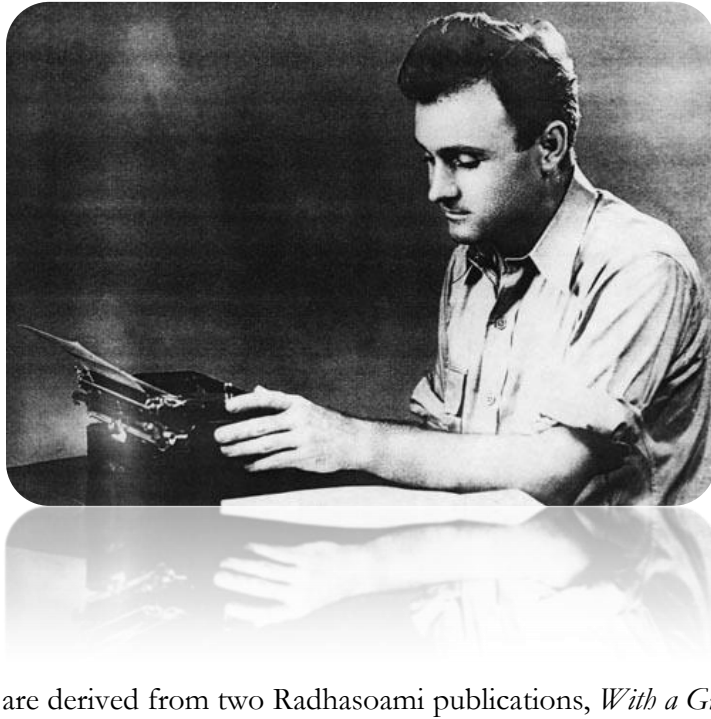


SACH KHAND

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The Genealogical Connection: Kirpal Singh & Paul Twitchell

That religions often evolve out of other past religions is a well-known phenomenon: witness Christianity's emergence from Judaism. What is not so well known, however, is how certain religions try to genealogically dissociate themselves from their historical roots. Eckankar is a classic case in point. Founded in 1965 by Paul Twitchell, one-time disciple of Swami Premananda, Kirpal Singh, and L. Ron Hubbard, Eckankar owes much of its theology to Radhasoami. Indeed, as Lane, Melton, and others have pointed out, most of Paul Twitchell's writings

are derived from two Radhasoami publications, *With a Great Master in India* and *The Path of the Masters* (both authored by Julian P. Johnson in the 1930s). Certainly, it is not surprising that religious doctrines can at times appear to be similar, but what is surprising is when a religion which has borrowed much of its history, doctrine, and terminology from another tries to consciously deny its putative association.

The story of Paul Twitchell's association with Kirpal Singh, and, in turn, the influence of Radhasoami on Eckankar, is well documented. In 1955 Paul Twitchell received initiation from Kirpal Singh in Washington, D.C. Twitchell, who, according to his first wife Camille Ballowe Taylor, was a "seeker of religion," met Kirpal Singh after a five year stay at Swami Premananda's Church of Absolute Monism. Twitchell kept up a ten year correspondence with Kirpal Singh in India, addressing his numerous letters to his guru as "My Dear Master," and so on. In 1963 when Kirpal Singh visited America for the second time, Twitchell brought his second wife to be, Gail Atkinson, to get initiated in San Francisco. The initiation records of both Paul and Gail are on file at Sawan-Kirpal Ashram in Vijay Nagar, Delhi.

Although Paul Twitchell and Kirpal Singh were on friendly terms, there arose a rift between them in the mid-1960s. Apparently, Twitchell sent a manuscript version of his book, *The Tiger's Fang*, for Kirpal Singh's approval. Kirpal Singh, however, did not agree with some of the things Twitchell said



in his manuscript. Subsequently, Twitchell severed his ties with Kirpal Singh and demanded that his manuscript be returned. In the meantime, Twitchell began advertising for his new spiritual group called Eckankar: The Ancient Science of Soul Travel.

What really prompted Twitchell to disconnect from Kirpal Singh has been speculated upon by a number of scholars. Critics contend that it was due to money and that Twitchell wanted to start his own ministry, unencumbered by the fetters of restrictive Indian moral systems. Followers of Eckankar, on the other hand, contend that Twitchell was a spiritual trailblazer who had been divinely commissioned by the "Vairagi" masters to carry on the eternal "Eck" teachings. Whatever one may suspect about Twitchell's motives, one thing is certain: Eckankar draws heavily upon the teachings of Kirpal Singh and other shabd yoga masters for its theology.

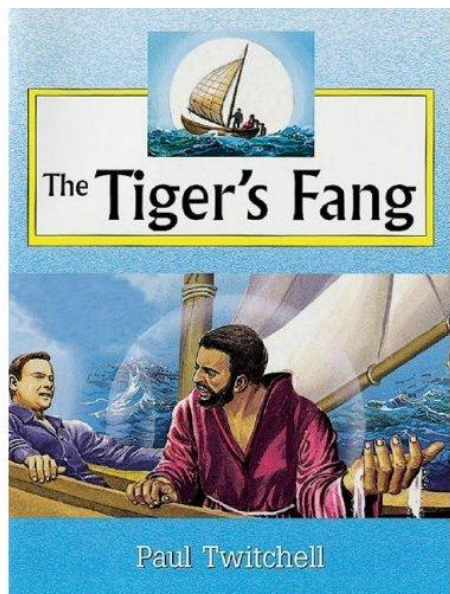
Even the very name "Eckankar" is derived from Julian Johnson's use of the term in *The Path of the Masters*. Ek in Hindi means one; Onkar means God or Transcendental. Combine the two and you have a popular Sikh name for God, which is mentioned in Guru Nanak's fifteenth century poem, Japji. Twitchell most likely learned of the name from both Julian Johnson's book as well as from the Sikh scripture. Twitchell simply added a "c" between the E and the k to develop his own unique spelling and to give his organization's name an identifiable distinction. Moreover, Twitchell intertwined Radhasoami doctrines with other teachings he had encountered in his career, including Theosophy, Self-Realization Fellowship, Scientology, and Occult teachings in general. The result is a fascinating mixture of Eastern and Western mysticism. Twitchell's creation (or revelation, depending upon one's appraisal) was a huge success. Today, some twenty-four years after its founder's death, Eckankar is one of the most successful new religions to be founded during the decade of the 1960s. Eckankar has followers all over the world and numbers its adherents in the tens of thousands (official numbers have yet to be released by the Eckankar organization).

