

SPIRIT OF THE SIKH

PART I

PURAN SINGH



PUBLICATION BUREAU
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

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(MEDITATIONS ON RELIGION AND THE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE)

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SPIRIT OF THE SIKH (PART I)
by
PURAN SINGH

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INTRODUCTORY

(*First Edition*)

Spirit of the Sikh, written between 1927 and 1930, is perhaps the last work of Professor Puran Singh, unless what according to the statement of his son, the late Raminder Singh, he scribbled on his bedside charts while lying sick, be taken into account. He caught the fatal disease of tuberculosis during the last years of the decade of the twenties; and this assuming the 'galloping' character, he passed away in March, 1931. Puran Singh's whole life was passed in writing activity that may be called 'feverish' without the implication of a mere metaphor. A vast mass of work poured out from his pen—on the science of biochemistry in which he held a professorship at the Imperial Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun; English belles-letters expressive of fervent devotion to the holy Gurus of Sikhism and their teaching, and of warm humanitarianism. In addition, towards the last decade of his life cut short so cruelly, he poured out those writings in Punjabi, prose and poetry, that have acquired the status of classics in the language.

The total mass of what he wrote is truly astounding and it might be said that his entire working life was devoted to writing, while no doubt in his sleeping hours his mind must have lived with his themes in dream. There is about his writings a dreamy, other-worldly quality, a strong urge to escape from the bases of the mundane reality of profit and loss and the machiavelian diplomacy of self-aggrandisement. All which makes them 'romantic' in the basic and primary sense of what is opposed to everyday reality. His fevour and passion carry the reader along on a powerful wave, so that irresistibly he is made to touch certain heights and depths of experience that leave the heart and the imagination bathed in fervent passion. Passion is his element and in that he abides. A kind of

intellectual inebriation habitually grips him, and it is under the heady influence of that he wields the pen.

To make a brief mention of the English writings of Puran Singh, of which the present book would form part— some of these were published in Great Britain half a century ago, and became justly famous, particularly among the readers attuned to absorbing the devotional literature pertaining to the teachings of Sikhism and of the characteristic immanentist-vedantist vision that has been one of the great contributions of India to world culture. Puran Singh was temperamentally a mystic : for several years he remained sannyasi, was close to Swami Rama Tiratha, on whom he wrote a book which still is indispensable on this theme and later came under the spell of the mystical Bhakti of Sikhism, to which he returned after the alienation of several years. The discovery by Puran Singh's soul of what may be called the 'romance' of religion has been a fortunate accident both for the literature of religious experience associated with Sikhism and for the Indian movement of romanticism in Punjabi letters. Puran Singh poured out in both these traditions, writing that is rich and powerful, and should find him a place in the galaxy of those who have given expression to the devotional urge and passion of our people in the Indian languages and in English. Puran Singh's English work that has already been published (part of it reissued) includes *The Book of the Ten Masters*, *Sisters of the Spinning Wheel*, *The Spirit Born People*, *The Spirit of Oriental Poetry*, *Seven Baskets of Prose Poems*, and *Swami Rama*—this last being the story of the famous Yogi, Rama Tiratha, who too like Puran Singh came from the Punjab.

Besides what has seen the light of the day, some work of greater magnitude and most likely of a maturer and more comprehensive level of experience still remains unpublished. Of this unpublished work the two most considerable are *Spirit of the Sikh*, that is of the nature of a voluminous series of moments of spiritual vision growing out of the teachings of Guru Nanak and his holy successors, and *Prakasina*, a novel, which as the author says in the sub-title, is the story of a Buddhist Princess. Both these came in manuscript form to the Punjabi University, which has a project of salvaging whatever

of the creative effort of the genius of the Punjab falls within the scope of its several Departments established towards this end.

II

Spirit of the Sikh is found preserved in typescript in three substantial volumes, slightly mutilated here and there, because of the vicissitudes of being preserved for half a century, but nevertheless intact more or less. The typescript has in numerous places been retouched and the expression improved in the author's own handwriting, which should make these bound volumes valuable archives-material, pertaining to the culture and letters of the Punjab. The present work is, through continuous and related portions built on a particular somewhat fanciful out of the longer mass. It appears that back in 1930, when laid down with his sickness that proved fatal. The author made approach to a well-known publishing firm of Lahore for its publication. But the publication could not be arranged at the time. In consequence, this portion along with the larger work, has remained unpublished for near upon half a century.

Spirit of the Sikh, as its title would indicate, is the author's expression of devotional passion arising out of the teachings of the holy Gurus, the religious history of Sikhism and his understanding of the ideals underlying the practice of the Sikh faith. In adumbrating his theme, the author, besides lyrical effusions expressive of fervour and devotional passion, makes continual resort to the Sikh sacred writings (Gurubani), the lives of the holy Gurus and the entire lore of Sikh piety in its history and what may be called its hagiology. All this matter pours forth from the writer's pen in a flood of vehement passion, somewhat in the style of Carlyle's exhortations, by whom Puran Singh appears in no small degree to be influenced. The characteristic Carlylean effects such as constant exhortation in a raised tone, the use of capitals wherever a striking term expressive of spiritual experience occurs and the general mystical tone, are ubiquitous in Puran Singh's writings. In the course of editing the present work for publication, some of this fervour and passion has had to directed along lines of greater stylistic discipline in the sheer interest of acceptability of what otherwise would be beyond the 'average reader's capacity to absorb Carlyle's famous work, *Heroes*

and Hero-Worship was issued in a Punjabi rendering by Puran Singh under the title *Kaladhari te Kaladhari Puja*. This rendering is soulful and truly enters into the spirit of the original work. It may further be pointed out that the doctrine of the 'Great Person' as the source of powerful movements in human history is firmly held by Puran Singh like his great Victorian mentor, and flashes of this belief may be met with constantly in his writings. Besides Carlyle, the other great western writers who have influenced Puran Singh are Goethe and Walt Whitman. Of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* also he has left a Punjabi rendering, and his own style in Punjabi poetry is free verse of the Whitmantan pattern.

III

As the theme of *Spirit of Sikh* is the expression of fervent devotion to the holy Gurus in lyrical outbursts in prose charged with deep emotion, it time and again becomes fragments of prose poems. This devotional fervour takes in its grasp reflections of Gurubani (the sacred texts from the Granth Sahib) and anecdotes from the spiritual experience of men of God—those held to occupy exalted spiritual status along with the simple devoted souls. While 'Sikh', rendered properly as 'Disciple' by the writer, does overwhelmingly imply those professing to be the followers of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, the term is given also the wider, universal connotation of comprehending all those who have been favoured with the experiences of direct communion with the Highest, whatever the formal creed they might have professed. Particularly significant in this context is mention of experience of certain Christian mystics and quoted texts from the New Testament. Religious experience thus oversteps the confines of the creeds and becomes in the widest sense *Gian (jnan)* that oversteps credal or national boundaries. The objects of homage and devotion nevertheless are the holy Gurus of the Sikh faith, through whose word Puran Singh found the experience of the Life Divine. Among those whose experience and witness to God are recounted, the Sikh devotees, named and those nameless predominate.

To the believing Sikh, seeking Divine grace in the form of devotion to the Gurus' teaching, the following pages hold something

akin to the texts redolent of Bhakti and the higher levels of God-consciousness. Withal they emphasize that synthesis of devotion with the life of religion lived in beneficent action, in the *Seva* (service) commended in the teaching of the Gurus, that constitutes part of the larger appeal of Sikhism. To study it therefore, is like the rest of the work of Puran Singh, to expose oneself to the religious experience in the form of its deeper appeal, wherein the heart is left converted in an overwhelming flood of emotion and tears of the joy of communion with God.

A word about the technique of presentation of experience in this book. This is done through the reflections and meditations of certain individual mystics drawn from the various traditions who in the writer's fancy accord with spirit which the writer holds to be the essence of the experience of devotional Sikhism. This company is truly cosmopolitan, just as the world of reference of each individual mystic is. In this process historical time is telescoped and past and present are merged in a kaleidoscopic marvellous amalgam. That, however, is only in keeping with the writer's general approach to reality, which is timeless and not confined within the categories of what is ordinarily known as realism.

The sub-title in referring those experiences are recorded, calls these 'Appreciation by Invisible Friends'. Among the mystics providing guidance to the Sikh on the path of devotion are those acknowledged such, like Namdev, Shah Behlol who sat at the feet of Guru Nanak in Baghdad and Bharthari Hari, besides a host of others with deep spiritual experience such as Goethe. Then there are aery personages—The Akali, the Five Horsemen, the Himalayan Maiden, Songsters of the Mid-air (*Gandharvas*), the Swordsman that goes before the Sun. The Sisters of Song Gathered on the River Ravi and several others. Of the same poetic strain are the Pearl-Sowers of the Sky and the Blue-Churners of the sea. There is Ganika the 'bad' woman of Indian mythology, sister to the 'women who erred' in the New Testament story on whom nevertheless grace-descended for her repentance. Puran Singh's presentation of her supplication is noble and recalls besides Christian charity, the Buddhist compassion of the Bhikku who visited the courtesan when

she was lying ill and deformed with sores. A beautiful supplication recalling the rhythm and appeal of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* is included. Also included in this company is the mystic poet of seventeenth century Punjab, Shah Hussain. This may surprise those who are aware of the antinomian attitude of this mendicant-mystic. Still more surprising would be the inclusion of Omar Khayyam, in his poetic experience a pessimist-hedonist, and Heer, the heroine of the famous romance of the Punjab. The only formula that would comprehend all these diverse personalities and appropriate them to the experience and practice of the Sikh faith is the writer's belief that it is in the yearning heart that the true essence of religion lies and not in learning and ratiocination. Repudiated equally are puritanism and formalism. In all this not every believer may agree to find the true elements of his creed, but the overwhelming fervour of devotion which is the predominant theme would seem to reconcile paradoxes and anomalous juxtapositions.

Puran Singh wrote always at the white heat of the creative fever, which usually became inspiration and resulted in spurts of writing which rises to greatness. But with him usually the first formulations stayed, and seldom was there much scope for close revision and that achievement of a perfectly expressive form that meets us in the greatest writers in world literature. So, the resultant quality of what was written by Puran Singh depended on the range, grasp and quality of the first impulse or inspiration under which he wrote. The result of that has been writing which is essentially unequal and the existence of passages that should have been subjected by the author to revision. That being not possible, the labour of the present Editor had to be somewhat more painstaking and in places not a little painful. The problem was to present to the world the experience of a writer of undoubted genius on such a noble and sensitive theme as the devotional essence of Sikhism. That threw a great responsibility on whoever was to prepare it for public presentation. That is wherein the Editor is to make a plea to be understood in his labours. While writing out *Spirit of the Sikh*, Puran Singh's mind was subject not only to his usual impatience of delay and the labour of revision which to him must have appeared

uninspired work, but also the onset of his fatal disease which must have kept him restless. And yet despite these handicaps what has herein been achieved is work of an irresistible appeal.

The reader will be able to analyse for himself the various directions from which spiritual experience poured in to shape Puran Singh's total view of devotional and humane religion. Besides Sikhism and Vedanta, there are two major influences—Christianity and Buddhism. The grace and compassion inhering in the teaching of these faiths are echoed constantly in his writing.

A word about the renderings from Gurubani frequently occurring in the course of this writing. To identify these and relate them to their proper context in the Granth Sahib (called Guru Grantha by Puran Singh) is made difficult by the renderings being very wide of the literal parallels, and being in fact what are called 'transcreations' in a very free sense. It should have been observed by those who have made some study of Gurubani that similar affirmations are found in different places in it with no very wide verbal variations. Where the excerpt quoted is only a couplet or a line, such identification becomes extremely difficult. Where, however, the passage cited is of some continuous length, the process is rendered easier. This difficulty has to be pointed out to the reader, so that a kind of running spirit of collaboration between the Editor of these writings and the reader may be established.

In order properly to enter into the spirit of these writings, the reader will be well advised to familiarize himself with the spiritual history of the Sikh people. Certain names and allusions that occur are elucidated briefly in the footnotes. The names of the holy founders of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh should be familiar to most readers. So should the names and allusions associated with Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. Besides, a knowledge of the general cultural background of the Punjab, so deeply loved by Puran Singh and woven into his creative experience would be an essential pre-requisite for a better understanding. Punjab is moreover, the home and the holy land of the Sikh people, whose spiritual experience forms the main theme of these writings.

The Editor must acknowledge with gratitude the encouragement received from the authorities of the Punjabi University, Patiala, which has formulated large and comprehensive plans carrying on research in the cultural roots of the Punjabi people. It is to be hoped that the publication of the present book will not only add an important new dimension of awareness about the total literary achievement of Puran Singh, but will be of absorbing interest to students of the higher aspects of religion and of the Sikh faith whose study has only recently caught on in the academic sphere.

Patiala
1st July, 1976

GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY	(v)
1. THE KINSHIP OF AGES	1
2. THE SIKH	6
3. THE SONG OF THE SIKH	10
4. THE SIKH SYMBOLISM	12
5. HIS DISCIPLES	15
6. THE DISCIPLE-SPIRIT	20
7. ALCHEMY OF THE PERSONALITY	30
8. HEART LIGHTING HEART	39
9. THE GREAT LOVE	42
10. THE UNSEEN REALMS	53
11. RENUNCIATION	65
12. I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO DO GOOD	68
13. THE KHALSA OF GURU GOBIND SINGH	72
14. THE SONG OF THE AKALI	79
15. THE FEAST OF FLESH AND BLOOD	83
16. OUT OF THE SWORD—STIRRED WATERS	86
17. THE ARROW OF THE MASTER	91
18. THE BIOGRAPHY OF A SIKH	96
19. SECRET FRIEND	100
20. HE IS GURU GOBIND, REDEEMER	106
21. AN AFTERNOON WITH THE SELF	107

THE KINSHIP OF AGES

by

BHAKTA NAMDEO¹

THE WHITE DOVE

In all ages, the life of the Spirit descends on man as Heaven's great favour. It is truly the alighting of the 'Holy Ghost' on one's shoulder as a little White Dove. Initiation into Discipleship, or *Sikkhi* as we in the Punjab call it, is *Inspiration*. It is the intimate and perennial and companionship of the immortals, "the powerful Ones of the Unseen Realms"² as Guru Nanak refers to them in *Japuji*.

OUR PROTECTORS

In the rapture of the soul, one sees the visions of the Beautiful ones—angels and gods—of the sublimated moral and spiritual world of souls. And there are the great Emancipated Ones who protect the Initiated from all harm on the path of divine love—bright and swift of action like the keen edge of a sword.

INSPIRATION OF DIVINE LIFE

This inspiration is not limited to any chosen race or colour or caste; it is flowing invisibly on all the white threads of life that bind it back to its sources. It is like the sea flowing and filling all the creeks. At times, even the dumb animals rise to the highest pitch of pure divinity in their feelings and the power of God is inherent in all sentient beings, just as the sea is inherent in every wave. Aye, the prayer, the unuttered wordless prayer even of a mother-doe is heard

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1. Such authorship notes are not meant to be taken factually. These are intended rather to emphasize the spiritual vision associated with different personalities. Namdeo or Namdev was the great Maharashtrian saint whose hymns have found a place in the Holy Granth, Scripture of the Sikh faith.
 2. *Japuji*, xvi—Panch parwan, panch pardhan.

by Subuktigin³ of Ghazni gets a throne for the simple act of pleasing the heart of God that also beats under the ribs of a mother-doe.

FEELING IS ALL IN ALL

In this great sympathy lies the secret of creation. When this is found, all is found; when this is known, all is known. All true culture lies in this culture of Self-Realization. Feeling is all in all, concludes Goethe.

The continuous glow of this feeling burning in one's bosom, is as the red charcoal glowing in the soft nest of ash. Religion is the priceless inheritance of man; with it, it is his greatest curse ! The Life-Self devoid of it, lyric glow is a mere process of combustion, and devoid of it, the long years of life are like the years of a snake, says Guru Arjan Dev (*Todi Mahalla, V. 2*).

KINSHIP THROUGH AGES

Bhai Gurudas⁴ great poet of spiritual experience traces in his "Odes to the Spirit of Discipleship"⁵ a continuous kinship that runs through the ages. The Disciples of all ages, he says, are bound in an indissoluble spiritual comradeship. He sings how Rani Tara leaving her bed by the side of her husband each night, used to go to the Guru's *Sat Sang* (Holy Communion) and her husband Harishchandra, knew not where his Rani went at night, leaving him asleep. Bhai Gurudas says he went to heaven and heard the word of the Guru. And following her, her husband too heard the word of the Guru.⁶ There is One word, and One Guru in all ages. "He was Guru Nanak then, it is Guru Nanak now and it shall be Guru Nanak hereafter." He sings of Discipleship as a great cosmic process of the moral sublimation of life itself, metaphysically speaking, of God Himself, starting from the smallest cold of clay to the highest Buddhahood, godhood. It is the Guru that makes God manifest. It is God come in person, come to us as man that starts the new life in us.

-
3. Father of Mahmud of Ghazni. The story of his releasing from the snare of the young are of a doe out of pity is well-known.
 4. The great poet and amanuensis of Guru Arjan, who made the first copy of the Holy Granth. His *Vars* (Odes) and short pieces (*Kabits and Swayyas*) contain authentic interpretation of Sikh teaching.
 5. *Lit.* Spirit of the Sikh (disciple).
 6. Bhai Gurdas—*Var X. 6*.

"The knowledge—*All is Brahman* is useless, worthless, without meeting Him," so preaches the great Churala of ancient India to her husband, *Yoga Vashishta*.⁷ And here Bhai Gurudas also proclaims that without meeting the Guru in person, there is no divine knowledge anywhere.

"Dhruva won it by intense love of Him.

He saw God,

God came and met him as the mother-cow meets her calf.

And made of him a star of heaven, round which the Sacred
Seven revolve in worship.

God as Person comes to the rescue of His own devotees.

They cast him in fire,

They threw him in water :

One burnt him not,

The other drowned him not;

The Guru-favoured Prahalad,

The Bhakta was unharmed.

Harinkashayapa took up the sword and asked Prahalad,

"Where is thy Guru, God ?"

Out of the red-hot pillar of iron came the friend of Prahalad,

And the evil one was destroyed."

(Based on *Var X, Cantos 1 & 2*)

* * * *

"Draupadi is about to be disgraced in the court of the Kuru
King.

They intend to strip her bare in open court.

She closes her eyes, calls for help to her God, Krishna, and
fixes her Dhayanam on Him,

Krishna saves her honour, and appears before her in vision;

And she bends her head before him bashfully

And says—"Yes, you saved me, my God."

From beginnings of things such is the way if God;

He sides with those who have

No one to side with them."

(*Var X. 8*)

* * * *

7. This is a philosophical work of Indian mysticism in the form of a myth.

"Sudama goes to Dwarka to meet Krishna,
 doubting if ever a king would receive
 a poor man like him :
 Seeing the poor old friend of his boyhood,
 Krishna leaves his high seat on the throne :
 Aye ! God Himself comes out to receive his devoted
 through poor Bhakta !
 Krishna goes round Sudama as if round a sacred temple of
 God,
 And then touches his rugged feet and embraces him;
 He washes his feet,
 And gives him his own Throne for a seat."

(Var X. 9)

* * * *

Jayadev is lost in love, and forgets to write his *Gita Govinda*,
 God Himself comes and writes what he could not express.
 "Namadev offers Him the spotted cow's milk
 And insists that his God should come and drink,
 And God came and partook of his devotee's offering;
 The beautiful umbrella of honour was spread over the head of
 Nama,
 And great was his glory of love !"

(Var X. 10)

"Ramanand is on his way to Ganga for his early morning bath,
 And a Mussalman weaver lies dead with thirst for God on the
 way.
 His foot touches Kabir, and Ramanand says
 "Rise ! Utter Rama"
 And thus was Kabir inspired.

(Var X. 14)

"Ajamal, a sinner, a reveller in sense-pleasures, who turned
 his back on God and man,
 After a whole life of transient pleasures and selfishness, seeks
 the Guru.
 The Guru enunciates to him the Word that clears up his doubts
 and he rises up chastened, feeling divine.

Thus does He save a sinner."

(Var X. 20)

* * * *

[The above are free renderings from the *Vars* (Odes)
of Bhai Gurudas.]

The Nam, meditating on whom the Ganika swam the Sea of
Illusion

That Nam, that is my support."

(Guru Tegh Bahadur in the measure Maru)

* * * *

I gather here a few personal chants to this Spirit of Inspiration in its newest and freshest manifestation in Sikh history and the life both of the individual and the community as dreamt and actually created in the Punjab by the holy Gurus. I believe that Discipleship—*Sikkhi*—is inspiration of Divine knowledge through the culture of the feeling for beauty, and through its manifestations in human art and labour. It is more a subjective state of the mind than an outward action or ritual. Those who do not slowly and resolutely imbibe the deep culture of Self-Realization and do not cultivate the feeling of oneness with God and His Humanity, are blind of heart, and withered and palsied of soul. Guru Arjan Dev says :

"If one has plenty of delectable foods, delightful things to drink,
And all manner of pleasures—
His whole life is like a deadcorpse decorated."

(Gauri)

* * * *

When the Wealth of the Peace of His Love is found ,
All other wealth of land and elephants
And hawks and gems and jewels are as dust."

(Gosain Tulsidas⁸)

* * * *

"Blessed, blessed is the very *Chandala* (pariah)
Whose poor heart is the Temple of Gopala.....(God)

(Guru Granth⁹)

8. The famous author of Ramayana in Avadhi Hindi, which is held as a sacred book by millions.

9. *Adi Granth*, the Sikh Scripture is worshipped as Guru Granth.

THE SIKH

by
MOHAMMAD SHAFI¹

WORSHIPPER OF THE BEAUTIFUL

To me the word Sikh conveys a deep spiritual meaning. It is the man in man—he who has longed for ages for the realization of his destiny and the knowledge of the Self, the Humanity that has worshipped God under many names and forms. At the dawn of time, it rang its heart-bell, and at the great dusk it shall light its taper of mind at His altar, still to worship and to adore the Life-giver.

