

Parables and Insights of Sadhu Sundar Singh

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Fishers of Men

Our Lord has called us to be fishers. When a fisherman is at work he makes no noise; he sits quietly there until his net is full; for if he were to make the slightest sound the fish would escape. That is why we work in stillness; when the net is full the whole world will see what we have been doing.

Come unto Me

Once when the Sadhu was crossing the Kailas Range in the Himalayas, he came upon the cave of an aged ascetic, in the midst of wonderful scenery, not far from the Lake of Manessarowar. He was used to finding Indian Sannyasis and Tibetan monks in these mountain regions, but now, to his surprise, he found that this was a hermit who believed in Messiah who bid him to kneel down and pray with him, whose prayer closed with the name of Yeshua, and who then read aloud to him some verses from the Sermon on the Mount from an ancient manuscript. Then the seer told him a wonderful story. He said that he had been born at Alexandria,

of Moslem parents. At the age of thirty he entered a Dervish Order, but neither prayer nor study of the Koran brought him any peace.

In his inward distress he went to a believer who had come from India to Alexandria in order to preach the Gospel. This man read aloud to him the words out of a little book: "Come unto Me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." These words from the Scriptures led him to Messiah. He left his monastery and was baptised, then he went out into the world a wondering preacher, first of all with his teacher, and after that alone. After long years spent in missionary journeys he retired to the holy mountain of Kailas to give himself up to meditation, prayer, and intercession. In this solitary life of prayer wonderful apocalyptic visions and revelations had been granted him.

Doing our Duty without Having to be Told

Once there was a man who had a beautiful garden. The plants and the trees were well cared for, and all who went by were delighted with its appearance. Then the man had to go away for a time. 'But,' he thought to himself, 'my son is here, and he will keep it in order until I come back.' But the son did not bother himself at all about the matter, and no one looked after the garden. The gate was left open, and the neighbours' cows got in and ate up the carefully tended plants. No one watered the thirsty plants, and they; soon began to wither. People used to stand and stare in wonder at the destruction that was being wrought. But the son lolled idly at the window. Then the passer-by asked why he was neglecting the garden like this. 'Oh,' he said, 'my father went away without telling me what to do.' You Indian believers are just like this; your missionaries have gone away, and may not be back for a long time, and you look on and do not bestir yourselves. But if you wish to be true sons, then do your

duty without a special command from your father.

Materialism and Intellectualism

One day when I was in the Himalayas, I was sitting upon the bank of a river; I drew out of the water a beautiful, hard, round stone and smashed it. The inside was quite dry. The stone had been lying a long time in the water, but the water had not penetrated the stone. It is just like that with the people of Europe; for centuries they have been surrounded by Christianity, they are entirely steeped in its blessings; they live in Christianity; yet the religion of the Messiah has not penetrated them, and it does not live in them. Christianity is not at fault; the reason lies rather in the hardness of their hearts. Materialism and intellectualism have made their hearts hard. So I am not surprised that many people here do not understand what true Christianity really is."

Humility

When Yeshua entered Jerusalem the people spread their clothes in the way and strewed branches before Him in order to do Him honour. Yeshua rode upon a donkey, according to the word of the prophet. His feet did not touch the road that was decorated in His honour. It was the donkey that trod upon the garments and the branches. But the donkey would have been very foolish to have been uplifted on that account; for the road really was not decked in its honour! It would be just as foolish if those who testify of Messiah to men were to think anything of themselves because of what men do to them for the sake of Yeshua."

Dependence Upon God

The truth is that we cannot live a single day, nor indeed a single hour, without God. In Him we live and move and have our being. But most of us are like people who are asleep, who breathe without

being conscious of it. If there were no air around them, and they ceased to breathe, they would be neither asleep nor awake; they would die of suffocation. As a rule, however, men never think about the absolutely indispensable gift of the air we breathe. But if we do reflect upon it we are filled with thankfulness and joy.

Our spiritual dependence upon God is something very like that. He sustains us; we live in Him Yet how many of us ever think about it? How many souls are there who really wake from dumber and begin to breathe in the Divine air, without which the soul would die of suffocation! What kind of breathing, then, is this? The breath of the soul is prayer, through which fresh currents of air sweep into our being, bringing with them fresh supplies of vital force from the Love of God, on whom our whole life depends.

