh was supposed to be burnt in a fire and he had very heavy karmas to pay. That is why I did not want to give him Initiation but because Moti Ram insisted I had to give him the Initiation; as a result I had to carry all his karmas and that is why I became sick.”

Two weeks later Baba Sawan Singh went there and learned that Baba Jaimal Singh had been very sick. Seeing His pale face and very weak body, he requested, “Master, why didn’t You let me come to You when You were sick? I would have served You, I would have taken care of You; You should have allowed me to come here.” But Baba Jaimal Singh Ji replied, “No, dear one, it was good that you did not come, otherwise you would have had bad thoughts, thinking, ‘The Masters also have to suffer this much?’ It was good that you did not come, otherwise you would have also lost your faith in the Master.”

So, dear ones, the meaning of saying this is that to give the Naam Initiation is not a very small thing, it is taking on the karmas of the disciples whom you initiate. For the disciples who have got the Naam Initiation, for them, only this once is enough. If we do not do any bad karmas, and whatever problems we have, we try to sort them out ourselves—if we always act according to the instructions of the Masters, if we do the meditation of the Shabd Naam as the Masters have told us—if we are doing all this, that would be more than enough help to the Master. (*Sant Bani*, September 1990, pp. 25-27)

Several questions often come up in connection with this story and others like it, but it should be understood that Master Jaimal's unwillingness to initiate Hukam Singh was not because he didn't love him nor want to take him Home; he would have taken him Home eventually, anyway. Once someone requests initiation he will definitely be granted it although it may not be in any given time period and perhaps not even in a given lifetime. The reason he did not want to initiate him at this time was that he would become responsible for the heavy karma and that would prevent him from serving anyone else until those karmas were worked off.

When the Master gets sick at a time when the Sangat is expecting Him to do seva, it's very difficult. At least twice in recent years Sant Ji became ill while a group was visiting Rajasthan, and it was a traumatic experience for those groups. It is very painful for us to see him suffer. When he was at Sant Bani for five weeks in 1977, he was extremely sick with malaria for two of those weeks and it was very hard for everyone. His illness also means that he can't do what he has to do for the other initiates; all of his energy and strength are tied up with that one person whose karmas he is carrying. So from a Master's point of view it's better for everyone if the prospective initiate works off some of his karmas himself before the Master takes responsibility for him. He owes that to his other disciples.

In a question and answer session very early in his mission (October 10, 1976), Sant Ajaib Singh Ji summed up this whole question of loving:

We came down to love, but we have forgotten. It doesn't matter if anybody is loving you or not, but you have to do your duty—that is to love all. There is no expense, there is no burden in love.

QUESTION: That's why all men came to the world is to love?

SANT JI: Yes. And only in the human body can we love all. If we are given any other body we don't have any sense of empathy with others. But only in

the human body we can do that. You always have love in your mind and never let your mind be dry—without love. (*Sant Bani*, January 1977, p. 31)

Love is what our lives are all about. The Master comes to love us because we need it. Whether or not we have had loving parents, whether we feel people around us may or may not love us, the fact is that we need to be enveloped in unbounded, unconditional love; so the Master comes down to care about us and love us. Then we are able to be generous and strong and share that love with those around us, and we know we are doing his work. If we can remember how much he cares about us, even taking on our karmas and suffering all the things described in the Bible and the esoteric scriptures, we will finally understand how much we matter to him.

The crowds around Jesus were astounded by his authority, but after all, his authority came straight from the God of love and so it was boundless. We, too, are astonished when we recognize the scope of the living Master's great love for us. We are important to him; we count. The memory of our value in his eyes can carry us through many difficult times although we sometimes want to forget it because it's so hard to live up to. But the fact is, it is his love for us that makes it possible for us to do what all human beings came down to do: to love. With his help, in his remembrance, we can do it.

Chapter 29

Recognition

We have already seen that the verses concluding Chapter 7 of the Gospel according to Matthew have many aspects to consider: "Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." In studying this statement we analyzed what a Master is and how he is perceived by the people who recognize him. We observed the differences between the Messiah who comes to judge and to rule with a rod of iron and the humble servant who comes to love and to suffer for us with the goal of taking us back Home. We also considered the confusion caused by those who have thought that Jesus could fulfill both roles.