Eckankar has also seen its share of controversies. When Paul Twitchell died, he was succeeded by Darwin Gross who assumed the title of "Living Eck Master." Gross was appointed by Twitchell's widow, Gail, after she claims to have had a dream where she saw the transference of power. Several months later Gail and Darwin got married only to be divorced in the late 1970s. In 1981, Darwin Gross decided to step down and appointed Harold Klemp as his successor. In his resignation, Gross claimed that he was still the "Mahanta" but not the "Living Eck Master." However, just two years later Gross was stripped of even that title when Harold Klemp excommunicated him from Eckankar altogether and banned the sale of all Gross related publications. The early 1980s was a time of turmoil for Eckankar, but today in the 1990s it has weathered the storm and has witnessed a steady increase in its membership. Though Eckankar started originally in San Diego, it has moved its center of operations several times: to Las Vegas to Menlo Park and finally to its present site in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Eckankar has also had a long history of trying to come to grips with its Radhasoami roots. In the 1970s a number of scholars alleged that Twitchell tried to cover-up his association with previous

real-life gurus by creating "cover" names. For instance, in his earlier publications for such magazines

as Orion, Psychic Observer, and Search, Twitchell profusely mentions the names of Sawan Singh, Kirpal Singh, and other well known spiritual leaders. However, after he started Eckankar he redacted those names when he reprinted his earlier articles in new books. Twitchell did not change the story



or the text, as such, but rather switched names: from Kirpal Singh to "Sudar" Singh; from Swami Premananda to "Rebazar Tarzs"; from the Holy Bible to "The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad." What Twitchell was attempting to do is fairly obvious: he was trying to rewrite his biography so that it could dovetail with the antiquity of Eckankar's rich (if invented) mythology. In doing so, however, Twitchell had to deny his Radhasoami roots. Why? Because Twitchell wanted Eckankar to be an autonomous tradition which stood apart from his shabd yoga cousins. The only glitch, however, is that it was these very cousins which informed and shaped Eckankar's theology.

Radhasoami's influence in America has most likely seen its greatest impact through the teachings of Eckankar. Whereas Radhasoami has limited appeal to Westerners because of its strict moral codes and exotic Indian

terminology, Eckankar has done away with many of the more rigid ethical considerations inherent in shabd yoga (from vegetarianism to sexual abstinence, etc.) and tried to make its image more palpable to an audience interested in having "out of body" experiences, or what Eckists like to term "soul travel." Moreover, Eckankar charges money for its services and advertises extensively in the print media and occasionally on radio and on television. Eckankar is in many ways an Americanized version of Radhasoami mixed with Theosophy and Scientology. To thousands of Eckists (as members are often referred to) around the world, it is an irresistible combination.

What is most intriguing about the transfusion of Radhasoami ideas into Eckankar is how certain key concepts get transformed when transplanted from one group to another. The following is a close look at the Radhasoami/Eckankar transfusion.

Living Eck Master

One of the strong selling points in Radhasoami is its emphasis on the "living" master. All Radhasoami groups go to great lengths to argue that a living master is necessary for enlightenment and that past prophets and saints are of absolutely no value in the ultimate salvation/liberation of the soul. Eckankar shares this belief with its shabd yoga counterparts, but differs significantly in how much respect and adoration is shown to their leader. In Radhasoami circles the guru is seen as God incarnated on earth. Thus satsangis display tremendous amounts of respect to their respective gurus. In some instances, disciples have been known to drink their guru's saliva, to drink water that has touched his/her feet, and to eat dust where he/she has walked. There is an almost bodily worship of

ECKANKAR / SPIRITUALITY / INSPIRATIONAL

You are about to enter strange new worlds . . .

"If you read this book with an open mind you will never be the same again. I can guarantee this for you."

PAUL TWITCHELL

Within these pages, you'll join Paul Twitchell on his remarkable journey outside of space and time. He openly shares with you how to duplicate his adventure through your own spiritual awakening. If you're seeking to explore the deepest realms of self and God, you'll be enthralled. Experience the expanded state of consciousness called Soul Travel.

The Tiger's Fang is Paul Twitchell's account of his incredible journey to other planes of existence where he finds himself in the company of Rebazar Tarzes, the great Tibetan ECK Master, ancient advocate of the ECK teachings.

"Whether *The Tiger's Fang* is a record of an actual spiritual journey or the vivid impression of a vision that has been granted to few mortal men, must remain a matter for the individual reader to judge. Whatever *The Tiger's Fang* may be, it is certain that the book is a most remarkable work, a volume that has few peers in its array of challenging concepts, provocative thoughts, and inspirational wisdom."

BRAD STEIGER, FROM THE FOREWORD

Eckankar is ancient wisdom for today. Its teachings, which resurfaced in 1965, emphasize the value of personal experiences as the most natural way back to God. Whatever your religious background, they show how to look and listen within yourself—to expand your consciousness and enjoy spiritual freedom. See, perhaps for the first time, how to lead a happy, balanced, and productive life. And put daily concerns into loving perspective.



PAUL TWITCHELL is the modern-day founder of Eckankar. In 1965 he reintroduced the ECK teachings to the world and released spiritual truths from the cultural trappings which had surrounded them. He soon began conducting ECK workshops in California. In 1970 he helped establish Eckankar as a nonprofit religious organization. Paul Twitchell died in 1971 after initiating many into the ECK teachings.