All life comes from God, but most people never think about this at all; they are quite unconscious of their spiritual life. It is only when a man begins to pray that he becomes conscious of this relationship.

Then he begins to think, and realises how wonderful it is to live in God.

Fresh Life through Prayer

Once I was sitting upon the shore of a lake. As I sat there I noticed some fish that came up to the surface and opened their mouths. At first I thought they were hungry and that they were looking for insects, but a fisherman told me afterwards that although they can breathe quite well under water they have to come up to the surface every now and again to inhale deep draughts of fresh air, or they would die.

It is the same with us. The world is like an ocean; we can live in it, carry on our work and all our varied occupations, but from time to time we need to receive fresh life through prayer. Those believers who do not set apart quiet times for prayer have not yet found their true life in Messiah.

The Necessity of Prayer

God has created both the mother's milk and the child's desire to drink it. But the milk does not flow of itself into the child's mouth. No, the child must lie in its mother's bosom and suck the milk diligently.

God has created the spiritual food that we need. He has filled the soul of man with desire for this food, with an impulse to cry out for it and to drink it in. The spiritual milk, the nourishment of our souls, we receive through prayer. By means of fervent prayer we must receive it into our soul. As we do this we become stronger day by day just like the infant at the breast."

Prayer is both the air we breathe and the mother's milk of the soul. Without prayer it is impossible to receive supernatural gifts from God.

Prayer is the necessary preparation for receiving spiritual gifts from God. Only longing and prayer make room for God in

our hearts. God cannot give us spiritual gifts excepting through prayer. It is only as we are immersed in the spiritual world that we can understand spiritual things.

There are beautiful birds in the air, and twinkling stars in the heavens, but if you desire pearls you must plunge down into the depths of the ocean to find them.

There are many beautiful things in the world around us, but pearls can only be discovered in the depths of the sea; if we wish to possess spiritual pearls we must plunge into the depths, that is, we must pray, we must sink down into the secret depths of contemplation and prayer. Then we shall perceive precious pearls.

Out of the Darkness

When we are in the dark we know through our sense of touch what kind of object we are holding in our hands, whether it is a stick or a snake. Both can be felt in the darkness, but we can see them only in the light. So long as we are not in the light we grope and stumble about, and we cannot see true reality.

The man who does not believe in Divine Light is still in darkness. What then shall we do to come to the Light? We must step out of the darkness and approach the Light; that is, we must kneel before our Saviour and pray to Him fervently. Then we shall be bathed in His Light, and we shall see everything clearly. Prayer is the key that opens the door of Divine Reality.

Prayer leads us out of that darkness in which, in spite of all our intelligence and power of vision, we cannot perceive the Light of Truth. Prayer leads us into the world of spiritual light.

Strength and Joy and Peace

Through prayer, by the simple method of prayer, we become aware of Messiah's Presence and learn to know Him. You must go, into the stillness and pray to Messiah in solitude; there you will hear the Voice of Him who alone can help you. If you read His Word and pray to Him even only for half an hour every day, you will have the same experience. He will

reveal Himself to your souls. I am sure that He will reveal Himself to you in prayer; then you will know Him as He is. And He will not only reveal Himself to you, but He will come and give you strength and joy and peace.

Continual Abandonment to God

The essence of prayer does not consist in asking God for something but in opening our hearts to God, in speaking with Him, and living with Him in perpetual communion. Prayer is continual abandonment to God.

Prayer does not mean asking God for all kinds of things we want; it is rather the desire for God Himself, the only Giver of Life. Prayer is not asking, but union with God.

Prayer is not a painful effort to gain from God help in the varying needs of our lives. Prayer is the desire to possess God Himself, the Source of all Life. The true spirit of prayer does not consist in asking for blessings, but in receiving Him who is

the giver of all blessing, and in living a life of fellowship with Him.

Prayer is not a kind of begging for favours; it is rather breathing and living in God.