HIS SAINTS

This word is used here with particular reference to men who are reborn of the Spirit of the Guru now, or were once "*twiceborn*"² in the near past in the Punjab—men of cosmic consciousness—angels, Gods whose bodies are mere vehicles of the Spirit, presences singing "*Glory! Glory!*" and flooding both landscape and the face of man with the living image of their vision. Men of all races and ages and climes and colours, men of all religions, with their own religion, however, always distinct, and new extraordinary men with the revelation of heaven on their own brows!

"The morning breaks,
The birds sing;
His saints glow in various, wonderous colours!"

—*Guru Granth, Gauri-ki-Var (V. 6)*

THE WORD BURNS LIKE STARS, DAY AND NIGHT IN THEIR EYES
Guru Gobind Singh creates his Nam-dyed commune of Saints—

-
1. This is a typical Muslim name, and represents the reaction of his class to the teaching of the Gurus.
 2. Reference to the Hindu nation of the twice-born. Here the meaning is spiritual rebirth.

The Khalsa—the Brotherhood exalted in their noble humanity. The absolute purity of his ideal of Man is measured by the failure of men to be what He wishes them to be. And yet, unknown men are to Man the Disciple, to the Sikh, like broken crystals, with edges gone, angles deranged, and sides lopped off, but crystals yet. There in the Sikh is the Man in all men ! She worshipper, waits at the shrine of heavenly beauty !

Guru Gobind Singh's chant of the perfect Man is glorious; it is intense, life-giving. His word is charmed; association with its feeling puts one in touch with the invisible sources of life. The hymns of Guru Granth sink deep into the soul of man and the Word burns, like stars, day and night in the eyes of the Guru's disciples.

* * * *

The awe-inspiring scenes of the "Akalis"³ in their present somewhat confused struggle, however, misled and misguided from certain points of view—courting death like moths, the Sikh women coming and garlanding their husbands before the Akal Takht to go and bare their breasts to bullets if need be, in the name of the Guru; mothers and fathers putting with their own hands the flaming crown of martyrdom on their young sons' heads and praying that the Guru may grant them the honour of death in His Name; people laying themselves down on railroads before the rushing railway engines, carrying a trainful of their brethren as prisoners; as a appeal for stopping the train to let them who are out of prison to feast those who are going in; thousands dressed in yellow and black, vying with each other to be the first to form the groups of five hundred or a thousand martyrs that are sent to face prison, torture and even death in the name of the Guru; and the universal diffusion of this one feeling of service and sacrifice throughout the Sikh masses—these make one wonder if one is living in an age of rank materialism as the present one, or in the age when under the direct inspiration of the Tenth Guru the Sikhs were taking vows of absolute self-surrender to the Ideals of the Khalsa.

3. Reference to the "Akali movement" of the Punjab in which the Sikhs have been demanding the control of all their religious places to be in their own hands.

(Editor's note)

Here is a new race created by the Guru with the spirit of fire and iron and death, which makes them immortal even in death. Every page of Sikh history burns with a hundred star-like names; one name is enough to thrill a whole life in us with the noblest spirit of heroism. The names of Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh, his Four Sons, the five Beloved Disciples, and of the Sikh martyrs and devotees, the heroes of war and peace, provide the Sikh with an in-exhaustible and intense past which few races in history can provide in its life-giving, death defying powers of inspiration to serve the Master and his ideals !

The other day, an Akali of the old type who came of the Hindus of Bihar, showed how the Sikh tradition could inspire life and change the outlook of man. He wore a *chakra* (sharpedged disc) on his head, a *Kirpan* and a quiver on his waist and held a battle-axe in his hand. He walked as if the whole earth was his. He had the proud gait of a veritable conqueror. One could see that this one man had the presence of a thousand. There was the Guru's steel in his veins and a thunder in his voice. If one of us read the song of the Tenth Guru without that iron in his accents, he would tell us :

"This chant is not for the weak and the timid. It is the Bowman's Bow; everyone cannot string it up and shoot arrows about. In the Guru's Words, there is a holy war, the axes strike, the swords clash, the arrows fly, destroying the ghosts of darkness."

These words of his give a new glimpse of the fire of life that tingled in his blood, a new tradition that occupied his mind. He was quite different from those around him, the weak, superstitious, fear-consumed people who in their ritual observance had never known the spirit of heroism.

A philosopher told me, it so appears that the Sikh religion, in a generation or so, works right up to the bone of man.

The other day I saw a fine village boy in Bihar, young, rosy and strong. If left to his youth, I believe he would have been quite a self-intoxicated lad, fit for something great. As he passed me by, he said, "Jai Paryagji ki,"—"Victory to Paryag or Hail Paryag."⁴ It

4. Prayag, the sacred spot near Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, where the holy Ganga and Jamuna make confluence with the equally holy, though invisible, Sarasvati.

made me reflect, what inspiration could at all there be in these words for such a youth? If he were to be only a Knight-Errant, his lady-love would infuse more life into him than a mere dead remembrance in this listless way of the two rivers meeting at a place called Paryag. Comparatively, even in these days, a Sikh child is wholly inflammable like a heap of gunpowder, when touched by the names of his holy ancestors.

THE SONG OF THE SIKH

by

PREMA SINGH¹

A LONG-TRESSED CAMEL-DRIVER

Ah! Well, let my hair grow long;²
And long the chant of the Guru's Song,
And let my breath burn with His Nam,
And if I sing, I am the Brother of Man.
Silent craftsman that builds a Sikh out of clay,
Thy Disciple I love to be !
My clay is not yet shaped so well,
My ray has not yet its sway of love,
Yet I am brother of Man, a man,
A slave who merged in the Master,
A slave and the Master in the slave.
My body is His Temple and Mansion,
A poor mud-house, yet a temple and a kingdom;
Thy Disciple I love to be !
I cannot forget the knot He³ tied on my head;
It is sacred, it is his mark of remembrance.
The Master has bathed me in the light of suns not yet seen;
There is eternity bound in this tender fragile knot.
I touch the sky when I touch my hair, and a thousand stars
twinkle through the night.
Thy disciple I love to be !

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1. Like the rest of the *authors* named, this too is imaginary and symbolic.
 2. Kipling in his *Kim* says; "Let their hair grow long, and talk Punjabi.... that is all that makes a Sikh...." (Editor's note)
 3. Refers to Guru Gobind Singh, who enjoined upon all members of the Khalsa Brotherhood to wear long unshorn hair.

Under my simple, rustic appearance
 Beats my heart, warm to the whole human race,
 It quivers for all glows, hopes—
 It burns, it glows, it hopes
 This heart is vast to enfold all creation.
 It is the soul of creation's Mystery,
 The forests and rivers are images of me.
 And the very snowy peaks have my grey locks of age.
 Thy Disciple I love to be !
 Who says the hair is no more than grass ?
 The human bones but pieces of lime ?
 Yet a single hair is a dear remembrance, an heir-loom, a trust,
 a pledge, a love, a vow, an inspiration.
 My form is but a statue, a dumb gratitude for the knot of
 Friendship tied by those Kings of Eternity, the Gurus who
 came to the Punjab,
 The Saviours who were gracious to love me and made me a
 home in the Realm of Eternal Beauty.
 There yonder !
 I know I shall go there to them to those far-off mansions of the
 Kings of Love,
 And there new robes wait for me, and immortal love !
 Thy Disciple I love to be !

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THE SIKH SYMBOLISM

by

GLASUDDIN¹

When personal love for Jesus Christ ebbed away from Europe and mere Christian principles took hold of the minds of his disciples, the creative and true feeling of discipleship ended. And the long-flowing locks of Christ worn by a few devoted Saints, Jesus images, went out of fashion. The symbolism born of the fire of human feeling, be it a kiss, or a wound or a lock of hair, a ring, a tree, is an index of the intensity of life. The traditional form of Christ is the seal on His Word; both go together. Think one away, the other becomes lifeless. So is it with the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh.

WORSHIP OF THE WORD

After all it may be said, there is a good deal of symbolism with the Sikh. He has the Golden Temple, the Akal Takht, his worship of relics similar to the Buddhists, his worship of "The Book", his submission to the authority of his unique church, like that of the Vatican, and a hundred other symbols and traditions. True. And all this shows that there is a genuine religious feeling, for whenever there has been a genuine feeling, it clothes itself in similar forms. Symbolism is dead if the feeling is absent; and if feeling is there, it cannot live without creating its own clay. To think of a genuine religious feeling without its cherished symbolism is to think of a soul without a body : Dead symbolism, however, hugs the pictures of other peoples, loves, and as such is empty self-deception; it is the glorification of a corpse,² in the words of Guru Arjan Dev. But to pretend to rise above portrait-worship and above the affection of love letters from one's beloved, and above the worship of relics and

1. On supposed authorship, see note on the foregoing.

2. See p. 4 *ante*.

memories, and yet to claim at the same time to have a feeling burning within one's bosom is a peculiar freak of dead puritanism which is equally lifeless and vain.³

* * * *

It is our personal love for the Guru who has fascinated our soul with his life, his endeavour and love for us that gives to us the breath of life. Such dedication is our faith. There is deep solace for us repeating the Name. Our cherished sentiments and even superstitions, however crude and primitive seemingly from the viewpoint of shallow faithless rationalism or of a dry, academic metaphysics about God and Man, have all the same, an essential bearing on the fervent continuation of our life-giving traditions in the society and the individual. The sentiments and symbols of a living faith are the artistic forms of its highest poetry.

MY BOSOM THROBS

The other day a God-intoxicated Sikh went along muttering a prayer between his lips. I put my ear to his bosom and heard his heart-beat :

"I have come away now,
My bosom throbs.

The Guru has called me to the service of the Khalsa; I am offering my heart's blood, only a few drops they are, for mixing it with the cement with which one more marble slab is to be laid today on the floor of our Hari Mandir⁴

"Ah ! why do not my brothers accept my prayers ?

Why do they not bless me thus ?

"Ah ! why don't they accept it at once"

* * * *

BAPTISM OF FIRE

The baptism of fire and steel inaugurated by Guru Gobind Singh is the inspiration that remoulds man to a new faith and a new death in love. It is emancipation by the touch of the Adepts⁵ who

3. This insight should be carefully understood and its meaning sought for in one's experience.

4. The original name of the famous Golden Temple at Amristar.

5. These are the *Panj Pyare*, symbolized by five devoted Sikhs who administer *Amrita* or the Baptism of Immortality or of the Sword to the initiate.

have the Guru's authority to give the gift of personality. It is the miracle of man-making, angel-making by a divine touch.

"Come, let us not despair.

"We too go out and seek the Emancipated ones

"Those whom God has favoured with His Own gift of love.

"Perchance we may find them,

"And attain liberation from misery of Illusion of Duality.

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THE MASTER STANDS BY ME

I wished to hear again a word from those holiest of the holy lips of Guru Arjan Dev⁶ himself, as did once my forefathers in the Punjab. I panted for it. I thirsted for it. I cried like a child. I wished to see him, the sweetest minstrel of divine love who lived with us once, and spoke to us with a sweetness that no one has since been capable of bestowing on us. Would he meet me? Where is he gone? Where dwells he now?

Messengers robed in white flames came in and took me into a little bright, fragrant sweet retreat in my own house. There was the Treasure of his Songs.⁷ I fell down speechless at the feet of the Song, at the Feet of His Disciple,⁸ who had given me that Treasure and also the zest in my soul for its pure light and feet of the Master. The white-robed Messengers lifted me up and these angels made me sit by the Treasure of Song. I felt at that entranced, blessed time that I was sitting by the side of the Master himself. The angels sat in me and opened the Book of Songs and they read and I listened. I felt, Guru Arjan Dev came in response to me as He had blessed my ancestors of the Punjab. So is He still with me. I felt deeply comforted.

6. Fifth in Guru Nanak's line, singer of divine hymns and compiler of the Holy Granth. He was martyred in 1606.

7. Refers to the *Granth Sahib*, scripture of the Sikh faith.

8. The reference is likely to be to Bhai Gurudas.

HIS DISCIPLES

by

TOPAN MAL, DAYA RAM AND THEIR BRETHREN

A CARAVAN OF SINDHIS TO THE "CITY OF JOY"¹

They say, on an auspicious day, at an auspicious moment, a rain-drop falls from heaven and the mother of pearl floats on the sea's surface, waiting and thirsting for this sacred drop, and as it falls, she goes down with it to bottom where in death-like silence and repose, she dreams a pearl !

They say, the pearl is the creation of samadhi.²

"But" says Gurubani³ "The soul of man doth close after taking the seed of Naim from the Guru, and sink deep into silence, thenceforward moving as the winds may move him.

"Though over his head roll the thundering oceans, he lies love-immersed, all closed in joy of his faith, till the Word of God comes forth as the new form of the Disciple !

"This disciple is more than a pearl, more than a gem, more than all the scriptures old and new; he is the seed of life that creates life afresh.

He is the Disciple in whose soul God himself blossoms forth in his own perfect Beauty.

When I wish to see the Guru, I see the Master; and both look so wonderfully alike.

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1. Anandpur in the present-day Rupar (since named Rupnagar) district of the Punjab is the "City of Joy". Here Guru Gobind Singh resided for a number of years, and here it was that in 1699 he administered the baptism of *Amrit* and Created the order of the Khalsa.
 2. *Lit.* gathering up-the state of complete absorption in the Absolute.
 3. Gurubani (*lit.*: Guru's word) refers to the hymns that form the Guru Granth. The renderings given here are free renderings from various places in the holy Book, and reflect its spirit rather than literal translation. Parallels and near-parallels may be traced, but the poetic inspiration of the author has broken free of strict adhesion to the original.

"So strike fear in naught, nor are we afraid of aught." The Master has made us simple, strong, heroic and true. We sing the hymns of the Pure and learn to die bravely.

(*Guru Tegh Bahadur—Slokas*)

As the infant loves the mother's lap
so we love the Presence of God.

We do nothing for ourselves, our God does every thing for us.

* * * *

On wings of inspiration, we rise over all to the unknown heights
of pure thought.

* * * *

We go like birds tasting fruits swinging in the air from bough
to bough.

* * * *

Doing the Will of our Beloved is the highest fulfilment of our
life. What He wills our highest good.

The Guru's path is known as the path of birds. Each one must
cut his own fight in the trackless blue by his own wings.

* * * *

We do not know how to tell others what is our inmost exaltation.
On the road-side we sit, and all our life, we distribute our joy in red
earthen bowls.

Our holy Temple is the song of the Guru, and it never forsakes
us.

* * * *

Out of our Beloved's bow issues a singing shower of His gold-
tipped arrows, and yonder lie whole cities pierced with His light,
tasting for the first time, since their birth, the wounds of love.⁴

We are as old as new as the opening flowers of just this hour.
We have nothing to tell anybody, except only that the Master has
made us all so beautiful, and He has made us all infinite by His love.

He has given us the rapture of life by the touch of His feet, and
we know now, that there is no other way to obtain it.

4. Hereafter the short verse-pieces become wholly of the author's creation.

The good people living beyond the door of death come and meet us like the figures of the strange music of Heaven.

* * * *

We are in touch with many things which we do not know. Our life is a series of miracles and yet it is so simple

* * * *

All virtue is fragments of our love as stars are of light.

* * * *

Wisdom comes to us through His grace, spontaneously as speech comes to the infant.

We cannot express what we feel. All those who wish to know us must see our Beloved.

* * * *

Our religion is to labour and to love and to see our God everywhere and in everything. We live brimful of Him.

* * * *

Our life is in the *dhyanam* (the imaging of Him in our soul) of our Beloved. We die when of this deprived.

Are not whole races enslaved by others, by first ruining the *dhyanam* of the former ?

We are the alabaster vases in which the Master has, with His own Hand, planted the tender fibres of the light of soul and the fibres grow into trees of light. Their light by its glowing up and paling down produces pictures of the spiritual effects of man, things and events, which signal to us when we act right and when wrong. We are consistent only with the impression recorded by this light in our soul, and we are faithful only to the light of the Guru's Lamp burning within us.

* * * *

In this trackless sea of life, we follow the rays of light emanating from the Guru's word. Our God is seated on the lotus petals of our heart.

The gleams from the Guru's Lamp make us omniscient; by it we know what is right. No outside dictates are of any use to us; our ethics are of the harmony that flows from his lips.

* * * *

Our joy from the white blossoms of light in us, is the final guide of our ship. This joy comes not from what the world has to offer, but from within ourselves.

* * * *

What a magic light ! Sometimes, a rain of sparks falls on us from it, as it quivers and shakes like a living thing; and at another, when we are fast asleep, it rains honeyed dew on us. We live in its shade. We know its flesh-language from ancient times. We understand this love-signal which no one else can see.

* * * *

All is kind, even death. We know it all definitely now by the knowledge that comes to us from Him.

* * * *

We have been with this truth for ages, and yet it still has an endless wonder and surprise for us every moment. It assumes innumerable new shapes. The self-same vision carries in itself the myriad reflections of the soul.

* * * *

Sometimes I feel happy in the dust of a poor man's cottage; at other's I feel cursed by rich raiment. Dainty dishes have tasted to me bitter; but a dry crust and water tasted like amrita when offered in love.

* * * *

I condemn nothing, I renounce nothing. All comes so naturally and in its own time to me. Without eyes, have I more than those that have eyes.⁵

I NEED no renunciation as the Hindu saint urges on me. I believe in that renunciation which comes to me through the grace of my Guru, equally in the royal mansion and the straw hut. I believe in communion and contemplation, as he irresistibly draws me to Himself.

* * * *

5. This is perhaps subconscious memory of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, as the blinded Earl of Gloster reflects on the spiritual blindness of those that have eyes, yet see not.

I ENTER my soul's solitude as the long-maned pair of my green mares gallop in the air, and my chariot wheels fly in the sky.

* * * *

Let the heavenly winds carry me on their shoulders in all directions. Who can enshrine the Word in him who is not rich enough to have the Sun and Moon to dust his floor ?

* * * *

Braid in the star-pearls from Heaven in my tresses, and drape me fine, for I am the Lord's Bride.⁶

Just as a money-changer by running coins through his hands can part the counterfeit from the genuine, so does the whole range of things pass through me, only the Truth remains in my hands.

* * * *

We burn ourselves in His love and are made of the whole universe. For, our wick and oil when lighted as a flame, however tiny, are for God's temple-service. Our Master says it our best service is when we contemplate Him. To be beautiful is to be above the individual, the petty. Beauty is goodness too. Did the Master, Guru Nanak, sing of the beautiful tresses, lovely people and sweet breath of the Divine beloved ?⁷ He is our way and our destination.

6. The bride-image for the devotee is well-known in Indian devotional poetry.

7. *Wadhans Mahalla I, Chhants.*

THE DISCIPLE-SPIRIT

by

SAINT SHAH BEHLOL¹ OF IRAN*

I

A FLOWER IN THE DUST

I AM THE FLOWER PLUCKED BY HIM

You touched me, I trembled;
You called me, I came;
You raised me, I feared to lose your touch;
You laid me on your breast, I died with joy of it.
You dropped me, I fell;
My wings broke, my clothes torn;
The evening dust trampled me down.
But the scent of your touch abides.
And I still bear your perfume.

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I AM THE DEW ON THE GRASS WAITING FOR THEE

I am as the dew on the grass waiting for thee, my sun !
Turned am I into eyes, eyes, looking out for thee, my love !
My empty eyes are as tears, they thirst for thee, My bones
have melted, melted, love !
Without thee, I am tears, tears, tears
Come love ! from behind the skies,
And gather me in thy glistening arms,
I am as dew on the grass waiting for thee, my sun !

—Bhai Vir Singh²

(Translated from the Punjabi)

-
1. Shah Bahlol, a Sufi of Baghdad, is believed to have received spiritual guidance from Guru Nanak as he visited this famous centre of Islamic Culture.
 - * This too is imaginary author, as in the other pieces.
 2. Bhai Vir Singh, the author's mentor, the greatest man of letters in Punjabi of the modern times. He lived 1872-1957.

II

WINDS AND WAVES OBEY HIM

"But as they smiled, he fell asleep, and there came a storm of
 wind on the lake,
 And they were filled with water and they were in jeopardy,
 And they came to him and awoke him saying—"Master !
 Master ! We perish,
 Then he rose and rebuked the wind and raging of the water and
 they ceased and there was calm.
 And he said unto them—"Where is your faith ?
 And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another :
 What manner of man is this ! for he commandeth even the
 winds and waters and they obey him !"

* * * *

LOVE WASHES SINS

³And he turned to the woman and said to Simon,
 "Sees thou this woman ?
 "I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet,
 but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them
 with the hairs of her head.
 "Thou gavest me no kiss, but the woman since the time I came
 in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.
 "My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but the woman hath
 annointed my feet with ointment,
 "Wherefore I say unto thee...
 Her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved me much,
 but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little."

WORSHIP OF GOD IS THE BEST SERVICE

"When Jesus understood it, he said unto them,
 Why trouble ye the woman for she hath wrought a good work
 upon me.
 For ye have the poor always with you,
 But me ye have not always."

* * * *

3. In this section, the pieces move, of course, around the holy life of Jesus the Christ.

BEING GOD IS BEST SERVICE

"And Jesus answered and said unto her—Martha ! Martha !
 Thou art careful and troubled about many things,
 But one thing is needful and Mary hath chosen that good part,
 which shall not be taken away from her."

* * * *

FAITH IS BEST CONDUCT

"Consider the revens, for they neither sow nor reap; which
 neither have store-house nor barn; and God feedeth them;
 how much are ye better than fowls."

* * * *

"Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not;
 and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory not
 arrayed like one of these.