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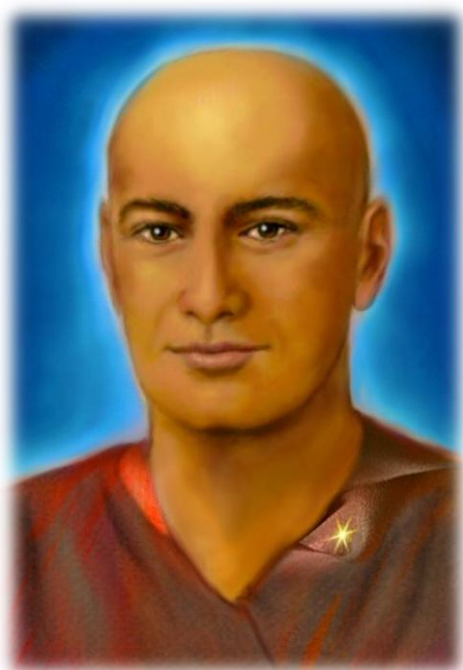
the guru in Radhasoami. In Eckankar this is not the case. To be sure, Eckists have high regard for their leader and show him [1] the utmost deference, but they do not on the whole "worship" him in the ways that satsangis "worship" their guru. One of the reasons for this difference may stem in part from Twitchell's differentiation of the outer and inner master. The outer master in Eckankar is for all intents and purposes a human vehicle, replete with its limitations; the inner master, sometimes called the "Mahanta," however, is not limited and is a direct link with the infinite. Although outer and inner master are connected, their ultimate functions are distinct. Eckists on the whole are clear about the limitations of their "outer" masters; satsangis, on the other hand, are not, believing as they do that their particular guru is Supreme in all ways.

"Soul Travel"

All of the Radhasoami branches speak at length about "leaving the body at will" or "dying while living" or "going within." Kirpal Singh, in particular, laid special emphasis on experiencing "above body consciousness" and seeing inner light and hearing inner

sound. Indeed, he buttressed his claims for mastership by stating univocally that only a competent master could offer inner glimpses at the very time of initiation. Paul Twitchell seems to have been fascinated with out-of-body experiences. Most of his early 1960s articles, just prior to the founding of Eckankar, talk about "bilocation" or the ability to be in two places at the same time. By the time he started Eckankar in 1965, Twitchell had coined a term called "soul travel" to describe in a nutshell what his path was all about. Although it is clear that Twitchell learned of "soul travel" from his association with Swami Premananda and Kirpal Singh, in developing Eckankar he modified the term to represent something a bit different than what his original teachers had in mind. In Radhasoami meditation practice, for example, emphasis is placed on achieving out-of-body experiences while one is conscious. Thus any experiences that are derived during unconscious processes, like dreams and such, are not given much credence. However, the chief method by which Twitchell "soul traveled" was by sleeping and having dreams. In his numerous letters to Kirpal Singh, Twitchell repeatedly mentions how he left his body after lying down and going to sleep. Dreams for Twitchell were the gateway to other worlds. Kirpal Singh was suspicious of this modus operandi because in his tradition dreams are extremely unreliable and may not necessarily indicate a higher state of consciousness but rather a lower one. It was precisely on this point that Kirpal Singh

critiqued Twitchell's manuscript, *The Tiger's Fang*, and which eventually led to their irresolvable rift. To achieve out-of-body experiences during the waking state is a very difficult thing, according to Radhasoami practitioners. To achieve such during dreaming is much more easy, even if much more suspect and unreliable. That Twitchell emphasized the latter and not the former (in Radhasoami an initiate is enjoined to spend not less than two and a half hours in meditation daily; in Eckankar the "chela," as students are called, are enjoined to do about twenty minutes twice daily of spiritual exercises) proved to be one of the great attractions of Eckankar to new seekers. Since almost everybody dreams, the relative "success" rate of Eckists is bound to be much higher than those in Radhasoami, where only "waking" experiences are given value. Whether Twitchell consciously realized this as a marketing tool is unclear, but it is certain that it contrasted dramatically with Kirpal Singh's teachings. Today dreaming is perhaps the central way for Eckists to "experience" the truth of their path. The present leader Harold Klemp when describing most of his inner experiences bases them upon his dream excursions. Eckists have also followed suit.



The Vairagi Masters

As we have seen in the early history of Radhasoami, lineage is an important legitimizing factor in substantiating the claims of a would-be successor or master. Almost all Radhasoami gurus try to link their putative role with the orders of their predecessors. Radhasoami gurus, in general, never try to claim that they are masters because of their own efforts (with the possible exception of Shiv Dayal Singh, but that's another issue). Rather, they view themselves as a link in a sacred parampara (guru lineage). When Twitchell founded Eckankar he likewise attempted to connect his efforts with previous masters. But instead of directly linking with his real-life gurus, like Kirpal Singh and L. Ron Hubbard, Twitchell instead "invented" his ancient lineage entitled the "Vairagi" masters. He claimed that there were 970 masters which had preceded him. The very first master in this tradition was "Gakko" who brought the true

teachings of Eckankar from the city of Retz on the planet Venus some six million years ago. Other masters in this pantheon include "Rama," "Jagat Ho," "Yaubl Sacabi," and "Fubbi Quantz." In the modern era the two previous masters before Twitchell were "Rebazar Tarzs," a five-hundred year old monk who still resides in the Himalayan mountains, and "Sudar Singh," a shabd yoga teacher who resided in Allahabad until in his death in the late 1930s. Several scholars have argued that both Rebazar Tarzs and Sudar Singh are cover names for certain Sant Mat masters, like Sawan Singh and Kirpal Singh. Indeed, Twitchell himself never mentions either Rebazar or Sudar before 1964 in any of his published writings, but does profusely mention Kirpal Singh, L. Ron Hubbard, and others.

What was Twitchell attempting to do when he developed (or invented, depending upon your affiliation) the "Vairagi" master concept? Most likely it was a way to legitimize his own role as "The Living Eck Master." It is one thing to claim all by yourself that you are enlightened; it is a lot more

impressive, though, to have hundreds of masters preceding you who back up and contextualize your claim. Clearly Twitchell did not wish to serve as merely a disciple of Kirpal Singh or a one-time student and press agent of L. Ron Hubbard and Scientology (which he was in the latter part of the 1950s). Twitchell believed that he was a gifted master in his own right. However, instead of acknowledging his previous association with other gurus, he instead denied them and created a biography that is filled with dubious gurus with curious sounding names. In his study of Eckankar, for instance, Lane has never found any historical evidence to suggest that Sudar Singh is, in fact, a real person. The same is true, he claims, about Rebazar Tarzs. The evidence for such beings simply does not exist. Lane, therefore, contends that these masters serve as a way for Twitchell to invoke a double sense of mystery and antiquity, a sense in which Eckankar is connected not to a real historical past (one that can be discerned by scholars) but to a unique mythological one. [2] It is a past that is exclusively Eckankar's; it is also a past which has been trademarked and legally protected in the United States.



