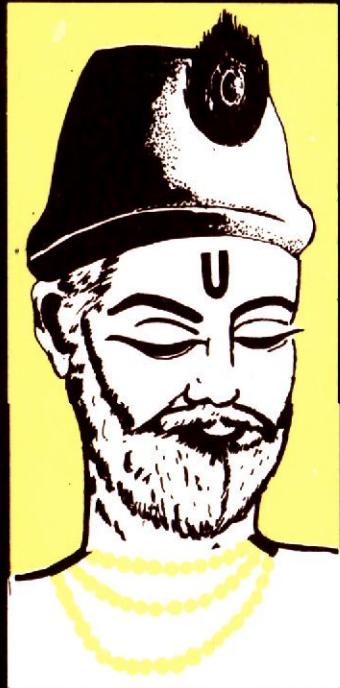


The
Dialogues of
Kabir



B.K. Narayan
Rajeev Sawhney

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B. K. NARAYAN
RAJEEV SAWHNEY



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First Published 1998

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Printed at Nutech Photolithographers, Delhi (India)

*This book is
dedicated to
Sant Kirpal Singhji Maharaj*

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Preface

Kabir is widely known in India for his homespun couplets (dohas) with which he succeeded in conveying deep spiritual thoughts through homely metaphors in an incisive and memorable fashion. Indeed, the very fact that these 'dohas' have been recited and memorized by generation after generation of Indians for almost five hundred years, bears ample testimony to their universal appeal as well as their permanent validity. While Kabir is best known for these 'dohas', which were mostly passed down by oral tradition, a systematic and comprehensive exposition of his teachings has been more difficult to come by. It is nothing but a miracle that his message continued to be more widely known with each passing generation, considering the fact that his teachings spread almost by word of mouth and his discourses were all extempore.

This book contains an anthology of extraordinary dialogues between Kabir (1398-1518 A.D.)—arguably one of the most influential of Indian Sages—and other contemporary leaders of spiritual thought. In these dialogues with scholars, religious luminaries and other people who sought his counsel, Kabir covers a wide variety of topics. With divine authority he answers their questions in a simple and direct manner. His message cuts across all narrow religious dogma and helps each person overcome his or her jaundiced perceptions and prejudices. The result is a long and deep spiritual journey within oneself which never fails to transform the reader or listener. Wherever possible necessary,

unfamiliar terms, concepts, and characters have been interpreted, thus making the book universally accessible to the scholar and novice alike.

Acknowledgment

The authors thank Mr. S.A. Bhandarkar, Mr. Gopinath and Mr. S. Sridharan for wordprocessing the text. Others who helped in different ways include Mr. And Mrs. Pradip Sethi, Mrs. Siva Das, Mr. Suresh Kumar, Mr. Sashi Rao, Mr. G. Shankar and Mr. Manohar.

Bibliographical Notes

Since Kabir is not known to have written any book himself the very next most reliable source is either the widely-known oral tradition or the texts attributed to him by unimpeachable sources. The Kabir legend is widely well known at the mass level in the different parts of Bihar, Rajasthan and the Uttar Pradesh in India and many of his couplets are quoted by all and sundry in the context of situations of daily life. Many school textbooks contain some of his couplets or poems with the result that these are intimately interwoven with the national ethos of India, transcending religious and denominational barriers.

Singularly free from any dogma or sectarianism the path shown by Kabir may be aptly described as the "mystic" path or the Masters' path sans any restricting epithets. This path with all its details has survived to this day, though known by the names of the founders who carried on the tradition after the original disciples of Kabir the most prominent among these was Dharam Das. He was succeeded by 13 others in the line. There are several ancient manuscripts possessed by various institutions carrying on the tradition with many scholars who are well-versed in the interpretation of the generally accepted texts going far beyond the literal meanings of words and getting into the spirit of the expressions as a whole.

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KABIR GRANTHAVALI: (KG)

This is said to have been compiled during the lifetime of Kabir and the year 1504 is attributed to this manuscript which is

preserved in an institution at Banaras. It is said to contain over 400 poems and 800 couplets.

ADI GRANTH (AG)

This is the Sikh religious scripture which includes 228 poems. Guru Nanak himself was a contemporary of Kabir and hence by all accounts this is the most authentic collection. This scripture was compiled by Guru Arjan Dev in 1604.

BIJAK (B)

This is a highly valued collection of Kabir's poems of preserved in the various institutions associated with Kabir and is said to have been compiled about the middle of the 17th century.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

Kabir "The Weaver of God's Name" (KW)

A book by V.K. Sethi published by Radha Soami Satsang Beas in 1984 based mainly on the first three sources quoted above.

POEMS OF KABIR (PK)

As lender booklet of Kabir's poems translated by Rabindranath Tagore and published by McMillans in 1915.

COUPLETS FROM KABIR (CK)

An English publication by G.N. Das published by Motilal Banarsi Dass in 1991.

KABIR JOG (KJ)

A rambling account in Urdu manuscript published in 1947 by S.B. Lal Burman.

KABIR, THE GREAT MYSTIC, Issac A. Ezekiel, published by Radhasoami Satsang, Beas, India.

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THE KABIR BOOK

"44 of the Ecstatic Poems of Kabir"

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Apart from these books there are others which have references to Kabir and his teachings. Some of these are as follows:

Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, 'The Crown of Life', Sawan-Kirpal Publications, 1980 (COL); 'Godman: Finding a Spiritual Master', 'Prayer: Its Nature and Cure'.

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Part One: Kabir

Introduction

Chapter 1

Introduction

Kabir is believed to have lived during the entire fifteenth century. India had witnessed the brutal invasion of Timur, a Turkish conqueror, in 1398 A.D., the year in which Kabir was born. Timur devastated Delhi, Meerut and Jammu before withdrawing and taking with him enormous wealth and hordes of Indian artisans and builders to Samarkand. Timur's depredations brought about the downfall of the ruling Tughlak dynasty and its replacement by the Sayyid dynasty (1414-1458) and the Lodi dynasty (1451-1526).¹

During the fifteenth century India faced unbridled corruption at the administrative level and seething religious rivalry at the social front. It required more than ordinary pluck for anyone in that dangerous and suffocating atmosphere to mercilessly expose the trivialities and hypocrisies of both the Hindus and the Muslims of that time. Kabir's blunt and uncompromising folk-jargon won him many enemies from both classes. Despite the many attempts towards his physical elimination he managed to survive to the ripe old age of 120 even though he spared no one with his barbed wit, whether he be a king or a commoner.

Kabir's encounters with King Sikandar Lodi, who ruled India from 1489-1517 are phenomenally popular. Stories of these episodes are narrated even today with much fervor by the village folk of the north Indian states of UP and Bihar. One such story relates that a torch light procession was taken to King Sinkandar

Lodi by both Hindus and Muslims in broad daylight to seek action against Kabir who had ridiculed the beliefs and practices of both communities. The King ordered his soldiers to capture Kabir and bring him before him. Kabir deliberately evaded them for a long time and it was only towards the close of the day that he allowed himself to be brought before the King. When questioned about his late arrival Kabir stated that he was busy observing hundreds of camels and elephants passing through a path as small as the eye of a needle. When asked to explain, he stated that the pupil of the eye was like the eye of a needle and yet camels and elephants could pass through it. He further explained that the eye could see the sun, the moon and the stars despite their vast distances. It could also see an ocean in a drop and thousands of suns in the particles of sand. These were presumably a reference to the misleading nature of appearances. Kabir stated that those who were good saw only good and those who were evil saw only evil. The King was intrigued but his courtiers wanted Kabir punished as a heretic who turned people away from their faith.

The King then asked him if he was an honorable or a dishonorable person. Kabir replied that he was far above the states of both honor and dishonor. One with self-respect looked at him with respect and one without self-respect looked at him with disrespect. He was above religion and irreligion both. The King ordered him to be bound and thrown into the river. Kabir was seen swimming comfortably. He was then thrown into fire but he emerged from it unscathed. The King then rode his own pet elephant and directed him to trample Kabir under his feet but the latter is believed to have appeared in the shape of a tiger whereupon the King relented and sought forgiveness.

Sikandar Lodi was advised by Kabir to stop cruelty and murder in the name of religion and follow the path of tolerance and compassion towards his subjects. It is recorded that there was a sea-change in the attitude of Sikandar Lodi after this incident and he became highly reflective in his subsequent conduct.

THE YOGA OF DEVOTION (BHAKTI)

The fifteenth century in India witnessed a gigantic upsurge in its spiritual regeneration with an accent on the devotional path of God-realization as compared to the path of Knowledge (Gyan Yoga) and the path of Service (Karma Yoga). It sought to combat bigotry and separatism with love and compassion for all living creatures. Starting with the duality of the devotee and divinity, the subsequent progress on the path narrowed down the gap between the Individual Self and the Universal Self until the drop merged in the ocean. It was the Yoga of the heart rather than that of the head or hand. Adoration led to absorption and the devotee progressed from proximity to the Divine Beloved to assuming his form and finally becoming one with Him. All systems in fact started with duality and ended in unity.

Some outstanding religious figures of that age were:

Namdev, the sage of Pandharpur near Bombay (b.1480)

Guru Nanak (1469-1539). The founder of the Sikh religion who synthesized Islam and Hinduism and heralded the 'Path of the Masters'. He had close links with Kabir.

Ravi Das: A cobbler saint devoted to Kabir who was his contemporary. The Rajput Princess Mira Bai was his disciple.

KABIR AND THE PATH OF THE MASTERS

Kabir is credited with being the first to initiate disciples through what is known as the Surat-Shabd Yoga (or the Yoga of the Sound Current). The basic premise of the Yoga of the Sound Current is that when the unmanifest Absolute manifests itself it assumes the two primary attributes of light and sound. The sound principle is referred to as the 'word' or 'shabd' which pervades the physical, astral and causal realms. It is from the basic 'sound' or 'word' that the light spreads and all creation comes into being. The Yoga of Sound Current (of the flaming sound) aims at enabling the individual soul to trace back its way to its starting point after transcending various planes and finally merge into the formless Absolute. The three conditions to traverse this inner journey successfully are firstly, to find a competent Master;

secondly, to follow a pure ethical life and lastly, to follow the discipline steadily and steadfastly until the goal is reached.

Kabir's erudition and depth of esoteric wisdom defies rational explanation since he was unlettered and had no schooling whatever. Yet he humbled the leading religious luminaries of the day with his incisive logic and penetrating insight. He ridiculed book-knowledge against the direct perception of Truth. Indeed he had no use for the letters of the alphabet. Only the four letters "LOVE" were enough. He advocated participation in and an efficient performance of worldly duties rather than withdrawal therefrom. He prescribed an inner detachment and transformation from within rather than an external withdrawal. He himself earned his bread through weaving and recommended work for everyone and condemned parasitic existence and mendicancy.

An animal is useful to man whether alive or dead but a man who wastes his life is no good whether alive or dead. A dead man's flesh is not eaten even by a jackal nor can a pair of shoes be made out of his skin. Love and devotion to the Lord do not fluctuate, increase and decrease but remain steady as otherwise it is not true devotion. When you love the Lord and lose, you remain His but if you win, He becomes yours. Just as a grain of salt can spoil tons of milk similarly one sinful act may wash away merit accumulated over a long time. Lust and love are poles apart; where there is one the other is not. Practise chastity in your love for the Lord, period of let it be pure and unadulterated.

Kabir did not marry and did not raise a family. Nevertheless he looked after his foster parents and adopted a son (Kamal) and a daughter (Kamali) to set an example to society. He wanted everyone to discharge his debt to the soil which nurtured him and to the society which sustained his earthly existence. All cosmos was one unit and none should escape his responsibilities at the worldly level under the garb of spirituality. Spirituality was no circus nor a diversion for those who failed on other fronts and sought an alternative hobby to indulge.

Kabir composed his devotional songs and couplets extempore drawing profusely from folk-wisdom and matters of everyday

experience which carried a deep meaning often in the form of riddles and conundrums. This form of verse captured the imagination of the masses and the appreciation of the intellectual elite alike. Its humorous satire and simple rhythm struck a responsive cord in the minds and hearts of the masses. Those who were hostile to him coined spurious couplets in his name on the same pattern and floated them among the masses, but it did not take long for the discerning to separate the genuine from the spurious.

It would also perhaps be out of place to be too literal in the interpretation of Kabir's couplets and discuss the nuances of each word used by him, as such an exercise is likely to make us miss the wood for the trees. As it is, Kabir shows a disdain for intellectual subtleties in understanding the spiritual truth. Spiritual realization is a matter of direct experience or spontaneous perception. Chanting the names of God does not bring Him any closer than shouting 'food' can fill the stomach or shouting 'water' can quench the thirst. Chanting the name of the medicine does not relieve the sufferings of the sick. If it were so, none would be hungry, thirsty or sick in the world. The means is not the end. The scholar is lost in verbal jugglery, the ritualist is lost in lifeless ceremonies, the priest is lost in empty jargon. They deceive none but themselves. A mind free from lust, a tongue which can recite the two syllables of love and a heart full of devotion are the only requirements for a direct perception of Truth. The Lord has His abode not behind the clouds but in the loving hearts of His devotees. The purity of the heart attracts the Lord who runs after His devotees and carries out their wishes. An impure heart is like a dirty cloth which does not accept a holy dye. Doubt and delusion will never leave the heart until it merges in the Lord.

There is no release for man as long as he is being hounded from pillar to post by pairs of opposites and the mirage of dualities. God and the devil, virtue and vice, good and bad are relativities which co-exist mutually. When the evil is overcome by good and vice by virtue and the devil by God, both become redundant—just as a thorn is removed with a thorn and both are

discarded. Once the disease is cured by medicine both the disease and the medicine are discarded to enjoy a state of good health. Kabir exhorts his folks to rise above these relative states for liberation from every craving. A state of desirelessness and self-sufficiency under all circumstances is to merge into divinity. To surrender everything is to gain everything.

GOD, ADAM, ANGELS AND SATAN

In his inimitable way to drive a point home with telling effect Kabir put the Guru (Master) higher than God. God created man and put him in the shackles of creation whereas the Master showed him the path of release and guided him inwardly until he emerged from darkness into eternal light. One bound him while the other liberated him. One of the dialogues in the 'Holy Qur'an' book deals with the Qor'anic story of Adam, the first Prophet and Satan. (See the 'Holy Qur'an' translated by Yusuf Ali, S2/V30-39 and S7/V19-25 and notes thereto).

Briefly, God created Adam as His viceregent on earth and taught him the nature of all things. Then He placed these things before the Angles and asked them if they knew their nature. They pleaded ignorance whereupon God asked Adam to enlighten them which he did. Then God asked the angels to bow down to Adam and they bowed except Satan who refused as he was haughty. He was of those who rejected Faith and despised the angels who bowed to Adam. He said Adam had been created from clay but he was created from fire and hence superior to Adam. God permitted Adam and his wife to dwell in Paradise and eat of the bountiful food therein except approach the forbidden tree but Adam was misled by Satan and he succumbed to the latter's suggestions. Adam was then expelled to earth which became his dwelling place. A refreshingly original interpretation of this scriptural episode has been given by Kabir in his dialogue with Shaikh Akardi which satisfies both the head and heart and breaks fresh ground in esoteric literature. It discusses such questions as why God asked the Angels to bow before Adam and not before Himself. Adam was the first teacher (Master). Here is a heavenly

approval for the institution of Master-Disciple relationship or the 'Path of the Masters'.

THE EIGHT-FOLD PATH

A general idea of the Yogic disciplines will help in appreciating the relevance of Kabir's observations in regard to them in relation to the Master's Path. The father of Indian Yoga, Patanjali has elaborated an eight-fold path for self-realization. These are:

1. Abstention from vices such as lying, causing injury, stealing, unchastity and greed; (Yam)
2. Development of virtues such as truthfulness, purity of mind and body, contentment, austerity, practising spiritual discipline and total dependence on God; (Niyam)
3. Correct bodily postures to enable the spiritual currents in the body to converge and move upward rather than move downward and dissipate; (Asana)
4. Yogic breathing to vitalize the skin, bones and muscles; (Pranayam). The subtle life-force (Prana) within the body moves up through the astral tubes acquiring great power provided the other do's and don'ts have been observed.
5. Control of the Senses: mainly of eyes and ears in gathering impressions; (Pratyahara)
6. Concentration on any sense perception within or without such as on beautiful forms, tunes, tastes, scents or sensations of touch. In the wakeful state the physical pleasures brought by the senses predominate while in the dream state (astral) sound has a great appeal. In dreamless sleep (causal) one gets a feeling of pleasant and deep absorption; (Dharna)

The practice of concentration (dharna) can be directed inward in consonance with the plexuses (chakras) along the cerebro-spinal system. The most important of the inner channels are three in number; the right, left and the central ones, known respectively as Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. These invisible channels start

from the base of the spinal column and move up respectively to the left and right nostrils and the third-eye center between the two eye-brows.

In its upward journey the central channel passes through six plexuses which are represented by lotuses with different numbers of petals. These plexuses are known as Basal (4 petals), Hypogastric (16 petals), Solar (8 petals), Cardiac (12 petals), Pharyngeal (16 petals) and Cavernous (2 petals) making a total of 48 petals. Four more petals are added to these representing consciousness, mind, intellect and ego thus achieving a figure of 52 which is the number of the Sanskrit alphabet.

Kabir says that the physical, sub-physical and para-physical worlds as well as the inner world represented by the 52 letters have to be transcended to reach the everlasting 'word' or 'sound' principle.

7. Meditation (Dhyan). Meditation may start with concentration on the form of the Master and focused on the third eye center where the radiant form of the Master appears and takes over further guidance of the soul from there onwards.
8. Finally, there is the stage of total absorption in the Lord (Samadhi) and identification with Him. Such a merger in the Absolute can either be with the retention of the individual identity or by giving it up altogether. Such individuals remain immersed in the Divine even while performing their worldly duties disinterestedly. Kabir calls it a state of eternal equipoise.

It is apparent from the foregoing that these arduous and prolonged physical, mental and psychic processes are most exacting and not many will have the required competence to undertake these disciplines. Kabir offers the world a simple discipline within reach of all: the yoga of the sound current, the 'word'. A divine heritage cannot be denied to the vast majority. It has to be made available to them freely like the gifts of sunlight, air and

water. It is the Master who leads the aspiring soul Godward safely and surely. The 'Path of the Masters' is infallible'.

SUFISM

Here a very brief explanation of the term 'Sufism' would be necessary only in so far as it has relevance to Kabir's comments on Sufism. Sufism is mysticism associated with Muslim saints and sages. Mysticism is direct communion with the ultimate Reality yielding ineffable knowledge and power. Perhaps the term originated from the Arabic word 'Suf' meaning 'wool' as the early sufis wore coarse wool or from the word 'saf' meaning clean or pure. Sufism which became well-established by the 10th Century A.D. generally advocated a three-stage discipline, viz: of ethical purity, absorption into the Master through unconditional love and finally absorption into the Lord through total surrender.

The Sufi theory traces the stages of progress on the path through adherence to disciplines laid down. It is presumed that specific practices will bring about measured results. On the other hand states of ecstasy are induced by the grace of the Master or the Lord. These results are gradually achieved through following an ethical and moral conduct and by adhering to a rigid code of specific disciplines leading finally to the perception of Truth.

The Path of Sound Current or the 'Word' (Shabd) mentioned by Kabir is known among the Sufis as 'Sultan al Azkaar' or 'the sound of the Abstract' which is reverberating within and without endlessly. Those who are able to hear this Sound within will be able to solve the mystery of human life and its potentials. Moses heard the Divine sound from the burning bush and saw God's light directly.

Though Prophet Mohammed did not directly converse with God he did so through the Angel Gabriel. Thus the Sufis conclude that with appropriate disciplines it would be possible to directly contact divinity or through the medium of a competent Master. This is the basis of the 'Path of the Masters" with the Sufis as well. Orthodox Islam did not take kindly to Sufism and considered any assertion of man's identity with God as blasphemy

and there is a reference in these dialogues to Mansur al Hallaj who was crucified for claiming "I am the Truth". Al Hussain Ibn Mansur Al Hallaj lived from 857-922 A.D.). Though historically many Sufist schools came to be established they differed more in style than in content.

KABIR ON HIS DEATH

When it became apparent that Kabir was shedding his mortal coils there was an uncontrollable anguish among the devotees around him. Addressing them he said:

"I never die; the world will die. I have found the one who gives 'life'. I am undying because death is only in the mind. One who believes in mental death alone dies. He dies who is not linked with the 'Word'. The faithless die. A saint lives for ever. He ever drinks cups of ambrosia. If the Lord dies then only I die. If there is no death for the Lord how then can I die? I am eternal. I am an ocean of bliss."

"Why do you wail? Do you love the body or Kabir? Kabir was neither a body before nor is he one now. Both fear and the appearance are imaginary. One who thinks he is born dies. My Reality is neither born nor dies."

After the physical passing of Kabir nearly 50 sects or offshoots sprang up which swore by him as being the source and origin, but they became largely known by their respective proponents. Their teachings are the same with minor differences of style rather than content. These sects are spread all over Bihar and U.P. in north India. Kabir's couplets and poems in hundreds are known to them by heart. They recite them on numerous occasions in their daily life. Their setting is rural and their expressions are rustic and need to be conveyed to modern audiences in a slightly modified mode linguistically.

KABIR'S SUCCESSORS

Though the number of Kabir's followers increased by leaps and bounds some 13 of them were prominent in carrying the torch to the different parts of India. Their names were: Dharam Das, Gopal Das, Bhagwan Das, Narain Das, Huraman Das, Jagu

Das, Jiwan Das, Kamal, Tamaxali, Gyani Ji, Saheb Das, Ninas Nand and Kamal Nad. In the tradition of the Buddha and Shankaracharya, Kabir's message was carried to all nooks and corners of India during his life time itself. Kabir himself generally remained in Banaras but there is evidence that he visited a few towns in the provinces of U.P., Bihar and Gujrat. His followers were trained and dedicated to carry the message which they did with zeal and competence.

Dharam Das was the foremost exponent of Kabir and served him with heart and soul after his initiation. His two sons Narain and Huraman continued in their father's footsteps. Kamal was another who interpreted Kabir's mysticism most ably and with great conviction. Dharam Das was succeeded by 14 others in the line.

There are many rural areas around Delhi and in Bihar and U.P. where many rustics not only know Kabir's verses by heart but are also capable of discussing the mystic and spiritual aspects of his poetry with considerable conviction and these include a large number of women.¹

SYNOPSIS

It would be worth while attempting a very brief digest of Kabir's teachings on topics which form the subject-matter of the dialogues based on his own poems and couplets. This would ensure that one is not wide off the mark while digesting the viewpoint presented therein and that one is true to the spirit of the teachings if not the letter.

The Master

What type of a Master was Kabir?

There are Masters who hold direct commission from the Almighty and possess knowledge and authority as against those who acquire it by dint of their dedicated discipline while on planet 'earth'. Kabir described himself as belonging to the former. He said:

1. Kabir Jog; S. B. Lal Burman,

"Kabir saith that he came directly from the Kingdom of God and held an instrument of instructions from Him"?

"I come from the Kingdom of God to administer the Law of God"¹

Sant Kirpal Singh says: "Once he initiates an individual, the subtle form of the Master gets embedded in the disciple..."

There is no power on earth that can render sterile the seed sown by a Master Soul. Master never dies. He may leave the body, as anyone else does, but he is more than a mere body. He is an ideal, a living Sound Current or a Life Principle that gives light and life to the entire world.²

"... the Master is competent to impart further guidance and instructions, even when he is working on the spiritual plane after leaving the physical world."

"... When Queen Indra Mati completed her course of spiritual discipline and reached the Abode of Truth, she found her Master, Kabir in the seat of the True God. Seeing this, she said, 'Master! Why did you not tell me before that you were the True God (Sat Purush) yourself?' Kabir, smiling, replied, 'I could not have convinced you then.'³

A question which naturally arises is that since the organized religions and the Prophets too are already there, where is the need for the Path of the Masters. Religions and Prophets come against a historical background with both a contemporary social message as well as a perennial divine message. They act like a general map or guide to the Heavenly Kingdom whereas a Master takes charge of individual souls and leads them to their final destination in a manner which suits individual aptitudes and requirements. He helps them through the various stages of the spiritual journey. Saints, seers and masters are needed at all times who transcend the bounds of doctrinaire formalism and historical time-frames and lead humanity at the spiritual level far above

1. Godman: Finding a Spiritual Master, (G.M.) Sant Kripal Singh Ji Mohanaj, p.23

2. ibid, p.24

3. ibid, p.148

creeds and denominations. The very first Master was Adam and God is said to have ordered the Angels to bow before Adam which is a heavenly endorsement of the superiority of a human teacher over even the angels. Only a man can teach another man as they are from the same species to be credible. Jesus Christ was baptized by John. Scriptural Deities in human forms had to adopt Masters for themselves. Thus the Master combines in himself the tripartite functions of the Deity, the Prophet and the teaching all rolled into one. One who is lucky enough to find such a Master can safely anchor his ship in him. Such a person stands firm like a rock in the middle of the tempestuous ocean of existence whereas one who tries to rely on his own deficient instrument of mind sinks in this ocean like a leaky gourd.

Since Buddha preached his doctrine the most prominent Master in this line seems to have been Kabir. The word *Buddhi* means 'intellect' and those who are adept at verbal jugglery and hair-splitting are not easily convinced and subdued except by the very great ones among Masters. The dialogues of Kabir bear ample testimony to the fact of several scholars of the day meeting their Waterloo in public debates with him. The Masters first issue a warning and take the first step in attracting the prospective antagonist to join issue. Once that is done the Master launches his multi-pronged assault on the pet areas of specialization of the haughty and proud challenger until he is driven to desperation and defeat. Once the walls of the fortress of pride and prejudice are exposed and demolished, begins the next phase of building a new phase, of erecting an unassailable fortress of invincibility based not only on sound logic but on the authority of inner guidance and experience. Unless the bubble of intellectual pride is burst by a competent Master such an egoist is most likely to turn into an argumentative and self-centered scholar revelling in debating successes. The Master cures precisely such a situation where the pride of book-knowledge is not allowed to misguide and mislead the acolytes.

COSMOLOGY

'My Father has several mansions!'. Kabir has mentioned eight levels or planes of awareness each with its own nomenclature and description. The dialogues contain a bare reference to the experiences of those who were fortunate enough to be initiated into the realms of Divine mysteries.¹ It would suffice here to mention certain broad observations as the higher mystic regions are not everyone's cup of tea. Even to the initiates each stage looks complete in itself though each lower stage shows up to be insignificant in relation to the next higher stage or hierarchy. To those whose horizons are limited to mind and matter there is nothing beyond the physical world or the mundane. They physical, astral and the causal belong to the realm of mind and body consciousness. The first 5 regions may be described as follows:

1. The region of the 1000 petalled lotus: This is the region where the individual soul contacts the 'sound current' or the 'word' which is known by various terminologies.
2. This is the 'abode' of the Master and signifies the spiritual region above the physical universe where a Master awaits the arrival of the pilgrim soul of the disciple to take charge of him and chapter on him to the higher regions. The disciple is expected to exert himself and withdraw consciousness from his body senses to the seat of the soul above and behind the two eyes where the radiant form of the Master meets him.
3. This is the region of the 'Tenth Door' above and beyond the nine lower portals of the body thus making the region as that of pure spirit. Here lies the 'pool of immortality' (Mansarovar).
4. This is the region of light and sound, of Divine origin not perceptible by human organs of perception.
5. This is a region of Truth of indescribable and imperishable dimensions.

1. For details of these stages a reference may be made to *Mysticism: The Spiritual Path*, Vol. II, (MSP), L.R. Puri, pp.373,374

Generally the beings on each plane are unaware of the other planes even as the dwellers of the earth plane are unaware of the spiritual planes and consider them as speculation. As the evolving soul achieves mastery over its own plane the next higher one opens up its possibilities to it.

The physical world has a relative and not an absolute position and is hence temporary. It has validity as long as man is in its grip but the moment he sees the rope as a rope and not as a snake, the spell is broken. Just as God works through the Masters the soul works through the mind. The gross mind of the waking state, the subtle mind of the astral self and the even more subtle mind of the causal self are all within the realm of the physical body. The Masters are not commissioned to improve the physical conditions of the material world in the Divine Plan as such an action will dampen the spirit of the aspirants to move up on the spiritual ladder. The Masters are not essentially interested in the material amelioration of society or in social reformation as these are temporary palliatives and cannot be a permanent feature of a relative world lacking in substance.

The Divine Plan opens up an endless vista for the humans to rise higher and higher by their own effort.

Says Kabir:

'The world is a fictitious bondage,
and Kabir entered in the Naam (Word) is forever free'¹

Again he says:

'Whether sitting, standing or walking about,
They remain in a state of eternal equipoise'²

For achieving this state of realization while living in this world the Master is the guide within to lead the soul to the Supreme Being.

1. The Crown of Life, (COL) Sent Kirpal Singhji Maharaj, Sawan - Kirpal Publications 1980; Godmen: Finding a Spiritual Master, 'Prayer: Its Nature and Cure, p. 74.

2. ibid, p. 75.

The Triple Modes

The division of existence could be considered to comprise the material, the material-astral, the astral-spiritual and the purely spiritual realms. The creation of the world is made possible by three modes which are characterized by perfect balance (tranquillity or harmony), activity (passion) and inertia (passivity or inaction). These modes are qualities or attributes which through their interplay bring about cognizable manifestation. Kabir says that the same principle is operative whether in the human body or in the physical world. The manifested world is characterized by the trinity of time, space and causation.

The factor of time itself has an illusory trinity of the past, present and future with the inert future becoming the active present and consigned to the debris of the past endlessly. These could be seen as birth, sustenance and death or the functions of creation, sustenance and dissolution. The contrasts between them and their interaction resulting in an endless combination of the predominance of one over the other present the kaleidoscopic drama of life with a wide variety of dualities and contrasts. Only a perfect state of balance and harmony can present a picture of equilibrium. A disturbance in the pristine state of perfect balance brings about manifestations and its restoration signifies liberation or emancipation.

The act of creation is linked with devotion, sustenance with activity (karma) and dissolution with knowledge. Inertia is the stable condition of matter both before and after activity. Creation is an act of love (devotion) and knowledge destroys ignorance of the true nature of self thus leaving activity in the middle position. Thus activity stands as the bridge between creation and dissolution. Activity has no position of its own except in relation to birth and dissolution. The combination of dualities and pairs of opposites is the result of activity and keeps the pendulum swinging for ever in a relative state. Pleasure and pain, joys and sorrows, gain and loss are the inevitable states of duality which cannot bring about a permanent result or liberation.

The manifested world of time, space and causation and the triple qualities of 'tranquillity', 'activity' and 'passivity' which

characterize all creation are the outward expressions of the Creative Power and any act of devotion or esoteric activity within the field of dualities and contrasts can only be a binding and not a liberating factor. It is a movement within the manifested expansion and liberation lies in the journey from the manifest to the absolute. This qualitative jump is possible through the intercession of a Master Soul.

The limitations and imperfections of the manifested dualities are no reflection on the nature of the Absolute Power which is beyond them just as electricity can generate both heat and cold and it depends on their proper or improper use without a reflection on the power generator itself.

The combination of the soul and body is a masterpiece of the supreme genius of the Creator. The fledgling in the nest stays there for a brief while and flies away. The soul in the body is only on a brief sojourn. The bird flies away to its eternal abode leaving the flimsy cage behind. That liberation is beyond time and space. One is not aware of time or space in deep meditation.

Kabir and Knowledge

“O scholar! how can your mind and mine agree?
You speak of the written lines while I speak of what my eyes see”

Knowledge of that is to be had by knowing which everything is known and nothing worth knowing remains unknown. Without such knowledge nothing else is worth knowing. Know the knower; know the truth supreme.

What appears to exist and does not exist and what does not appear to exist but exists are both illusory appearances. The extraordinarily complex world of the waking state disappears in an instant in sleep when the mind in the astral creates a totally new world telescoping vast distances and time into split-seconds. In the deep sleep state there is neither the world of the waking state nor of the dream state nor of the body nor of the mind. The experience of the bliss state is felt on awakening from deep sleep. These three states created by the supra-causal mind experience pleasure and pain; joys and sorrows based on one's karmic load.

These coexist with the mind within the domain of the region of the mind. When the mind is left behind and the spirit soars into regions beyond the mind in trans-causal there is progress in the higher regions of awareness.

Kabir says:

“Reading, writing and parading cleverness are an easy matter.

But to conquer lust, control the mind and traverse the heavenly regions is difficult.”

Intellect as an instrument tries to bifurcate, analyze, divide, subdivide and establish inter-relationships and hence it is at home while seeing diversity in unity. The intellectuals at large swear by intellect as being the only instrument of knowledge while it is obvious that most ills and disharmonies of the world are traceable to this concept. The way out is only through the guidance of a Master who alone has the competence and the authority to rescue lost souls.

Mind comes first and then matter. There can be no matter without mind. This is the law of nature. An architect makes a plan in his mind first and sets about giving it a practical shape later. He can never give a complete shape to his plan because his plan never gets completed. The mind is an ever-changing commodity. By the time the architect executes the plan it is already outdated. No sooner a building is erected that one has to bother about its repair and maintenance. He thinks of various ways of perfecting his structure but in vain. The whole life is spent in this game with no solution in sight. The three forces of balance, activity and inertia continue to play their game till the very end. While he has not yet finished his planning, execution and patch-work, the span of his life is over.

The mind is like a shadow, it accompanies you as you walk and halts when you halt. It is in front of you or at your back but it is not within your grasp. A thing which does not have an existence of its own cannot be grasped. Thus the tasks of the world can never be finished though life comes to an end.

There is no release for man as long as he is being hounded from pillar to post by pairs of opposites and the mirage of dualities. God and devil, virtue and vice, good and bad are relativities which mutually co-exist. When the evil is overcome by good and vice by virtue and devil by God both become redundant just as a thorn is removed with a thorn and both are discarded. Once the disease is cured by medicine both the disease and the medicine are discarded for enjoying a state of good health. Kabir exhorts his folk to rise above these relative states for liberation from every craving. A state of desirelessness and self-sufficiency under all circumstances is to merge into divinity. To surrender everything is to gain everything.

DEVOTIONAL LOVE

The mystic doctrine has all along been based on love between the mystic and the Lord free from any tinge of self-interest or motivation. This is usually referred to in the Indian tradition as the 'Bhakti' cult or movement. It could be likened to a stream joining the ocean. To lose individuality is to assume totality. When the 'I' appears 'He' disappears and the 'He' remains when the 'I' disappears. Kabir's prayers and poems have a touch of a heartfelt poignancy. When the mystic loses his self in the Lord, the Lord becomes his and runs after him—says Kabir:

'I shall not count the beads nor shall I chant the name of the Lord 'Ram';

'I shall find solace only when my Ram chants my name'; and, 'My mind became a bird and soared high into the Heavens.

It found the paradise empty as the Lord was with His saints'.

Trinity, duality and unity are the three stages in which a mystic merger is achieved. This is variously described as the three stages of identity as Christ being a messenger, then the Son of God and finally the assertion, "I and my Father are one" or in another version, 'I am in the Light, the Light is in me and I am the Light'. It is a state of mind where there is no separate existence of God. Devotional love is applicable to the love of the Divine, all else being merely attachment of one kind or another.

Once it assets itself it does not depart nor does it fluctuate but remains constant.

To associate Kabir in particular with the 'Bhakti movement' of the 15th Century and consider the mystic doctrine of devotional love within a time-frame and as a reaction to an overemphasis on any particular monistic philosophy or intellectual theory would appear to deny the single most all-pervasive Divine Law of Love, a perennial position unaffected by the vagaries of social and institutional evolution. Love is the basis of the very creation which preceded it and will outlast any other doctrine or system of thought independent of social evolution. Says Evelyn Underhill: "Now Kabir, achieving this synthesis between the personal and cosmic aspects of the Divine Nature, eludes the three great dangers which threaten mystical religion.

First, he escapes the excessive emotionalism, the tendency to an exclusively anthropomorphic devotion, which results from an unrestricted cult of Divine Personality, especially under an incarnational form; seen in India in the exaggerations of Krishna worship, in Europe in the sentimental extravagances of certain Christian saints."

"Next he is protected from the soul-destroying conclusions of pure monism, inevitable if its logical implications are pressed home: that is, the identity of substance between God and the soul, with its corollary of the total absorption of that soul in the Being of God, as the goal of spiritual life"¹.

Kabir was a practical mystic who after having experienced absorption in the divine set about to span the bridge between the transcendental and the mundane in terms of one natural law comprehending the one Truth. He knit and interpreted the physical, the physical-mental, the mental-spiritual and the spiritual in terms of one all-embracing law. Spirit and matter and body and soul are interlinked by mind. Since the spirit and matter belong to two different categories or species any communication between them cannot be free from fear and ignorance. Where

1. Poems of Kabir, McMillans, 1915; pp. 10-11.

there is fear there cannot be any unfettered love which is the supreme principle on which the creation is based.

Spiritual discipline makes the gross body subtle and makes it more harmonized to experience divine love. Whether the body be gross or subtle it is still a body. The mind persists in the gross, astral and causal bodies. A temporary suppression of the mind is not what is recommended by the Masters of the caliber of Kabir. They lead one to a realm where the mind ceases to exist. It is a higher state of awareness which is incapable of being explained in terms of a mind which subsists at a lower level.

DEVOTION

Kabir likened his love and devotion of the Lord to a game of wager. If he lost the game he still remained a devotee but if he won the Lord would become his. In either case he stood to gain.

Love for the Lord did not admit of ebb and tide or waves of ascent and descent but of one even tenor, steady and unflinching at all times.

If love waned and warned it was not genuine love' it was a kind of barter with an expectation of gain or fear of loss. It was attachment and not love. True love can only be for the Lord; all else is attachment.

Says Kabir:

'By endlessly reading Scriptures none became an accomplished person;

One who digests the two syllables of love alone reaches the goal of wisdom'

The kind of love spoken of by Kabir starts with duality and ends in merger and indistinguishable unity.

The intensity of devotional love is such that it transcends the limitations of reason and yet it is not of a fluctuating nature. It is altogether steady in essence. Says Kabir:

"Yoga cannot equal love, nor can Cyan (knowledge);
Without love and devotion, O mystics, all contemplation is void."¹

Love transforms and elevates the higher consciousness to the acme of 'Reality' itself. It is not merely a sentiment. The purer one becomes the nearer he reaches the pinnacle. Beyond time and space the consummation of love is the sound current or the 'word'.

Kabir says that the mind (Manas) has its seat in every heart and hence occupies just a middle position in the human system. In the system of the plexuses the heart has the central position where the vital airs reign supreme. There are two plexuses above it and two below. The navel and the basal plexuses are below it and whereas the two plexuses above it are in the region of the throat and the 'third eye'. The mind will be in the ascension if it turns upwards and mundane if it turns downwards. The soul will have to overcome the body consciousness to realize its true nature.

In the ultimate analysis a man represents the universe in miniature in himself. All that is found in the outer universe is to be found within himself. The physical, the physical-spiritual and the purely spiritual dimensions exist in him. A human being is like a deer who has the musk within itself but searches for it all over the wood in vain. Kabir says:

'Your Lord is inside you like the scent in a flower,
Though the musk is within the deer it seeks it outside all over.'

The Master has free access to all the Realms and spiritual hierarchies which he transits at his will. Every realm appears independent and self-contained in itself just as the men of the physical world consider the physical to be the reality and any other realm a speculation. This spiritual blindness could be pierced only by a Master who alone has access to the entire hierarchy simultaneously and he alone can remove the intervening mask from the eyes of the disciple. Since the Master is

1. 'Mysticism: The Spiritual Path, Vol. II, L.R. Puri, Redha Saomi Satsang, Beas, 5th Edn., 1988, p. 104.

free from any personal ambition or desire it is his grace which he showers on the disciple through which he can see what his master sees.

'Take a Master who has no greed or attachment or conflict within himself and Who while living on the earth is free of its shackles.

Kabir's total detachment was the secret of his power. His barbed wit aroused more of mirth than malice because of his transparent sincerity. His teachings were addressed to all humanity and not to any denomination or nationality.

The Master-Disciple relationship progresses at various levels. At the physical level the contact and communication between the two is direct. Once the disciple overcomes self-identification with body-consciousness or moves over from the gross body to the subtle at the astral and causal levels the Master's form also assumes more subtle levels. As the disciple progresses on the path his independence or release from the gross and rise to the subtle levels prepares him to meet his Master in his radiant form. Once the contact between the two is established at that level the gap between the gross and the subtle narrows down and the way opens for the upward ascent of the human to the Divine. With the transcendence of the physical, astral and the causal the Master paves the way for the eventual merger of the human into the divine. The disciple will move from the outer to the inner life. The human will then have his real identity established in the Divine marking the end of the journey and the fulfillment of the purpose of life. The disciple then sees himself as an entity of pure Awareness and the Master as the all-absorbing sound-current. The absorption through the linkup is Realization.

Just as a mental plan leads to a blue-print and finally emerges as full-fledged building, the process on the spiritual path is the reverse one. The reverse journey sheds the coarseness of the body and moves up to the subtler regions of consciousness. The mind both binds and liberates. The material world is a gross creation of the mind. Overcoming the mind is overcoming matter and body consciousness. The ascent to the spiritual realms begins when

both the gross and subtle minds are left behind. Kabir has given vivid descriptions of the spiritual regions during this ascent.

For love to develop between two entities it is necessary that they belong to the same category of beings. Celestial beings, animals and humans belong to different categories and it is difficult for love to develop between them because of various grades of grossness and subtlety intervening between them. There can be attachment between the one and the other but not love. A man finds it difficult to love God whom he has not seen as God is the most subtle and man is gross. We fail to see the minute microbes because of our gross eyes. If the one is to see the other either the microbe has to become gross enough for the human eye to see it or the human eye has to become subtle to the level of the microbe. God in the human garb of a Master is hence accessible and lovable. The mystic process of merger takes place in two stages; first the merger of the disciple in the Master and finally the Lord.

When there is diversity in species an element of fear vitiates the bond of love and where there is fear there cannot be love. A man has to shed his grossness and move up on the subtle plane to close the gap between the human and the divine. This is the path indicated by the Master which guides the disciple to enter the radiant regions leaving behind the gross physical.

"The Master is beyond the three qualities of tranquillity, activity and inertia; beyond the 5 basic elements of matter; beyond the 25 subtle forms of the elements and beyond the mind."¹

The cosmos, the goal and the path are all within. Kabir says that all efforts and disciplines directed outside yourself are self-defeating.

"A quest in the wrong direction cannot lead to success. O Kabir, take with thee a guide and find the great jewel. A sure guide will help thee to reach quickly, however distant it may seem to be"²

1. Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, Godman: Finding a Spiritual Master; S.K. Publications Delhi; p. 18-19.
2. ibid,p.42

The Master never leaves the disciple come what may. 'I shall never leave thee nor forsake thee till the end of the world'. One who boards the bandwagon of the Master will reach the goal sooner or later. Says Kabir:

'Gold attracts not rust, nor steel the worms;
The disciple of the Master will never go to hell'¹

The "Word" (Shabd)

Sound and light are the primary manifestations of the ultimate 'Reality' or Truth or Love. The sound current exercises an inexorable pull on consciousness which is withdrawn from the body and senses. It is an attraction of love which is irresistible. The inner illumination (light) precedes the sound current even in the material world though this light and sound current are not of material origin. Allegorically it is only light and sound which beckon to a lost entity in a dark jungle. The newborn baby is immediately attracted and silenced by a light or the sound of a bell. A man departing from his physical body is shown the 'lamp' at the final moment. The sound current is referred to as the 'word' and all creation or manifestation emanates therefrom and expands. The Lord Supreme controls both the material and spiritual worlds through the 'sound current' working at various planes.

Says Kabir:

'The three worlds (Lokas) and the fifty-two letters (Sanskrit alphabet)
are one and all subject to decay'
But the eternal and the everlasting
holy Word is quite different from them.'²

The soul manifests itself in body in the form of consciousness and the 'word' which lifts the disciple above the relative world of time, space and causation and the latter dissolves into 'it'.

