

~Other Speakers S-Z: Sadhu Sundar Singh:

SECTION I

The Disciple, "—Master, it is clear to almost everyone that to disobey God and to cease to worship Him is sin, and the deadly result is seen in the present state of the world. But what sin really is is not absolutely clear. In the very presence of Almighty God, and in opposition to His will, and in His own world, how did sin come to be?

The Master, "—1. Sin is to cast aside the will of God and to live according to one's own will, deserting that which is true and lawful in order to satisfy one's own desires, thinking thus to obtain happiness. Yet in so doing one does not obtain real happiness or enjoy true pleasure. Sin has no individuality, so that no one can say of it that someone created it. It is simply the name of a state or condition. There is only one Creator and He is good, and a good Creator could not have created a bad thing, for to do so would be against His very nature. And apart from the one Creator there is no other who could have created sin. Satan can only spoil that which has already been created, but he has not the power of creating anything. So sin is not a part of creation, nor has it independent existence such that it could be created. It is simply a delusive and destructive state of being.

For instance, light is something which has real existence, but darkness has not; it is only a state, the absence of light. Thus sin or evil is not a self-existent thing, but simply the absence or nonexistence of good. This dark state of evil is most terrible, for because of it many miss the right course, and making shipwreck on the rocks of Satan fall into the darkness of hell and are lost. For this reason I who am the Light of the world became manifest in the flesh, so that those who put their trust in Me should not perish, for I rescue them from the power of darkness and bring them safe to that desired and heavenly haven, where there is neither name nor sign of darkness (Rev. xxi.23, xxii.5).

2. You ask how this dark state of sin came to be in the very presence of the Lord of creation. It arose because Satan and men, of their own motion in an unlawful and wrong way, sought to carry out their own desires. And if you ask why God did not make man in such a way that he could not fall into such a state, the answer is that if he had been constructed like a machine he could never have attained to that state of happiness which is reached only by action in accordance with one's own choice. Adam and Eve fell into the wiles and deceit of Satan because in their sinless state they did not know there were such things as lies and deceit. Before this, Satan himself did not know of the existence of that pride by reason of which he was cast out of heaven, for before him no such thing as pride existed. And although both in men and Satan this state of sin came to be, God by His almighty power has given that state a new aspect, so that even from it He has brought forth the noblest results.

First of all, the boundless love of God was made manifest in the incarnation and redemption, which under other circumstances would have remained hidden; and in the second place, the redeemed, after having tasted the bitterness of sin, will more richly enjoy the happiness of heaven, just as after a taste of bitterness the sweetness of honey gives greater delight. For in heaven they sin no more, but in meekness and obedient love they serve their Father God, and abide with Him in joy for evermore.

3. Men are keen on discovering faults in the sun and moon, such as spots and eclipses, but to the spots and eclipses of sin they give no heed. From this you may measure how great that darkness in men is, when the very light they have is darkness (Matt. vi.23). Just as the body of the leper by reason of his disease becomes numb and insensible, so the heart and mind of man by reason of sin become dull and insensate, and bring to him no sense of disgust or pain. But the time will come when he will awake to its terrible ravages, and then there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

4. Many who are immersed in sin are unaware of its load, just as one who dives into the water may have tons of water upon him, but is wholly unaware of its weight until he is choked in death. But he who emerges from the water and seeks to carry some away soon finds its weight, however little he takes up; and he who, finding the burden of his sin, comes to Me in penitence will freely receive true rest, for it is such I come to seek and to save (Matt. xi.28, Luke xix.10).

5. It is not necessary that every single member of the body should become useless and weak before death occurs. A weakness of, or a blow upon, the heart or the brain will suffice to bring an end to life, however strong and healthy other parts of the body may be. Thus one sin by its poisonous effect on the mind and heart is sufficient to ruin the spiritual life not of one only, but of a whole family or nation, even of the whole race. Such was the sin of Adam. But as one word from Me could bring Lazarus from the tomb, even so it is sufficient to

give eternal life to all.

6. Sometimes it happens that an animal or bird after long association with man returns to its own kind, but they, instead of welcoming it, set upon it and do it to death, the reason being that by its long residence and familiarity with man, its habits and manner of life have entirely changed. In the same way as animals do not admit to their society those of their kind that have come under man's influence, how can the saint and angels in heaven welcome those sinners who have lived in intimate relations with wicked men? This does not mean that saints and angels have no love for sinful men, but the holy atmosphere of heaven will itself be distasteful to such men. For clearly, when in this world sinners dislike the company of good men, how can they be happy in their company throughout eternity? To them a heaven of that sort would be as distasteful as hell itself.