Conscious Co-worker with Sugmad

In his first books on Eckankar Twitchell used standard Radhasoami cosmology to describe the inner spiritual planes. He also used shabd yoga terminology in ways quite similar to their original usage. Over time, though, Twitchell began to redefine many Radhasoami and shabd yoga terms when he used them in Eckankar. An interesting example is his use of Kirpal Singh's often repeated phrase (derived in part from Sant Mat and Sikhism) about being a conscious "co-worker" with God. In Kirpal Singh's theology, the ultimate realization is when the soul merges back with God and becomes one with Him/Her/It. Twitchell also

accepts that a disciple must reach the highest plane of consciousness to be "God-realized." He differs with his predecessor, however, over the ultimate ontological status of the soul. Whereas Kirpal Singh and Radhasoami argue for a merging in God and a subsequent losing of one's individuality, Twitchell opts for an eternal permanence of the individual which keeps him or her distinct from the ultimate annihilation. Indeed, this is one of the bedrock doctrines in Eckankar's theology and one which they highlight to accentuate their differences with Eastern mysticism. Although Twitchell uses the Kirpal Singh's phrase "conscious co-worker," he defines it along a more dualistic and Westernized fashion. This is quite significant because it demonstrates that Eckankar is not merely a recapitulation of Radhasoami or shabd yoga, but rather a creative mixture of many mystical ideas and often with a Western slant.

Thus even though the influence of Radhasoami on Eckankar as a whole is tremendous, it must be kept in mind that many of its doctrines have been transfigured in their Western landscape. Perhaps this is the fate of all religions, to some degree, which evolve over time. They get nuanced in ways that are not prefigured when first developed. Eckankar's radical reinterpretation of Radhasoami suggests that religion is always in the process of being co-opted by its successors in ways that may



seem entirely incongruent at first. It also suggests that religious ideas are quite fluid and dynamic.

The Inner Planes

Radhasoami has a complex cosmology concerning the physical, mental, and spiritual universes. Following the lead of previous gurus in the Sant tradition, Shiv Dayal Singh described five inner planes (Sahans-dal-Kanwal, Trikuti, Daswan Dwar, Bhanwar Gupha, and Sach Khand) which a soul must pass in

order to reach its ultimate destination. Shiv Dayal Singh has also at times given slight nuances to this basic five plane cosmology, with the two major variations concerning the region between Daswan Dwar and Bhanwar Gupha, known as Maha Sunn (the great darkness), and the further subdivisions of Sach Khand, which he calls Alakh, Agam, and Anami. In the various Radhasoami branches in India there has been debate over some of these more rarified distinctions, but overall there is general agreement on the major features of the inner planes.

The differences between Twitchell's earlier version and his later, standard one are significant.[3] As Lane points out in his book, *The Making of a Spiritual Movement*, Twitchell's changes include altering which sound one hears in the Astral plane (first version: tinkle of bells; second, revised version: roar of surf) and the Soul plane (first version: vina or great sound current; second, revised version: single note of flute), as well as replacing the various Lords or Deities (first version: Maha Kal was above Saguna Brahm; second, revised version: the two are switched). Although these differences may appear to be trivial to an outsider, to members of shabd yoga related movements they are quite pivotal since the technical yoga is based upon knowing which sounds to adhere to and which to discard. By a close analysis of Twitchell's writings, it is clear that Eckankar's ideas underwent an evolution from 1965 to 1971. What is not clear is why. Why, for instance, did Twitchell feel the need to modify what had more or less been standard fare in Radhasoami circles for nearly a century? There may be several answers, ranging from the critic's charge that Twitchell needed to develop his own unique "brand" of Sant Mat so that he could distinguish Eckankar from its Indian counterparts and thereby "copyright" his schema as unique (which he did, by the way, in his work, *The Spiritual Notebook*) to the more sympathetic insider who believes that Twitchell was given revelations that previous shabd yoga masters were not. In any case, Twitchell's cosmology is a decidedly different one than his earlier ones and represents a drastic overhauling of the Radhasoami version. That this evolution occurred within the span of less than four years is remarkable; that such an evolution is documented in books is even more remarkable. It suggests at the very least that a new religion (and maybe new religions in general) are much more pliable in their early development than anyone inside or outside the movement may at first suspect.



Initiation

Initiation into Radhasoami is regarded as the most sacred event that can occur in the life of a disciple. Theologically it represents the transference of the soul's tie with Kal (the negative force) over to the Satguru (the positive force). Although there are many different branches of Radhasoami, there are certain common traits to be found in each of their initiation procedures. First, a sacred name ("Radhasoami" in the case of Agra related groups) or names (five names in the case of Beas related

groups) is given to the disciple as his/her meditation mantra to be repeated as often as possible at the third eye. The disciple is also instructed how to listen to the inner sound (technically known as bhajan) by assuming a certain yogic position, the details of which are considered semi-secret. In some Radhasoami groups, like Kirpal Singh's related movements (Sant Bani, Kirpal Light, and Sawan-Kirpal Mission), during initiation there is a meditation sitting in which the neophyte is given the opportunity to hear inner sound and see inner light. Overall, the key feature to Radhasoami initiation is learning the procedure of how to meditate, which includes simran (repeating names), dhyan (contemplating at the third eye center, looking either for light or for the form of one's initiating master), and bhajan (listening to inner sound). These three features are prevalent, with slight modifications, in all bona fide Radhasoami satsangs.