If God so clothes the grass which is today in the field and
 tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he
 clothe you, O ye of little faith,"

* * * *

III

Holding stars in the folds of his robe,
 And the orbs in his sleeves,
 Yonder cometh he, mother;⁴
 The dealer in gems !
 He has those red, live crystals,
 And unnoticed he goes !
 He sells the red, red gleams,
 He sleeps on bare earth, Mother !
 And his tresses are long and black.
 O! His self-incarnadine eyes !
 And unnoticed he goes,
 The Prince of Love, Mother !
 "On reading an Arabic Inscription in a Shrine Outside the town
 of Baghdad, dated 912 Hegira.⁵

4. As pointed out earlier, in Indian devotional poetry, the yearning spirit is imaged as the devoted female. The admired beloved in this piece is obviously Guru Nanak.

5. This is the year in which Guru Nanak is believed to have visited Baghdad. According to the Christian Era this should be 1507-8.

"Upon this simple slab of granite didst thou sit, discoursing of fraternal love and holy light, O Guru Nanak, Prince among India's holy sons.

"What song from the source of the Seven Waters thou didst sing to charm the soul of Iran !⁶

What peace from Himalaya's lonely caves and forests thou didst carry to the vine-groves and rose-gardens of Baghdad !

"What light from Badrinath's snowy peak thou didst bear to illumine the heart of Balol⁷, thy saintly Persian disciple.

"Eight fortnights Balol hearkened to thy words on Life and the Path and Spring Eternal, while the moon waxed and wanted in the pomegranate grove beside the grassy desert of the dead.

"And after thou hadst left him to return to thy beloved Bharata land, the fakir.⁸ it is said, would speak to none nor listen to the voice of man or angel;

His fame spread far and wide the Shah came to pay him homage—but the holy man would take no earthly treasures nor hear the praise of kings and courtiers.

Thus lived-lonely, devoted, thoughtful—for sixty winters, sitting before the stone where-on thy sacred feet had rested;

"And ere he left this House of Ignorance he wrote these words upon the stone : "Here spake the Hindu Guru Nanak to Fakir Balol, and for these sixty winters, since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Balol has rested on the Master's word—like a bee poised on a dawnlit honeyrose"

Ananda Acharya in "*Snow Birds*".

Silence seals the lips of the Disciple. He has found happiness in himself; nothing else matters. His life is consecration to the Beloved; unquestioning obedience to His Will, waiting for the best wisdom to ripen when it ripens. The Disciple's heart is a sharp that shivers with music of being, touched by His winds, His water. His Light, His Flowers, His Beauty in Creation and its variety of Colour.

6. On his return joining Guru Nanak travelled to India through Iran, Afghanistan and the Tribal areas to the North-West of India.

7. This is Behlol.

8. Behlol (Balol) is implied.

Day and night, the disciple suffers from the illness of love, aching for what it knows not.

Pain has lost for him its anguish and pleasure its excitement; calm like Bodhisattva but excited like a new blownflower swimming in the light-floods of the dawn.

Humanity is in giving away, and the disciple is he who gives himself away.

Life is identified with distribution and death with conservation. The disciple recks not, so abundant is the gift of the *Giver-genius* to him. He distributes His ripened life and love and labour unconditionally to man, bird and beast. He is the symbol of God. He represents God and so must be God like, feeding all, giving light to all, sustaining life, illumining the breath of man with the inspiration of Nam.⁹

There are natural emanations of goodness, forgiveness and freedom from the masks of worldliness. The Disciple's presence is enough revelation of the moral Beauty of the Universe. Truly humane, he is the best of men, His religion is that of the sun, the rivers, the snows, blessing all by his very sight. His creed is Love—not that egoist desire that comforts itself in the luxury of thrones, basks in the sheen of jewels and feels well in deriving pleasure from certain objects and conditions. It is that mighty awe-inspiring earnestness of soul that relieves its "achings for the Beloved " in feeling the sharp edges of the Sword and the dagger and finds a cure for its pain in being blown up to piece before the muzzless of guns directed to destroy his faith and uproot his fraternity. Bullets of lead cool his heart if it be for the sake of the Master. It is love that seeks its fulfilment in death, dissolution, and ruin if need be. He who loses his life gains it. Love that is the insane passion in its idealism; for it there is peace in kissing the poison touched by lips of the Beloved and for it, it is agony "to breathe without Him." Misery is where He is not. Without Love, life is a dreary emptiness.

The Disciple is soul-strung, vision, vibrated. He sees what no one else sees. In history he is those few who are misunderstood for

9. Nam. *Lit. Name*, is the mystic term in Indian religious thought, symbolizing the Divine Essence in manifestation.

their celestial inspiration, their flowing goodness, their crystalline purity, their fearless humanity. But martyrdom, however silent or passive, is the life-blood of races and nations. Man would die if there were no sky and stars, and he would die sooner if there were no men imbued with goodness and holiness, that is *Dharma*. "God-men," the true Disciples¹⁰ are equally distributed in different races, clans and ages of human history.

The Disciple is of the chosen of God. God is at His back, and his fearlessness and recklessness is always balanced well in his vision of Everlasting Truth. The mighty rulers are mere toys of Time but Time itself halts and kisses the feet of the Disciples. Their spirit triumphs over the savage nature of man and beast and makes it sweet. The disciple is mother-spirit in the animal, the flower spirit in the vegetable, the human-spirit in Man. The disciple's race as proclaimed by the Buddha is the race of gods. "O King" replied the Buddha, "thy descent is in the succession of the kings, but mine in the succession of the Buddhas." No nation, no sect can claim exclusively the Disciple—for they are the gifts of Heaven to Earth and are scattered all over like jewels in the dust, like stars in universal darkness. They are the wayside shelters that afford protection to the traveller at night. They are as trees which lend their branches for nest-making to the birds, holes to creatures of the earth, shades to the sun-beaten travellers, and which themselves sing with their myriad leaf-clapping the songs that the winds pour into their souls.

True Discipleship, as Bhai Vir Singh put it so pithily is :

1. *Kirat karni*
2. *Nam japna*
3. *Vand chhakna*

KIRAT KARNI

To toil for one's bread, for goodness, for love for man, for God in the spirit of devotion—this is *Kirat* or work inspired by the spirit of holiness. Feeling Him in us, about us, to keep our hands, and limbs and mind employed fixedly in labouring for the good, in gathering bread for hungry mouths, providing solace to the sick,

10. *Disciple* is the English equivalent of *Sikh*. The true Sikh or Disciple is the man in whom human nature takes the ideal form.

clothing the naked, and making the burden of suffering light for humanity by completely losing our individual selfishness—such is *Kirat Karni*.

NAM JAPNA

Being good or the attainment of simple and pure goodness if for man as spontaneous as for birds to fly. To be of God and of His love, being capable of active divinity in inspirational touch with the inviable Divine Spirit, is *Nam Japna*—repeating His Name. Mere repetition may be death, though repetition is also life. *Simrin*¹¹ or Remembrance is Love in action. And His Name is He Himself. The Word is God. With the Word on our tongue, God is in our voice. With the Word in our soul, God is in our soul. We may thus find the Infinite in Man and Man in the Infinite.

There is no union anywhere but in God. And God is inaccessible, unknowable, forever unknown, a stranger, an alien, unless the Disciple has got Him in his Love embrace as the Word as the Lyrical Words ringing in his soul. All poetry and scriptures of man are shadows of this sublime state of inspiration of man by the "Holy Ghost," the Word of God. Without this 'Holy Ghost' coming and filling us, there can be no sprouting of the life of the spirit in man. It is inspiration from the Invisible World of the Saviours of Man.¹²

Simrin of some kind no one can escape. If it is not the face of God that one recalls and remembers; it will be the face of woman, of man, a friend, an object, some desire, ambition, even lust, and greed that man shall have to remember and repeat to himself. If not God, the spirits of evil shall fill him. If not the "Holy Ghost", then some ghosts of darkness shall "possess" him.

So *Simrin* of God, of the Guru is the highest state of love. *Simrin* is in the heart-beats of the mother-tiger, the mother-doe, the mother-sparrow and the mother of man. *Simrin* is the law of love. It is the holy manifestation of God in the matrix of matter. It is what makes the monotony of repetition of day and night, of love and longing so fascinating.

"Remembrance of Him" says Guru Nanak, "is what gives True

11. From *Smarana* (Skt.) remembrance; implied sense, meditation.

12. These are of course, the holy Teachers of mankind.

Life." (*Rahiras*).¹³

Simrin is the true builder, the slow silent architect of the soul.

VAND CHHAKNA

To share our bread and joy and attainments of God-Realization with all. To give a feast of our flesh and blood, to be Christs, Buddhas, Gurus, not *men* only. Above humanity, living outside our bodies, in touch with super-humanity of the Higher Worlds.

The sermon of political economy is expression of the estrangement of man from man, systematized, justified and perpetuated. The wickedness of human nature which is only an accidental excrescence must be forgotten forever. In the laws, in literature, in the press, no one should remind us of it. Let us drive the animal out by self-sacrifice. Let us all cease to be mere individuals, so that the Kingdom of Righteousness arrives, making ourselves universal. The ideal of discipleship is the reverse of these political hypocrisies and rabid fallacies of political economy. There is no political economy in the kingdom of love. The father of the family strives to feed his children. In love, it is to seek no kingdom for itself; it is to confer kingdoms on the poorest. It is to rob no one, robbing others is what constitutes the art of empire-founding. Conserving wealth for oneself is to make many die of hunger. It is a life distribution and not of "*possession*" that the Guru presents to humanity. Hoarding is vice, eating by the sweat of one's brow is virtue. Living and letting others live in reasonable enjoyment of each one's own individual life of home and country is what the Guru thinks should be the principal tendency of man's rule over his fellow-men. The calamities not of our own making are enough to contend with; let moral governments aid man in making his life successful. The moral Law alone and not the stuffed law, justified by crooked logic, based on the animal selfishness of man is recognised by the Guru.

The administration of human affairs is comprehended by the Guru in *Vand Chhakna*— "*Share thy bread, O Disciple ! and live*". The laws of all nations should be under the inspiration of this truth.

Shame on man and his empires and the governments thereof, if

13. The Sikh Evening-Prayer.

they have not succeeded so far that no woman, no one's liberty of body, mind and soul be interfered with. To let the hampered person develop towards inner self-sovereignty, that may confer on him joy.

* * * *

"Self-sovereignty is the goal of the true culture of man and the state."

* * * *

Out of matter are created new souls by God. The divine singer throws them up like new suns from the nebulae. His touch makes the face of creation immortal.

* * * *

Reck not poverty and suffering if the mind be rich and truly cultured !

Mind not your poor accomplishments if the soul be drunk with the inebriation of self-sovereignty.

* * * *

Better be beasts of the jungle, than these men with religions of differences and duality.

* * * *

Better have no tongues,
If tongues are to be employed to name God in vain and to inflame the fires of animal passions.

* * * *

It is better to die on the battlefield than to live full of hatred for one another.

* * * *

Better total annihilation than enslavement of body and mind even for an instant.

* * * *

Bequeath to your children the kingdom of freedom and its rapture only, not the sickness of the sense of property.

* * * *

The best law is of Love;

The best service is of labour in love;

The best thought is of the emancipation of man; The best justice from man to man is unselfishness;

The best manners are incessant giving of the self away, and incessant forgiving;

The best ethics is melting away, melting away into love of ideal beauty.

Your surplus belongs to anyone who may need it.

* * * *

True union is in feeling, in the soul,

Neither in the mind, nor in the body.

* * * *

The world is an inn on the road to perfection.

Knowledge is not so covetable a property for a true man as a flame in his heart which might consume the dross of his self.

* * * *

All friendships take place here in one little point where our souls touch and come in contact with each other.

Do not try embrace the whole circumference :

That one shining point is of great reality of things.

* * * *

Culture of the inner self by hearing the voice of the unheard from the Unseen worlds from where inspiration come, is true humanity.

ALCHEMY OF THE PERSONALITY

by

THE SISTERS OF SONG GATHERED ON THE RIVER RAVI¹
OF THE PUNJAB

SACRED MEMORIES

The Vedanta philosophy makes out that "name" and "form" are illusion. But life clings to these illusions with a passion that never abates; in fact in it swells its bosom with immortal faith in its everlastingness. And those who wish to get rid "name" and "form" lose life itself. The great groups of men or races live by creating "names" and "forms" and there are some names that act like charms all along the generations. God may or may not be to them a reality, but their great men are. And the great men are the centres of the collective human culture of art, labour and love. All life radiates from there, though we suspect that behind these gods of ours, there may be some great person.

The great and sacred memories in human history rest after all on a few names.

* * * *

DEAD GENERALIZATIONS

The present times through which we are passing tend towards impersonality. It is just as in war, when names and forms of men do not count, only the act of killing is supreme. The home where little names and forms were held so dear—the mother clinging to the child, the wife to the husband, is fast disappearing. The hotel is replacing the home and homely affections and attachments are giving place to legal arguments in favour of sex-based relation on a heartless

1. On this river is situated the city of Lahore, capital formerly of all Punjab, and now of that part of it gone to Pakistan. Along the bank of this river also, elsewhere settled down Guru Nanak in his last years.

economic basis and to protect ship what is called the independence of the male and female. The world is suffering acutely from too much light. The mental forces of man are driving him towards vague impersonal and dead generalizations both in religion, art and society.

* * * *

The Universities of Japan make their children into good Japanese; of America, into good Americans. Oxford and Cambridge turn out Englishmen stamped with their own peculiar character and mould. These great national institutions of different nations breathe the power of ages. Centuries of dear associations of mind and heart are personalized in their very names. These places have been etherealized as the very souls of these different nations ! Here the very matter by its hoariness has grown to be pure spirit; they are no more building and places, but visions and ideals !

* * * *

But men stamped with particular trademarks and dubbing, as turned out by these national universities are only of significance. Modern civilization has not been able to capture genius from the sky in the net of its schools and systems. Its men are like its gold and silver, good only for one particular market. It strikes in its mints the current coins which rapidly change hands as they pass. Negligible paltry things ! A rolling, roaring stream of common, stereotyped humanity rushing onward, covered with its own foam to nowhere, to no purpose !

* * * *

A modern hero wins the war, but soon after, he is put out like an extinguished lamp, not wanted any longer. Engineers are pressed in by their own ideas and schemes, and all are soon lost like the little screws of a huge machine immediately to be replaced by new ones; few rise to the state of self-realization. Great scientists and experimentalists are mostly the facts and figures they have gathered— busy thinking machines, whose soul is buried deep out of sight in the heap. The web has made its own spider a helpless-prisoner ! Restlessness and impatience are characteristic of the modern life. Men have forgotten the man in themselves.

They have no leisure to breathe calmly. They are running after the mirages of *maya*.

* * * *

Genius is being drafted to tasks of mere utility; it is not allowed to traverse the path of self-realization. There is no doer visible, it is all work. Books and their contents make their authors famous for a while, rather than the books being made known through the names of their creators. What a vain flood of books rolls on now in which the authors are drowned and blotted out !!

* * * *

A WHOLE DIVINE CULTURE IN A NAME

There have been single, solitary unknown men whose glance, a stray touch of a hand, a word spoken at the village well, a smile strewn on the footpath as they passed, made them the eternal guides of the human race. The very name of the Buddha is more than all the Buddhistic scriptures. The chant *Buddha, Namō Buddha!* is enough to fill our soul. Jesus is more precious than all the Christian Gospels written by the Apostles. Muhammad strikes the empty world of Arabia with his own name, it still rings from the domes of the mosques the world over. Millions name him five times a day in *Namaz* and bow down to God as He has commanded. Reading of the Quran is secondary, sweet only the faithful, because it came from the Prophet. Krishna, the one name, is a whole religion. The Gita has significance because of the divine personality of Krishna.

* * * *

NAM SEEN IN INSPIRED ACTION IN THE HISTORY OF MAN

We worship this intense process of capturing the perfected man in a name, and being thereby made perfect in an instant. In a Name, we create a home for ourselves in the known invisible worlds of strangers beyond. *Simrin* puts us in touch with our Friends there, right from here. When the Buddha's yellow robe was donned by large parts of Asia, men burnt like orbs. The man shone. When, out of the idol-worshipping barbarians of Arabia, came forth the fresh Muslim life, when Guru Gobind Singh of the Punjab quite recently

changed the low castes of the Punjab into the steel-clad infinity-aspiring Khalsa, it was the intense cosmic process of *Nām* in its inspired action. Verily, however it is not by any process even of *Nām*, that man shines. When man shines, we find the process of *Nām* in solemn action, as perfumed rise only when the rose is in bloom.

* * * *

So great is our devotion to the wonder of this transmuting touch that makes man shine, that we long for its inspiration for ages, may be in idle prayers, may be in futile waiting for ages in nameless superstitions. And indeed great is its miracle, worth all the sorrow of the emptiness of our life, because whenever that moment comes, centuries of inanity are, forgotten; the common men realise the perfection of genius. The least of them become in a twinkling of an eye, the veritable Kings of men and rise to the gift of prophecy.

* * * *

It descends on earth as the Command of Heaven in the person of great teachers like Guru Gobind Singh. Certainly, we have no power to control the process of the inflow of this inspiration into the heart of man. Guru Nanak calls it *Simrin*, "Naming God". It is lyrical remembrance, the association in the Name, with the whole divine life of God. It is realization of His Presence in a single Name.

Simrin or capturing the perfected man, the Buddha in a name is not that dull, slow-footed, mechanically moving biped with the listless repetition of muttering prayers and beads. Otherwise the songs of the Guru Himself would not pulsate with that oceanic heaving of the bosom of the Guru in love. It is the cry of the soul both in joy and in pain, which in its train, makes millions alive with the throbs of the Universal Soul. Heaven itself is the power both of its voice and silence. It is the Hymn of passion that glows like a star at the sight of Beauty. It is the pure flame that eats the light of the suns and stars, and kindles the eternal darkness.

* * * *

VIRTUE IS ABSOLUTE SUBSTANCE

Thundering anger, the thunderbolt and the *Trishul*,² the calm

2. Shiva's trident.

suffering, the cross and the Poison Cup; the Infinite wildness of the new-born life; the soft glow of compassion, the madness of its freedom; the soft glow of compassion, the holiness of self sacrifice, the eternal peace—all are beautiful aspects of *Simrin*. It transforms vice into absolute virtue. The strength held in leash in non-injury—*Ahimsa*—and the gaint clanging strength of battle shine as gems in the ring of the Guru—gems whose fire has the glow, but not the flame that burns. The ordinary standard of human judgments are suspended in the face of this divine phenomenon. The genius of *Simrin*, in its cosmic vastures, transcends all the petty measures of our relative ethics.

* * * *

THE APPEARANCE OF A PROPHET OF GOD IS A COSMIC UPHEAVAL IN THE MORAL WORLD

When genius really appears in the world, every thing else becomes small and insignificant. Centuries of labour of the poor coral insects and their great coral islands are certainly negligible spaces when a new Himalaya shakes up his majestic head and rises supreme before the eyes of a world agape with wonder.

* * * *

HUMAN PERSONALITY SHAKING ITS LION-MANE

There is no cure for human suffering outside of man, as suffering is an inner ailment of the spirit. All joy is the health of the Spirit. All outer conditions stand their oppressions. This inward strength comes from the regions of inspiration. Without this help coming from within, the outer world is the world of enemies; the stars and the sky combine to reduce man to an amorphous powder. Man is a dust flying after the chariot wheels of Time, unless he realizes himself and stands against the very elements, and by his love, tames them all, as he tames the wild animals to be his companions.

* * * *

Mere systems of education, the mere routine experience of life, the mere analysis of human nature and its undertakings, do not impart this inner knowledge. Ethics too cast the human personality into a life-long prison. Genius is truly the gift of Heaven and a true genius

turns its gaze inward upon itself. This state of the life self-realization is akin to immortality in the flesh. We wait with bated breath for the coming of even a single man of such power. And when he comes, we give up our hearths and homes and follow him. "Follow me and ye shall have everlasting life," he declares. With this great renunciation come to us, this apparent life and death of ours have thenceforward equal value. We then believe that there is a golden region beyond the ken of knowledge, where there is no pain of dual passion, no suffering of ignorance, no chaining in illusions, where the weary and the heavy-laden are truly comforted. There, only there, the right balance is struck, and no one is a loser. All are forgiven in the cosmic compassion, and everyone is made supremely felicitous within himself.

* * * *

The people of the East gather around him.³ They hover around his Word as moths around a lamp. The voice of this unique personality disturbs our soul with eternal joy. It is the personal contact with him that forms truly all our religion, genius lighting genius as a burning lamp lights another.⁴

We are not satisfied till we find one who can read our inmost desires and fulfil them both in waking and in dreams, cure our sick children, bestow prosperity on us by giving it to us wrapped as his gift in a pinch of holy ashes from his sacrificial fire and vouchsafe immortality to us by merely touching our forehead.

* * * *

We are not quite consoled with the grand idealism of the Sermon on the Mount till we meet in person, one like Jesus, meeting with whom we know makes the great Sermon a poem of our own emancipation. It is Jesus whose ordinary speech is the Sermon on the Mount. Where is He ? Find Him and live the Sermon ! Where is the Man who makes the Sermon alive ?

* * * *

3. Jesus of course, is implied.

4. This figure is typically Indian and has been used of the inspiration transmitted by Guru Nanak to his successors in the holy office of Guruship.

Ashrams and institutions and schools are in themselves lifeless symbols. Emancipated men are the real truths in the divine scheme of inner inspiration. Ramakrishna Paramhans lately gave Swami Vivekananda to the world; the latter left a scattering of Ashramas in the style of modern civilization, which seem to be but small pieces of his ochre robe, born out of it, by thorns of the wayside bushes, as he passed through them looking at the Figure of his Master in the sky. And there are they caught by thorns, a few orange robe-rags fluttering in the wind to no purpose ! And so the disciples created by the Sikh Gurus, once were freed men whose genius sparkled with the beauty of Self-Realization. But nobody again gave to anyone what *Nangta* Bawa of Umballa gave to Parmahansa Ramakrishna !⁵

* * * *

As birds roost for the night on any wayside tree, so does the Sikh on this earth in his pilgrimage to immortality of Love make any branch his home. The earth is small, but the sky of his vision is wide, and the great Guru has given him wings. The very sparrows fly with the power of the hawk that is seen perching on the right thumb of the Guru.⁶

* * * *

The disciples ride, wear swords, and dress and march like conquerors and kings, but they are all made so by singing 'Glory ! Glory !'⁷ by a rebirth in the song of the Guru and each one is a man made infinite by the inner freedom of self-realization. Everyone of the Guru's Sikhs is a genius of power, love and service. And the genius was once given as a gift by the Guru to the poor ploughman, wood-choppers, brewers and other humble folk of the Punjab.

