

Selections From  
**The Stranger of Galilee:**  
The Sermon on the Mount and the  
Universal Spiritual Tradition  
(Emphasis on Sant Mat)  
By Russell Perkins



Dedicated to Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj

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Russell Perkins has always been one of my favorite spiritual writers. As editor of Sat Sandesh, he contributed numerous articles over the years that were always a delight to read. Russell writes with a rare combination of knowledge, wisdom, humor, and candor. A long time practitioner of Sant Mat meditation (he was initiated by Master Kirpal Singh in 1958), Russell writes from personal experience. Also, Russell had rare access to my Master, Sant Kirpal Singh, and relates fascinating stories and teachings from his numerous trips to India that have been of considerable value. He also has a Masters of Theological Studies degree from Harvard University.

A few highlights contained within this booklet include Russell's story of his encounter with a snowmobile riding neighbor in chapter 14, his stroke in chapter 12, Baba Sawan Singh's put down of a tattletale in chapter 9, and Ramakrishna's rebuke to a disciple who did not defend his Master in chapter 22.

The selections chosen for this booklet are among the many valuable pearls of wisdom contained in this wonderful book.

The entire book can be read on-line at [mediaseva.com](http://mediaseva.com). Go to the heading BOOKS ONLINE. Russell's book is near the end of the book section.

## A Review of *The Stranger of Galilee*

by Christian Allègre

To do justice to this great book is a challenge. Not unlike the Sant Bani Sunday morning Satsangs it evolved from it is both an explanatory commentary on the teachings of the Masters and a practical book concerned with daily situations. It is filled with extensive quotes from the Masters' discourses and talks, and it offers personal accounts, stories that the author personally witnessed in the times of Guru Kirpal or from his visits to Sant Ji. It introduces very challenging notions for Christian Theology, and it is an enlightening essay in comparative religion, drawing on the writings of philosophers, poets and saints of many traditions. It is indeed the kind of book one expects from someone who has received *the impact of a Saint*. The epigraph by Henry David Thoreau at the beginning of the book and the dedication to Kirpal sum up perfectly the spirit and intent of the book.

*The Stranger of Galilee* presents itself as a commentary on chapters 5 to 7 of the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament -- what we call the Sermon on the Mount, from the point of view of Sant Mat, or from the point of view of what Russell Perkins calls in his introductory chapter the Universal Spiritual Tradition, which he shows to be no different from Sant Mat. The author's method is to study the Tradition through the successive themes of the Sermon on the Mount, chapter after chapter. Given the nature of the Sermon this method has a consequence : it gives a lot of importance to the moral elements, in other words those aspects of the theory of the Path which deal with personal conduct. One of the achievements of Russell Perkins' new book is to help us understand anew the true meaning of moral principles from a religious point of view, that is from the point of view of people whose aim is to know themselves and to know God. The central message in all spiritual traditions is that the commandments the Masters want us and help us to follow are not laws at all but rather "glimpses of reality" as Russell calls them, aspects or features of how things really work in this Creation which are such that if we adapt ourselves to their demands, if we understand how they work, if we "follow", as Master Kirpal would have put it, we can become truly content and truly happy. The commandments can then be viewed as criteria for those who would like truly to *Go Jolly*, that is who would like to live with love in their heart, mercy on everybody, and the knowledge that they are redeemed.