We have seen that when Masters come, they conform to the will of God and the laws of nature as expressed on the physical plane, particularly the Law of Karma. They adjust themselves to what they find here, and in the process take as many people as possible back to their Father's Home. That is their aim and their mission: to take people back Home.

We saw that one aspect of the Master's mission is to take upon himself the sufferings of others. As Master Kirpal Singh said, "All Masters have died for the sins of the world." So we concluded that the prophecy in Isaiah applied not to Jesus alone but to all Masters and to the whole institution of the Satguru, the servants of the Positive Power who love us

simply because we exist. They incarnate only to bring us love and mercy and protection.

In the *Sar Bachan*, written by Swami Ji Maharaj in the last century, we can learn how to recognize such a Master who comes to release us gradually from our bonds. In Book I, section 41, he says:

According to Vashisht (an ancient Hindu rishi) there are eight types of bondages:

1. **Pride of family honor and respectability.**
2. **Pride of high caste.**
3. **Pride of exalted position or office.**
4. **Fear of public criticism.**
5. **Attachment to wife, children, wealth and property.**

Many people find it difficult to understand the difference between attachment to wife, children, wealth and property and love of wife or husband and children. If we look at the wording of statement 5, the answer is clear: if our attitude toward our spouse and children is not different from our attitude toward our wealth and property, it is attachment. If we see our wife or husband and children in the same way we see our wealth and property—that is, as extensions of ourselves to be controlled and manipulated for our convenience—then we are attached.

If, however, we care about them as living human beings the way the Master cares about us, if we attempt to see their point of view, to see their suffering and pain and do our best to make that better, if we see them as children of God, then we are loving them; that is not attachment and that is not bondage. Rather, it is a way up; it is a helping factor. It's important to bear that distinction in mind. The Tenth Commandment forbade coveting our neighbor's property and our neighbor's wife; they were lumped together with property named first because if we covet our neighbor's wife for our own needs, we are treating her as though she were property. We find that attachment begins with that: treating people as though we can appropriate and manipulate them like any other property.

6. **Partiality for false and shallow beliefs.**

7. Hopes and desires, and love for the pleasures of the world.

8. Vanity or egotism.

Note that vanity or egotism comes last. Even though it is fundamentally responsible for the others, it comes last because, as Master Kirpal Singh has said, "It is the last to go." When we take up the spiritual way, make efforts to change, take the initiation, and accept the love of the Master, things begin to change within us; but the very last thing to go is vanity or egotism.

If the society of and service to any Mahatma leads to the gradual loosening of the above-mentioned ties and promotes love and faith in the Feet of the Supreme Being, you may be sure that He will free you from such bonds by and by, and take you to the Supreme Region. There is no other reliable way of recognizing a Saint or a Sadh. It would be a great mistake and a folly to judge the Saints by the extent of conformity of Their conduct and behavior with descriptions in old scriptures, or to expect Them to perform miracles, or to test Them in any other way. It is not possible for an ordinary mortal, with his limited intellect and reason, to test the conduct and spiritual knowledge of a Saint.

One should first think of his own personal needs, and see how far the company and words of the Saint create a longing within him for God-realization. One should go to a Saint in the spirit of true humility and should never try to display his cleverness before Them, nor should one, with his imperfect intellect, judge Their ways and behavior or meddle in the same. The acts of Saints, even if apparently childish, are not without some underlying purpose for the good of humanity. Our intellect can't reach that height where it can truly perceive what is good or bad for us. For this reason, many people, on account of their ignorance and lack of understanding, criti-

cize the ways of the Saints and so needlessly lose by keeping away from Them.

It is important to note that Swami Ji's emphasis here is on the fact that the only way to really tell if a Master is a Master for us (there may be more than one Master in the world, but necessarily only one for us) is by how he makes us feel, how much easier it is to love God by being in his presence, how much the eight bondages are eased by being with him, and how much we love him. There is no other way. The criterion Master Kirpal so often gave, of inner experience at the time of initiation, has to be understood in this context. It's like a sign of what is to come; it is not necessarily conclusive by itself. It has to be understood in connection with what Swami Ji is saying here.

To recognize the Master is the crucial point, and we cannot do that if we do not have the capacity to do it. The ancient Gnostics used to divide humanity into three parts: spiritual, mental, and physical; and the spiritual, or pneumatics, were the people who instantly recognized the Master. The mental, or psychics, were the people who had the potential to recognize him, although they might not; recognition would come more slowly. The hylics, or physical, were the people who, in this lifetime, were not capable of recognizing him; they might in the future but in this lifetime they could not.