The True Children of God

A little child often runs to its mother and exclaims: "Mother! Mother!" Very often the child does not want anything in particular, he only wants to be near his mother, to sit upon her lap, or to follow her about the house, for the sheer pleasure of being near her, talking to her, hearing her dear voice. Then the child is happy.

His happiness does not consist in asking and receiving all kinds of things from his mother. If that were what he wanted, he would be impatient and obstinate and therefore unhappy. No, his happiness lies in feeling his mother's love and care, and in knowing the joy of her mother-love.

It is just the same with the true children of God; they do not trouble themselves so much about spiritual blessings. They only

want to sit at the Lord's feet, to be in living touch with Him, and when they do that they are supremely content.

Praying for Material Things

In another parable St. Sundar shows how mean and contemptible a thing it is to beg for all kinds of everyday things when one is in the Presence of the greatness and wonder of God:

Have you ever seen a heron standing motionless on the shore of a lake? From his attitude you might think he was standing gazing at God's Power and Glory, wondering at the great expanse of water, and at its power to cleanse and satisfy the thirst of living creatures. But the heron has no such thoughts in his head at all; he stands there hour after hour, simply in order to see whether he can catch a frog or a little fish.

Many human beings behave like that in prayer and meditation. They sit on the shore of God's Ocean; but they give no thought to His Power and Love, they pay no attention to His Spirit that is able to

cleanse them from their sins; neither do they consider His Being which can satisfy their soul's thirst; they give themselves up entirely to the thought of how they can gain something that will please them, something that will help them to enjoy the transitory pleasures of this world, and so they turn their faces away from the clear water of spiritual peace. They give themselves up to the things of this world which pass away, and they perish with them.

Sometimes people ask me this question: "If God does not wish us to ask for material things, but for Himself, the Giver of all good, why do the Scriptures never say: Do not pray for this or that, pray simply for the Holy Spirit? Why has this never been clearly expressed?"

I reply, Because He knew that people would never begin to pray if they could not ask for earthly things like riches and health and honours; He says to Himself: If they ask for such things the desire for something better will awaken in them, and finally they will only care about the higher things.

God's Purifying Rays

The heat and the sun's rays, falling upon salt water, cause evaporation, which gradually becomes condensed into clouds, which again descend in the form of sweet, fresh water. The salt, and all the other things in the water, are left behind.

In the same way the thoughts and desires of the praying soul rise to heaven like clouds; then the Sun of Righteousness cleanses them from the taint of sin by His purifying rays. The prayer then becomes a great cloud which falls in showers of blessing, life, and strength upon the earth below.

Through prayer we experience the greatest of all miracles, heaven upon earth.

Such miracles also are worked through the power of persistent intercession. There are times when one can do more good by prayer than by preaching. A man who prays incessantly in a solitary cave

can help other people a great deal. An influence goes out from him which actually pervades the spiritual atmosphere, even though this influence is exerted in great stillness, unperceived by men, just as wireless messages are conveyed by unseen waves, and as the words which we speak penetrate the consciousness of other people through mysterious channels of communication.

He who searches for Divine Reality with all his heart and soul and finds it, becomes aware that, before he began to seek God, God was seeking him, in order to draw him into the joy of fellowship with Him, into the peace of His Presence; even as a child who has strayed, when he is safely back in his mother's arms, realises that she had been searching for him, with deep maternal love, before he had begun to think about her.

A Prayer

O Lord, God who is all in all to me, Life of my life and Spirit of my spirit, have mercy on me and fill me with Your Holy Spirit and with love that there may be no room

for anything else in my heart. I do not ask for any blessing, but for Yourself, You who are the giver of all blessings and of all life.

I do not ask for the world and its pomp and glory, or for heaven, but I need You Yourself, for where You are, there is heaven.

In Yourself alone is satisfaction and abundance for my heart; You Yourself, O Creator, have created this heart for Yourself, and not for any other created thing. Therefore this heart cannot find rest in nothing but You: only in You, O Father, You who have made this longing for peace.

So now take out of this heart whatever is opposed to You and abide and rule in it Yourself. Amen.