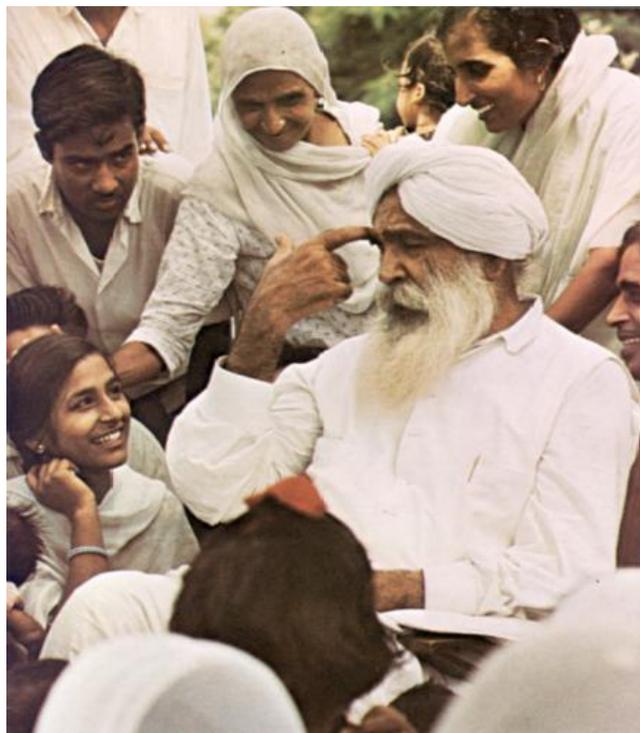
Of course for us satsangis, for any true Christian, moral principles apply to our mental life as well, because we know that the fight starts in fact with *the enemy within*, the mind. If someone in the Sangat knew the Scriptures sufficiently in depth to achieve this, it was Russell Perkins. But the beauty of this book lies in the fact that it brings the whole array of our Masters' moral teachings out of the Sermon on the Mount. It is in this that it is a true commentary and this is how Russell is able to transmit to us with such clarity what he has learnt: *the life in the teachings of Jesus*.

Chapter 3 *Blessed Are Those Who Hunger for Righteousness* illustrates what Master Kirpal meant by "ruling passion"; chapter 4 *Blessed Are The Merciful* contains an invaluable passage on raising children while respecting their personalities; I have found a clear and sweet explanation of what it means to have an "undivided heart" in chapter 5 *Blessed Are the Pure in Heart*; chapter 7 *Blessed Are the Persecuted* explains what karma is about, and how we can suppress it -- it could be subtitled "Long live the Critic!". Chapter 12 on marriage and divorce is the clearest and most definite exposition I have ever read of why the Masters are so strict in this regard. These are just a few examples.

Often Russell Perkins underlines the connections and the complementarity between different chapters. This helps us understand anew several connected aspects of God's love and how privileged we are to have a true Master, who is at the same time Spiritual Teacher, friend, father, protector and beloved. It is a book so rich and deep and at the same time so practical, humane and sweet that it can help us refocus our understanding not only of our life as a satsangi living in the world, but also of life in general. The central message of the book is that the best thing for us is to adopt *the point of view of the Master*. No imposition, no law, no punishment, no hell, just a switch of angle of vision, which if followed, will change our ways and make us much happier and relieved and filled with peace and joy than we are. He explains it through and through in the first half of the book. And he applies it to our day to day living, within our families, with our parents or our children, our spouses, friends and relations, in all the practical situations that matter to us.

The book shifts in tone after the Beatitudes and this shift perhaps culminates in chapters 21, 24, 26, 27, when, after stressing from the start and all along the importance of not judging others, root cause of so many evils, it comes to what the author calls The Golden Rule : "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). Usually we treat others as we have been treated, which is completely different. Throughout the book Russell Perkins insists on the importance of avoiding criticism of others, on the importance of love and forgiveness (as opposed to power and justice). He reminds us of the answer Sant Ji gave to Mr. Oberoi when the latter asked him what retards progress the most: "Criticism of others. While one has even the tiniest bit within oneself, the inner way will not open up."

All subjects are always seen from the perspective of the whole, and the same meanings are shown to be present in the Judaic tradition, in Gnosticism, in Hinduism and Buddhism (Russell Perkins often quotes the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, so close to the Masters' teachings.) but it is not a discussion in theology. It is rather a series of thirty beautiful satsangs which contain a wealth of human experience and satsangi experience, coupled with a lot of learning...



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj

## Chapter 1: Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit, for Theirs Is the Kingdom of Heaven

The more we are cushioned and protected from reality by security, money, comfort, and other aspects of worldly-richness, 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 - 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.



