

The Manifestation of God's Presence

by Sadhu Sundar Singh

God's presence is manifested to each heart in accordance with its needs, and this manifestation is necessary for bringing men into the way of righteousness.

Scripture: Genesis 1:31, Isaiah 64:4, Matthew 3:11, John 1:9, John 4:24, John 6:63, John 10:28, John 14:21, Colossians 1:15, Revelation 1:8

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Sadhu Sundar Singh preaches about the importance of spiritual vision and the true happiness that comes through the heart rather than mere physical sight. He emphasizes the need for believers to have a personal relationship with Jesus in order to truly know Him and experience His presence. Through various analogies, he illustrates how sin can hinder our spiritual perception and the importance of receiving the Holy Spirit to drive away the darkness of sin. Sadhu Sundar Singh also highlights the significance of loving God and others, understanding the spiritual language of the Bible, and seeking God's manifestation in nature with spiritual insight.

Transcript

SECTION I

The Disciple,--O Master, Fountain of life! Why dost Thou hide Thyself from those that adore Thee, and dost not rejoice the eyes of them that long to gaze upon Thee?

The Master,--1. My true child, true happiness depends not upon the sight of the eyes, but comes through spiritual vision, and depends upon the heart. In Palestine thousands looked upon Me, but all of them did not thus obtain true happiness. By mortal eyes only those things can be perceived that are mortal, for eyes of flesh cannot behold an immortal God and spiritual beings. For instance, you yourself cannot see your own spirit, therefore how can you behold its Creator? But when the spiritual eyes are opened, then you can surely see Him who is Spirit, (John iv.24), and that which you now see of Me you see not with eyes of flesh, but with the eyes of the spirit.

If, as you say, thousands of people saw Me in Palestine then were all their spiritual eyes opened, or did I Myself become mortal? The answer is, No! I took on a mortal body so that in it I might give a ransom for the sins of the world; and when the work of salvation was completed for sinners (John xix.30), then that which was immortal transfigured what was mortal into glory. Therefore after the resurrection only those

were able to see Me who had received spiritual sight (Acts x. 40,41).

2. Many there are in this world who know about Me, but do not know Me; that is they have no personal relationship with Me, therefore they have no true apprehension of or faith in Me, and do not accept Me as their Saviour and Lord.

Just as if one talks with a man born blind about different colors such as red, blue, yellow, he remains absolutely unaware of their charm and beauty, he cannot attach any value to them, because he only knows about them, and is aware of their various names. But with regard to colors he can have no true conception until his eyes are opened. In the same manner until a man's spiritual eyes are opened, howsoever learned he may be, he cannot know Me, he cannot behold My glory, and he cannot understand that I am God Incarnate.

3. There are many believers who are aware of My presence in their hearts bringing to them spiritual life and peace, but cannot plainly see Me. Just as the eye can see many things, yet when someone drops medicine into the eye does not see it, but the presence of the medicine is felt cleansing the inner eye and promoting the power of sight.

4. The true peace which is born of My presence in the hearts of true believers they are unable to see, but, feeling its power, they become happy in it. Nor can they see that happiness of mind or heart through which they enjoy the peace of My presence. It is the same with the tongue and sweetmeats. The faculty of taste which resides in the tongue and the sweetness it perceives are both invisible. Thus also I give My children life and joy by means of the hidden manna, which the world with all its wisdom knows not nor can know (Rev. ii.7).

5. Sometimes during sickness the faculty of taste in the tongue is interfered with, and during that time, however tasty the food given to the sick person may be, it has an ill taste to him. In just the same way sin interferes with the taste for spiritual things. Under such circumstances My Word and service and My presence lost their attraction to the sinner, and instead of profiting by them he begins to argue about and to criticize them.

6. Many believers again--like the man born blind, on receiving his sight--are able to see Jesus as a prophet and the Son of Man, but do not regard Him as the Christ and the Son of God (John ix.17, 35-37), until I am revealed to them a second time in power.