The Peace and Joy of Messiah

The most wonderful experience the Sadhu has ever had of this peace was on that occasion when he was thrown into a well which was full of dead bodies.

The physical suffering was great, but in spirit I was happy. I began to pray to God, and His joy flowed into my heart to such an extent that I forgot the gruesome place I was in. A wonderful peace filled my heart, so lovely that I cannot describe it.

Never have I experienced greater blessedness in the peace of Yeshua, received through prayer, than during those very days. Messiah's peace turned that deep well into the Gate of Heaven.

How was it possible to have the peace of God in the pitch-dark night, in the midst of corpses and dead men's bones? Joy like this, peace like this, comes from nothing in this world. God alone can give it.

While I was sitting therein the well I reflected that I never felt this kind of happiness while I lived in the house of my parents in comfort and luxury. From where, then did this overflowing joy in that terrible den come from? I saw then more clearly than ever, that Yeshua is

alive, and that it was He who was filling my heart with peace and joy.

I was talking once with a very learned man, a psychologist, who assured me that the wonderful peace which I experienced was simply the effect of my own imagination. Before I answered him I told him the story of a person who was blind from birth, and who did not believe in the existence of the sun.

One cold winter day he sat outside in the sunshine, and then his friends asked him: "How do you feel now?" He replied: "I feel very warm." "It is the sun which is making you warm, although you cannot see it, you feel its effect". "No!" he said, "this is impossible; this warmth comes from my own body; it is due to the circulation of the blood. You will never make me believe that a ball of fire is suspended in the midst of the heavens without any pillar to support it."

Well, I said to the psychologist, What do you think of the blind man? "He was a fool!" he answered. And you, I said to him, are a learned fool! You say that my

peace is the effect of my own imagination, but I have experienced it.

Spiritual Sweetness and Inward Peace

The Cross is like the fruit of the walnut-tree. The outer rind is bitter, but the kernel is refreshing and strengthening. From the outside the Cross has neither beauty nor goodness; its essence is only revealed to those who bear it. They find a kernel of spiritual sweetness and inward peace.

Suffering Can Lead to Life

During an earthquake it sometimes happens that fresh springs break out in dry places which water and quicken the land so that plants can grow.

In the same way the shattering experiences of suffering can cause the living water to well up in a human heart.

A newborn child has to cry, for only in this way will his lungs expand. A doctor once told me of a child who could not breathe when it was born. In order to make it

breathe the doctor gave it a slight blow. The mother must have thought the doctor cruel. But he was really doing the kindest thing possible.

As with newborn children the lungs are contracted, so are our spiritual lungs. But through suffering God strikes us in love. Then our lungs expand and we can breathe and pray.

Once there was a man who noticed a silkworm in its cocoon; he saw how it was twisting and struggling; it was in great distress. The man went to it and helped it to get free. The silkworm made a few more efforts, but after a while it died. The man had not helped it; he had only disturbed its growth.

Another man saw a silkworm suffering in the same way, but he did not do anything to help it. He knew that this conflict and struggle was a good thing; he knew that the silkworm would grow stronger in the process, and so be better prepared for its new stage of life. In the same way suffering and distress in this world help us to get ready for the next life.

Giving of Ourselves for the Good of Others

Many people despise those who give their health, their strength, their means, for others, and call them fools; and yet they are those who are able to save many.

Not until we lavish our strength do men begin to see that we are not selfish, but that we are really redeemed. Our Saviour says that we are the salt of the earth. Salt does not impart its flavour to other things until it is dissolved.

Suppose we put some salt into a saucepan with boiling rice; because it dissolves it gives flavour to thousands of grains of rice. In the same manner we can only redeem others by giving ourselves up for them. This giving out becomes a blessing to others. That is my own experience.

When I went up to Tibet, if I did not give out some blessing or power which I felt I possessed, I lost my peace; and when I

gave away any gift of strength, then peace came back.

The pipe which carries water from place to place is always clean, because it is always being cleansed by fresh pure flowing water. It is just the same with those who are used by Holy Spirit to serve as conduits of the living water to others. They keep themselves pure and holy and become heirs of the Kingdom of God.