* * * *

We till now, have a proverb in our language that the very dogs of the Guru could work miracles. Our daily life became a series of miracles. Miracles are nothing extraordinary. Extraordinary is the

5. See "*The Master as I saw Him*" by Sister Nivedita.

(*Editor's Note*)

6. Guru Gobind Singh is figured with a white hawk perched on his thumb a picture that has inspired the heroism and chivalry of the Punjab.

7. An implied rendering of the Sikh name for God—*WahGuru* (Hail, Lord !).

Inspiration of Peace. Be inspired yourself, and all life is a series of miracles.

* * * *

Little men became great leaders of mighty revolutions. All miracles wrought in the Khalsa history both in war and peace are simple acts of the Guru—inspired Man. The new chants that the Guru poured out of his soul vitalized man with the whole power of righteousness. The "Singh" or "Lion", now a somewhat monotonous ending of a Sikh name, was once a metaphorical expression of the great moral prowess of the Guru's soul-force. The Sword was the symbol of this moral process. The tenth Guru called God by the name of the Sword—Bhagauti. And nothing in the world can symbolize the intense flame of life so truly as the sparkle of the sword-blade.

* * * *

One woman-born man comes and touches a whole people with the spark of his genius and raises them at once to be supermen. Heaven vibrates in the voice of grass-cutters. Learning sits at the feet of the unlettered men of despised caste-origins, who were exalted to sainthood by the Master. Only seeking to be submerged in the great depths of Truth that shone once in the Guru-lit Nam-encaptured eyes of the Disciples of the Guru. Genius comes down to earth from its hidden heights wherever might be its natural home, and breathes in the features of common men. Akalis were veritable god-men whom neither steel cuts nor fire burns. They were spirits, their bodies were but the shadows of a forgotten past and in these bodies, mere shadows, moving on the mounds of Anandpur, the future type of a completed man faintly glimmered with universal hopes.

THE PROPHET SEES WHAT NO ONE ELSE CAN

Guru Gobind Singh is riding on his splendid bay steed, and by him rides in attendance the chief Dalla, when in a dreamy abandon of blessing his apostles, the Guru said :

“DALLA ! See the water running in channels all over the country, behold the crops waving green and beautiful !” Dalla not knowing the strangeness of the prophecy replied in the humdrum

accents of ignorance of his own, little life :

"Sire ! The land is all arid, only the dust flies !" But the Guru said again :

"Dalla ! See the trees laden with fruits, see the country rich with the golden harvests of the ripened corn." Dalla again replied foolishly :

"Sire ! The country is all arid, the dust flies and I see nothing of the gardens thou seest."

The Guru blessed the Land of Dalla, the Guru blessed the Punjab. Material prosperity too must wait on the door of his Disciples. All must be added unto those who have given themselves to the Love of his name. Only Dalla understood not the prophecy, nor do we understand it now, when we willingly go forward selling our Christ for a few pieces of silver, selling our soul for a mess of pottage.

HEART LIGHTING HEART

by

THE TORCH-BEARER THAT RIDES AT NIGHT

INSTITUTION DIE AS SHADOWS

The lands and people where and to whom Heaven sends religious geniuses become rich both with the inner and outer wealth. Nations rise like rivers in flood. And they go forward in ever-rising tide by the impulse so given. One man saves a whole race, institutions spring and die after him as his shadows.

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SILENT, DEEP LIFE GIVES THE SPARK OF LIFE UNSEEN

A disciple went and lived with a poor man. He lived with him for a day and went away. The poor man soon rose in himself and found the circumstances of life bowing down to him. He became a living person who felt the thrill of a new life, and with the life come to him, came in its wake prosperity too. Every event of life turned in his favour.

What had the man of God added to the poor man that the world became different to him ?

He went and stayed with a rich man. He ate with him, smiled and laughed. The rich man followed him, as he went away without telling of his destination. The rich man shed his wealth, and found new prosperity in the light of the day and a new kingdom in the peace of the moonlight. His eyes were kindled with the spirit of a poet, and he saw beauty everywhere. He became light as a bird and pure as a diamond.

What had the Man of God done to him that the world became different to him ?

He went and stayed with a sick person. The whole family loved the lady who was ailing. He ate his meals from the hands of the

daughters of the lady who was ill. The sick mother was healed as he went away.

What had the Man of God done that the Mother was healed ?

* * * *

WHEN I FORGET THE MAN BEHIND ME

I met a Sikh who chanted the Divine Names. He was an inspired apostle of his great Master. He loved me, he gave me bread and water. He proffered me his friendship. Strange to say, he accompanied me in my sleep, to the realms of my dreams. He saved me from many dangers which would have crushed me. He helped me. He gave me clothes from his own back, when he saw me naked and shivering with cold. He charmed me with his sweetness. He enchanted me with the mystic colour of his eyes and the infinite suggestion of the streak of his smile. But the most wonderful effect of this wonderful man was that his presence and ineffable silence kindled my heart with the Love of the Guru whom I had never seen.

I standing in the shallow waters, become at once infatuated and proud and vain, thinking how suddenly the love for the Guru began burning in me ! As I turned my back on him, I became again arid and sandy. The desert in me caught fire and hell itself flamed within me. Suddenly, he came to me in my distress; the clouds gathered, rain fell and all was cool again. Alas ! I knew not in my vanity, that it was all he and not I.

He made the desert of my heart a garden of roses. The sight of such a Sikh fills me with the Love of God, So perfect is his realization of the beauty of his own Master in himself.

True beauty puts you not in mind of itself, but always of its Creator.

* * * *

HOW THE SIKH FASCINATES

A Sikh, with his usual rugged exterior, with a turban covering his crown of the Guru's tresses, the beard of the Guru flowing down his chin, in a way carrying the face of his Master— this new Initiate into the mystery of life and love—comes to the home of a distant neighbour. This was a Hindu, clean-shaven as was customary in those times.

A strange thing happens. The clean-shaven 'modern' man finds

the Tree of Hair sprouting in him. When he sees the shaving apparatus, he sheds tears and says :

"No, the hair is not hair ! It is that strange good Sikh coming into my soul, and taking his abode in my heart. I am no more myself, I am new, different, I long for the natural simplicity of that Sikh. I fain would run away from this civilization of barber and tailor. Look, his very tresses are appearing on my head. Wonder of wonders ! I am lost in him, I know not why. This growing hair of mine is a faith, a trust, something eternal, though I know that in seeming form they are as grass on top of a mountain. What else ? What else ? But what am I myself in seeming form?—Mere clay wet with someone's blood."

* * * *

THE PEACE OF SIMRIN

The moth dies seeing the light it loves. The woman is dead forever in the chosen beloved of her heart. Bhai Nand Lal, the poet and scholar went to Anandpur to meet Guru Gobind Singh. One glance from the Guru was enough. The bee went deep and slept in the rare fragrance of the white lotus. Bhai Nand Lal never left the presence after.

Simrin is death in love of Him. But death-love comes when it comes. His beauty falls on the soul like the sudden flash of fighting. The body then is the mere vehicle of the Spirit of God.

Asia was once lit up by *Simrin*, the spiritual chant enunciated by the Buddha. All wore the yellow robe of poverty that He wore; all walked bare-footed as he had done. All eyes were half-closed with raptures of Nirvana, as the eyes of the Master. So the yellow Bikku is the pathetic remnant of that great glory of *Simrin* that once shone over us.

* * * *

We of the Punjab, were called to don the robe of the Guru's Discipleship. We wear turbans as He did; we keep long hair as He kept. We prefer the colours he liked. We are still alive with the spark he lit in our souls. The torch when lighting another creates its own images.

We carry the Guru's face. His features, His whole image, in our face and form. As I ponder who I am, I knew I am of the Guru.

THE GREAT LOVE

by

THE FIVE HORSEMEN

WHEN THE MAN HEARS THE VOICE OF THE HIDDEN GOD

What is the end of this great attraction ? Surely it is different from knowledge. Knowledge has no wings to fly to those dizzy heights where the moonbird flies, covering the beauty of the moon with its intense desire.

Ages pass, the book of knowledge are eaten up by worms, but the song of the cuckoo is never hushed; it pierces still the heart of summer.

The Bulbul and the Rose still cry to each other in a pain of separation whose ecstasy is everlasting.

The woman thinks loving is creating anew, and pictures again and again the face and the images of man she so intensely loves. But innocence nestles in her heart and gives back the milk of life she received to life itself, and she knows it not.

The Man in Love hears the voice of the hidden God and he follows it and reaches a sacred place where the sun and the moon bow to Him in submission and all come and kiss his feet. The Creation gathers in Him, for he has already become a great temple where angels come to worship. The stars burn incense and all see God in Him as the Muslims see their "Id Moon". He is the Akali, the deathless man, who walks on the waters, and sits unharmed in the fire arching over him, singing the song of the Masters. He is pure soul.

When religion is power, it is enough to break the ribs of the mountains by a thought; it is enough to reduce great empires built on hate, just by crushing them between its two lily-white palms. Its prayer is both the death and the life continents and nations.

GOD'S SWORD IS BRIGHT

A poor man clad in rags, exposed to wind and weather, his skin cracked, but with eyes flashing the fire of the stars, once stood begging for alms from a vain rich merchant. Begging is bad, but he begged for the joy of it. The rich man treated him slightly. The star-eyed man stood repeating his cry for alms. The merchant suddenly saw that behind that dreaming figure, careless and outworn stood a *man* with long tresses, who felt offended at the slight offered to his spirit-born son, and on the palms of that great Being was lying trembling the whole city of the vain rich man ! And the protecting Hand was going to throw the city down into the abyss of eternal damnation. The rich man trembled, seeing the destiny that awaited him on that high precipice. The star-eyed man was not alone. Metaphorically, there is immediate waging of war by the King, if His servants are slighted. God is jealous. And His Sword is bright and flashing.

* * * *

THE SAINT'S WHITE SONG

The Nām-life of the Saint sings day and night. Kabir say :

"Holiness ! and that only of a body-shrine;

No ! A whole country is bathed in holiness by the moon-floods
of the Saint's white song's !"

* * * *

ONE WHO KNOWS A SIKH FAKIR

What is your accomplishment, Sir ?

Your eyes are red with the wine that sparkles in the cup of the
sky !

And your face is incarnadined with the unfading Rose that no
one has yet seen !

I cannot even write my name;

I am an unlettered ploughman of Punjab—

A poor Sikh who knows none of your questions !

But do not be taken in by my ignorance and humility !

When aroused, my wrath is terrible.

With my raised hand I tear the dynasties of tyrants like piece
of waste paper.

And I start new dynasties of kings whose rule would be kind to
the children of man.

In my sigh are numberless clouds that rain down and cleanse
the earth !

And in my tears the great rivers that bless a thousand generations
of the man.

I cannot even write my name,

I am an unlettered ploughman of the Punjab—

A poor Sikh who knows none of your questions !

But do not be afraid of me.

I am as gentle as the mother is to the child,

As forgiving as the babe to the mother,

As good as water is to the unclean body.

I have the large white love that is in the heart of the sun,

And I love you as the sun loves flowers of this earth.

You have not seen my love, you who have no eyes to see !

I cannot even write my name,

I am an unlettered ploughman of the Punjab

A poor Sikh who knows none of your questions.

I have no language :

Neither the stars nor the sky have it.

Nor can I reply.

Come, I will show you what is hidden in me,

Behind the veil, you and I are one

Have you seen yourself ? There in my heart are you, there in
my eyes are you !

* * * *

But do not fear me.

Come, I shall massage your tired limbs;

I shall cool you with the shade that in my eyes.

Come I shall stroke your tresses and soothe their waves and
comfort your wearily soul.

I am an unlettered ploughman of the Punjab—

I cannot even write my name

A poor Sikh who knows none of your questions.

I have no language

Neither has the river, the cloud,
 Nor the forest that dwells by the mountains side.
 Come I shall show you the fountains that have burst in me.
 And take you to the loveliest lonelinesses where the green leaf
 and the white ray hold quiet converse.
 Come, I will take you to a Cave inside me where you will see
 what would make you speechless in joy and wonder,
 Where the whole starry sky is gathered in a cave—
 There where God dwells in the toiling masses, but is never
 seen by any mortal eyes,
 Neither He nor those lying at His feet !

* * * *

They came and cut a Sikh like a log of wood into two !¹
 The *Sikh Chant*—"Glory to the Guru"²—came like soft music,
 as they cut him like a log of wood into two !
 A mere man could not endure such pain and sing the song of
 peace when so tortured.
 The man was dead, the corpse of the Sikh was in the lap of the
 gods and celestial beings took up his chant and sang :
 "*Glory to the Guru*".²
 The Sikh—Chant—"Glory to the Guru"²—came like soft
 music as they cut him into two like a log of wood !
 The robbers bound a Sikh hand and foot and dug a pit and put
 him into it, throwing loose earth deep up to his knees !
 They fled away with their booty,
 The Sikh thanked them,
 Guru be praised ! friends !
 All is peace,
 While I can chant "*Glory to the Guru*" !²

* * * *

I have taken the vow of life, to live for Him.
 I have taken the vow of death to die for Him.
 But all my vows are the rambling notes of the Song of His

1. This was Bhai Matidas, a devotee by Guru Tegh Bahadur sawn into two, two days before the Guru himself was martyred.
2. In the original, *Wah Guru* !

pleasure that knows not their own aims, nor their fulfilment.
 I do what He does when He comes into me and drives me to act.
 When His call comes, I go about,
 snapping all ties that bind me to this life ego-filled.
 I have taken the vow of love and I wait on the road-side for
 Him, with tears in my eyes. At His sight I break loose of
 all conventions, for I am crazed with Love !

* * * *

A BRAHMGYANI, KNOWER OF THE UNKNOWABLE

An Akali³ was digging the earth and making a pathway.
 He sweated hard in clearing the jungle, and he went on single-
 handed, making the long pathway !
 And one of his own admirers seeing a Brahmgyani hard at
 work, said to him:
 "Sire ! your eyes are the hawks of the Guru,
 Your heart the temple of God.
 Why do you sweat so hard in making a pathway and tire your
 body with unnecessary labour ?
 You have got the fruit of life in your luminous noble mien;
 For you, as the scriptures say, there is nothing left to be done.
 All tasks are ended for such as you and all debts are paid.
 Sire ! why do you sweat so hard making a pathway?"
 "As I have no work," the Brahmgyani-Akali replied,
 I dig the earth and make this pathway !
 I am a spare person in this world as you say,
 I dig the earth and make the pathway and rejoice in it.
 I set to task as the Master directs me."

* * * *

EXCHANGING SICKNESS FOR HEALTH

Once he fell dangerously ill,
 And he grew worse and worse.
 After a few days he suddenly recovered.
 "Someone was ill," he said;

3. Cunningham : *History of the Sikhs*, 2nd edition: John Murry, p. 110, Footnote, (Editor's Note).

"God has saved her."

A lady came a few days after.

She had suffered in those very days from the very malady, and she related how miraculously she was cured the day her physician had given her up.

But she had no knowledge how the Saint had suffered for her sake.

* * * *

SADNESS IS EMPTINESS OF SOUL

What is to be done when I fall away from the song of "Glory to God" ?

When sadness comes and pierces me with a poisoned steel blade ?

"Rise and take a dip in the cold water", said the Saint.

"Run and cry, as if your whole house was on fire; Chant the great Japuji of Guru Nanak, aye, even mechanically;

Chant ! Chant !

Till you find in its deep silent sound the Golden Ladder from Heaven lowered to you by the Hidden Ones, your protectors in the realms of the Spirit.

The Ladder would hang down as a vision resting on the chants of Japuji.

Rise then on the begemmed rungs of the Ladder lowered to you,

And rising on it, sing like an irrepressible happy boy.

Yes, in mid air, on the perilous heights.

I shall come to take you in my arms and carry you to your hidden protectors.

As you wake up from your sweet slumber in the Infinite, you would have regained the notes of the Paradise of Peace within you,

And no one would know what has really happened;

Only you would be fascinating to yourself.

And you need not speak aloud about these sacred things,

For the learned will argue and call it idle dreams,

And so it is till you

Know it from me.

This is between you and me;

Tell no one, for the visions fly if you begin off them the veil of
love's dream.

This is the holy secret of a daily resurrection from the daily
death that the serpent of illusion hurls at you with his hot
breath."

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THE WORLD OF THE SPIRIT

I do not understand what the learned say,

But my Guide used to tell me...

He was a simple guileless man :

"There is a world of spirits;

Some sink like lead to earth,

Some are thought-imprisoned,

They are too heavy to fly;

And some are fettered forever by their own violent actions;

Some go and rise a little higher up on the wings of good actions :

But only a few chant "Glory to the Guru",

Fly off like birds from the cage of this body.

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Each breath is an opportunity afforded us to break our fetters
of matter and break into the chant : "Glory to the Guru"—

We waste our breaths, we spill them in the mire;

The odours of our breath are foul;

Our flesh is rank with negligence :

We run after the mirage of *Maya* and get bitten by the serpent
of indifference.

Our very existence stinks, our helpers fly away from us.

We cry and weep but what avail is mere tear-shedding ?

It is hard to breathe the Spirit of God, Can such great destiny
be ours without incessant labour ?

O disciple ! labour as the child at school labours in muttering
his lessons, his alphabet, without understanding.

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A man of the world asked a man of God to dinner.

"Yes," he said, " I will come ."

But he came not.

Perhaps he hovered in the celestial regions instead of remembering , His engagements on earth for that day.

Next day, the poor host began complaining :

"Sir ! you accepted my invitation,

And you did not come."

"Ah ! Well !

I did say "yes"— Did I ?

And I did say "No" — Did I ?

So I did not come."

And without much parleying with him, the man of God hurriedly went away !

* * * *

THE SIKH HAS NO SENSE OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

A herd of cows and buffaloes came and fell upon a straw-fodder heap belonging to the little shrine of the holy man Sawaya Singh⁴ of Amritsar.

An attendant of the shrine ran with a stick and drove away the cattle.

The man of God saw him and as he returned, said:

"Who are you, my dear fellow ! to drive the dumb cattle away as they came and waited at the Guru's door for a meal ? Go away ! you will not do here, who think of *mine* and *thine* in a place on whose roof the immortal flag of the Guru waves high."

* * * *

MEN OF GOD CONSCIOUSNESS SEEK THEMSELVES

Men of *Simrin* seek quietly the seekers after God aid them.

A Sikh devotee lay ill,

And Sant⁵ Sawaya Singh came off himself and just sat by him.

He was silent for a while looking at him, and went away.

The Sikh devotee felt that his mind got a new lustre from the holy man's visit.

4. This Sant lived in Amritsar in the last years of the nineteenth century.

And the song of *Simrin* began resounding in him with a new rhythm
with the shine of a hundred candles burning in a temple.

* * * *

TRUE MANNERS ARE PERFUMES OF LOVE

A Sikh Sant⁵ passed by and a "vile"⁶ man came and offered
him the first ripe orange of the season.

He accepted it and felt pleased.

He blessed him and went away.

Another day, a "good Man" came and offered him almonds.

The Sant felt perturbed as if the acceptance of the "Good Man's"
almonds would be like a cup of poison. He threw them
out of the window. And every visit of the "Good man"
had so disturbed him that he could not sleep the whole
night, and had to work hard, keep vigil and chant
repeatedly the Guru' Word, till the Song of *Simrin* returned
with its live silver chime to his veins.

He slept singing and he woke a song himself.

And to those gathered around him that morning he said :

"Why do these "Good" people of the world come and vex the
roses of God ?

They come in their rolling chariots, threw all their dust on the
face of the roses and extinguish their gem-like glow.

And why do they bring "almonds" to me ?

The dry crust of bread and a cup of water for me is enough;
only they should have mercy on me and come not to kill
me by their courtesies.

The other day a "vile" man loved me and offered me a ripe
orange.

By accepting it from him I felt happy like a child;

But these "almonds" have hurt me.

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5. A holy man. Its sound resembles 'Saint', but the two terms bear distinct though similar connotations.
 6. He might be a simple person from the so-called 'lower' castes. The 'good' man figuring above would obviously be a person claiming to be religious, without the spirit of true religion in him.

LIFE IS GLORIOUS

Long is the path and unending;
 Distant is the goal, forever receding.
 As the child toils hard for the knowledge of this world, you toil
 your hardest for the knowledge of God.
 "Each life-breath is like a purse full of gems;
 Man has not loosened the strings, nor seen the rich contents of
 his own life..."

(Guru Granth)

RAPTUROUS UNIONS

A Sikh Yogi was lying one night under the sky on the roof of
 his host-house, rapt in the thought of the Divine Beloved.
 It began drizzling, and the host came, and all too afraid to
 disturb him, he said, "Sire ! it is raining, come in."
 No reply came.
 The Yogi was drenched, the water ran under him,
 And the host came again, saying: "Sire ! it is raining, come in."
 The Yogi got up and went out of the house, saying, "I came
 thinking.
 You are one of the Assembly that know the secret of
 Union—Sat-Sang—
 I shall never come again to you, who separated me from the
 embraces of the Lord !"

SPIRIT IS POWER THAT GUIDES LIFE

In the life of the spirit lies power;
 Spirituality is strength of God Himself.
 All matter obeys that Power.
 Spirituality is His supreme unconcern that forgives and gives
 in measureless measures.
 It is also His Supreme Passion that makes both the young
 maiden's cheek and the rose blush with the divine colour
 of love.
 And it is as small and sweet as the smile of the baby and keen
 as the concern of the Mother.
 It is jealous in its protection and selection.

There are inscrutable differences in the character of created life :
Some are thrown away and some are kept quite close to Him
by Him.