Many of the descriptions of Jesus in the Bible are connected with this idea of recognition. This is from Matthew 15:21-28:

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon [present day Lebanon]. Just then a Canaanite woman [a non-Jew] from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take

the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

This story has given mainstream Christians a lot of trouble, primarily because of Jesus's categorical statement that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. But we should understand that although there is a universal aspect to all Masters' missions, there is also invariably a specific aspect to their mission. Even in modern times, after Baba Sawan Singh left the body, we know that he divided up his mission, albeit unevenly: Mastana Ji was assigned work in one section of Rajasthan, while Master Kirpal Singh was working in most of the world. And while Baba Somanath had disciples from many parts of the world, his work was centered in South India, where Kirpal Singh seldom went.

However, in the times before Kabir, when Masters generally worked within whatever religious tradition they were born in, they were usually not willing to work outside that tradition because that was part of the limitation of their mission. It bears repeating that Jesus was a Jewish Master. He worked within the context of esoteric Judaism, the tradition that branched off into Gnosticism and into the Kabbalah.

The easiest and most accurate way to understand him in his own time and context is, as we have seen, as a Kabbalistic Master, who came for the purpose of reaching and loving people within the Jewish religious tradition who were otherwise not being reached; they were ready to go Home but had no way to get there. They were the "lost sheep of the House of Israel." To universalize his mission in the way that Christianity demands—a way that cannot be justified by his own words—is to do him a great injustice and to miss the point that it was in his lifetime and in his own place that his work was done.

To clarify this point, the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John is very important and relevant:

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Observe the implications here. Many people have pointed out that this implies a belief in karma; because how else could the man have sinned if he was born blind? Behind that question there has to be an understanding of reincarnation and karma, an understanding which is still present in esoteric Judaism.* The Kabbalistic teaching assumes reincarnation and karma, and so did Gnostic Christianity.

Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Master Kirpal often quoted that last statement; it indicates a limitation in time as well as in space. He was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, and he is the light of the world as long as he is in the world. All Masters have said the same. As Master Kirpal said in this context, "One bulb is fused and is replaced by another. The same Power works and the same Light now shines from a new bulb." (*The Way of the Saints*, p. 69) Another body becomes the receptacle of the same Power.

When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar

* See Hugh Schonfield, *The Jew of Tarsus*, p. 46; Lis Harris, *Holy Days: The World of a Hasidic Family*, p. 112.

began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." . . .

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world

began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out. (John 9:1-17, 24-34)

The Gospel of John undoubtedly contains valid historical material and is probably more reliable in some respects than the other gospels, but the fact is that the miracles described in it are primarily parables acted out in order to convey inner truths. Jesus's restoring of the blind man's sight may well have happened, but the story is not about his prowess as a great healer; rather it serves as a parable for the opening of the inner eye within any disciple. And this story is repeated whenever anyone comes to a living Master. The religious establishment is always living in the past: "As disciples of Moses, or Jesus, or Mohammed, or whoever, we know that God spoke to him." How do they know that? They can't know it, except that they read it in scripture; and they may have internal psychological feelings that support their belief. But the person whose eye has been opened by the living Master and recognizes Him and feels those eight types of bondage removing themselves from him, as Swami Ji said, experiences the real miracle. He does not worry about adapting his behavior to fit old scriptures or whether someone in those scriptures performed miracles, because the real miracle is that he was blind but is now able to see.

His new ability to "see" is not only connected to meditation, although that is an important part of it, but to the shifting of his perspective to the Master's point of view; this is the shift that was emphasized throughout the Sermon on the Mount. He begins to see from that point of view, which means that he begins to see from God's point of view; it is a long process to achieve that, but the disciple begins the process when the recognition of the Master first occurs.

Basically the difference between the Master and other people is exactly this: that the Master can see from the point of view of God. We cannot, but by recognizing the one who can, we

can learn to do it too; we can become perfect just as our Father in heaven is perfect. If we cannot, the commandment doesn't make sense. The Master comes to show us, through his teachings and stories and through his own life and example, how to make that shift in viewpoint. Most important of all he gives us a boost; he takes hold of our hand and with his great strength lifts us up—because we need his help. We don't move upwards easily.