As the inner life with God grows through the loving service of others, so it contracts if it shuts itself up to self centred reflection, caring nothing for the world outside. A mysticism which confines itself to "pure contemplation" spells the death of true fellowship with God.

Bearing Fruit

Fish which always live in the depths of the ocean lose some of their faculties, like the Tibetan hermits who always live in the dark. The ostrich loses his power of flying because he does not use his wings.

Therefore do not bury the gifts and talents which have been given to you, but use them, that you may enter into the joy of your Lord.

While I was in Tibet I saw a Buddhist, a monk, who had lived for five or six years in a cave. When he went into the cave he had good eyesight. But because he stayed so long in the darkness his eyes grew weaker and weaker, and at last he became quite blind. It is just the same with us. If we do not use the blessings which we have received from God for His Glory, we are in danger of losing them for ever.

When I was in Israel I stood by the Jordan and said to myself, This fresh water is always flowing into the Dead Sea, and yet the Sea remains dead, because it has no outlet.

Even so there are individual Christians and Christian communities and churches that are dead because the living waters of the Gospel are always flowing into them, but they are not flowing out again to make the land fruitful. They receive

gifts of knowledge and experience, but they do not share them with others. The gifts of the Word and of the Spirit come to them, but they do not give them out again to those who have them not.

If we have really received God's redeeming message, it becomes a power within us which impels us to speak of the Lord. Those who have experienced this cannot sit still and keep silence about that which God has done for them; no, they must speak.

We have no right to be silent; even when confession of Messiah leads to persecution and suffering we must bear witness.

It is a joy to me to be allowed to bear witness. I want to bear witness of my Saviour, because I have received so much from Him. What a privilege it is to be His witness, a testimony to the Living Messiah! That is a privilege not even given to the angels, because they cannot testify to His power as Redeemer. They have no experience of salvation because they have never sinned. Only those who

have experienced His grace can bear witness.

Oh what love God has shown toward us, in refusing this honour to the angels, and in granting it to men.

It is not necessary for everyone to be a preacher. It is quite possible to be a great preacher without being a witness for Messiah. It is also possible to be a living witness, indeed a great witness, for Messiah without being a preacher or a speaker.

Every Believer, whether man or woman, boy or girl, rich or poor, workman or peasant, writer or priest, judge or official, doctor or lawyer, teacher or pupil, government official or missionary, is only a follower of Messiah on condition that he witnesses for his Lord.

In order to bear witness to Him it does not necessarily follow that we must preach in the marketplace or from the pulpit, or that we must conduct Bible study classes, Sunday Schools, or other such ministries; no, these are only some

of the ways by which we can witness; but all Believers, wherever they are, have the opportunity of witnessing for their Master.

They can do this by their upright life, their blameless character, by the integrity of their behaviour and their sincerity in speech, by their enthusiasm for their faith and their love for their Master, using every possible opportunity of telling others about Yeshua the Messiah.

Every one of them can be a witness for Messiah, not only with his lips but by his whole life. Every follower of Messiah ought to be a living martyr, who lives for the sake of his Master.

The Parable of the Boat

The fishes of the sea live in salt water, yet when we eat boiled fish there is no salt taste in the water in which they have been boiled. They have lived in an atmosphere impregnated with salt, yet they have kept free from its flavour. So do true Believers live in the world, without taking it into their hearts.

The man of prayer remains free from the taint of sin although he lives in a world stained with sin, because prayer preserves his inner life.

The world is like an ocean. We cannot live without water, it is true, but it is also true that we cannot live if we allow the wafer to engulf us, for there is life in water and also death. If we make use of water we find that there is life in it, but if we are drowned we find death.

In this world we are like little boats. A boat is only useful on the water; for there it conveys men from one shore to another. But if we drag it overland, through fields, or into a town, we find that as a vehicle it is utterly useless. The place for a boat is on a river or on the sea. But this does not mean that the water must be in the boat. For if it is in the boat, the boat will become useless; no one would then be able to steer it over the water. It would fill with water, sink beneath the waves, and whoever was in it would be drowned. The boat must be in the water, but the water must not be in the boat.