1. ibid,p.167

2. The Crown of Life, op. cit., p. 66.

"If spirituality must entail a slow ascension through all the rungs of this intricate and involved ladder of yoga, then it cannot choose but remain a closed secret to mankind at large. If, however, it is to become a free gift of Nature like the sun, the air and the water, then it must make itself accessible through a technique which places it within the reach of all ... It is of such a technique that Kabir and Nanak gave us hope ..."¹

DIFFICULT PATHS

Kabir brought absolute simplicity to life's disciplines bringing all its problems and aspects under one umbrella of a basic earnestness, rhythm with nature, harmony and balance. He did not approve of the highly complicated and taxing yogic practices which were beyond the capacity of the vast majority.

The yoga of Patanjali traced the upward journey along the central channel of the spinal column through the six plexuses.

"To overcome the hindrances and to realize the self, Patanjali gives an elaborate account of what he terms 'Ashtang Yoga', prescribing an eightfold method..."²

The plexuses are Basal (4 petals), Hypogastric (16 petals), Solar (8 petals) Cardiac (12 petals), Pharyngeal (16 petals) and Cavernous (2 petals) making a total of 48 petals. Adding four more petals to it representing the consciousness, mind, intellect and ego we arrive at a figure of 52 petals. (This represents the number of letters in the Sanskrit alphabet).

Kabir says that the physical, subphysical and parophysical worlds as well as the inner world represented by the 52 letters have to be transcended to reach the everlasting 'word' or the sound current.

The gross life-force (Pran) travels through the nerves in the human body but the subtle life-force travels through the astral tubes. However, even the astral and causal are physical in nature though more subtle. The sound current spoken of by Kabir lies beyond the physical, astral and causal and beyond mind.

1. The Crown of Life, op. cit., p. 85.

2. ibid., p. 24.

The strict disciplines associated with the plexuses at the astral and causal planes yield certain amazing and even miraculous results such as levitation, capacity to know the past, present and future of anyone, capacity to expand or contract the body at will to any size, walking on water etc. These actually become hindrances in one's divine journey and impede or even divert one from the path of self-realization. A lifelong investment of time and effort to acquire any of these will end up in smoke at bodily death without his solving the secret of life being solved or self-realization achieved, thus mainly repeated visits to planet earth inevitable.

MORAL CONDUCT

The traditional code of ethical and moral conduct is the very basis of any spiritual progress. Kabir says that unless one overcomes the pulls of the senses, controls the mind and steadies his intellect he cannot have a vision of the soul. The source of the original sound current (Word) is the Abode of Truth and no access to it is possible unless the individual seeking liberation has not humbled the realm of mind and matter. The soul while riding back to the Abode of Truth on the wave of the sound current has to jettison itself from the mind/body overlordship. Kabir is unsparing in his pithy comments on the petty foibles of mankind tinged with hypocrisy and outward show.

Here is a free rendering of some of Kabir's verses bearing on conduct:

'A sage, a virtuous woman and a valiant fighter are incomparable;
They tread a difficult path but if they fall from
the pedestal, theirs will be a calamitous end.'

A sage is looked up to by the society as a beacon of light and guidance even as a virtuous woman is the mainstay of the family and society and their lapses have many more serious consequences than the lapses of the ordinary folk.

'Where there is no desire there is no worry!
One who wants nothing at all is an emperor'

Attachment breeds desire and desire seeks fulfillment. A desire fulfilled breeds many more. There is more joy in overcoming desire than in fulfilling it. Any impediment in fulfilling desire creates anger while fulfillment fills one with pride and ego.

It is worth recalling that when the Buddha went back to his erstwhile kingdom as a monk his father wailed and said: "O God! Why have you sent a beggar in the family of kings?" The Buddha replied: "There was no king among my ancestors. They were all beggars (of the world). I am the only emperor."

Said Kabir:

"On whom shall I shower mercy and on whom cruelty?
All creatures big and small are the creation of the Lord whether the ant or the elephant"

Expressing his compassion for all creation says Kabir at another place:

'They kill the cock and the goat
and claim it to be right
All creatures are beloved of the Lord
What excuse do they have to escape?'

There is a certain amount of loss of life at micro levels involved in the inevitable processes of breathing, walking, drinking water or consuming food, etc. involuntarily as also in the activity of the motor nerves such as the process of digesting, growing hair or nails. These processes of life are a part of nature to sustain life at the physical level and should not be interfered with. However, killing to eat involves a liability and a drag for one who is on the upward path and the liability increases or decreases with the size of the creature slaughtered or the violence involved in the slaughter.

ISLAMIC MYSTICISM

Just as a soul is independent of its sex, nationality, race and other appendages mysticism too speaks a cosmic language free

from the blind prejudices of religious orthodoxy. Islamic mysticism or Sufism is thus a term intended to identify merely a historical time-frame in which certain mystics of Muslim background left their indelible mark on the spiritual fabric of human society. Kabir's dialogues embrace in its broad sweep the basic divine theme pervading all established religions, systems of belief and rites and rituals resulting in a harmonious blend exposing the hollowness of the gains of any conflicts engendered on these grounds.

The greatest meeting ground between Islamic mysticism and the mystic masters' path spearheaded by Kabir is the role of the Master in acting as the catalyst between the human and the Divine. The merger of the disciple's will in the will of the Master (*fana fi'l Shaikh*) is but a prelude to such a merger in the Divine Will (*fana fi'llah*). The spiritual advancement of the disciple is guaranteed to a great extent on his following the discipline laid down for him by the Master (Guru) whereas the final transformation is a matter of Grace of the Lord which cannot be demanded as a right or as a reward for one's exertions. A Sufi is concerned with evolving to ever higher states of realization than seeking compensation for his ascetic practices. The various schools of Sufism differ only in the prescription of sets of prescribed ascetic practices and the description of the various states of realization than in the fundamentals of piety or inner illumination. Kabir likewise emphasizes the importance of the pure, unalloyed and disinterested love for the Lord for its own sake than as a bargaining counter for securing one privilege or the other.

The process of total merger of the individual in the universal is a uniquely individual phenomenon. The Masters do not go about forming groups and bodies among themselves. They are like the lions and tigers who do not go about in packs. The human is gross and the divine is subtle. Ascetic practices help a disciple in shedding his grossness and moving up towards the subtle thus bridging the gap between the human and the divine. This helps in chastening and purifying the quality of love for the Divine. Every kind of attachment is a chain and non-attachment

liberation. Every kind of attachment is like a seed growing into a full-blown tree and producing thousands of seeds in its turn.

The human mind is a storehouse of many impurities. The Master provides the fermentation to clean it up. The mind having thousands of centers of attraction and attachment is ever mercurial. The Master helps the disciple to overcome this multiplicity and merge into the unity represented in his personality. When the disciple dissolves himself in this unity he secures the purpose of existence. When the seed dissolves in the earth it emerges as a tree. The Master helps the disciple in acquiring the power of self-dissolution.

The body, mind and soul all require to be disciplined to be able to consummate the purpose of birth. The body is best conditioned by serving God's creatures without self-interest. The mind is best conditioned by diverting it to the subtle than towards the gross. The soul is best served by turning inwards towards the inner "word" and the inner "light".

A word here regarding certain limitations in the Sufist doctrines will not be out of place. The Sufi doctrine refers to the four fundamental elements of the earth, water, fire and air but omits any reference to the fifth; viz, space or ether. The Sufi doctrine goes up to the level of the 'third eye center' (Nuqta Suweida) as the seat of the soul and not beyond. Kabir's dialogues have a much wider canvas and deal with the higher echelons of cosmic reality.

Part Two
Dialogues

Chapter 2

Kabir's Guidance to Jiwa and Tatwa

On Selecting A Master

Jiwa and Tatwa were two brothers dedicated to a spiritual quest. They were well-grounded in religious lore and lexicon and in accordance with the then existing tradition they were in search of a competent Master who would put them on the right path and provide them with inner guidance. However, it was not easy to identify a competent Master. In their quest they decided on a novel method. They spread a few dry branches on the ground and believed that if they washed the feet of a true saint and poured that water on the dry branches they would sprout. Many religious men passed their way and the two brothers devotedly tested them but the dry branches showed no signs of greenery. They continued with their litmus test in the midst of growing despair until one day Kabir happened to pass that way. This time fortune smiled on them. As legend has it, the water from Kabir's feet-wash turned the dry branches green. At long last the two brothers had succeeded in their search. Kabir recognized their intrinsic merit and sincerity and agreed to guide their spiritual efforts. However, on learning of their novel method of choosing a competent Master, Kabir advised them against such practices. The gist of a dialogue between them on the subject is as follows:-

J & T: Is not a fact that we ultimately found you? Is that not enough evidence that our method was worth while?

K : This is not correct. You tested many holy men but with much doubt and suspicion. This is not fair. Since you subjected them to your test, the natural law demands that some day you too will be similarly tested.

J & T : We did not want to take a chance in the important matter of selecting a Master. Everything happens in its own time. If it took a little longer what harm is there? We could not have hurried up matters anyhow.

K : Since you did not serve all the holy men whom you tested with equal devotion and indeed treated some of them with downright suspicion you are guilty of showing disrespect to them. This is not a good way to test the competence of a Master. Your test should have been restricted to their spiritual competence and knowledge and not to their ability to perform extraordinary feats. If you are seekers of feats then your pursuit is worldly and not spiritual. With certain practices it is possible to acquire some unusual powers, but such an acquisition is by no means a sign of spiritual advancement. Those who lay store by such feats are indeed on slippery ground and their desire for true spiritualism is doubtful.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVOTION

J & T : We are indeed ignorant and are not sure whether we deserve to be your initiates.

K : Your humility is proof of your eligibility for discipleship. However, one who renders service as a disciple with any motive of worldly gain of any sort is not a disciple but a labourer who wants a reward for his labour. If the aim of discipleship is worldly interest, then such service is a commercial deal. If the aim is to seek comfort in the life hereafter then such a disciple is a mere wage-earner. One who seeks God for His own sake is worthy and happy.

J & T : We are not clear of our own status. Are we disinterested seekers? We are indeed fortunate that you have showered your grace on us.

K : Those who lack awareness are the ones who are really aware. Only those who are lost in the world of devoted love are really aware. Those who seek God and not the world are dear to God. They are higher than angels. Those who totally identify themselves with God and do not find any distance between them and Him may function freely under his authority. In fact God functions according to the wishes of such devotees. Take the example of a moth which is attached to a flame and burns itself in it. Similar is the relationship between God and God-lover. The two do not consider themselves as two. They are one. Those who search for God outside of themselves search in vain since their basic premise is faulty. All disciplines which aim at finding God outside are bound to fail since the journey must be undertaken inwardly. A God-lover does not ever hanker after liberation. He is totally intoxicated with divine love to the exclusion of every other thought.

TRIALS ON THE PATH OF DEVOTION

J & T : Those who follow the path of devoted love often face opposition and calumny.

K : These are divine dispensations. The moon spreads its cool lustre over the whole world but the dogs keep barking at it. The more you rub the sandal wood the better is its fragrance. Initially the path is filled with thorns but subsequently it is strewn with roses. A man is confronted by two paths, the 'Preya' or the wide path and the 'Shreya' or the narrow path. The first is wide in the beginning but narrow and dark at the end. The second is narrow at the beginning but wide and bright at the end. Worldly life is like the initially wide path where the senses, body and mind are thrilled. However, as one progresses on this path there is nothing but disillusionment and pain. The narrow path is difficult at the beginning but leads to peace, tranquillity and fearlessness.

J & T : We have no other desire than to serve at your feet.

K : This is an exacting process. You should be like Henna leaves which are ground to a paste first before they can be applied on the hands to create a pleasing and lasting colour.

J & T : As long as your bright figure rests in our hearts we have nothing to fear.

K : A figure is made from clay. The earth is broken with a shovel first. It is mixed with water and cleansed of stones and other impurities. When it turns into clean and soft clay it is put into a mould and baked into a figure. When finally coloured or painted it is pleasing to the eyes. There is no innate figure in the clay. It is in the mind of the potter. The potter removes the superfluous material to mould the lump into the desired shape. Similarly, the figure of the Master is not outside you. It is in your heart. Do not search for him outside yourself nor consider the task strenuous. Your deficiencies and weaknesses will be eliminated by the obstacles and the trials which come your way. They will make you spiritually strong. This is their purpose.

J & T : Individual souls are weak. How can they stand up to such difficult challenges?

K : The One who has devised this grand scheme will bear the burden of finding solutions. Opposition and obstacles are created to make you strong and capable of overcoming them. When a child has a boil the mother takes him to the surgeon for an incision to enable the putrid matter to come out and bring relief to the child. Similarly, the Master will administer bitter medicine when necessary to bring relief to the disciple. Those who indulge in calumny will do so at their own peril. You do not have to pay back in the same coin. They are like house-flies who are attracted to dirt. You should be like the honeybee and keep the company of flowers. Nature has allotted tasks to everyone. The flea, though it sits on the cow's udder

sucks blood and not milk. It is therefore vital for you to develop your powers of discrimination.

THE POWER OF DISCRIMINATION

J & T: You have said that we lack discrimination. Kindly elucidate.

K: You are a product of the antecedents of your birth and tradition over the ages. These influences persist. Your thoughts, speech and actions are the result of waves arising in the ocean of your mind. These waves are for ever striking against the coastal rocks leaving their marks on them. An analysis of these marks indicates the nature and type of waves and their strength and pattern. What is true of the sea is equally true of a human being. This represents the sum total of character, tendencies and behaviour patterns. Their roots go back very far. A son usually resembles his father. New tendencies are difficult to create. It is easier to strengthen the inherited tendencies. I, therefore, tackle people with different backgrounds and thought-patterns in a manner which will be easily acceptable to them. I deal with the Sufis and traditionalists using their own familiar terminologies. I see the common features of various thought-patterns and use them as the basic approach for introducing the 'Path of the Masters'. The 'Path of the Masters' is based on universal spiritualism free from all limitations of castes, creeds and labels. Discrimination means recognising true as true and false as false.

There are three kinds of people who need to be improved. Those who are no better than animals, those who are restless, and those that are ignorant. These are the people whom the Masters seek to improve by various methods, one step at a time. Once they accept the path of service, love and devotion they develop discrimination. This is the first step on the road to enlightenment. Without devotion, love and service there can be no

concentration of thought and without such concentration there can be no enlightenment. The ability to concentrate is by itself not enlightenment. Dharna (concentrating on a fixed point) and Samadhi (total absorption) are not the end but the means. However, once this stage has been reached, a Master is needed to lead the person to the final goal of enlightenment. An enlightened person is one who has directly observed and experienced Reality. The Eight-fold Yogic Path to Enlightenment is a difficult path to follow because its various stages also lead to the acquisition of supernatural powers. Such supernatural achievements can distract the acolyte from his ultimate goal and serve as an impediment to progress. I have, therefore, simplified the discipline by introducing the 'Yoga of the Sound Current'. (Surat-Shabd Yoga).

It is my desire that the long and tortuous path of the Eight-fold (Ashtanga Yoga) be simplified so that more people may be drawn to it. The Surat-Shabd Yoga (The Yoga of the Sound Current) is not only simple but also free from many other pit-falls. Basically it is no different from the 'Path of Devotion' (Bhakti Marg). When you practise it regularly you will automatically develop discrimination. Discrimination will lead to enlightenment and liberation. Only one who is filled with the zeal of devotion to the Lord is capable of discriminating true from false and be above all prejudices.

One who has not achieved the objectivity of discrimination gets caught up in words without the understanding of their import. He cannot separate the chaff from the grain. Devotion is the only answer to prejudice and non-discrimination. It is a simple answer. However, in the world we frequently find that those who lack discrimination entice and enslave others of their own kind. For instance there are those who worship the dead and pray to their graves. Others thoughtlessly follow them. They do not care to understand that a dead king, a dead physician

or a dead teacher can offer no help to the living. Only a living king, doctor or teacher can render help.

People who lack discrimination can do great harm to others. Misguided men take delight in misguiding other men. Fallen women entice other women to their own crooked ways. An elephant entices other elephants to slavery and so does a deer entice other deers. It is like a forest fire. Trees brush against one another and burn down the whole forest. All of them pursue the same path without discrimination. Hence, the importance of right company. *The one who is discriminating does not select the ways of the world. His search is other-worldly.*

True discrimination starts with a clean mind. Anything that you wish to avoid or give up, you must first give up in the mind. When you sanitize your mind you will be rid of its hankerings for ever. Desirelessness has its base in the heart, not in external acts or movements. Renunciation from the heart is true renunciation. When you see death and destruction around you in this world, you are disillusioned with it and think of the next. The nether-world proves to be no different and you are once again disillusioned. Both this world and the next are ephemeral and transitory. Your search is not for Godliness because it is again a binding thought not a liberating thought. The worldly and Godly are both binding concepts. A complete understanding of both truly liberates you from both. You will then be free from all binding thoughts. Remove the thorn with a thorn and throw both away. Once you are cured both the disease and the medicine become redundant.

Evil is a weakness and a deficiency. First it has to be countered by the contrary concept of good and virtue. There is power in goodness. Supplant evil with good and give up both because even goodness can become a shackle. Good and evil are relative terms and hence co-exist. One cannot be without the other. A bright lamp has a dark shadow under it.

THE NATURE OF THE MIND

J & T : Kindly describe to us the nature of mind. It seems difficult to understand.

K : What you consider difficult becomes difficult and what you consider easy becomes easy. Unless you make the container ready to receive nothing can be put in it. You must be genuinely interested in understanding and willing to make the effort.

J & T : We shall listen with single-minded attention.

K : When it is windy the sea presents a strange multiple spectacle. There are waves, froth, foam and bubbles in it. A single sea presents a spectacle of multiplicity. This diversity in unity is the characteristic of the mind in which every thought-wave creates myriad thoughts, feelings and impressions. Matter is like an ocean. It creates many ripples such as the sun, moon and the stars. Each ripple has human kind, beasts, birds, minerals, greenery, insects etc., living in it. There are ripples within ripples. I am quoting this by way of an example. Otherwise the whole thing is mind and the mind is everything. The countries, the things and the element of time all absorb their natural characteristics both internally and externally. They display myriad characteristics of coming and going, stopping and moving, accepting and rejecting, etc. All these ripples are the 'mind' The ripples are in motion all the time. You are nothing but mind. Your bondage and liberation are both in the mind. Both knowledge and devotion are in the mind. Whatever thoughts, impressions and preferences you absorb become the base of the diversities around you. The universe is a huge conglomeration of differences and diversities. No two men are the same nor can two leaves be the same. The father who produces children is a game of the mind. The children who are born are also a game of the mind. Every species is interested in multiplying and progressing in accordance with the natural law. Whatever you witness around you is a game of the mind. The mind is ever-changing in its game of diversity.

J & T : This is clear but what is the solution? Do we passively accept whatever is happening without a murmur.

K : If you were to passively go along with this game of nature where is the need for the Masters? If you were to continue with this never-ending sequence of joys and sorrows, comedies and tragedies without any hope of redemption why should I have appeared on the scene? I heard the wails of suffering souls and out of my compassion for them decided to manifest myself. I raise my voice loud and clear for all to hear and take heed. If you want to understand it you should first gather together at one point all the potentials of your mind, as they lie scattered at present. As long as the mind loves diversity, differences and pairs of opposites, it will not be drawn towards the unity of Reality. There is sorrow in multiplicity. It leads to division, separation and estrangement. There is joy, contentment and affinity in unity. In spite of its efforts spread over thousands of years humanity has not learnt this lesson. It is my mission to rescue those souls who seek refuge in me and lead them to their true home. Saints hitherto have been explaining this mystery either as a theory or as a science or as a practical discipline but without much success. I have manifested myself to present to the world a composite of all these aspects. It is the Yoga of the Sound Current. This method is universal and objective in its character and holds an eternal appeal.

J & T : Why is the mind restless and why does it remain restless?

K : A thing has the qualities of its components. Delusion (Maya) is the constituent of the mind. Sugar is made out of sugar-cane and hence it is sweet. Chilly gives a pungent taste. The mind is composed of three states, viz., joy, sorrow and sloth. It is sometimes in a mixed state. This is Maya or Delusion.

J & T : How does the mind succumb to delusion?

K : This is due to various factors such as the antecedents of time, space and matter, the load of past actions, food and other factors. Just as gusts of wind disturb the surface of

the water similarly all the factors which I have mentioned influence the state of mind and make it restless. These are the facets of delusion.

J & T : We were under the impression that the mind has only one state, that of restlessness. We are surprised to hear of its three states.

K : This universe is in a state of flux. Nothing remains in the same state or in one state. Underneath every change is to be seen a play of the three states that I have mentioned.

J & T : If as you say, the mind has only the characteristic of restlessness then how could the saints and seers of the past subdue it and make it calm? Unless the mind has the capability of becoming steady and calm there can be no system of discipline to bring it about. This is a new concept for us. Please elucidate.

K : Every created being transits between three states, the wakeful state, the dream state and the deep dreamless sleep state. During the wakeful state the mind is restless and awake. During the dream state the mind alternates between restlessness and calm. During the deep sleep state the mind is totally at rest.

J & T : It means that the mind assumes these states when it is linked with the body. When it is with the gross body it is restless and when it is with the astral body it is both restless and restful. In the causal body it is totally at rest. The problem is that in all three cases it is the body which is involved. What then is the mind?

K : Just as the mind is made up of subtle matter or delusion (Maya) similarly the body is made up of the elements. The elements are also delusion. Both the mind and the elements have the same characteristics in their form and yet they have their respective identities. Though the mind becomes active in combination with the body yet one cannot say that the mind is otherwise incapable of acting. Mind and matter are like the fish and the sea. The fish is born in water, lives in water and is inseparable from water. Water is its origin. When water is low the fish

becomes restless. Where there is a current in water the fish swims about merrily but where there is deep water the fish dives in it and becomes calm. The relation between the fish and water is the same as between body and mind. The mind and body are different to the extent that fish and water are different. In reality both are the same. The convulsions of the vast ocean produce the fish in it. Similarly the mind skips about in dealing with the body. The body has three modes, the gross, the subtle (astral) and the causal.

THE NATURE OF THE BODY

J & T : What are these three modes in the body?

K : The body has three characteristics, serenity, activity and passivity. There is peace, bliss and brilliance in serenity (Sat). There is restlessness and sorrow in activity (Rajas) and dullness, lethargy and inertia in passivity, (Tamas). When these three qualities are in perfect equilibrium they are said to be in the causal state. This is the womb of all subsequent creation. When there is a slight movement or stir in the body the Satwa factor (Serenity) begins to manifest. When Satwa enters the astral and physical states in greater measure then the active stage becomes more manifest and the material phase asserts itself more and more. The same three modes are represented in birth, development and death. These three modes constitute the play of the universe and permeate all creation whether they be forces represented by spiritual beings, the human kind, the animal world, the biological kingdom or the minerals.

J & T : These three modes are understandable in the body but how do they manifest in the individual soul?

K : You are born, you deal with the world and you die. You are awake, asleep and in deep dreamless sleep. You arrive, stay and depart. You inhale, retain the breath and exhale. These three acts are common to all creation whatever be their nature. There are no exceptions.

J & T : In live beings this appears to be true but is it true even in the case of inanimate objects?

K : Why not? The law is the same for everyone. Everything is made up of these three attributes.

J & T : We do not see this triple action in plants and minerals.

K : The trees breathe in, retain the breath and exhale. This is how they acquire energy from space. The 'Touch-me-not' plant shrinks and withdraws its leaves and becomes feelingless. All plants do the same in their own way though you may not notice it. All plants are born, flourish for a time and then wither away.

J & T : It is understandable in regard to plants but not in respect of minerals and metals.

K : They are also born, stay for some time and then decay.

J & T : But the metals and minerals do not seem to breathe and seek food.

K : There is no exception to the rule. Every creation breathes in. What breathes in must breathe out. The two are inevitable. Even a stone absorbs its food from the space around it. The energy is sucked in by it, retained and expurged. Only your gross eyes cannot see these subtle processes in metals and minerals. Where you cannot see a subtle process through gross eyes you will have to infer them by observation of nature and logic. A diamond shows brilliance, then gets normal and finally becomes dull. This you can observe with your naked eye and this is nothing but triple action common to all nature, paupers and kings alike. There is not even the tiniest particle in the universe which does not follow this triple action.

J & T : Now we realize that the mind is everywhere and in everything. Its different manifestations look varied at the level of variation. This is natural. You have clearly explained 'discrimination' to us. Please explain to us detachment or asceticism more fully. Why does the mind become involved in the vagaries of the physical world and what are the disciplines it must undergo to deserve enlightenment and liberation?

K : The mind has five main vices: these are anger, covetousness, attachment, lust and egoism. Its virtues are compassion, disinterestedness, chastity and high-mindedness. One has to first abandon the vices and supplant them with virtues. Then both have to be abandoned to deserve enlightenment. The abandonment of vices and the adoption of virtues are not difficult on their own. Once you keep good company and attend spiritual discourses the path gets simpler. Attendance of spiritual discourses is more effective than reading books and pursuing difficult disciplines.

J & T : Kindly elucidate the term 'spiritual discourse' (Satsang).

K : The word 'Satsang' means the company of Truth or one who has resolved to pursue Truth. There is no difference between the Truth and its seeker. One who knows the Truth is Truth itself. One who differentiates between the two has not really understood both. Truth creates its own beneficial and uplifting atmosphere and falsehood its own deleterious effects on others. Your mind is influenced by the atmosphere which you frequent. Fire, air, water, earth and space all have their particular influences and effects. Similarly individuals have good and bad influences and they create their own spheres of influence. When they speak, see or use their hands to indicate anything their energy waves enter space and leave their influence thereon.

COMPANY OF SAINTS

K : The company of saints imparts several benefits to the acolyte.¹ 'The saint emits waves of positive spiritual

1. *The story goes that once Prophet Moses was on his way to Mount Sinai to see God and on his way halted in a rich man's house where he received much hospitality. The rich man, when asked by Moses if he desired anything, said that he had been blessed by everything except children. Moses, whereupon, promised to recommend his case to God. When Moses pleaded his case God informed him that the rich man was not destined to have any offspring. On his way back from Mount*

energy all the time. All who are around him get its benefit even unconsciously. Listening to them often will mould your thinking and lift you high. You will find it easier to rise above the pull of the senses and receive divine truth. Your mind will expand to great horizons. Your knowledge will widen to permit you a wide degree of tolerance and understanding. You will not be bored with your daily routine. Your mind will turn towards liberation.

Sinai Moses informed the rich man of what had transpired at Mount Sinai and regretted that he could be of no assistance to the rich man in the matter of an offspring.

A few days later a saint happened to pass by the house of the same rich man who as was his wont, offered hospitality to the saint. The saint was pleased with the rich man and asked him if he could do anything for him. When the rich man narrated to him what Moses had told him, the saint got indignant and said: 'Moses or no Moses! I bless you to have four children'. Saying thus he departed. In due course the rich man was blessed with four children. When Moses happened to pass that way again and learnt of the developments since his last visit, he was angry beyond measure. He proceeded post haste to seek an explanation from God for the course of events that had shaped that way.

God pacified Moses and promised to explain the whole thing to him but only after Moses brought a pound of human flesh from someone who would give it voluntarily. Moses searched in vain for a man who would voluntarily part with a pound of his flesh until the matter was put to the saint who had blessed the rich man with children. On learning of what God wanted the saint cut off his flesh instantly and offered it to the Lord. Thereupon God addressed Moses and asked him why he had to go in search of human flesh when he himself could have given it. Then He referred to the saint who had no hesitation whatsoever in offering all his flesh at the after of the Lord. Such saints who remain absorbed in the Lord do not have to approach Him for anything as the Lord does not live apart from them. They act on behalf of the Lord and the Lord upholds their action. The Lord runs the world according to the will of His saints. The Lord Himself is in search of such saints because it is in their hearts that He lives.

Says Kabir:

'I shall neither count the beads

nor repeat the Lord's name

I shall have a sigh of relief

Only when the Lord runs after me'.

J & T : If as you say every person throws his aura around him then the saint is only one as against his large audience. Since most of the audience is crooked in its ways their collective negative influence will overwhelm the positive influence of just one saint.

K : Know well that the power of good is very great and more enduring than the power of evil. There are many evil people and good ones are few and yet in the final analysis the evil cannot overwhelm good.

Chapter 3

A Dialogue with Jahan Gasht of Baghdad on Sufism

The following dialogue took place between Kabir and Jahan Gasht of Baghdad when the latter came to India in search of spiritual illumination and found what he wanted at the feet of the Master, Saint Kabir at Banaras. Only a gist of the dialogue is presented here:

K : What is the purpose of your visit?

JG : It is a common belief in Baghdad that the Holy Prophet of Islam used to often say that a cool breeze comes from India. I do not understand this statement and hence my journey to you all the way from Baghdad. What did the Prophet mean?

K : It is the same cool breeze which has brought you here. It means that India has always been a repository of spiritual wealth. Sufism was born here and it was here that it flourished and reached its zenith. The other countries received only a part of this treasure. It could not rise to its full glory there. Sufism is a way of achieving peace and inner contentment. The Indian soil is suitable for it. It is like certain fruits and flowers which are associated with certain countries such as the mango for which India is rightly famous. If it is sown in an alien soil the product will not have the same quality, taste or flavour. Similar is the case with Sufism. India offers a suitable climate for it.

Sufi saints are honoured in India whereas your country shows disrespect to them and sometimes they are lynched. In India whatever may be the theory propounded by spiritual men it receives respectful attention. Hence it is that the Holy Prophet of Islam spoke of a cool breeze coming from India.

JG : Is not Hinduism hostile to Islam? How can the Hindus honour Sufism?

K : Hinduism is not hostile to any religion. A Hindu is taught to be liberal and receptive to all religions. He is taught to keep in sight the goal of God-realization alone and hence religions, denominations and varied customs do not matter to him. India offers a suitable climate for evaluating various philosophies quite freely without conflict or discord.

JG : Do the Hindus accept being initiated by Muslim saints?

K : In Sufism there is no question of Hindu and Muslim. All are God's creation. One who is engrossed in an inner search has no stomach for futile controversies. I am a Muslim but I was initiated by a Hindu, Ramanand and I have an overwhelming number of Hindu disciples.

JG : You are right but I cannot absorb all your teachings at once.

K : You may stay on and continue the dialogue day after day until you exhaust all your questions and overcome all your doubts.

THE PART AND THE WHOLE

K : The loftiness of love is in its totality and universality. This universality is not revealed unless the part shows a thirst for the whole.

JG : I have not understood the concept of the part and the whole and the attraction between them.

K : The properties of the whole remain hidden in its parts but the part must thirst for the whole. There should be an upward movement by the part to realize the whole. The candle burns but the moth must have the attraction

for light before it moves towards it. When love generates in the lover he moves towards the beloved and the moth and the flame embrace each other as a reward for this pining. The thirst and its quenching are a mutually rewarding experience. The flame bends towards the moth only when the moth bends towards the flame.

PURIFICATION

JG : What is Sufism? Who is a Sufi?

K : Sufism is the purification and cleansing of the heart. One who has achieved it is a Sufi.

JG : What is meant by cleansing? What is its purpose?

K : The heart is like a container which is full of filth. It is a progressive accumulation of all deleterious influences arising from worldly interests, interests of religion, caste and creed, and physical and mental cravings. These are like dark clouds which envelope the heart and make it a repository of ignorance, disturbance, doubt, worry and confusion. The process of cleansing is to get rid of these influences for ever. Once the heart is cleared of this adverse conditioning the illuminating and ever present light of truth shines forth in all its glory. Unless the mirror is cleaned of dust it cannot reflect the image faithfully.

JG : You have mentioned so many points that instead of clearing my doubts they have further clouded my judgment and raised fresh doubts.

K : That is what I desired. The more the doubts the better it is. Mud is cleared by more mud and water cleans both the hand as well as the utensil. One who has no doubt at all cannot reach a stage of certainty. Only a stain can be washed and when all the stains are removed the mind is totally purified.

JG : You have advocated clearing the mind of religious orthodoxy and of the dogmas of creeds at the very outset whereas to us it is the be all and end-all and the very basis

of life. Is there any contradiction between the world and religion?.

K: Both are deficient. Contradiction engenders conflict. Orthodox religion breeds division, bigotry and prejudice. Each sect is headed by a person and its followers owe allegiance to him. Every sect sets itself up against every other. Should they owe allegiance to God or to sectarian leaders? Religious prejudice and bigotry is the root of all evil and conflict. It takes one away from God. Bigotry obscures the view of God. The world is nothing but a conglomeration of conflicting creeds. If you want to be a mystic or a Sufi you should cleanse your mind of these cobwebs of religions and creeds and see only the Truth as it is, without the obscuring veils around it.

DEVOTION TO THE MASTER

JG : A man is influenced by his society and environment, the country, race and parentage. He cannot help this conditioning.

K : Though this is true yet it is the task of Sufism to rid the mind of these prejudices. When a pot is already full you cannot put anything new in it. You should not only empty the pot but also cleanse it of any sediments. Getting rid of every prejudice and every preconceived notion is Sufism.

JG : How to set about it and achieve a new vision?

K : The first step is to find a competent Master. When you have found one you should consider yourself lucky as it is not easy to find a competent Master. But having found one you should not waste time but spend every available moment in his company and quietly listen to every word uttered by him with reverence and receptivity. If you do that then not before long you will soar high heaven-ward. There should be an inner yearning for the perception of truth as mere book-learning cannot take one far. A Master is much loftier than a mere scholar.

JG : The study of books enlarges one's vision and can help in the journey on the inner plane. Will it not be useful?

K : Reading of books and gathering information is not difficult but when it is a question of practical spiritual realisation on the inner plane you need one who himself has traveled the path. Even in a worldly sense crafts can be learnt only from a craftsman.

Spiritual science has all along been transferred from one adept to another and not through books. A book is an inanimate object, it cannot transmit vital life-giving impulses to a living entity. A person needs hundreds of intimate clarifications and inner guidance on this path. Sufist knowledge is of three grades. The first one is of a theoretical grade which is acquired from books. The next one is actually seeing what you read in the books in the person of the Master as a living reality. The final stage is of realisation within oneself or self-realisation. Every stage, if pursued in earnest, can culminate in the next. You had read about me and about Banaras. Then you came here and saw things for yourself. You are now progressing on to the third stage. No amount of reading could have given you what you have acquired by coming here and engaging in a dialogue with me. An hour spent in the company of a saint is equal to a hundred years of guileless prayers.

JG : What is the secret behind Master worship?

K : The Master will transmit to you the yeast or ferment of Sufism. When you absorb it you will yourself become the yeast. A speck of yeast is enough to ferment the entire quantity of dough. A touch of yogurt is enough to ferment all the milk without any effort. The change takes place silently on its own without much ado. One candle can light a hundred candles. One person who is wide awake can awaken thousands who are asleep. A mere bookworm or a scholar is usually ineffective. He cannot solve the mystery of life. Only a Master can do it for you if you seek his grace.

JG : Should one adopt only one Master or could there be more? At any one time is only one competent Master born or more than one? If I accept a Master what should be my attitude to the other Master? If the Master dies is it permissible to take another Master? If the Master chosen does not prove entirely satisfactory what is one to do?

K : Only one Master should be followed. There may be many competent Masters in the world but you can benefit from the company of and dedication to only one Master. Nevertheless the Master should be chosen with great care. There should be some initial characteristics in a Master. He should have an honest means of income and should have no monetary interest in his mission. He should not be an egoist and should not condemn others. He should not seek self-glorification. Once these preliminaries are over one should wholeheartedly give one's allegiance to such a person. The concept of unity is of great importance in nature. There should be one Guru. A wife should have one husband. A master should have one servant. A country should have one king. Such oneness ensures happiness, contentment and harmony free from friction and conflict.

There may be born more than one Master at a time. This will depend on the law of demand and supply. One Master cannot meet the needs of everyone everywhere all the time. Human temperaments also differ and the feelings of sympathy and understanding as between persons are not uniform. In spite of all these considerations, in reality, there is only one Master. I have appeared in this world in all ages as a universal teacher. All souls who are close to me in the spiritual realm come to me for further instruction. I undertake their guidance on the inner plane. I have many disciples all over the world who spread my message as they are the recipients of my initial yeast. This fermentation cannot remain inert. It has to spread by its very nature. The containers vary in their capacity and tolerance. I work at various

places in different parts of the world in different garbs. The work of my disciples is not different from my work. When you go back to Baghdad you will speak my language. The Master has many media to work through. One who gets initiated by a Master needs no other Master. However, he should show respect and reverence to all and display graceful manners. That is Sufi ethics. One who nurses grievances, prejudices, animosities and hatred of any sort has a long way to go even in his conduct and behaviour, be he a teacher or a disciple.

On the death of a Master if the initiate considers him dead then he has not really grasped the spirit of initiation. There is no harm if he takes the help of his Master's successor but he should realise that a real disciple is one who has dissolved himself in the Master. If he has not attained that status and is still in the grip of mind and matter then he has to start all over again at the hands of some other Master but in this event his status is devalued a great deal. He cannot be called a true initiate. People who normally jump from one Master to another are deficient in many respects. They cannot understand the beauty of unity of existence. It will be long before they reach anywhere on the inner path.

If a disciple genuinely feels that he has not benefited from his Master due to a wrong choice then there is no other way open to him except to settle for another about whom there is no doubt whatsoever. One should exercise great caution initially in making the choice as otherwise the whole life is wasted.

A man's mind is like mercury, ever restless. The Master alone is its sole refuge in ridding it of this restlessness. A monkey keeps jumping about even after he is tied to a pole but this jumping will gradually reduce until he relishes the virtue of being calm and restful.

JG : Why should a man be so restless initially?
 K : That is because there are many centers of attraction for him each demanding attention, like his wife, children,

status, prestige, money, education etc. Thus his many-centered mind has no rest. When he merges himself in his Master he becomes one-pointed. Instead of so many faces he turns decisively towards the face of the Master alone. He understands the secret of the process of one-pointedness. He loses taste for innumerable inner and outer forms.

JG : After all it is the mind itself which projects these inner and outer forms and they remain there.

K : Yes but now you control form and figure and you are not being controlled by them. This detachment is liberation.

JG : I understand, but surely there is more to Master-worship in Sufism than this.

K : The human mind has accustomed itself to seeking support from many agencies and has lost its sense of independent action and initiative. Now only one Master remains. From multiplicity it has turned to unity. Once the initiate loses himself in unity he will realise his true self. That is the secret.

JG : Seeking support from one or many is after all a sign of weakness. What happens if one seeks the support of someone other than the Master?

K : The world is after all a world of possibilities. All kinds of possibilities are 'there. A wife seeks support from the multiplicity of household engagements. A king seeks support from the multiplicity of state affairs. The support of knowledge is based on the multiplicity of information and learning. Worldly support is based on worldly considerations which are multifarious. Compared to all these kinds of support, the support of the Master is best. It alone rids you of duplicity and multiplicity. No one else can give you this freedom and liberation. It is only in the Master that you forget diversity and sense unity. The Master's support leads you towards unity. If you keep the Master's company you will absorb his quality of perceiving only unity just as you feel warmth near a fire and damp near water.

JG : Warmth and cold are physical phenomena and their effect is not permanent. Could it be that a Master's influence is also temporary?

K : Effects generally are temporary but the Master's influence opens the way to other subtle influences within and helps you dissolve yourself within yourself. When that happens the various screens drop off and truth shines forth in all its glory. This is not a temporary influence or effect. It is an indescribable state. It is a secret. Nature mostly works in secrecy. A man strips himself before his wife and so does the wife in front of her husband but all the same both of them guard each other's secrecy. Similar is the case with spiritual secrets. The recipient guards its secret. The soul hides itself behind the veils of bones and flesh but exposes itself to the genuine seeker. The one who experiences it finds it difficult to describe it and naturally the secrecy is maintained.

It is true that Master-worship is a kind of idolatry but the basis for this idolatry was laid by God himself who ordered the Angels to bow to Adam. Without Master-worship there is no liberation. A Master is a perfect man. He is sound in body, mind, intellect, and morals. He has a broad forehead and scintillating eyes. These are his external features. His internal make-up follows its own equivalent pattern. The link between his inner and outer features is his verbal expression. It is like a lamp in the corridor lighting up the inner and outer aspects. One who is inwardly pure is also outwardly pure but the reverse may not be true. All that glitters is not gold. The true test of a real Master is that he appears in the inner vision of his disciple and answers his questions.

JG : The community is also a binding factor. Birds of the same feather flock together. I do not like it that you have taken a Hindu to be your Master. This is not due to prejudice but due to basic principles. When God created mankind and ordered human beings to love one another it was based on homogeneity. Man can love man but cannot

love God. God is pure spirit whereas man is a combination of spirit and body. For this reason God promoted human worship in the shape of Adam. Why then have you not observed a distinction between the Muslim and Hindu communities?

K : I am happy to hear your plain-speaking and that you have asked this question. Otherwise it would have remained at the back of your mind and caused you considerable irritation from time to time. There is the animal kingdom even as there is a human kingdom. Is it not, therefore, enough that all humans are treated the same at the level of humanity? If you start dividing them further where do you stop? There is no limit to division. If, according to you, there cannot be any love between one community and another then the Brahmins, Khatri and scheduled castes will all be at daggers drawn but the reality is different. I have a colleague in Saint Ravi Das who is a cobbler by birth but there are hundreds of Hindus and Khatri who are his disciples. I was born a Muslim but the majority of my disciples are Hindus. One should not bother about communities and nationalities. Accept whoever is qualified to be a saint irrespective of his community and nationality.

If you are bound for the Haj pilgrimage take a Haji with you whether he be a Turk, an Indian or an Arab. What does it matter to the seeker what the Master's nationality is as long he has his goal clear.

Angels and humans are from different categories of beings but in matters of spirituality they have a lot in common. That is why God ordered the angels to bow to Adam. If God had not done so then the men of a superior position and status would have looked down upon the poor and the downtrodden. The world is too ready to create schisms, friction and divisions. Even the religions create divisions. There is no dearth of differences and disagreements even among the Sufi cults. These differences are widened and enlarged with the

passage of time. It is for this reason that I laid the basis for genuine Sufism so that people of all religious denominations could come together under its banner. I am the first spiritual teacher of the world to issue a call to all nations and communities to rally round genuine Sufism or mysticism.

JG : I am convinced of the need for a Master no matter what his nationality is. Otherwise one cannot control his mind and its vagaries. You have used the terms 'dissolution' and 'abidance' which are special terms used by the Sufi School which advocates 'traversing' a particular path. Do you belong to any particular school in Sufism?

SCHOOL OF SUFISM

K : I belong and do not belong. I am everything and nothing. I am both empty and full. These are the pairs of opposites which I exhibit a qualities but the reality behind the qualities is the true Self. One who gets involved in qualities cannot comprehend the 'Self' but one who tries to understand the 'Self' succeeds in his endeavor. In the Hindu scriptures the word used for qualities is 'Maya' or illusion and 'Brahma' for the 'Self'. The name and form hide the reality about the 'Self'. If you start describing the qualities of Brahma you will involve yourself in the word and the forms which it indicates but you will remain away from Brahma. To reach Brahma you will have to discard his qualities and move away from them. People entangle themselves in qualities at the expense of Self-knowledge. This leads them into a quagmire of ignorance and disturbance. Similarly, one should not get involved with names but search for that Entity which the names represent. Otherwise there will be endless quarrels about the names themselves. What is important is not the name but *that* which the name seeks to represent. You asked me if I belonged to the Sufi School of 'suluk' or 'traversing'. Actually 'traversing' a path is a discipline for one who treads the path. One who sets out on the path

traverses it. One who does not undertake the journey is not a seeker. One who is a seeker and traverses a particular path is said to belong to that school or institution. You asked me if I belong to any school of Sufism and I have told you that I belong to all and none. In my case there is no question of traversing or climbing as I am not deficient in anything. I have no need for traversing and climbing as I do not have to reach anywhere. My replies have been tailored to suit your requirements. You have certain preconceived notions about a student following a Sufi path and reaching certain heights in his search for Truth which is hiding behind names and forms. Since I am the totality of everything there is nothing that I need to do.

JG : Where and how did this Sufi path originate?

K : It has its origin in the Master-Disciple relationship. This secret path has always been handed down from a Master to his disciple . It originated in India. A part of this knowledge reached Iran, but only a part. A few Jews learnt it from the Iranians, still a smaller part of the part. None of them could understand it fully nor could they complete it. Some Hindus who were banished from their land took this knowledge to Egypt. Thereafter the Buddhists carried it to Iran, Iraq, Arabia, Syria and Rome. From there it reached Alexandria and Greece to a certain extent. The Iranians absorbed it greatly. After the Islamic conquest of Iran the Parsis became Muslims but continued to practise this science under the garb of Sufism. They interpreted the Qor'an in a way as to fit into their beliefs and practices. The Muslims thus adopted the system of Master-Disciple relationship and this holy science was saved from extinction. Though it originated in India yet the urge for it has always existed in the human kind. It produces results only if you pay attention to it, otherwise you remain oblivious of it.