Chapter 30

Conclusion

We have identified the perfect humility, love and strength of all Masters who come to protect and liberate us. We have also recognized that Jesus's great Sermon on the Mount and the teachings of all Masters focus on the difference between power and love, control and surrender, and therefore on the difference between the Negative and Positive. When the Master is talking about what is required of initiates as they move forward on the Path, he usually puts it in terms of control versus surrender; and if we look at the opposing ways the Negative Power and the God of love and mercy function in this world, we can gauge our own conduct to tell if we are falling into one camp or the other.

Jesus's entire Sermon was aimed at undercutting the desire in all of us to control or have power over our environment. Nobody can be blamed for this desire; it is part of the human condition. One of the strongest themes of the Sermon and all Masters' teachings is that there is no blame, and that is why we are not supposed to judge anybody. Bad things do happen, and people do them and are held responsible for them by the Negative Power; but the point is that it is the Negative Power that punishes them. The God of Love never punishes because He understands very well why people do what they do. We are all caught in the traps of Karma, of Maya, of Cause and Effect, of Time, and of Law; all of those things proceed from the Nega-

tive Power and have meaning only in the fallen universe, the lower three worlds. The true God is above those things, and the only way to salvation, according to all Masters in all religious traditions everywhere, is to transcend those categories of the Negative Power and rise above them.

This means that in our personal life we must assume a conscious willingness to give up control—in other words, to surrender. It is very hard to do, and if we can't do it we are not to be blamed; nor are we to blame anyone else if they fail to give up control. Yet there is really no other way to do what the Master wants us to do except to surrender our will to His. If we consider the teachings carefully and understand their full implications, we see that this is truly the only way to fulfill His hope for us. We have to let go; we cannot have it both ways.

It's hard to surrender control because we are used to functioning in the world through our mind, and our mind is connected to, and very much a part of, the Negative Power. We are constantly being given a choice; we are always oscillating between the two poles of control and surrender. In any given case we can opt for control/power or for surrender/love. Surrender carries with it all the things that go with it: softness, compassion, forgiveness, gentleness, understanding, a sense of why people do what they do, and a recognition that people caught in the domain of the Negative Power usually give to others whatever they have been given. Someone who has been loved will love and someone who has not will find it hard to love; people usually behave toward others as others have behaved toward them.

This is why the crucial cornerstone of all the Masters' teachings is the idea of loving and forgiving and respecting those around us and not judging or blaming them for their shortcomings. The only way to achieve these qualities is to give up our own tendency to want to control others. If we think about how all of these things are woven together in the Sermon on the Mount and in the things the Masters say, we will see that this is true.

In the world, especially the Western world, the idea of surrendering to "a Master" is held in very low repute these days and deservedly so, for to surrender to another human

being like ourselves—another ego, another active mind—can indeed be a disastrous mistake. Yet those of us who have known a living Master, who have spent time with Him either outwardly or inwardly and who trust Him fully, do not have any problem with the idea of surrendering to Him. Whether we can do it or not in any given instance, we do understand that it is a very sweet and helpful thing to do.

However, the idea comes very hard to people who do not know Who the Master really is, so we are taught to be discriminating. Master Kirpal Singh used to tell this story of the days of his own search:

Once, it so happened, that my brother wrote me, "Here's a very great man; a very great Master has come. Will you come?" I went there. I told him, "I have intoxication that continues day and night; but sometimes, after three, four or five months, it breaks for a day or two. And I am very much puzzled. Can you help me in that?"

What did he say? "You'll have to lay down everything—your body, mind and soul—to me. Only then I can, I will, give it to you."

I thought, "The man is after my body and possessions; my intellect and everything is to be blind-folded." I paid him homage and returned. Well, you see—surrender comes only when you see some competence. Devotion and love—one who loves—is something else. When you surrender, you have control of the one to whom you surrender: he has to take care of you. ("How I Met My Master," *Sat Sandesh*, July 1975, pp. 4-5)

And later in the same talk, after telling how he did finally meet his Master, and referring back to this story and others, the Master makes this comment:

So this is how I met the Master. "The Guru appears when the *chela* is ready"—even to the most skeptical mind. Perhaps none of you have been so skepti-

cal as I was. I was afraid, you see, lest I go to somebody who had not met God; and my life would be spoiled. (p. 8)

The Gospel according to St. John was written largely as a tremendous hymn to the joys of surrender. When we understand that the Master is not the ego, or the mind, or the individuality that functions as the rest of us do, but that He really is the Word made flesh Who comes "pitching His tent among us," as the Gospel of John says, then it is not so difficult to surrender to Him. That perception comes only after exposure to His Presence; but if we still feel some resistance and can't surrender completely, we are not to be blamed for that either. Surrender comes as a matter of grace.