Do not suppose that God or His people will turn sinners out of heaven and cast them into hell, for God who is Love, never cast anyone into hell, nor ever will do so. It is the foul life of the sinner that will bring him to hell. Long before the end of life brings heaven and hell near to us, there has been set up in every man's heart, according to his good or evil nature, his own heaven or hell. Therefore whosoever longs to be saved from that eternal torment, let him truly repent of his sins and give his heart to Me, that by My presence with him and the Holy Spirit's influence, he may become for ever a child of the kingdom of God .

7. A rebel against a king or government in this world may save himself by taking refuge in another country, but where shall a rebel against God flee for safety? Wherever he goes, even in heaven or hell, he will find God ever present. (Psa. cxxxix.7,8). He will find his safety only in repentance and submission to his Lord.

8. For Adam and Eve the fig leaves were too scanty a covering, so God gave them coats of skin. In this way, too, man's good deeds are as useless as the fig leaves to save him from the wrath to come. Nothing will suffice save My robe of righteousness.

9. The moth thinks not of the burning and destructive power of the flame, but fascinated by its brilliancy rushes into it and perishes. So man, regardless of the destructive and poisonous power of sin, and feeling only its allurements, rushes in to his eternal destruction. But My light rescues the sinner from death, and bestows upon him life and enduring happiness. Man was so made as to be capable of appropriating the precious gift of My true light.

10. Sin is not an illusion or a thing of the imagination, but in this state of spiritual darkness, by the exercise of the evil will of man, such living seeds of evil have come into existence as will for ever infect his spirit and finally destroy it—just as smallpox in quite a short time will destroy the beauty of a man for all time, turning it to repulsive ugliness. As God did not create wickedness, so also He did not create disease and bodily pains. They are simply the natural issue of man's disobedience. Pain and disease also are not things of the imagination, but are the outward and visible fruits of the hidden unseen disease of sin, whether it be one's own sin or that of the family of which one is a member. When all these members repent and are united with Me, My health-giving blood circulates through all, healing all their internal and unseen diseases and giving to them health for all eternity. For such a state of health man was created, that he might for ever dwell in happiness with his Lord and Master.

SECTION II

The Disciple, Master, in these days some learned men and their followers regard Thy atonement and the redemption by blood as meaningless and futile, and say that Christ was only a great teacher and example for our spiritual life, and that salvation and eternal happiness depend on our own efforts and good deeds.

The Master, 1. Never forget that spiritual and religious ideas are connected less with the head than with the heart, which is the temple of God , and when the heart is filled with the presence of God the head also is enlightened. For the mind and the eyes of the understanding are useless without the true light, as the natural eyes are without daylight. In the dark one may mistake a rope for a snake, just as the wise of this world pervert spiritual truth and lead astray simple minds. So Satan when beguiling Eve made use not of the sheep or the dove but of the serpent, the most crafty of all the animals. So he takes the wisdom of the wise and the skill of the learned, and of them makes instruments suited to his purpose. But it is not enough to be learned and clever; one must also have the innocence of the dove, therefore I have said, "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matt. x.16).

2. My cross and atonement do the same for believers as the serpent of brass did for the Israelites, for whoever

looked up to that with the eyes of faith was saved (Num. xxi.9, John iii.14,15). There were some, however, who, instead of believing, thought of it as brass only and began to criticize and say, "If Moses had provided an antidote, or were to give us some powerful drug or special medicine for these venomous serpents, that would be a proper object of faith, but what power has this pole over poisonous venom?" They all died. In these days too, those who cavil about the method of salvation which God has appointed will perish in the poison of their own sin.

3. A young man fell down a precipice and was so much injured, and lost so much blood that he was at the point of death. When his father took him to the doctor he said, "The life is the blood, and the supply of this young man's blood is exhausted; but if anyone is prepared to sacrifice his own life he may recover, otherwise he will die." The father, whose heart was overflowing with love for his son, offered his own blood, and this being injected into the young man's veins he recovered. Man has fallen from the mount of holiness and lies broken and wounded by his sins, and by reason of those wounds his spiritual life has ebbed away and he is near to death. But for those who believe in Me I pour forth my own everlasting and spiritual blood, that they may be saved from death and obtain eternal life. For this purpose have I come that they might have life and have it more abundantly (John x.10), and thus live for evermore.

4. In ancient times men were forbidden to drink the blood of animals, or to eat certain foods, in the belief that they would thus escape certain diseases; and also lest, as a man has an animal body, his animal propensities might be strengthened by eating flesh and drinking blood. But now "My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed" (John vi.55), for they give spiritual life, and by them perfect health and heavenly happiness and joy are received.

5. The forgiveness of sins does not mean full salvation, for that can only come with perfect freedom from sin. For it is possible that a man should die from the disease of his sin, though he has received full pardon for it. For instance, a man had his brain affected owing to an illness of long standing, and whilst thus affected he made an attack upon another man and killed him. When sentence of death was pronounced upon him, his relatives explained the circumstances and appealed for mercy for him, and he was granted pardon for the sin of murder. But before his friends could reach him with the good news, indeed while they were on the way, he had died of the sickness by reason of which he had committed the murder.