JG : I am not so much interested in its history as the stages on this path for those who follow it.

K : There are six stages and these are as follows :-
 A yearning for it, seeking love, unity of being, desirelessness, self-dissolution and abidance in God. There are Sanskrit terminologies for these stages which have been rendered into Arabic. (The Sanskrit terms are Bhu, Bhuwah, Swa, Maha, Janna, Tapa, Satyam and the Arabic terms Shouq/Talab, Ishq, Tawheed, Istighna, Fana and Baqa'). A yearning is the initial stage of desire. The same feeling develops into love. It further matures into a single-minded and undivided passion when you do not want to see anything else but the sole Beloved. This urge for the unity of existence brings about the knowledge of such unity. An example can be quoted here of water which when drawn from the well adopts the shape of the vessel into which it is poured, such as a utensil, a canal, a plate or a glass. In the same way where love is genuine it assumes the shape of the Beloved. This identity gives it the knowledge of the Beloved. When this knowledge is complete it leads to desirelessness which in turn merges the seeker into the sought. This dissolution is in fact abidance in the Lord.

These are the stages of Sufism.

JG : Where are these stages to be found? How does one reach them?

K : All these stages are to be traversed within yourself.

GOD & DEVIL

JG : Since last night I am obsessed by the thought of God and Devil.

K : As long as you are still in the world of pairs of opposites the illusion of God and Devil will continue to haunt you. When you cross over to the higher stage of perceiving the unity of existence then God and Devil will also merge into the concept of unity. As long as they maintain a separate existence there will be clash and conflict as conflict is the natural result of duality. If a girl wears more than one bangle they continually strike against one another and

make noise as she pounds the grain. If the girl retains only one bangle and removes or breaks the rest there will be no noise anymore. This is what actually happened when Saint Dattatreya was passing by a house where a girl was engaged in pounding grain. The Saint stopped there and greeted the girl reverently and acknowledged her as his teacher who taught him the great lesson of unity. If you entertain the thoughts of both God and Devil you will be miserable. If you banish the Devil then only God remains and there will be no more worry.

JG : What then are God and Devil? Are they both true or is one true and the other false?

K : If one is true the other one is also true. If one is false the other is also false. These are only the modes of speech.

JG : This is mind-boggling. I thought God was true and the Devil was false. You say both are true.

K : It seems that you have not pondered over the sayings of the Sufis of your own country. Unless you actually see both God and Devil with your own eyes this illusion will remain.

JG : This is even more puzzling. Are God and Devil things to be seen?

K : If you have formed a concept of God in your mind as having a particular shape then why should you not be able to see it? If one has not seen God why is he prepared to fight over a concept? How can you love God if you don't see Him? In this respect the followers of all religions are sailing in the same boat.

JG : Have you seen God and Devil then?

K : I have seen both with my own eyes. That is why I am making an assertion. How else will I be able to show Him to you?

JG : Where is the Devil right now?

K : He is right within you. That is why you are so restless and confused in your speech. It is the job of the Devil to confuse and mislead..

JG : The Devil is not a statue which one can see.

K : Of course, the Devil is an embodied existence.

JG : In that case please show him to me. I am anxious to have a look at him.

K : Surely I will show him to you. Be patient. Impatience is Satanic.

JG : I do not want riddles. I want to see Satan right now.

K : You came to see God. Now you are impatient to see Satan. This is how a man strays from the path. He is not steadfast in his search.

Spirit is God and the body is the devil. God is light and Satan a shadow. Their combination is known as this world. One who worships the spirit is closer to God and one who worships the body is closer to Satan. You are a combination of spirit and body and the mind is the link between the two. If your mind is God-inclined you are a Satan-worshipper. This is the dualist philosophy of the Hindu school of thought. The Zoroastrians expressed this thought in terms of two Gods, one for Good and the other for Evil viz, Mazda and Ahraman. The same theory was adopted by the Jews who called these forces as God and Satan. Since the Jews and Arab Muslims are from the same racial stock they retained the concept of God and Satan without going into detailed explanations. Thus there is an identity of concepts among the Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Zoroastrians. The Hindus call it 'Purush' and 'Prakriti' or 'Brahma' and 'Maya'. You have a Spirit in you which is a part of God and you have a body which is a part of Satan. Thus you have both in you. Inspite of seeing both all the time you pretend not to see either.

JG : How can I accept it to be true? Our religious texts are full of stories about Satan. Are they all false?

K : I do not dub anything false or true. There are many ways of expressing ideas. A wise man should grasp the essence of any expression. Fools get involved in wordy duels and ignore the essence. A poet may call a man a tiger but a

description does not convert a man into a tiger. Your religious texts may have similarly used similes and metaphors but you should not get involved in the meshes of words. The words are dead but the spirit is alive. If you look at everything from the spiritual angle you will solve this dilemma.

JG : You have a point there but I am not convinced. According to the scriptures God ordered the Angels to prostrate before Adam. All obeyed except Satan. Satan was then banished. Is this story false?

K : The story is not false but the fault lies in your understanding of it. You understand neither the Angels nor Satan. An angel is a subtle force of Nature conveying a message. They are subservient to mankind and hence they are not banished. That is the subtle spiritual aspect of man. The other aspect is body which is gross and inclines downwards away from truth and spirit. Hence, it is cursed. Some bury it underground and some burn it. The spirit is not buried or cremated. It is the body which is Satan. There is no other Satan.

JG : Why then was Satan called the 'Teacher of Angles'?

K : The body and matter are the world. They are the teachers of the senses and the mind. The senses and mind react to body and matter and are activated and learn lessons from this interaction. Thus the body is a teacher. A man undergoes this experience and blames the world. If there is no world there will be no learning. If there is no Satan there will be no learning. Satan has always been and continues to be a teacher. The process is continuing.

JG : If that is so why is Satan accused of misleading mankind? Did he not mislead 'Eve'? Is he not still misleading the offspring of Adam?

K : Of course. Your body is the offspring of Satan. It is this body which is the source of evil. It is because of the body that you become indolent, selfish and self-centered. You cause distress and loss to others to give comfort to your body. You are serving Satan. How many people serve the Spirit or God?

Practically everyone worships his body and his small self. This is the real idol-worship or self-worship. Are you not being dictated to by the body or Satan even now? Do not be misguided by metaphor. Understand the intention behind the use of metaphors.

JG : This is not the only story about Satan. There are hundreds of stories. If what you say is true then Satan does not exist. May be metaphors have been used in all these stories. Even then does not Satan have an independent personality?

K : Satanic qualities are all pervading. All bodies are Satanic. So a combination of all bodies can be considered a totality of embodied Satan. Similarly a combination of all spirits and spiritual tendencies put together is God.

JG : You have described matter to be Satan but matter is lifeless and inert. How can inert matter harm anyone?

K : How did you conclude that matter is lifeless and inert?

JG : Because it is without sensation or feeling.

K : When you sleep you are not aware of your body. Do you therefore, become lifeless during sleep? Particles of any matter show tremendous movement within themselves, be they the particles of wood, mud, stone, gold or silver. They even undergo changes all the time due to the effect of heat, damp and air. Does it not show movement? Vapor rises up in space, snow falls downwards. Water flows forward. It is the same matter which undergoes changes and becomes mud, gold, silver etc. They are continually moving.

JG : But their movement is controlled by a live being.

K : A clod of earth is burnt by fire, blown off by air and absorbed by water. Are they alive or dead?

JG : They follow God's decrees.

K : Is God alive or lifeless?

JG : God is alive.

K : If you call Him alive then he will be deficient, limited and incomplete because the word alive means having life which presupposes three things, life, the live one and the

capacity or power to have life. The one who has life is different from both. All these three are limited beings incomplete in themselves. Thus you become the worshipper of an incomplete and deficient God.

Actually there is neither anything alive or dead. Whatever there is, is. That is all one can say. Alive and dead are relative terms. Since our intellect is partial and incomplete we try to interpret the world and the creation through our limited relative concepts. We divide them into alive and dead, big and small, far and near etc. When our intellect becomes more subtle these relative concepts or illusions begin to evaporate. Spirit and matter, Satan and God are relative illusions. When the illusions vanish these concepts also vanish.

JG : What is God then?

K : God is absolute and not relative. He is the noumenon behind the phenomenon. Absolute existence is absolute but when it is described in terms of qualities and attributes it is no longer absolute. When people use the word 'God' they mean attributes. It would be more fruitful to discuss man than God as it would help man understand the 'Absolute'.

JG : What is man?

K : Man is a composite being moving endlessly within a triangle of body, mind and soul. The world is full of ordinary human beings but they are not perfect. A perfect human being is one who is perfect in body, mind and soul or spirit. I am a perfect man and hence I can guide and instruct the imperfect humans. One who begins to absorb my perfection gradually treads the road to perfection and may one day look forward to becoming perfect like myself.

JG : What are the qualities of the three ingredients of a human being which you have mentioned?

K : From the bodily angle he is low. The body forces him to a low level of existence. From the spiritual angle he can soar up to great heights and live in the highest mansions

while the mind is the middle link between them. With one hand stretched up to Heaven and the other touching the depths of the lowest grades of existence the mind gives him a semblance of balance. If the mind inclines upwards he goes up to merge in the Absolute but if it inclines downwards then he follows Satan and reaches rockbottom depths. This freedom to move up or down is given only to the human-kind, not even to Angels and other grades of creation. Thus man enjoys a unique position of status and eminence in creation. He dominates all other grades of creation. A man remains entangled at the middle mental level which is neither up nor down. All religious, sectarian and doctrinaire squabbles and quarrels pertain to this middle level which stands in the way of an upward climb. Peace of mind eludes him at the middle level. A perfect man, on the other hand, lives in total peace and harmony, contentment, comfort and serenity. Look at me. I have no worry of any kind because I have total control over my body. My mind is subservient to me and its vagaries can disturb me no more. Though I have a body yet essentially I am a spiritual being. You are, on the other hand, a bodily being under the control of your mind, ever dancing to its tunes. I have come into this world as a universal saint and teacher. I shall din into your ears spiritual truths day in and day out and take you to lofty and sublime spiritual heights. I have embodied myself only for this task. You are a body-mind combination and hence this body, in the shape of Satan, is troubling you.

JG : I am clear about what a man is but I am still hazy about Satan. According to Islamic teachings Satan misleads men and deflects them from the straight path. The Sufis call him the lower haughty soul. You call him the body.

K : Satan seems to have a tight grip on you but I shall release you from his grip. What you said about the Sufis is correct and what I said is also correct. The 'Haughty Soul' is not an animal with horns. It is the same as bodily mind. It is

this mind which deflects you from doing good and leads you towards evil. You want to establish a relationship of love with all humanity but your body-mind whispers in you to hate others on grounds of nationality, caste, creed and other grounds. You are easily misled and you coin various terms to practise prejudice, hatred and discrimination such as heretic, infidel and so on. You give it further strength by cutting the throats of the innocent by taking shelter behind these epithets. This is how you follow Satan. It is the same body-mind which makes you commit murders and goads you towards laziness, neglect and lethargy. Even in this gathering you find many who are snoring away instead of paying attention to our dialogue and learning something from it. When you worship the body your allies are jealousy, envy, hatred and enmity. When you break the shackles of body-worship you will overcome all these despicable characteristics and cultivate the virtues of divinity, self-sacrifice and spiritual endeavour and emerge victorious against lower nature. Now, does Satan still worry you? If it does then I shall try another formula.

JG : No. I have understood the reality of Satan now. There is no trace left of him any longer. You have banished him from me for ever.

K : Thank God! You are rid of this obsession which bothers millions. If they were to come to me I would cure them of it.

JG : I would request you to shed a little more light on the tradition of Master-worship without specific questions being asked by me.

K : I know the questions that have arisen in your mind though you have not articulated them. In Sufism questions are asked without the use of the tongue by the disciple and a competent Master answers those questions again without the use of the tongue. Our silent and wordless dialogue would have continued to our mutual satisfaction but for the fact that so many people have

gathered here to listen to our dialogue. If we were to carry on silently in a Sufi way none of these people will be any wiser. They will not know what is going on. I know the thoughts of all of them and I fashion my discourse in the way that they understand. Their absorption is limited because what they are seeking is itself limited. So most of them are satisfied with what little they are seeking and what little they understand. They do not benefit fully from these opportunities.

A man usually activates his thought-process through three means; viz, seeing, hearing and speaking. Remember those three processes because you will have to constantly deal with them in the Sufi disciplines and stations. All Sufi instructions are given through these three means which are outwardly visible, audible and vibrant. There is a fourth means but that pertains to a lofty stage far beyond the world of human behaviour. It is that state which is the core of the Sufi longing.

You have inwardly wanted me to say more on the subject of seeking a Master. The reason is that in the process of seeing, hearing and speaking there is a need for a witness. There are three witnesses for a man and these are one's own heart, the Master and God. The real witness is actually the Divine Being. I bear witness in His name and recite my evidence on His behalf. There are many people who are unaware of any of these three witnesses. They remain blank and unconvinced. Even if they get a glimpse of Truth occasionally in the natural course they consider it to be their imagination or hallucination. They neither recognise the evidence of Divinity in them nor are they convinced of it. Thus their lives are wasted. They need a witness who will interpret what they see, hear and speak as the evidence of Divinity. Those who accept this evidence are martyrs. Real martyrdom is to bear witness for God, the Master and one's own conscience. One who believes in this is a martyr. A disciple is not convinced unless God, the

Master and his own conscience all three bear witness. This trinity is needed to convince the doubting Thomas. When he feels the evidence in his own mind he is perplexed. Then he listens to the Master's evidence but waits until the Master's evidence is reinforced by scriptures or third parties. It is only then that his faith is strengthened.

The Hindu scriptures say that when evidence is supported by the Vedas, the Guru and one's own heart it is infallible. If any one of these is deficient then a wise man should not rush to condemn it but leave it open for the time being. In course of time the answer will be found. He should not be mulish and stubborn in his attitude.

Unfortunately, the Vedas came to be monopolized by the learned Pundits who were bookish, selfish and self centered and who involved others too in a wordy warfare far removed from the Truth which the Vedas represented. They locked up the Vedas in cupboards and became the hierarchical priest class themselves. Far removed from the spirit of the Vedas, lacking in practical experience of what the Vedas meant and immersed in a wordy mumble-jumble, the Brahmins lost faith in their own conscience, in their Masters and in their scriptures. They failed to bear witness on all three counts.

Having witnessed this sad state of affairs I decided to appear in the world—embodied. I am the original and true witness. I have no self-interest in anyone or anything. I do not belong to any group, creed, religion, sect or doctrine. My life bears witness that I have come as a world-teacher. I speak out the spiritual truth as it is, clearly and without any inhibition. I do not need anyone to bear witness to my Mastership. You don't need a candle to see the sun. Only a blind bat fails to see the sun. I took birth in the Muslim community to attract the receptive and deserving ones among them to listen to my message.

No one knows who I am and what is my origin. My father says that he found me in a pond and brought me up and hence I am a Muslim. The Hindus say that my mother was a Hindu who discarded me in a jungle. These are all wild stories. I am neither this nor that and yet I am everything and everybody. I have deliberately engineered it this way so that everybody may claim me while I belong to none and yet belong to everybody. That is why only those who have a genuine spiritual quest are attracted to me. Others who have an axe to grind shun me and spread malicious gossip about me. I shine like the sun so that all those who are not blind may benefit by my light and carry on their work. I am like the free-flowing river Ganges which washes and cleans up everyone, saint or sinner. I am like a lotus in a dirty pond around whom the honeybees are humming. I am like a bright candle attracting the moths from far and near. I have come with a cup of the nectar of Truth and whoever seeks martyrdom need but have a sip of it. Those who are afraid of martyrdom need but have a sip of it. Those who are afraid of martyrdom and are happy with the life of the world better keep away from me. Birds of the same feather flock together. Birds of other species keep out of it. The quest of truth brought you here all the way from Baghdad. The same rule applies to others.

The mystics say that knowledge is of three kinds. Sensory knowledge based on the evidence of the senses, inferential knowledge based on inference and scriptural knowledge based on the Scriptures. This is true but I wish to add something more to it. It is about spiritual knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is attained by word, by seeing and by hearing. By hearing I do not mean ordinary hearing with ears but hearing the word inwardly which is vibrant all the time. The word is the Holy Shabd which when heard inwardly without the medium of physical ears illuminates the mind and then you 'see' the Truth. This triangular inner experience is the witness and

the evidence. I am the teacher, the Master to instruct the world in these three ways. I impart this priceless wealth to those who seek initiation from me. I neither deprive the Brahmins of their legacies nor do I want to deflect Muslims from their orthodox practices. I have nothing to gain by doing these things. They are welcome to stick to their respective rituals. Those among them, whatever their religious affiliations, who seek spiritual guidance from me will receive such guidance. I shall guide them to traverse the highest spiritual regions and reach the sublime Truth.

I have devised a new system for basing the testimony of God, the Master and the conscience. The Word of God or the Original Sound is not outside you but within you. It is the only true Inspiration and Revelation. You can hear it at any time. This is the real Hearing. The ancient prophets and seers heard the word of God first. You can also hear it now. When you tear asunder the veils which wrap up your mind you can hear the 'Shabd' like the saints and seers of the past. For this you will have to withdraw your mind from the external world and introvert it inwards in the inner world. What you see and hear inside will be your own experience of 'seeing' and 'hearing'. In a nutshell this is what I teach. This is my new way of bearing witness. Firstly, you should listen to my words carefully. This is the first step. Then ponder over my words within your own mind. This is the second step. You will then hear the Divine Sound or Shabd with your spiritual not physical ears. This sound is all-pervading and vibrating in every nerve of yours already. I will guide you to discover it within yourself. This is the third mighty step which is realised through first-hand experience. There cannot be any higher testimony than seeing and hearing yourself. There is no point in my quoting the scriptures as a doubt may still linger about them. Hence I rise above all these, free you from all shackles and make you experience the Truth as it is in total freedom. You will

then be convinced without a doubt that spiritual enlightenment is right within you and not outside.

JG : How can I reach this stage of martyrdom?

K : It is not by an exercise of the mind that it can be attained nor by verbal chanting of the Holy Name. It is when the Lord Himself chants your name that you will find peace and satisfaction. In this state your body will become steady, your mind steady, your speech steady and your consciousness steady. Then a metamorphosis takes place in you. You were wasting your valuable life in living an animal life. You need to be reborn if you want this experience of Truth. Such a rebirth takes place when you surrender yourself to the Master and start afresh on the new path. The Master will then guide you to the lofty goal. I am scripture embodied. Those who turn to me will reach salvation.

JG : I am now cleared of all doubts. All that I want now is to seek an initiation from you and realize the purpose of life.

K : You have said two things. You say that you are free from all doubts. This is absurd. You have not understood even the vagaries of the mind. You have a unique opportunity now to clear your ideas. Your mind is like a sea, it is sometimes calm and sometimes stormy. It is never free from waves at any time. For the time being you feel quiet and peaceful because you are in my company and are listening to my talk but there is no saying when you would lose this state as this state is not yet permanent. If you had known a little about your mind you would not have fallen a prey to its shackles. Right now your mind can again indulge in doubt and delusion quite easily. It lacks a firm anchor.

Your second point is about your struggle to realise the purpose of life. Your effort is based on struggle and struggle involves push and pull. It is a proof of your restlessness. You have not yet understood the nature of spiritual effort. One who considers spiritual effort as a strug-

gle cannot achieve peace, contentment and bliss. Struggle is the harbinger of sorrow and discontent. How can it bring you peace ?

JG : What then is the nature of spiritual discipline?

K : You are still engrossed with your old ways of thinking. You will have to come to my way of thinking. You will have to build a structure on my foundation. Struggle and spiritual discipline are both wrong words. Such terms have confused even the Sufis and their disciples. Words have their own power. A powerful word generates certain thoughts and if it happens to be wrong then the seeker cannot reach the intended goal. If I utter the word 'cow' you form a picture in your mind of an animal with four legs which yields milk. Such and similar pictures form in your mind on hearing this word. So is the term 'spiritual struggle'. It gives you a picture of struggle, strain, fight, battle etc.

JG : That is correct but what other term should I use in place of spiritual struggle?

K : I do not want to indulge in the sport of changing one word for another. What I want to teach you is to go beyond words and capture the spirit behind them. What you call 'spiritual struggle' is called 'yoga' by the Hindus. Yoga is a better word because it means effecting a union between the mind and the sublime divinity by emptying the mind of illusory and wrongful ideas. The search after truth requires that you should have the will to ascend to the loftiest state as the goal. The word 'struggle' or 'discipline' does not convey this essential requirement and falls short of conveying the main ingredient of ascension. I may quote the simile of a few beautiful tall trees casting their reflection in a spring down below. However, you cannot see the reflection of the trees if the water is not calm. When the waves subside you can see the reflection clearly even though the trees have stood there all along. Similarly, your soul rests high above your mind all the time but the mind is disturbed all the time and hence

cannot see it. Once the mind is purified of its greed and lust it will see the reflection of the soul. The word 'yoga' is, therefore, more expressive of this thought. In fact it is not just a word, it is a book by itself. But if you are used to the term struggle, strain or endeavour you may continue to use it provided you are clear about its implication and meaning.

I would explain it further. The word 'struggle' presupposes that you wish to become something which you are not already. You wish to become something after putting in effort and struggle. In other words you wish to achieve spirituality by means of toil and labour. This is a vain attempt and a wrong concept. For the sake of argument even if it is conceded that you can gain something by paying the price for it you could also lose it. What is gained can also be lost but in Yoga there is only a union between the heart and soul. The heart and soul have been separate only apparently. Their union is a permanent phenomenon. Their separation is only imaginary. Illusion, separation and delusion are negative ideas and these can be neutralized by positive ideas. Yoga on the other hand is a positive concept and hence abiding.

JG : When the soul and mind unite how can I be sure that they will not separate again since the mind is full of lust, passion and desire.

K : You have forgotten that I described lust, passion and desire as negative and the negative has no existence of its own. Once its negativity is understood fully it vanishes. Suppose a man considers the projection of a tree to be a ghost and is frightened of it. A wise man takes pity on him and forcibly takes him to the tree and shows him the projection to be nothing other than a part of the tree. From that moment the ghost vanishes altogether. A Master knows what kind of a ghost haunts his disciple and then disabuses his mind of his hallucination.

JG : Your explanation is simple enough but actually it is not that simple. It does require a mighty effort.

K : If you think it is difficult then let it be difficult. Put in your effort and let me see what you get out of your effort! You seem to be the kind of person who hears everything and yet sticks to his pet fixations. This is a pathless path and you reach the goal without traversing the many stations on the path. You have no need to strive, struggle or mortify your flesh. One who thinks he is traveling on this path is in reality misguided. One who thinks he is without guidance is really ignorant. One who talks about it prattles idly like a chatter-box. One who doesn't talk as a matter of policy is of limited understanding. This discipline rests between speech and silence. One who struggles and strives exhausts himself. One who is idle and indolent is useless. This discipline rests midway between striving and idleness. One who sees feels disturbed and one who doesn't see is perplexed. This discipline rests midway between seeing and not seeing. Even these terms as striving, seeing, and talking are mere verbal exercises being a combination of relative terms. One who thinks he knows the secret is ignorant. One who does not know the secret may come to know it in future. One who seeks it chases a shadow and one who doesn't, cannot hope to achieve anything. In awareness there is ignorance and in lack of awareness there is cunning. In sleep there is wakefulness and in wakefulness there is slumber. Actually there is neither sleep nor wakefulness, neither awareness nor ignorance.

JG : I am totally confused and confounded. What does it at all mean if anything?

K : This is the language of a seer. If you don't understand it then I will talk to you in your language. You have not been in the company of accomplished saints for long. You may ask questions the way you understand.

JG : You said that in the path of striving there is no need for any effort or toil.

K : Yes. There are two forces operating in this world, attraction and repulsion. Both are hazardous and what

you need is a middle path between the two extremes. The middle path will teach you many things and open your eyes to reality. One who is learning how to swim should learn how to float on the surface of the water. Once he learns this technique well the other things follow from within himself. If he makes a mistake then he neither knows how to swim nor how to save himself from drowning. One who strives hard is also dealt with harshly but one who walks off alone is left alone, no one bothers. This is the way of the world. I can assure you that what you think to be a difficult striving on this path is really easy. Do not give it grand titles and make it sound and seem difficult. Call it as seeking a direction. We are always seeking directions in this world. The aim of seeking and following instruction is to bring about a balance between the two parts of a body. When both parts act in balance you will find it easy to run around and jump about. When an animal is thrown from the top he so balances his body that he lands safely on the ground. If he were not to adjust his body in flight he will come to grief on landing. When you gracefully throw a thin utensil from a height mostly it will land gracefully without breaking or denting. It is this kind of striving or seeking of balance which is needed in spiritual pursuits as well.

I would like to explain to you through the yogic vocabulary of the science of breathing. The three processes are inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath. Retention represents the middle point of balance between inhalation and exhalation and lasts for a little time. If your divine conscious energy is centered on this middle-point of balance, whatever be its duration, you will achieve steadiness of mind for that period however brief it may be. It happens naturally and without effort but when you think it over routinely you will begin to understand more and more about it. This expansion and deepening of experience in consciousness takes place silently bringing in joy and comfort inwardly. One who

practises it acquires this experience on his own but one who does not practise it is oblivious of it. Therefore, first find out the points in the body where you can concentrate your divine conscious energy. Start with one point first and observe and experience what happens there. When you have exhausted all the potentials of that point move over to the next. There is no looking back on this path, it is ever up. Otherwise you will be like one who climbs heights, looks down and feels giddy. When you continue your upward climb then you can hope to ascend to the greatest height. Every height that you conquer will give you the most pleasant results and goad you on towards greater heights. Do not tarry at any point, keep climbing. Do not stop to enjoy ecstasies and trances. They block your progress. It is the same law which works in your worldly affairs and even in business ventures. If they continue to maintain a steady pace they run well. If there is a blockage it will create many other obstacles. So do not block your progress. The same rule holds good in heaven as on earth. This is a simple recipe. Start on it and enjoy the results as you proceed. Do not stop until you reach the final goal.

JG : What if I fall down on the way?

K : Get up, wipe off the dust and get started again. Never give up. You will thus acquire extra strength. You should be sorry for those who never get started.

JG : Is the system advocated by you in tune with the orthodox formal religion or against it?

K : Your mind is restless like a monkey. You do not try to understand one problem fully and you jump to something else. You asked me about the nature of striving and while I was explaining that you asked me several other unrelated questions. I told you in the very beginning that religion and the world are both relative terms and unless you know the relative stages of both you cannot know the Truth. Formal religious obligations divert your attention from your quest but what I am

asking you to do is to rise above that stage. It is futile to discuss the merits and demerits of rituals and it is better to rise above and beyond that level. We have no quarrel with rituals but you should leave them behind and move up. The world is the playground of pride and ego, your household, wife and children. Servility to your mind and senses is the essence of the world. Religion is a device to keep lust and pride in check.

JG : I have understood the definition of the world and religion but I am doubtful about the Shari'a or the code of conduct laid down by religion.

THE SUFI METHODOLOGY

K : Let me explain this to you in terms of the Hindu concept which has divided life into four phases; viz, childhood, married life, life of contemplation and lastly ascetic withdrawal. The duties of these four phases have been laid down. The same are called, 'Shari'at', 'Tareeqat', 'Ma'rifat' and 'Haqeeqat' in Sufi terminology. Each phase has its own discipline and the aim is to bring steadiness to the mind. During the last phase the individual mind finds total identification with total existence. This is also in accordance with nature. In a kingdom the general populace is law-abiding. They are like children who follow the regimen. This is 'Sharia' or obligatory ritual. The ministers and other officials represent 'Tareeqat'. They receive orders from above and implement them without fear or favor. The King is on top of the other two groups and knows the interests of the state. He represents 'Ma'rifat' or wisdom and knowledge. Last come the saints and Godmen who rank the highest. They represent the 'Truth'. The basic principles are the same but their application varies in detail. One who graduates from the other three categories reaches the top category of saints. It is only the Saint who knows the unity of existence.

The Sufis have mistakenly merged the third and the fourth stages together. They combine knowledge with realisation and call it one.

JG : Please clarify this point with reference to Muslim Sufis. How do they understand it and what do they preach?

K : All creation is a combination of body, mind and soul. Whoever is born in a community behaves and functions in that particular mould within the framework of jurisprudence (Shari'at), the prescribed way (Tariqat) and Reality (Haqeeqat) and Enlightenment (Gyan). One who is still body-bound and has not risen higher should follow the prescribed legal disciplines (Karma Kand or Shari'at). One who has risen to the next stage should follow the prescribed way or the path of spiritual progress (Tareeqat or Upasana). The one who is immersed in pure spirit away from the lower shackles of mind and matter is only concerned with enlightenment (Haqeeqat or Gyan). Everything is fine as long as one follows his own path within the disciplines laid down. He will be trouble-free.

Enlightenment (Gyan or Haqeeqat) is a negation of untruth. The prescribed way or path (Upasana or Tareeqat) is a positive assertion. Jurisprudence (Dos and don'ts) (Shari'at) is only a combination of words. Since you want an explanation in Islamic terms I may add that 'La llaha' or the only God is a Reality (Haqeeqat or Gyan) 'illa Allah' or 'except the one and only Allah' is the way or the path (Tareeqat or Upasana) and 'Muhammadun Rasul Allah' or 'Mohammed is the Prophet of God' is the Law (Shari'at or jurisprudence). In Enlightenment and Truth (Haqeeqat or Gyan) there is intoxication, ecstasy and absorption. In the path of (Tareeqat, Upasana) there is divine love and devotion. In Shari'at and Karma there is religious prescription and ritual. In Enlightenment or (Gyan, Haqeeqat) there is no noumena or phenomena or existence and its attributes. In the path of discipline there

is existence but no attributes whereas in Karma there are attributes only without noumena. In Enlightenment (Haqeeqat, Gyan) nothing is describable. In the following of a path (Tareeqat, Upasana) there is observation or witnessing. In jurisprudence or abiding by the prescribed law (Shari'at) it involves striving and effort. In Shar'iat or following the law there is listening to the words of the laid-down law. This is the knowledge of Certainty called in Sufi terminology ('Ilm al Yaqeen). In following the specific path 'Tareeqat' or Upasana there is a visualisation and imagination known among the Sufis as (Haqq al Yaqeen). In Enlightenment (Haqeeqat or Gyan) there is no sense of presence or lack of certainty at that higher plane of consciousness. I have no quarrel with any of the three methods. Each one functions at his own level within the limitations of his understanding and inclinations. To explain further, when you are awake you act according to your code of conduct or Karma Kand or Shari'at. In the dream state it is the path of the spirit or Tareeqat or Upasana. It is in the astral state. In deep dreamless sleep there is awareness or Gyan or haqeeqat provided it has been cleansed of ignorance. It is the causal state. These three states are referred to by the Sufis as Jabaroot (Wakeful, Physical), Malakoot (Sleep state or astral) and Lahoot (Deep sleep, Causal). When there is clarity of thought about these states and everyone realises its nature and his own potential, things run smoothly but there is utter confusion about the various terms and due to this there are exaggerated and misplaced claims and counterclaims. In any case every action has its reaction and everyone bears the results of his actions. Everyone should follow his own path, bodily, mental or spiritual as the case may be according to his inclinations and persuasions. This is quite clear and straightforward. If one does not have the capacity to understand there is no use reading book after book out to him. No amount of

rubbing can make a crow white. Body, mind and soul all need to be developed. You look surprised because you have been told that the soul is already perfect and needs no further development. The soul is one stage short of perfection. When it reaches that stage all else becomes irrelevant such as the body, mind, spirit, duality, trinity and multiplicity. That is a stage which is beyond human thought. Before you venture on to that stage you should be clear about body, mind and spirit or soul. You can plan further after you gain this knowledge even though you should know that the higher stage requires no scheming or planning.

I am the first world teacher who has correlated the teachings of all religions and all philosophies and explained it to everyone in a manner in which he would understand best. My method of instruction is unique and suits everyone whether young or old, married or a bachelor.

JG : There is no doubt that your method of instruction is unique.

K : A man came to me and said that he was married and had a family but that he was spiritual at heart. He asked me whether he should remain a worldly man or become a renunciant. He added that family life was a big headache and there was no peace of mind in it.

In order to explain the matter to him clearly I played a little drama. It was a dark evening. I called out to my son Kamal and told him to bring a lantern and make a search. He did so but neither did he ask nor did I tell him what to look for. Then I told him to go back. I now called my daughter Kamali and repeated the drama with the same sequence. My visitor could not understand anything from what went on before his very eyes. Apparently nothing was lost and nothing was found and stranger still, no questions were asked and no explanations were given. I explained to him that in a happy well-knit family everyone carried out the orders of the elder without a

moan or grouse. Everything functioned smoothly. If this secret was understood then family life would be a boon. Otherwise a recluse's life would be preferable. I further told him that if one failed in raising and running a happy and well-disciplined family it was unlikely that he would succeed in his spiritual effort either. After all he has only one mind to operate. If he could preside over a happy obedient family there was no need to go to a jungle.

JG : I have understood the example you gave of a householder. What about a renunciant?

K : I got up and asked him to follow me. I made straight to the hut where Saint Ravi Das lived. As you know Ravi Das was a cobbler by profession and earned a pittance by mending shoes. If any of his rich devotees gave him a gift he used to distribute it forthwith among others. A queen who had visited him had given him a precious pearl. I asked him what had happened to the pearl? He replied that despite his protests the Queen had insisted on giving him a pearl and left it somewhere in the hut. He added that he had forgotten it and asked me to give it away to anyone if I found it somewhere in his hut. I told my visitor that here was an example of a renunciant.

JG : This is now quite clear. But I want to know something about striving, effort and struggle on the spiritual path. Please explain the Sufi paths, be they partial or complete.

K : The Sufis use the term 'Amal' for 'work' and 'Shughl' for 'being occupied'. Though they are essentially the same there is a differentiation between working and being occupied. This is theory but later on I will make you do it and understand it practically. This knowledge is not transmitted through the practical initiation of a disciple by the Master in private. The disciple should gaze steadily into the eyes of the Master to absorb his love. Unless the disciple has love for the Master he cannot dye himself in the same colour as the Master. When the Master feels that the disciple is now able to absorb his thoughts and feelings he himself takes the lead in teaching him 'the work' and

'being occupied' or he may issue certain instructions. In the striving or effort there are three kinds and five stages with each stage having a middle position. Each stage has to be gone through with a rigid discipline. The middle position is in fact a knot or an obstacle which has to be overcome. In fact there are seven stages and seven middle stages but those who have already traversed the stages of 'work' and 'being engaged' (i.e., Amal and Shughl), the last two stages are easy to cross. The five spiritual stages are known in Sufi terminology as Nasut (the world of humanity), Malakut (the world of Knowable substances), Jabarut (the world of power), Lahut (the world of Divinity) and Hooth (the world of existence). These terms are differently translated into different languages leading to some ambiguity and hence I shall explain. These five stages are present within a human body. The term 'Nasut' (Humanity) means forgetfulness or neglect. This has two aspects, one is forgetfulness induced by worldly indulgence which is negative, and the other induced by spiritual intoxication which is positive. One who has positive negligence needs spiritual instruction which would benefit him. The one who is neglectful due to worldly indulgence is still at the body level and will not benefit by spiritual instruction. The positive type of person I have referred to is one who has full faith in God. His faith will increase and consolidate day by day. An atheist, on the other hand, is wholly negative and lacks a foundation to build upon. The third category of Malakut is a world of purification. At this stage the person who has this quality attributes all the virtues to God and purifies his heart by hankering after God alone. Jabarut (power) is a stage of experiencing the vision of God. He hands himself over to the Lord and thereafter he receives enlightenment of various kinds. Lahut is God or Divinity. One who reaches that stage becomes a worshipper of the One, sees One and says One. He becomes a Unitarian. Here he enters the world of unitarianism.

The term 'Hooth' means absolute existence. At this stage one seeks merger in the absolute existence.

Nasut or the world of humanity is also known by many other names such as the world of feelings, advice, wakefulness etc.

Malakut has also other names such as the world of spirits, the Unseen World, the Subtle World, the World of Dreams or the Astral World.

The other names of the World of Jabarut (Power) are the World of Certainty, the World of Possibility, the Causal World etc. Lahut (the absolute world) also has different names and so has Hooth, the world of Truth, the world of noumenon. The first four worlds are worlds of attributes whereas the fifth one is the world of Absolutism without any relativity.

JG : Where are these stages located inside our bodies?

K : All these worlds are situated within various concentric circles around the heart. You have within you what there is in the universe outside. The macrocosm and the microcosm are similar. The five circles around the heart are material in nature and the sixth spiritual. After crossing the five circles you will have to reach the zenith in the sixth.

JG : I had imagined 'Tareeqat' or 'the prescribed way' to be easy and you have also been emphasizing that it is easy but having listened to your explanation I feel it is anything but easy. If this is the essence of 'Amal' (Work) and 'Shughl' (being engaged) then it is by no means easy. If these six stages have to be crossed both externally and internally it is indeed a difficult proposition.

K : Do not be frightened by an elaborate explanation. It was done only to clarify your mind. In practice it is easy. If I had not explained it to you in detail there would have been lingering doubts in your mind and your faith would not have been steady and steadfast. Since you have already read books on Sufism you have to be convinced theoretically first before you practise. Intellectual and

scholarly ways are always longwinded and tortuous. An ordinary man is satisfied with one or two facts and then sets about it in earnest but this is not possible for a scholar. They do not understand simple things simply.

JG : What are the three kinds of heart which you have attributed to the Sufi doctrine? What are their six positions?

K : One is a physical heart (Jismani). The second is subtle or atomic (Hayulani) and the third spiritual (Ruhani). The physical heart is material, the subtle heart is of the subtle universe and the third purely of the spirit. The physical heart deals with the five gross elements. The sixth position is above those of the five gross positions. The five gross positions derive their power from the sixth. The five gross elements according to Hindu mysticism are earth, water, fire, air, and ether whereas the Sufis have mistakenly accepted only four eliminating the fifth one. It is because of this error that their concept of 'Tareeqat' or the prescribed path remained deficient.

The Sufis neglected ether, space or Akash. The location of space in the human system is the throat. The physical heart is the location of the air element between the two parts of the chest. Here the process of breathing is indicated by the movement of the heart. The lungs act as fans. The navel is the seat of fire. The reproductive organ is the seat of water and the anal region is the seat of earth. This is the last limit of gross matter and keeps ejecting waste matter. Thus all these five locations are within your body. The sixth seat is half spiritual and located on the brow between the two eyes. Thus its location is above all others. The Sufis call it 'Nuqta Suweida' or the third eye center. The life-force controls the whole body from here. The five bodily levels of Nasut, Malakut, Jabarut, Lahut and Hooth are also in this location in the physical heart.

The second is the subtle heart. It belongs to the subtle world and consists of six wide circles, five of which

are of subtle space, air, fire, water and earth, like of the astral world. There is no difference between the two except in density. On top of these is a replica of the subtle third eye which is the seat of the universal spirit. Unfortunately, the Sufis stopped at these two stages of the physical and the astral and never ventured beyond them.

The third is the spiritual heart which is above the physical and astral and it is purely spiritual. This is the Causal state which is purely subtle. A grosser five or six fold manifestation of it became the astral and when the astral became grosser it became physical. They are nothing but a grosser reflection of the spiritual which is the original. One who remains at the level of reflections alone fails to go any further and puts a limit on himself.

JG : What is the proof that this third stage really exists?

K : You already know that a man has a body, mind and a soul. In nature, generally speaking, everything splits into three. You can doubt it only if you doubt the existence of the soul. If you concede the soul then how could you contest the existence of the spiritual heart?

JG : I am now convinced that the soul exists above and beyond a thing and its attributes. The basis for anything and its attributes is the soul or spirit and it is the soul which is at the pinnacle. Please teach me the practical discipline to tread this path.

K : Practical initiation for visiting these lower and higher states is to be done privately in seclusion.

THE EXPERIENCE OF JAHAN GASHT AT HIS INITIATION

(The Next morning Jahan Gasht was initiated by Saint Kabir. Jahan Gasht was asked to sit in front of the Master facing him. He was then guided practically in withdrawing himself from his outer surroundings and introvert his attention. He was taught the proper bodily position to adopt before undertaking the practice. After Jahan Gasht adopted the position the Master gently pressed the point of the forehead between the two eyes twice with his right thumb. Jahan Gasht, thereupon uttered a loud exclamation

and went into a trance. The Master left him in that state and came out to talk to the assembled gathering. After several hours he went inside and found Jahan Gasht still in a trance. The Master made a pass over his head and asked gently how he was feeling. The conversation that followed is recorded as under:)

JG: Thanks to your Grace I have realised the aim of life and the purpose which drove me from Baghdad to your sacred feet. At last you have given me what I was seeking all along.

K: You were destined to benefit from me as you have receptivity of a high order. Now describe to me what you saw and heard.

JG: When you pressed my forehead with your thumb the first time, my whole forehead shone like a moon. When you pressed it for the second time the moon split into two from the center. I went through it and started climbing. I reached a strange world of extraordinary lights. It was a sublime scene. The sun was shining gloriously, and rivers were flowing. There were gardens in all four directions with flowers in full bloom. I saw divine beings among the flowers. I met an angel who asked me to go higher with him. I suddenly got wings and started climbing until we reached another brilliant spherical world. The angel told me that he could not go beyond that point. That, according to the angel, was known as 'Sidra al Muntaha' or the 'Lotus Tree in the Seventh Heaven'. He said that if he went any further he would get burnt. His task was over and he was getting back. As for me he advised that I could roam around that place with the grace of the Master or go higher to the highest Throne. Saying this he disappeared. I wandered around for some time and then I heard a strangely appealing music the like of which I had never heard before anywhere. I was so lost in it that I was no longer aware of anything else. I do not know how long I remained in that state of total absorption. I woke up only when you came to touch me.

(Thereafter Jahan Gasht fell at the feet of the Master)

K : Whatever scenes you witnessed were the phenomena of the subtle world. It is neither the goal nor the object of the highest aspiration. It is only a mid-way point. This is the limit of Paradise and Hell. There are further glorious stages to be crossed. If you continue the same practice, within a few days you will understand more and experience more. Even in the Sufi 'Tareeqat' or the prescribed path the acolyte will need the Master's direct guidance for a few days after he has crossed all the stages. In 'Tareeqat' you will experience absorption after the completion of all other stages.

These stages cannot be crossed by book-reading nor by talking and listening. Here a shower occurs without a drop of water. It is neither sweet nor brackish. In a place of silence you will hear the notes of various musical instruments. You will see lightning without the clouds. You will see without physical eyes and hear the sound-current without word syllables or tunes. Only the initiates of the Master will cross over into the sublime worlds far beyond your imagination.

This secret is known only to the close confidants. None else will know my abode. It is not described in the scriptures of the Hindus or Muslims nor can they lead you there. The ear and tongue cannot describe it nor is it within the reach of the formal religious rituals.

JG : Does not even God exist at that level?
 K : No. Not even God.
 JG : This is disturbing. How can there be any place without even God? There must be something there.
 K : You have such fixed ideas about God and Satan that in spite of seeing and hearing everything you cannot get over your pet ideas about them. A man attributes everything good to an entity and calls it God and everything bad to another entity and calls it Satan. These are men's concepts. Both are relative not absolute terms. As long as you do not free your mind from relativities and

dualities you cannot grasp the Truth. Sufism will rid you of this fixation. This is what the 'prescribed path' also aims to do. Unless you actually experience those higher states your illusions will not loosen their grip on you. Both God and Satan are attributes not absolutes and since they are based on opposite concepts, the one involves the other invariably. This leads to duality, multiplicity, pairs of opposites and a disturbed and confused state of mind. Neither of these relative concepts can be a goal. Liberation depends upon liberating yourself from attributes and thinking of absolutes. Later give up both the absolutes and the attributes. That is where you will experience the Truth. One who links the concept of God with the concept of Satan is a real infidel. When no partnership is to be ascribed to Allah which is the basic article of faith for a Muslim how dare he make Him coexist with Satan.