In other contexts, surrender is called "developing receptivity," and it really only means this: We are to open ourselves to the grace the Master is trying to give us. When we are controlling and judgmental, classifying people as to how worthy this one is, how deserving that one is, we are closing ourselves off from that which the Master wants to give us. It becomes especially obvious in meditation; we can experience inner grace only to the extent that our mind stops judging. When it is totally open to Him, when we have surrendered by following His meditation instructions exactly, we do experience the grace He gives us. Otherwise we cannot.

If we recognize Who He really is, it is not hard to surrender to Him; but for most of us that awareness comes in steps or degrees. Some people do know instantly Who the Master is; some people recognize Him as such before they physically meet Him or even before they meet Him within. But usually it is hard to recognize Him and surrender completely without seeing some demonstration of competence or having some exposure to His greatness, as Master Kirpal indicated above.

Those of us who have spent considerable time with Master Kirpal Singh and/or Master Ajaib Singh realize that competence is there and that greatness is there. The Master is indeed the Word made flesh. Maulana Rumi says, "Does not the sun himself the sun declare? Behold him, all the proof you need is there." For those of us who have been fortunate enough to be

close to Him and to see His greatness, to understand Who He really is, there is less excuse if we fail to surrender our will to His.

We do have to use discrimination, but the true Master will deal with us in such a way that we ourselves will understand and want to do what He asks of us. Master Kirpal Singh gave a talk called, "Joyfully I Surrender" (published in *Sant Bani*, December 1991). Surrender is a matter of great joy. Meditation, when done properly with a complete letting-go of our body and usual mental activities, is the most acute form of surrender; and when we do it right, it is supreme joy regardless of what we experience inside. It is happiness and peace. That is why Sant Ji says so often that the Master is pleased with those who meditate happily and do not consider it a burden. Surrender to His grace is, by definition, total joy.

In His book, *Godman*, Master Kirpal writes about this giving up of power and control in exchange for love and surrender in a chapter called "Surrender to the Master." He is not here talking about the Master as a human being, but about His ultimate form, the Satguru: the Radiant Being Who is the Word even before It's made flesh.

Surrender to the feet of the Master means to merge one's individual will in the Will of the Master, and to completely place oneself at his mercy. It is the surest and easiest way to escape from all cares and anxieties. It comes only when a disciple has complete faith and confidence in the competency of the Master.

This type of self-surrender is like that of a completely helpless patient who, trusting in the skill of a competent surgeon, places his life in his hands and quietly submits himself to his knife and lancet.

Or it may be compared to the trust given by the hopelessly lost traveler in the wilderness to the forest ranger who finds him and leads him out.

In exactly the same way, the work of the Master does not consist in merely teaching the theory of Para Vidya (Science of the Beyond), but it includes

the practical demonstration of results of spiritual experiments, and help and guidance through all the disciples' difficulties. A true friend does not only give theoretical lessons in how to escape from mind and matter; he helps in effecting the escape itself.

Suppose, for instance, that a person has to go abroad. He will begin by making inquiries as to the various means of transportation available, land, sea or air, as he may choose. After he makes his choice, he enters the plane, ship, or train, and relying on the skill of the operator, takes his seat comfortably with the least anxiety. Should the ship flounder, or the plane be caught in a storm, it is the duty of the captain or pilot to take every possible care to save the conveyance along with the passengers for whom he is responsible.

In exactly the same way, an aspirant for spirituality has, after careful investigation, to decide first about the spiritual worthiness of a Master, and then to submit himself wholly and solely to his authority and direction without any mental reservations whatever; for he alone knows the turns and twists of the spiritual path and is in a position to act as an unerring guide.

The term *surrender* therefore means that a disciple should have full confidence in the skill and competence of the Master, and scrupulously follow and act on his instructions whatever they may be, whether in conformity with his own reason or not—for his reason being limited may be faulty or fall far short of the depth or prove uncertain.

It is not for him to question the propriety of the Master's commandments. He must learn, like a soldier, to obey his command without knowing the why and wherefore of things; for the Master knows what is best and most suitable in each case.