This choice configuration, however, varies from moment to
moment.

THE CLEANSING OF SOULS IS WITH LIFE-BLOOD

'Do not come to me in numbers,' said a Sikh devotee,
Come one by one, I feel enfeebled by your visits:
My power seems gone.'

* * * *

BE HEROIC IN ACQUIRING DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

Be not afraid of discipline.

Discipline gives you the perfection of freedom when there is
no more of discipline.

Rise, give up drowsiness of spirit by intention, O disciple !
And like the soldiers storming a fort, you charge again and
again the Fort of the Ego and take it : There is freedom at
last !

'He who has conquered the self has conquered the whole world.'

(Guru Nanak in *Japuji*)

SIMRIN IS ASSENT TO THE MORAL LIFE

Labour, pure physical labour is needed for gathering the beauty
of God scattered as gleams in the trembling dreams of
Maya.

An incessant chant of "*Glory to the Guru*" eventually transports
you where angels come and form above your head a canopy
with their wings.

No hot breaths of the winds of difference blow there.

Simrin is companionship of angels invisible, that rejoice seeing
you naming Him: *Simrin* is seeing God's glory, feeling it,
drinking it, swallowing it,

And being it a song, a prayer, a flame, a sword.⁷

7. This last line like all else in these outpourings expresses the Sikh ideal of the religious life, which integrates with Divine laudation, prayer and devotion, intense idealism and the crusading spirit (Flame, Sword).

THE UNSEEN REALMS

by
GOETHE¹

POETS ARE IMPRESSED BY THE UNSEEN REALMS SUB-CONSCIOUSLY

A friend of mine drew the attention of an apostle of *Simrin* to creation portions of "Faust" and "Gotliche". Out of "Faust", the apostle picked up the scene when Margaret expresses to Faust her spontaneous abhorrence for his shadowy companion.² She feels heavy at the latter's sight, though her soul beams when she sees Faust. And she complains why Faust does not come alone to her. He said to my friend, "Goethe, your poet, is truly impressed by the verities of the other Realms of the Spirit that open after death, but he was not yet in a position to recognise the individuality of those impressions; for many of them come repeatedly. It is just as we meet in one person repeatedly the sameness of his face and form. Those who can recognise the individualities of these sublime impressions as the musicians recognise the musical notes in the warbles of the free creatures of nature and are capable of differentiating definitely one from the other, are risen to that spiritual transparency where they see images of the superrealities and are absorbed in receiving impression from above. So does the Saint of *Simrin* know the different personalities of the Hidden World of spirits. And when he says he meets the personalities we consider long dead,

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1. As in the case of other imaginary authors of these pieces, Goethe too is a symbolic figure. The German poet of the integrated vision of religion based idealism and the mentor whose insights inspired Carlyle. Goethe's is an appropriate name in this galaxy. Puran Singh's style is redolent in most places of the intensity of Carlyle the same hammered strokes of vision, the emphasis on the vocabulary of powerful inspiration. Even in ascribing these pieces to these imaginary authors, the reader may be reminded of Carlyle's choice of Herr Tufeldsdrokch in shaping his message in *Sartor Resartus*.
 2. He is Mephistophiles i.e. the Devil.

he is not dealing with the illusions of his own mind, but is face to face with them in the same sense in which he saw them when they were in this world of the living. Those indefinite unshaped impressions of Goethe get definite colours and forms, and the Saint recognises his own pure thought, pure emotion and pure wish. I have liked this view of *Faust* immensely. It is so true. Here I see a seer of the unseen realms.

* * * *

THE SIKH MAKES THE WORLD OF GOD MANIFEST

All the ten Guru are gone. Can they be seen no more? Where are they? If a new initiate went and asked this question from a great Sikh devotee; he would shut his eyes, his face would glow, and tears of ecstatic joy would flow from his eyes. The eyes of the enquiring initiate would close and he would see by the miracle of this great saint all the Ten Guru in a flash, passing before his mind so transported by him. Such vision remind us of the Einsteinian possibilities of the human vision and its powers.

* * * *

WITHOUT SUCH FAITH, RELIGION IS LIKE A TORN DRUM

Unless one has felt visibly or invisibly the Beckoning Hands of the great Helpers on the path of Discipleship, and has breathed the inner Heaven of those glorious Presences, there is nothing to find in the domain of religion. Religion is a torn drum without this faith in the living presence of the Emancipated Beings. Unless our minds and bodies are permeated by the holiness of the beyond, what are we but shadows of vanities that stagnate in filth, mire and dust?

* * * *

Szirbi, the great Hungarian man of faith, says :

"Death is the soul's realm, not of the body. Thou wilt see the soul there, just as thou seest it not here. Just as thou seest the body here, thou wilt not see it there, Yet thou wilt have a notion of the body there, as thou hast a notion of the soul here.

That continuation of life—that other side of the heavens which is not before our eyes.

"Death is a gate which all have to pass through. Beyond the

gate is another courtyard; an unknown land. How everyone fears the unfamiliar face as children fear an unknown friend of their parents who brings them sweets.

"What kind of life will be there, over there? What thou deservest after thy life here.

"But it will go badly there with many. Terrible things will happen there.

* * * *

"For it is a great treasure for those who lie in death, if no one curseth them; And great is their blessing if men think of them with love. So it is a great blessing to those who are there, if from the land of death they gaze on them lovingly. And it is bitter agony if they curse them from the beyond.

* * * *

"He who is pure, his vision is clear, and he gazeth on death also with smile.

* * * *

"As thou hast arrived here by a path, so shalt thou depart hence on a path also:

"It was not thou who brought thyself here, then why dost thou trouble thyself about further existence?

* * * *

"Well! Why dost thou worry about the future, when thou dost not worry about the past, and what is thy concern with the present also?"

Such are the clear words of the man of faith—they convince without any apparent argument. This is a little clearer peep into the realm of the 'spirits' than mine in my³ "Gotliche" and my *Faust*. How terrible is my balled—The Erl-King! For safety in those realms, the Guru insists on *Simrin*, holding to the Bright Names, for those "Names" and "Forms" will come to befriend us! As to the strangers of the other worlds, we need making them our friends right from here. And Guru says, choose the very best friends. Have nothing to

3. The speaker is to be taken of course, as Goethe.

do with ghosts and spirities, you have plenty of them right here. They are fires that burn, they torment here, they torment there.

* * * *

The dream of the early Christians of the angels had in it the marvellous suggestion of the worlds beyond and of our Unseen Helpers dwelling there. Without burning visions like those of Dante and Kabir, actually casting their living influence on the earthly life of the disciples, without the aura of the angels and holy beings guarding them, it is a misnomer to be known as "Sikh" or Disciple".

* * * *

ALL DISCIPLES BELONG TO THE VISION OF THE TEN GURUS

The disciples of the Buddha or the Christ or of Muhammad in the glow of their first conversion may be said to partake of the vision of the Ten Gurus. It is this first glow of faith that has to be sustained in its virgin purity by the perennial inspiration of the Heavenly Beings, by the gladness of soul that would make us fly before the Sun. It is this faith, a mustard-grain of which can remove mountains.

* * * *

AS A MAN FROM OTHER SEES THIS

O man ! O woman !

I am not of you, yet of you,

I have not come to meddle with your affairs.

You live in peace with each other, I neither draw away man from woman nor woman from man.

I have no inclination to select any single one out of you for myself, because you are prone to feel jealous when someone steals you from each other.

I will rather have you all live in a large heart, in an infinite mind, in an unclinging attachment, yet a passionate attachment of the pure spirit.

I may tell you, no one can love you so much as I, because they of the body are fond of you in the body, and I of the spirit am fond of you in the spirit.

When I meet you, I draw my soul near you, and strike friendships that do not pass off with the moment's pleasures, nor

with the change of our tempers, nor of our vision; you go away from me apparently in your bodies, leaving your spirit in mine and you take the whole of mine with you !

When I meet you, I fall so deeply in love with you that I think I would not be able to live even for a moment more without you, so irresistibly does your soul draw mine; and you know not how much I love you, for you love in the same way some-one else, and I go away on my way glowing like fire in the thought of your face. I am your secret lover.

But you cannot stand my mad, wild passion, I know it.

You do not want the blazing love of the naked spirit. You would have it presented to you in velvet veils, since its glare hurts your eyes.

You are at once tired of me, when I throw myself entirely on your love. You want distances between us still preserved in some subtle ways. You like me as much as I can present you back with what is you in me. You love yourself !

But I am wild when I love,

I am impatient of all veils;

I am not courteous to those whom I really love.

I wish to dissolve myself in you !

But you do not endure my irresponsible joy erratic love-indulgence. You cannot stand the naked glare of my purity which also look across to infinity and strike the chords of your minds. No one loves my naked soul; all love me if I wear those colours which might set in you the music of an inner joy.

You say you would be a sacrifice in your love of me, a Poet,

But you never love me as yourself.

You are bored if I behave as bad as you behave towards yourself.

But you cast me away from the throne of your heart, as soon as I being to depend wholly and solely on you !

You get sick of me.

But I wonder you never get so sick of yourself any time !

God in me loves me more than myself, and when you love me, you are God.

Who also can love ? Who can ?

* * * *

So I have given up the quest of the mirage shining in your bodies; it allures, it takes me out of myself and then kills me by my own thirst; you O bodies ! remain eternally "others," not these dearest, sweetest, "Me's," when at first sight of love, we hail each other as if I and you were one !

And still I follow the mirage passionately, for without its beauty and glow, my heart's lamp is soon extinguished of itself.

* * * *

Fear not I am not going to vex you any more

I understand, you are so helpless in the casements of your bodies and minds.

* * * *

I am as a newly arrived guest among you. Enough for me is a small room by your side as long as you can feel a generous host. I leave you and go away, when you do not !

To me now, this little world of yours, these trifles and trashes can never be a fit place for a permanent home, as you have made it into little beehive cell where only one "you", can hardly get room enough, or at most only "two" can live together.

My own intensity of feeling like a dagger stabs me through the heart, if I seriously think of settling down amongst you, who are so hopelessly blind even to your larger self-interest.

* * * *

Death is the glorious Horse on which I ride away from you, when you are tired of me and I of you.

I know a time comes when you can no more abide my company, though I be as ever, and you throw me out of the windows of your heart and mind. But I know you cannot be better here despite your pious resolves. You are fettered by the darkness of a fearful selfishness that lacerates your soul.

* * * *

So I turn away from you, O Individuals! by facing you as the

multitude;

I go fraternizing with the Infinite Individual in the multitudes of You !

I now think no more of being your guest but of my God.

There are some who hate me and turn me out of doors, and others who offer me the gay welcome of the Spring-Blossom !

And I now wonder how some of you should be of such meagre selves and others of such infinite souls so very much like gods !

And I look upon the myriad-mooded multitude as a mere vehicle of the infinite mercy of God

Now it is the same to me if I put my head on a wayside stone to sleep, or on the most luxurious eider-feather cushion put under my head by the most charming beauty. I remember my god and utter my thankfulness to Him for ever and ever !

God's grace is enough;

No human help can be enduring !

* * * *

I go smiling both through your love and hate, for to me each is a different tone of His speech, His sweet speech.

He has a million hearts to love me and a million hands to give me His gifts;

He spreads His million arms to save me from all calamitous happenings.

He may save me through you this time and the next, it may be quite a stranger whose abundance of love might make you all blush;

I recognise no names and faces, but in you all, His face whose smiles bathe me and whose sweet words adorn my very soul.

* * * *

And when the world hates me,

I cling to Him still more furiously as a frail woman grips with her twining arms her tall powerful lover.

* * * *

To me Thy love is sweeter than lover of mother, sister, wife and children; amid them I feel I am Thy guest, O Lord of Love !

The moment they bestow on me their most exclusive service and love, I know it is Thou inspiring their affectionate hearts !

* * * *

Whenever I dotted on the best of friends and forgot Thee, charmed by their love and its abundance, I invariably found an illusion haunted me. Friendship got embittered for causes that were too petty to consider. Little sand-grains assumed the size of huge mountains and our loving hearts felt burdened. Yet on the whole, when now I see looking backwards, those mighty reasons were as soot and smoke, the solid reasons of our falling out were as rotten fruits full of maggots.

* * * *

"They who glorify the little particles of the goodness of their friends into large things as high as mountains, and speak of their own mountains of love as mere particles have the truth of comradeship with them," Tulsi Das.⁴

* * * *

When thou comest and fillest me again with the rich and careless abundance of Thy boundlessness, I wonder why I ever misunderstood anyone, even my so-called foes, in this world of blind understanding and still more blind actions. I then rise and pass out of my selfishness to Thee in Thy Image in the face-mirrors of Thy Creation. And I find no one beautiful enough for my service and love. There is Thy Glory in the frisking of fawns, in the bleating of lambs. Ah ! the young ones of horses and donkeys and bears and the tiny stripped squirrels are all so beautiful ! And how much more the children of Adam !

* * * *

I go away from Thee again and again.

Thou didst ask me to stay a day more with Thee, but I went away turning my back on my Sun and playing with the lamps of the glow-worms flying before me !

4. The great seventeenth century author of *Ramayana*, the epic on the life of Rama, the supreme Hindu God.

But wherever I went, I felt still Thy hands of blessing soothing me, and my heart always drunk with joy. Try as I may, I can never go away from Thy House nor turn my back on Thee, whatever else I may do. The whole Universe is as much Thy Palace as Thy little hut where Thou dwellest, MY KING !

When I see people formally praying and trying to speak to Thee. Beloved ! in measured and ceremonial accents, I feel I am trailing behind them with lame steps, I can never utter so polished a prayer and one so rich in form. Have they seen you? And do they not know that the flesh of man has countless tongues, and that one has nothing on earth or in Heaven to pray for, if once these myriad tongues open and sing of the joy of Thy love ?

* * * *

I have thus become the possession of anyone who might care to own me for the moment. I have lost my credit with everyone, and I have gained more than even with my God. I keep my engagements with no one—for who can tell whose exclusive possession I shall be the next moment ? In this way, I have become as I should say, a passive universalist. I love the whole universe passively, giving it the fragrance of my concentration in His love. The memory of love, even if it be for the twinkling of an eye, sticks to my flesh, and after centuries, they would feel in my clay, the fragrance of their own affections they showered on me.

Society to me is as the pond's water to the lotus. I am absorbed in the beauty of my own blossom, almost forgetful and careless of the infinite provision made by God for me. I am quite a small thing, but I am dumb with wonder, how much the hidden powers of the universe flatter the individual caprices of beauty.

* * * *

I cannot breathe without man and his world surrounding me, yet I feel his society is only to set me off in my individual loveliness. If it does not, I quit it and go wherever I get that service from Nature. They think I am so vain in giving them up and instead, tending lovingly the fawns of the forest,⁵ and lavishing my affection on the

5. An authentic autobiographical touch.

pure glow of flowers.

But human society does not see that if the individuals are devoured by it, it becomes a monster, eating its own children like the serpent. Sick of its monstrous tendencies, I retire into myself and veil my face and refuse to see anyone. But I would fling my veil off when I find human society strung once again in the spirit of true comradeship in life, in death, and even beyond.

* * * *

The crowds of men are like the old-world princes and the atmosphere around both is similar. Only buffoons and courtesans can play the tunes that they are paid for. The sublime Dante is always out of court here for he cannot please as others can. It is impossible for a true man to descend to these wretched levels. So the saint of Nam rapt in his visions of Beyond, living in the society of Immortals, flies for his very life from the crowds. And no one can understand why he so flies.

"Better go and drown yourself in the flowing river, than come in rapport with men who are fractions of themselves,— the broken ones the *Saktas*."⁶

—Kabir in *Guru Granth*

SELF-EFFACEMENT

My being active in the service of mankind is not given to me now. As long as I had not seen Him, the Beloved, I was terribly active as all volcanoes are. I robbed others of their life, labour and love, even mind and soul, I took pride in being now in digging than my fellow-beings. But I believe now in digging my own heart and sinking deeper and deeper in the sea of myself. I lie prone wherever He leaves me; I rise whenever He raises me. I am both His Sword and His reed-flute.

* * * *

MIRA BAI OF RAJPUTANA UNVENOMS THE SNAKE

Whenever I am, full of the *Sweetness* of His favour, the serpent's bite has no venom for me, nor the mad elephant any fury. I am the passive lover and the lions crouch at my feet. The kingdom of love

6. A materialist, an egoist, seeker of power.

of my Beloved extends to the hearts of the wild beasts.

"The snake is sent by the king
This too is the messenger of my love."

—Mira Bai

* * * *

MY RELIGION RINGS WITH HEROIC PEACE

His Nām is a lullaby songs in my ears by the angels through my own lips. I am wrapt in sound sleep all day long while my body is acting, and all night long, while it is as dead. I am a myriad others. I know not yet. My religion is ineffable peace that glows with life; not dead peace, but the peace that is also ringing heroically in the music of war.

RELIGIOUS FEELING GROWS BEST SUBCONSCIOUSLY

I feel I am denying Him if I disturb my mind for getting up a special attitude of prayer or a special pose for expression of ecstasy.

If I wish to go to paradise. I bodily go wherever it is. By earthly means Paradise is not attained. What use trying to build the snow-peaks of the Himalayas with the bricks burnt in our kiln !

* * * *

My religion of Nām is therefore, devoid of any anxiety even for its own sake. Rest, leisure of soul, rapture of life in its deep and red glow as it comes to a new Bride when sleeping by the side of her lover is religion. My religion is *the glorious moment* become *endless*, the moment of quenching all thirsts, the fulfilment of all desires, the eternal union of love.

* * * *

The freshness of my feeling is of the face of a holy virgin. I throb with the sacred thrill of the ringing of the bells of all the temples of the world.

* * * *

BETTER YOUR DEEDS CLEANSE YOUR MIND THAN IT REEK IN SMOKE OF SICK FEELINGS

One day, a holy man was passing alone when he was teased by some wag, so much was he annoyed that he returned the unkind compliments. "Sir ! it is given in scriptures that anger is not one of

the virtues of the saint,"—said a foolish, book-ridden admirer of his.

"If scriptures say that you should hug the fire that burns you, I believe more in myself than in scriptures," he replied. "I do not think any of my human virtues can be reduced by religion to such impotence as not to enable me to retain and exercise my sovereignty over my own anger, or another passion inherent in me as man, as animal, as saint no less."

"My peace is a rose blooming amid thorns. Some times I think of it in terms of thorns, sometimes in terms of its own loveliness."

RENUNCIATION

by

OMAR KHAYYAM¹

DIVINE RIPENESS OF LOVE IS RENUNCIATION

Renunciation is sickness, if we think of renouncing by making up our minds to tear the little tendrils of our consciousness that so passionately cling round the nearest "thorns". If we break away like this, we dissipate our life in striking our little heads against hard rocks. Here are a young lad and a young lass. They fall in love under a wayside tree. She goes with him, leaving everything behind and he takes her away, renouncing all. They go and fill the lonely corners of life with the bustle of joy of their sacrifice, never thinking if they have made any sacrifice at all. What a miracle ! The woman trusts the man and he trusts the woman. And clinging passionately to each other, they pass alone the path of love and life, cooing to each other the little lyrics of the soul.

This is Renunciation. Do not think of renouncing the worlds' activity, do not think of giving up your wife and child, for you know not that it is only the ripe fruit that leaves of itself the tree. And all these clings of your consciousness are props for the support of your inner life. They are chains undoubtedly if your inner life is already stunted. Renunciation is, in other words, the true ripeness of inner manhood. The Son of Man ripens into the Son of God, and there is His Bride of Heaven waiting for him !

But with such renunciations, Heaven itself is made rich. God himself brightens up with the iridescence of this New Union.

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1. While claims have been entered for Omar Khayyam being a mystic, he in reality is a kind of philosopher of hedonistic pessimism. That is what comes out in his Rubaiyyat; made famous by the western world. The author here has gone in for famous names in the world of literature and thought. The choice of such names is a mixed lot as far as the communication of the meaning of religion and its experience is concerned.

THE JOY OF UNION IS SOUNDLESS

I wonder why people make so much noise in calling upon God. Their beating of drums looks an empty sounding of little pebbles in a tin can. I again give you an illustration from life. The lover of a mere woman shuts all doors, extinguishes all lights, draws down curtains, and behind the veils meets his beloved. He is jealous of that rich joy. These hymn singers go singing all their life and sending up their muezzin-cries in the empty air. Surely God is no reality to such as these. For, if the sweetness of a woman takes a man to the pure silence of the soul, how much intenser must be the killing situation of the union of God ?

* * * *

The virtue of silence in the practice of *Simrin* is the dumb reseatedness of the temper of the Saints of *Simrin*. To adopt a phrase from Emerson, the universe is there to lend them a spark, a spark which might keep them aglow with His love that glistens far behind in the serene depths of their black eyes. Physical beauty is nothing to them and yet, at times, everything, for it might lend them a flash which would kindle for the moment the Flower of the Heart with a new Rose blush. As soon as this lightning strikes them, their eyes close and they sink deep into their own beauty. The jerky suddenness with which they sink deep into the hidden Nectarine Lakes, leaving the whole dear world on the dry shore, proves they are pure souls, not bodies; divine glows of flowers, yet not flowers, flashes that come and rest and sink in the eyes of devotion.

Saints are white Lotus floating on the blue waters unwetted by the profusion around ! "I do not desire thrones nor crowns nor kingdoms; nor I am after the occult powers that Yoga confers;

Nor this way of Greatness,

My soul is a bee of thy Lotus-Foot, O Love !!

I desire to be drawn eternally inward to Thee, slumber in Thee,
my Love !"