If you cannot detach the idea of Good from Evil and identify God with Good and Satan with Evil you will never be able to separate God from Satan. When the two go together as an inseparable team it is the worst form of infidelity.

JG : I find it difficult to digest.

K : Only a disciple of the Master can understand it.

JG : How can I understand it when even the brain is perplexed?

K : To overcome your perplexity you should continue to progress on the path shown to you. Keep the company of saints. You will then perceive unity not duality. It is like seeing a seed of the pea. Its two halves are within one husk. It is actually one but when you see its twin aspect you get used to seeing it as two. Do not split the one seed into halves and start seeing two in one. Convert your concept of God and Satan into one absolute truth with the twin-aspects of positivity and negativity. It is like a light and its shadow. The shadow has no existence of its own. Clear your mind of both God and Satan and you will

see the Truth as it is. This is what the Sufi path teaches you to do i.e., see the Absolute and not the Relative, see the Thing-in-Itself and not its Attributes. When the mirror gets clean you will see your image clearly. If you try to mix up the religious rituals with the Sufi path you will end up with trouble and difficulties. When you achieve clarity you will reach the goal easily.

JG : The Sufi methodology is also a mode of worship. In worship there is the trinity of the worshipper, the worshipped and the act of worship. It is easy to put the two halves of a grain of pea together and call it one but in the matter of worship how can there be one?

K : Just as you put the two halves of a grain of pea together you will have to do the same in the case of worship also. The secret of doing it is contained in the Master-Disciple relationship. The Master's person is the whole indivisible grain of pea. It contains both God and His Prophets in one. Since you are Islam-oriented do not forget that the Angels were ordered to prostrate before Adam. The worship of Adam is symbolically Master-worship. Once you understand the reality of the Sufi method you will reach the goal of Truth.

I have initiated you into the mystery. You may now either stay here or go back to your country and continue your practise. The fermentation generated by my initiation will not stop until you become wholly like me. It will not leave you until you reach the goal. I shall be in touch with you and guide you astrally even thousands of miles away. Our dialogue will continue on the subtle plain.

A NOTE ABOUT JAHAN GASHT

It would be of interest to know the circumstances of Jahan Gasht's arrival in India to see the Master since it is connected with his last phase, conversion, initiation and return to Baghdad. Kabir instinctively realised that Jahan Gasht would stay on to be initiated into Sufi mysteries. When the Master was informed that Jahan

Gasht was on his way to meet him he ordered that a pig be tied outside his house. He knew that his visitor was rather of orthodox beliefs and rituals and that it was important to release him from the grip of formalities and rituals if he were to have an experience of God-realisation.

When Jahan Gasht arrived at last and saw a pig outside the door of Kabir he was sorely disappointed and started turning back to withdraw from the scene. Kabir knew it and asked his visitor why he was going away without seeing him. When told by the visitor that he had a dirty pig outside his house he asked him whether a dirty thing should be outside or inside the house. That initial lesson was to be also the final lesson when Kabir asked Jahan Gasht not to bring in Satan alongwith God and understand the lesson of Divinity by overcoming the relative concepts of good and evil, God and Satan altogether.

Chapter 4

A Dialogue with Meer Taqi, the Puritan

There was another visitor presumably from Baghdad who came to Kabir for enlightenment. His name was Meer Taqi. The dialogue between Meer Taqi and Kabir is of profound interest from the Sufist angle. There is some doubt about the antecedents of Meer Taqi. Some considered him to be a citizen of Balkh and a mentor of the king Sikandar Lodi. According to legend Meer was present at an occasion when Kabir revived a dead man, Kamal Shah by name, at a place called Jonsi. Meer Taqi was so thoroughly impressed by this feat that he decided to seek illumination from him. Once the Hindus of Benares complained to Sikandar Lodi about Kabir's diatribes against them and when this complaint was made Meer Taqi was present in the court. Meer then informed the King that Kabir was a saint of extraordinary powers and that he had himself seen him revive a dead man to life.

When Meer Taqi heard of Jahan Gasht's initiation at the hands of Kabir he was also encouraged to seek his discipleship. After some hesitation he came to the Master and requested initiation. Kabir remarked that he had come very late because he was afraid of Shari'a or religious orthodoxy. He added that one who was afraid of the world lost the protection of the Lord and one who sought the company of kings would not be benefited by the company of sages.

Meer pleaded guilty and sought the Master's pardon. The greater the sin the greater was the need for forgiveness and mercy. The virtuous did not need it, only the sinners did.

A DIALOGUE WITH MEER TAQI

M : I am fed up with theological disputations. They lead us nowhere. The ritualism of religion seems dry and fruitless nor can it give solace or peace of mind. Debate and argument have also lost their flavour. There is a strange appeal in the unity of existence and monism. I am not tired of it.

K : This stage is natural. Girls play with dolls only as long as they do not get married. Imagine the ritual-bound men as unmarried girls interested in dolls. These dolls are dressed as bride and bridegroom, music is played and sweets are distributed. Formal religious rituals like fasting and praying are also like the doll-game. They cannot bring peace of mind. Prayer may give you a temporary relief but no more. It tells you to wait. Remember that one who considers himself separate from God neither inherits bliss nor deserves it. One who considers himself separate will be bound, inferior, limited and slavish. Even the animals do not like captivity and slavery let alone man. The glory of Truth does not lie in slavery but in freedom. One who understands the *secret of freedom* will never like to be subservient. When the Deity itself disappears where is the question of being subservient? All these relative concepts are the products of the mind and the result of imagination.

MONISM

M : Is the concept of God not necessary for the unity of existence?

K : One who keeps chanting God day and night only reaps discomfort. One who does not remember Him at all will be guilty of neglect which also is considered undesirable. One who repeats the names of God considers Him a foreign entity separate from himself. One who maintains silence becomes indifferent. One who recites and repeats the names is a parrot. One whose body and mind keep jumping during prayers is a monkey. One who maintains silence is a tortoise.

M : This is too high for me.

K : One who climbs high falls some time. One who is below may hope to climb some time. Water vapour climbs high, becomes a cloud and comes down as water drops. They become vapour again, climb high and come down. There is no God in going up and down endlessly. The Yogis discipline their intellect and start climbing up but they get caught in the meshes of acquisition of power, miracles and other things. That is their end. An ordinary person gets totally confused and lost. Who among them is good and who is bad?

M : Those who contemplate and understand get closer to God.

K : Contemplation and understanding is the function of the intellect. Intellect is complicated and twisted. Man can never reach God through the intellect. The knowledge of God is not within the competence of intellect.

RITUAL

M : If that is the case then I am speechless. How can I start a conversation at all?

K : The conversation is already on. The eternal "sound current is reverberating all the time. It only needs a listener. The sound never stops. The sun is shining in all its glory but the blind do not see it. Someone competent should open his eyes so that he may begin to see. This is not something to speak about with the tongue and be listened to with ears. The morning recitation is nothing but a mechanical falsehood. Though the Scriptures say that God is beyond a group of attributes and qualities yet our recitation is nothing but a bunch of attributes repeated every morning. We try to prove what is beyond Scriptures through the very same scriptures. So we are neither here nor there. We have vitiated both God and the Scriptures and indulged in falsification of both. How can you mix intellect with something which is well beyond it? You do not know whether God has qualities or

He is beyond qualities. Thus the whole life is wasted in a futile tug-of-war. Death comes and the body disintegrates into elements, earth, water and air.

M: I realise the loftiness of your sayings. Indeed you have no peer. Your explanation is unique.

K : In the ocean of creation there are innumerable drops or particles each one with a sense of separation. The sun, moon, billions of earthly and heavenly beings and billions of atoms were created. You are a center and I am a center. Every center has a sense of separation or ego which has led to delusion. Those who shout, 'I am Brahma' have actually carried their ego very far while they do not see the Divinity which is inside themselves. Thus they glorify their own ego instead of dissolving it by witnessing the Divinity in themselves. A sage, on the other hand, who has dissolved his ego is already out of the clutches of delusion because he has struck at the root of delusion which is ego. Delusion or Maya is a direct product of ego. No ego, no delusion.

[Noticing that Meer Taqi was somewhat in a state of daze after hearing all this, Kabir wanted to be a little soft on him and suggested to him that he should discuss it with his son, Kamal for a change. Meer heartily welcomed this interlude and addressing Kamal, asked him to throw some light on the question of unity of existence in the context of the holy Muslim texts which he had diligently studied. What was his view of what he had heard from his father right then?]

The dialogue between Kamal and Meer took the following pattern.

Meer: You appear to have imbibed your father's great spiritual qualities! Did you inherit them or learnt them from your discipleship of your father?

FOUR KINDS OF SPIRITUAL MENTORS

Kamal: There are four kinds of teachers. The first kind is known to be like the touchstone; i.e., if it touches iron or

copper they turn into gold but the iron and copper do not turn into touchstone. The second kind is the like of my father, Kabir, whoever touches his feet becomes another Kabir in all respects. I serve him day and night and so it is natural for me to become like him in toto. He is like a bright lamp which can light up thousands of lamps. The third kind is like the sandal wood which imparts its scent to any tree which grows in its company provided it is receptive. If it is not receptive then the sandal-wood tree cannot impart its fragrance to it. The fourth kind is that of gold which though golden in itself cannot make other things golden. There is yet another kind who are neither competent themselves nor can they impart competence to anyone else. However, they are good at roping in disciples and making a show of their Mastership. My position is clear. I have cast my lot with Kabir and have become one like him.

Meer: You seem to be good in Sufism too.

RELATIVISM OF GOOD AND BAD

Kamal: Good and bad are relative terms. When only God exists where is the scope for good and bad? I cannot call anyone good or bad because everywhere and in everything I can only see my own image. I do not nurse any feeling of being either a Hindu or a Muslim. I am what I am, that is all I can say.

Meer: Why then did your father say that you are well-versed in Islamic scriptures?

Kamal: He said it from your point of view, not from mine. He thought perhaps you would listen to me more sympathetically since you claim to be a Muslim.

Meer: What a wonderful experience this is. I see both Kabir and Kamal in one mould. I see the father in the son and the son in the father. I do not see any difference between the two.

Kabir: Just as you see one in the two of us similarly when you develop a single eye you will see One in everything. To

see one in everything, everywhere and at all times is to be rid of delusion for ever.

Meer: (Addressing Kamal) I am so happy to see that you have grown into a fine young man. I had seen you as a baby when your father had raised you from the dead.

Kamal: Actually you are not happy to see me but at seeing yourself. I, you and He are all one. Happiness does not consist in seeing anyone else but in seeing oneself as in a mirror.

If something comes between you and the mirror and blocks the view of the self then you will not be happy. On the other hand you will be disturbed. Actually you are witnessing yourself in me and feeling happy. When you first saw me I was dead and I was small but at that time you did not feel happy as you were obsessed by big, small, life, death etc. Now you are in a different frame of mind or mould and hence see things differently. Saints employ different strategies to draw people to drive home a lesson. When they respond and establish contact with him then they imbibe his qualities. When the iron touches the touchstone it becomes gold. When a dirty stream joins the sacred Ganges it too becomes sacred. When you lose the self you gain God. When you lose your awareness you achieve ecstasy. When you lose humanity you achieve divinity. When you lose slavery you see the Truth.

Meer: (Looking at Kabir) This is an amazing discourse. You appear to have groomed your son Kamal in the path perfectly well.

CONTROVERSIES ARE ILLUSIONS

Kabir: You are still involved in the path, discipline and enlightenment (Shari'at, Tareeqat and Ma'rifat). All these are controversial and create illusions in the mind. Truth is beyond these, instant and immediate. One who gets lost in Truth remains above these three states fully absorbed in Truth. Those who are bound by these three

states dislike those who transcend them and remain absorbed in Truth. Kamal is the elite of the chosen ones. It is difficult to understand him. Since you seem to understand and appreciate him, I reckon you are also a chosen one. Nevertheless, you still need to learn to swim in this ocean of Truth or bliss. That will come when you keep the company of the Master.

Meer: What is this state of absorption? What is it to swim in the ocean of Truth or bliss?

AWARENESS AND ABSORPTION

Kabir: One who sees the ocean in drops and drops in the ocean and does not consider them separate swims in the ocean of Truth. One who sees the universe in himself and himself in the universe without considering them separate swims in the ocean of bliss.

Meer: Has Kamal reached this stage?

Kabir: Ask him directly.

Meer: (Addressing Kamal) Please say if you have reached this stage so that I may understand its secret.

Kamal: Sublimity is not climbing to the top. It is acquiring the knowledge of the self or contacting the Self. I have done it in the company of my father, Kabir. That is my sublimity. I do not attach any importance to the three states of Shari'at, Tareeqat and Ma'rifat. These states are deficient in one respect or the other. The state of Truth alone is complete.

(Meer stopped talking and entered into a state of ecstasy for some time. When he became normal Kabir returned to his dialogue.)

Kabir: You have been in a state of absorption. As long as you are floating on the surface of water you need to splash your arms and legs but when you dive deep you need not struggle. It is a state of quiet absorption. Even this state is temporary, It cannot be trusted as it may change. When it becomes a permanent state then it is known as 'a transcendental state of awareness' or 'Sahaj Samadhi' in

Hindi terminology. This state is not achieved as a result of any effort or discipline. It is the natural state of the soul. It does not diminish or increase but stays as it is at all times, in all situations and everywhere under all circumstances. This is the Grace of the Master.

Meer: Is this state of absorption or awareness available to everyone at all times?

Kabir: Though it is naturally present in everyone yet they ignore it and suffer endlessly from delusion. It is the Master who cures them of this delusion. Delusion acts as a screen to hide this awareness and when the Master removes this screen the natural state of awareness shines forth in all its glory.

Meer: I have not understood it yet fully.

Kabir: Let Kamal explain it to you as you seem to understand him.

Kamal: An unbridled and uncontrolled horse runs hither and thither but when it is controlled by a bridle and spur it changes direction and runs the proper course. The Master's grace is the bridle and the spur. This simple secret is not understood by all.

Meer: Your example is superb. It is easily understandable.

Kabir: This world is a world of examples galore. Examples help in understanding.

Meer: (Addressing Kamal) You say that this secret is present in every bosom. Please elaborate.

Kamal: Let me narrate an incident to you. A Sufi was passing by the house of a dancing-girl who invited him to enter her house. He did so and sat down. A funeral procession was passing that way. The dancing-girl asked her maid servant whether the deceased went to Heaven or Hell? The maid replied: 'Hell'. In the meantime yet another funeral passed that way and the maid ascribed the deceased to 'Heaven'. The Sufi was greatly surprised that the maid of a dancing-girl should have this knowledge whereas he himself did not have it. The dancing-girl correctly gauged what was passing in his mind and told

him that divine secrets were not revealed as a reward for any spiritual practice. God did not look upon his creatures as high and low. In fact the evil-doers were closer to God as they needed His forgiveness and mercy more than the pious. It is they who glorified the merciful qualities of God. Here it is not a world where you deal with good and bad, virtue and vice, effort and reward and other relativities. Here you are face to face with Truth as it is shorn of qualities and attributes. The Sufi collapsed on hearing this and before long he lay dead. The Maid pronounced her judgment of his having gone to Heaven because his last thoughts were of God. He had finally got rid of his concepts of relativity of qualities and attributes and turned to the Absolute. The few moments which he had spent with the dancing-girl had acted as a spur to God-realisation.

Meer: Until now I was wrong.

Kabir: In what way?

Meer: I had a wrong notion of God. God is the Absolute Being, not attributes. He is the only Being.

Kabir: Your assertions are purely verbal emerging from the tip of your tongue. If you did not have a tongue you would not use these words to define God. You are still far away from Truth. You have not grasped the point.

Meer: Please clarify. (Looking at Kamal pleadingly).

Kamal: God is what you worship. For one who worships his wife, his wife is God. For one who worships his son, his son is God. For one who worships a prophet the prophet is God. For one who worships his Master, the Master is God. Whatever captures your imagination and holds you is your God. One who has never seen God entertains only imaginary visions of Him. He thus either worships imaginary visions or he lies.

Meer: Are not pious people the worshippers of God?

POLYTHEISM

Kamal: You speak about God, the prophets and worshippers. This is real polytheism and not unity of existence. There is but one Reality, one Truth.

Meer: You are dubbing me a non-believer and a polytheist. Please tell me if God is one or many?

Kamal: When I describe to you the faith in just one, you refute it. So are you not a non-believer of One Truth? As for God whatever exists is God. What else can it be? Some say everything is Him and some say everything is from Him. The former are right. The latter are wrong. Once again I should make it clear to you that right and wrong are merely relative terms. Whatever explanation I have given is also from a relative point of view.

Kabir: People think that the concept of the unity of Being is a bookish idea and a matter of intellectualisation. A sincere and unsophisticated ordinary worshipper is better than a hypocritical theorist who talks big but whose faith is shallow. Careless and ignorant people are harmless but those who claim to be monotheists outwardly but are polytheists inwardly are hypocrites. All of them are ignorant and their ignorance is of different shades, physical, mental, psychic and spiritual. All of them are seeking some kind of comfort and solace through various means. That is why I have selected a unique method of teaching them through the Master's living touch. If you really believe in the unity of Being then where is the need for argument and debate. It is fruitless and misleading to talk of one, two and many. It is enough to say that whatever there is 'is' and that is about all. It is so difficult to grasp this simple point. Where is the need for one to lose his sleep in proving the 'Unity of Being' and running about hither and thither to do so. What there is, already 'is'. Does it require reinforcement or support? Even the term 'one' is relative to more than one and any assertion of unity is

merely its negation. When there is nothing but what 'is' what is there to prove and who is there to prove it?

Meer: From your brilliant explanation I have come to realise that the term monotheism is nothing more than an effort to divert the defective understanding of humanity towards perfect divinity.

Kabir: Those who shout the slogan of unity are themselves involved in duplicity and multiplicity. Everyone is a victim of his own make-believe dogma. Religions, paths, disciplines and verbalization are all shackles which keep one away from living the actual Truth.

Every assertion or refutation itself forms a shackle whether of monotheism or polytheism, whether of this world or the next, whether of unity or multiplicity. These are all relative terms. That is why I tell them to take the middle path which is neither this nor that.

Meer: I am clear in my mind that both religion and irreligion are the two sides of monism. Neither of them deserves either support or rejection. They only create delusion.

Kamal: Real rejection of all kinds of faith and belief is actually true monism. The Holy Qor'an has not been properly understood. For instance, ponder over the following verses:

"As to those who reject Faith
 It is the same to them
 Whether thou warn them
 Or do not warn them; they will not believe."

(S2/V6)

"God hath set a seal
 On their hearts and on their hearing
 And on their eyes is a veil
 Great is the penalty they incur".

(S2/V7)

This is generally misunderstood. Who are these people who are not like ordinary believers and who refuse to

expose their eyes, ears and hearts to external stimuli and remain happy within themselves?

Meer: From this angle Satan was better than the Angels because he refused to bow before Adam or anyone else except God. Why then do we blame Satan and curse him day and night?

Kamal: When all that exists is only God how can you ascribe a separate existence to Adam and Satan apart from Him? Everything exists within God. There is a secret in this enigma which better remain a secret. There is a strange joy in maintaining silence on this point. Satan conceded God's existence apart and away from himself. Thus he tried to prove that something existed apart from God and for this sin paid dearly and was banished from Heaven. Mansoor Al Hallaj, the great Sufi, on the other hand claimed to be God. (He said, 'Ana Al Huq' or 'I am God'.) He was lynched. Thus both Mansoor and Satan received punishment. The Truth lies between these two positions. The middle path is the correct one and silence is the best way to express this Truth.

Yet for purposes of better understanding let me clarify that it was God himself who ordered Satan to bow to Adam. All three were aspects of one reality. Satan cut himself away by carving for himself a separate identity apart from God. That was a grave error and real denial of faith. Similarly when Mansoor Al Hallaj claimed to be God he excluded others from Godhood as if other than him existed apart from God. Thus both, in their own ways, were going against One Reality which in fact is lack or denial of faith in monism. To depart from Monism is to invite trouble.

Meer: Seeing more than one reality or polytheism is also of different kinds, formal, verbal or mental and religionists are not free from one of the three.

Kamal: Seeing more than One is the real Illusion. For instance refer to the following Qor'anic verse:

"And most of them believe not in God without associating others as partners with Him". (S12 V106)

One who thinks of God as something alien and different from himself in essential nature thus corrupts the monotheism of religion.

Meer: If that is the case then why do we give a superior place to the prophets and a cursed place to Satan?

Kamal: The glorious and the reprehensible are the two sides of a velvet cloth but Godhood is above and beyond these relativities. This duality is only a help to humanity to overcome relativity and awaken into One Absolute Reality. (These aspects are referred to as 'Jalali' and 'Jamali' in Islam). This relative world is an expression of both these phenomena.

Meer: Why should Reality play hide and seek in this manner?

Kamal: This is a display of Lordly indulgence. Some are inclined towards sport and some towards serious devotion. It is through this duality and some among the devoted are given a special pride of place.

Look at what I am doing now. I have taken the stringed instrument in my hands. My fingers play on the strings. My throat and tongue are singing. My heart is ecstatic and deeply engrossed in a trance-like state. So many different agencies are engaged in producing a single unified state. When I lose even the sense of such ecstasy then I am in Truth or that is 'Reality'. One who understands this has understood the game. One who has not understood it goes round and round without reaching anywhere.

The Holy Prophet has himself said "Mun arafa nafsahu arafa Rabbahu". "One who knows himself knows his Lord".

Then consider the following Qor'anic verses:

"But those who were blind in this world, will be blind in the Hereafter, and most astray from the path"

(S17/V72)

“Whatever good happens to thee, is from God,
but
whatever evil happens to thee is from thy own
soul.
And we have sent thee as an Apostle to instruct
mankind.
And enough is God for a witness”.

(S4/79)

“Therefore shun those who
Turn from Our Message
and desire nothing but
the life of this world”.

(S53/V29)

So God is the witness and He is Existence in the words of the Qor'an and of the Holy Prophet. You may see the evidence in yourself. If you do not see it in yourself then see it in the Master.

Chapter 5

Institutional Sufism

KABIR'S DIALOGUE WITH SHAIKH AKARDI AND SHAIKH SAKARDI(1)

(During the lifetime of Saint Kabir, India witnessed the establishment of a large number of Sufi centres which had developed around the mausoleums of Sufi saints. It was Kabir's practice to visit these metropolitan towns and engage the heads of these institutions in public debates to highlight certain spiritual truths. Jounsi, near the present day Allahabad was one such place on the eastern heights of the river Ganges where there were two leading shaikhs who were known as Akardi and Sakardi. These and other Sufi shaikhs deeply revered Kabir and welcomed any opportunity to benefit from his deep spiritual wisdom. He was known to them as Shaikh Kabir even though Kabir himself avoided any kind of appendage to his name. When Kabir's visit became known to the people a large number of Muslims gathered to welcome him and hear the dialogue between him and Akardi and Sakardi who were known as local Sufis.

Kabir expressed his joy at meeting these two Shaikhs and won the people's hearts with his pleasant manners and conversation. He listened to the talk of the two shaikhs intently and then ensued the following dialogue.)

Kabir: You seem to be the worshippers of the tombs of the dead. If as Muslim Sufi saints you do so then why blame the idol-worshippers in general.

WORSHIP OF THE GRAVE

Akardi: Worship of the grave is really the worship of the Master. The ideal of Master-worship receives a boost with grave-worship. Naturally such practises are related to attributes or qualities and not to absolute concepts. Things and qualities go together. It is through the expression of qualities that the Absolute can be appreciated and man can begin to perceive and enjoy.

K: What state are you in as a Muslim believer? You also claim to be a Sufi. With all that I see I realise that you have practically ended up with the glorification of a grave. You talk about lofty things but what you practise is totally divorced from your profession. I am saying this not to hurt your feelings but to elevate you in thought and action.

THE ABSOLUTE AND THE MANIFEST

A : Nothing is devoid of Truth. Absolute God reveals Himself to a devotee through anyone of His qualities. Such a quality can appear to him as an ocean. The devotee has only to swim in such an ocean.

K : You are swimming in an ocean of a quality or an attribute. Are you not overtly influenced by this attribute at the expense of the knowledge of the Absolute?

A : Unity and multiplicity, one and the many, uniformity and diversity are all the glorious reflections of the One Reality.

K : You have come out with a strange theory! I thought you considered Truth to be above the relative concepts of unity and diversity. Now you have equated Reality with pairs of opposites. Not only that, you also seem to have given up your pet theory of the unity of God. Now you see multiplicity in unity.

A : What I mean is that unless these qualities are inherent in God they cannot manifest outwardly. These qualities are within the realm of possibilities.

K : The realm of possibilities is after all full of possibilities both right and wrong. That is why it is known as the realm of possibilities. Certain possibilities are even beyond one's comprehension. Islam set out to destroy idol-worship but today the Muslims have become the greatest idol-worshippers. They worship tombs, the Holy Ka'ba, the water of Zamzam, the Black Stone and many other things. All these are within the realm of possibilities. There is no point in arguing this point any more. Since you say you also are unitarian perhaps we could consider it.

A : We have not come here for a debate but only to listen to you. Who else but you can throw light on monism and unitarianism? We wish to benefit from this opportunity of your presence here.

K : Unitarianism and monism are also not real. They are also qualities and attributes. Qualities are seen by the mind, and name and form are also away from the one and only Reality. What can be conceived by the mind and described by the tongue is not the Reality. These organs are incapable of reaching or experiencing that state.

A : Can it not be described any further?

K : I can quote an example. Consider an ocean. It is one wherein all drops of water appear to be together and not separate from one another. Whether you look at it from afar or near they appear to be one. Another example of unity is a jungle wherein all the trees seem to be a part of it from a distance but as you get closer the trees look separate. The third example of unity is that of a mud-wall which is constructed with mud, bricks, lime etc. Whether you see it from a distance or from nearby it is the same one wall. The wall, its existence and its oneness are all a bunch of qualities and appearances. But what causes this display of relativity and multiplicity behind the scene is the Reality.

A : Unitarianism and oneness are mere play with words. We call it one when the name and form join together to

present a unified picture in which they do not show up separately like in the example of the wall. A unitary phenomenon is shown in the example of the jungle. When you look at the jungle your mind accepts it as one. A clump of trees is called a jungle. In spite of it being one it is also a picture of multiplicity. It has trees of different varieties. Though a family is one its members are different.

MONISM

S: In explaining the concept of monism you also referred to the example of an ocean. There must be something behind it. Please explain.

K: In monism the name and form lose their separate identity. There is only one noumenon behind the phenomena. The existence is one. The jungle is one but you see multiplicity in it on getting closer. Nevertheless its oneness is not affected. The jungle presents a picture of unity in diversity and diversity in unity without any effort. The number of trees being less or more becomes obvious. The ocean is different. Whether you get closer or not the ocean remains an ocean. No matter how many waves rise in it, its unity or oneness is not affected.

S: Is this unitarianism real or imagined?

K: What do you mean by real and imaginary?

S: The real exists always but the imaginary exists in imagination temporarily and then vanishes.

K: It is real and imaginary both and also neither.

S: This is not intelligible. If a thing exists then it has existence. How then can we equate existence and nonexistence both?

K: There is no denial of the existence of anything. If it exists, well, it has existence. If it does not exist even then it 'is'. There is 'being' both in assertion and negation. Of course how far one's mind accepts it or rejects it is a different matter. It is only then that a question arises about convincing one to accept or acknowledge. These

processes employ words which create impressions of being or nonbeing. Both these are imaginary processes. When the mind is convinced of this then it does not dub anything real or imaginary for that matter.

(At this point Shaikh Sakardi suggested to Shaikh Akardi that they should now avail the unique opportunity of Kabir's presence to clarify their doubts about Sufism which had dogged them all along).

A : We have studied Sufism but our knowledge is theoretical and book-based and does not satisfy the heart.

K : So you think I am a Sufi. It is not so. As regards the knowledge of problems and their interpretations such claims are made by scholars and I do not pretend to be a scholar. However, I agree with you about the need to be practical provided practise is based on honest faith and is conducted under the supervision of an adept. I shall try my best to remove the cobwebs of doubt from your minds.

NAME, FORM AND ATTRIBUTES

A : Among the Sufis there is much fuss over such terms as name, attribute and form. When the Reality is one why should there be emphasis on this triune principle?

K : What you call triune or trinity is only a way of expression. Actually they are three aspects of the explanation of a single Truth. Much confusion arises because of their use of foreign phrases in preference to indigenous ones. The mother tongue is uniquely equipped to convey understanding and it comes alongwith the mother's milk. Why create confusion by borrowing alien terms, "sifat and tajalli" for name, attribute and form? The Hindi equivalents are Nam, Guna and Roop.

The Hindi terms are easily understood. Why complicate the issue by borrowing Arabic terms and start explaining them? Many problems are solved by keeping things simple but man finds a thrill in going in for things which are seemingly difficult.

A thing can be perceived through its name, form and qualities. This is a practical requirement in daily life. If you are suffering from a disease it can be identified by its name, its symptoms and effects. The disease can be treated in two ways, either by means of similar drugs or by antidotes. A cold can be cured either through cold or through heat. This is true even in spiritual matters. The Sufis have two methods of acquiring divine knowledge. One is 'Anta al Haqq' or 'Twam Brahma' or 'you are the Reality' or 'Ahain Brahma'. To affirm that 'I am the Reality' is in reality an affirmation of Unity of Being or monism. It recognizes only one reality. To deny one and ascribe partnership to the one Reality is polytheism and denial of one God. Satan was the first to deny the unity of Godhood when he said, 'Anta al Haqq' or 'You are the Reality' and thus erected a barrier between God, himself and the rest whereas all were in One and all were One. A real Sufi is one who only sees One and says 'Ana al Haqq'. One who addresses God as 'You' by considering himself separate from Him is a follower of Satan. Thus Satan becomes their first and original Master. God ordered Satan to bow to Adam as Adam was in the mould of God Himself but Satan refused to bow to Adam.

S: What you are saying is true but we are used to addressing God as 'Thou'. Please continue your invaluable exposition. Every word of what you said is true.

K: Do not be in a hurry to endorse what I said and issue me a certificate. I shall continue only if you are prepared to listen further with a discerning mind. In actual fact the words 'You' and 'I' are both defective and their users are separated from God. The real Monist is God who made no differentiation between Himself, Satan and Adam. Both Satan and Adam are imaginary illusions but since they have a name and form they have imposed themselves on the human mind as realities. When you get rid of this illusion then only Truth can shine.

Denial of the only Reality is Deviltry or Satanism. It is the grand illusion. 'I' and 'you' are also illusions. The bubble of illusion has to be burst so that only Reality shines forth in all its glory otherwise the illusory bubble takes its toll in ignorance, fear and prejudice. Unless the illusions are faced squarely and exposed thoroughly how can one see Reality? Name, form and attributes are also illusions and these have to be neither existence nor non-existence, neither one or many, neither monism nor dualism.

When Adam came into being he did not know how Eve was born. There were no Turks nor Hindus then, neither the blood of the mother woman nor the sperm of the father man. There were no cows nor butchers. No one had the occasion to say, "In the name of God, the Merciful". There were no religions and sects. There was no Heaven and Hell. When movement or manifestation started there arose the mind and every kind of quality and attribute came into being. When two things combined the mind came into play. When they separated the mind also became still. When the senses came into being the mind created the idea of lust and the sense of taste created various kinds of dishes to satisfy the palate. When there is One there is no conflict but when there is more than one there arise innumerable consequences.

What was it like when there was no manifestation or movement? I can neither verbalize it nor can you understand it but silence is also not desirable. One should try as far as words can convey anything. In the beginning was a complete and self-contained supreme Reality. Try to visualise an ocean. A wave arose in it which was called Adam. Adam had a form. The form was given a name to distinguish it from other forms of manifestation in a world of knowledge of relativities. With the name and form came other qualities and attributes. The name, form and attributes are all interrelated and interdependent. It is difficult to separate any one of them from the other.

DID SATAN EXIST BEFORE ADAM

A: But Satan and the Angels existed before Adam!

K: If they were there where were they?

A: They were with God.

K: Do not say they were with God. You may say 'in God'. If you say "with" then you violate the unity of Truth. If Satan and the Angels existed before Adam who came to know about them? Adam or God? If God had their knowledge then you are a believer in the trinity of the knower, knowledge and the known. Hence, it is obvious that they did not exist before Adam. It was Adam himself who conceived of and created the Angels and Satan by virtue of his being created perfect in the image of God.

This trinity is the result of the discriminative mind of Adam. He differentiated between them. Man finds within himself both the Angels and Satan. He considered Angels as Angels worthy of keeping company and treating them appropriately.

S: I am afraid it is too difficult to understand. Please explain in clear-cut terms, not in symbols. You used three words, Satan, Angel and Knowledge and called them the Name, the Attribute and the Form. Why did you have to use these three words and the three symbols?

BODY HIDES REALITY

K: Illumination, knowledge or form is the body and the body is Satan. The body is the outer form which hides Reality. When the expression or manifestation is in the shape of a form or a body it develops egoism. It is the ego which seeks and expresses itself in miracles, supernatural phenomena and physical and mental powers. One who gets involved in these is a lost soul. He is lost to both this world and the next. When the same illumination or form or the body is not associated with ego then it is the illuminating Reality. Identification with the ego is body-worship or Satan-worship. Thus the manifestation of body is the key to illumination by proper identification. There

cannot be any shape or form without light or illumination. Whether it is higher, middle or lower it is not divorced from body or shape or form. Thus there are many grades and shades of light and darkness. The body is given various names according to its parts in accordance with the degrees of light and darkness they represent. Wherever there is name and form there will be clustering of other qualities too. These are the attributes. Adam is endowed with all three faculties. He is the original complete being as he was cast by God in the image of perfection. Since Adam was complete Eve was a part of him and was named as such. Since she was a part of Adam she was relatively called deficient or incomplete. When the incomplete mated with the complete the result was the offspring. Thus the partial and total qualities merge to produce results.

S : This is something absolutely new to me. I have not read it in any Sufi literature nor does Sufism explain the subject in this fashion.

K : Everyone has his individual viewpoint. Whatever inclination one has, he sees everything accordingly. Some have a broad all-inclusive universal mind and some a narrow, limited and partial outlook.

S : You have ascribed name, attributes and form to Adam. Can you explain it in any other way?

SATAN, MIND AND ANGEL

K : Why not? You see three levels in the world; body, mind and soul. The body is Satan, the soul is the angel and the mind is the middle link between the two. The outer or bodily manifestation is Satan because it makes one forget the Truth or Reality. The soul takes one higher up towards the Spirit. The mind keeps forming ideas and speculations about the two.

S : This is an incredible explanation of the word 'mind' which I have not heard before anywhere at any time.

K: What then is mind? Is it the conical shape of flesh in a man's body? The mind is nothing but a name in which reside ideas and thoughts. It is the center of thoughts. This is the middle state which links body and soul. Ideas and thoughts arise in it like waves in an ocean. When it links up with the body it assumes the body-identification. When it links up with the soul it assumes a spiritual cloak. When it neither goes up nor down but remains in the center it is in its normal position. Thus it is involved in a triangular state, climbing up sometime, staying in the middle or going down. It is only when it gives up the three states or is liberated from them that it can experience the fourth state of enlightenment or the Sufist state.

S: Why do you call this mind only a name? To call it a name is mere illusion and will create many painful problems. Nobody has called it a name, not even the Sufis.

K: Name is after all a name. Whether you call it aqua or water it is a name. You call it mind and I call it 'name'. I do not repeat what any Sufi may or may not have said. I am not their drummer. I teach you my own teaching. Body produces another body. Soul generates soul. Like promotes like. Name generates more names. I have told you that name is and has an imaginative power. When I use the name 'cow' it creates the image of a cow before you. Similarly, all words and forms of speech create images. They are all ideas created by the mind with various names. It will continue to create and manufacture names. If it is not a name in itself then how can it create more names? All names and ideas are its offspring. These can be gross or subtle. This is because the mind or name can rise up or go down and thus it keeps wandering in both states or worlds. It is like a person of the middle-sex in a royal household with free access to both the men's wing and the ladies Harem. Thus the mind keeps wandering in and out of both worlds and can be at home

S : anywhere and everywhere. The name has such a property.

K : Why then cannot it be called the 'root' or the 'basic' element so that there be no room for ambiguity?

K : Unfortunately for you, you have also coined various kinds of names with differing imports such as the 'Greatest Name', 'the Big Name' etc., (Ism Azam, Ism Kabir etc). Many thousands are attached to the various names of God. What are these but different human concepts? These are only thoughts and ideas. I am deliberately using the word 'name' in this fashion to bring home to you certain lessons and to make you think of certain points of truth. I know that you are attached to some names and have developed certain sensitivities towards them. That is why I am sticking to the word 'name' during my dialogue with you today. You seem to have associated some names with some groups of people. My use of any of those names straight-away leads you to think of them. All this is only imagination. All names, their use, their associations and the images they create are all in the realm of imagination. Why then should I not call the mind "name"? Ideas are created by the mind and imagination is also subject to 'mind'. When a name is uttered the object to which it refers creates its image in us. Thus you may have realized by now that the mind and name are one and the same thing. People unfortunately go for the externals and shadows rather than for the substance.

Now let me explain to you something more about this trinity of name, attribute and form all of which are bound and found together. For some the Reality appears in a combination of name and qualities. For some others it appears as a form in sudden illumination. Yet for some others it appears in the form of qualities.

S : I have not understood this.

NAME, SPEECH, VISION

K : It is like this. Some people see a form and figure and in their mind love is generated for it. Some fall in love with a mere name. They do not want to see the 'named'. Mere name is enough for them to generate love within themselves. Love can be generated by speech or by seeing or vision. Sometimes there is a silent effect and an unconscious influence bringing it about. The name, speech or vision create different impressions of their effect on the recipient. The subtleties of this phenomenon are very important for Sufism.

S : I can understand love through speech and vision but I do not see how love is kindled by a silent imperceptible effect or through an unconscious influence.

K : Speech can be heard by physical ears. Vision can be had through physical eyes. Someone hears about a fire or actually witnesses it and gets the feeling of heat or warmth within himself. There may be some who have neither heard of a fire or seen one and yet they create within themselves quite unconsciously a feeling of warmth.

S : Seeing and hearing are understood but visualization has made the whole subject difficult once again.

K : Suppose there are three persons who are shivering with cold. One of them saw fire from a distance and his imagination ran riot and made him feel warm by the mere vision of fire. He could also walk up to the fire and sit in front of it to get warm. These are two examples of overcoming cold by the vision of fire inside and outside. This is known as "Tajalli" or form or illumination. Suppose there is another person who has been paralysed by the cold and is unable to move. Some kindly soul pulls him near an oven and leaves him near it even though the oven is cold as there is no fire in it. The person concerned has no knowledge of the oven being cold. He imagines it to be warm and acquiring an imaginary

warmth from it sleeps comfortably. This is the effect of keeping the company of an imaginary fire. This faculty of feeling the effect purely by imagination is present in every individual. Let me quote an example of speech. Suppose someone informs a third person by word of mouth that the warmth of the oven will banish his cold. He also comes and sleeps near the oven. There was no fire in the oven but the warmth was produced by a verbal effect. Nevertheless the man was able to overcome cold. In the first case it was the shape or form which created the effect of warmth. In the second and third examples the name and its attribute created an imaginary warmth.

Similar is the case with disciples. The name, the attribute and the form have an effect on them along similar lines. People merely strengthen their imagery and benefit from within. This is the essence of Sufism. You strengthen your imagination to benefit by it inwardly. To empty a vessel of its existing content and fill it with a new content is the task of Sufism.

S : When an acolyte performs the laid down practices he reaps certain results but you call it an illusion or imagery. If these are illusions then they should not be produced. An illusion is an illusion after all.

WHAT IS AN ILLUSION

K : You have not properly understood the term illusion. You consider it false and unreal but at its own level it has its function. For that matter this whole world is an illusion. An illusion arises in the mind but it has also the power to create it and create new images. A man sees what he considers to be a ghost. Another exposes the ghost to him to have been nothing more than a creation of his imagination. Once the exposure takes place the ghost also vanishes for ever from his mind.

S : But what about the scenes witnessed by the acolyte? Are they purely a result of his hallucinations?

K : They are both, real as well as imaginary.

S : How can they be both?

K : The universe is a grand illusion created by a Supreme Power. As an illusion it exists but when the acolyte makes progress inwardly he begins to understand with certainty this illusion and all doubts leave him. There is milk in grass and grass in milk. There is seed in the tree and tree in the seed. The cow eats grass and then yields milk. The seed is sown, a tree grows up and yields seeds. If a man learns how to convert grass into milk then he can directly do so without involving the cow in it. If a man comes to know the process of creating seeds from a tree then he can extract seeds straight-away without waiting for the season. Similarly, when an acolyte achieves knowledge through his austerities he can create within himself every part of the universe and observe them. All that exists in the outer universe also exists in seed-form inside him. By acquiring the knowledge of creation he can create and witness for himself such creation. What the Sufis say in conundrums and puzzles I am explaining threadbare without any camouflage. This I do for those who have no other axe to grind except to recognize the truth as it is.

MAN, A MINIATURE UNIVERSE

S : While describing the name, form and attributes you also dealt with various states in passing such as the world of perception, the astral world, the causal world, the One Reality and the ultimate Reality. I do not wish to raise these issues once again but I would like to know why a man has been referred to as a miniature world representing the big world outside in every detail. Did this idea exist before the advent of Islam? This idea seems to have taken root at a time when during the Abbasid Caliphate books on Greek Philosophy got translated into Arabic.

K : You are right. This concept was adopted by the Muslims from Greek philosophers. Before the advent of Islam Arab dervishes were influenced by Persian fire-worshippers. That is why Adam was considered endowed with all qualities and hence perfect. The Greeks adopted this concept from the Hindus. The Muslims adopted many Greek concepts including certain sciences such as medicine.

S : How can Adam be considered as possessing all qualities?

K : Perfection is in the only Truth. None can reach that state. When the process of creation was set into motion in accordance with natural laws Adam was its apex and crowning glory. Since Adam passed through all other stages before creation he absorbed all the qualities in the process.

A man, therefore, finds all qualities, attributes and influences within himself. These are latent in him. Whenever he wants he can create those influences in himself since they are already present in him in seed-form. The whole universe is within him in its essence. All natural phenomena can be reproduced by him by concentrating his mind on them. A detailed description of this will take a long time.

S : This is what is needed by the Sufis. What better opportunity can there be than this to get a glimpse of it from your own lips?

K : I shall try to explain this theory from the Hindu point of view since they originated it. According to the Hindu theory the first ever man made his appearance in the Himalayas and was known as Manu. He then descended on Ayodhya and made it his capital. His offspring increased by leaps and bounds and spread in all corners of the globe. When the Great Floods came and swept the whole world the second Manu took shelter in the Himalayas, the highest place on earth. When the Deluge subsided the second Manu again set forth to discover the site of Ayodhya. His offspring spread all over the world.

The Egyptians, Magians, Greeks and others are all traced to the Second Manu. Since these descriptions are couched in a religious and scriptural garb they underwent mutilation as they spread from one country to another. The word Manu became Noah in Hebrew. The Hebrew sources recognise Noah as the Second Adam. Some Muslims believe that Adam was born on a hill in Sarandip or Lanka which they named Adam's Peak. All this is by way of parenthesis. The main theme is that Adam descended from great heights down to plains. It is a story of the downward descent of man and a description of his latent aptitudes and powers in him which forms the frame-work of Sufism. These descriptions are sometimes partial and sometimes comprehensive but they do not yield the whole Truth clearly.

WAS ADAM PERFECT

When Adam was created he was the last link in the chain and hence he absorbed the characteristics of all other links in it and was called comprehensive in his nature. He has imbibed the highest spiritual qualities as well as the lowest materialist attributes. His mind represents a combination of these two kinds of attributes in an abundant measure. All the characteristics of creation from A to Z are to be found in man.

When the Creative Power began its downward descent towards manifestation it incorporated in itself both the original as well as the mixed qualities of Ether (Space), Wind, Fire, Water and Earth. A man has all of them. Initially each of these qualities was represented in a planet which is so even today. In a subsequent development innumerable suns, moons and stars with their mixed bag of qualities came into being. They are the dwelling-places for various grades of creation such as angels and spirits etc. Such places are numerous and beyond count and they are unknown to people. However, a perfect man can gain their knowledge through his spiritual development because all these qualities are to be found within him. When the creative spirit made its downward descent to the Earth planet it incorporated

within itself all these attributes and qualities and the result was the creation of Man in a human garb.