When Paul Twitchell developed Eckankar he also conducted initiations. Although he borrowed much from his association with Kirpal Singh and Ruhani Satsang (like similar instructions how to meditate), he made distinctive changes which transformed the character of the initiation process altogether. Perhaps the most obvious change is that he did away with a singular initiation which is common today in Radhasoami circles (at the maximum there are two initiations given in Radhasoami: instruction in the name and instruction in the sound). Twitchell instead invoked multiple initiations, arguing that for each plane of existence a new initiation was necessary. Since Twitchell did away with his original five plane cosmology and replaced it with twelve planes, his multiple initiation also followed suit. Today the official number of potential initiations are twelve, with most members of Eckankar ranging from second level to fifth level. In Eckankar's official dictionary, it explains the purpose of these initiations:

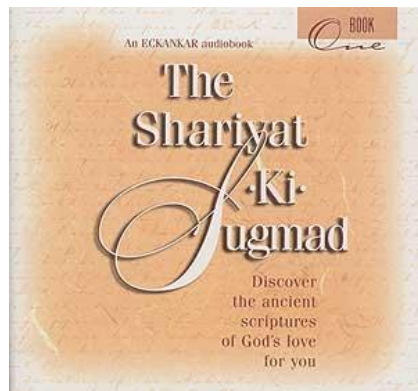
Inner initiation serves the function of raising the vibrations of the individual to those of the nearest higher plane. The inner initiation may come years after the outer initiation. The First Initiation is an inner initiation given in the dream state by the dream master. Sometimes the chela is fully conscious and can remember everything about it; it prepares the chela for the linkup with the Eck Sound Current, the Audible Life Stream. All initiations above the Eighth are inner initiations. [4]

Twitchell stresses that the first initiation takes place in the dream state where the dream master appears to the chela. Such dream initiations are practically unknown of in Radhasoami circles, though there have been exceptions. Perhaps one of the reasons Twitchell invokes such a modus operandi is because dreams played a tremendous role in his own inner development. Indeed, in most of his accounts about leaving the body, it is clearly implied that such excursions occurred when he was dreaming.

Moreover, the second initiation, or first outer initiation, in Eckankar does not have the same strict prerequisites that are required in Radhasoami. For instance, in Radhasoami there are four vows

which all the groups, more or less, enjoin: 1) strict vegetarianism (no meat whatsoever, including eggs); 2) abstinence from alcohol and any mind-altering drugs; 3) a pure moral life (no sex outside of marriage); and 4) two hours plus of meditation daily. In Eckankar there are essentially no prerequisites in terms of lifestyle (outside of giving up smoking and drugs), except that one has to be a paid member of Eckankar for at least two years.

Finally, Eckankar's initiation ceremony itself is quite different than Radhasoami's. In many ways it is more reminiscent of Transcendental Meditation's ceremony, where one offers a fruit or gift to the initiator and one is given a name suited to that person's personality. Eckankar does not give out the five name mantra of the Beas related satsangs, nor does it give only one name for all initiations. Rather, there are a series of names which the particular initiator (working on behalf of the Master) can give. In sum, Eckankar's initiation is a hybrid of various methods, but one which is most closely aligned with T.M. and Ruhani Satsang.



The Sacred Writings: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad

Eckankar's most sacred writings, The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book One and Book Two, authored by Twitchell and published in the early seventies, have striking similarities with Julian P. Johnson's 1939 book, *The Path of the Masters*. [5] Although Twitchell's adoption of lengthy passages from Radhasoami literature empirically illustrates the extent to which he was influenced by Radhasoami, of greater interest perhaps are the numerous alterations of concepts and terms which Twitchell invokes, giving insight into how religious ideas evolve.

When Twitchell first started writing about Eckankar he more or less used terminology which was based upon shabd yoga. However, he quickly began to take on terms which were not in Radhasoami literature and incorporate them into the larger theology of Eckankar, as witnessed in *The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad*. In so doing he made Eckankar an eclectic teaching, even though its major emphasis was Indian in origin. The term Mahanta is a case in point. Although the term usually translates as "one who is in charge of a temple" or "head of an ashram," Twitchell utilized it as meaning: "The Living Eck Master." He writes:

The full force of the Rod of Eck Power and the Mantle of the Mahanta are embodied directly in



him; all those who come to him in the present age have been with him since their advent into the world; the body of the Mahanta is the Eck, which is the essence of God flowing out from the Ocean of Love and Mercy. This special incarnation of the Sugmad makes an appearance but once every five to a thousand or more years, depending upon the part he is to play in a major upliftment of consciousness on every plane. [6]

In other words, Mahanta now stands for Radhasoami's Satguru. They are more or less interchangeable in their essential functions, except for the part about manifesting every "five to a thousand or more years" which is Twitchell's addendum to the concept.

Thus, Twitchell not only uses Radhasoami terms, but he also uses Radhasoami concepts without the terms, preferring to coin his own Indian or Sufi names for his own purposes. There are several examples in The

Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad of how he substitutes Indian words for Persian ones, such as referring to God as Sugmad instead of Sat Purush, using the term zikar instead of simran, and employing the sacred Sufi word "hu" as a chant (much like the use of "om" in Indian philosophy). Even the title of his book, The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, is Persian for The Path of the Masters, although it translates more like The Law/Path to God. Indeed, most of Twitchell's understanding of Sufi terminology comes directly from Hazrat Inayat Khan, who Johnson cites in section 11.5 in The Path of the Masters. But Twitchell does something distinct from Johnson: instead of merely citing Sufi terms Twitchell incorporates them into his religion while altering their meaning for his own unique theology. Perhaps this is an effort to distinguish his group a bit more from its Indian ancestor.

Moreover, while Twitchell may adopt lengthy passages from The Path of the Masters, he tailors them to fit Eckankar, leaving out any material that conflicts with its teachings. A key example of this occurs when Twitchell utilizes a passage of Johnson's that deals with morality but he omits an important section concerning the wrongfulness of killing and eating animals. Why? Because unlike Radhasoami, Eckankar does not require a vegetarian diet. In the appendices are five examples illustrating how Twitchell not only adopts certain Radhasoami ideas, but how he transforms some and rejects others, although keep in mind that this is just a small sampling of the numerous "empirical correlations" found within these texts [7].