Faith and Experience

In Messiah I have found what Hinduism and Buddhism could not give me, peace and joy in this world. People do not believe, because they are strangers to the experience.

Once when I was wandering about in the Himalayas, in the region of eternal snow and ice, I came upon some hot springs, and I told a friend about them. He would not believe it. "How can there be hot springs in the midst of ice and snow?" I said: Come and dip your hands in the water, and you will see that I am right. He came, dipped his hands in the water, felt the heat and believed. Then he said: "There must be a fire in the mountain." So after he had been convinced by experience his brain began to help him to understand the matter.

Faith and experience must come first, and understanding will follow. We cannot understand until we have some spiritual experience, and that comes through prayer. As we practise prayer we shall

come to know who the Father is and the Son; we shall become certain that Messiah is everything to us and that nothing can separate us from Him and from His Love. Temptations and persecution may come, but nothing can part us from Messiah. Prayer is the only way to this glorious experience.

Our knowledge of Divine Reality depends upon our inner life, and not upon philosophical arguments. Although philosophy tries to grasp Divine Reality, it does not succeed. No one can grasp Divine Reality with the intellect.

Yeshua began His work, not among philosophers, but with simple fishermen. The world has seen many learned men, and many of them it has already forgotten; but these simple men who helped Yeshua the Messiah in His work will never be forgotten.

It is not God who sends the sinner to hell, it is his own sins. God allows everyone to come to heaven; indeed, He invites everyone most earnestly to come in. But sinners themselves feel that it is a torture

to stay there; that is why they do not desire it. God does not make their entrance into heaven either difficult or impossible, no, it is their own inner attitude which makes it impossible for them to have any joy in eternal life.

Seeing God

The Indian seer lost God in Nature; the mystic who is a follower of Messiah, on the other hand, finds God in Nature. The Hindu mystic believes that God and Nature are one and the same; the mystic who follows Messiah knows that there must be a Creator to account for the universe.

When I entered heaven for the first time I looked all round me and then I asked: Where is God? and they answered and said to me: "God is seen here as little as on earth for God is infinite. But Messiah is here, He is the image of the Invisible God, and only in Him can anyone see God, either here or upon earth."

Some years ago I saw how a simple countryman was being shown a red glass

bottle filled with milk. They asked him what was in the bottle. He said: "Wine, brandy, whisky." He could not believe that it was filled with milk until he saw the milk being poured out from it, because he could not see the white colour of the milk owing to the redness of the glass.

So it is with the Person of the Saviour. He became Man and His Godhead was hidden in His Humanity. People saw Him tired hungry and thirsty, and they said: "If He is God, why is He tired, hungry and thirsty, and why does He pray to God?" They saw only His human side, and could not believe that He was really Divine. But those who followed Him and lived with Him knew that He was more than human and that He was God.

Some years ago in Tibet I heard a story about a king who wished to send a message to his people. He entrusted the errand to his servants, but they would not do as he wished. The king, who loved his subjects, now resolved to take the message to them himself in order to be convinced of their difficulties.

He could not go there as a king, for he wanted his subjects to speak to him freely of all their sufferings and distresses. So he changed his garments, left off his royal robes, and dressed himself like a poor man. Then he went right among his people and said to them:

“I have been sent by the king in order to learn about all your difficulties.” The poor and the distressed had confidence in him and told him all their anxieties, and he saw how he could help them. But there were also some proud people who could not bring themselves to believe that such a poor man was really the king's messenger, so they were rude to him and chased him away.

Later on the king came to his subjects at the head of his army in all his royal state, and the people could hardly recognise him again nor believe that it was the same person. They said: “Then he was a poor man and now he is king.” The proud who had despised him were punished and thrown into prison, but those who had been good to him were honoured and their wants relieved.

Even so is it with the Word of Life who became man; His people did not see His Glory, and He was crucified. But the days are coming when we shall see Him in His Glory, and we shall know that He is the same Yeshua the Messiah who lived like a poor man for thirty-three years upon this earth.