S : Does it mean that there are no human beings on planets other than our Earth?

K : It is difficult for you to understand. Look at it this way that each planet is suitable for the existence of a certain kind of creation or species. Our Earth planet is a suitable place for human beings to exist thereon.

OTHER INHABITED PLANETS

S : There may be other planets beyond or below the Earth planet with its appropriate grade of species living thereon?

K : Yes, there are such planets and they are not uninhabited. They are known by different names. The Hindus refer to one such level of being as 'Patala Desh'. There are other levels of existence too.

S : If there are such spheres which are below the Earth Planet with a different or lower grade of creation then how can you describe man as having their characteristics too for being 'comprehensive'?

K : Matter in its lowest grade ends up at the Earth planet. The earth element is the grossest manifestation of materiality. That is why man's body is made of it. Moreover a man also has a middle position, of going up or down. Hence he can absorb the qualities of planets though they be lower in scale. He has within himself both upper and lower scales of qualities.

S : Has man also the qualities of stars?

K : Yes. I have not described to you the celestial beings of outer space. I have only told you about the solar system. The Earth Planet is a member of the Solar system. Apart from other stars and planets the Solar system has seven celestial travelers. The Rishis have produced almanacs based on their relative positions in the course of their movement in space.

Seven planets have been chosen from the solar system for fixing the seven days of the week. As the earth planet rotates it absorbs their respective qualities. Thus Saturday is the day of the Saturn, Sunday of the Sun, Monday of the Moon, Tuesday of Mars, Wednesday of Mercury, Thursday of Jupiter and Friday of Venus. These seven heavenly bodies are very important. The quality of intellect is activated by Mercury, the quality of destruction is imparted by Saturn, heat and light by the Sun and dampness and material power by the Moon. Besides these a man has also in him the essential nature of divinity (Hahut), creative nature (Lahut), archetype (Jabarut), symbolism (Malakut) and human nature (Nasut). You will thus see that a man is comprehensive.

A : What are you driving at by this description of man's comprehensiveness in his qualities?

K : You should ask yourself that question because I am only replying to your question. However, I wish to say that when a man becomes convinced of his comprehensiveness he experiences real comfort, peace of mind, non-dependence on anyone or anything and a sense of permanence. He will cease to look at things partially with a feeling of deficiency and diffidence and begin to experience in himself a completeness without any limits and limitations of any kind.

S : But the difficulty is that if a man is only a reflection of completeness then it is after all a reflection, not the reality. It will be error and delusion and not the Truth.

K : You have not understood the word 'reflection'. A face is reflected in a mirror as long as the eye is focused on the mirror. When you stop looking there is no reflection. The act of seeing has merged into the seer from the seen. There is then no need for the mirror.

A : Has a man animality in him also?

K : Of course. This is what I have been explaining to you. Within a man are the qualities of minerals, plants and

animals. He has the ferocity of a tiger, the cunning of a fox, the economic organisation of an ant and so on. He has in him the vastness of space, the warmth of fire, the fickleness of breeze, the taste of water and the heaviness of earth. All creation is made of these elements and their presence in man imparts to him a comprehensiveness and completeness. He has at his disposal whatever he wants to be. He just has to will it. He can become an absolute being or a deity if he so desires.

S : The absolute existence is that of God alone. A man can never become the Lord or God. If a man could also become God then there will be so many Gods whereas God is one.

K : I have told you that what your projection of unity as Godhood is a deficient and defective concept of monism. One, two and many are relative human perceptions. The concept of one arises only when you see more than one. But when you see only the Reality or Truth there is neither one, two nor many. For example, greed and contentment are two relative states and exist together. The antidote to greed is contentment and as long as greed exists in a mind contentment also exists as its remedy but if greed is overcome then there is neither greed nor contentment. Both vanish. Man himself is the absolute being and he is himself the speaking animal. He is everything and his attributes have perfection. This totality is known as monism or a state of unity of being. When he becomes conscious of one then he gets involved in a whirlpool of deficiency and doubt. When he gets rid of the dilemma of the one and many then he himself becomes the absolute being. When you give up the idea of self (fana) you automatically achieve abidance (baqa). This is your daily experience but you get involved in a faulty mental process and refuse to give up your delusion.

S : How does it form my daily experience?

K : When you are awake you experience plurality because in this state your body, mind and senses are all active. When

you sleep you are in a state of duality because in that state your mind and spirit are functioning. In deep dreamless sleep there is absorption and a state of unity as only one element functions in it. Is this not your daily experience?

S : From simple examples of everyday activity you have explained to us the most complicated problems. Tons of books do not give us what you have imparted to us in a single session. We have doubts about the hereafter and what happens in afterlife.

K : In life hereafter you reap what you have sowed. Whatever ideas and thoughts a man may form in his life in sum total are carried forward for their fruition. All your pet convictions, prejudices and predilections will continue to dog your consciousness as before. If you want freedom from all these shibboleths you should shed them now in this life. A change of faith will not help as one system of faith is just as binding as the other. Your prejudices will make you ghosts whether you are a Hindu or a Muslim. Here you worship graves and there you will be a ghost. What ambitions you have!

S : I do not want to be a ghost. While on this subject please throw some light on ghosts. We as Muslims believe in Ginn and Spirits but no one has explained these terms and they remain vague concepts.

THE WOLRD OF SPIRITS

K : After-life also rests on the human mind. In the absence of the body the spirit goes to the world of spirits and indulges its pet pursuits. It is like the daughter of the weaver who, even after her marriage has to weave more energetically than ever. She has no rest either in her father's house nor in her husband's. The same is the condition of the human soul or spirit. Whatever hopes and fears haunt a person in life are carried forward to the next. Some are afflicted by doubt and agnosticism, some are afraid of the Day of Judgment and so on. They continue to suffer from the same in the shape of ghosts.

Mere death will not solve the mystery of life. Some spirits are good and some bad and stick around the place of their burial because of their attachment to the body. Cremation is better in a way because the chances of the spirit lurking around the graves are remote. The ghost is in love with its body and sticks around it after physical death.

A : But the Hindus who cremate their dead are also apprehensive of ghosts.

K : Whether Hindu or Muslim if one is obsessed by a ghost he cannot but be under its influence. I have stated the general principle.

A : Without a physical body how can a ghost or a spirit partake in worldly activities?

K : It is a good question. You can get rid of your illusion by an answer to your question. A lustful person indulges in his lusts as long as he is youthful but when he grows old and is incapable of physical indulgence he is still gripped by his lustful nature. He is, however, shy of marrying a young bride and young brides also shun such an old groom. In such a situation the old crony hunts for other people's wives or exploits the situation within the family for such indulgence. Where he cannot physically indulge he does so mentally. Lust is lechery and a lecherous person finds many ways of indulgence. His mind is a workshop of the devil. The same thing is applicable to the spirit as well. Since a lustful soul no longer has a body of its own it enters another body to taste indulgence through that body. So beware! Do not be under the influence of the mind and the senses as a victim of lust has no hope of redemption. He keeps sinking lower and lower. You should get rid of both the world of bodies as well as the world of spirits. Those who indulge in spiritual practices such as (Chilla) or the 40-day ritual etc., are also doomed. Be above both, rise above both if you want to be rid of this grinding wheel.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

S : What is the purpose of human life?

K : Now you are on the right lines. This is a basic question. When the stream of life descends it creates various forms of creation until it creates 'man'. Here it reaches its pinnacle and then reverses its course upward. Man is the last link in the chain of creation. After creating man the Creative Force did not feel the need for creating anything else and hence it relaxed and rested. It felt satisfied, comforted and blissful. Hence, the purpose of life is to seek total happiness, bliss and satisfaction.

A : How did the stream of creation reverse its direction in Man? I have never heard this concept before.

K : In a fountain the water flows from the top to bottom and when at the bottom it aspires to go up again. The bottom-most thus gets to the topmost again. Man was at the bottom of the downward move of the creative stream and hence all the surrounding characteristics in the water of a pond reversed. The trees at the top and at the bottom seem to merge at the roots. The thing and its shadow together create a wonderful image.

The downward flow of the creative stream went down in spirals or spherical forms. Thus the stars, sun and the moon assumed spherical forms. Within the spherical shapes emerged straight, round and rectangular figures. In the plant kingdom roots are at the bottom while the leaves, fruits and flowers are on top. The fundamental elements have descended similarly. The plant kingdom gave birth to the animal kingdom. The same trees got inverted when it came to man with its roots up and the branches down. The tree has its seeds and flowers on top whereas a man spills his seeds downwards to procreate. A tree is static while a man is mobile in his roots. Nevertheless human movement has its roots in the head from where all else is controlled. The life of a tree is in its roots. The five senses and the mind of a man are

controlled by the head. A man resembles a tree in every respect but in reverse. Hence he has to tread the path in reverse. All plants are rooted in earth and all animals have their faces down towards the earth whereas man alone looks up towards the Heaven. He is Heaven-bound and his head is a center of activity where he can think of his problems of material comfort, ideas and ideals as well as the secret of existence. The human head is like a dome. It is the real mosque, church and the temple. Everything is within it. All solutions lie within it. All sceneries are within it. All stages of the inward journey are covered in it. You will meet the Lord in it. My system is based on traversing this inner journey in the head. The acolyte, the worshipper, the disciple, the practitioner all have a vision of their Lord therein.

S : How can one find real peace and comfort in the head?

K : When a person falls from a height he suffers an injury. When his consciousness shifts to the head he feels comforted and as long as his consciousness stays there he remains comforted. Similarly, a sick man does not have a feeling of sickness while he is asleep. During sleep he is oblivious to pleasure and pain and has an experience of bliss. Thus we know that comfort rests in the head when consciousness is gathered there. So we should seek bliss in the head.

S : This is what is done by those who follow the Sufist path but does it mean that the soul should remain in a state of sleep always to experience bliss consciousness? Is not sleep an inferior state of mind showing lack of alertness?

FREEDOM FROM PAIN

K : It is not intended that a man should go to sleep all the time. The idea is to gain control over those centres in the head which guarantee freedom from pain and experience of bliss. With practice such freedom will endure even in a wakeful state. He will then always be calm, composed, highthinking and brave. He will start

reaping his reward very early in his practice. He will gain a poise and balance palpably as he traverses various stages. He thus inwardly traverses all the stages through which he had passed earlier to reach the present stage in a reverse journey. He thus goes back to where he started from and reach the original source from where he started and the downward journey commenced. This practice will rid one of egoism and pride and tear down the veils of illusion. He will be face to face with Truth. When the time comes for him to give up his bodily cage he will do so comfortably and without fuss and merge into Reality with a feeling of permanent union with the transcendent Truth. He will consummate self-knowledge which is the purpose of life. Self-realization leads to total peace and tranquillity.

If you have understood what I have portrayed to you summarize it for me briefly. What are your conclusions?

A : Briefly I may say that in the beginning there was absolute existence which could be called neither existence nor non-existence. Affirmation or denial can be made only if there be more than one Reality. Who is there to deny or affirm and what is there to deny or affirm? The only Reality had two aspects rolled into one, namely the thing and its attributes. An attribute can be attributed only to a thing and thus the two cannot be seen in isolation.

The differentiation between a thing and its qualities is merely a matter of linguistic usage and style. A sea cannot be isolated from water. A thing and its attributes are relative terms and in fact, there is neither a thing nor its attributes. When we look at the illusion of qualities they seem to be of two kinds, one is soft and beautiful, the other harsh and grand. One is positive and the other negative. All elements are the result of a combination of these two types of qualities. All creation, in turn, is a result of a combination of elements. Some of the creation is harmonious and beautiful while some other stern and punitive. In man all these qualities have gathered

together. He is both an angel and a non-angel. He is both an animal and a non-animal. He is true as well as false. Truth is real and false unreal. The act of creation thus reached its apex in man. Adam was perfect but since he had the capacity to descend naturally he forgot his comprehensiveness and fell from grace. He succumbed to a part of his capacities and forgot the totality of his innate nature. His offspring reflected his qualities in parts and multiplied without number. Thus their totality degenerated into bits and parts and man got enmeshed in plurality and division. If he ignores this partial and restricted view of himself he will realize his comprehensiveness and totality. The first lapse committed by Adam opened the flood-gates to his offspring to multiply these lapses. In order to rectify this situation the Creative Power sent prophets and sages to all nations to represent the harsh and punitive aspect of power to divert them back to their original completeness and divine heritage. Yet the man is not prepared to reclaim his original glory and perverts even the teachings of prophets and sages to create conflict. This negative inclination is known as Satan which misguided Adam in the beginning and continues to misguide his offspring. It is within the power of man to overcome his negative qualities and turn to his original state of perfection to become a perfect man. It is to deliver this message and help man to regain his perfection that Kabir appeared on the earth-plane. He shifted man's attention from external temples, mosques and churches to the head of a man which is the real dome of divinity. One who devotes his attention to this dome within himself will be richly rewarded with superb visions of tranquillity.

Chapter 6

A Dialogue with Nawab Bijli Khan, the Orthodox

*(To be read with XI which is another dialogue with the
same individual with a slightly different emphasis)*

Gist of a dialogue between Kabir and Nawab Bijli Khan Pathan, a rigid and uncompromising ritualist. He was an aristocrat of a place in India known as Maghar. This gist is recorded here for its relevance to the understanding of Sufism.

EQUALITY OF RELIGIONS

B : Do you believe in the equality of all religions?

K : Since God the Creator is the same in all religions why should any religion be superior or inferior?

B : But the mode of worship is different in each case.

K : If a father has two sons and both are doing two different jobs in two different ways and both are benefiting from it is it proper to condemn one and ask him to adopt the ways of the other? I am not concerned with either supporting the one or condemning the other.

B : Then what is your mission?

K : My mission is to spread awakening, wake up the sleeping ones and guide the misguided.

B : Who is a forgetful man in your opinion?

K : A man forgets his self and becomes ignorant on several occasions. For instance, when he sees a beautiful woman, or when an old man forgets his age and dignity and keeps the company of youngsters or when he is intoxicated with power and position, or when he is proud of his knowledge or when he is in bad company or when he is surrounded by luxury, or when he is a victim of wrong religious propaganda or when he is driven by greed and lust. Examples can be given galore.

B : What is the source of forgetfulness? Is it God or man? If it be God's wish that a man remain forgetful and ignorant then why blame man?

K : What is your concept of God?

B : God is the creator, sustainer and the prime cause of everything in the universe. He runs the universe.

K : This concept of yours is that of a great powerful man and as long as the concept is of a man then forgetfulness is his characteristic.

B : But God is described as omniscient and not forgetful.

K : If your God is brainy then he will also be forgetful. Brain is an instrument of discrimination. Discrimination is based on a judgment of good and bad. It means that good and bad should both be in God so that he may discriminate between them.

B : How can I accept God as being indiscriminate?

K : One who knows the taste of bitter can know the taste of sweet. One who does not know sweet cannot know bitter and vice versa.

B : We Muslims believe that all goodness and discrimination is in God and all indiscrimination and evil is in Satan.

K : Then you are a believer in duality, God and Satan. As soon as you let in more than one Reality you invite conflict and confrontation between them. More than one Reality admits of deficiency and weakness in its parts. If you say God is one then the question arises—where did Satan come from? If the reply is that God created Satan then one would ask why. Does anyone, on his own, create

an enemy for himself unless he is of unsound mind? If you assert that Satan was created for no particular reason then what kind of a creator do you have in your mind? Some even believe that Satan can thwart God's plans as he did in the case of Adam. If so, Satan will be considered more powerful than God as he can frustrate God's intentions. Can you think these over and come up with an explanation?

B : We are simple believers without any sophistication. We believe in one God, his Prophet, the Angels, the Day of Judgment and paradise. I cannot answer any of your questions.

K : I have nothing to say against that. I am not saying anything against any religion. I am only discussing the questions which you posed to me. You believe in many things without understanding them. That is my point. I formulated various questions based on what you told me.

B : I have not come to argue a point nor do I like arguments. All I want to know is the source of neglect and ignorance in man.

K : Man himself is responsible for his ignorance as he has both capacities, for ignorance as well as for knowledge. When he proceeds on the path of ignorance he becomes negligent and when he proceeds on the path of knowledge he becomes wise. When you eat you do not speak and when you speak you do not eat. When you are in one state the other state is covered and you forget it. Neglect and lack of attention are a part of human nature.

B : But why should it be like that?

K : Nature is like that. Where there is no knowledge there is no ignorance either. With the acquisition of knowledge comes ignorance too. Their beginning depends on the mind's inclination. When a mind is directed towards one object it becomes conscious of its neglect of other objects. Thus arises the idea of neglect. The mind then turns towards the thing neglected and thus overcomes neglect. The knowledge of one and the neglect of another go

cheek by jowl. When you are aware of one thing you simultaneously know that you are neglecting the other and then set about rectifying it. When you light a lamp the darkness is suppressed, the more the light the lesser is the darkness. Light and shade are relative terms. When you know light you know shade and vice versa.

When a man, similarly, understands good and evil and sticks to good only, will not evil be suppressed?

B : Yes, it will be suppressed.

K : All right. Now the evil is suppressed and the good is strengthened. The man then detaches his attention from good and evil both and gets rid of these relative concepts altogether. The relativities vanish. You are still in the grip of God and Satan. You think God to be good and Satan to be evil. So you should suppress Satan by the love of God. Strengthen this love to such an extent that Satan is totally suppressed. When you have achieved it then both God and Satan will vanish.

B : What happens thereafter?

K : You will then experience that absolute existence which lies underneath both God and Satan. God and Satan are complementary to each other, there cannot be one without the other. This is what causes conflict and confusion. The idea of God is better. So strengthen it to such an extent that Satan departs for ever. When Satan departs then God also vanishes because there is no need for him any longer. When both God and Satan depart after a clash there is total peace thereafter.

B : Is this not atheism?

K : Who is an atheist?

B : One who does not believe in God is an atheist.

K : I have affirmed both God and his colleague Satan. How can this be atheism?

B : Since you say that with the departure of Satan there is no need for God it amounts to a denial of God.

K : There is a difference between saying 'there is no God' and saying, 'there is no need for God'. I did not say the

former. I said the latter. The fear of Satan reminds you of God. The fear of hunger reminds you of food and the fear of thirst reminds you of water. When you are no longer hungry or thirsty will you still be thinking of food and water? Will you still think of medicine once you are cured of disease? Once you enjoy good health you are rid of the ideas of sickness and medicine both. These examples are only for the purpose of explanation.

B : It sounds logical enough but my mind revolts against the idea of discarding the concept of God.

K : In other words you are saying that you are not prepared to discard Satan. You cannot merely think of God without thinking of Satan. All I am asking you to do is to so intensely love God that your self is totally consumed in it.

B : Whatever may be the explanation, I would still like to call it God-worship.

K : I do not mind the words as long as you have their correct import. If what I refer to as the Absolute Being is what you refer to as God then there is no harm. What I would like to impress on you is that qualities and attributes depend on terminologies and words. Satan is also a quality, not a being. The 'Merciful' is also a quality not the 'Being'. Unless you overcome the illusion of relative qualities how can you hope to reach the Absolute Being? You should, therefore, raise your sights, rid yourself of qualities and march ahead towards the only Absolute Being. Once you elevate yourself in this way then the rites and rituals of formal religions and creeds automatically drop off and lose their grip. This is what the Holy Prophet demonstrated when he rode the horse Burraq during the night of Ascension. He came face to face with the Absolute Being. You should similarly aim very high, truly high, leaving behind the world of attributes and relative qualities. In fact that sublime experience itself is an eternal secret.

B : How can I know that secret?

THIRD EYE CENTER

K : That secret is hidden behind the third eye center of the Master. The secret of the Ascension of the Prophet should be seen at a spot in between the two eyes of the Master. Within the white and black of the third eye shines a star and within that star is the sun which is not easily understood.

In the center between the two eyes appears a shining winged moth. In the middle of the wings is an entry-point. When you pierce that veil and enter within you will have crossed over to the land of eternal awakening and freedom. This world will bother you no more. You are liberated. Only those can enter this gate who have become perfect and have overcome relativities and qualities. When they enter the world of the Absolute they will never be separated from the Lord ever. There is the seat of eternal music, the music of the spheres. One who practises this sound principle gains entry into that kingdom.

B : What is the prescribed practice to achieve that stage?

K : Detach and attach. Turn about and march ahead. Close your eyes, nose and tongue to the world and open them to the other world. As you do so the Truth will slowly begin to dawn on you and the veils of secrecy lift automatically.

THE NATURE OF HEART

B : What you are saying concerns the heart but the heart attaches itself to things outside. How can it be diverted inwards? It cannot turn inwards unless someone helps the person to do so.

K : A heart can never be empty of attachment. It is in its nature to be attached but the fact is that it is attached to itself. This is not understood by most people.

B : This is indeed a puzzle. How can one attach himself to himself?

K : The heart engages itself with other things and other persons for its own sake. Your faith, belief, prayers, friendships and dealings are all based on self-interest though it may sound harsh to say so. In fact love is nothing but the fulfillment of self-interest in some way. There are three main organs involved in this self-centered activity, the eyes, nose and the tongue. These have to be switched inwards. This inner attachment is called love.

B : But love is directed towards another person not towards oneself.

K : Don't delude yourself. Do you love God for God's sake or for your own sake? If you consider God to be a different species apart from you then why should He need your devotion? I have not come across a single person who loves God for His sake. You pray, supplicate, demand and beg only for your own sake. No one is free from this, not even saints, sages, prophets and seers. All of them have their axe to grind.

B : Very often we see cases of selfless love.

K : That love brings you pleasure. You do not go to meet a person if meeting him does not please you. Since he gives you pleasure you like him. If not you would not even think of him. You see some qualities in someone and feel attracted to him. You feel sympathetic towards him. This attraction is love which leads to your meeting him which in turn gives you joy. It is for this joy or pleasure that you do all this.

B : How can one love God without seeing Him?

K : There are many ways of seeing. You have heard a great deal about God. Hearing is also a kind of seeing. Knowledge is not of only one kind or from one source. You acquire knowledge through hearing, tasting, touching and smelling. Mostly when you hear a lot about someone your interest in him is kindled. This interest is the beginning of love.

B : You have described God as the Absolute Being. What does it mean?

K : God is a Being and that Being is you. The Being is in you and God is also in you. You think of God in your mind and start loving Him without seeing Him. Only the heart is capable of love. No other organ but the heart is capable of love. Love is God and hence a heart which feels love feels God. Your considering God as something apart from you is an illusion. But as you increase in love the various covering veils drop off one by one and your love for yourself reaches its zenith. When you pass through all stages of love and get rid of all the intervening veils then you will witness God within yourself. You will directly realise that what you were seeking all along was within you. You have not given up the illusion of separateness and hence you are sorrowful. Separation is sorrow. But if you persist in love, your illusion will vanish and you will experience meeting the Beloved.

THE NATURE OF ILLUSION

B : What is illusion?

K : An erroneous impression is illusion and illusion creates restlessness. An illusion is countered by another illusion. This is a medical principle. Heat is treated with heat and cold with cold. If you are blistered by fire then a little warmth will bring you relief. Wise men treat one illusion with another by first sympathizing and agreeing with the deluded person and after gaining his confidence they prove to him the basis of his delusion. Such exposure will rid him of his illusion. A man is wounded in his dream. A doctor treats him with an ointment and he gets well. Then he wakes up fresh as his dream wound was treated with dream-dressing. There are many kinds of illusions but if you remain steadfast in your love of God and introvert your senses inwards then you will experience the Truth within yourself.

B : When a person believes in an illusion he does not know that it is an illusion nor does he have an understanding of illusion.

K : If he were to understand illusion then how will he remain under it? A deluded person does not have the sense of recognising delusion as a delusion. He is therefore restless. In order to overcome restlessness he resorts to all kinds of remedies just as a patient in pain will listen to anything which a doctor may say, whether appropriate or not as he is anxious to rid himself of pain.

B : In order to gain the knowledge of the Absolute Being what is the most important condition?

K : It is love. One who is in love with the Absolute Being alone can know the Absolute Being.

B : But how can one love without first knowing?

K : How can one know without first loving? For loving you don't need much of outer knowledge but a little of inner disposition. A certain amount of inner knowledge is always present in a person.

You see someone and like him immediately although you do not know him or his name. Only the first sight is enough to start the process. Later he comes to know more about his casual acquaintance. The absolute being exists always. If you touch a worm it will try to save itself instinctively because though it has self-love it is not aware of it.

THE NATURE OF LOVE

B : Self-love is present in every being but not God-love. Otherwise there would not have been so many faiths and creeds.

K : The love of God is present in everyone. When God is the essence of the absolute being how can be anyone devoid of it? Faiths and creeds create quarrels and divisions because they consider God as something different from them and alien to them. If everyone comes to understand that God is the Absolute being then there is no scope for differences.

B : You have stated earlier that God is in every being but in a suppressed state. How can He be aroused?

K : Love is kindled in three ways. First, by actions, second by qualities or attributes and last by feeling it innately within the being. Love is evoked by witnessing action or by listening to the qualities and attributes of the beloved but this is of a low grade as actions and qualities are variable. At best they are the beginning of a process. If somehow these actions and qualities change or disappear then love also evaporates. Innate self-love or the love of being lasts for ever without change. A religious person worships God because God is bountiful and generous to His devotees. His 'love' and devotion will continue as long as he sees these qualities in action. God is also the almighty subduer and punisher. These are not endearing qualities, rather they create a sense of repulsion. No one loves a cruel and arrogant being. The so called religious devotees do not love God but His qualities of mercy and bounty. They worship not God but the benefits that accrue from Him. That is why their love of God is weak and shaky. It is not love but a deal. Real devotion and love are not based on expectations of rewards and comforts but love for love's sake. This will not be possible unless you consider God as your own being.

B : You have described the end result after mentioning the first phase.

K : But this love is such that you will have some experience of the result even in the first phase. Even in worldly affairs someone gets to like someone else without any rhyme or reason and keeps him company always. He does not even watch his qualities or actions. This is love of self or love of a being.

B : Love of a being as explained by you is laudable but there is no love in this world without some kind of interest. That is why religious men link their self-interest with God-love so that they may reap its benefit. Though love may

be initially guided by self-interest later on it matures into true love.

K : It is by no means certain that love becomes pure ultimately. Self-interest and benefit are delusions. As long as even a little self-interest remains the goal stays far away. Once the delusion goes there are chances that the pure love of being asserts itself.

B : The difficulty is that God is not considered a pure Being.

K : That is why sages and seers appear on the earth and beckon humanity towards the pure being. Their physical company helps the acolytes in forming an impression of pure Being.

B : Does such physical company of Masters lead one to self-love?

K : There should be no doubt about it.

B : Kindly initiate me into this mystery with an explanation. I have not yet understood this 'Being' which you have talked about. I can understand God but not this Absolute 'Being'.

K : Since you say that you understand God may I know what you understand by it?

B : He creates, sustains and destroys. He is God.

K : These are actions. Actions are performed by one who acts. Action creates attributes and qualities such as creating, sustaining and destroying. A creator creates and creating is an action and a creator a quality. Thus action produces qualities. All names and actions are attached to a being. The 'Being' by itself is neither action nor a quality nor a name. Name, action and qualities are based on 'Being' and they keep up their drama.

B : Is that 'Being' God?

K : God is both everything and nothing. He is linked to everything and to nothing. He has no names and all names are His. If you want to call such a one as God then He is the same as the 'Being'. If your God is something else then it is not a 'Being' but an adjective, a quality, an attribute.

B : But God has names and qualities.

K : At the same time he is independent of both names and qualities. Only then will He be a 'Being'. But if you think of God as someone with names and qualities then He will not be the 'Being' because names and qualities are perishable. One who gets stuck in qualities and attributes can never hope to reach the 'Absolute Being'

B : I realise that names, qualities and figure derive their basis from the Absolute Being but is the Absolute Being different from them all?

K : In a sense He is different and in another sense He is not different. In a way qualities, names and forms derive their support from the Absolute Being while at the same time they constitute illusions within the Absolute Being.

B : That which gives support is different from that which is based on such support. The two may be homogeneous or divergent. A spring may have sweet or brackish water. Can both come from the same source? Is not the Absolute Being the source of good and evil?

K : Where do good and evil reside?

B : They are relative states at a relative level.

K : You have answered the question yourself. There is no relativity in the Absolute Being. When the relative level itself is abolished how can relative states exist in it? Why do you want to distort the Absolute Being by bringing in good and evil in it through distorted logic and futile argument? The Absolute Being is like the basic tincture with a physician which is neither good nor bad. When the physician adds something to it, the same may become poison or elixir. Similarly the Absolute Being is neither creator or created. From your point of view you call Him a creator and beneficent. He is neither a creator nor a destroyer; neither merciful nor cruel; neither just nor unjust. You have formed these concepts in your mind and created a god of your description possessing all these qualities.

B : Now my doubts are all removed for ever. I now understand the Qor'anic verse S112/V3 which says: "He begetteth not nor is He begotten". I have no doubt that it refers to the Absolute Being. (At this juncture Bijli Khan fell at the feet of Kabir and expressed his unbounded gratitude and devotion to him for clearing the cobwebs of his doubts and delusion).

K : You seem to have violated the fundamentalist code of not bowing to man. You have started becoming an angel because it was the angels who first prostrated to Adam. Those who do not do so are considered opposed to the Angels and are banished from God's presence as happened to Satan. The other lesson is that the angelic qualities in them mobilized them into action and made them bow to Adam. The attributes which are opposed to angelic qualities are condemned and banished and crushed under Adam's feet. Have you understood that which is condemned and dishonored?

B : Yes, it is the gross essence of matter. My thoughts are now clear. All that I seek now is the Master's grace and initiation.

CONDITIONS FOR INITIATION

K : Before I initiate you I want you to understand certain preliminaries in this connection. These are as follows:

1. Do not be idle. Keep discharging your worldly and religious obligations so that your mind is not subjected to lethargy, indolence and inactivity. An idle mind is a dangerous thing. It will keep misguiding you and throwing you off-balance.
2. Before you act make sure that your action will not hurt others, injure their feelings or deprive them of their rights.
3. Earn your bread by honest means. Dishonest earnings will disturb the equanimity of your mind and will make it an unsuitable instrument for spiritual practices.

4. Abstain from meat as dead meat contains toxic matter and gets absorbed in the human system with harmful effects on spiritual progress.
5. Do not condemn any religion as the object of worship in all of them is the same. What method of worship is chosen by one is up to him according to his inclination.
6. Do not be harsh in your criticism and condemnation of other people. Everyone is responsible for himself.
7. Respect the feelings of your neighbours and do not offend their susceptibilities. Adam is the common ancestor of all mankind. The Sanskrit word for Adam is Adamanoah. The Muslims call him Adam and the Hindus Manu. Noah is the second Adam. You are a Pathan and Pathans were originally Rajputs. The word Pattha in Hindi means brave and courageous. "If you affirm these seven principles I shall initiate you," Whereupon Bijli Khan signified his total acceptance of them. Thereafter Kabir gave him a gist of the esoteric doctrine behind the practice of initiation as follows:
 1. The first stage is one of multiplicity which is called "The Thousand-petalled Louts". Here you witness a lotus with a thousand shining petals. You will also see myriad shining faces with thousands of heads and hands. In Sanskrit this is known as "Virata Purush" or "Jyoth Niranjan". One would see thousands of eyes as on the feathers of a peacock. Both within and without you would see the resplendent figures of the Master. This is a stage of multiplicity based on mere visualization.
 2. The second stage is of trinity of Trikuti. Here you will see the triple qualities. One who reaches this stage will overcome multiplicity and witness trinity or Onkar.
 3. The third stage is known as the stage of duality or the "tenth door". Here both 'conscious soul' (Purusha) and 'material nature' (Prakriti) hold sway. This is the source of duality and polytheism.

4. The fourth stage is known as "The Cave of Hira" (Bhanwar Gupha) or the stage of monotheism, of the one without a second, where the soul and nature spiral up to form unity. It is only after reaching here that one can talk of monism, unity after reaching here that one can talk of monism, unity and monotheism. Mere verbal assertion of one God does not mean much. It is a matter for direct experience not verbal jugglery.
5. The fifth and final stage is of the 'Absolute Being' or 'Truth'. Here you are face to face with 'Reality' devoid of names, forms and attributes. Here the aim of life is realized.

It is at this stage that you will experience the original sound current (word or shabd) from where all creation emanated.

Chapter 7

A Dialogue with the Hindu Scholar Sarba Jit

A FEW CONUNDRUMS

SJ : What is it which is the highest as well as the lowest, the dominant as well as the vanquished, never dies and yet death is attributed to it, never changes but is considered changeable, is long and broad but is considered small, is fast as well as slow, has no parts but divides into parts, everyone thinks of it and none can ignore it, it is with everyone and yet everyone seeks it, it is found and not found, it eats up everyone and everyone keeps eating it, none so far has known it but everything is known by virtue of it and there is not a single person who claims not to know it?

K : This is a childish question. You are referring to the immanent soul or (atma). It is all-pervading in nature. It is in the sun as well as in a tiny particle. It is in the ocean as well as in a drop. The strange thing is that everyone sees drops in the ocean but not the ocean in a drop. It is high as well as low. Death cannot vanquish it and yet you cannot call it alive because death and life are relative states and cannot apply to it. It never changes. Since it is wrongly associated with childhood, youth and old age it is seen to be changeable. It is independent of others but others are dependent on it. The same soul subsists in an

ant as well as in the whole of creation. It is in the microcosm as well as the macrocosm. You claim to be a monist or unitarian (Advaitist) and yet you are obsessed by relative pairs of opposites even in your question.

SJ : True. Who is it who is free from joys and sorrows and remains in a steady state? Enemies rush to kill him but cannot do so. He has a body but is also without a body. He is neither bound nor free and yet he is both?

K : Your description fits the 'soul' but your reference is to an enlightened person, a self-realised soul. Joys and sorrows affect only those who are desirous of fruits of their actions but a self-realised soul though seemingly active is free from all kinds of fears and expectations. His actions are like the blowing of wind, the rising of the sun and the flow of water in a river, all of which take place mechanically without any interest or motive involved. Take my own example. I have no self-interest in helping souls achieve liberation. I am working in the same manner as the earth, sun, moon and the elements according to the law of nature. I am not interested in winning a debate. I can write a note saying you won the debate. Those who are inimical to me wish to do away with me but my mind is pure without the least trace of any illwill towards anyone and hence no illwill of anyone can ever affect me.

Enemies are like dogs barking at the elephant and the moon. But neither the moon fails to shine nor does an elephant change his walk because of the bark. Since I have found the secret of the soul I am above the relativities of living and dying and hence none can kill me. If I were to love life then I would be afraid of death. How can death frighten one who has no interest in life? Even while I have a body I am not under the spell of the senses. When you are deeply engrossed in something nothing can wean you away from it. All other sights and sounds become ineffective as if they did not exist. Similarly I have withdrawn myself from the senses and

they do not affect me. If you attach your mind to the body then your mind is a physical mind. If you attach it to the spirit it is the spiritual mind. I am neither bound nor free because my mind is not a bodily mind. When I am above the senses and the body how can I be bound by them? Since I am not bound there is no question of my being free. These are relative situations. If you indulge in seeing, smelling and hearing then you will differentiate between the pleasant and the unpleasant sense perceptions but if you do not indulge in them at all then how can you be appreciative of the pleasant and repulsive of the unpleasant? Both are powerless to bind you.

I seem to take work from my body. I use it. I conduct business and teach but I do not do these things with the participation of my heart. My heart rests unconcerned at a higher mansion. My heart cannot be involved nor can it be overwhelmed.

SJ : True. You have correctly diagnosed my question. I have one more question. What is it which we all have but do not value, enjoy without knowing it, give to others as well as take from them and sometimes we do not care for its ups and downs in the least?

K : You are referring to life which we all have but do not value. When you show sympathy and understanding to others you give them life but when you show hatred and contempt you take away some of it. We do these things without realizing the ups and downs which they cause in life.

Try and understand what I say. A woman came into the world. She has neither a mother nor a father. She has neither a head nor legs. For seven days she has to be suffered by the learned as well as the half-learned. Strangely she is worshipped by both the scholars and the ignorant.

SJ : Kindly explain.

K : Here the woman means illusion or (Maya). Not having head or legs means being formless.

Illusion is not the product of any recognizable parentage. The seven days refer to intellect, mind and the five senses. The learned refers to acolytes devoted to the Being without attributes and the half-learned refers to the Being with attributes. Attributes or the lack of them are both the modes of illusion (Maya)

The son comes first and then the father because unless the son is there there can be no father. Both the son and the father are illusions (Maya). Similarly the devotee comes first and then God as without a devotee there can be no knowledge of God.

Most impressions come to a man through the eyes. The impressions thus formed tie him down to Maya. The tongue is a dangerous instrument and its use gets you involved more and more in Maya or illusion. So is the case with the ears. What you hear creates impressions and memory and gets you involved in Maya. The external light, speech and sound are the instruments of illusion. To escape delusion one should shut them off externally and switch them on internally so that he may see the perennial light and hear the abiding sound principle within. Once the senses are detached from external stimulants and hooked on to the source of inner light and sound (shabd) the illusion is overcome. The mind then becomes one-pointed, inward-looking and calm. Inner and outer chanting and meditation are the processes through which liberation from illusion is attained.

SJ : The eyes, nose and ears are external organs. How can one introvert them?

K : All the senses which are in a body function both inside and outside. When you eat delicious food your tongue first relishes it and then you enjoy it the whole way into the stomach. The nose smells the fragrance which travels from the external nose inwards all the way. You can hear the external sound as well as the inner sound. If you see the sun with open eyes and then close them, you will still

see its image within. Similarly when you get used to introversion you will progress on the spiritual path and have an inner experience when the eyes, ears and tongue are locked out.

This will introvert your consciousness and generate a current of peace and inner tranquillity. In fact this tranquillity converts itself into consciousness. The Hindus blow the conch to indicate the state of absolute peace. The Sanskrit word for conch is Shankh (from the root word 'Sham' meaning 'peace'). When the three senses are inverted within and pegged on to their respective seats then peace follows automatically. When this inner peace is established there emerges a whitish yellow glow within, which sends a wave of ecstasy to the introverted senses. This stage of experience is known as 'the thousand petalled lotus'. The acolyte smells a captivating fragrance within and wishes for a greater absorption. The same mind which was earth bound before now desires a state of absorption. The consciousness soars higher and reaches the state of 'trinity' (Trikuti) and settles down in the mansion of the sound current (Onkar). These experiences and their grades are intelligible to those who practise the discipline of sound current. (In Sufi terminology it is 'Sultan al Azkaar'). I help people of all persuasions and faiths to rise higher inwardly. I put myself along with them in the same stage which they have reached and guide them further on the inner planes.

If you are a believer of material mind then you take a plunge downhill. You become whatever you think of at that plane. It is the basis of ego and slavery of mind. There is no hope of redemption for such a person.

THE SLAVERY OF MIND

SJ: A man functions on the basis of his beliefs but you call it slavery of mind and advocate obedience to the spiritual mentor instead.

K : A man's mind has two tendencies, attraction and repulsion.(Sankalp and Vikalp). One is positive and the other negative. It is like a double-edged sword. The mind is forced to resort to good and bad both. Sometimes it is happy and sometimes sad. Sometimes it loves and sometimes it hates. One who proceeds according to the dictates of this mind can never be relied upon as his opinions are variable. Even when he seems to be convinced of something he acts contrary to his convictions. A field where wheat is sown seldom produces only wheat. Many other weeds grow along with wheat. When the weeds and thorns grow by the side of wheat sometimes the wheat crop is suppressed. Similarly good intentions are suppressed by bad ones. The mind is a doubting Thomas. Its beliefs are undependable. Hence it is that I advocate your reliance on a Master. That will save you from many pitfalls, doubt and disaster. When you came to see me first your intentions were not wholly honorable. You were self-opinionated and haughty. I adopted a method of tackling you in a manner which would rid you of these drawbacks. As long as one is under the control of the mind he cannot even understand the real meaning of scriptures. His mind casts a shadow of ignorance over him.

SJ : What ignorance assails me?

K : Not of one but many kinds. You are supposed to be a scholar of Nyaya Shastra (A branch of Hindu philosophy). According to these scriptures the soul (Atma) is said to have six states; These are desire (iccha), enmity (dwesha), endeavor (prayathna), joy (sukh), sorrow (dukh) and knowledge (gyan). Scholars like you read this and rest at that. They do not realize that these are not the states of the soul but of the mind. If you maintain that these are the states of the soul then pray what are the states of the mind? The most you can say is that when the soul keeps company of the mind and

accepts its influence these may be its states but not of the pure soul. The propounders of the Nyaya system have made a grave error. They say that the pure soul stays in a state of deep sleep without any feeling, sensation or consciousness. If that is so then who would want to aspire to a piece of inert unconsciousness? I have given you an example of ignorance. Such mis-statements are spread throughout the scriptures. Woolly arguments lead you to a dead end. There is no way out except through an all-knowing master. If you maintain that the pure soul is inert and unconscious then who learnt of it? The mind or the soul? If the soul learnt of it then how can an unconscious being become conscious of its own unconsciousness? If the mind learnt of it then the mind becomes superior to the soul. That which does not know remains under the control of that which knows. This is the tangle of the mind-based beliefs. You will never be able to solve the puzzle without the help of the Master. Do not get involved in endless scriptural terminologies. Discuss the core of the substance in simple words. A mind based study of the scriptures can only lead to a clash of words devoid of their true import. If you do not understand the scriptures through the help of a Master then they can prove disastrous. All scriptures are under the control of the Master who alone can convey to you their true spirit shorn of verbal gymnastics.

There are many kinds of teachers of arts, crafts and sciences but it is the spiritual Master alone who will liberate you from delusion and introduce you to the world of Truth.

The Master becomes a mirror in which the disciple sees himself as he is. Then the disciple becomes the mirror in which he sees the image of the Master and then becomes like him. The two images become one and merge into each other. Unless this intimate relationship is established there is no real gain. The Master and disciple are separated by a veil of illusion. The disciple

wants to see the Master's vision within himself and the Master wants to help the disciple reach that stage. The iron and magnet have attraction in them for each other. They only need to come close to feel it. The iron has to be rubbed a little to clean it of rust and dross. The disciple is burdened by triple qualities and wishes to be rid of them through the intercession of a Master.

SJ : Pray what are these three qualities?

K : The three qualities are Truth, Activity and Intertia. (Sat, Ruj and Tam). Laziness and indolence bring sorrow. Activity brings both joy and sorrow. Both these qualities are obstructions to self-knowledge. It is only the quality of Truth which entitles one to spiritual illumination. Even this quality stands as a thin veil hiding the face of Reality. This thin veil is pierced by the Master.

SJ : I came here to vanquish you in debate. It shows that I am under the influence of the second quality of activity (Rajas). This quality produces the ideas of victory and defeat, debate and argument. Since I am under its sway I am not eligible for realizing the truth.

K : Since your coming here you are no longer indolent. You have absorbed some enlightenment. Because of the strong urge in you for displaying your knowledge you were proud. This has also softened up. I knew what kind of actions were circling in your mind and I adopted suitable tactics to show you your weakness. Now all that remains between you and truth-consciousness is a thin veneer of illusion. It is like a lamp covered by a black and red covering. First the black cover is peeled off and then the red. Then only a glass covering remains which is somewhat dull and smoky. You continue your dialogue freely and this remaining obstruction also vanishes. Thus we are mirrors to each other.

SJ : Nevertheless a Master is a Master and a disciple, a disciple.

K : It is like a dialogue between a tree and its seeds. A tree is nothing but an expansion of a seed and the seed is nothing but a product of the tree. This chain of

argument is not new to you and me. It has continued since the dawn of creation. The dialogue between the Supreme and his manifestation of illusion is eternal.

SJ : I would like to be rid of these three qualities.

K : Yes. The veils have to be pierced. As long as a single veil remains the view will not be clear. Speculation will not help. If you attribute qualities to God then your world will be filled with Gods. If you consider Him as an absolute entity then He will become one. When you overcome both the qualities as well as the one being then you will realize that the only truth that exists defies description. When you reach that stage then all doubts, differences and illusions will leave you for ever.