(Guru Granth)

(based on Sri Raga, Mahalla 1)²

* * * *

2. See in the original the hymn opening : "*Moti ta mandir usrai ratnin ta hoe jarau*" (Sri Raga).

I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO DO GOOD

by

A DWELLER ON THE GLACIERS

THE CRUCIFIXION MINDS OF MEN ARE FULL OF THE DAY'S DUST AND DIRT AND POETIC MINDS OF THE DREAMERS OF PURE LOVE OF GOD SUFFER DAILY CRUCIFIXION IF THEY OPEN THEMSELVES OUT TO THE WORLD

A Sikh Sister said : "It took me five hours of mechanical recitation of the Hymns of the Guru—Hymns every word of which is a shining diamond adorning my soul—Ah ! what bitterness that I fell from my great heights of His grace and such beautiful things looked like pebbles; and all this while I felt as if I was licking pebbles to no purpose to wash my self clean of the filth that my company with those 'forgetful of God' threw on me. "Do not ask me to get off my veil now, I cannot see anyone, lest again, I should have to waste my life passing through another purgatory. Better alone. Better covered up in a hundred veils, than suffer from the pains of reading the "Love letters of my Beloved"—His hymns—with love all dead in me. "They say I am so proud, I hate men and women. But tell me, what can I do when they come and I meet them quite innocently and yet whether consciously or unconsciously, they rob me of my pure feelings, which to me is my only beauty, nay my only chastity, my only honour. They may not know they rob me, I may not be able to explain who robs me and how, but after meeting them, I have to pass like Sita through the ordeal of fire to become pure again."

"Those who must meet these strangers, must. But I have no need of them, nor they of me. I fly within under my veils. Brothers, it entails hard labour and great suffering for me, if I get up to do good to others. I cannot. This is the state to which lovelessness has reduced me !

A noble Sikh lady never permitted any of her neighbours to use her oven for baking bread. Instead, she took their kneaded flour, did extra work for them, and did the baking for them herself and gave them her own sweating labour, gave them the bread readymade, but she kept them standing outside her own line of self-protection !! She was a strange, spiritual genius, though she never stopped to parley with people. She spoke mystically and in short sentences. Questioned by a new-comer why she took all that trouble instead of letting the people come in and bake their own bread in her oven, she said :

"They come and put so many ghosts in my oven."

* * * *

The early Christians when they drew a cross in the air against any danger must have been cognisant of these "ghosts" of other people coming and contaminating their aura. "Even an artist does not care to give his brush into another's hands. An author clings to his pen. Too many feet trespassing into his room, as says Emerson, entail weariness for the true artist. Dust gathers in his mind, and he cannot permit the dispersed minds that the general confused people bring into his room.

* * * *

This all looks so 'dualistic' and almost aristocratic, but those who toil hard for the maintenance of the spiritual atmosphere and their moral tone, cannot fling away their hard-earned aura in democratic sympathy. It is, as Jesus says, throwing pearls before swine.

* * * *

The Sikh knows that the inner wealth of grace is in the nature of a capital borrowed from the Guru. He has given it to him for nurturing the virtue of faith. When man is completed, there is the perfume of perfection around him, which is good for all creation. It is then that the Sikh is sent out as a preacher, to lend beauty to the surroundings, of his own glowing presence. He becomes a vehicle of the gift of the Guru, and goes on giving as He directs. Nothing is his own, his body is only a medium for Power behind, to display

themselves in his actions, thoughts and feelings. The Sikh realizes that the capital of grace given by the Guru is not for squandering. He feels he has no right to give gifts out of the wealth that is not his in any sense. It is this great humility which is misunderstood by the multitude as something resembling the pride of aristocracy and the dark ignorance of the dualistic consciousness.

Many a time, the Initiates feel as if by meeting a muddy character, a mud basket has actually been thrown on the crystal stream of their hearts overflowing with feeling, and they see in a physical sense the rapid washing off the mud and the water regarding its own transparency. This is the power of the Guru washing the consciousness of the disciple by the inflow of Guru-consciousness. Man is then as a fountain; he drives away impurity before its gushing stream. This inner life is exquisitely aesthetic, and its needs are aristocratic in all the artistic and noble senses, but full at the same time of submission to the Guru.

The man of *Simrin* has a delicate balance within him whose pans oscillate heavily by the weight even of an hair. Men and their thoughts, events and their thoughts, events and their foreshadowings, the books and buildings—all are judged by him, as they affect his balance. He grows omniscient by reading the omens in the shadows of men and things that are cast on him. "God is in Heaven and all is well"—is a metaphysical generalisation. The state of mind of the saint of *Simrin* is—"God is in me and all is well." He is gifted with the vision celestial. The two breaths of the same breeze may be different for him, one giving him acute pain, and the other acute pleasure. Two little violets might delight him and the gift of two kingdoms be a curse to him. Such a genius as said above is omniscient. The worlds of souls revolve in his gaze, and he is extremely jealous of his absolute independence.

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None of us from below can stand the "insane" inconsistency of such a god, his infinitely large temper. Sometimes he is speaking to the dead, we understand not, and pass him by, considering him uniquely read. At others, he is brooding over the personality that is

to take its birth and we understand him not. When he glows up and gets ready to trample mountains of the old systems under his feet to start new ones, we understand him not. We think he is another warrior like the warriors that rattled their sabres and ran amuck in the world. We misunderstand him altogether both in his strength and weakness, because he has the misfortune to be masquerading in a body like ours for some appointed work amongst us. We imprison him, torture him, crucify him both by our love and our hatred, for we understand him not. His thought is so simple and so strange that unless it is clothed in the clay of language, we find it impossible to follow him. So he kills himself for our sake, to make his thoughts take root somewhere on the earth—for in them is the saving grace of God. And the man has to be rescued from his arch-enemy, his own self!!

"Great is the distress of the little "I" and as great it is as its own cure."¹

—Guru Granth

1. This is a distant rendering of an affirmation in Var Asa : "*Haumai diragh rog hai daru bhi is mahen.*"

THE KHALSA OF GURU GOBIND SINGH

by

GANDHARVAS, SONGSTERS OF THE MIDAIR

THE FESTIVAL OF THE BURNING LAMPS

Men assemble around an inspired Apostle of *Simrin* in all ages, where under his magnetic, personal influences, magnetic through God-given inspiration, through the Authority of the Powerful Ones on high, they suddenly drop their petty selves. They then become lamps that light the human heart. And thus when the Disciples gather, it is a veritable festival of Lamps, a *Deepavli*. The Buddha thus made the *Sangha*. The Guru initiated thus the *Sangat* in the Punjab.

* * * *

THE SON IS THE FATHER TOO

The *Sangat* is composed exclusively of inspired men who like wedded women, have dedicated their bodies and souls to a great Love—the Guru's personality. Each unit of the Guru-*Sangat* has in him the potentiality of the Guru Himself. Once a Punjabi Pharisee come and asked a devotion-ripened Sikh if he arrogated to himself the dignity and position of the Guru and dared to sow the seed of *Nām* ! The devotee calmly replied, "Who dare condemn me so baselessly ? No one can know what I am to Him and He to me. But every Sikh and Disciple of the Guru, however, has the potentiality in him, of His Heavenly Father, to be a father himself, and be capable of impregnating dead humanity with the seed of life. I am the son, that is, the father also."*

* * * *

THE ASSEMBLY A VEHICLE OF HIS SPIRIT

Of such powerful men is the Sikh *Sangat* composed. At least

*Those repeating the Name become the Named by incessant naming of Him.

once in history, it was so. It assembled around the Throne of the Ten Gurus¹, and there the individual came and merged himself, into the Infinite Individual, the Guru, whose myriad faced, myriad-handed. Reflection was the Sangat. It was called Sadh-Sangat, the Holy Assembly. To such a unique Assembly of Perfected Individuals, to this galaxy of glowing geniuses of love, the Guru himself paid homage with his divine humility. The Tenth Guru thus sings the praise of his own beloved Khalsa :

"They make me what I am,
For there are many like me that
all forlorn, waste away alone !"²

Those whom Guru Gobind Singh praises in such glowing terms and for whom he melts away in supreme emotion on many occasions, they alone can compose the Sikh Sangat, the Khalsa. It is the Assembly of "Guru Gobind Singhs" as all bodies of His Sikhs, the disciples, are only the vehicle of His spirit. The majesty and spiritual splendour of this ideal group of "*Guru Gobind Singhs*", which had been the dream of Guru Nanak, and which Guru Gobind Singh named "*Khalsa*" is but the root of the kingdom of Righteousness planted in the garden of Anandpur. Angels and gods of Heaven walked in His shape in the wild forests of liberty. This was the *Khalsa*, the chosen, the Glorious, the myriad forms of the one Guru' *Gobind Singh* !

* * * *

THE KHALSA IS OF HEAVEN RATHER THAN OF THE EARTH

This Khalsa can be seen even now with the eyes of faith in a trance. Heaven rolls aside its veils to show the Sikh Sangat in its divine hero, to the eyes of intense devotion that hunger to see the great group of this Guru Gobind Singh in myriad-forms, that is the Khalsa.

* * * *

Do not tell me, the majestic Khalsa can be seen in a world

1. The Holy Granth, also called Guru Granth.

2. Original :

*In hi ki kripa ke saje ham hain,
Nahin mo se garib karor pare.*

restlessly clutching at shimmering shadows, taking them as real under a spell of self-hypnotisation caused by men entangled in their own delusions of *Maya*. Pearls are not found in such shallow waters !

* * * *

THE LAMP OF MAN

Guru Gobind Singh sings passionately of the Khalsa again—
 "He in whose Heart burns unflickering
 the Lamp of Nām, day and night,
 Know him the Khalsa, the pure !"³

* * * *

Such an individual is a million in Himself,
 And has the strength of millions.

* * * *

SPIRITUAL EXALTATION

It is not in idle fancy, but in solemn self-affirmation, when one Akali calls himself the "Host of the Khalsa" and his arithmetic begins not with the figure, but with 1,25,000, *Sava Lakh*, as one. This is significant of his inner spirit, its exaltation, its power and its divine abandon. Whole nations march at his word. Akali Phula Singh so strangely impressed the overwhelming hordes of the Pathans against whom he was pitted near the Indus that they fled before him, seeing the skies streaming with the Akalis of the same shape as Phula Singh⁴ himself, and that each Pathan saw himself pursued post-haste by dozens of *Phula Singhs*, and dozens of his naked swords they saw flashing before and behind, when all the while Akali Phula Singh stood almost alone against overwhelming odds. This is the spiritual vision of the Khalsa, which catches fire as soon as the Khalsa flings open the little window of the Infinite in him.

* * * *

Each one is the society of the Saints of *Simrin*—the Khalsa—has the infinite abundance of Heaven at his back. Nothing is lacking in him. The Guru from his great Treasure of Love grants him

3. Based on an old *Swayya* of a bard's composition.

4. Leader of a band of Sikh crusades in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time, known as *Akalis* or *Nihangs*.

everything. In the Trance-bound realisation of the same self in all, I am all I serve.

* * * *

THE FOUNDATIONS LAID IN DREAMS

The outer conditions of physical life remain unequal all the same, but the heart of man has, in the rich intoxication of the inner abundance of the Guru, become limitless in its givings and forgivings. And on this continuous exchange of soul and on the basis of an intoxicated memory of the sweetness of human Nature, are laid the deep foundations of the social structure of the Khalsa society. Service of each other is more pleasure than duty in every Sikh's home. His physical existence is to be spent in the service of love that seeks no reward on earth or in Heaven, except that in the service of the Assembly of the Saints of *Simrin*, the *Sadh-Sangat*, lies fulfilment of life itself. This is Discipleship as universal as the human heart itself that beats with love and breathes the spirit of God. It is as rare as the true man." "I see God everywhere, but I do not see man"said a philosopher.⁵

* * * *

Bhai Taru Singh's⁶ tragic death is put before us in words of blood, but his inner life has yet to be told in its life-streams of the milk of devotion to the present day Sikhs, for he lived even more nobly than he died. Immersed in the flowing Ganga of Nām, living in his village hut, tilling the soil and growing grain, unknown to the world outside, being a simple Sikh, yet a man of tremendous devotional power in the guise of a simple ploughman, Bhai Taru Singh is forever the true type of the Khalsa, one devoted to the Name and one in many and many in one. Such was the miracle of the presence of Guru Gobind Singh in the heart of the humble disciple. His sister was no less; she was a lady who was always in the transport of faith and who bodily went everybody to *Sach Khand*, the blessed spiritual Abode of the Guru, and bathed in light that shines there at the feet of the Master. Both brother and sister sought the joys of Nirvana in service. Service of such as these is the spontaneous love-

5. Perhaps the great Persian mystic Jalaluddin Rumi is referred to.

6. Afamous Sikh martyr of the eighteenth century. His skull was broken with scalpels.

offerings akin in its spirit of giving, to the fragrance of flowers. It is the natural functioning of their God-intoxicated spell. As water cools and refreshes, as breezes blow, as clouds rain, so are the Sikhs in devotion to the Master kind to the entire creation and dedicated to the service of the Lord's vineyard. There did gather once the Saints to breathe the angelic atmosphere of Bhai Taru Singh's little hut and partake of his dry crust, dipping every morsel in the nectar of Nām. When the Sikh's heart flows as the river of love, floods of God's mercy overflow all banks and the parched land around is enriched thereby.

* * * *

ABUNDANCE OF LOVE'S SERVICE

In this infinite abundance of service in the Name of the Beloved, lies the secret of the equality of men and women and their complete social emancipation from the thralldom both of the false religions and false systems of social thought. The conquered and the conquerors bury their hatchet in the purity of their motives of being free and making others free as angels are in Heaven, and both come and meet in the inner peace of the Infinite that has burnt all carnal desires and has damned the springs of dual consciousness just as the dual consciousness vanishes in sleep ! In the Guru's Sangat assembled, kings wash utensils and wipe dust from the sandals of the Saints, who might be 'low-caste' in ordinary reckoning. Differences of rank and race vanish in the complete negation of the little "I", pierced by the keen sword-edged ecstasy granted by the Master. And the differences subsist as before in the division of social service which is imbued with an altogether new outlook and dedication. A change of hearts, the true inner conversion, is the scheme of the Guru, not the change of scene, for wherever one goes, his Ego goes with him. Dip the Ego in the Infinite, wash it clean of dualistic action and thought by the supremacy of the rapture of self-realization.

* * * *

ONE IN MANY

The initiate sees in the heart of the Khalsa the Guru Himself

enthroned. It so happened that I once sat in the midst of the select few that gathered round in Apostle of *Simrin* and we were all glowing in dumb ecstasy as the flowery bushes wave in the morning air, when I saw, in a vanishing flash, the figure of the Master reposing in the little transparent bosoms of the new initiates. And now I saw how one could be so many ! The Brothers, the Khalsa are dear not for their physical relics, for all bodies are clay, but for the holy image of the Guru they carry in their being ! For a moment when the Guru visits the heart-mansions of the Initiates, the latter are transformed into the glorious Khalsa !!

* * * *

THE SIKH WOMAN

Never was eastern or western woman so free as when she rose like Sundari,⁷ the nurse-sister of the Khalsa in times when the Sikh were pitched against the Mughal Empire. Sundari chose her own vocation, dedicated her whole freed life as the sister-nurse alike of the Khalsa and his foes.

* * * *

The Sikh woman as brave a soldier of the Guru as her brother. The sister of Bhai Taru Singh was waylaid by Muslim ruffians as she was going with a basket of food for the Khalsa in the forest. She warned them, they did not listen. They attacked her, when like a flash of lightning woke her Kirpan sleeping by her side, and the sister defended the honour of the Khalsa. Her foe lay wounded by her side as she fell in a pool of her sacred blood. The Khalsa appeared on scene, all of a sudden, and saw what had happened. A jug of water was brought to comfort her last gasps, but she told them to give it to her Muslim assailant, lying wounded.

* * * *

DEMOCRACY

Democracy, the dream of modern civilisation was established in this part of Asia in the exact modern sense in the realisation of the spirit of Man. And the mortal fallacies which poison the human

7. The heroine of Bhai Vir Singh's novel of that name, of which the sense is laid in the eighteenth century amidst the Sikh-Mughal struggle.

thought among the Soviets, were avoided by the Khalsa. The Khalsa made democracy its daily practice, driven by the inner feeling, that is reborn of the spirit of the Guru that all men are brothers. Democracy is not conceived as a social system, but as a rue inner spirit-born feeling. Democracy is the moral feeling that naturally wells up in the Informed Ones.

The humblest brick-lifter has equal rights of joy and life with the king. A labourer who feels richer than a king and a king who feels poorer than a labourer; this is democracy of the spirit. Their self, their I was realised as the Guru's self in every Sikh. The glorious Guru Gobind Singh called this commonwealth the Khalsa, his son and laid the infant in the lap of the Mother—Mata (Mother) Sahib Devan.⁸ Physical birth became by this act of love a negligible accident. And the Khalsa stood bound by its moral rebirth as one individual, one person, the Son of Guru Gobind Singh.

* * * *

The alternative of the outer condition of life, even political revolutions cannot secure the equal distribution of land and wealth and labour; they cannot transmute human nature. Unless the change be wrought within, the volcanoes will burst forth again, and the lava shall flow as before, and all our levelling of conditions will be in vain ! The Guru visualized this and leaving the outer surface of human nature untouched, changed the inner springs of action.

* * * *

MINGLING OF A THOUSAND RIVERS

The Khalsa is like the meeting of a thousand rivers mingling their currents of the Ambrosia of Nām. Here is the great sacred confluence for the world to bathe in the water of sinlessness. The baptism of the Khalsa as initiated by Guru Gobind Singh is the lending of the spiritual personality of the Guru's chosen. Five to the Initiates for them to start on the path of discipleship with power and courage.

It will be a pity if it ever becomes an empty ceremony in the hands of men devoid of that nucleus of the life of the spirit.

8. Guru Gobind Singh's wife : She is called Mother of the Khalsa. Hers is a noble story of the sacrifice of the joys of conjugal life.

THE SONG OF THE AKALI

by

THE SWORDSMAN THAT GOES BEFORE THE SUN

I am of God's Temple,
Brother of the Way ! Let me kiss
Your feet, let me rub on
my forehead the dust
of your path.

Over us is God, Brother ! Over us is He :
Are you thirsty ?

I shall run to the well, throw the bucket in, slipping a long
hemp line with speed and draw it up full of water for you;
I shall bring you the draught, sweet and cool to refresh your
soul by my humble love-perfumed service;
You shall drink and rest and lie quiet under the shade of a
road-side tree; I shall massage your tired limbs, and kiss
you in my soul as you sleep by the roadside !

Over us is God, Brother ! Over us is He.

* * * *

Are you hungry ?

I have a handmill, to grind for you wheat, I will knead the
flour, and bake it into bread for you.

There is plenty, Brother, there is plenty.

Are you naked ?

My mother and sister and wife have gathered the cotton of
Punjab, they ginned it and spun it and wove this yarn of
love into cloth for you. Wear them and be glad. They
were made for you !

There is Guru's Plenty, Brother ! Plenty !

* * * *

The fingers of the Sikh man and woman work—
 Work work, work ceaselessly. We create wealth, it is the product
 of our labour in the love of the Guru's commonwealth.
 And know, all is added unto us. There is Guru's plenty,
 Brother ! Plenty !

* * * *

I am of the Country of Man,
 I was born in the Heart of Man,
 This is my native land !
 Come Brother of the way, come;
 I am on way to Hari Mandir.¹
 I see you are the Temple yourself,
 O Disciple of the Guru !
 What golden domes resound in you !
 I hear the song of eternal comradeship in you.
 Who are you ? I feel you are a brother to me, born of the same
 mother, that have met me after an age-long separation !

* * * *

Come, Brother, come.
 Do not be fettered here with mere dreams; there yonder is the
 Hari Mandir, around which the blue lakes of nectar wave
 day and night;
 There is the song of the Guru ! whose echoes are in me.
 Come, Brother! come.
 I am on way to the Golden Temple.

* * * *

"I see the nectarean lakes in your eyes,
 You are the music of fellowship."
 I see the light of God on your face.
 Slacken your pace,
 Let me behold you,
 Be with me for a while, O strangest of strange Men !
 Good-bye. Remember me when you get weary of collecting

1. *Lit.* Temple of God—the proper name of the holy Golden Temple at Amritsar.

poppies and staining your hands with their blood.
 Remember me ! I am of the City of Joy.²
 My name is—"Blessed be Guru Gobind Singh".
 All other names are illusions, conventions, self-deceptions.
 Remember this one Hymn—the Name³ has in it the secret of life.
 This is a star burning day and night in my eyes.
 Look at the star,
 Follow the gleam.
 And passion, O brother of the Way.
 Life is a glorious passing away.
 I am born of the flash of the Sword,⁴
 And my speech is thunder;
 I do not compromise with darkness, I tear its belly with my
 rapiers of lightning;
 Terrible is the sight of the dazzling tangle of the flashes of my
 rapless, striking right and left and destroying.
 You are not born of steel ?
 No !!
 The sheen of steel is of the colour of the soul.
 And lightning of the Sword-flash is of the gleam Unknown.
 * * * *
 Only little birds quiver, their eyes are dazzled and they hide in
 their nests when the sword-like moves on the face of the
 restless blades of lightning;
 But I tell you the smiting scimitar has in it the white sparkle of
 the bow of God.
 Put a sword in the belt of the Sikh youth,
 And give him the draught stirred with the Guru's dagger,
 And let his soul shine as sharp as the edge of lightning.
 And he should stand up along in the universe to match the
 strength of his arms with the arms of the Sun.
 * * * *

2. This is the literal rendering of Anandpur, the town sanctified by Guru Gobind Singh.

3 The mystic term for the Divine Essence.

4. At the creation of the Order of the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh flashed his sword, symbolizing the crusading spirit and sacrifice.

We fell as a rain of Kirpan⁵-flashes on the ghosts of darkness;
 Do you remember when the invaders from the North came and
 laid chains on the tender wrists of hundreds of Hindu
 Punjabi wives and daughters and marched them as
 bondwomen bound for Kabul ?⁶

When on the banks of the Chenab the miscreants met the Sword-
 Tempest of the Khalsa, and the separated birdmates were
 rescued from the claws of the birds of prey, and they met
 again, those from whom they had been cruelly separated !