Once when I was travelling about in the Himalayas I saw something that made the love of God very real to me. In a Tibetan village I noticed a crowd of people standing under a burning tree and looking up into the branches. I came near and discovered in the branches a bird which was anxiously flying round a nest full of young ones. The mother bird wanted to save her little ones, but she could not.

When the fire reached the nest the people waited breathlessly to see what she would do. No one could climb the tree; no one could help her. Now she could easily have saved her own life by flight, but instead of fleeing she sat down on the nest, covering the little ones carefully with her wings. The fire seized

her and burnt her to ashes. She showed her love to her little ones by giving her life for them. If then, this little insignificant creature had such love, how much more must our Heavenly Father love His children, the Creator love His creatures!

Messiah speaks: "If you talk with a man who has been born blind about different colours: red, blue, yellow, and their variations, he has no conception of their glory and beauty, and he is quite unable to value them for he only knows about them; he knows their different names, it is true, but he can never have a true idea of the various colours until his eyes are opened.

In fact, the colours are quite remote from his experience. Even so is it with the eyes of the spirit. A man may be as learned as possible; but until he has received his spiritual sight he cannot know Me, nor see My glory, nor understand that I am the Incarnate God."

It is impossible for us to achieve our own salvation. Good ethical teaching sounds well, but it accomplishes nothing. A fish

which has been caught in a net can see a certain distance before it; it can even move about a little, but it is still a prisoner. If it tries to work its way out, it realises still more painfully that it is a prisoner.

My studies broadened my mind, but in spite of everything I discovered that I was caught in the net of sin. I am not alone in feeling this; I have met many, many Indians who had forsaken the world, who were living in caves in the jungle where they were striving with all their might to find the way to spiritual freedom; but all their efforts were fruitless. They only became more deeply entangled in the net. Many of them, however, went on seeking until they found Messiah. Messiah broke the fetters of sin, and they were free.

If the little chicken in the egg were to declare that nothing existed outside the egg, and its mother were to reply: "No, in the outside world there are mountains, flowers, and blue sky," and the little chicken were to reply: "You are talking nonsense, I can not see any of these

things,” and if the shell were to break suddenly, then the little chicken would see that his mother was right.

It is just the same with us, we are still in the shell, and we see neither heaven nor hell. But one day the shell will break, and then we shall see. At the same time there are hints of the future state: the little chicken in the shell has eyes and wings, which are in themselves a sufficient proof that they will be needed for a future life.

The eye is created for seeing, yet what can it see while it is in the shell? The wings are created for flying, but how can it fly while it is in the shell? It is quite clear that neither eyes nor wings are intended for a cramped life within the limits of a shell. In the same way, we have many desires and longings that can never be satisfied here. There must be some way of satisfying them, however, and this opportunity is Eternity. But just as the little chicken needs to be kept warm as long as it is in the shell, so while we live in this world we have to be cherished and warmed by the brooding Presence and Fire of the Holy Spirit."

Other teachers who know that they will have to leave this world are anxious that their teaching should continue to live in written form when oral instruction is no longer possible. But Messiah is quite different. He never dreamt of leaving us alone, and He will be with us to the end of the world; therefore He did not need to leave any written word behind.

Then there is another reason why He wrote nothing. If He had written something in a book, men would have bowed down and worshipped it, instead of worshipping the Lord Himself. God's Word is only a hand stretched out to point the way to the Lord who is the Truth and the Life. The Life and the Spirit of the Lord can only be written in the hearts of men, and not in books.

In the mountains the rushing streams make their own river bed along which they flow; but in the plains men have to work hard to make canals, in order that the water may flow along them.

It is just the same with those who live upon the heights with God. Holy Spirit

streams through them freely, while those who give little time to prayer and communion with God have to find their way with much labour and effort.

Seeking the Messiah

The Sadhu once said:

We in India knew already that God is good. But we did not know that He was so good that Messiah was willing to die for us. The highest light comes from Messiah and full satisfaction is only found in Messiah; he who finds Him finds Heaven upon earth.

The Wise Men followed the Star to Bethlehem. But when they reached Bethlehem they no longer needed the Star, for they had found Messiah, the Sun of Righteousness.