NOTES

1. My usage of male pronouns is consciously since most gurus in these varying traditions have been male. There have been a few exceptions, however, including female gurus from Soami Bagh and Manavta Mandir.
2. See David Lane's *The Making of a Spiritual Movement* (Del Mar: Del Mar Press, 1993).
3. Twitchell's later, standard cosmology has thirteen distinct realms, although he numbers only twelve of them. Why does he fail to number the Etheric plane?
4. Paul Twitchell, *Eckankar Dictionary* (Golden Valley: MN: Illuminated Way Publishing, Inc., 1973), p. 69.
5. Several scholars have noted strong similarities between Eckankar and Radhasoami literature. However, the comparisons drawn here between Eckankar's most sacred writings, *The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad* and *The Path of the Masters* are new findings. I found the parallels by simply looking at the indexes of each book and then jotting down word by word similarities.
6. Twitchell, op. cit., p. 92
7. For more examples, see the Appendices.

Further Reading

The Making of a Spiritual Movement

The Whole Truth

Confessions of a God Seeker

Radhasoami Reality

The Radhasoami Tradition

Radhasoami and Eckankar Passages

Here I offer over twenty-one examples, illustrating not only the extent to which Twitchell was influenced by Radhasoami but also how through slight changes in his writing he developed Eckankar as a distinct religion apart from its Indian predecessor.

Example One

These two accounts of the guru are almost identical, yet Twitchell adds the term ECK within it twice. He also refers to disciples as chelas, a term found in some Radhasoami literature but rarely in Johnson's material.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters (Fifteenth Edition) p. 182

In the realm of religion, the Master is a paradox. He has no theology, teaches none, yet he is the most religious man on earth. His system is not a religion, yet it leads to the most complete religious experience, and the most happy. He is absolutely universal in all his teachings. He has no creed, yet he never antagonizes any creed, sect or institution. He never condemns any man or any system. He finds no fault with anybody or anything, yet he draws the sharpest lines between the good and the bad...To correct faults in the disciples, he simply points out the opposite virtues.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 81

In the realm of religion the Mahanta is a paradox. He has no theology. He teaches none, yet he is the greatest religious leader on earth. The system of ECK, which he teaches, is not a religion although it leads to the most complete and enlightening religious experience. He is universal in all the teachings of ECK. Not having a creed-like religion, he never deliberately antagonizes any creed, sect, or religious institution. He never finds fault with anyone, but draws the line sharply between God and Kal. To correct errors in the chelas the Mahanta often points out the opposite virtues.

Example Two

Initiation by a living (and not a past) teacher is emphasized in both these passages. While the similarities are strong in the writings, one can see how Twitchell attempts in parts to add a bit of his own style. He uses the term chela to refer to the disciple while Johnson uses the personal pronoun "you" here. Twitchell also intermixes Mahanta and Master when referring to the spiritual teacher and Johnson simply uses the latter.

Radhasoami Literature: the Path of the Masters p. 192

There is a vital difference--you cannot simply follow the departed Master--not at all. Neither can he initiate you on the spiritual path.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I pp. 81-82

A vital difference exists between a Mahanta and a departed Master. The chela cannot follow a Master who has left this plane...The departed one cannot initiate anyone on the spiritual path.

Example Three

Compare how Twitchell speaks of Kal, an Indian term which in this context refers to the controller of the perishable world, in nearly the same terms that Johnson uses to describe anger, one of the five recognized ills or passions of humanity according to Indian philosophy.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 294

This disease [of anger] manifests itself by the following set of symptoms: thinking ill of others, taking offense easily, criticizing the actions of others, lecturing or discoursing on the mistakes of others either to the person himself or to others about him, chronic fault-finding..., scolding, nagging or haranguing others, habitually blaming others for all that goes wrong, vile abuse and curing others, actual fighting, quarreling or trying to inflict injury upon others.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 140

He [Kal] encourages...thinking ill of others, taking offense easily, criticizing the actions of others, lecturing on mistakes of others, chronic fault-finding, scolding, nagging or blaming others for things that go wrong, vile abuse, cursing others, fighting, quarreling, or trying to inflict injury of others.

Example Four

In comparing the two accounts Twitchell describes Kal very similar to how Johnson describes greed.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 296

Lobh [greed] has many minor phases, such as: miserliness, falsehood, hypocrisy, perjury, misrepresentation, robbery, bribery, trickery of all sorts.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 140

He [Kal] also encourages miserliness, hypocrisy, perjury, misrepresentation, robbery, bribery, trickery...

Example Five

In this example notice how Twitchell applies Johnson's description for vanity to Kal.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters pp. 301-02

The minor phases of ahankar [vanity] are: bigotry, self-assertion..., it makes obtrusive show of wealth or power, it is gaudy in dress, exhibits a domineering attitude...dearly loves titles, honors, college degrees...

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 140

He [Kal] also encourages... bigotry, self-assertion, a show of wealth and power, gaudiness in dress and the exhibition of a domineering attitude. He dearly loves titles, honors, degrees...

Example Six

There is very little difference between these two pieces of literature: both describe the role of the guru. Yet instead of referring to the guru as a Master as the Radhasoamis do, Twitchell here calls him a Mahanta.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 181

He [the Master] generally is a family man, though not always. He is no ascetic and does not encourage austerities. He does not consider it a sin to keep the body comfortable, well fed and healthy; in fact, he says that it is a duty. The Master lives in the world though he is not of it. He enters the stream of human life to help others, yet he himself stands aloof from the waves of human passion. He has attained all virtues...He believes in developing the highest possible degree of strength, yet that strength must never be separated from moral qualities. Strength minus love and humility produces a brute. The Master has become strong, stronger than any giant of body or intellect--for he has unlimited power, yet he combines with that strength the noblest virtues of the humble and gentle...All people find in him inspiration for the building of noble character.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I pp. 80-81

The Mahanta is generally a family man--he is never an ascetic nor does he ever encourage austerities. He will advocate keeping the body healthy as it is his duty to serve the world. The Mahanta, the living ECK Master, lives in the world although he is not of it. He has come to help all those who desire it, and enters the stream of humanity to give his help. Yet he himself stands aloof from the waves of human passions. He has attained all virtues. He believes in the highest degrees of strength; spiritual strength which cannot be separated from the moral qualities of mankind. This strength is the strength of love. He is stronger than any man in intellect or spirit, for he has unlimited power, and yet this strength combined with the noble virtues of the humble and gentle. All people find him inspiration for the development of noble character.