We should be aware that while the benefit from this kind of response is absolutely true, and that it is the easiest and best

way for the disciple to grow, the Master does not hold it against us if we cannot do it. He simply tries again, at another time. If He gives us a command and we cannot obey it because we have not surrendered enough, then we are the losers; but He won't judge us. He will continue to love us and will give us another chance. We can call this Path "The Path of the Million Chances."

One must therefore obey the Master literally, and straightway engage himself in the sadhan or spiritual practice and discipline as it may be laid down for him.

This is the only way to spiritual success; there is no other.

In this context, we have the testimony of Hafiz, a great Sufi poet of Persia, who declared:

*"Dye thy prayer carpet in wine should the Master so desire;
For he is not ignorant of the turns of the highway ahead."*

When a disciple entrusts his all to the Master, he becomes carefree and the Master has of necessity to take over the entire responsibility; just as a mother does for her child who does not know what is good for him.

As the disciple develops in his sadhans, he fits himself to receive more grace from the Master. Under His kind and benign influence, the disciple begins to thrive from day to day, and all his wishes are fulfilled without the least trouble on his part. . . .

Self-surrender is not an easy task. To accomplish it, one has to recede back to the position of an innocent child. It means an entire involution, a complete metamorphosis, supplanting one's own individuality.

It is the path of self-abnegation, which not every-one can take.

On the other hand, the path of the spiritual discipline is comparatively easy. Self-effort can be tried by anyone in order to achieve spiritual advancement.

It is, no doubt, a long and tortuous path, as compared with the way of self-surrender, but one can, with confidence in the Master, tread it firmly step by step. If, however, a person is fortunate enough to take to self-surrender, he can have all the blessings of the Master quickly; for he goes directly into His lap and has nothing to do by himself for himself.

He is then the Master's Elect, his beloved son, the son of God Himself. But rarely even a really blessed soul may be able to acquire this attitude. (Kirpal Singh, *Godman*, pp. 177-181)

It is clear that this is the attitude the Masters themselves have when they come to their Masters. They are able to obey because they have surrendered first. The reason the Path of Self-Effort is hard is that it is dependent on obedience, and one can rarely obey without surrendering first. If one is successful without surrendering, the danger that continually crops up is that the ego takes credit for what has been accomplished. From there it is but a step back to the mode of control and power and judging others for not being as good as we are.

It becomes possible to shift our perspective and assume the Master's point of view only by making His priorities our own priorities, and in the final analysis this is what love for the Master really means. All of this is summed up in the idea of surrender. It's possible to surrender a little bit for a little while and then slip back; but each time we do it, it becomes easier the next time.

The conventional religious objectives are not necessarily what the Master asks of us. We are not to judge or criticize or blame others; we are to be loving and forgiving and merciful and maintain strict morality ourselves but never criticize those who do not. This is summed up in the maxim: "Reformers are wanted: not of others, but of themselves"; and even though it is the basic teaching of Jesus and the Prophets, it is much more radical than standard religious thought. In order to make such

a sharp shift in perspective, we must obviously have at least some degree of surrender.

Master Kirpal mentioned the quote from Hafiz in the selection above: "Dye thy prayer carpet in wine should the Master so desire; For He is not ignorant of the turns of the highway ahead." The story that goes with that quote concerns a Kazi (a Muslim lawyer who is expert in the Koran and Islamic law) who was told that Hafiz was teaching the *first half* of the couplet; and the Kazi, who had respect for the Sufi Hafiz, didn't understand why he should be saying such a thing. According to standard religious thought, to dye your prayer carpet in wine was blasphemy. Wine is strictly forbidden in Islamic law and, indeed, the prayer carpet was the single holiest possession of a Muslim, so it seemed blasphemous to teach this.

He asked Hafiz to complete the couplet and explain what he meant by it, and Hafiz told him that in order to get the explanation he would have to go to another Sufi who lived a couple of towns away. When the Kazi went to him, he said, "Well, I will tell you the second half of that couplet if you will visit a nearby brothel." At this point, the Kazi was beside himself. It was bad enough to be told that he should dye his carpet in wine, and now he was being told to visit a house of prostitution. He thought, "What kind of holy men are these?"