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 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.



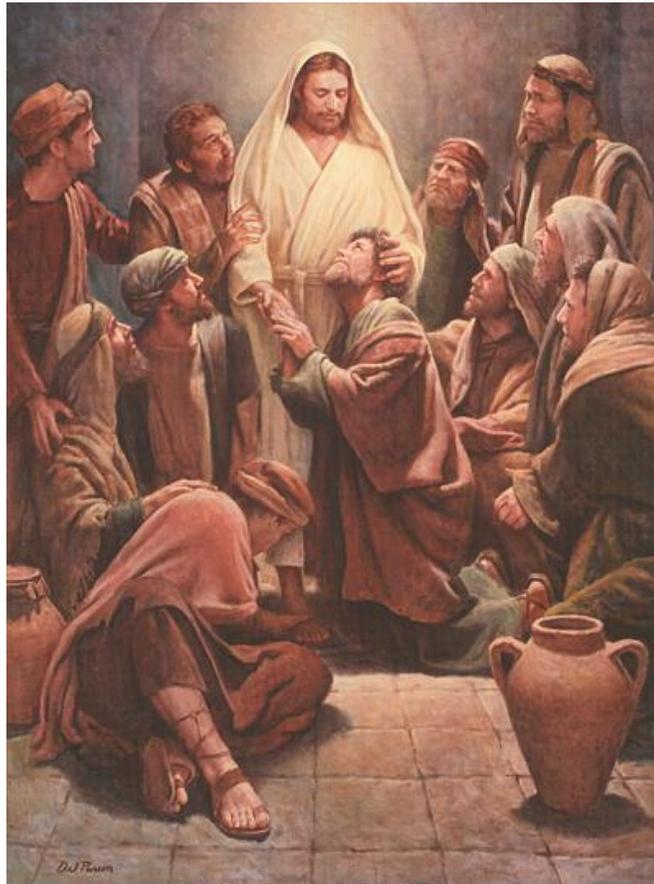
## Chapter 2: Blessed Are Those Who Mourn, for They Will Be Comforted

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.

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.



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."



The Resurrected Lord by Del Parson

### Chapter 3: Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness, for They Will Be Filled.

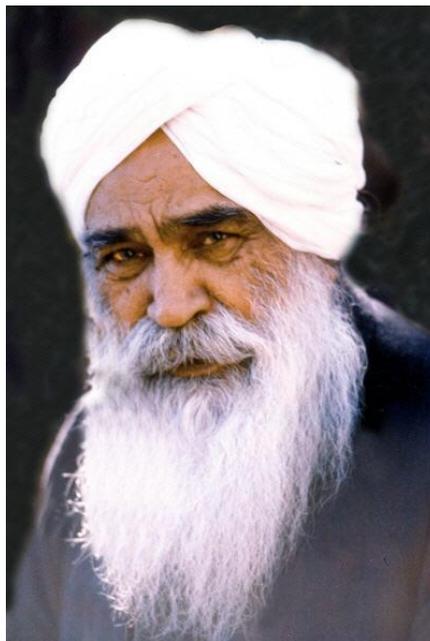
We cannot emphasize enough that the Sermon on the Mount - like the writings and sayings of all Masters - is not a set of rules but an attempt to show us what the demands of reality are. By living in conformity with those demands, we will be blessed or happy.



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.

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.



## Chapter 4: Blessed Are the Merciful, for They Will Receive Mercy.

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.



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, for They Will See God

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.

## Chapter 6: Blessed Are the Peacemakers, for They Will Be Called Children of God.

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.

## Chapter 7: Blessed Are the Persecuted

... 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.



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.