SAGE KAPIL AND ATHEISM

SJ : The sage Kapil and the philosopher Charwak both rejected the ideas of God. I can understand Charwak saying so because he was an atheist but with Kapil it is a different matter altogether. He was the founder of the Sankhya system of philosophy.

K : How did you conclude that Kapil was an atheist? May be he has been misquoted and misunderstood. It is also likely that he wanted to jolt the people out of their mental rut about God. Moreover Kapil believed in consciousness (Purush). His disciple Patanjali believed in God being a special grade of consciousness (Vishesh Purush). How can a disciple contradict his own Master? Yoga is after all a branch of Sankhya. As for Charwak he was a believer of matter (Prakriti). I do not call him atheist because he has affirmed faith in matter. When one is positive about something he cannot be a negativist. In fact his positive assertion makes him a more confirmed believer. This world is a world of differences and different opinions. Do not condemn anyone for a difference in opinion.

SJ : But Kapil never believed in special consciousness (Vishesh Purush) If he has made a mistake I would like to know it.

K : I am neither here as an advocate of Kapil nor should you worry about the mistakes of others. It is enough if you know the truth. Every creature has a body, mind and soul. From Brahma the creator down to the lowest worm have these three entities. The whole universe is similarly made up of these three entities. Just as you own the body, mind and soul so does the universe own an aggregate of bodies, minds and souls at a much bigger level. People call it God. The individual is fashioned after the universe in the same design. One is microcosm and the other macrocosm.

SJ : I have not understood the nature of God the way you have described. This is different from the scriptures. There does not seem to be a uniformly general opinion about God. Everyone has his own opinion.

K : All Vedantists have uniformly said that without following the discipline (sadhana) one neither understands them nor does he have the right to hurl questions about them. However, there are some who conceive of God as a combination of soul, mind and body at the cosmic level. (Sagun Upasana). Then there are those who conceive of Him as possessing only the Universal Soul. (Nirgun Upasana). I preach neither the one nor the other. I advocate rising higher than both and reaching the Truth.

SJ : I have now understood the difference between a believer and an atheist.

K : What do you understand by these terms?

SJ : Those who think of God as having a material body are atheists. They are so engrossed in matter that they do not proceed further. The believers, on the other hand, ignore the physical body and believe only in His qualities.

K : You are indulging in mere verbal gymnastics. This has no value or permanence. Unless your mind actually experiences the Truth mere verbal jugglery will lead you nowhere. The atheists believe in matter alone and look upon consciousness as an attribute of matter. They also think that matter has the quality of adopting shape

innately. Their thoughts are not clear and the believers also waste their time in condemnation and argument trying to hurt their feelings rather than enlighten them. But basically both are the birds of the same feather. The atheists believe only in matter and consider all else as its attributes. Similarly the believers believe in consciousness as basic and all else as its manifestations including matter. Thus far they are equal. But both are verbalists without the actual experience of what they are saying. Verbal arguments create conflict and conflict is dangerous for monism. As long as both stick to one reality both are unitarians. The one starts with matter and the other with consciousness but both believe in one.

SJ : Manu says in the Dharma Shastra that the one who does not believe in God is not an atheist but the one who does not believe in the Vedas is. There are six systems in the Hindu scriptures and they are Sankhya, Nyaya, Yoga, Visheshik, Uttar Mimansa and Purab Mimansa. Sankhya openly denies God and the Mimansas are rather lukewarm about Him. The other three believe in God.

K : You have switched back to half-baked arguments. You are not clear about Vedas. The word Veda means knowledge. The Hindu society is based on the four Vedas for the sake of social discipline. They impose social restrictions but they do not interfere with your beliefs. On the contrary they give you freedom to believe in the way you want and worship the way you like. In other religions it works the other way. They give you social freedom but restrict your thoughts, beliefs and modes of worship. Freedom to criticize helps in spiritual progress and this is what is guaranteed by the Vedas. That is why Manu did not want the Vedas to be condemned. It was in the interests of spiritual progress of mankind that Manu said so. The Vedas are like a mirror in which you can see yourself and see how you can improve yourself. If the scholars do not understand it, it is not the fault of the Vedas. You should improve your image and not break the mirror. I am

neither for the Vedas nor am I against them. For that matter I am neither for nor against anything. My task is to guide the misguided souls and to tell them where the Truth lies objectively and make them rise above both if they want to progress on the path. I uncover the priceless treasure which is in every soul but people are unaware of it. I remove the covering veils and make them see what is in them already. None can understand it without the help of a Master. Only the Master can transfer this knowledge to his disciple. That is the merit in Master-Disciple relationship.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE VEDAS

SJ : Is this knowledge not to be found in the Vedas?

K : When you get tired of the physical sciences you turn towards the scriptures but you cannot directly extract the knowledge of soul from the scriptures. It depends on the grace of the Master. It is the knowledge of the 'Beyond'. What do your scriptures say about 'the knowledge of the beyond' or 'Para Vidyā'?

SJ : According to Chandogya Upanishad the Vedas are a part of the mind and intellect. It helps in the understanding of God. The Hindus generally regard the Vedas as the word of God. What is your opinion?

K : The Vedas may be the word of God but since man does not understand God he remains deluded all his life. But in order to realize the Truth you need not depend on the crutches of scriptures lest you develop bigotry and narrow-mindedness. The concept of God as contained in the scriptures is different from the common man's concept. Hence the confusion. The Vedas were conceived by sages with godlike qualities in them but you have such a low opinion of man and such a high opinion of gods that it hurts you to hear that men wrote the Vedas. The Vedas themselves describe how they came into being. Will you read out any verse from the Vedas as an example?

SJ : (Reads verse 15 of Chapter 32 of Yajur Ved) which says: "Grant me the capacity to understand".

K : Is it not enough to conclude that it is man and not God who can say it? All the Vedas have similar constructions. They are full of stories about men and women. Do you still have any doubts about the scriptures being written by men? In point of time it was in Kali Yug that Sage Vyasa compiled them in four parts. But for this classification their number would have increased beyond reckoning. In order of sequence first came the Vedas, then the Brahmanas and lastly the Upanishads.

SJ : The Vedas are known as 'shruti' or 'that which has been heard'. People heard them by word of mouth and learnt them by rote memory and thus preserved them.

K : Reading and writing were not much in vogue during those days. Writing commenced in late Dwapar Yug. Nevertheless, the word 'Shruti' means much more. It means the unending sound current with which those sages established an inner contact. They converted it into the spoken human language in verse form with a tune. This materialised conversion is different from the original sound-current whose melody and attraction is indescribable. Once the original current is shackled in speech it undergoes devaluation and exposes itself to linguistic interpretations and distortions. Now the priests have monopolized mere verbalism and corrupted the original 'Shabd' or sound current. Then came 'Smriti' or 'remembrance'. The priests chant the verses ad nauseum but without the least benefit from it. It is like a wooden spoon which keeps stirring the sweet syrup without enjoying its taste. They take pride in carrying tons of books and in scholarship but they miss the real essence of the scriptures. The scriptures have listed the virtues and vices and raised a host of controversies and conflicts and their reciters gain nothing but a sense of self-importance and ego.

SJ : You have equated the sages with God since the sages come to acquire God-like qualities of power, wisdom and competence. This may be correct linguistically but not from the religious angle. The Yajur Ved chapter 40, verse 8 says that God is immanent, pure and bodiless.

K : Read the verse which describes the act of creation.

SJ : It is described in chapter 31 and also in Atharva Ved (11-24-2-27). God created intelligence, then the earth and then the body.

K : If God has created these things did He do so out of his own consciousness by using matter which existed before in a world which was there already? Is matter separate from God? Why did God need to create a world? Was He needy? All these questions arise the moment you separate creation from the Creator and think of them as two. It is not easy to answer these questions when you think of Reality as more than one.

SJ : There is water in a pool just as there is water in the sea. The water is the same in both and yet one is called the sea-water and the other water from the pool. Similarly, there is a God who creates and One who is above creation. Both are God. Duality is in words not in actuality.

K : You are showing signs of understanding but your understanding is only verbal and shallow. You have to see the Truth.

SJ : Merely to accept something is to believe in an illusion. Illusion is temporary. May be I am now under your influence. When that influence is no longer there I may have a different impression. But impressions will not affect Reality as it is.

K : You are still caught up in the trinity of belief, believer and the object of belief. You should experience Truth both in my presence and in my absence. It is not based on my saying and your believing. You should strike at the roots of this delusion.

SJ : A tongue has been given to speak. A mind has been given to believe. But I am neither the tongue nor the mind. I have now risen higher than both.

K : Are you not the tongue? Are you not the mind? If you think you are different from them you are still groping in the dark. Your temporary feeling of elation will not last very long. This is not monism or the unity of Being.

SJ : I am experiencing a strange feeling of dissolving in the Unity of Being. You seem to have transferred your impulse to me. I have never had this experience after all these years of study of scriptures. What is its secret?

K : When a man drinks sea-water he will find it brackish and unpleasant. When the same water comes down in the shape of rains it becomes pleasant. The scriptures are like sea-water. The Master is a cloud. He withholds salt and sends down sweet water. Hitherto your study of scriptures only made you proud and ignorant. I have conveyed to you their true import like the sweet and pleasant rain-water. You have to cut off (Vairag) your delusion and delusion strengthening desires through the scriptures but you seem to have strengthened your ego instead. Thereafter you have to cultivate Abhyas (Practice) or striking correct relationships and balance. In between these two positions you will experience Truth. The Masters recommend this middle path.

It is midway between concern and non-concern. It is concern in non-concern and non-concern in concern. Neither left nor right it is central. By attending religious discourses you cultivate this kind of disinterestedness (Vairag). Then comes practice (Abhyas) which is the path of light and sound current (Surat-Shabd Yog).

SJ : Last night I dreamt many dreams. Are all that I saw false or are they true?

K : These are all various visions to instruct man. What is true and what is false? When a man walks the spiritual path even delusion comes to help him in his quest. If the aspirant has the requisite faith in and love for his Master

then he witnesses facets of it in his dream in different ways.

SJ : But this is false and untrue.

K : Why?

SJ : Because it is a fleeting experience. Now it is there and now it is not.

K : You saw the sun rise yesterday. Now it is not there. So the sun is false? You were here yesterday. You disappeared at night. Are you unreal and false?

SJ : The scriptures declare that a thing is real only when it is permanent. It existed in the past, exists now and shall exist in future.

K : According to your definition even the soul is unreal. It is not seen.

SJ : But the soul has always existed. It has never disappeared.

K : Delusion has also always existed. It has never disappeared! Why then do you call it unreal? When does delusion cease to exist?

SHANKARACHARYA

SJ : Shankaracharya has said that delusion (Maya) has no real existence. It is indescribable.

K : I do not want to comment on Shankaracharya. What I am doing is to analyse your own words and quotations. According to your quotation delusion is indescribable. Has any sage or saint ever described soul? All of them have said it is indescribable. Does it mean that soul is a delusion?

SJ : Do you then deny what Shankaracharya has said and call him false?

K : I have no need to support or deny what others have said. I am dealing with your logic. Shankaracharya lived once upon a time. He is not there now. So according to you he is unreal. How can an unreal being say something real which you are defending today?

SJ : Shankara's body may have perished but he is alive in his words and books. We Vedantists consider him timeless.

K: So you are here to defend Vedantism and want to pressurize me into saying that Shankara was true and that I agreed with him. I have told you that I have nothing to do with agreeing or not agreeing with anyone's opinion. Secondly, you described how you dreamt last night. That delusion does not exist now but its effects are still there in you just as Shankara continues to live through his words.

SJ: Please forgive me and guide me as I am ignorant. Please do not delude me any more.

K: Am I deluding you or Shankara's words? Yesterday you were experiencing a dissolution in the unity of Being. Today you are back again in your old mould. Who knows how long will you remain in this state? These states are so variable! The *mistake you are making now is the same* which everyone makes when his knowledge is book-based and merely verbal. You are caught up in the meshes of your own creation, a cobweb of words.

The ancient sages and saints utilized various terminologies and methods to raise the perception of humanity but the scholars got enmeshed in terminologies without understanding their true import.

When you come to receive enlightenment from a Master forget your verbal jugglery and do not try to show off. The Master can easily prick the bubble of your shallow arguments and empty rhetoric. Book-worms like you try to understand nothing except a few phrases parrot-wise and give yourselves labels such as theists, atheists, illusionists, materialists, monists, dualists and so on ad nauseum without understanding the basis of any of them. Nevertheless, everyone of these labels gives you a sectarian bias and you are more ready to quarrel over them than explain or understand them. If a simple unsophisticated man comes to me I adopt a simple explanation which gives him enlightenment but with scholars like you who come to argue and not to seek enlightenment I have to be harsh and expose your

hollowness mercilessly. I would like to make you understand through an exposure of your own words.

SJ : I am repentant. Kindly explain to me what is delusion or 'Maya'?

WHAT IS MAYA

K : What is the root meaning in Sanskrit of the word 'Maya'? (Delusion)

SJ : According to Yasik Muni the word 'Ma' means 'measuring' and 'ya' means 'the cup of measure'. This is its literary meaning but it has several derived meanings and one of them is mind or intelligence.

K : One literal meaning and one derived meaning are enough. The measuring cup is mind or intelligence. That is the creator of delusion (Maya).

SJ : But the word has several other meanings too. It also means, trickery, magic, an evil spirit, deception, cheating, illusion, human intelligence, goddess of wealth (Lakshmi), evil, corruption, compassion, sagacity, diplomacy, philosophical hallucination, the creator (Brahma), the mother of Buddha, a woman who works her charm and so on.

K : All that you have narrated as several derived meanings are nothing but the different shades of a single entity 'mind' which creates them. Whatever good or bad is happening in the world is a creation of the mind. The mind is a very subtle operator, it is the creator, it is the measure of happiness and unhappiness, it spreads its tentacles of delusion, hallucination and charm, fraud and deception. The very same mind has two aspects, total and partial. In its total aspect it is considered 'God' or complete and total intelligence. Its incomplete, partial and defective aspect is reflected in man, animal and all creation down to the last particle. Consider, for instance, an ocean. There is water in it everywhere as one block but when you consider the drops in it, it looks fragmented

and divided. In the total view of the sea there is no ambiguity. In the total view of water also there is no ambiguity. But when you have a partial view of the ocean or of water confusion arises.

The first is a total outlook and the second a partial outlook. When viewed separately the two aspects are clear. But when viewed together it creates wonder and astonishment. Wonder and astonishment lead to delusion. The other creatures apart from man do not have this problem of measurement. The drops of the ocean stay together as one entity but it is only man who considers himself separate from the ocean and starts measuring its extent. There is suffering in separation, not in unity. It is more so when this separation is also a result of imagination not of reality. Similarly, man thinks himself separate and different from God because of his partial view even though he is never separated. The sorrow of separation grips him and in order to cure these pangs of separation he resorts to various means; yoga, philosophy, mysticism etc. This, in a nutshell, is the essence of doing good deeds, acquiring knowledge and practising devotion. What is the state of your mind now?

SJ : I have reached the stage of witnessing a thousand-fold vision. The vision is wonderful, such as I have not witnessed before. The entire creation seems to have combined to present a spectacle of one supreme Reality. There is a brilliant flash of light with a golden tinge.

K : Take your mind off these visions. You have yet to learn more about delusion. The vision you have seen is one of grand delusion (Maya)., Many spiritual aspirants are satisfied with this vision and stop at it. But this is not the goal. You are still in the material world of delusion and have not crossed over.

(Kabir cast a glance at him and the vision vanished into thin air. SJ was back to normal).

SJ : I had a totally different concept of God. Today I am a changed man. I have realised that God is not an entity

separate from creation. It is a totality of all that there is from a total view. Just as the human body has various organs representing one person, similarly this entire creation represents the body of God.

K : You are on the right lines. You will have to forget the vision you had and not aspire for it as it was not real. What you saw was the gross version of the astral. You have many veils to pierce as yet and not get stuck at the level of subtle delusion. I shall not allow you to get stuck here even though you seem to be thrilled by it.

(Now Kabir cast a glance at SJ and transferred to him an impulse and then asked him what did he see now?)

SJ : My eyes are open but I do not see the world. I see another vision of a reclining universe in which subtle beings seem to be forming up very fast. I see a white cloud with many glittering stars and suns. Now I see a sunlike sphere with many ethereal and subtle beings resembling those whom we see on the earth. Within the cloud formation I see heavenly creatures, men and trees forming and dissolving as if the entire drama of creation is being played in front of my eyes.

K : See within the vapour-cloud and describe what you see therein.

SJ : I see a glorious light as if it were the morning rays of the sun. I have a blissful feeling. I hear the hum of a melodious sound-current. I would like to stay in this zone.

K : You cannot linger in this zone. Open your eyes. This is where the subtle astral and the material creation bifurcate. (Aum and Onkar). Just as the human mind deals with the mundane material world but dwells in the subtle astral, similarly the cosmic mind deals with the cosmos but dwells at the cosmic astral plane which you saw. This is the place of origin of the scriptures. At this level there is creation and dissolution of worlds taking place all the time. That is the sound current which you hear as Aum, the sound of worlds in creation and dissolution. The first letter 'A' signifies creation, the

second letter 'U' denotes a brief sustenance and the last 'M' denotes dissolution. Creation, sustenance and dissolution take place at the material or mundane level as well as at the subtle astral level. Both are the same except for their density and grossness. You have seen the astral self of yourself and the gross self of the cosmic being. You have not yet seen the astral of the cosmic being. (Hiranya Garbh.) However, you can infer what kind of a state it would be. I will not show you that vision yet. You need to follow a discipline for that.

SJ : Is the astral state of the Cosmic Being the final goal?

K : No. Wakefulness, dream-state and deep dreamless sleep state are all still within the grades of delusion (Maya). Just as you are perplexed within these three states similarly the cosmic being (Brahma) is also perplexed at the astral level. The final goal is beyond these grades of delusion both at the individual and the cosmic (Brahmic) levels. That I call the stage of 'Truth' or 'Reality'. It is beyond 'Purush' and 'Prakriti' or consciousness and matter. When you reach that stage then there is liberation, a state of eternal bliss without the fear of life and death. That is where I lead those who seek my discipleship.

SJ : What then is the limit of delusion of Maya?

K : It is a stage midway between the deep sleep state of the cosmic being (Brahma) and the 'Reality'.

SJ : You have termed both the cosmic being and the creator as parts of delusion. At the same time you have also taught me to see only 'One'. How do I reconcile all this with delusion or Maya? If delusion is everywhere and all-pervading then it means duality. I am confused about delusion (Maya).

K : You are right. You are still labouring under certain phrases. What you call Brahma is also a mode of Maya (delusion). The literal meaning of the word 'Brahma' is to expand or expansion and contraction. There is no need to get into these verbal juggleries. These phrases have been coined at various levels to inform and educate

the people. They should be seen at that limited level for a limited purpose. In a sense delusion exists but it exists on the basis of some other reality. It is not separate from that reality. If you consider it separate then you will get involved in an endless maze of multiplicity and go farther and farther away from Truth.

In fact the Reality is only one but in order to describe it verbally one has to coin words or sounds. A word can only be understood in contradistinction to some other word and thus multiplicity is born. Thus one Reality is described as two, ie. consciousness and matter (Purusha and Prakriti). The mind seeks a name and form to understand anything although the name and form are themselves delusion (Maya). These should be used for the limited purpose of understanding that which is denoted by name and form. Discrimination between the two enlarges intellectual understanding. We give names to all objects of creation but they are all imaginary and fictitious. Your parents give you a high-sounding name. You take pride in it and you feel puffed up with ego. That is the result. Because Maya is delusion and unreal we have coined the opposite of it and call it the True Being (Sat Purush). The human mind and the scriptures thus deal with different names and forms or with delusion. When both fail to deliver the goods and the mind gives up in despair there the Reality shows up. It is above one and two both.

SJ : Matter (Prakriti) according to you is delusion (Maya) and it is different from consciousness (Purush).

K: I have neither said 'one' nor 'different'. One or more are merely relative terms. When you say 'one' you are afraid of 'more than one'. When you say 'many' you are aware of 'one' in comparison. A thing and its attributes cannot be really separated. A body and its grossness are indivisible. The spirit and its subtlety are indivisible. The sun and its warmth are inseparable. As long as you are aware of separate entities you will never have a peaceful

mind and Truth will elude you even though it is always there waiting in the wings. That is why Maya is accused of keeping you from Truth by giving you a partial vision. Intelligence is the source of delusion.

SJ : Is not God intelligence? Is He sorrowful because of it?

K : God has intelligence but not of the type which divides and discriminates. Discrimination arises between the birds of the same feather. One man discriminates against another but God is only one and hence there is no comparison or discrimination.

SJ : If that is the case then why is the delusion (Maya) sorrowful?

K : In a balanced ordinary state there is no sorrow. When a thing becomes particular from general, sorrow arises. For instance, a man has strength but he does not attach any importance to it. But when his mind starts playing and he becomes conscious of his strength then he develops ego. The ego leads to mine and thine, conflict and attachment. The mind is Maya (delusion). It creates more and more division and sorrow.

SJ : What I have understood so far is that actually there is neither God (Ishwar) nor soul nor is there any need to believe in anything or know anything.

The individual soul creates the concept of a separate God and when the individual soul is no more then its God also vanishes. The individual soul considers itself weak and imperfect and God as strong and perfect. The Reality is neither this nor that. It is above both. The soul considers itself impure and God as pure like a mirror in which it sees its own reflection. The reflection which he sees is according to his own concepts. God neither punishes nor rewards, there is neither Heaven nor Hell, there is neither freedom nor slavery. All these are mind's creations. When the mind proceeds to know the Truth it starts understanding more and more and this state is known as self-realization. On achieving self-realisation the difference between mind and matter vanishes. When

ignorance departs the drop in the ocean identifies itself with the ocean. When the restless river joins the ocean its restlessness disappears. Then there is neither soul nor God. Only the state of Truth remains.

Chapter 8

Kabir's Dialogue with Dharam Das, A Billionaire

Dharam Das was an extremely wealthy person and happened to catch a glimpse of Kabir and was soon attracted to seek initiation from him on the spiritual path. The following is the gist of a dialogue between them which took place in Banaras. Dharam Das was well-versed in the Hindu scriptures and it has been recorded that his entire family was initiated by Kabir.

D : Is a school and a path one and the same thing?

K : A school is intended to give comfort and solace (in the spiritual field). To give solace and comfort several methods are adopted such as showing sympathy with the seeker, laying down certain disciplines and rituals and so on. These bring comfort to some extent. The path, on the other hand, is the way which leads to the selected goal. A soul has to find its way back to its permanent abode and hence the importance of the path. By whichever way a soul has entered this world it can trace its path back in the same way. This is an inner path and is not outside. Initially consciousness descended from dizzy heights much higher than the sun, moon and the stars and hence it had to pass through all these intermediate stages and in the process it absorbed the effects of all the them. The path by which it descended was the sound current and the sound current passed through the

Channel of the Absolute (or Sushumna). It is this channel which established the system of a path or the way.

DD : It is difficult to understand. The conscious current passed through the various Heavenly bodies and entered the human body. Is there an equivalent of the Channel of the Absolute (Sushumna) outside the human body as well?

K : What you see as the cosmos (Brahmand) is also a body. It is the cosmic body like you have a physical body (or Pind). Just as you have various organs in your body similarly the cosmic body also has various organs on a bigger scale.

DD : Similarities take many forms. Parts of the cosmos may resemble some human parts but it is difficult to believe that a human body and the cosmic body are the same except for size. We may call a brave man a 'tiger' but there the similarity ends. It does not mean that the man develops paws and stripes.

K : You are referring to poetic expressions but the similarity between a human body and the cosmic body is more than poetic. Stick to your original question and do not get lost in a plethora of words.

DD : Since you have said that the path of descent of consciousness lies through the cosmic world of suns and stars and while it so descends it acquires the impressions of all these before getting into a human body hence it is necessary first to know the cosmic worlds. Unless we know the cosmic body how can we know the human body?

K : Your position is topsy-turvy. When you get to know the human body you will know the cosmic body and not the other way round. One who knows the drop gets to know the ocean but one who starts investigating the ocean first neither gets to know the ocean nor the drop. Only one grain of rice can tell you whether it is cooked or not. You need not examine the whole quantity for that purpose. A handful of mud is enough to acquire its knowledge. You don't need a mountain for the purpose. Similarly, the

human body is enough to know about the cosmic body and an individual soul is good enough to yield clues about the cosmic soul or God.

DD : But that knowledge will only be a drop of a human body or of a human soul not of an ocean, cosmic body or God.

K : Your objection is due to your ignorance of the drop, the human body and God. The cosmic world is nothing but a combination of drops and God is a combination of all souls. Ignorance of this basic concept has led to much conflict among the various religions.

DD : The drop, the human body and the individual soul are limited, weak and defective. Therefore, the ocean, the cosmic body and God will all be weak and defective. A combination will only reflect the weakness of its parts.

K : Parts of a rope are weak but will it be weak when joined together? When various deficiencies are combined they become whole and complete. Completion means the overcoming of deficiencies.

DD : The drop dries up, the body falls sick and a man dies. Will they be free from these defects in their totality?

K : Defects exist only in a partial view not in a total view. Defects exist in parts not in the whole. When you look at the whole you do not see any deficiencies. You see them only when your view is partial.

DD : Please explain the path of consciousness.

K : Consciousness travels towards the brain within the body. When you traverse this journey within the body you will solve the problem of the cosmic mind and cosmic body automatically.

Just as you have the Channel of the Absolute (Brahma Nadi or Sushumna Nadi) in your body similar is the state in the Cosmic Body. The seat of the Cosmic Soul is in the Cosmic Body just as the seat of the individual soul is in the individual Body. Just as there are stations in the Cosmic World for Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth and specific positions for them similarly all these

elements are to be found within the human body. If you understand the human body you will understand the cosmic body. Understanding the self precedes cosmic understanding. One who does not know himself cannot know God. Self should be understood first and then God. The eye precedes the rising of the sun. If there is no eyesight there is no sun-rise. Within your body the various elements have their seat as follows:

Throat-Ether (Akash)

This gives birth to Air whose seat is the Heart.

The Air element gives birth to Fire whose seat is the Navel.

The Fire Element gives birth to Water whose seat is the Reproductive Organ.

The Water element gives birth to the Earth Element whose seat is the Organ of Evacuation.

The Organ of evacuation excretes the unwanted earth element. Water is excreted through the organ of reproduction.

These are the centers of gross elements. (Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether). Their centers are therefore, positioned down below. Their subtle states are positioned above. The centers of subtle elements within the body are situated high up as follows:

Sound. The Ears.

Touch. The Skin.

Form. The Eyes.

Taste. The Tongue.

Smell. The Nose.

Their controlling points are all located in the brain. The sound principle led to the creation of Space (Ether or Akash).

The Touch principle led to the creation of air.

The Form led to the creation of fire.

Taste led to the creation of water.

Smell led to the creation of earth.

Thus the ten elements and their ten centers subsist in creation.

Essentially all these manifestations proceed from a single entity but seem to evolve different characteristics from within themselves.

DD : What was the need for these various elements to create various stations in the manner you have described?

K : Nature means expression and everything expresses itself in nature. It cannot express itself except in its own way according to its inclinations.

For the sake of an example say you are a married man. Your sense of responsibility towards the family makes you establish a home, equip it well and entertain guests. You display hospitality and generosity. If you had not established a home you would not have had a chance of displaying your qualities in this manner. The urge to establish a home in your case may be compared to the elements in nature wanting to express themselves.

DD : Is it nothing more than this mere urge for expression? Are there no ulterior motives behind this creation?

K : If there are any other reasons behind this simple urge then they create difficulties and problems. Mere expression is not harmful. If it leads to egoism, selfishness and meanness it becomes harmful.

DD : Has the cosmos only these heavenly bodies or are there more?

K : There are innumerable heavenly bodies. The more you ask about them the more they multiply. How long can you go on like this? You look at your own physical body and analyse a small part of it. It is made up of billions of varied cells. These are also minute systems. How much do you want to know about them? They are systems within systems ad infinitum. Your mind is like a pool of water with moss formed on top. I stir it a bit and you begin to see your reflection. The moss reforms and you are full of doubt once again. Until the entire pool is cleared you will neither be able to see yourself in it nor take a swim.

DD : My mind is exactly like what you have described. Within a single system there are myriad systems. But are they all similar?

K : The cosmos is another name for heterogeneity. How can there be homogeneity where differences are the order of the day? Not even two leaves on a tree are the same, nor two drops of blood nor two bone pieces.

DD : This is true but unless there is some similarity within the system how can there be cohesion? If wholly dissimilar there will be conflict and collision within it.

K : There is the uniformity of principle which keeps everything within the system together.

DD : If we accept this principle for one system then we shall have to accept it for all. Do its components have similar functions or different?

K : Each component has its own function. The eye cannot do the functions of the ear. The same is the case with other sense-organs.

The organs of perception (ears, skin, eyes, tongue, nose) and the organs of action (vocal chord, legs, hands, genital organs, excretory organ) are all centrally controlled with the control center situated in the lower part of the forehead. The tongue (functions of speech) is the seat of the fire element.

The sex organ is the seat of water element.

The anus is the seat of the earth element.

The hands are the seat of the air element.

The legs are the seat of the element of space (ether)

Some scriptures refer to legs as the seat of the fire element.

The legs lead us towards what we see with the eyes or hear with our ears. Hence they have the characteristics of both space and fire.

The tongue tastes the drink and the same is excreted through the sex organ. Water and taste are thus linked.

The skin feels and the hands catch a thing after feeling it. Hence both the sense of touch and air are involved.

This is how the sensitive and gross perceptions function. This is what is called physical and astral.

DD : What about the causal? How does it function within the body?

K : The causal manifests within the body in four ways, ego, intellect, mind and consciousness. Ego proves the existence and it has the space element in it. The intellect is discriminatory and imparts certainty and it is made up of the fine (Satwik) elements of the subtle organs of perception. The active (Rajasik) elements of these sense perceptions make up the intellect. Hence it actively absorbs and reacts to the perceptions. When the gross (Tamasik) aspects of the very same perceptions hold sway then the consciousness is patterned after the same. This is reinforced by the intellect and confirmed by the ego.

Try to understand it this way. A mosquito stings. The consciousness is disturbed. The mind thinks. The intellect confirms that it is a mosquito. The ego acts by striking at the site of the sting. These are the four sheaths of the causal in a human body.

The scriptures say that this body has five sheaths. The food sheath is the physical body with its gross sense organs.

According to scriptures there are 5 sheaths in the human body. They are as follows :

Food Sheath : This is the inner lining of gross matter.

This needs food and other things to gratify the senses. It has within it the organs of perception and action. (Anna)

The Covering of Vital Airs : (Prana)

This is the realm of air. Its continuous movement and activity keeps the arteries and nerves alive and active.

The Mind-stuff : (Mano)

The organs of perception are associated with it.

Intellectual Sheath :

It is concerned with knowledge on the physical and spiritual planes (Vigyan). Here dwell the organs of perception and the mind.

Bliss Consciousness : (Anand)

One catches a faint glimpse of it after waking up from a deep dreamless sleep.

THE NATURE OF BLISS CONSCIOUSNESS

DD : Is Bliss Consciousness the same as the Soul (Atma)?

K : This is what the scriptures say but it is not correct. The soul (Atma) is different from a feeling of bliss. The awareness of bliss is a function of the mind and intellect but the soul is beyond it.

DD : Even the scriptures say that the soul is above and beyond the mind. How can they equate soul with the feeling of bliss?

K : The reason is that bliss consciousness is very close to the seat of soul. The acolyte catches a glimpse of that reflection and identifies it with the soul. It does not do much harm but it is better not to halt there and proceed further. The fact is that one is so elated at that stage that the mind refuses to see or think further. Thus they reach a ceiling and do not see any more. They consider it the ultimate and indescribable through words. I have for the first time tried to enlarge their vision further.

DD : You have mentioned that the human consciousness has descended and passed through various cosmic systems before entering the body. You have also said that within the human system there are innumerable systems and the consciousness absorbs the influences of all the cosmic bodies. Within the cosmic world are there many systems within systems as within the human body?

K : Although the human consciousness goes through the various heavenly bodies and absorbs their characteristics it has these characteristics within as well.

DD : How did they enter the human body?

K : Whatever the eyes see, the mind thinks, the ears hear, the nose smells and the tongue tastes leave their impressions within where they subsist. It is because of these impressions that memory recalls them every now and then. The body continues to deal with them or their memory impressions which become myriad. When you drink cow's milk, for instance, your mind gathers impressions not only about milk but also about the cow and several other connected things. If a child drinks milk it is unaware of the cow being its source and so it will not have any impressions about the cow in addition to impressions about milk. This is but a superficial view. The milk contains within itself all the characteristics of the cow in the same way as a seed has all the potentials of the tree. A child thus has potentially the knowledge of the cow but it may not be apparent or explicit. A time will come when it will uncover all this knowledge within itself. This is a subtle point which is not generally understood. When human consciousness descends through the various heavenly bodies it absorbs their characteristics in the same way as a child drinks milk and silently absorbs the impressions of milk as well as of cow.

You will see the tree in the seed as well as in shade. In the same way you will see the individual soul in the universal soul and within the individual soul you will see illusions. The seed sprouts into a big tree and the tree casts shadows. The individual soul spreads its own illusions in a similar manner.

There is vacant wide space with potential for all creation. It produces the original sound (Shabd) which is eternal and then perishable matter (Prakriti). Since movement takes place in a circle the initial product is a round seed which is the seed of the cosmic body. It produces innumerable heavenly bodies such as the sun, the moon and the stars. The cosmic soul resides in the

cosmic body in the same way as the individual soul resides in the individual body.

The sun has rays and the rays have brilliance. Similarly, within the Supreme Reality are to be seen the soul and the Universal Spirit. The Reality is one but it appears as many. Some see many in one and some others see the One in many. Illusion has a total as well as a partial aspect. In its total aspect it is the universal soul and in its partial aspect it is the individual soul. It is the shadow of a shadow.

DD : Have the stars and the plants left their impressions within me as well?

K : Why not? All human bodies have absorbed them. There are seven planets in the solar system with seven different characteristics. These characteristics are present within a man as shadows, as imagination and also clearly. The solar system has the Sun, the Moon, the Mars, Mercury, Venus and Saturn. The days of the week and the calendar are designed on this basis. The Sun (Sunday) gives warmth and life. The Moon (Monday) is wet and moisture supports life. Mars (Tuesday) denotes strength. Jupiter (Wednesday) denotes the power of understanding. Mercury (Thursday) denotes intelligence and discrimination. Venus (Friday) denotes the seed. Saturn (Saturday) denotes destructive power. What is represented outside in the solar system is also represented within the human body. The basic planets are the sun and the moon. The other five have a secondary role. Life is created by warmth and moisture. Four elements support life and the fifth (Saturn) destroys. Just as a house-holder keeps various bins filled with various things similarly every planet is a store-house of a particular commodity or quality. Just as a housewife takes a specific quantity from every bin and cooks a meal, the cosmic system runs a similar show by drawing upon something from each planet and makes a compound out of them.

PLANETS ARE STORAGE BINS

DD : I doubt if we can compare these planets with storage bins. The scriptures say that there are live beings on other planets. Storage bins are dead and lifeless. If they are lifeless then how can a lifeless thing influence a live person? If they are systems or mansions then they will be outside the body and not within the body.

K : I shall meet all your objections with a single explanation. Firstly, these planets are nothing but storage bins. The cosmic stations are no more than places where you keep things. Secondly, your statement that they are lifeless requires a little thought. If you cast a glance over your own body you will discover that it has within itself millions of microbes. Does it mean that you are lifeless? Do you not influence all living bodies within you? Similarly, these cosmic stations exercise their influence on you. You influence not only the microbes living within you but also exercise your influence on other creatures outside your body. You are similarly subject to other's influences both internally and externally. The same is the case with the macrocosm. When you say something to someone he retains its influence which, in other words, means that you have secured a place for yourself within him. Thus you enter other bodies. There is not much difference between influencing and entering another body. Does this explanation satisfy all the five objections that you raised?

DD : Yes but there are further doubts. Are these cosmic bodies alive or dead?

K : Every cosmic station will have three characteristics, (a) colour and shape (b) the creatures living it (c) the force sustaining it, without which it will come to grief. In the Hindu scriptures these three are referred to as (Vasu, Aditya and Rudra). Vasu means a place to settle. There are 8 such places and these have been named (1. Vahu, 2. Dru, 3. Som, 4. Vishnu, 5. Tal, 6. Prabhal, 7. Prabhaw, 8. Manal.) As regards the creatures living in them

(Aditya), these are 12 in number. These accord with 12 months in a year. As for Rudra or the sustaining force these are 11. These have been named as follows:

(Ajai, Kapad, Ahrawardhan, Virupaksha, Sureshwar, Janeet, Bahu-Roop, Trimbak, Aparajit, Savitr, Har-Shiv). Actually these names are of 10 organs of perception and action (gyan and karma indriyas) and the 11th is the 'mind'. Since a body cannot function without these instruments these have been called 'Rudra' or that which makes you cry in its absence. All these elements put together add up to 33 if you include 'intellect' and 'the ego' in them. In view of this explanation you may deduce whether these are live entities or dead matter.

DD : So far so good. I now understand that these cosmic beings have colour, shape and their sustaining forces. None of these can be separated. But my original question remains. Are the 7 planets that you mentioned actually within the human body or is it merely an assumption?

K : Thus far you have seen that the various planets have their special functions and powers. The sun, moon and stars cast their reflections in water. Even so these influences are within us as reflections and find expression in the shape of waves of the mind which spill out when the occasion demands. They find expression in two ways, either deliberately or unconsciously. From the point of view of knowledge there may be differences between a scholar and an ignorant man but both act in the same way in practice. When an intelligent person is confronted by a problem he thinks over it intensely with his eyes closed. His mind leaves its place and concentrates on the forehead. Then it establishes contact with the seat of Mercury within the body. As soon as it touches it the problem is solved and he comes to know all the intricacies of the problem. This is done consciously but in the case of a student for instance, when he is trying to solve a problem, he first gets befuddled and then he gathers his wits and closes his eyes. He is now unaware of

his surroundings. The current rises from his mind and moves up to the seat of Mercury in the body. When the contact is made the light dawns on him and he finds his answer. The principle is the same but the difference lies in doing it consciously or unconsciously. Whether one is learned or ignorant the current from the mind rises towards the brain and makes contact with the Jupiter center therein. Does it not mean that the reflective potential of Mercury is already stored within the brain? Let us take the example of the planet of strength— Mars. You ask a small boy to lift a big weight. He tries a little and feels disheartened. You encourage him and he closes his eyes and makes a grip. The mind-current moves up to the Mars center which pumps a burst of energy into the arms of the boy. And lo! the weight is lifted. Similar is the case with other planetary centers within the body. The life-current flows from the brain-centers to all parts of the body below through arteries, the consciousness is withdrawn and sent up. The part below the brain swoons and consciousness remains high up. In death the withdrawal starts from the toes and ends up at the crown of the head. All this shows that the forces of birth, sustenance, strength and withdrawal are all controlled from within at the brain-center. One who learns how to tap that source gains success whether he be an artist, poet, painter, builder, yogi, diplomat or a businessman. No matter who they are, they have recourse to the same brain-centers in times of need or trouble. It is also a source of comfort, peace and bliss. Unless the life-current withdraws to the brain you cannot even enjoy sleep.

If a wounded man's attention is not diverted to the brain then he will never feel relief from pain. All relief is provided by withdrawing consciousness to the brain. One who wants to traverse the higher path has to divert his consciousness towards the brain. One who merely reads books or indulges in arguments on the religious path gets nowhere unless he knows how to divert attention to the

brain. Outer rituals do not deliver the goods. One has to traverse the inner path. External places of pilgrimage and bodily rituals cannot help. How can bodily movements and blind beliefs give you spiritual solace ? A householder can be a perfect spiritualist if his mind is dyed in spiritual colour.

DD : I have understood that the cosmic centers or stations exist both outside and within as storehouses of certain characteristics. I have also understood that this current of consciousness has to reach back home the same way and during this journey all these intermediate stations become relevant. You have said that the way back lies through the Channel of the Absolute (Sushumna). But I have not understood this Channel of the Absolute nor its various stages of upward movement in the Inner Path.

THE GANGLIONIC CENTERS

K : I have given you a preliminary idea as those who are not really serious about pursuing the matter practically listen to all this only as a story. Now I shall clarify all your doubts. The ganglionic centers are not all in a straight line. They lie scattered right and left. The central pathway runs up the center of the spinal axis. There are channels right and left of it. (Ida, Pingla). There are knots or junction points where all three meet and these knots are located at the base of the spine, the heart region and the crown of the head. The inner path is the straight central path with the channels on the right and left being diversions. The central channel looks narrow and difficult in the beginning but later widens up. On the other hand the right and left channels appear wide and bright in the beginning but later on become narrow and dark.

Previously the Yogi used to progress up the central channel and reach the crown of the head, passing through the navel center and while at the navel center he used to concentrate at the tip of the nose. Mostly he ended up here because of lack of guidance on the

subsequent steps. From the nose the way is straight up exactly the way a lady parts her hair. She puts the comb in line with the top of the nose and parts the hair up to the crown of the head. That is the highest spiritual center. A Hindu marks the spot with pig-tail. This is the inner path.

You have understood the central path or the Channel of the Absolute but I have yet to describe to you the intermediate stages on this path. The first center on the path is the third eye center (Nuqta Suweida). This is the spirit center of the body and the starting point of spiritual progress. This point is above the other centers of the lower bodily currents described earlier. To mention them again, there is the center at the throat where the space (ether) element is predominant (Durga). The heart is the next with the air element being predominant (Rudra). Next is the navel where the fire element (Vishnu) predominates. This element of fire is present from the stage of the womb. Next comes the center of reproductive organs where the water element is predominant as it is the water which sustains life (Brahma). The fifth center is the anal region where the earth element is predominant (Ganesh). This is where the process of the upward movement commences.

DD : The Hindu scriptures vary from the description which you have given in two respects. Firstly, there is no specific center assigned to the water element (Brahma). Secondly, you have not allotted any center to the most important heavenly body, the sun.

K : The reason for your two objections is to be traced to the Puranic accounts of Brahma. The stories associated with Brahma in the Puranas are not very palatable and so Brahma was deprived of a status and the pride of place was given to the sun instead. The sun was therefore, assigned the position at the third eye-center. Each center is noted for its predominant element and the credulous allot to each the status of a Deity with a name and start worshipping it which is harmful. The Reality is only One

and one should not be diverted to the diversity of manifestation. One who gets stuck at the level of any Deity will never reach the state of liberation.

When a man dies the soul starts withdrawing from the lower anal region to the navel signifying the death of the Deity of that region (Ganesh). When the life-current withdraws from the navel Vishnu vanishes. By the time the current reaches the third-eye center all the Deities would have disappeared yet leaving the man still alive. With the ascent to a higher level the lower centers (along with their presumed Deities) die and cannot assist at higher centers. Hence there is no merit in setting yourself lower goals and limited deities. At least keep the goal high of just One Reality, the Highest.

DD : Unfortunately a man is ignorant about his own greatness, easily believes in phantoms and does not easily acknowledge the Truth.

I have a doubt about the channel which the stream of consciousness takes upward. Some of the centers lie to the left of the Channel of the Absolute and some to its right. Is it permissible for the practitioner to deviate right and left accordingly or should he stick to the central and straight path up? What are the centers which lie on this straight channel?

K : The practitioner is not allowed to deviate right or left. He should concentrate on the central channel. It is dangerous to deviate right or left lest the seeker be misguided and derailed from his quest. Paths other than the central have many pitfalls. They have many attractions and are enough to make the seeker swerve from the path and forget the quest.

I have already told you the various centers of the elements within the human body, the highest being the crown of the head. The mind of the body lurks around the heart's region. The same situation obtains at the level of the cosmic body. The cosmic mind lurks around a center known as the highest heaven of a yogi (Trikuti)

known as Onkar. It is situated midway between the physical world and purely spiritual realms. Most Prophets descend from this region. The path of the Master is higher than that which is the True One (Sat Lok), the realm of the pure spirit. The Yogi's highest heaven is (Trikuti) which is called Sumer Parbat. In Hindu terminology the top of this mount is called Brahma Rendra (Also Sunn and Maha Sunn). Kailash and Mansarovar are located there. The soul emerges purified totally after a dip in them. At its summit is the seat of the cosmic soul (Bhanwar Gupha). Here ends the similarity between the human body and the cosmic body.