7. A mother once hid herself in a garden amongst some densely growing shrubs, and her little son went in search of her here and there, crying as he went. Through the whole garden he went, but could not find her. A servant said to him, "Sonny, don't cry! Look at the mangoes on this tree and all the pretty, pretty flowers in the garden. Come, I am going to get some for you." But the child cried out, "No! No! I want my mother. The food she gives me is nicer than all the mangoes, and her love is sweeter far than all these flowers, and indeed you know that all this garden is mine, for all that my mother has is mine. No! I want my mother!" When the mother, hidden in the bushes, heard this, she rushed out and, snatching her child to her breast, smothered him with kisses, and that garden became a paradise to the child. In this way My children cannot find in this great garden of a world, so full of charming and beautiful things, any true joy until they find Me. I am their Emmanuel, who is ever with them, and I make Myself known to them (John xiv.21).

8. Just as the sponge lies in the water, and the water fills the sponge, but the water is not the sponge and the sponge is not the water, but they ever remain different things, so children abide in Me and I in them. This is not pantheism, but it is the kingdom of God, which is set up in the hearts of those who abide in this world; and just as the water in the sponge, I am in every place and in everything, but they are not I (Luke xvii.21).

9. Take a piece of charcoal, and however much you may wash it its blackness will not disappear, but let the fire enter into it and its dark colour vanishes. So also when the sinner receives the Holy Spirit (who is from the Father and Myself, for the Father and I are one), which is the baptism of fire, all the blackness of sin is driven away, and he is made a light to the world (Matt. iii.11, v.14). As the fire in the charcoal, so I abide in My children and they in Me, and through them I make Myself manifest to the world.

SECTION II

The Disciple,--Master, if Thou wouldst make a special manifestation of Thyself to the world, men would no longer doubt the existence of God and Thy own divinity, but all would believe and enter on the path of righteousness.

The Master,--1. My son, the inner state of every man I know well, and to each heart in accordance with its needs I make Myself known; and for bringing men into the way of righteousness there is no better means than the manifestation of Myself. For man I became man that he might know God, not as someone terrible and foreign, but as full of love and like to himself, for he is like Him and made in His image.

Man also has a natural desire that he should see Him in whom he believes and who loves him. But the Father cannot be seen, for He is by nature incomprehensible, and he who would comprehend Him must have the same nature. But man is a comprehensible creature, and being so cannot see God. Since, however, God is Love and He has given to man that same faculty of love, therefore, in order that that craving for love might be satisfied, He adopted a form of existence that man could comprehend. Thus He became man, and His children with all the holy angels may see Him and enjoy Him (Col. i.15, ii.9). Therefore I said that he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father (John xiv.9-10). And although while in the form of man I am called the Son, I am the eternal and everlasting Father (Isa. ix.6).

2. I and the Father and the Holy Spirit are One. Just as in the sun there are both heat and light, but the light is not heat, and the heat is not light, but both are one, though in their manifestation they have different forms, so I and the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father, bring light and heat to the world. The Spirit, which is the baptismal fire, burns to ashes in the hearts of believers all manner of sin and iniquity, making them pure and holy. I who am the True Light (John i.9, viii.12), dissipate all dark and evil desires, and leading them in the way of righteousness bring them at last to their eternal home. Yet We are not three but One, just as the sun is but one.

3. Whatever worth and power and high faculty God has endowed man with must be brought into action, otherwise they gradually decay and die. In this way faith, if it is not truly fixed on the living God, is shattered by the shock of sin and transformed into doubt. Often one hears something like this, "If this or that doubt of mine be removed I am ready to believe." That is as though one with a broken limb should ask the doctor to take away the pain before he sets the limb. Surely this is folly, for the pain comes from the breaking of the limb, and when that is set the pain will of itself pass away. Thus by the act of sin man's tie with God has been snapped, and doubts, which are spiritual pains, have arisen. It needs must, therefore, that the union with God be again renewed, then those doubts which have arisen regarding My divinity and

the existence of God will of themselves disappear. Then in place of pain there will come that wonderful peace which the world cannot give nor take away. Thus it was that I became flesh, that between God and poor broken men there might be union, and they might be happy with Him in heaven for evermore.

4. God is love, and in every living creature He has set this faculty of love, but especially in man. It is therefore nothing but right that the Lover who has given us life and reason and love itself should receive His due tribute of love. His desire is to all He has created, and if this love be not rightly used, and if we do not with all our heart and soul and mind and strength love Him who has endowed us with love, then that love falls from its high estate and becomes selfishness. Thus arises disaster both for ourselves and for other creatures of God. Every selfish man, strangely enough, becomes a self-slayer.