Example Seven

Johnson is equating a Master with being a son of God. While Twitchell delineates the same message almost verbatim, he deviates a bit when he refers to the Supreme (or the all-embracing Father as Johnson writes) as either Sugmad, the all-embracing ECK, or IT.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 191

In the process of their development, all Masters simply expand the godlike qualities with which they, in common with all other men, were born. Any true Master is a divine man, a real son of God. Moreover, every man has in him the latent possibilities of such expansions to become a son of God. He only requires a living Master to help him develop it. He needs but the flames of mastership in another man to light the fires in himself. When any Master attains sainthood, he gains conscious oneness with the Supreme...The real Master is conscious of it. That is one of the distinguishing qualities of a Master. He knows the relationship with the supreme Oversoul and is consciously able to exercise his powers and prerogatives as a son of God...Partaking of his qualities...he is literally part of the all-embracing Father...

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 81

In the process of the development of the Mahanta, all living ECK Masters, in their days on Earth, wore the mantle of the Mahanta and expanded their God-like qualities in common with all men. The living ECK Master is, therefore, the divine man; a real son of God. Yet every man has in him the latent possibilities for the same expansion to mastership. He only requires the living ECK Master to help develop it. When the Master gains Mahantaship he attains conscious oneness with the SUGMAD. This is the distinguishing quality of the ECK Master. He knows the relationship with the SUGMAD, and is able to consciously exercise his powers as a son of God. He is literally part of the all-embracing ECK, partaking of ITS qualities...

Example Eight

When discussing the necessity of a living guru, Twitchell utilizes Johnson's examples of a child needing a living mother and a sick man requiring a fully functioning doctor. Yet, Twitchell does leave out the reference to the impossibility of a "dead jurist" trying a case, which demonstrates how he makes subtle changes. He also makes plural the word Master, whereas Johnson does not. Perhaps this is an attempt simply to distinguish his passage a bit more from Johnson's.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 193

A child cannot get nourishment or learn vital lessons from a dead mother. A sick man cannot obtain medicine from a dead doctor; neither can a dead jurist try a case at law. The Master of past ages has gone from this field of action, and thus he has finished his work here.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 82

A child cannot get nourishment from a deceased mother, not a sick man from a departed doctor. The Masters of the past ages have left this field of action and so their work here is finished.

Example Nine

That the guru gives a precise method to experience higher states of consciousness is the topic here. When adopting this section from *The Path of the Masters*, Twitchell excludes about ten sentences. I too have omitted them so that the parallel in writings is obvious. But what is interesting is how Twitchell selects certain portions and leaves out others, perhaps to present the writing as original. He also makes slight changes, such as substituting Mahanta for wise man.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 195

All men will recognize, if they think of the matter at all, that feelings are not proof in religious matters...The wise man will learn to discount feelings as proofs of religious dogmas...He [the Master] offers you a definite method by which you can prove things for yourself, not by feeling but by sight and hearing.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 82

Men must recognize that feelings provide no proof in religious matters. The Mahanta will try to teach the chela to discount feelings as proofs of religious dogma. Only the living ECK Master can offer the chela a definite method by which he can prove all things for himself.

Example Ten

On one's spiritual journey the radiant form of the guru should appear, so indicates the passages below. Twitchell borrows this basic theme from Johnson's book but changes the wording somewhat. This illustrates not only how Twitchell adopts ideas but also how he creatively re-states them.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 197

And yet all of these things are not conclusive proofs. There is but one way to know beyond all peradventure that a man is a Master--that is to see him on some higher plane, where deception is impossible...If you see the Master there in his radiant form, you have nothing more to worry about...

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 82

There is one way to know if the living ECK Master is authentic. That is to see him on some higher plane where assumption is impossible. If the Mahanta is seen in his radiant form, the chela will know this is the true Master of ECKANKAR...

Example Eleven

While these passages are very alike, both petitioning one to have faith in the teacher and to hold steadfast when problems manifest in one's life, Twitchell incorporates a few subtle changes. For instance, he uses the term "karma" instead of "problem," as Johnson does. And Twitchell suggests that the Master will resolve any questions, while Johnson does not mention the Master in this particular context.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 198

Having now found the Master, what next? Follow him with unwavering faith and determination. In other words, after you have once accepted a man as a Master, accept his formula also and work it out with absolute fidelity. If you run up against many problems which cause your boat to rock, hold a steady hand upon the oars of self-mastery and wait while you work. At first there may be puzzling questions...Do not jump to conclusions. Let them come to you. Wait and work. By and by, your questions will answer themselves; you will be surprised how very easily. When the light becomes strong, the darkness vanishes.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I pp. 82-83

Whenever the chela finds the living ECK Master he should follow him with unwavering faith and determination and accept him wholeheartedly. If the chela runs up against karma and burdens, he must hold a steady hand on himself and wait while these are being worked out by the ECK Master. Hold all and wait. The questions that are in one's mind will be worked out eventually without a word for the Master. The light becomes stronger and the darkness vanishes...

Example Twelve

Both of these writings speak of a common theme: living in the world and performing one's duties but not being of the world. There is very little deviation between them.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 383

One may love while keeping his own independence...A man must remain in the world so long as he has a single duty to perform, but he is not to love the world. He must not become so bound up with duties, family, or worldly interests that he forgets his more important interests. He should never

forget that one day he has to leave family, friends and all possessions. And he knows not what day he will be called upon to leave.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 114

He who is fortunate to gain the attitude of true love shall have independence. Man must remain in this world as long as he has a single duty to perform, but he is not to love the world. He must not become so bound up with duties or family or worldly interests that he forgets his most important interests. He must never forget that one day he will leave friends and all possessions, and he never knows what day he shall be called upon to leave them.

Example Thirteen

The message of Johnson's passage is that one should not be attached to material things, since they are ultimately temporary. Twitchell reiterates almost the exact same message but makes an interpolation when he says that the material world is the property of Kal Niranjana.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 383

He must leave not only his wealth and loved ones but he must leave his own body. Material things and people all belong to the passing show. They all have but a temporary interest. They are not his own, and his attachment to them is only temporary. He must never regard them as his own but as loaned to him for the day, the moment, that he may both serve them and use them. This is vairagya in the real sense of the term.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 114

Not only does he leave his own body. He can take nothing with him except his inner possessions. All material things and people belong to the passing show on earth, for they have only a temporary interest. These material possessions are not his own. They have never been, nor ever will be. They are the properties of Kal Niranjana, the king of the negative worlds, and man's attachment to them is only temporary. He must never regard them as his own, but as a loan to him for Kal Niranjana for the day, the moment that he may both serve them and use them. When he comes to this attitude he has reached the Vairag.