Yet he had respect for the Saints, so he went to that brothel and was able to rescue his daughter, whom he hadn't seen for fifteen years: they had had to leave their home town because of a revolution. His daughter was scheduled to be initiated into prostitution that night, but because he obeyed the Masters he was able to find her and save her from that life. He went back to the second Master, and he told him to go back to Hafiz; then Hafiz kindly completed the couplet: "For he [the Master] is not ignorant of the turns of the highway ahead."

When the Master tells us something, He speaks from a longer point of view than we can usually have; therefore His statement is a gift of grace in itself and it transcends the standard kind of thought. Too often our way of thinking is bound up with the negative, with categories, with blame, with judgment, with law, with "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts," and with

time all of those things. The Master transcends all that. So it's important to realize that "Reformers are wanted—not of others, but of themselves" is a revolutionary thought, because when we understand something our first impulse is to apply it to others.

The last few pages of Sant Ji's book, *In the Palace of Love*, presents self-surrender from a slightly different angle—from the standpoint of not fighting one's circumstances. Many years ago Master Kirpal wrote something we've often heard at Sat-sang: "Please know it for certain that whatever comes to your count is in your best spiritual interest." In other words, whatever happens to us is the best possible thing for us in view of *what we really want to accomplish*. It may not seem that way from certain points of view, but it's the best in terms of reaching our real spiritual goal. To surrender to that, we have to have a sense of the Master's constantly being with us, helping us, guiding and protecting us.

If we recognize Him in the fullness of what He is, then it becomes easier to surrender because we can see Him doing all of those things for us. This doesn't mean that He is the author of our circumstance; that comes from our fate karma and is unavoidable. But the beauty of the Master is that when He initiates someone, He guides him in such a way that the fate karma of that person becomes a teacher; the disciple learns whatever he needs to learn from that karma and is able to benefit from it. What would otherwise be simply an event that causes responses producing new karma, under the Master's guidance becomes the means by which our karma is wrapped up once and for all. We will not then have to go through the process eon after eon as we have been doing. This is perhaps the greatest thing the Master does for us.

Sant Ji writes about surrender from this perspective as he comments on this verse:

*"One does only what is written;
One gets what he has left in the Real Home."*

The jiva [the bound soul] works in this world according to what he has been given in the Court of

the Lord. He who has been given the work of doing the meditation of Shabd Naam, will do the meditation of Shabd Naam no matter what happens. He who has been given some other work—for example the work of doing bad deeds, he will do bad deeds. God does not have any enmity towards anyone, and He does not give bad works to some and good works to others. It all depends on our own karma. Our intellect and brain are formed because of our good and bad deeds of the past, and according to them we have been given work; and whatever work we have been given according to the karmas of the past, we do that in this world.

Guru Nanak says, "No one is foolish and no one is wise. Everywhere Your will is functioning."

This does not mean that we should sit idle and say, "Well, if God wants, He will come and make us do good deeds." We should not have such an attitude because God never inspires us to do bad deeds. Whatever is in our control—whatever we can do—we should do.

One day in the Satsang, Prophet Mohammed told his disciples, "Everything is done by God Almighty." So one of his disciples who took care of his camels, always had a hard time tying the camels' feet and guarding them, so he told Prophet Mohammed, "Master, if, as you say, 'Everything is done by God Almighty,' then why should I tie the legs of the camels and guard them?" But Prophet Mohammed said, "No, dear one, it is your job to tie their feet, and it is your job to stay awake during the night to guard them. If after doing your part, someone comes and steals them, then you should understand that it is the will of God."

No, it is the work of the disciple to improve himself. It is the work of the disciple to do his meditation, and then Master will shower His grace on him. The Shabd will open with the grace of the Master,

and the soul will be pulled up by the mighty Master. It is our job to sit for meditation, it is our job to improve our life, and if we do our meditation every-day, then Master will not delay in coming and pulling our soul up. (Ajaib Singh, *In the Palace of Love*, pp. 217-218)

This somewhat paradoxical teaching is very useful to us if we think of it in terms of what we can see. In other words, if we can see that the work of doing the meditation of Shabd Naam is what has been given to us, then that is a gift of grace; and if we see it as grace, we will meditate. Non-initiates cannot see it that way, but there are also many initiates who have forgotten that this is their work and therefore don't meditate. We often see that other people are not doing their work, but this teaching can be very helpful if we understand that no one is to blame for their failures.