* * * *

This life is a theatre of war,
 And I am strangely excited when singing war-songs,
 And when I die, there too I fight my way though a host of black
 ghosts yonder to the shining ones;
 As long as a single man has the way of the ferocious tiger and
 the wolf in him still unforgot, I cannot lay down my Kirpan,
 nor unstring my bow.
 God is a little child and I have to fight saving Him from all
 harm that comes from these tigers prowl on the earth in
 the guise of men.
 I do not sleep and dream when I am on the battlements,
 And when I die, I die to save my God who is a little child.

* * * *

5. Kirpan, from Skt. the characteristic Sikh name for the sword.
 6. Recalls an incident of Sikh chivalry which occurred around the sixities of the eighteenth century.

THE FEAST OF FLESH AND BLOOD

by

THE PEARL-SOWERS IN THE SKY

DEATH IS THE BRIDE OF THE BRAVE

If peace, inward peace, is essential for the growth of the Sikh's personality, the abundance of sacrifice, the profuse spilling of the blood of saints lends its tragic inspiration for the growth of the Khalsa. Such has been its past history; so it shall be. Fresh red shoots now must blossom into their full glory ! Death, apparent death, is embraced by the Khalsa as no lover ever embraced his sweetheart. The Khalsa dies like the dashing waves of the sea, creating in the wake of its death millions more like itself. The life-breath of the Khalsa thus is losing its apparent life to gain its life everlasting.

In the ideal of the Khalsa, one can see the ideal spirit of the passionate love of death for the sake of life as is seen in the Bushido of the Samurai of Old Japan. In that fervour of Yamoto, the physical life turns all into a little moth flickering its wings in infinite impatience to die. Death is the bride of the brave.

* * * *

GURU TEGH BAHADUR PLACES HIMSELF BETWEEN THE TIGER AND THE HERD¹

The Brahmans of Kashmir come and pray that they should be saved from the wolves of the Mughal Government. Guru Tegh Bahadur goes to Delhi and dies for them. They are saved by his sacrifice.

Guru Gobind Singh at the fortress of Chamkaur girds a sword

1. Guru Nanak in *Babarvani* uses this symbolism—Babar's soldiery is the tiger, the Indian people the helpless herd.

round the waist of his young son, Ajit Singh, attires him in green velvet, and binds the Sikh turban on his tresses with his own hands and sends him out to fight with the Mughal hosts. The Prince of the Khalsa dies fighting even as his other brothers in faith reborn of the spirit of the Guru ! Again Jujhar Singh, younger than Ajit Singh, folds his hands and stands before the father, praying for a similar glorious death

"Too young yet, my son ! art thou for it; wait for a little while longer."

"No" says the child; "I have sucked of the same breast; and age should not stand in the way of my receiving God's mercy as did my brother."

The Guru takes the child in his arms, kisses him on the forehead, bathes his face with glory, attires him as the Guru's soldier and puts a little scimitar in his tiny belt ! On rides Jujhar Singh to where lies his brother on the field. But he feels thirst and he wheels back his horse and asks his father for a cup of water.

THE CUP OF WATER IS IN HEAVEN

"My child ! Go, the cup of water for you is there held in the hands of your brother who stands waiting for you yonder." And Jujhar Singh goes and falls on the swords of his foes; his body is cut to pieces, but his spirit ascends to heaven winging. And there go the two Princes of the Khalsa, arm in arm to the Land of Light, singing, 'Hail the Glorious Lord !'²

* * * *

THE SONG DIES, YET LIVES

Two other young sons, little children, Fateh Singh and Zorawar Singh suffer the torture of being buried alive in the brick wall of Sirhind, and they too die singing 'Hail the Glorious Lord !' And everlastingly they live in the homage of millions morning and evening.

* * * *

GOD DIES THAT MAN MAY LIVE

It is not what the small intellects say—'Martyrdom'—sacrifice

2. Wah Guru, the Sikh name for God.

and call these mighty truths of the exchange of Divine Life-blood by such small names. When God has poured Himself into Man thereby, and for one spark of freedom, a thousand lightnings have to die, it is a cosmic process of making the human spirit live. Nothing else can impart the life of the spirit.

Such was the flooding of the Guru's soul into the soul of the Khalsa in that infinite abundance of the oceans of love over which the spirit of God broods.

The sudden realisation of the freedom of the human soul, that came to the down-trodden, suppressed people of the Punjab, people who had been serfs and slaves for centuries, demanded the sacrifice of the Sons of God.

It was freedom won with the Guru's life-blood. It is freedom still in His Name, in His Remembrance.

OUT OF THE SWORD-STIRRED WATERS

by

THE BLUE-COLOURED CHURNERS OF THE SEA¹

COLOURED CRIMSON

The Khalsa is thus coloured Crimson with soul of Guru Gobind Singh who, with the jealousy of a true artist who has to undergo so much travail for the birth of a new idea, bade his disciples salute God with the Naked Sword, and guard jealously with the heroic prowess the seed of Truth that he had sown in the fields of their souls.

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SALUTATION TO THE SWORD

The Guru salutes for their sake the sword, the battle-axe, the arrow, and starts a creed in India in which weapons become symbols of divine worship. He mounts guard over the Garden of Man laid by him, lest the wild beasts should enter again and uproot it, and turn it into a wilderness. He replaces the idols of stone and the goddesses of mildewed old superstitions, by the flashing sword in the imagination of people : "*Jai Tegham ! Jai Tegham*".² Here is a unique group of men who have been given a Religion of Arms for freeing slaves and for protecting His Saints.

KAL KIRPAN

The Guru invokes the protection of *Kal Kirpan*, the "*Time Sword*" the "*Death Sword*" for protection of the ideal of the Khalsa embodied in human clay. And by putting a sword in the hand of every slave in the Punjab, he makes him a free man by one draught

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1. "Here the symbolism is two-fold. Blue is the colour of the Akalis, devotee-crusaders for the faith of Guru Gobind Singh. 'Churning' harks back to the Puranic legends of the Churning of the Ocean by the gods and demons, to extract the 'fourteen jewels'."
 2. Hail the holy Sword.

of His sword-stirred,³ Word-born waters of *Simrin*, Nām. Such is Guru Gobind Singh.

* * * *

The Khalsa in its group-manifestation, is like the splendour of a million naked swords. Its sight is truly awe-inspiring. No one dare provoke the Khalsa's wrath. But in the heart of the Khalsa is the Fountain of Hari-Nam. Cut a Sikh and if his little heart the deep dove-coos of the Name of the Beloved are not heard, he is only fuel. The Khalsa is sweet and refreshing like the crystal waters of the Ganga. His presence is immortalizing. He is a blessing in this desire-scorched desert of sense delusions !

* * * *

THIS UNIVERSE IS THE BODY DIVINE OF GOD

The Khalsa has no selfish ends for the aggrandisement of his small self in this warfare of life, because his "I" has already grown by the Grace of the Guru to be large "I" of Humanity itself. He is God. No one need be afraid of the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh, that it would ever think of seeking the bones of material objects. The eyes of the Khalsa are fixed heavenward.

"It opened my eyes and saw that this Universe is the body divine of God; it is Beauty of Hari, Hari!"

—*Guru Granth* (Rāmkali, Anand, xxxvi)

* * * *

THE KHALSA THROWS AWAY KINGDOMS TO THE HUMBLE

Once in the tangled jungles of the Punjab sat the Khalsa reciting the hymns of the Guru. It was a divan of men with kingly spirits. The agent of Nadir Shah approached them with a robe of honour from the great conqueror and emperor, in lieu of some service rendered to him, but there was no one to receive the honour. The Khalsa sat rapt in God. The agent stood for a long while in an awkward position much embarrassed and feeling slighted by the indifferent attitude of the Sikhs. The Khalsa was engaged with a King higher than any earthly potentate. At last one of them announced that a robe of honour

3. Reference is to be Khalsa ceremony, in which holy water stirred with a dagger is administered to those seeking initiation.

had come from Nadir Shah; on whom should it be conferred ?

The divine assembly heeded not, but someone replied, "Let it be conferred on the servant of the Khalsa who attends to the shoes of assembly." The robe of honour was conferred on the servant. The agent of Nadir Shah returned puzzled and put out. He reported to the emperor what had happened. Said the perspicacious Nadir Shah : "From the heart of this nation comes the rich perfume of some great sovereignty."

* * * *

Maharaja Ranjit Singh also realized that his sovereignty of the Sikh monarch was the Viceregency of the Guru, that he never referred to himself as "I". He always said "put this case up to the Huzuri, to the Divine Majesty."

* * * *

Once it is said the Khalsa occupied the throne of Delhi when the Mughal Emperor submitted and acknowledged the power of the Khalsa, the leader Jassa Singh⁴ said—"Ah ! The Khalsa is *atit* (untouched by Maya). What has it to do with thrones"—and gave the throne back to the Mughal.

This one act of elevated consciousness is of the glorious choice of freed souls.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh cried like a bondslave of love, when an embroidered canopy with diamond pendants was spread over him. "Ah ! no, I am not the King. I am His slave." The canopy was sent to the golden Temple, to the Guru, the true sovereign.

The Khalsa has the inner sovereignty of the Kingdom of Heaven. His heart beats like the heart of a conqueror and his mind has the supremacy of the *Sat Sri Akal*⁵ in which it lives immersed. The eyes of the Khalsa, like the Eagles of Liberty gaze into infinite spaces and sweep in their high flights, the great plains of life. The Khalsa has no time for the miserable details of the humdrum mundane world. All that the world holds precious has dropped from his hands, as he

4. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the great leader of the Sikh in the fight against the Afghans and the Mughals in the eighteenth century.

5. Eternal is the holy Lord : the Sikh war-cry and salutation.

lies dead to it in God !

* * * *

LIVING PEACE OF THE SOUL

The Samadhi of Yoga has come out of the old caves of the Himalayas and is seen here moving in the mud-stained limbs of the Khalsa labouring with the plough, in the smithy and the carpenter's work-plank.

In action's storm, I am bidden to sleep,
And the saddle of my horse is the cave for me to meditate;
While ploughing and sowing, I am to fill my throat with the
dove-coos of His Name.

While loving and clinging to my wife and child, I am to float
up like a lotus to receive the Sword-kiss of the Sun of suns.

* * * *

MAN WORSHIPPED

It is man that is worshipped in the Khalsa—neither wealth, nor rank or status. Kings too are glorified labourers and labourers are glorified kings.

The eternal heart-burning are forever quenched in the joys of *Nirvana* that have come equally to all and no one of us has any leisure from the luxurious joys of our Inner Beauty of Self, to note the earthly differences that have been for so long exaggerated by hollow men waging wars of selfish claims in this Maya of the shadows of the inner subjective Realities.

* * * *

EARNING OUR DAILY BREAD IS WORSHIP

In the spirit of Dhanna Bhagat⁶ we eat as well as pray for our daily bread and for our physical needs to put our spirit at peace. Bhagat Dhanna has a whole song on the subject. We have two wings to maintain our balance in the air. Humanity is not deadened or killed, only still more intensified and made divine. God comes down here and Man goes up, and both meet in an ideal sphere where the two co-mingle.

6. A Bhakta of medieval times in Northern India. He is known for his down-to-earth approach to devotion.

"Give me bread and beans twice a day,
 A little butter, my God !
 And a little salt pray !
 Give me a cow with udders brimful of milk,
 And a mare to ride.
 Give me a good wife to love, to serve, to be with,
 this is all your Dhanna needs, this is all he prays for.
 Dhanna is not greedy;
 A little of comfort, pray. Enough to breathe the spirit of God
 on earth,
 And to live in the joy of Nām,
 And if these things are not given to him,
 Pray, here is Thy rosary of beads ! I cannot tell beads unless I
 am quite comfortable."

—*Guru Granth*, in the Measure Dhanasari.⁷

7. The hymn given here is a free and 'distant' rendering.

THE ARROW OF THE MASTER

by
SHAH HUSSAIN¹

THE PAIN OF ECSTASY

Sleep needs no velvet beds; love knows not caste. True religious feeling causes wounds of love deep within; the devotee has no escape from its poignant pangs of ecstasy. Beauty divine kills man with its fatal flashes, and he lives fluttering like a bird pierced with the hunter's arrow. The pain of ecstasy is his prayer. He has seen that Beauty which is seen everywhere and yet is forever beyond the reach of the senses.

I spread my arms in the empty air to embrace it, but my hands cannot clasp it; my arms remain empty, trembling with an unfulfilled desire.

"In a dream you met;
I rushed to clasp you.
But there was only a flash, a glimpse, that eluded my grasp.
Only my arms were quivering in the air with a strange ecstasy!²

—Bhai Vir Singh

"He has killed me now, by one arrow shot at me from His
arched eyebrow, I lie dead. There is no cure for me now,
for the arrow has gone through my heart."

—Bhai Nand Lal³

* * * *

FREEDOM IN SELF-REALIZATION

The religious feeling of this great intensity is as free subjectively

1. A Muslim mystic of the seventeenth century, who lived in Lahore. He was known for his unconventional ways. His lyrics of Divine ecstasy are some of the masterpieces of Punjabi poetry.
2. Free rendering of a famous lyric (Punjabi) of Bhai Vir Singh, the great Punjabi poet.
3. One of the poets who attended on Guru Gobind Singh. He has left fine Persian poetry of Sufistic experience.

as it is restrained in the physical sense. This restraint is not so put on it; it is spontaneous. Wherever the flash of perfect beauty falls on the heart of man, its effect is as of lightning. This vision lifts the human consciousness from the physical plane where it receives the kiss of Beauty, into the salient regions of ecstasy to the pang of separation from it. The devotee of Beauty thus rises and falls into himself. Both the sorrow and joy of the true religious feeling are equally glorious; they react on each other to a still higher fulfilment.

* * * *

A Sikh peasant was noticed continuously to utter the Name of God—"Glory, Glory"—and they of the earth asked him why he repeated the same word to no purpose. "I am not quite well," said he; "my skin smarts, it burns; I feel sharp needles piercing me all over, it is very painful. The air burns me; I perspire, I feel sick; I cry—no one can save me from this hell-fire. And brothers ! the only cure for me is this 'useless repetition' of this pebble-like name 'Wah Guru', 'Wah Guru'. The only cure for me is this repetition of 'Glory', 'Glory' that you think useless. My religion is this licking of saltless rocks."⁴

With this utterance, I feel as if I am having a dip in the Himalayan Ganga.

* * * *

THE KHALSA IS A CRAFTSMAN

The Khalsa Order is primarily *Sadh-Sangat* (Holy assembly). Its function is to aid its individual members to disport in this Himalayan Ganga and in the same intense devotion to the aesthetic practice of "Naming Him" as the Sikh peasant just mentioned. It is the gathering of power in silence and such creation of power in the depths of the soul of a whole people is the real activity of any great people.

* * * *

THE KHALSA IS AS THE BLOSSOMING OF FLOWERS ON A TREE

The physical "struggle for existence" as a mere individual in

4. A phrase taken from the great Sikh poet of spirituality, Bhai Gurudas. It symbolizes the 'tastelessness' in the ordinary sense of prayer.

this intensity of creative love of soul ceases in the individual for it becomes the service of the saints of God, exactly in the same sense as the selfishness of a lover becomes dead in the passion he feels for his sweetheart. The Lover can no more labour for himself because the life as an isolated individual apart from his lady love has truly become meaningless. As a commune, the Khalsa has to struggle for the well-being of its individuals. Its activity on the physical plane in the shape of war or peace with its neighbours is but a manifestation of the occasional outbursts of the inner vitality that is gathered in the soul of community.

INNER VITALITY

In the case of such an idealistic inspired community as this, its social ethics unlike those of the animal society yet unborn to the spirit of communal activity, are not tethered to the apronstrings of any wooden inelastic, dead, codes. We leave our actions entirely in hands of the outburst of our inner vitality. We know it can be trusted. Nothing can go wrong when we live, move and have our being in the Name of God, in continuous remembrance.

HE LIVES WHO LOVES

The power of Love and Mercy, of right impulse, of good will to all, already accumulated within, knows well how to move. Mere names, good or bad, however, do not terrify our inspired practice of unselfishness that is born of *Simrit*. We go to war if need be, but our feeling is that of the wrestler going with his arms akimbo to the ring to try his strength. It is physical exuberance overflowing its banks to resuscitate itself. We shun war, as it massacres the supreme individuality for the very preservation of which some think wars are necessary. All goes on as the expression of a higher vitality. We move as moves the river or the falcon and we hardly know if we are moving. If we are broken off from the spheres of *Nam and Nami*, we are as the dead corpses that have no more the original significance, the dead are dead whether they be Sikhs, Muslims or fire-worshippers. He lives who loves— none else," says Guru Gobind Singh.

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THE WORDS OF A SAINT ARE AS ARROWS THAT PIERCE THE HEART

Even a few simple words of a silent man of *Simrin* go sinking into the soul of the aspirant, and they work like arrows shot from a mighty bow. The man is wounded and he has nothing more to ask. It is done not for a year or two, but for ever. Do not ask any more, begin a new life ! Enough, you are now his. He is yours. Have faith even as the woman has in the man she gives herself up to.

It is the practical life of *Simrin* that excites the attention of the great. They pass by the intellectuals who string mere words, with supreme indifference.

* * * *

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT IS OF INFINITE VARIETY OF COLOUR

Life is more than all that can be made manifest. All that we know is still not what they know as *Simrin*. Repetition of Nām is also a way, only a way. It is not the goal. It is after all, the concentration of the whole man in love, in the Self, in the glorious Guru. It is the resultant knowledge of the peace and power of silence; the fruit of *Simrin* as *Simrin* again, that is the kernal of this joy. Therefore, when you insist on one particular phase of life, you are apt to labour it out much too much beyond the truth of it all. The life of *Simrin* is beyond all such faulty descriptions of it, beyond all intellectual vindications. It is the fulfilment of life. It is Beatitude. It is in one sense love of man and in another sense, the love of God; in still another, neither. In another sense, it is pure intellectual transcendence above all petty symbolism; in still another, only a half truth bound by little threads of superstitions and sentiments. It may be under certain conditions, quite a good strong animal life, and under others the life of absolute Nirvana. At one time a loaf of bread, at another hunger, starvation, death. You can not tie down inspiration to this or that mode or form for long. Hence all the philosophy you write, is like the description of the hills from a distance. At times you see them in the glare of the sun, at others in the dim mists. And the infinite variety of colour seen from a distance confounds all your words. And the charm of the varying composition is caught neither by your paintings, however lovely they be, nor by

your poems, however rhythmical. Something felt in the soul is always too deep, both for your tears and for words. When it is not possible to give a complete view of the ordinary objects that we see and sense so well, how can anyone be correct, except partially, in describing the moods and modes of the soul, as it shines under the gleams of Heaven's inspiration ? *Simrin* is the glowing of man under the light of the inspiration of love !

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THE ELOQUENT SILENCE

Be quiet and only live. The life of Nām itself is the greatest of all expressions. Be ! Is being not the very essence of faith ?

There yonder is the Bowman !

Look there yonder !

Has the arrow pierced you ?⁵

5. To be pierced by the arrow of love is a symbol commonly used in romantic poetry as well as in the poetry of spiritual experience.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A SIKH

by

HEER, LADY OF JHANG SIYAL¹

THE TRUE OF LIFE OF THE BUDDHA IS IN THE BUDDHA FACE

Entering a museum of stone-statues of the Bodhisattves and Buddhas, one is struck with the ecstasy of the peace pulsating in the stone. And we sit gazing rapt in wonder, till we join the great concourse of the Celestials and breathe the same ineffable peace, however short the blissful moment may be. The whole life of Buddha centres in this strange Assembly, and then it radiates from there everlastingly its superb calm and exquisite divine compassion. Here is the highest significance of all art.

This little moment of peace, made eternal, has been the lifework of the Buddha and his disciples. This in fact is the whole life of the Buddha.

Even elephant-loads of Buddhistic literature without this supreme Godlit face would be meaningless. A whole record of the lives of the Bodhisattvas, replete with lessons of all kinds, would be fiction without this glorious face.

The true biography of the Buddha is the Buddha himself.

* * * *

LOVE HAS DIFFERENT COLOURS, BUT ONE UNCHANGING FADE

The life of saints and disciples is just one unvarying biography of a man or a woman in intense love with the Master. Their speech is hymns, their action worship. To love, to labour and to distribute the Nām and food to sustain life is their religion and art.

1. Heer is the heroine of a tragic romance of the Punjab. Her story (going back to the sixteenth century) has been presented symbolically as the yearning of the soul for God.

"Those who have enshrined the Guru's Word within, see Him everywhere and in all things; their life is a continuous salutation to the divine."

(Guru Arjan Dev in *Sukhmani*)

IX—Sloka

They carry out the will of their Master and their hands and feet are the instruments of an impulse born of His will. They labour to gather peace of the soul as they labour to gather bread for mankind. Both art and labour are for concentration of the Soul in the Being of the Beloved, the beautiful. The art of *Simrin* is for me to live by, all other arts are but side-expressions of my soul.

* * * *

SPONTANEOUS BLOSSOMING OF MAN

Concentrations of mind is only a muscular exercise; concentration of soul is spontaneous blossoming into that great sunshine.

* * * *

OUR ROSARY

The names of the Ten Gurus spell for us the name of the deathless being on whom we Sikhs are bidden to call in all our needs. The rosary of these holy names, these Ten Stars of our firmament is revolving in the sky of our memory.

* * * *

GURU NANAK'S IMAGE

In such an atmosphere of holy memory, of prayer, of personal passionate love for those sacred Ten, we are born and bred. The face and form of Guru Nanak is to be shaped out of human clay in every Sikh home.

OUR WHOLE CULTURE IN A LOVE-SONG

"*Blessed be Guru Nanak : Blessed be Guru Nanak,*"—this is an inspired sense of the Guru's Presence within and without us. Continuous repetition of this holy Name is shedder of life-sparks. This is our way of *Yoga*, of our union with supreme. In moments of acute doubt we cry with Kabir

"Kabir ! go on.

Repeat the two syllables *Rama Rama*;
 Go on !
 If there be a Master, if there be
 a Lord of us,
 He shall save you."