What advantage was this pardon to the murderer? His real safety would have been to be cured of his disease, and then he would have had real happiness in his pardon. For this reason I became manifest in the flesh that I might deliver penitent believers from the disease of sin, from its punishment and from death; thus taking away both cause and effect. They will not die in their sins, for I will save them (Matt. i.21), and they shall pass from death to become heirs of eternal life.

6. To many people life is full of peril, and they are like that hunter who caught sight of a honeycomb on the branch of a tree overhanging a stream. Climbing up, he began to enjoy the honey, quite unaware of the fact that he was in peril of death, for in the stream beneath him lay an alligator with open jaws waiting to devour him, while around the foot of the tree a pack of wolves had gathered waiting for him to descend. Worse still, the tree on which he sat had been eaten away at the roots by an insect and it was ready to fall. In a short time it did fall, and the unwary hunter became the prey of the alligator. Thus, too, the human spirit, ensconced in the body, enjoys for a short time the false and fleeting pleasures of sin gathered in the honeycomb of the brain, without a thought that it is in the midst of this fearsome jungle of the world. There Satan sits ready to tear it to pieces, and hell like an alligator waits with open mouth to gulp it down, while, worst of all, the tiny unseen insect of sin has eaten away the very roots of the body and life. Soon the soul falls and becomes an everlasting prey to hell. But the sinner who comes to Me I will deliver from sin, from Satan, and from hell, and will give him eternal joy "which none shall take away from him" (John xvi.22).

7. Satan with crafty speech and enticements draws men to him and swallows them down just as a snake fascinates little birds by the magnetism of its glittering eye, and makes a prey of them. But to those who believe on Me I give deliverance from that old serpent and from the seductions of this soul-destroying world. I set them free so that, as a bird, easily resisting the force of gravity which is in the earth, flies freely through the open heaven, they mount on the wings of prayer and reach at last the abode of safety and their hearts dear home, drawn by the sweet attractions of My love.

8. Just as a man with jaundice sees everything yellow, so to the sinner and the philosopher truth itself takes on the form and fashion of his sin or his theories, and it is not a matter of much surprise if such people go a step further and count Me a sinner like themselves. But My work, which is the salvation of sinners, does not depend on the good opinion of the world, but for ever moves on its undisturbed way in the lives of believers. Just as

Levi, being still in the loins of Abraham, paid tithes to Me though he was not yet born, so all generations of believers have in Me, offered upon the cross, the atonement and ransom for their sins, though they were not at that time even born; for this salvation is for all races of men in the world.

9. This saying, that a man can by his own effort and good works acquire salvation, is foolish and absurd so long as the man is not born again. World-rulers and teachers of morality say, "Become good by doing good," but this is what I say, "Become good yourself before doing good works." When that new and good life has been entered upon, good deeds will be the natural result.

It is only a fool that will say that a bitter tree by constantly bearing fruit will at last become sweet. As a matter of fact a bitter tree can become sweet by being grafted on a sweet tree, so that the life and qualities peculiar to the sweet tree will pass into the bitter one and its natural bitterness will pass away. This is what we call a new creation. So too the sinner may have the desire to do what is right, and yet the only result is sin; but when he repents and by faith is grafted into Me the old man in him dies, and he becomes a new creature. Then from this new life which has its origin in salvation good deeds come forth as fruit, and this fruit abides for ever.

10. There are many who have learnt from experience that man's natural goodness cannot give true peace of heart, nor can it give him a certainty of salvation or eternal life. The young man who came to Me seeking eternal life is a case in point. His first thought with regard to Me was wrong, as is that of some worldly-wise men and their followers at the present day. He thought Me to be one of those teachers who are like whited sepulchres, and in whose lives there is not a particle of true goodness. Therefore I said to him, "Why do you ask Me about goodness? There is none good but One." But he failed to see in Me the one giver of goodness and life; and when I sought to admit him to My companionship and make him a truly good man, and bestow life upon him, he became sad and left Me. His life, however, makes one thing perfectly clear, and that is that his keeping the commandments and his goodness did not satisfy him or give him the assurance of eternal life. If his good works had given him peace he would not have come to inquire of Me, or had he come he would not have left Me in sorrow, but, believing My words, would have gone away rejoicing.

Not long afterwards the young man Paul recognized Me, and the desire of his heart was completely fulfilled. Instead of turning away in sadness he gave up all that he had and followed Me (Phil. iii.6-15). So everyone who ceases to trust in his own righteousness and follows Me shall receive from Me true peace and everlasting life.