This also I have said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Now although in a sense all men are neighbours one of another, yet the reference is especially to those who habitually live near each other, for it is an easy matter to live at peace with one who is near at hand for a few days only, even though he be unfriendly; but in the case of one who has his dwelling near you, and day by day is the cause of trouble to you, it is most difficult to bear with him, and love him as yourself. But when you have conquered in this great struggle it will be more easy to love all others as yourself.

When man with all his heart, mind, and soul loves God, and his neighbour as himself there will be no room for doubts, but in him will be established that Kingdom of God of which there should be no end, and he, melted and moulded in the fire of love, will be made into the image of his heavenly Father, who at the first made him like Himself.

5. Also I manifest Myself by means of My Word (the Bible) to those who seek Me with a sincere heart. Just as for the salvation of men I took on a human body, so My Word also, which is Spirit and Life (John vi.63) is written in the language of men, that is, there are inspired and human elements united in it. But just as men do not understand Me, so they do not understand My Word. To understand it a knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek tongues is not a necessity, but what is necessary is the fellowship of that Holy Spirit, abiding in whom the prophets and apostles wrote it. Without doubt the language of this Word is spiritual, and he who is born of the Spirit is alone able fully to understand it, whether he be acquainted with the criticism of the world or be only a child, for that spiritual language is well understood by him since it is his mother tongue. But remember that those whose wisdom is only of this world cannot understand it, for they have no share in the Holy Spirit.

6. In the book of nature, of which I also am the Author, I freely manifest Myself. But for the reading of this book also spiritual insight is needed, that men may find Me, otherwise there is a danger lest instead of finding Me they go astray.

Thus the blind man uses the tips of his fingers as eyes, and by means of touch alone reads a book, but by touch alone can form no real estimate of its truth. The investigations of agnostics and sceptics prove this, for in place of perfection they see only defects. Fault finding critics ask, "If there is an Almighty Creator of the world why are there defects in it, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, eclipses, pain, suffering, death, and the like?" The folly of this criticism is similar to that of an unlearned man who finds fault with an unfinished building or an incomplete picture. After a time, when he sees them fully finished, he is ashamed of his folly, and ends by singing their praises. Thus too, God did not in one day give to this world its present form, nor will it in one day reach perfection. The whole creation moves onward to perfection, and if it were possible for the man of this world to see from afar with the eyes of God the perfect world in which no

defect appears, he too would bow in praise before Him and say, "All is very good" (Gen. i.31).

7. The human spirit abides in the body very much as the chicken in the shell. If it were possible for the bird within the shell to be told that outside of it was a great widespread world, with all kinds of fruit and flowers, with rivers and grand mountains, that its mother also was there, and that it would see all this when set free from its shell, it could not understand or believe it. Even if anyone told it that its feathers and eyes, ready now for use, would enable it to see and to fly, it would not believe it, nor would any proof be possible till it came out of its shell.

In the same way there are many who are uncertain about the future life and the existence of God, because they cannot see beyond this shell-like body of flesh, and their thoughts, like delicate wings, cannot carry them beyond the narrow confines of the brain. Their weak eyes cannot discover those eternal and unfading treasures which God has prepared for those who love Him (Isa. lxiv.4, lxv.17). The necessary condition for attaining to this eternal life is this, that while still in this body we should receive from the Holy Spirit by faith that life-giving warmth which the chicken receives from its mother, otherwise there is danger of death and eternal loss.

8. Again, many say that the thing, or the life, that has a beginning must of necessity have an end. This is not true, for is not the Almighty who is able at His will to make from naught a thing which is, also able by the word of His power to confer immortality on that which He has made? If not He cannot be called Almighty. Life in this world appears to be liable to decay and destruction, because it is in subjection to those things which are themselves the subject of change and decay. But if this life were set free from these changeful and decaying influences, and brought under the care of the eternal and unchanging God, who is the fountain and source of eternal life, it would escape from the clutch of death and attain to eternity.

As for those who believe on Me, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John x.28). "I am the Lord God Almighty that is and was and is to come" (Rev. i.8).

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