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

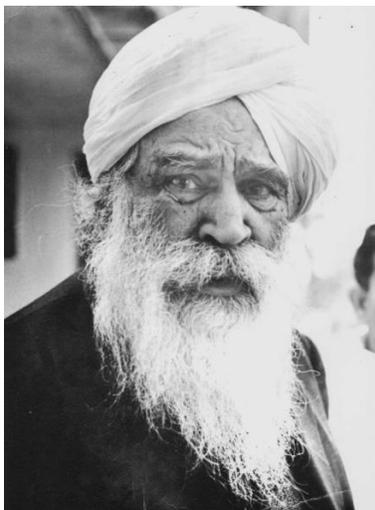
Most of us have come to realize that "From those to whom much is given, much is expected." When we are initiated and connected with that which is the essence of the Master, namely the Word (Naam or Shabd), He allows us to participate in that. The Master is Word made flesh and when we are given the privilege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



## Chapter 9: The Eternal Torah

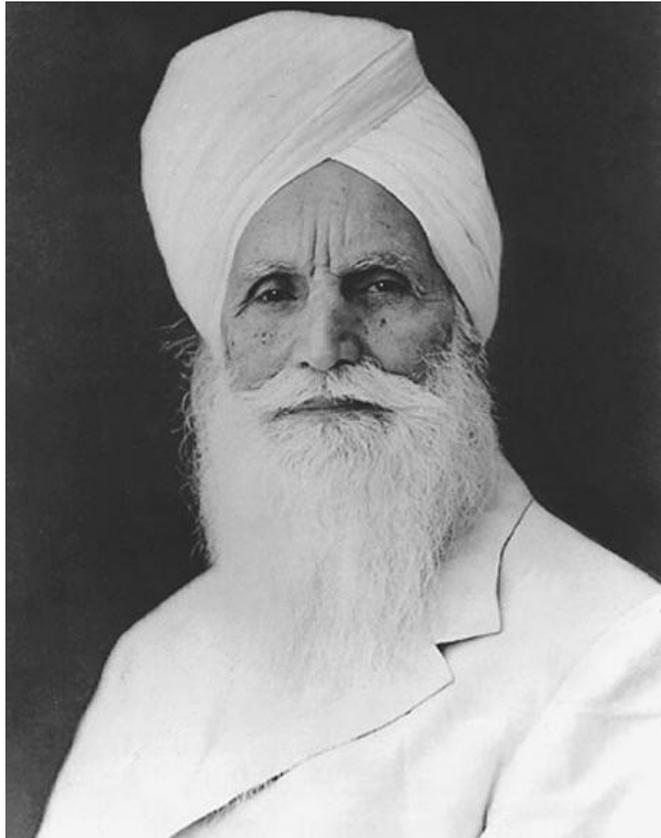
Baba Sawan Singh used to tell a story about an initiate of Baba Jaimal Singh (his Master) who was seen by a fellow initiate riding in a carriage drinking and in the company of a prostitute; the brother was horrified and rebuked him, saying, "You are the initiate of such a great Master, and you are acting 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.



Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj

## Chapter 10: The Fire of Anger

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."*

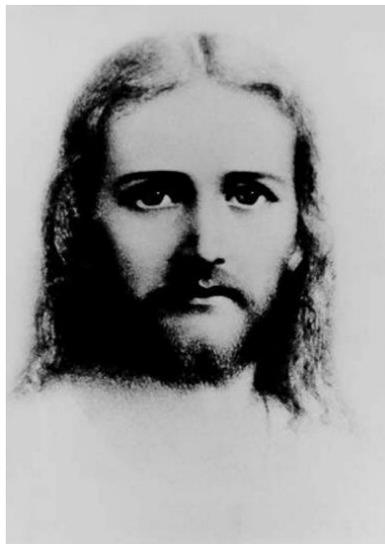
We become angry because they prevent us from having what we want. This is the other side of the coin from seeing people as objects of desire. There is really no difference psychologically. In either case we are denying their humanity. If we want them sexually or for financial reasons, if we want to exploit 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."



...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

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.



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 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.



...the reason why chastity is part of the teachings of all Masters 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 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."



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.

## Chapter 12: On Marriage and Divorce

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.



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 non-exploitative 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.



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.



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.



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.



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."