The seat of the soul of the human body is the third eye center where the realm of the body ends and that of the cosmic creation begins. Here starts the upward ascent of the spirit or soul.

Thus you will notice that there are 6 centers of the body-mind, 6 of the cosmic mind and 6 of the pure spirit, a total of 18.

DD : What is the proof?

THE SEAT OF THE SOUL

K: As far as the body is concerned you have a different experience of the 6 centers. The 6 cosmic centers are reflected in the human body which you will accept by inferential observation and deduction. You have already seen that what is in the outer cosmos is reflected within.

The last 6 may be accepted by you on the basis of the Master's testimony. Thus you have all three modes of proof, direct experience, inferential proof and the Master's testimony (Shabd).

Just as the human body is a replica of the cosmic body similarly the cosmic body is also a replica of a higher Truth. Both the human and the cosmic bodies must perish. Let me be more explicit. You are a combination of body, mind and soul. Your body is nothing but the materialization of the mind. The material reflection of

the mind's thoughts is the body. The body depends on the mind for its existence. As soon as the mind packs up the body dies. In the same way the mind depends on the soul for its existence. When the mind leaves its body center and takes its place in the soul then the mind also dies. The soul remains as both the mind and body derive their existence from the soul which is the base.

There is another way of understanding this process. When you are awake your senses and body organs function. Your body is said to be carrying out its functions at the bodily level in the physical world but when you sleep these senses and organs become still. At that time the mind stays at its center and indulges in its weaving of dreams. This may be said to be the functioning of the mind at the mental level in the mind world. The physical body is a world of multiplicity. The mind is a world of duality. As long as it remains centered on the body it indulges in its never-ending pranks of monkeying around but when it attaches to the soul it seems to die to the world. Here there is no duality. Only unity remains.

DD : Which of these three is important?

K : The soul is important. The body has some importance at the bodily level but it is subservient to the mind and soul. Similarly, the mind has some importance at the mental level but it is under the control of the soul. Hence all importance is to the soul. The body and mind have their play within the soul. The soul is without movement and yet there cannot be any movement in the body or the mind without the soul being behind them.

DD : In the waking state the body has the awareness of its functions. In the dream state the mind has awareness of its functions. But in deep dreamless sleep there is no awareness of the functioning of the soul.

K : If in the deep dreamless state you had no awareness then how did you know about it? You acknowledge the state of peace and bliss in the deep dreamless state. How did you get this knowledge? It is this bliss consciousness which is the activity at the soul level.

DD : There is a feeling of bliss no doubt in the deep dreamless state but it is vague, it cannot be described or even remembered. This is a very defective plane.

K : If you cannot describe the state of bliss then how can you assert that it is a state of bliss? It is obvious that you remember it as well as describe it. You are contradicting yourself.

DD : I agree that there is memory and also that I can describe bliss. Here a doubt arises. Who has this memory and knowledge when there is neither the body nor the mind? You have already eliminated them. If on the other hand, you say that the sense organs and the mind still imbibe knowledge then they are not yet dead. If it is the soul which absorbs this knowledge then the soul is deficient because it becomes subject to the trinity of the knowledge, knower and the known. What then happens to monism?

K : You have raised valid objections. You cannot make progress on the spiritual path unless your mind is quite clear. When I used the word 'death' for the body and mind I did not mean it in the sense of extinction or oblivion but indicating a state of suspension of activity. It shows a change of stage. When you sleep the external organs and senses become insensitive, but they retain their essential characteristics. Similarly, when you are in deep dreamless sleep the mind retains its subtle sense of perception. It is the mind which absorbs the experience of bliss and the experience of bliss itself is the soul, nothing else.

DD : If experience is itself the 'soul' and if it is the mind which experiences then the soul becomes lower than mind.

K : You are now getting obsessed with words. After all the only reality is experience. The mind itself is a part of this experience. It is all one but its view can be total or partial. This needs to be understood.

DD : What I have understood so far is that both the individual body and the cosmic body are similar except for size. If so

both the individual soul (Atma) and the universal soul (Brahma) should also be the same. You have indicated the various centers in the human body (Pind) and incidentally in the universal body (Brahmanand). Atma and Brahma are in the same category. One should aspire only for the highest and not for supposedly intermediate deities. You have told us about the 6 spiritual centers in the body but I am not quite clear about the 6 spiritual centers in the cosmic body (Brahmand).

K : The 6 spiritual centers in the cosmic body are as follows: (Their Hindu names are Sahasra Dal Kamal (1000 petalled Lotus) slightly higher than the third-eye center, Trikuti (halfway between the physical and spiritual), tenth Door Akshar Neh Akshar, Sunn and Maha Sunn.

The six spiritual regions or stations are: Bhanwar Gupha, Sat Lok (Abode of Truth), Anami (Nameless) and the three realms of pure spirit, Alakh, Agam and Anami. The last named is also called Radha Swami to distinguish it from the third station mentioned above.

DD : I have understood these analogies. Just as there is an individual body-mind and a cosmic body mind can there be a cosmic spiritual mind for purposes of understanding?

K : You have coined a new term: 'spiritual mind' but I do not want to indulge in verbalism' if your idea is to clarify issues. After all it is the soul or spirit at the nameless station (Anami) which is the goal.

STAGES AND STATIONS

DD : You have explained the various stations but since these depend on practice and direct experience there is not much scope for further questions. When you described both dense and subtle stages and stations through which the spirit current descends I innately felt that I should experience those states personally before asking questions. By your grace I have experienced some of its early stages. Please bless me with a more comprehensive understanding of the path of the Masters.

K : Not only will you be an adept yourself but I bless that a large number of others may reach their goal through you. Though you are right in emphasising the practical angle yet you and others who are listening to this dialogue will benefit from it. You may ask me any number of questions.

DD : What is the description of the various stations which you mentioned? What do they look like?

K : At the physical level these are spherical balls. In their gross forms they are darkish yellow. At the mental or astral level they are bright reddish and at the spiritual or causal level they are absolutely white. With progress in the spiritual state these become flashing white. This state is known in Sufism as (Tajalli) or brilliance and in the Hindu vocabulary it is called (Kranti). As you progress on the path you will see them change accordingly. It requires a little practice to see them first. Initially nothing may be seen but gradually they acquire colors and brilliance. Their brilliance is too much for the eyes to bear at once and hence a gradual change comes about.

DD : But my experience does not support this description. Although I have not practised the special discipline under your guidance I have been comparing my normal experience with your description. In our everyday life we are familiar with three states; the gross physical deep sleep state (Tamasik), the active (Rajasik) state and the subtle dream state (Astral or Satwik). The heavy sleep state is a darkish world whereas in a state of wakeful activity I see mostly a yellowish bright world. In the sleep or dream state the world appears a whitish shadow. This is so as far as the physical body is concerned. As far as the cosmic body is concerned we can draw similar parallel analogies. As for the spiritual stations we can base them on your testimony to complete the picture.

K : (Casting an appreciative or loving glance at DD)

You have described it very well. It is actually as you have described. Your description is more general and mine particular. There is no basic difference between the two.

DD : Do the wakeful, dreamy and deep sleep states have their counter-parts at the spiritual level?

K : Generally yes. The only difference is that an ordinary man is conscious during the wakeful state but during the dream and deep sleep states he is unconscious of what is going on. On his waking up he retains their memory. These very states become deeper at the spiritual level. With spiritual practice the state of unconsciousness becomes one of intoxication and absorption. The general impressions become particularised and intensified.

DD : I am again disturbed. If the nature of experience remains the same except for intensity and particularisation at the physical, mental and spiritual levels then what is the need for any kind of practises? If the changing states are of the same nature where then is liberation? Secondly, if spiritual practices only convert a state of unconsciousness into one of absorption and intoxication then such intensity can be brought about even by physical-mental level exercises. What is the relevance then of spiritual discipline?

K : You have ignored the central point of my teaching. You are still involved in the trinity of body, mind and spirit. None of these is a goal. You have ignored the fourth state. As long as you are within the three states there is constant ebb and tide. Liberation is only in the fourth state which is above body, mind and spirit. Perhaps you may wonder whether the fourth state also applies to each of body, mind and spirit and if so does it not become once again subject to ups and downs? What you need to understand is that the body, mind and spirit are not independent entities by themselves. They are merely reflections of the fourth state. The fourth state is what I have called the Nameless State (Anami). Once you reach that state you will at once see the reality of Self and the trinity is demolished forthwith. When the reality is known there is no need for its shadow to remain. The disappearance of the shadow is liberation. The musk-deer smells the

fragrance within himself but searches for it all over the jungle. Similarly, the soul which is itself bliss searches for it in the world. You told me that the state of intoxication increases at lower levels also with practice. Please explain it more clearly.

DD : Lower down there is grossness whereas there is subtlety on top. As the thin stream flows downward it becomes a torrent. The stones and the earth are gross matter in a state of deep sleep. Even so they attract and repulse, add moss or thin down showing that they are not totally dead and unconscious. An elementary form of consciousness is present in it. The plant kingdom is active during the daytime and asleep at night. Its state of consciousness during daytime is the same as that of a man in his sleep-state. During sleep a man is aware of a mosquito bite. The plants are like babies who suck milk unconsciously while they sleep. Similarly, the plants keep absorbing nourishment from the surrounding nature. The 'Touch Me Not' plant shrinks with the human touch but springs back to action when the humans depart. Some plants attract insects and some behave as if they are dreaming at night like babies who smile in their sleep. Similarly, a man in the fourth state is aware of three other states, namely, waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep.

K : What you have explained is largely correct but not without errors. Your assumption that the fourth state is the awareness of the other three states is not correct. Such a reasoning will lead you to 5th, 6th, 7th states etc., endlessly. The three states are not independent. They are the reflection of the fourth which alone is the Truth.

You have proved yourself worthy of my discipleship. Nature has to extract a lot of work from you. Ask as many questions as you want so that no point remains ambiguous.

DD : I do not want to talk more. You have sown the seed in me which shall sprout in the course of time. I want to enjoy its fruit in silence.

K : Describe your thoughts so that I may listen.

DD : Having won your grace today I am the luckiest person to live in this world.

What I have gathered so far is that a spiritual seeker should leave the bodily stations first and establish a link with the cosmic stations. Thereafter, he should abandon these as well and go purely for the spiritual stations. Liberation comes with the arrival at the fourth station.

First he should dissolve the body in the mind. Then he should dissolve the mind in the spirit. He should then abandon all three and jump to the final fourth state. The mind is the central link. On one side there is the body and on the other the spirit. The mind at its central position watches both ends and should abandon both.

BRAHMA

K : In your opinion what is Brahma? Is Brahma your apex or is there anything else?

DD : Just as the individual mind is at the level of the individual body similarly Brahma is the cosmic mind at the cosmic level. The very word Brahma means expansion. It is expanded mind but none-the-less it is mind. What expands also has to contract. These are relative terms and states. That is why it is known as Aum or Onkar or a triple state incorporating Sat, Rajas and Tamas (Truth, Activity and Lethargy). These are adjectives or qualities and qualities cannot be permanent. Brahma is, therefore, a limited concept. It cannot be my goal. My goal is the ultimate Abode of Truth. Brahma is only a drop in the ocean of Truth. I can use the concept of Brahma for further progress but it cannot be my ultimate goal. Just as figure 'one' can become several digits of one, i.e., millions and billions, similarly the multiplied concept of Brahma becomes this cosmos, the drop becomes the ocean. Those who get stuck in the scriptural drop fail to see the Ocean of Truth.

K: Now you do not need to question me further. With the practise of the secret code which I have revealed to you, you will attain my stature in due course. I am happy that I have found in you a worthy aspirant. But guard the secret which I disclosed to you at the time of initiation.

(Thereafter Dharm Das kept the company of Kabir till the end serving his Master with utmost dedication and devotion and carried on the mission of Kabir after his physical passing. Aman Devi was the wife of Dharam Das who was equally interested in following the higher path. She had attended the dialogue between her husband and Kabir and was anxious to be put on the path. In due course she became the second woman devotee of great merit, the first one being Mai Lui. Kabir had a unique way of instructing every one in a manner suited to him or her in a tailor-made fashion though the main theme remained unchanged. The difference lay in the words chosen, the style of expression and the analogies. It was unusual in those days for ladies to join a public debate. A very brief summary of the dialogue between Aman Devi and Kabir is recorded here.)

Chapter 9

A Dialogue with Aman Devi: The Secret of Creation

K : (Addressing Aman Devi: If you have any questions to ask go ahead. Ladies have a more subtle mind than men. You seem to have a poetic bent of mind too.)

AD : When a well is built in the wilderness all kinds of creatures flock to it for solace and sustenance. Your coming into this world is itself an invitation to thirsty souls to quench their parched throats. I am like an unchiselled block of stone. Please cut me into shape with your chisel. You seem to be silently suggesting to me questions yourself. The answers are also in you. What is the secret behind it?

K : This is the secret of creation. If it were not so then there would have been no manifestation in a world of possibilities.

AD : From your answer I infer that the same Reality expressed itself both as light and shadow. Without such a distinction there can be no discrimination. Without discrimination there can be no perception. Only this duality can help one in identifying light from shade and call them light and shade. But what was the position before the manifestation of light and shade?

K : When the two lips are together they are neither open nor closed. There is no need for the terms opening and

closing. In the middle interval between opening and closing the sound is produced. The generated sound created the terms opening and closing as well as the upper and lower lips and many different kinds of sound. This world is a world of similarities and examples. Only through an example can you understand a phenomenon not through abstractions. Take the grain of a pea. It is one grain but when it splits you see two in one. As a raw grain of pea it is single but when it ripens it shows up as two. The two have the urge to unite and this urge manifests in the shape of a fresh tiny pea. So the drama of joining and separating goes on. This is the result of a partial view. When you rise above the level of relativities there is neither joining nor separating.

AD : What is the background or antecedent of remaining joined and wanting to rejoin after separation?

K : In that original pristine state it is not background or antecedent but a question of quality or characteristic. A background needs action and habit but an innate quality of a thing requires no such conditions. It is as it is. It is neither created nor destroyed. It remains as it is, unchanged. It is beyond shape and size. The urge to unite, rejoin or love is a natural innate urge. Its absence creates pining. This is the basis of the Yoga of Devotion (Bhakti).

AD : If it is natural and compulsive then it should work automatically in every person. Where is the need for yoga or a teacher?

K : The basic urge which creates the need to unite is the same which makes a Saint take birth to explain this principle. The natural law behind both is the same.

AD : Why? What is the need?

K : It is both easy and difficult to understand. These are its twin aspects. The lips are divided into upper and lower lips. Going up is difficult; going down is easy. If human imagination considers it easy, it is easy. If it considers it difficult then it is difficult. The sense of upper and lower

creates a sense of difficult and easy. One may have recourse to a power and overcome this dualism. I represent that power. Humanity needed such a power and hence my appearance in this world.

AD : When the initial, the middle and the final are natural processes then nature should take care of them automatically. Why then the birth of a Master for this purpose?

THE TEACHER AND THE TAUGHT

K : The principle which takes care of it is the same which makes a Master take birth. When the baby cries the mother feeds him and the crying stops. There is movement from both sides. The same is the relationship between the teacher and the taught. There should be thirst for knowledge and knowledge will be imparted.

AD : But the children avoid schools and learning. How can it be assumed that there is a natural thirst in them for knowledge?

K : You are missing the forest for the trees. You are getting involved in partial details instead of having a total outlook. The children have a natural tendency to learn. They copy the elders in everything. If they run from schools the fault lies in the schools, not in the natural tendencies of learning. Where a rapport is established between the teacher and the pupil there is attraction and receptivity. Both the thirst for learning and the capacity to teach must combine to make the transaction a success.

AD : I agree but there are good and bad teachers in the world and the system as a whole is working. Even dull teachers have brilliant pupils.

K : When a keen student has a dull teacher, he goes out of the way to establish a rapport and get what he wants. These are exceptions. Ordinarily, when one party is lacking in some respect there is bound to be disharmony. Learning is best when God, the Guru, the code of discipline and the student's dedication are all present in the situation.

AD : What should be done if even one of these elements is missing?

K : The most important element in this equation is the student's thirst. His thirst attracts God's grace and the Guru's favor. Once the code of discipline is also joined in, the rest is a matter of time. A time comes when the student will have a sudden illumination. The earnestness of the student keeps making deep inroads silently and he innately feels that he is making progress.

AD : Your words make an indelible impression on my mind. Such teachers rarely make their appearance in the world. The world is full of teachers; good, bad and indifferent. You are a Master par excellence and only the most deserving should come to you.

K : What is your concept of the most deserving?

AD : The deserving disciple should be brainy but on second thoughts it is not necessary. Everyone who has erred and sinned and deeply desires to turn over a new leaf should have access to you. Only such a person can benefit from you spiritually whereas a scholarly person may derive some scholarly benefit.

K : You are very wise but you have made a mistake. It is not correct to say that the scholarly people will benefit from me only in a scholarly or academic way. That is why I have two aspects of discipline in my teachings; knowledge and practise. Whatever may be the differences between the two kinds of men in the beginning they will emerge the same at the end. A deep anguish must gush forth from the heart for redemption before the Guru appears. This is the basis of prayer. The Guru is there all the time but does not appear unless the thirst for him generates in the heart. Total faith in the Master's words merges the disciple and the Master into one. This is the climax of devotion. It abolishes duality. It is different from mere verbal and intellectual indulgence in the scriptural texts. It is no different from interest in music, art etc. It does not bring about a direct perception, realisation or

liberation. To end up in it is to waste life and to find that it is now too late. At the same time not everyone can become a scriptural scholar. The path of devotion is easier, superior and goal-oriented. Everyone can follow it.

Devotion or love is not restricted to human kind alone. It is a universal principle. It is only in the humans that it can find full expression. This principle has twin inclinations, attraction and repulsion, positive and negative and when practised in its highest state one becomes a devotee of God. This devotion is also of two kinds; lower and higher. The lower kind is seen in the relationship between the sheep and the shepherd. However lowly a shepherd may be, as far as his flock is concerned he is a king. Even a king cannot lure the flock away from the shepherd by bribery. The devotee does not look into any defect which his selected deity may have. He is totally committed. Such intensity of devotion gains perfection in its own time.

Initially the devotee considers his Deity to have a hand in the ills and cruelties of the world. When his devotion becomes mature he no longer blames his Deity for the ills of the world. Just as a person gets attached to his domestic pets such as dog, cat, birds etc., similarly a devotee gets attached to all creation as his own. There is another kind of devotee who will associate with only those who follow his chosen prophet or deity and look down upon others. Prejudice and bigotry cloud his vision. After further progress on the path he begins to shed his prejudices and finally he finds his goal. The last kind of devotee is the one who is well-informed, has no prejudices and comes to the Master for the golden touch. The Master's kindly glance is enough for him. Apart from these categories of devotees there are large numbers of others who only follow a blind routine of set patterns of behavior out of conformism. They have no particular merit.

THE PATH OF DEVOTION

AD : Kindly tell me something about the path of devotion.

K : The very first condition for the Path of Devotion is to have a Master. One who practises devotion without a Master can never reach the goal completely and finally and he will be beset with dangers and difficulties. Though devotion is a natural instinct yet in the spiritual sense one should know (a) why one should be devoted, (b) whom should he be devoted to, (c) how to practise devotion, (d) what are the pitfalls on the path and (e) how to maintain the intensity of devotion. Without a clear view of all these points mere haphazard bouts of devotion can do more harm than good. Firstly, it can become a routine habit with mechanical reactions and thus lose its importance. Secondly, after all a heart is a heart with its moods—swinging up and down. During moments of depression it is assailed by doubts and skepticism. It is like getting stuck in a marsh. If during these moments of depression one succumbs to lower passions then he is damned for ever. He will remain stuck in the mud. Instead of going up he will go down and bid goodbye to the path. Secondly, if he makes some progress he will find it tiring as it warms up in the region of the brain. Both these are undesirable tendencies. A Master is protection against both these negative factors.

AD : You have given comprehensive guidance. Every point needs some clarification. Why should one practise devotion?

K : It is inevitable because it is the natural instinct in a man and he seeks to progress in it. This impatient urge or yearning is universal. It is because of this reason that all men remain dissatisfied with a strange urge or yearning keeping him so. If you force your mind to be satisfied with what is, then this will only cause worry. In fact such a suppressed state makes you see only the dark side of everything with no silver lining in it. Therefore, the mind should be kept engaged in a task which provides variety

and dazzling spectacles of colour and change. This pleasant changing experience should be widened and deepened. This is the basis of practising and deepening devotion.

AD : To whom should one be devoted?

K : The one who can (a) make you focus your attention on one point; (b) attract you to him; (c) has the quality of everlastingness; (d) has the power to impart inner joy; (e) who continuously exercises supervision and never lets the disciple become careless and slothful. He keeps goading the disciple until he reaches the goal. It is a question of identifying and establishing the correct relationship. One is devoted to money and works day and night to grab more and more of it. It requires effort to gain money. If you don't make the effort and remain idle then an idle brain becomes the workshop of the devil. If you have a lot of money then it leads to sin. Sin leads to disturbance in the mind and body. Money needs to be guarded. Taking all these factors into consideration is money worth being made a Deity for dedicated worship? It does not mean that you should not earn money. It only means that you should know the correct relationship and not worship money. If you worship money you will lose sincere friends and gather around you a few flatterers. People of doubtful motives will always gun towards relieving you of it. It will not be safe during times of social convulsions and upheavals. The greed to add up more and more will not allow you to enjoy it. You can neither give it up nor enjoy it. Money should serve you. You should not serve money. This is but one example.

Take another example; worship of one's family and children. All are subject to illness and death and other uncertainties. Separation from them is painful. One may deprive others to benefit his own family. Temperaments within the family also vary and you may not like it. It does not mean that you don't love or serve your family but that you should not worship them.

Another one worships prestige and esteem in society and goes out of his way to please even the unworthy ones to earn their praise. He gets moody and sad beyond measure if someone utters a word against him. It does not mean that one should not maintain self-respect. One who is upright and honest is automatically respected. It only means that you should not worship respect for yourself.

There may be one who worships knowledge and intellect. He prides himself on his knowledge. He decries others of lesser intellect. He uses his cleverness to cheat and confuse others. He can derail others from the straight path by clever arguments. A clever lawyer can make truth appear false and false true. He can get the innocent punished and let the guilty go scot free. Truth and justice are sacrificed at the altar of cleverness in argumentation with a loud mouth. Moreover this kind of knowledge itself is shadowy. It is extremely minute. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Who can claim to be anywhere near perfection? When by its very nature it is shadowy and uncertain what results can emerge out of it if it is worshipped?

All this is 'Maya' or illusion. Shadow is illusion and illusion is shadowy. You cannot catch a shadow. As you run after it, it also runs. Knowledge and intellect are shadows. Illusion is an imaginary shadow. Wealth, family, honour and glory are all shadowy illusions. Worshipping shadows is dangerous. The worship of Truth alone is safe and worthy. The Truth is the Self. The one who enquires about Truth is Truth itself. The one who answers is also the same Truth. Truth should be worshipped from the point of view of Truth.

AD : How can the one who enquires be the same as the one who answers? Is it not ambiguous?

K : If he thinks it is ambiguous then it is ambiguous, if not it is not. If there is no Truth in the enquirer how can he ask about it? If there is no Truth in the one who answers then

how can he answer? Both have Truth in them. Both are the Truth.

It is like a lady who wants to apply beauty aids. She takes a mirror in her hand and looks at herself in it. She questions herself if her hair-style is alright. She finds the answer in the mirror from her own reflection. Both faces are the same. The face in the mirror is the same which is in the body. Again it is neither in the body nor in the mirror. It is a paradox.

AD : In this case it would be the worship of the mirror not of Truth.

K : What in your opinion is the worship of Truth?

AD : It is in discarding the mirror.

K : If you do not make use of the mirror then how can you judge your face? The eye can look at other things but not at itself. Hence the need for the mirror.

AD : Please pardon my insolence. I am the questioner and you are the answerer. Then I am the face and you are the mirror.

K : If you have taken a good look at your face in the mirror then turn away from it. If you have failed to see yourself in the mirror then keep looking at it until you see it. Once a lady finishes with her make-up, she finishes with the mirror and gets busy with showing her form and figure to others.

AD : I cannot accept it in these words. Otherwise my worship discipline will suffer.

K : This is so in ordinary parlance but not in Truth. The thought of looking at your face itself creates its image and the possibility of there being a mirror. You put a question and I reply. You beautify your face and I show you its reflection as a mirror. I shall look at my own reflection in you. There is one draw-back in this assumption. You are asking the question and not I. Therefore it is better if you give up your mental inhibitions and follow the argument as it is. Once you understand the concept then you can

abandon the concept of the mirror for ever. If a Master is looked upon as a mirror what harm is there? As long as there is need to look at the face the mirror is relevant. Thereafter this link is redundant.

The beloved appears where there is a lover. If there is no lover in the first place who can be called a beloved? The feelings and emotions of the lover are reflected in the face of the beloved. A beautiful woman falls in love with an ugly man and people wonder how it came about. A woman's love is in the heart and the eyes. This is reflected in the man in whom she sees her own beauty and love. Similarly, God's existence is in the devotee. Unless a son exists who will call the father a father? Unless there is a disciple where is the Master? It is the disciple who confers the title of 'Master' on his Guru. Now that you understand this secret all that remains for you to do is to establish your relation with your mirror. Clean your mirror until you get a clear reflection of yourself. Then turn your limited external reactions inwards and expand them until they become unlimited. There will remain neither the body nor the mirror. Only the Truth remains. When that happens there will be no need for any verbalisation. That is the climax. All other states are intermediate states. Some see their reflection in water; some in oil and some in a mirror. The media differ from person to person but the reflection is the same. The paths are different but the goal is the same. Initially you want to see your own face in the mirror. Later you will see every face in the Guru's face. When your vision turns inwards the Guru will appear in the inner vision. Ultimately even that vision disappears. The Truth remains. It is not a topic for debate.

AD : Let me summarise what I have learnt so far. Why should we show devotion? The answer is, it is a natural disposition. To whom should we be devoted? To whoever or whatever helps in expressing this natural disposition. He is the Guru or Master. The Guru exhibits the Truth or

Reality in himself and thus turns the attention of the disciple towards himself. In plain words we should shower our love and devotion on the Master. So far so good. Now, everything in nature around us is a kind of reflecting mirror. Everything in its own way is a reflection of ourselves. Why then should be the Guru so important compared to everything else? Everything in nature can teach us.

K : There are people in this world who learn many things from nature. They also learn many things from their daily dealings with others and consider all these things and persons as their Guru. But their number can be counted on fingers. Their example is not adequate to cure the ills of the world. There is so much of bigotry, prejudice and hatred in this world and the vast majority of people do not take a lesson from these few examples and reform themselves. The need for a Guru and devotion to him are also a natural urge among the humanity.

You need a teacher in every field in worldly affairs. How can the spiritual world be without Masters? One man teaches another. Father, mother, sister, brother are all teachers in one respect or another but in imparting spiritual instruction they cannot have the persistence and objectivity required nor can they have the time or capacity to answer hundreds of questions and doubts that arise in one's mind. Since nature produces that which is needed, similarly a Master is born in response to the need of the society. Where there are genuine Masters some fake ones also get into action. They introduce the gullible to different idols or interpret scriptures or get them involved in rituals since they are not competent to give them inner guidance. A mimic can only perform mimicry and provide some entertainment for a short time. A genuine Master is like a tiger. He leaves the left-over for foxes and jackals. Fake religious teachers are no more than foxes and jackals.

The real temple is one's heart. All worship should be offered in this natural temple. The human body has within it all the deities, gods and goddesses. The head is the dome of the human temple. Temples made of brick and mortar are coarse replicas of the human temple. It is within the human head that various sounds reverberate like that of the bell, conch, drum, flute etc. It is there that you can see the flame. It is like a vessel from which nectar drops all the time. A Master is one who can open the gates of this inner temple to his disciple to experience it for himself.

HOW TO WORSHIP

AD : Two problems have been solved. The third one remains. How to worship?

K : There are nine ways of offering worship. It is similar to a wife who decks herself up before her husband. A disciple should adorn himself to attract his Master so that a wave of sympathy and love binds the two. The nine steps through which a wife proceeds to attract her husband are as follows:

1. The thought.
2. Conversation.
3. Expression of devotion through flowers.
4. Music.
5. Lighting a lamp.
6. Turning her attention mentally to the husband.
7. Addressing the husband repeatedly.
8. Getting lost in his contemplation.
9. Ecstasy.

Once the wife creates this mood in herself she is ready to transmit the same to the husband and win him over. Thought precedes all other steps. It is the basis for the subsequent build-up. She should then mentally converse with him or with her friends. It promotes devotion to him. A musical note and a loving glance light up the flame of love leading to absorption.

AD : This is at the human level. I want to know about divine worship.

K : The principle is the same. First you should think of worshipping God deeply. Then you should talk about it

constantly. At the same time you should cleanse your heart of all blemishes knowing well that God will only enter a pure heart. You should then approach God with total dedication, respect and commitment. Do you not become totally attentive when you go to an important worldly man? Then how can you allow your mind to wander when you are in the presence of God? Does it not amount to showing disrespect to God? It shows that the heart is not yet clean. This is not a formula for the brick temple but for the temple of the heart. In this temple all these steps are completed in thought silently, almost simultaneously. Unless you open your eyes how can you see the sun? When you open the inner eye the Lord enters your heart and settles there. Once this identity is established all noise stops. People consider this to be a difficult exercise and abandon it and settle for the external ritual.

AD : This question is also solved. Now remains the question of how to save oneself from pitfalls and errors.

K : The very first requirement is monism. If you do not believe in unitarianism the errors and dualities of multiplicity will always dog your mind. The concept of one has great merit. One husband and one wife is the basis of Hindu society. If you quote the examples of Raja Dasrath or Sage Yagyavalk having married more than one wife they have broken the golden rule and it is by no means desirable. The principle applies to everyone with no exceptions. There is only one Purush and one Prakriti. There should be no second marriage even if the wife does not bear a child. Having a relationship with only one promotes peace, harmony and purity. The same principle holds good in religious and spiritual matters. There should be but one Deity. This is the first condition. Second, you should avoid the company of those who do not believe in monism as long as you are not firmly established in your faith. A person of weak faith can easily be swept off his feet by doubt and indecision. The third

condition is about the purity of quality and quantity of food. It should be a simple vegetarian diet in small quantities. The human mind is made from one's diet. As is the food so is the mind. Food which excites passion gives bad dreams, weakens the resolve and enfeebles the system.

Fourth, you should not be surrounded by too many things around you. Keep them simple, minimum and essential.

If you display any pictures let them be inspiring such as those which will evoke and promote devotion.

Fifth, do only those acts, think only those thoughts and speak only those words which will serve your ultimate goal. Hence judge every act, thought and speech which originates from you. Thoughtless acts, frivolous thoughts and aimless talking drain energy purposelessly. The body, mind and tongue continuously suffer misuse. The same principle works in collecting unnecessary articles. It fouls the air, promotes germs and insects around them and they gradually lose their efficiency and usefulness.

Sixth, lead a useful kind of life which will leave a silent influence on those who are around you or who come into contact with you. You need not even speak. Your silence will be more eloquent than your speech.

Seventh, do not hurt anyone's feelings. Once you thus subject your speech, thought and actions to close scrutiny it will soon become a habit and imperceptibly you will notice that a tremendous change has taken place in you. A spiritual change in you will become inevitable.

AD : What should one do to receive help from time to time and promote devotional worship?

K : In the path of devotion you should never get stuck anywhere along the path. Never give place to routine, boredom and disinterestedness. Set new goals and new endeavours all the time inwardly. Seek new visions and keep working for them. Enjoy the varieties of inner spiritual stages. Dwell at each stage in turn and enjoy its

variety. Attend spiritual sessions (Satsang) and enjoy the variety of interpretation. Inwardly jump from one stage to another, from the stages of the eightfold path (Ashtanga Yoga) to the stages above the third eye center and to the crown of the head. In this inner journey you will meet many spiritual swans, stations and states. Visualize the aspects of Sat, Raj and Tam (Truth, Activity, Stagnation) at each state and station. Having seen and experienced all states and stations climb up to the Mansion of Truth (the Abode of the Absolute) where all qualities and relativities lose their meaning. There will neither be a devotee nor the Lord, neither the path nor the goal, neither Karma nor knowledge, neither unity nor diversity. That will be the ultimate of all paths, goals and methods. It will be the Abode of the Absolute.

Chapter 10

Initiating a Minor

Mukta Muni

THE MASTER'S MOST PRECIOUS GIFT

Mukta Muni was a young boy whose parents had been initiated by Kabir. The child was not quite aware of what was going on. He exchanged glances with Kabir and a complete rapport was established between them instantly. Kabir asked the boy lovingly if he wanted anything. The boy thought for a long time and finally said: 'I have practically everything which I need. So please give me what may be the most precious thing".

K : What do you think is the most precious thing?

MM : If I knew I would have named it. I leave it to you to think of what would be best for me.

K : Alright! You will get the best and the most precious gift even while you play. You will not have to burn midnight oil over it. I will grant you what Yogis achieve after a lifetime of effort and practice.

DD : (Addressing the Master)

This boy is the most lucky person. Without doing anything to deserve it he has been showered with your grace.

K : If you do something and get something in return as a wage or compensation it does not last long. It is temporary. All temporary things must have their base in something permanent.

DD : But how can this child understand all this?

K : A child is the father of the man. He has the seed of growth in him. In course of time he will be a major. Everything is potentially present in him in a dormant form. It needs to be uncovered. A little attention and practise will provide a congenial climate for the seed to sprout. The seed already has the potential to sprout.

DD : As you have said he needs a congenial climate to evolve his seed-potential. In other words he is deficient of it now.

K : What you call a congenial climate is a response to the inner urge of man or nature which is already there. If this urge were not there then you could have complained of defect or deficiency. Time, space and thing are themselves reflections and not original in their nature. They are the creation of the mind or consciousness. They are the ideas of the Creator. As long as they are subtle they are not noticed. Once they acquire density and become gross they become physical and palpable. The transition from subtle to gross and gross to subtle takes place due to movement. It is this movement which is practise, discipline or Sadhana. Let me give you an example. Juice is present in the sugar-cane but not noticed. When you press it, it comes out. When boiled, it yields sugar which is solid. The same solid sugar becomes liquid when water is added to it. You can compare a child's mind with this analogy. If the child is taught a discipline or practice or given even a loving glance it generates heat to make him soar from the gross to subtle.

A loving glance has great power in it. There is warmth in it even as there is moisture in it. It brings tears. It brings peace. All these states and emotions are potentially present in a man. It can be aroused with an appropriate technique and this technique is also present in nature.

You are perhaps wondering how could the little boy be granted this grand prize without being made to work for it by me.

DD : This is difficult to understand even for an intellectual let alone a child.

K : Children don't need explanations. Only elders do. Since the children do not intellectualise and follow a mere hint with simplicity of mind they are quicker to grasp the truth and innately experience it.

Even for you self-realisation will be difficult unless you become child-like. I will have to squeeze the sugar cane, extract sugar and make syrup out of it. You would want me to first let Mukta Muni become an adult and then put him through the paces. Instead I want to convert you into a child and bring you to the level of Mukta Muni. Have you now realised the tremendous gap between your thoughts and my solutions?

DD : I am absolutely stunned. I realise that everything is within us but we do not look within to tap the inner resource. We look outward and seek external aid. For instance, a hungry and thirsty man who does not find food and water outside gets exhausted and falls asleep. He forgets his hunger and thirst in sleep and enjoys peace and tranquillity whose source is inside himself.

K : Now you are talking wisdom. You have reached the level of Mukta Muni. Now you can step into the shoes of Mukta Muni and ask questions at that level so that everyone may benefit from this dialogue.

(Dharam Das gladly assumes the mantle of Mukta Muni's spokesman and resumes the dialogue on his behalf for common benefit).

DD : A man, by nature is either lazy or active and impatient or calm and peaceful. Hence the spiritual path for them should also vary to suit their temperaments. The Path of Action (Karma Yoga) will suit a lazy temperament. The Path of Devotion (Bhakti Yoga) will suit an active and impatient soul. A calm and peaceful mind is well-suited to pursue the Path of Wisdom (Gyan Yoga).

K : Instead of 'lazy' use the word 'dull'. A dull person is only partly lazy. He has potential but it is dormant or has been

diverted to wrong channels. The Path of Action will give him a chance to activate his potential in the right channels. Here the Path of Action means manual labour not mental action or the use of the tongue.

DD : How can any action take place without the silent or active participation of the mind even if the tongue is silent?

K : When a dull person is being instructed he is asked to function only manually without the participation of his mind and tongue. In the initial stage such restrictions are necessary. If a labourer indulges in talking and theorising he will never get through his work. Hence a dull person is considered a puppet in the hands of his puppeteer. A dull person is in any case incapable of thinking or speaking clearly. His defective thinking and fruitless talking will make him dissipate his energy. A blacksmith or wood-cutter will only have to deal his manual strokes with a chisel or axe. A potter softens his mud into clay and guides it into shapes desired. These categories of personnel do not have to do much thinking or talking. Such dull persons stand to gain from the Path of Action. (Karma Yoga).

DD : I am totally confused. The scriptures tell us that there is no liberation in action whereas you say there is.

K : I have also told you that there is no liberation in action. Action brings wages and there is no liberation in earning wages. But there is liberation in the Yoga of Action. Do you not see the difference between action (Karma Kand) and the Yoga of Action (Karma Yoga)? Don't get involved in words. Understand their true import. Once a labourer gets his wages his task is over. Where is the question of his liberation? A hungry man works, earns his wages, cooks eats and sleeps. Is he liberated from hunger for ever? The Yoga of Action is, on the other hand, a different kettle of fish. It is a branch of Yoga and it has the stages of (Dharna, Dhyan and Samadhi) i.e., concentration, contemplation and absorption.

DD : It is surprising that Mukta Mani had no questions and yet he felt immediately happy and contented. I am much worse than him. I had to put so many questions and yet remain confused.

K : This is how the Master's Grace works. The Master transfers his grace into the bosom of his disciple and the disciple becomes a replica of the Master. In the transference of Grace there are no questions asked and no answers given. Mukta Muni is now a realised soul. He has no questions to ask. You may ask questions.

DD : According to the scriptures a dull person has to be taught the discipline of action first, then the discipline of devotion and finally the discipline of knowledge. He has to progress gradually through all these stages. You have said that only one stage of Yoga of Action is enough for him to achieve liberation.

K : You are very fond of quoting the scriptures but I do not get involved in their complications. There is only one goal though the paths are many. The three Yogas are three paths but if you can reach the goal by following one path why waste your time and effort on all three? A dull person need learn the Yoga of Action alone and reach his goal. He need not learn the Yoga of Devotion and the Yoga of Knowledge as well. The fruits of all three are the same.

DD : But what harm is there if this teaching is imparted through a regular discipline?

MM : I like play. When I am engrossed in play I do not feel even hungry or thirsty.

K : (Addressing Dharam Das) That is the answer to your comment. If you go along with one's natural inclinations and guide him along the natural path towards the desired goal why use coercive disciplines? If you allow him to follow his nature he will arrive at the goal happily.

DD : But the Yoga of Action is no child's play.

K : What in your opinion is the Yoga of Action?

DD : In my opinion such action should lead to liberation in this world and the next.

K : You have heard Mukta Mani saying that while playing he does not need even food or drink and he is totally happy and contented. If one can achieve these results through play what is your objection? If one is happy and contented in this life its effect will continue in after-life too. If you are unhappy and discontented in this life you will carry the same impressions hereafter even if you are placed in a paradise there. You will convert paradise into hell. On the other hand if you are happy here and are placed in hell hereafter you will convert hell into paradise.

DD : This is a religious issue which we are discussing. What is its relevance to play? It is something else.

K : I want to know what that 'something else' is? Everyone wants happiness. There is happiness in play, in work, in devotion. Liberation is happiness itself, absence of pain and tension. It is a totally relaxed state. What else is it?

DD : Is not happiness the result of devotion to God?

K : There are many paths to achieve happiness according to one's inclinations. Even God is nothing but happiness. By whatever path you achieve happiness follow that path whatever name you may give to it.

DD : If God is happiness then what is the need for the Paths of Action, Devotion and Knowledge?

K : All these are paths to the same happiness. One who is inclined towards knowledge will not feel the same way about devotion or action.

It is like a hungry man who is concerned about the art of cookery, pots and plates. Once he has eaten he has no need for cookery.

DD : That is only a temporary satisfaction.

K : There is an answer to every need. A permanent satisfaction requires a different discipline. Whatever may

be the need it will be fulfilled in a particular way. Where there is a will there is a way. Nature provides for it. One who wants a slow means of travel will find it. There is also a fast means of travel. Turning your attention to your particular need is a particular discipline. Its regular exercise is the prescribed practise.

DD : If happiness is the only aim of life then we should have the freedom to seek happiness in any manner we like.

K : Of course you are free to choose.

DD : A thief finds pleasure in stealing and a cruel person in cruelty. Why should they be condemned and punished?

K : Those who commit crimes do so stealthily. They are in the grip of fear of discovery and shame. Where there is shame and fear there can be no happiness. Light and darkness cannot co-exist. A criminal does not like crime himself. If he were to like it why should he be afraid or ashamed? When you meet the Lord there is joy and ecstasy not shame and fear. This joy itself is God. A criminal has an illusion that his crime will give him happiness. His punishment disabuses his mind of this illusion and he is reformed. Both the saint and the sinner are seeking happiness. They are one in this respect. The criminal chooses the thorny path and reforms himself the hard way sooner or later. The saint travels the path faster without obstacles.

DD : What is the relation between the Yoga of Action, seeking happiness, God and playfulness?

K : Whoever performs any act is a Karma Yogi (Yoga of Action). But a thief, though he is acting cannot be called a Karma Yogi because he is fearful and ashamed of his act. A Karma Yogi on the other hand looks upon his actions as a play. He is happy and joyous like a child. Every action attracts either penalty or reward. The saint and the sinner reap their harvest accordingly. This whole cosmos is one unit despite its size and diversity. If you hurt any part of it in any way happiness eludes you. Your body is one but there are millions of germs, cells and

nerves and veins in it and any imbalance in any one part will bring pain to the whole body. One rich man cannot be happy in the midst of a hungry and poverty-stricken population. Their negative impulses will affect him adversely.

Therefore, anyone who aspires to be a Yogi of Action should perform only those acts which promote other's happiness and abstain from those acts which cause pain and sorrow to others.

DD : What you have advocated is doing good to others or performing social service and avoiding hurting others. How does this help in liberating oneself?

K : Service to others is a wrong term to use. It is, in fact, serving oneself. It is like one who feeds and clothes his wife or improves the sanitation and aesthetics of his surroundings. In doing so he is serving himself not others. If you do charity, you again help yourself by increasing your sensitivity to others sufferings. But for these acts you brutalize yourself. You should thank the receiver of charity for accepting your charity and giving you a chance to make spiritual progress. This is Karma Yoga.

DD : Kindly explain the benefits of philanthropy and the disadvantage of not doing charity.

K : If you sow wheat you will reap wheat. What you sow you reap. One who gives charity lovingly sows the seeds of love. Such an act ennobles both. If one gives charity grudgingly, angrily and with hatred for the receiver he sows the seeds of anger and hatred. Such charity has no merit in it.

DD : I now understand that all that surrounds us is a part of us. By serving them we are serving ourselves. We cannot be happy my making others unhappy.

(At this stage Mukta Muni who was silent until then exclaimed thus):

MM : In that case dear Master, you are also serving yourself!

K : You have made a very correct remark. Just as you clean your whole body with your hand and feel happy similarly I clean all my disciples spiritually and feel happy. Just as the body is not different from the hand, similarly my disciples are not different from me. I feel happy in their happiness. They reflect my own self and my attributes.

MM : Master! Forgive me if I have been insolent in my remark. I do not understand much.

K : You have not said anything wrong. Children have an innocent frankness. Children understand motherly advice better than fatherly advice. So let Aman Devi explain it to you.

AD : Mukta Muni! A mother's happiness lies in her children's happiness. Master Kabir is the father and mother of this universe. He has appeared in this world only to redeem us. We are all his children and in our happiness lies his happiness. He deals with all of us like a mother deals with her children.