When the sun rises the stars lose their radiance. In India we have many genuine truth-seekers, who faithfully follow their Star; but it is only starlight which guides them. But those who follow after Yeshua have the glory of the Sun.

Hinduism and Buddhism have dug canals, but they have no living water to fill them. In this sense I was prepared to receive the Living Water from Messiah.

There is in the Himalayas a certain kind of flower which by its scent lulls men into unconsciousness; in form and colour the flowers are beautiful; everyone who sees them feels attracted to them, but no one walks near them, or sits down among them without being overtaken by mysterious and fatal slumber.

At first I thought that the flowers were poisonous, but people assured me that this was not the case, for those who have been overcome by the scent do not die until the twelfth day, and then death ensues from hunger and thirst, and not from the immediate effect of the drug.

In like manner the things of this world are not in themselves evil, but they stupefy careless souls, and hinder them from being conscious of spiritual hunger and thirst, and they drift into a sleep which may easily lead to spiritual death.

I say to the Hindu sadhus: You become sadhus because you want to torture yourselves. I became a sadhu in order to serve; I do not torture myself, although I have often been tortured by others.

Indians forsake the world and deny themselves before they have discovered the fullness of God. They practise self-denial for its own sake not because they have found peace, but because they want to win peace.

When a man is thirsty, whether he be learned or ignorant, young or old, in order to quench his thirst what he needs is not knowledge, but water. Before he drinks the water he does not need to know that it contains oxygen and hydrogen. If he refused to drink it until he could understand what we mean by oxygen and hydrogen he would die of thirst.

From time immemorial men have quenched their thirst with water without knowing anything about its chemical constituents. In like manner we do not need to be instructed in all the mysteries

of doctrine, but we do need to receive the Living Water which Yeshua the Messiah will give us and which alone can satisfy our souls.

It must be admitted that philosophy has made no progress in the course of centuries. The same old problems repeat themselves, though in new forms and in fresh language. In India an ox with blindfolded eyes goes round an oil-press all the day long. When his eyes are unbandaged in the evening he finds that he has been going round and round in a circle and that although he has succeeded in producing some oil he has gone no further.

Although the philosophers have been at it for hundreds of years, they have not reached their goal. Now and then, after much labour they have produced a little oil, which they have left behind them, but it is not sufficient to meet the sore need of mankind.

Man is Not God

God is our Creator and we are His creatures; He is our Father, and we are His children. If we ourselves were divine, we would no longer feel any desire to worship. If we want to rejoice in God we must be different from Him; the tongue could taste no sweetness if there were no difference between it and that which it tasted.

To be redeemed does not mean to be lost in or absorbed into God. We do not lose our personality in God; rather we find it. Pantheism does not admit the fact of sin; therefore we often find immoral conduct among its followers.

No one ought to imagine that the Presence of Messiah and the sense of "Heaven upon earth" mean what a believer in pantheism means when he says: "Now I am God." No, we are in God and God is in us. But that does not mean that we are God or that He is man.

There is fire in the coal, and the coal is in the fire, but the coal is not the fire, and

the fire is not the coal. We are only so far united with God as we give our hearts to Him and allow Him to baptise us with Holy Spirit.

Look at the sponge as it is immersed in the water. The sponge is in the water, and the water is in the sponge, but the sponge is not the water, nor the water the sponge, but both are different things.

When we give time to prayer then we are in God, God is in us; but that does not mean that God is our soul or that we are God.

Just as the water is in the sponge, so God is everywhere and in all things, but He is not identified with created things.

Have you ever stood in a smithy? Did you notice how the blacksmith held the iron in the fire? It became more and more glowing the longer it lay in the forge, until at last it looked quite like fire. The iron was in the fire, and the fire was in the iron, but the iron was not the fire, nor the fire the iron. When the iron began to glow, the smith could bend it into any

shape he desired, but it still remained iron. Even so we still retain our personality when we allow ourselves to be penetrated by Messiah.

The Atonement achieved a union which was not there before. He is in us, and we are in Him; by this I do not mean that kind of union which Indians call "losing oneself in God." They talk of the stream which is swallowed up or lost in the ocean. We do not lose ourselves, but we attain life in union with Him.

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