(Kabir in the Measure Gauri)

We go on calling on the Ten Great Teachers who came and loved us, served us, saved us and made us free men.

* * * *

THIS FLYING INTENTION

Beyond a simple life lived in continuous remembrance, in passionate, throbbing love, in peace and goodwill to all, in continuous sweetness of manners that sees One in many; beyond a great silent extraordinariness of the ordinary life of a man with a mystic light of omniscience-like intuition gleaming in the eyes of the Sikh, there is no other event in the biography of a Sikh that has any bearing on the world outside himself.

* * * *

THE SIKH IS A VISION

The Sikh is like an umbrageous tree wherever he lives, and the sun-beaten, thirsty traveller whoever he may be, finds a solace in his shelter, in his home. And the traveller rises and goes on his way blessing the Sikh whose face accompanies him as a friend who blesses and vitalizes him. In his reverie, the traveller sees the cool shade of the Sikh soul spreading over his head in the hot, dry, blazing deserts that lie beyond death and he wakes dreaming and thankful for having met him.

Such is the way of the Sikh individual. And Sangat (society) is a galaxy of such Perfected Individuals made by the prayer of Nām, of Service.

THE KHALSA IS THE INVISIBLE HELPER MORE IN HEAVEN, THAN ON EARTH

Rare, rare is the Sikh and still rarer, rarer is the Khalsa, the Sikh Commonwealth, because both are inspirations, both are vehicles of Divine grace and both are flashes divine, now and then

investing humanity. The divine Perfected Humanity—both the individual and society is the dream of the Angels that have met the Guru. And these Angels, the Helpers of the world caught in travail, is the Khalsa.

Sat Sri Akal.²

Wah Guruji Kā Khalsa.³

Sri Wahe Guruji Ki Fateh,

Khalsa is of the Master,

All glory to the great Guru !

Of Him is the Khalsa !

2. This is the Sikh war-cry and salutation. *Lit.* holy is the Lord Eternal.

3. This is the Sikh salutation. In this, Wah Guru, the characteristic Sikh name for God, is used.

SECRET FRIEND

by

GANIKA,¹ A DANCING GIRL OF INDIA WHO FOUND HER
FREEDOM IN HIM

FOR A GLIMPSE OF HIM

Come, when the sea is in tide, and a tiny²
white skiff is borne safe on the angry waves,
And in it, the man swung as in a little cradle, secure in the peril
of the Arms of the Unknown :
Whatever He may be to anyone else,
To me, in that Danger of Joy, He is my Succourer, my
Saviour in the jaws of death !

* * * *

Come, when the tide of blood ebbs low like a winter-shrunk
stream,
And a little tired heart waits on its dry-lipped bank, sinking,
sinking within itself, like a lamp whose oil is spent;
Whatever He may be to anyone else,
To me in that sad moment of waving life
He is the Provider both of oil, wick, and kindling spark !

* * * *

Come, when the whole world of pious men combines to stone a
sinner to death,
Come, when they have bound hand and foot the victim, and the
victim has lifted his eyes upto Him;
Whatever He may be to anyone else,

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1. (*Skt.*) Courtesan. The story of the courtesan—'saved' by the Lord is narrated in the mythological lore of India, and is drawn upon frequently in the Sikh sacred literature.
 2. Cf. Tennyson's, *In Memoriam*, XLIX : 'Be near me when my light is low.....'

To me in that moment of bitter death,
 He is the veil over my shame and wretchedness, the
 Passionate Lover of my weakness !

* * * *

Come, when a woman is in tears, in distress of the unroofed
 open in throes of her struggle with rebellious flesh;
 Whatever He may be to anyone else,
 To me, the forlorn woman, He is my Husband !

* * * *

Come, when the misery of my own desires has been all my
 undoing; when the animal in me has sprung with his mouth
 full open, and sits firm with his claws buried in the body
 of the prey, his own self;
 Whatever He may be to anyone else,
 To me, He is the Huntsman, whose gold-tipped³ arrow pierces
 the animal with a fatal wound for God.
 And I rise a pure spirit, out of the savage beast, that a while
 ago, howled and roared and tore about.

* * * *

Come, when a million eyes of peasants—
 Men and women, children—are lifted up to Heaven for
 rain-water,
 And a little tear rises and dries up in their eye, when a purple
 cloud, no bigger than a hand, appears in the sky, and
 drenches in the twinkling of an eye, the expanse of
 continents and deluges the parched lands;
 Whatever He may be to anyone else,
 To me, the poor peasant, He is the Cloud-Sender who pours
 His love in untiring abundance !

* * * *

Come, when a million faces glow with youth, and flame with
 divine friendship on earth below,

3. This image is associated with Guru Gobind Singh, the mighty warrior. To be pierced with the arrow of love is a well-known image in romantic, no less than spiritual poetry.

When a million orbs roll and the Rings glow, and the Rivers of
 Light flow in Heavens above;
 Whatever He may be to anyone else,
 To me He is the invisible God that passes as a flash of life in
 myriad glances and in myriad smiles of Creation,
 And says : "Have you not seen My yet ?
 It is I"

* * * *

Ask me not to name Him,
 to laud Him;
 I cannot preach of Him, nor hide
 Him—
 One who has freed me—me, the self-poisoned, down-trodden
 slave, by the touch of the fragrance of His Self.
 Whatever He may be to anyone else,
 To me, He is the Creator who has cast Himself in the shape of
 His Song, and sitting nowhere, showers from His eyes a
 rain of stars in the sky !

* * * *

Let the great Ones name Him, the scholars search Him;
 Let the learned discourse on Him, and the martyrs sing of Him,
 sitting in flames of fire or offering their flesh to the dagger
 Let the lovers call upon Him, the maidens garland Him;
 Let the saints worship Him, the devotees kiss the hem of His
 Garment and rub on their foreheads the dust under His
 Feet
 Whatever He may be to anyone else,
 To me, He is the secret Friend, who comes unseen to me in my
 dark despair, to wipe a silent tear with the edge of His
 Kingly robe,
 And says to me when I cannot listen even to Him, choked with
 my own tears,—"I am here by your side, the whole of
 myself. When no one is nigh, I am for you, O sad sinner !
 For you in your hour of agony:"
 Have my whole love, open your heart, and be free,

"I strike the fetters of sin off thy soul."

Let the ascetic say to Him, "I bear pain for you" and the yogi
say "I lie wrapped up in thought of you."

Let the pious tell Him, "We obey Your Law"

Whatever He may be to anyone else and anyone to Him,
What of me ?

I devoid of virtue,
merit, or light;
Of song
or dance or thought;

Of the secret vows of piety; or the stilled heart;

I, a poor straw-gatherer in the streets of the pleasure of senses;

I, aimless chaser of quivering illusions that fly in the trembling
colours of the wings of the butterflies that flutter round
the *maya* of life in gay blossom

What can I say to Him ?—I, the old pleasure-sipper with the
everlasting burden of illusion on my back;

I only cast my head down in shame;

I stand abashed, away from all in the corner of my own naked
self with all its scars and stains !

But behold ! He comes even to me, as the sun goes down and
darkness descends;

And as He comes, I burst forth crying;

And He consoles me saying;—"Have I been too long away
from thee ?"

* * * *

People went seeking Him in temples and shrines;

Tired of them, He came, and sat by me in His lordly leisure on
the bare earth,

He, sat by me—me, who had wasted away the whole empire of
my mind on the trifles of youth and roses and wine;

By me, a mere gambler who had staked all for winning nothing
at all !

By me—lying with my head buried in my own palms, and
wondering if even then, He would come to me and say,

"Cheer up, I stand by thee".

* * * *

My friends ! What can I say of Him to you ?
 Of Him who disdains to cast a look at the kings and queens of
 the world come to worship Him, but goes forth and offers
 His arm to the helpless maiden on the lonely bank of a
 river, lifts her up with his mighty arm,
 In his joy stringing stars in her tresse,
 On his bay charger transporting her tenderly as a fluttering
 birds to the nest !

* * * *

Friends ! What can I say of Him to you ?
 He who wipes off the tears from the widow's sunken cheek,
 And fills the heart of the orphaned man with mother's love;
 Who renews with virgin light the sin-stained robe of thought,
 And heals the wounds of the soul with a flash of His sword;
 Who pours the pride of life again in blood gone cold,
 And casts a loving glance at those He has redeemed.
 Who strikes the fetters off those bound hand and foot, saying :
 The Eternal Lord does all, not I, not, I.

* * * *

There He comes,
 He who bursts open the closed buds of souls and mocks at the
 long wise face of me !
 And with a smile unravels all knots of the mind, rock-sealed so
 long in self-deception !
 And makes the old skip like fresh new children in the air,
 And whirls the crowds in the magic ring of His Presence, and
 makes them dance in a joy the undisturbed with care:
 In his movement is what the dreamers dreamt, the seekers
 sought,
 And those with gifts wrought in word and deed.
 There stands He, the Unseen,
 Yet even near—
 Guru Gobind Singh, the Redeemer.

Life lingers still on the meadows and the grass.
 The evening draws down its veil, the morning lifts it up !
 The housewife wakes to grind the corn, to draw water from the
 well, to the day's labour :
 The ploughman goes with his plough and pair to till the ancient
 soil, to sow, to reap and to fill the Home of God;
 The mason builds, and the carpenter shape wood,
 The maidens sing and spin the white cotton flakes.
 All eyes rise to a vision of Him Who fought to free them,
 And the Eternal bustle behind is alive with His Unseen
 resolves to love and die for all,
 He is Guru Gobind Singh, the Redeemer.

* * * *

And His name?—He is each one's secret friend,
 By the sorrow-afflicted bed He watches;
 With His finger on His lips He comes to kiss the sleeping babe;
 Light not the lamp, for his sheen is everywhere;
 He of the golden aigrette, the white hawk and the bay charger—
 Guru Gobind Singh, the Mighty Saviour.

* * * *

The true King, the everlasting Giver !
 Giver of life, love abundance.
 The Poet sublime, the Hero unrivalled,
 The heart that throbs to make mankind happy;
 The soldier that unsheathes the sword to cut down slavery;
 The lonely wanderer in thorny wastes,
 Bearing dry-eyed the loss of four jewel-sons;
 The impersonal Person whose magic in myriad self-same faces
 into every heart.
 The perfection of Dhyanam, God.

HE IS GURU GOBIND, REDEEMER

I am dying, take me to the city where He dwells. Lay me in the dust which carries His footprints and leave me there ! Anoint me with the dust under His feet, I am well.

I feel my heart-beat singing the old song again. My eyes open on a new world again. My skin bathed in this holy dust is washed with an undreamt of holiness, and out of its pores flows the Ganga of singing nectar !

* * * *

He passes me by, looks at me and smiles. And the lotuses of my navel, my heart and hundred-petalled golden Lotus that hangs with its face down, the *Oordhva Kamalum*¹ of my head all catch the spark from their sun, and spread themselves once again in the glory of their perfect blossom !²

Perfection lies in the simple, soft touch of the light that comes from Him.

I wave with all my lotuses fully blooming in air, on the tender stalk, and with me wave in the blue waters, my own reflection.

I wave as waves a beautiful flower-laden lotus fresh on its stalk;
I tremble like the Master-struck note of music in space !

I shiver like the aspen-leaf touched by the breeze that flows
from His doorstep.

Purity is not so pure as I !

Good-bye !

Good-bye ! I roll in my bliss.

The moon now sparkles on my forehead—

How cooling is the spark of life !

I have found in Him all the treasures—

In Guru Gobind Singh.

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1. Lotus to which the brain of man is likened by Sanskrit poets (Editor's Note).
 2. The imagery in this passage is taken from the practice of Hatha-Yoga postulating the piercing of the 'six lotuses' in the body by the aroused *Kundalini Shakti*.

AN AFTERNOON WITH THE SELF

by

BHARTHARI HARI¹

Moments of old age were just crowding on me. I have now grown to live in the company of the moments of life as they come and go touching me, now awakening me, then putting me to sleep; now playing with me, then rejecting me. The cycles of a whole life, nay, of many lives in one, or of one life in many, are completed in me in these moments. People say they leave behind them their old times like the travelled tracks and go forward, but I find the old and the new, the before and the after, returning to me as the spokes of an ever-speeding wheel. Everything that was, is, and shall be, goes with me. My future path curves above my head and meets the end that is under my heels. The traveller's path of life forms but a nimbus of glory encircling him from head to foot. I live in the ring of my own song.

INFANCY seizes me at time, and I find myself now, even at this age of forty-two,² a little babe lying in the lap of my mother, covered under her shawl, with both my tiny, white hands still clutching at her breast, with the life-nipples in my mouth, and sucking the nectar of love from those fountains of love, from those fountains of immortality. I lie thus for hours in dreams of heaven and earth, and find all life and love.

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1. He is the famous Yogi of medieval times, who left a throne to become a mendicant. His philosophical treatise in Sanskrit verse, called *Bharthari Hari Niti Shatak* is a well-known text, and has been rendered into Punjabi verse by Bhai Vir Singh, the poet who inspired Puran Singh. (The present piece is a fragment of spiritual autobiography.)
 2. The age at which the author Puran Singh was contemplating the present work (1923). It was actually composed *circa* 1927-28.

AGAIN does my childhood catch hold of me, and I revel in childish follies, as if ones again and for ever. Here I gather a harvest of joy, which the eyes of knowledge seldom reap. Gathering poppies and bubbles and pebbles, laden with joys and shouts, bursting with naughtiness, I conquer the world, with my hands full of everything.

* * * *

YOUTH follows me as I recede from it, with the perpetual desire for the being of joy. It matures my centuries in a moment—red and ripe and luscious like a fruit. I love this fleeting moment of youth, like the autumn sight of the gold-coloured oranges hanging, half-concealed in the clusters of green leaves and bending their boughts with the weight of their loveliness. The rose-lipped youth is God on a visit both to the rich and the poor, but I feel Him to be mine and only mine when He fills me with His Bounty.

* * * *

MY moments of old age are streaked, wrinkled, somewhat wise and calculating, like a fruit with the juice squeezed. They have their own ripe flavour, but not the juice with which I was once so brimful in my divine adolescence.

* * * *

THE passage of these moment of myriad colours and shapes and voices through me, is like the passage of a caravan of singing pilgrims of different climes and countries and races. I feel I am but a listener of their footballs.

* * * *

Standing under the canopy of the sky in the open air, I can hardly ever distinguish where I am—in the dome of my head or in the dome of the sky? I fly out into the infinite. What matters if my clay-clogged feet remain fettered to the earth? I cannot say which is myself, this finite or that infinite, for I feel as if both were my own nests.

* * * *

WHEN I was just emerging out of boyhood, my soul hungered to know itself, for what is after all our desire for knowledge but an incessant groping in the dark to find the light hidden within ourselves?

Like all my fellow-beings, I too groped in the cave to find a couple of flint stones, perchance to strike a spark and light the lamp of the heart, with which to catch a glimpse of the indweller of the sacred shrine of the self.

* * * *

AS I proceeded along the path of "education", I found thoughts and things pouring into me from out-side. I was being overwhelmed with "knowledge", I was stuffed with 'facts' carefully gathered, but I found that it was all fiction. Hardly any breathing space was left within me. The names and dates and plans and plots and thoughts and ideas moved in my mind like crowds of men that run hither and thither to nowhere.

* * * *

BUT no step is ever mistaken, no sin is without its own virtuous end. Nothing goes totally waste. It is the soul moving to its destined goal. This kind of "education" too was a passage to the self. It was not knowledge yet, but a desire some what like hunger that sought bread for its satisfaction. Hunger was satisfied; but the food did not yet become my flesh and bone. A time comes when what is gorged in libraries has to be thrown out of doors, to make room for welcoming the glorious masses of sunlight within. The books and bookish lore have to be cast out, for they had so long choked the free sproutings of life within us. Our inner time and space have to be relieved in order to bear the expanse of the infinite within us. Then is taken the place of "knowledge" by sympathy, joy in beauty and the power felt in the soul.

BREATHING at last ! freed from the bondage of learning and thought. Thoughts no more rise in me from the pages of books lying open on the shelves of my memory, but they spring from the soil of the Infinite, just as you see those trees coming up yonder. They no more come now, as of old, linked together by logic in the chain of its syllogistic necessity at bayonet point, but come of their own accord, as things of an inner reality, and grow by their own laws and stand each by its own self, and yet wondrously related to each other and all.

* * * *

MY thoughts no more obey the logic of thinking. I sit for hours both at dawn and at dusk, watching the new arriving blossoms, opening as they open, closing as they close. To be by the side of one single thought like this, is an event of joy that can take place only in me and now where outside me. My thought chooses its own season, its own place, and selects its own climate. Summer produces one kind and winter another. Creative inspiration runs bare in trackless surprises.

* * * *

ALL things thus growing like trees, and moving in me like the animals moving on the face of the earth, wait for the inspiration of His grace. In me, I wait for His voice that has always been heard only here in its maddening melody.

* * * *

I am most of the time, full of the blank blue space that arches like a spell of love within and without me ! This is why, I am so often overwhelmed with the illusion whether the blue sky is my head or my head is the blue sky. I do not put the familiar processes of thinking into operation as I used to — only I practise the virtue of emptying myself. I stretch my eyes to the end of the shoreless sky. I sit by the side of the flowing river and watch the play of the waves on its moving surface. I lie in my bed playing hide and seek with the stars. What thought can come when happiness of living engulfs me so suddenly ?

* * * *

ONLY the red ripe moments of my youth drag me out and cause vibrations of passion. The dark clouds of the rain-mouth march, singing inside me their sweet, moist tunes; the lightning flashes, the thunder roars. It "rains roses" inside me. As the season passes; I stand still, again waiting to be similarly ravished with joy. I get out again and clutch wildly at the evanescence of the creation to embrace the very infinitude of beauty. I swallow the stars, eat space and gather all time within myself. I rise to wear winds and waters and fires. I run out of everything to find myself seated in their very hearts. I again and again free myself from the bondage of Love, but

find myself for ever in her arms closing on me in ecstasy.

* * * *

AH ! the Illusion of passion seizes me. In the embraces of everything I am lost, I am gone ! I melt, I, melt, like the snowflakes in the sea. I fall, I fall, like the moonbeams on the rushing waters. Is this all in me, or me in all? I rise out of my own shadow and find the whole of light in my nimble embrace !

* * * *

MY true education commences with the dissolution of all my mental equipment. I learnt the first letter to the knowledge of the self by unlearning all that I am taught. In self-renunciation I found Him, whom the music of the infinite loves to name the loved sweet, Supreme Beauty.

* * * *

DID I say, I found Him ? It is in fact an ever-finding Him, an ever-naming Him, an even-singing Him. Glory, Glory to the eternally glorious. It is always the beginnings, it is always the end !

* * * *

I have the companionship of the exquisite face-lit leisure in me, where knowledge, love and service have become one joy that I create and swallow.

* * * *

Preaching of Him is death to me. To proclaim His love dries up the fountain in me.

* * * *

I lived in a tiny little hut and lay all alone on a straw pellet. When whole cities had fallen into dust-drunken sleep, I found myself rising, and with me rose the pellet and the hut, and I suddenly found my home borne by a cloud of fire, winging like a star, above the palaces of kings and the wretchedness of all desire.

* * * *

PHILOSOPHY grows into all-poetry here. Have we not heard Goethe telling us :

"I tell you what's man's supreme vocation.
 Before me was no world, 'tis my creation;
 'T was I who raised the sun from out the sea.
 The moon began its changeful course with me."

* * * *

The true prosperity of man lies in this direction. They are blessed great who live in the supreme richness of leisure rippling with the divine pleasure of Creation. Many of the learned painfully struggle with entangled thoughts, while I have seen unlettered peasant girls, the very princesses of inner joy, full of this divine self-realization. I have seen them quivering like birds with their whole bodies trembling with the very touch of the breeze and the light pass on of men and women in love, embodying the very lyrics of Radha and Krishna, and yet slowly and softly diffusing away, away into beauty of the Infinite, as the sun dies with joy there in the red pool of the western sky, filled with its own blood !

* * * *

The Infinite has assumed innumerable forms and is, in them, at the feet of the Infinite.

* * * *

Love sees its own image in myriad forms of beauty, and through its dance of joy, sinks back into itself again.

* * * *

Beauty is the final form of self-felicity created by God's own hand. It is the deity enshrined within us, whose image is on land and in the skies.

In the inmost sanctuary of our soul, the secret of life nestles as pure beauty, lofty love and as might and power, that transcends all features and forms. Says the beauty-intoxicated Hafiz of Persia in the Platonic vein:

"The Perfect Beauty is beyond my loving,
 My love is for what is all so imperfect:
 Thy Shining Face, in its own splendour,
 Needs no outer form nor colour, nor line,

Nor curve—the Transcendent, the infinite !
It is beauty within ourselves that invests with beauty all objects
and thoughts.

Our little self, clinging to the objects of life, throws over them
the colour of enchantment.

* * * *

The one little hollow piece of a green bamboo shoot, touched
by the lips of Sri Krishna, becomes the awakening song for the
whole world of bird, beast and man. The same in the hand of a
peasant is but a stick to drive the dumb-driven cattle on the pasture-
land.

* * * *

When will that day dawn ? That I a King now, shall be so
blessed with the severe joy of thy beauty;

That I, in trance of thy face, shall be sitting on a boulder bathed
by the flowing Ganga,

Roseate, speechless, my being all choked with joy !

And the tears falling, bead by bead, from my closed eyes, and
I so lifeless in Thy love !

That the birds would perch on my shoulder and drink from my
eyes the tears of joy,

Taking them to be pearl-drops of Ganga,

And drinking, look at each other all self-satiated;

And the forest gazelles would rub their horns against my bare
back, as though I too were a rock !

* * * *

Thou the great White Lotus,

And I a fond gatherer of honey, a bee.

As the night falls, enclose me softly within Thy white petals

And bury me in Thy fragrant Self.

—Guru Granth¹

1. The last extract corresponds to some affirmation, distantly as usual, with the Holy Granth.