Ultimately, of course, we could say that everyone is to blame on the grounds that we have all produced whatever karma we have, but that is precisely the point: we are all in the same boat. Jesus's famous parable about the rich man who forgave his servant a debt of nine million dollars and then learned that the servant went out and threw a fellow servant in jail because he owed him fifteen dollars, is a parable about what we are doing when we blame others. What we see or do not see is between us and God, and the same is true of everyone else. It is so important to understand that people do what they have to do. If we see something higher, that is what we have to do; but we must also leave it to others to do what they have to do.

Each of us makes the best of whatever we can see within whatever circumstance we are placed. Whatever our intellect and brain are, whatever we can make of the universe around us, and whatever amount of recognition we can bring to Who the Master is and the importance of what He asks from us—to the degree to which we can do all that, we make ourselves open to receive grace. We let go, and that is what is called surrender. But all of us have blind spots and we never know what they are; if we knew, they wouldn't be blind spots. By

definition we cannot know what they are and it is the same with everyone else.

That is why we can't reform others. Each human being is his own person and each one is directly responsible to God, not to us. By trying to impose on others that which we see clearly, we betray our own vision because then we have stopped surrendering and are trying to control.

It seems appropriate to end this commentary on the Sermon on the Mount with this paragraph from Master Kirpal Singh's *The Way of the Saints* (p. 289):

Standing at the crossroads of Time, we must make a firm resolve to do better from day to day. . . . As there are landmarks on earth, so there are landmarks in Time. The past and future are like sealed books to us: the one is in the limbo of oblivion, while the other is in the womb of uncertainty. It is only the LIVING PRESENT that is ours, and we must make the best use of it, ere it slips away through the fingers and is lost forever. Human birth is a great privilege and offers us a golden opportunity. It is for us to make or mar the same, for it is given to each individual to forge his or her own destiny as best he may.

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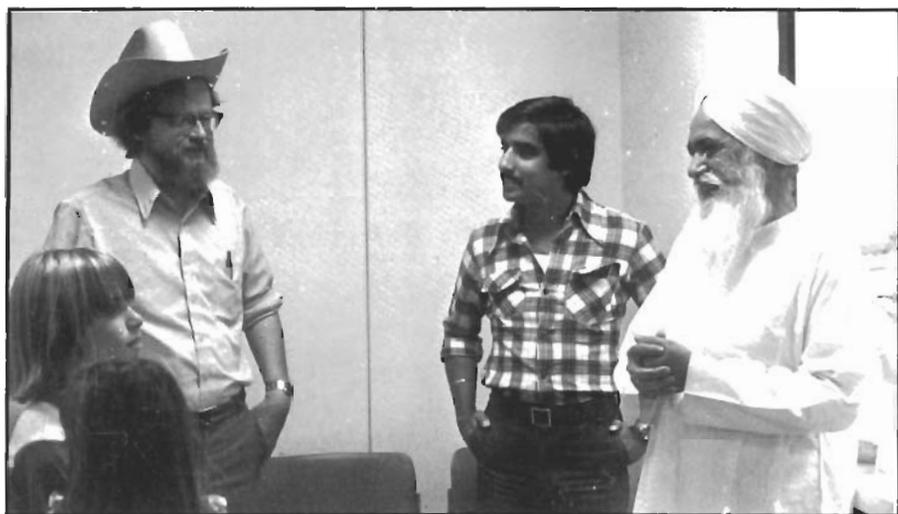
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*The author (left) with Sant Ajaib Singh (right),
Houston, Texas, June 28, 1980.*

Russell Perkins was born in Florida in 1935. Brought up in New England, he was “born again” in the evangelical Christian faith in 1951, and spent two years at Gordon College in Boston preparing for the Baptist ministry. Eventually dissatisfied and frustrated with the evangelical understanding of Jesus and his mission, he prayed for help. His prayers were answered, and on New Year’s Day 1957, in obedience to Matthew 7:7-11, he began a serious search for God which led him to the feet of the living Master, Sant Kirpal Singh Ji of Delhi, India, from whom he received Initiation in May 1958, and with whom he has been associated ever since.

He is married with two grown children, has a Master of Theological Studies degree from Harvard University, and teaches at The Sant Bani School in Sanbornton, New Hampshire. He has served as a Representative for Sant Kirpal Singh Ji from 1967 to 1974, and for his successor, Sant Ajaib Singh Ji, since 1976. The story of his meetings with these Masters is told in his previous book, *The Impact of a Saint*.