K : The Yoga of Karma aims at the height of beauty, height of symmetry, height of perfection and the height of inner peace. Whatever action promotes these is the Yoga of Karma. Practising this type of Karma will gradually lead to a perfect blend of beauty, peace and completeness.

DD : If Karma Yoga has to change this world into one of beauty, harmony, peace and perfection then we shall have to wait until doomsday. This world will never be straightened.

K : From your angle, at a certain level, it is correct but you should know that what I said is the ideal to be aimed at. That is the goal of the Yoga of Action. You will have to prepare your mind for it. The mind is the middle link between heaven and earth. It can go up and become heavenly or go down and become earthly. Whichever way you command your mind it will assume the same colour and influence its surroundings accordingly. An artist starts painting a picture and as he makes his picture more and more beautiful, his mind also becomes more and

more beautiful. His inner aesthetic urge finds an added spur. Unless a sculptor has an image in his mind how can he transfer it externally on to a block of stone? He uses his chisel and hammer to strike soft and hard blows at different angles. These are his inner urges which are transferred to metal or stone. Similarly, different people feel inclined towards different channels of expression such as charity, relief to the distressed, treating the sick, educating the ignorant and so on. These are different expressions of the Yoga of Action. Such a Yogi reaps his happiness in advance while his beneficiaries reap it later.

DD : Yes. One who does good has to become good first and convert others to goodness later.

K : An evil person burns in evil thoughts first and suffers earlier than those who are hurt by his evil action. One who causes a loss to others loses his equanimity first. It is like preparing poison in your own utensil first and then giving it to others. The candle burns first and then burns the moth. One who is not good himself cannot make others good. One who has no money himself can give no charity to others. Hence be extremely cautious about hurting anyone by thought, word or action even unwittingly. This is my teaching.

YOGA OF ACTION (KARMA YOGA)

DD : What are the stipulations for the Yoga of Action?

K : There are three stipulations. First, one should not be idle. An idle man's brain is the workshop of the devil. Second, choose a profession which is well-intentioned and helpful to others. Good intention is the basis of good karma (action). Third, it should not hurt man or beast. Apart from these three stipulations, one practising this discipline should perform his job whole-heartedly and not waste his time in idle chatter. Idle talk will dissipate his energies and weaken his mind whereas the whole-hearted performance of duties will generate within him new currents of energy and dedication.

There are three stages of a good act. First, its conception. Second, its implementation. Third, to remain in a combined state of conception and action. When a person gets accustomed to doing a job whole-heartedly his mind gets clearer and clearer. He will then do good as a matter of habit even without being conscious of it. Only good will come out of him as a matter of course. He is neither conscious of his good actions nor proud of his functioning. Such acts do not bind him. He is like a sun which gives life and warmth to all creatures without being proud or conscious of it. He is like a breath of fresh air which all enjoy. He is like a clear flowing stream of good water quenching the thirst of parched throats. He is like a flame which cooks a meal for the hungry ones. Though all men make use of earth, water, fire and air none is thankful to these elements. Similarly, a Karma Yogi serves all without asking for anything in return. When a Karma Yogi achieves such a status it is as good as reaching the goal through the paths of devotion or knowledge.

DD : If the Path of Action which you have described is enough to achieve liberation then is there no need for belief in God?

K : What you call God is the same as the Law of Karma or the Law of Devotion or the Law of Knowledge. When the end result is achieved the differences in terminologies vanish into thin air. The One Reality appears in so many garbs and under so many names. To ascribe superiority and inferiority to one path or the other is the root cause of trouble. What is important is to be clear about the goal. Whatever the path, action, devotion or knowledge one should have a thirst for it. This thirst is known by different names, inclination, love, search, discipline, dedication, reverence, fascination, rapture and so on. Whatever it is called you should have enough of it to get anywhere. If it is deficient then make it up first if you

want to achieve results. This can be done by keeping appropriate company.

If you want to get involved in terminologies then the spiritualists have coined the term 'Truth-Consciousness cum Bliss-Consciousness' being a combination of Truth, Bliss and Consciousness. These three basics appear as one. The Karma Yogi has his eye on the body which to him is Truth because it exists. A Yogi who believes in intellect considers it to be True and asserts that there is no need for the Yoga of Action as intellect can deliver the goods. The Yogi who is a believer of devotion considers love to be the only plank of God-realisation. He has no use for the other methods such as through action or intellect. If you consider these three situations a little more closely you would realise that Karma starts with the body, Gyan or knowledge with the mind and Bhakti or Devotion with the heart but their end-result is one and the same whether we term them separately as Action, Knowledge or Bliss. Moreover, if we concede that one who follows the Path of Knowledge does not need Action then can we rightly say that thinking and acquiring knowledge is not Action? Is the Path of Action devoid of any need for knowledge and understanding? Is not the satisfaction that action brings with it based on a better state of inner understanding? Similarly, is not the enjoyment of bliss-consciousness itself action? Is not the awareness of bliss itself Gyan or knowledge? These three cannot be separated from one another ever.

From another angle the body is situated below the head and the mind is in the middle with an admixture of both mental and physical characteristics. Hence the mind is restless and seeks attachment of one sort or the other. If it attaches to God then it is called Bhakti or Devotion and obviously it is not free from action and knowledge.

When you open your eyes and see something then you believe in it and feel happy. Seeing is action,

believing is Truth and feeling is Bliss (Anand). When you see the Truth and believe in it then the act of believing in it as Truth is Gyan or intellect and deriving joy out of it is Anand or Bliss. It is a triumvirate action and it is not possible to isolate one aspect of it. The triple qualities of Reality, Activity and Passivity act unitedly to present a picture of unity in diversity. It is difficult to perceive the unity of absolute existence behind the multiplicity of manifestations. At this stage some give up the exercise saying it is an impossible task and some take cover saying it is beyond verbal explanation. Both groups thus give up midway and fail to proceed further. This is a barrier which can be overcome only with the help of a Master. Those who rely on scriptures alone get stuck at this stage.

DD : I have followed the unity of results of the three paths but all three still seem to remain at the physical level of body, mind and intellect. It is surprising that despite all their severe disciplines they should still be deprived of the prize.

K : Although the mind has the central position yet every act is committed by the mind in reality. When it functions at the gross body level it deals with sense organs at the wakeful stage. At the subtle astral level it experiences dreams. At the intellectual level it experiences the deep sleep state. These are respectively the real, active and passive states. At the triune level, the wakeful state is the real (or true), the dream state is consciousness and the deep sleep state is one of bliss.

DD : A little while ago you described the body to be real (true), consciousness to be intellect and bliss to be the mind. Now you say that at the level of the mind there is the play of consciousness.

K : The mind does not have an independent existence of its own. The intellect is on top with the body down below. The intellect retains within its center its essential formative seed which remains hidden. In its manifested downward expression it shows up a variety of division and

multiplicity. The mind is a combination of the intellect and the body. When this combination is facing downward it becomes gross and gets fully involved in physical involvements in the wakeful state. When it moves up further into the causal or deep sleep state then it assumes that state again forgetting its middle state. That could be described as the unitary level or the state of bliss. Here the intellect itself assumes the mantle of bliss. It is the same intellect which at the physical level was inextricably involved but abandoned it and entered the lower level of the intellect. Subsequently, it went into the causal stage of bliss consciousness. Since the mind seeks pleasure it goes along with the causal state of bliss. In point of fact bliss consciousness is the very nature of intellect. What is physical body but the gross expression of the intellect. It becomes subtle at the astral and more subtle at the causal levels. The middle state has the capabilities of descending to the gross level or ascending to the subtle levels. When it ascends high it sheds its grossness and experiences subtlety while it still carries the impressions of the reflections of the gross.

At each stage the two merge into one to form a single plank. The mind and body become one. Then the mind and intellect become one. Then all three merge to give a single feeling. Thus there is only one experience at a time and it does not admit of conflict at that stage because conflict can only result if there is more than one. The practitioners of the three disciplines wrongly attribute the resulting feeling of elation or divine intoxication to only one of the three disciplines. One of these conditions is permanent. The body, mind and intellect are changing all the time. When the mind gains control the body loses its effect but it still leaves some of its shadow with it. With every upper climb the lower becomes weak but leaves some of its reflections on the higher. The unsteadiness of experience is due to these reflections or knots which pull it downward after some time. Steadiness can be assured if the lower reflections or knots can be overcome.

DD : Then do I take it that during the stage of deep sleep the knots of the body and mind, or the gross and the conscious are opened or overcome?

K : No. If this knot were to open then the mind will never descend to a lower level. The knot is only loosened a bit thereby giving a chance to the mind to taste the higher state for some time. The three yogas of body, mind and intellect are intended to open these knots. When that happens then the mind enjoys that state temporarily but the practitioner considers these intermediate states to be the ultimate. This is a stumbling block where most give up further search and effort and do not go beyond the deep sleep state at the causal.

DD : This is very enlightening. Form this I conclude that the wakeful state, the dream-state (astral) and the deep sleep state (causal) or the transference from one state to another is what is called the theory of transmigration. Then, is not the birth and death of the body itself transmigration?

K : Your question does not bother a Karma Yogi (Yogi of Action). He is only concerned with performing his tasks and no more. He does not go into its why and wherefore. While performing his tasks he has his flashes of mental and intellectual satisfaction. The degree of mental and intellectual satisfaction in his case does not become an obstacle to cause him pain and sorrow.

DD : The law should be the same for all three yogas. If the Yoga of Mind and the Yoga of Intellect can bring a measure of trials and difficulties then how can the Yoga of Action be free from it?

K : I did not say that a Karma Yogi is totally immune to trials and tribulations, but comparatively speaking his trials are lighter than the other two.

Take for example the case of a sculptor. He chisels a statue with his deft hands. As he works at it tirelessly his joy increases with the statue assuming a shape. As the statue becomes more and more beautiful outwardly his

heart also becomes more and more beautiful inwardly. As his aesthetic sense improves within he transfers it to the statue and beautifies it further. He is fully absorbed in his manual work and simultaneously in his aesthetic enjoyment. In all these three stages he is not assailed adversely by any other thought. Soon he enters the fourth stage of absorption in his work ethos oblivious to everything else in his surroundings. There is no reason for him to be grief-stricken unless he is pulled away from his all-absorbing work. As soon as the distraction is over he is back again to his work with child-like simplicity. A child does not take long to recover his playful mood. In the case of Yoga of Devotion or Knowledge the Yogi is an adult. An adult does not forgive or forget easily. On the other hand he makes it a habit to nurse his grievance for ever. The result is sorrow. There is more sorrow in the path of knowledge than in the path of devotion. That is why the Yoga of Devotion is simpler than the Yoga of knowledge and similarly the Yoga of Action is simpler than the Yoga of Devotion. Manual work is simpler than devotional acts and devotional acts are simpler than mental gymnastics. They respectively represent childhood, youth and old age preferences.

DD : I now realise that a child has comparatively lesser sorrows than an adult. The one who is more brainy has more sorrows. But what has all this got to do with the question of transmigration?

K : What you call 'transmigration' is nothing more than a change or transformation in the mental state. When the mind settles down in a new state then it has gained a new lease of life. When it is disturbed and removed from its settled state it spells its death-knell. What people refer to as transmigration of the soul is nothing but a change in the mental state when it has not found a changeless firm base. When the mind gets old with dampeden spirit, doubts and disappointments it seeks a new life with abundant energy and hope. This is the difference

between the young and the old. That is why nature removes the old from the scene to a different level of existence.

DD : We are concerned with the death of the body. We do not consider the changes in mental attitudes as death.

K : The human body has many sheaths, the food sheath, the vital sheath, the mind sheath, the intellectual sheath and the sheath of bliss consciousness. What you call the food sheath is nothing but a gross form of the mind sheath. It is the mind which adopts a suitable body to carry out through it what it wishes. The relationship between life and death is established only by the mind.

DD : According to the teaching of the Gita it is the soul which discards the body when it becomes worn out and takes on a fresh cloak. You say it is the mind which does it.

K : What is soul according to the Gita or according to your understanding?

DD : The Sanskrit word for the soul is 'Atma' which consists of two syllables, 'At' meaning 'moving' and 'ma' meaning 'thinking'.

K : According to your own definition it moves and thinks. What is it if not the mind? It is the mind which discards the old and adopts the new. Your question and my answer are also based on the mind, by the mind and for the mind. The one who moves from the waking state to the sleep state and then returns to the waking state is again the mind. Tell me, what is it which is born and which dies?

DD : The soul.

K : That which is born and dies is defective and you cannot have a defective thing as your ideal. What is your ideal?

DD : In order to avoid weakness and defect I shall have to postulate the existence of God.

K : Your concept of God is also a limited and defective concept because it is based on qualities and a quality is a relative attribute. Although you say that you are postulating God, you are actually once again describing

the mind. There may be a concept of a great or small mind but it is mind nevertheless.

DD : What should be the ideal then?

K : It should be above mind and speech, above the limited and unlimited, it is neither born nor dies, it neither increases nor dwindles, it neither goes up nor down. For want of a better word people have settled for the term 'soul' but actually their concepts are hedged in within the field of Maya or Delusion.

DD : What term would you like to use?

K : If you depend on a word then you fall into the same trap. The new word will have the same draw-backs as others. For only practical purposes I use the word 'True Name' (Sat naam).

Let me now explain to you the ultimate states of Action, Devotion and Knowledge. In the yoga of action the doer gradually loses identifying the action with his self. Because of this dis-identification he loses his ego. The disappearance of ego itself is liberation. A Yogi of Action gets married and becomes dual. He has offspring and becomes multiple. He expands his relationship to cover his community, country and all creation and thus grows in broader and broader identification. The discipline of Karma Yoga teaches him humility, lack of egoism and broad universal and cosmic sympathies. Thus beginning with dullness and inertia such a Yogi ends up with a state of realisation equal to that of a devotee or a scholar.

The Yogi of Devotion (Bhakti) starts from a state of acute disturbance in his mind and seeks solace through devotion to the Lord. Then his Lord assumes a universal or cosmic aspect. He sees the Lord in everything and everything in the Lord and extends his love to all that there is. Thus he sheds his ego and extends the frontiers of his love to cover the cosmos. Though starting with emotional disturbance he ends up with shedding his ego and reaches the stage of realisation. The Yogi who treads the Path of Knowledge neither starts with action nor with

devotion but with mental analysis. He starts with discrimination and analysis until in due course he comes to the conclusion that the human being is a unique being. Though such a conclusion induces ego in him initially it starts expanding until his ego covers the entire universe. At that stage the individual ego undergoes dissolution. Once the ego is dissolved he stands on the threshold of realisation. Thus the three paths lead to the same goal and same results.

DD : This proves that all this drama has been played by the mind. Action, Devotion and Knowledge are the webs woven by the mind.

K : When the mind loses its own identity the result is soul-realisation. At that stage the mind is lost for ever. Nothing remains at that stage which you can call the mind.

Chapter 11

A Dialogue with Nawab Bijli Khan: Pathan Ritualism

Bijli Khan was a reputed aristocrat of Maghar in (India) who was extremely bigoted in matters of religion and would countenance no departure from fundamentalism. His fanaticism was such that he would brook no argument from any quarter about the doctrine. Saint Kabir who happened to visit Maghar along with some of his admirers attracted his attention. Bijli Khan soon sought to question the Saint about matters of faith and as the dialogue progressed his mental reservations began to crumble one by one. Ultimately the light of truth dispelled the dark clouds of his fanaticism and he was able to climb high on the ladder of spiritual progress and attainments with the Grace of the Master.

BK : You seem to regard all religions with the same reverence whereas it is only Islam which is truly monotheistic.

K : If the Lord they worship is the same then how can one religion be true and the other false?

BK : The methods of worship differ.

K : So you agree that all are the creation of the same Lord and all worship the same Lord. Your objection is to the mode of worship. Two sons of the same father function differently and each one thinks he is doing the right thing. Both benefit from their respective modes of functioning. Is it correct for either of them to find fault with the other? In any case I am not interested in either

defending or condemning any religion. I am only interested in waking up sleeping souls and guiding misguided ones.

BK : Who are these misguided and sleeping souls?

K : At the moment you are the one who needs guidance. You are forgetful of your identity. Forgetfulness may result from many factors, from involvement with women, involvement with sons and daughters, from the arrogance of power and prestige, from the pride of knowledge, from keeping undesirable company, from items of luxury and self-indulgence, from a distorted view of religion and from love of money and position etc. There are many other distractions which make you forget your own self.

BK : There is a ring of truth in what you say but please explain it to me a little more clearly.

K : A man forgets his own parents when he falls for a form and figure. He forgets his filial duties and responsibilities. He forgets his brothers and sisters. Similarly, one who gets involved in childish pranks for their sake buys trouble. The children run away leaving him to face the flak from an aggrieved party. This is the result of his forgetting his own identity. Arrogance of power can be compared to a dog who receives a piece of bread from his master and bites and chases other dogs even though they are his own kind. Similarly, when a man has power he decries his own kith and kin and takes pleasure in berating and insulting them.

The pride of knowledge is also an intoxicant. Some become so elated with their knowledge that they consider themselves as another God. When such claims are made in and out of season the result is often tragic as such claimants are burnt at the stake. Next comes an example of keeping bad company. In bad company one forgets his own identity and adopts the dubious conduct of those around him and comes to grief. Then there is the example of lust. A lustful person loses his self-respect. Every lust is like any enemy. If there are many enemies

one bids farewell to dignity and self-respect altogether. When you cast your eyes around you in nature you will find many examples of such slavery and its disastrous consequences. The fish bites the bait and meets a painful death. The moth gets burnt in the flame. The deer listens to the music and falls into the snare. The snake is charmed by the flute and spends its life in captivity in a basket. The male elephant falls into the trap of the hunter lured by the female. You can imagine what can happen to a person who is a victim of all five lusts. Then I mentioned to you the wrong propagation or distortion of religion. How can two fight in the name of the same God who has created them both? A wrong view of religion can induce the worst kind of prejudice and hatred and make one abandon even the good practises of another religion merely because they are practised by the followers of another religion. Then I mentioned to you the greed of money. Such greed can make one forget his self-respect and commit heinous crimes for its sake. In this way a man brings about his own destruction.

BK : You started by mentioning neglect and forgetfulness. Who is responsible for it, man or God? If it is God who wants man to be forgetful then why blame man? If it is man who becomes forgetful then why does he do so?

K : What is your concept of God?

BK : One who creates the world, sustains it and maintains order in the universe and its orderly functioning.

K : In that case your God is like a very great and powerful man on a mighty scale and since man is usually forgetful this super-man or God will also be the source of forgetfulness.

BK : No one has called God forgetful. He is full of knowledge and wisdom.

K : Wisdom is a comparative term. It stands up in contradistinction to ignorance and forgetfulness. If God is wise, He will also be ignorant. It is like discrimination

and lack of discrimination. Wisdom is a relative term of the measure of discrimination versus indiscrimination. Understanding this relative quality will be a prelude to exercising judgment and making a choice.

BK : How can I be so impertinent as to say that God has no discrimination?

K : If He does not understand indiscrimination then how can he be discriminating? Indiscrimination must have been present in Him from the very outset. Hence He understood the difference between the two. One who has tasted bitter knows the sweet taste. One who has never tasted bitter cannot describe a thing as sweet.

BK : According to orthodox belief non-discrimination and evil come from Satan and all good and discrimination come from God.

K : In that case you are a believer in two Gods, one good and one bad, one originating virtue and the other originating vice. The two will always be crossing swords with each other with victory and defeat alternating to the end. Thus both will have a measure of weakness in them. If you say God created Satan then the question is whether God is lacking in discrimination? Will He create His own enemy? Will He act thoughtlessly? If Satan can mislead a man and defeat God's purpose will he not be more powerful than God?

BK : I am a simple believer. I believe in whatever the scripture has told us. I cannot answer any of your questions.

K : I have no quarrel with your simple beliefs in God, the Prophet and the Book. But you believe in so many other things too such as Satan, hell, evil, non-discrimination etc. Belief in so many things shows that your understanding is faulty and deficient. I have nothing to say against any religion whatsoever. I am only dealing with your questions and your own statements to clarify the issues in their proper perspective.

BK : I did not come here to argue. I only asked a simple question as to the origin of ignorance and carelessness.

K : If that is all that you want to know then man himself is responsible for his ignorance and carelessness. A man has both knowledge and ignorance in him. When he bends towards ignorance, he becomes careless. When he inclines towards knowledge he is not careless any more. This is a part of human nature.

BK : Why should there be bouts of ignorance and carelessness?

K : Nature is made that way. There can be no knowledge without ignorance and vice versa. All this has its origin in man's inclination. When a man looks at a thing he only has a vague idea of its surroundings which he neglects. The idea of neglect makes him fix his attention on the neglected part. The feeling of neglect exists in him and his attention overcomes his sense of neglect. When he turns his attention to the sense of innate neglect there is no neglect anymore. It is a question of knowing and turning his attention. Thus the sense of inattention and neglect draws one's attention to it and once the attention is diverted to it the neglect is no more.

BK : I cannot grasp this subtle point. You say that the knowledge of neglect leads to the abolition of neglect. At the same time you also assert that attention and inattention exist side by side and these are but relative states linked to each other. From all this I conclude that a man cannot be liberated from ignorance and neglect. One who considers himself good and virtuous cannot be so without a knowledge of evil and vice at the same time. His knowledge of good and virtuous will be based on his knowledge of evil and vice. But you also say that turning one's attention to one aspect will liberate him from the other aspect. This is rather confusing.

K : The knowledge of one aspect is the starting point of the other. Both have a relative existence. So far so good. When you are aware of the evil being bad and the desirability of being good, such a knowledge does not automatically abolish the evil. It remains suppressed.

Light and darkness are relative aspects but as soon as a lamp is lit the darkness is suppressed down below. If the light is bright then the darkness vanishes even though the mental idea of darkness remains. But for this impression of darkness he will not have an idea of light either. Similarly, a man gets to know both good and bad and strengthens the good. Will it not suppress the bad?

BK : Yes, it will.

K : Now the evil is suppressed and the good is strengthened. Once the good is firmly established does not one give up both good and bad and rise above both these relative states? Then do not these relative states vanish?

BK : They do not vanish permanently but remain suppressed.

K : When you detach your attention from something it is said to vanish.

BK : By this analogy what is it that you are driving at?

K : Now you are in the grip of a good God and a bad Satan. If Satan is bad then suppress him with a good God in the first instance and confirm your love for God. Then be free from both God and Satan.

BK : What is that state?

K : That is the state of Absolute Existence which reflects both God and Satan. First love God and suppress Satan. When Satan is suppressed God will also depart.

BK : Is this not atheism?

K : Who is an atheist?

BK : One who does not believe in God.

K : When I believe in both God and Satan how can I be an atheist?

BK : You have also said that when Satan is banished there is no need for God and He also departs. Does it not amount to atheism?

K : It would have been atheism if I had denied God altogether. The fear of Satan pushes one to seek the shelter of God just as hunger and thirst push one to seek food and water. Once you find food and water and quench hunger and thirst do you still hunt for food and

water? Do you run after a doctor and medicine even after you are cured? When you are healthy it is a natural state and you have no need to think of health and disease. Similarly, God is a necessity as long as Satan is there but with the disappearance of Satan God becomes irrelevant.

BK : Whatever the force of the argument my mind does not easily accept it. My religion is one of true submission to God.

K : If that is so then what you are saying is that you can never give up Satan either. The two concepts go hand in hand. I have never tried to make you deviate from your path of believing in your religion. I am asking you, on the other hand, to dissolve yourself in the love of God. You seem to be stuck in a few words and phrases parrot-wise. If you jerk yourself free from these grooves you will make progress and find the Truth for yourself.

BK : Whatever that state may be I shall call it God nevertheless.

K : Words do not matter. I called it the Absolute Existence. Both God and Satan are attributes and attributes need the existence of something to which they pertain. Unless you go beyond the attributes you cannot reach the thing in itself. Unless you free your mind from sterile theological rituals and repetitions you will not see the Truth behind these phenomena. The Holy Prophet rode the white horse Burraq and had the vision of the Spirit. Why don't you follow in his footsteps and have that experience?

BK : How can I gain that experience?

K : The Prophet dwells in the third eye center. Within the black and white dots of the eye there is a bright star. This star is in reality a brilliant sun which is difficult to understand.

In the center of the eye there is a shining winged moth. Between the wings of the moth is the entry point. See intently within this entry-point. You will then find eternal deliverance when you enter that door and cross over to eternity. We are the citizens of a city which has no

houses. Only those can enter its gates who have solved the mystery of the sayings; "Everything is God". and "Everything is from God". Once you gain entrance into that eternal city you will meet the Lord as your Eternal Companion. The one who solves the mystery of the word or the sound-current alone can enter that city.

BK : What is the method to solve this riddle?

K : Basically it is very simple. Do not look at the world. Look the other way. Shut your windows on the world and the other world opens up before you. Close your eyes, nose and tongue to the impressions of the world and open them to receive impressions from the other world. Gradually, a new world will reveal itself to you and the curtain blocking your view will be raised.

BK : This is related to the mind but the mind is related to the outer world. Hence it will have to be turned inwards first. The mind does not switch over on its own. It needs a support. Without such support it will not detach itself from the world and attach itself to the other world.

K : A mind can never be vacant without an attachment of some sort. Mostly it is attached to itself but people are not aware of it.

BK : How can the mind attach itself to itself?

K : All relationships of the mind are for its own sake. Why are you attached to Islam? Why do you conduct your numerous worldly dealings? To serve your own interests. This is your self-interest. Your sense organs are busy day and night outside to serve your self-interest. This is called attachment. You have to turn their attention inward. When you do that it is love.

BK : But one loves someone other than oneself. How can one love oneself?

K : Do you worship God for God's sake or for your sake? If God is different from you then why does He need your worship? People worship God for their own needs whether they be ordinary men, apostles, saints or anyone else. All have their own axe to grind.

BK : Often we see that we love some without any self-interest.

K : Your observation is superficial. If you analyse your statement you will notice that the person whom you say you love in some way attracts you first and gives you joy. If it were not so then you would not have turned to him in the first place. You may have noticed certain qualities in him which you liked. This liking leads to sympathy. Sympathy leads to attraction and attraction is love. Love leads to union and in union is happiness. Thus you do everything for your own happiness.

BK : How can one love God without seeing Him?

K : There are many kinds of 'seeing'. You have heard a lot about God. Hearing is also a kind of seeing. Knowledge comes through many channels not through seeing alone. There are other senses. Often your interest and curiosity is aroused by hearing about someone. That is the beginning of a loving relationship.

BK : You said that God was nothing other than Absolute Existence. What does it mean?

K : God is the thing-in-itself or the Absolute Existence. You are existence and existence is in you. So God is in you. You conceive of God in your mind and without knowing anything about Him you love Him. Love is the quality of the heart and only the heart is capable of love. So a loving heart is an embodiment of love itself. This Love is God. I call it Absolute Existence. You are confused because you consider God as apart from yourself. Once you start loving God the veils drop off one by one and you get the feeling of loving yourself. When you cross all the stages of love all the veils vanish and you will meet God within yourself. You will then realise that God has all along resided within you. Since you have not met Him yet in this manner you are separated from Him and separation is always painful. When you start loving Him then He will pave the way to meet you within yourself. Your doubt and delusion will then vanish.

BK : What is delusion?

K : A wrong impression is delusion and this is what creates confusion and disturbance. A delusion can be overcome by delusion itself. This is a medical formula. Heat is treated with heat and cold with cold. When a person gets burnt his boils will find some relief when he foments them with a little warmth. A thorn is taken out with another thorn.

BK : How can one delusion be removed by another?

K : When a person is suffering from delusion a wise man first gains his sympathy by apparently agreeing with him and after winning his confidence he starts demolishing his delusion systematically. He will thus raise the level of understanding of the deluded person to his own level and thus the delusion is vanquished for ever. You can understand it in this way. A person dreams of being bitten by an insect. He goes to a doctor who applies an ointment on the sting and the person feels cured. Both the wound and cure were imaginary and based on delusion. Nevertheless the imaginary pain was cured by an imaginary drug.

You are still surrounded by the delusion of being separate from God despite my clarification. I will have to make you go through the actual experience of it to convince you. You should commence by loving God in your own way. Detach your attention from the outer world and direct it within. You will experience in various stages the falsity of your delusion and the reality of your oneness with God.

BK : A deluded person cannot accept delusion as delusion. Moreover he is not clear about delusion himself.

K : If he were to understand delusion he will not be under it any more. A deluded person does not have the understanding that he is deluded. He remains restless under delusion. When he is thus restless he is like a drowning man catching at a straw. When a person ails from a sickness he believes in everyone who suggests a

remedy. He even seems to benefit from the delusion of a wrong medicine due to his intense desire to get well and due to his consequent gullibility.

BK : How to get to know the Absolute Existence or the thing-in-itself?

K : The very first condition is to cultivate love for the Absolute Existence.

BK : How can love arise in the heart without knowledge?

K : For cultivating love not much external knowledge is required. As for inner knowledge a certain amount is always there in a dormant form. You look at someone and the very first sight evokes love for him even though you do not know his name. Later on, you acquire knowledge about him but not at that time of first sight. The existence of the self precedes everything. When you touch a worm it curls up in self-defence. It shows that it is in love with itself but is not conscious of it.

BK : I agree that self-love is there in every creature but not the love of God. Hence the theological differences.

K : God's love is in every creature because God is the self. How can any self be free from his love? Theological divisions are due to the fact that they consider God to be different from the self. This is the basis of delusion and conflict. If everyone were to believe the self to be God how can any conflict remain?

BK : You said that the love of God remains dormant in every creature. How can it be awakened?

K : Love has three facets, the active, the qualitative and that of the self. Active love is awakened when you watch certain movement or action. Qualitative love is kindled when you hear of some qualities. The love of self is inherent in the self. The first two kinds of love are not of a high order because actions and qualities are ever-changing. Therefore any love which is evoked by the action or quality of another lacks permanence. When there is no more action of that type or endurance of that quality love also beats a hasty retreat. But self-love endures for ever.

A religious person worships God as long as God remains beneficent and bountiful. His love for God endures only as long as God's bounties endure. If God displays His wrathful nature then who will love Him. Do the people love God's wrath when it falls? The usual rut of religious people are the worshippers of bounties and mercies not of wrath and punishment. They only strike a bargain. It is not devotion but barter. The only ones who love God are those who love the self. This is not possible unless you identify God with your self.

BK : You are painting the end result with the primary discipline.

K : I am doing this to explain the point to you. Even the preliminary stage of love sometimes produces end results. Even in worldly life one person falls in love with another without any logical explanation. He neither looks at his actions nor at his qualities but keeps his company day and night. This is the love of self. It has no negative aspect to it.

BK : Even in love associated with actions and qualities there can be self-love.

K : May be and may not be. A servant may devotedly serve his master as long as he expects to be paid regularly. If this is not assured he abandons his master. This kind of self-interest is always mixed with action-oriented or quality-based love.

BK : Self-love is indeed praiseworthy but rarely seen in this world. A religious man begins with tainted love but seems to end up with the benefits of true love.

K : When you talk of benefit there cannot be love.

BK : What I meant was that though in the beginning his love may not be perfect yet in the end the result may be good.

K : This may happen but it is by no means certain. Selfishness and benefit-seeking are delusions. As long as delusion continues the goal will remain far away. It is only when the delusion is overcome that love of self has a chance to succeed.

BK : The difficulty is that the self is not considered God by the majority of people.

K : This is why saints and sages appear in the world from time to time to remind the people of the truth through preaching, personal example and silent influence. With practical discipline and the Master's company the disciple begins to experience the reality of the self. There should not be the least doubt about it.

BK : Please instruct me in the theory and practise of this science.

K : First of all clear your mind of all doubts by asking me as many questions as you want.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE THING-IN-ITSELF AND ITS QUALITIES

BK : I do not understand the term 'self' or 'the thing in itself'. I understand God but do not understand the 'self'.

K : What do you understand by the term God?

BK : The one who creates the world and sustains it is God.

K : The one creates also destroys. The one who sustains also withdraws his sustenance. All these are actions. Actions produce qualities or attributes. One who does good works is called a good man.

Your God is a Creator and so creativity is a quality or attribute. You define him as a creator. The act of creation and the quality of creativity need a base to which they can be ascribed. You came to me and addressed your questions. The acts of your coming and airing your questions are under your control. These acts pertain to your self. You are the self. Similarly, there must be selves to whom all qualities and actions are attributable. The self is neither an act, nor a quality nor a name by itself but all three are based on the self.

BK : Is this self what you call God?

K : He is everything and nothing. He is linked with everything as well as separate from them. He has no name and all names are his. This is the definition of self. If your conception of God is the same then he is the self, if not, it is an attribute or quality.

BK : God always has been a God of name and qualities.

K : If you want to cling to your concept then believe in one more proviso that He is independent of names and qualities. If you believe God to be a combination of names and qualities alone then he will be different from the self because the names and qualities keep changing and they are perishable. If you get stuck in these perishable qualities then you will never reach the self.

BK : Can the self exist without names and attributes?

K : In a sense the self is different from them and yet in another sense it is not different from them. That is because the self plays its game of hide and seek with the help of names, forms and attributes.

BK : We often find that the thing which gives support can either be of the same category or different. The water of a spring has its own intrinsic quality.

K : What you are driving at is that the self is responsible for both good and bad.

BK : Yes.

K : Where do good and bad reside?

BK : These are relative states.

K : Good. You have answered your own question. The self has no relative states. It is Absolute. You attribute qualities to God from your point of view of a created being such as Creator, Beneficent, Merciful etc. Actually He is none of these. He neither creates nor is created. If you attribute one quality to Him then He must have the possibility of the opposite quality too. Then you will describe Him as possessing all the qualities.

BK : Now the fog is beginning to clear. I now understand the true import of the Qor'anic verse:

"He begetteth not,
Nor is He begotten"

(S112/V3)

I have, for the first time, understood the correct interpretation of this verse. It refers to the self. We have all along been playing with pairs of opposites without understanding the true import of the scripture.

K : You have started behaving like an angel. It was the angels who first bowed before Adam. Those who do not bow before Adam are not angels. In the case of angels their qualities and attributes assume the garb of movement and action. The qualities which are the opposite of the qualities of angels are loathed, discarded and thrown at the feet of Adam to be trampled and shunned. They suffer insult and ignominy.

BK : This is the gross form of matter. My delusions have left me. All I seek now is your grace and initiation.

A DIALOGUE WITH GYANI JI

[Gyani Ji was noted Sanskrit scholar and poet with a profound knowledge of the Vedantic lore. When he came to Kabir for initiation the Master addressed him as a Gyani Ji and the name stuck to him to such an extent that his real name was totally forgotten. Even his poetry was written in the same name. The dialogue between him and Master Kabir is noted for its brevity and terseness. It has been termed appropriately as Gyan Yoga (the Yoga of Knowledge). Since Gyani Ji was already a scholar of eminence all he needed was the Masterly touch of Kabir to be redeemed.]

Gyan Yoga (Yoga of Knowledge), Shabd Yoga (Yoga of Sound Current)

The day when Gyani Ji came to hear the Master's sermon in Benares the subject was 'the Yoga of Sound Current' (Shabd Yoga).

GJ : Does an enlightened person also need to follow a discipline?

K : What is the enlightenment which you say the person has received?

GJ : To acquire knowledge of a thing is to be enlightened about it.

K : Whose function is it to acquire knowledge?

GJ : It is the function of the mind. Only the mind needs to know.

K : If I accept your statement then enlightenment is subordinate to the mind and the mind has the upper hand. In other words the mind is a Gyani or possessor of knowledge. If the mind has already acquired knowledge then where is the need for following any discipline? A discipline or path is needed only to acquire knowledge. Your thesis shows that you consider the mind to be ignorant which acquires knowledge by following a path of discipline. What is acquired can also be lost. The fear of loss is born with any acquisition. It may be lost again if acquired again. My second observation is that the scriptures describe enlightenment to be not subject to the mind. To attribute enlightenment to the mind is a delusion of the mind. Hence it is obvious that you have not yet grasped the essence of enlightenment.

GJ : Please explain to me the nature of enlightenment.

K : With enlightenment everything else is known but enlightenment itself remains unknown. The entire play of knowledge is based on enlightenment. The mind can only experience enlightenment but during that experience it loses itself.

GJ : It is not clear yet.

K : It is not clear because you interpret enlightenment to be the same as to know some thing. Your confusion will remain unless you overcome the delusion of knowing something and making something known.

Knowing is a relative term. Knowing and not knowing go together. When you get rid of this relativity then you start experiencing enlightenment. Enlightenment is the 'thing in itself'. It is like clay out of which a potter makes many pots of various sizes and shapes. Despite their variety and number the pots are basically clay. But people

do not understand this. They think the clay is changing shapes and sizes whereas clay remains clay and it is the unchanging base. There is no change in the character of clay. Pots come into being and return to being clay at the end. To see the unchanging clay in the pots is enlightenment. To imagine that the clay is changing shapes is delusion. Some say, 'everything is from God' and some say, 'everything is God'. Both are delusions and when both are overcome that is the Absolute Self.

GJ: I see the point. A discussion can only center round relativities where there is a question of the one and the many. When one has passed the stage of relativity all argument ends.

K: Let me revert to your original question. Does an enlightened person need to follow a path or discipline? You now know that all pots are really clay and there is clay in all pots.' Similarly, God is one entity who seems to pervade all creation and all creation is in Him. Even this is a limited concept. I would like to take you to a higher plane than that where there is neither one nor many and after reaching that level of experience alone you will not need to have a path or discipline. I want to release you from the stage where one shouts in ecstasy, 'I am Brahma' because such a claim is still within the field of the body and mind. This subtle ego manifests in the body in four ways, as self-consciousness, mind, intellect and ego. Consciousness becomes awareness, the mind thinks, the intellect decides and the ego separates. Actually these four stages are of the mind alone. The fourth stage of ego starts with "I" which is defective because it excludes others or "you" and affirms only "I". Thus those who shout "Aham Brahma" or "I am Brahma" are stuck in the relativity of I and you. Liberation eludes him since his mind will constantly be changing its attachments within and without. Such defective thinking is obstructive to enlightenment and needs a path or discipline which can rectify it. Such people cannot find freedom from the

dictates of the mind. After all it is the mind which swings between understanding and neglect. Such a Brahma forgets his own self and searches for his own self. This is still a relative stage whatever the slogan or assertion.

GJ : Master! What you have said can be understood only when that experience is gained. At the verbal level it does not mean much.

K : That is why I instruct the novices to understand monism first so that may put both monism and multiplicity in their correct perspective and then rise above both. I ask them not to aspire for lesser goals and get stuck at intermediate stations. The Reality is neither one nor many. In order to experience it directly you will need to follow the discipline or the path. Even the path or discipline can only give you a partial experience. Moreover the Yoga of Sound Current (Shabd Yoga) is not considered a strict discipline. It is termed 'Sahaj Yoga' or 'the simple or natural yoga'. It is a transcendental state of awareness in which one is naturally but fully alert and innately feels universal consciousness in everything that is happening around him including his daily activities. One who reaches that stage is blessed with a unique state where the mind is no longer mind. It becomes higher than mind and reaches the state of the 'Word of Truth' while the mind itself disappears.

GJ : In the course of your sermon you referred to this state of the 'word of truth' and described its center to be in the brain. It gave me the impression that one could have that experience through listening to a sermon (satsang).

K : When the mind moves from one center to another it undergoes the experiences of those centers. For instance, when it rests at the eye-center it sees. The same is the case with the tongue etc. You cannot see or taste anything merely by listening to its description. Similarly, the mind cannot experience 'Brahma' or 'divinity' unless it rests at the 'Brahma' or the 'divine center'.

GJ : Then Brahma is not all-pervasive. He is also bound by space.

K : You are again mistaken. When you call something 'all-pervading' it also has to be limited in space in contradistinction. The sun is limited to a space but its rays are all-pervading. The earth is confined to the globe but it also pervades everything made out of clay. Thus the concepts of God, Mind and Matter (Brahma, Purush and Prakriti) can be said to be both limited and unlimited. Whatever is enveloped by a relativity is both one and many, limited and unlimited. This is the law of nature. My teachings are based on nature and the natural law as revealed by direct observation. I do not want to force a set of rigid beliefs down the throats of people like organised religions do. I call delusion, delusion. Whatever is experienced at any particular level I call 'true' for that level. From these relative levels I lead them beyond relativities step by step quite naturally. I assess the aspirant and lead him in a natural manner by making appropriate combinations of action, devotion and knowledge to suit individual requirements and guide him upward. A day will come when my teachings will spread world wide through an appropriate human instrument.

GJ : You are the greatest Master I have come across and there is no doubt that your teachings will receive the widest recognition.

K : Great and small; yes and no, agreement and disagreement are relative terms. It is this relativity which is called Maya or illusion. This whole universe is a play of these relativities.

GJ : Liberation and bondage are also a game of the Lord. Only when we rise above both shall we see the Truth.

K : Liberation and bondage is a game of the mind. It is a divine game from the point of view of the individual soul. The mind has thousands of qualities and it is bound by them. When it selects and concentrates on any one of

them it becomes an embodiment of the quality and a distinct personality. Such a personality is bound by that quality and is bogged down in it. By virtue of boredom or disgust it abandons that quality and picks up another one and the cycle continues ad infinitum. When he gets tired of the whole exercise he turns towards asceticism. That is the time he needs a Master whose guidance will make him cross all the stages and lose his ego and individuality. He overcomes the bondage of name and form and rises above the after-effects of his karmas or actions. That is liberation.

GJ : How does he overcome the effects of his karma (actions)?
K : When the mind is concentrated on the body then his body suffers pain and pleasure. When the mind is at its own center it obliterates the accumulated mental effects. When it rises to higher centers it sheds its load at each level until he becomes like a burnt-up knot with no force of bondage left in it. This is the state of a sage. When the body-consciousness totally disappears and there remains neither the mind nor the scriptural word then that is known as the State of Truth. That is what you should aspire for.

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Appendix A

Human Body, The Elements & Their Seats

Elements Seat:	Ether (Akash) Throat	Air Heart	Fire Navel	Water Organ of Reproduction	Earth Organ of Evacuation
Principle: Organs associated	Sound Legs	Touch Hands	Form Tongue (Speech)	Taste Sex Organ	Smell Nose
Colour code	White	Bluish - white	Red	Blue	Yellow
Meditation there on gives the power of	Knowledge and Longevity	Knowing the past, present, future	Entering other bodies, curing diseases	Freedom from fear	Levitation
Scriptural Deities Presiding Function	Shakti	Shiva	Vishnu	Brahma	Ganesh
	All-round power	Death/Decay	Preservation	Creation of Species	Purification of body

Appendix B

Four Phases of Sufist Theory and Practice and the Hindu Equivalents

I	II	III	IV
Shari'at (Obligatory Ritual)	Tareeqat (The Prescribed Path)	Ma'rifat (Knowledge and Wisdom)	Haqeeqat (Total identification with total existence)
Preparatory phase of childhood (Brahma- charya Ashram)	Youth and raising a family - married life (Grihasta Ashram)	Life of Contemplation (Vanaprasta Ashram)	Ascetic withdrawal (Sanyas Ashram)
Karma kand	Upasana kand	Gyan or Enlightenment	Realisation

Note: In Kabir's view the Sufis merged the third and the fourth phases of Knowledge and Realisation into one.

Appendix C

The Five Worlds of Sufism

I	II	III	IV	V
Nasut (The World of Humanity) (Forgetfulness)	Malakut (The World of Knowable) (Substances) (Purification of heart)	Jabarut (The World of Power) (Vision of God)	Lahut (The World of Divinity) (The One Divinity)	Hooth (The World of Existence) (Truth)
Feelings	Astral World	Causal World	Monism - Absolute	
			<i>World. Supera-Causal</i>	

Note: The Sixth World is of Ascension (Mi'raaj)

Appendix D

Seven Stages in Sufist Discipline

Arabic Term	Sanskrit Equivalent	Remarks
Shauq	Bhu	Yearning
Talab	Bhuwa	Search
Ishq	Swaha	Love
Tawheed	Maha	Unity of Being
Istighna	Janna	Desirelessness
Fana	Tapa	Self-dissolution
Baqqa	Sathyam	Abide in Truth

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Rs 195

VIKAS PAPERBACK

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VIKAS PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT LTD

576 Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi-110 014

ISBN 81-259-0651-7



9 788125 906513