## Chapter 13: Truthfulness

Baba Jaimal Singh wrote many letters...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.

## Chapter 14: The Reality of Non-Violence

... 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.



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.



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 anymore, 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 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.

## Chapter 15: Rewards and Rewards

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.

If we fall into the trap...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...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

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...



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.



## Chapter 17: The Essence of Religion

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 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.



...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 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.

## Chapter 18: Who Made Me a Divider?

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.



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.

## Chapter 19: The Treasure of the Inner Light

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.



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.



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.



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..."*

## Chapter 20: Why Worry?

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 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.



## Chapter 21: Judged By Our Own Judgment

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.



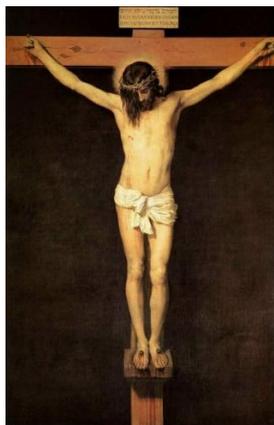
This teaching is of the utmost importance. Yet somehow or other, because of the way we're made, because of our inability to recognize our own faults, because we're afraid not to judge and criticize others, we tend to deny that this teaching is really important.

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.



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

*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)*

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 something, 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?"

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...



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."



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:

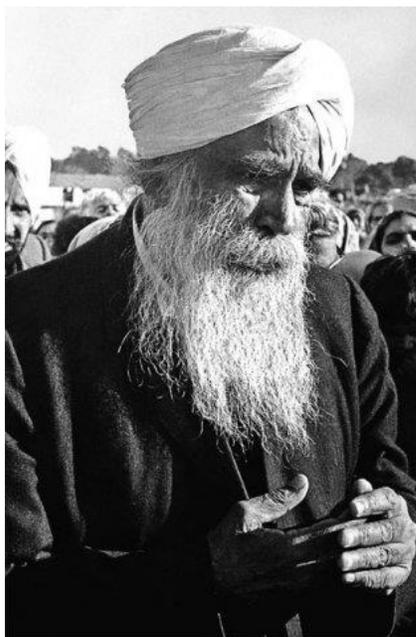
*"Anger is a deadly sin," he said, "you ought never to let it carry you away...As for those mean-minded people who talked against me, they weren't worth getting into a quarrel with - you could waste your whole life in such quarreling...See what a great crime you were about to commit, under the influence 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.



## Chapter 23: Search, and You Will Find

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)



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 times. 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.

## Chapter 24: The Golden Rule

*In everything do to others as you would have them do to you;  
for this is the law and the prophets.*

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 11, 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."*



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 reprovcs 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.

## Chapter 25: False Prophets

...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.)



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 gurmukh at times and a manmukh at other times. It's very difficult to be perfect, and the gurmukh 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.

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.

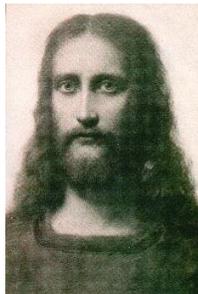
So the Master is One Who has entered through the narrow gate, and in obedience and conformity with the law of His essence He does not relate to other people through power, nor will His true followers do so insofar as they are really following His teachings. They will relate to their loved ones, their parents, their partners, their children, and everyone around them with love. Power is taken away and replaced by love.

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.



## Chapter 26: The Will of the Father: 1

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.



It is 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.



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 [followers of the mind]. 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. 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.



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.



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.



...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.

## Chapter 27: The Will of the Father: 2

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 cliches, 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.



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 something 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.

## Chapter 28: The Messiah?

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.



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 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.

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.



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.



Portrait of Christ by Rembrandt

## 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 Negative 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.



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. Surrender to His grace is, by definition, total joy.



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."



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.



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.

...Many years ago Master Kirpal wrote something we've often heard at Satsang:

*"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.



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.”*



Salvador Dali

May your soul be happy;  
journey joyfully.  
(Rumi)

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