Example Fourteen

While this is a very small example it is, I believe, an enlightening one. Twitchell borrows one of the last sentences of Johnson's book and applies it in an entirely different context than Johnson. When Johnson writes of the importance of love he is explaining what makes for a civilized world instead of a degenerate one. Twitchell, on the other hand, is concerned here with the method of how the

"chela" enters into the inner spiritual regions. Thus, Twitchell, it seems, is prone to adopt certain passages and then re-work them into different themes.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 452

Love alone makes civilization, and love is the essence of pure spirit.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 118

It is love that makes civilization of this Earth plane, and that love is the essence of pure spirit.

Example Fifteen

When speaking of samadhi, both agree that the highest form is nirvikalpa. For Johnson this occurs in the third spiritual region, where the disciples "behold themselves as pure spirit." But for Twitchell nirvikalpa is attained in the fifth region, where the "seeker of God cannot distinguish himself from the ECK ITSELF." Also, a modification appears near the end of Twitchell's passage: whereas Johnson asserts that Shabd is the necessary ingredient to advance spiritually, Twitchell suggests that spiritual growth depends upon having a "Living Eck Master."

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters pp. 441-42

All of these things enumerated above lead one up to samadhi, to actually going inside and stepping out upon the astral regions, as suggested above. The highest form of samadhi is nirvikalpa. This is gained by disciples of the Master when they enter the third region. It is there that they behold themselves as pure spirit, after leaving behind all material coverings...But the most important thing about all yogic systems is the complete absence in them of all knowledge of the Shabd and reliance upon it for entering the higher religions. Without it, no one can advance very far on the inner path.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I pp. 117-18

This leads the seeker of God up to Samadhi, to the actual going inside and stepping out onto the astral planes where he meets with the Mahanta in the Nuri-Sarup. The highest form of Samadhi is the Nirvikalpa, in which the seeker of God cannot distinguish himself from the ECK ITSELF. This is gained when the chela enters the fifth plane (the Soul region) with the Mahanta. It is here that he beholds himself as pure Soul after leaving behind his material sheaths. Few, if any, can attain this state without traveling the path of ECK in the company of the Mahanta. No one can get his release from the net of karma without the living ECK Master.

Example Sixteen

Both accounts deal with the disciples encounter with the "radiant form" of the guru. Besides a few word changes (like Master to ECK Master or Mahanta, and disciple to chela), these passages are almost the same.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters pp. 438-39

At a point between the sun-worlds and the moon-worlds and the pure astral zone, the disciple of the Master enters a zone called Ashtadal Kanwal. At that place something happens which changes the whole course of his life and also his method of procedure from that point on. It is the meeting with his own Master in his radiant form. This is the Master's nuri sarup or "light form. It is the Master, his own Master, appearing just as he does in physical life, except that his body is now much more beautiful and full of light, brilliantly illumined. The radiant Master then and there receives his disciple with much love, to the great joy of the disciple. From that moment on, the two are never separated throughout the journey to still higher regions. Of course, this form is always with the disciple from the moment of his initiation, but the disciple cannot see him. But from here on, the disciple can see the Master on the inner planes as well as the outer.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I pp. 115-16

When one reaches this stage of spiritual development he finds the living ECK Master always in his inner vision waiting to meet him at a point between the sun worlds and the moon worlds. This is the pure astral zone, where the lover of God enters a zone called the Ashta-dal-Kanwal. At this point the whole course of his life is changed. It is the meeting with the living ECK Master in his radiant body. This is the Mahanta's Nuri-Sarup, or Light form. It is the living ECK Master appearing just as he does in this physical life, except that now his body is more beautiful and filled with a brilliantly illuminated light. The radiant ECK Master greets the chela with much love and from there on the two are never separated throughout the journey to still higher regions and eventually to God. This inner form of the Mahanta is always with the chela from the moment of his initiation, but the chela cannot see him. Yet from this moment on, the chela can see and communicate with the living ECK Master on the inner places as well as the outer ones.

Example Seventeen

One must practice the dharma, rightful duty, if one is to progress spiritually, so says Johnson and Twitchell. Dharma in this context seems to be referring to dedication to the spiritual life. These writings are very close, except Twitchell does add a few Eckankar terms, such as ECK and ECK chela.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters p. 441

All of this is take for granted, even before one starts on the path of the Masters. Of course, every student must be well grounded in the fundamental laws of righteousness. He must also practice the

real dharma in all his life. Without it, he cannot even make a start.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book I p. 117

One takes for granted before he starts on the path of ECK that he is to become well grounded in the fundamentals of righteousness. He must practice the Dharma, the law of life itself, in all aspects of his life. This means doing what one ought to do while an ECK chela. Without doing this he cannot make a start in life.

Example Eighteen

In comparing these passages, which deal with the creative powers that make up the world, we clearly can witness the influence of Radhasoami text on Twitchell's thinking. Twitchell does make a few adjustments though, such as replacing the term supreme power with SUGMAD and on one occasion substituting the name Niranjan with Brahm. And, interestingly, Twitchell places man not at the "very (lowest) foot of the grand hierarchy," as Johnson does, but gives him the status of an "in-between being."

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters pp. 260-61

They are the famous Hindu trinity--Brahman, Vishnu and Shiva. These are called sons of Kal Niranjan...The female counterpart of Kal Niranjan is Shakti, who in fact represents another creative current. Out of the union of these two great currents, three subordinate currents flow into the lower worlds, and to these are attributed the creation of all lower worlds. These three became creators, lords and governors of the lower worlds under their father, Niranjan, and their mother, Shakti. There are said to be more directly under the supervision of their mother. In fact, these three represent creative currents; they carry the creative impulses from the greater powers above. But they have been given these individual names as persons. It is well to remember that all creative currents may become personal, that is, take individual form and assume individual duties. Now these three have generally been accepted as the Hindu trinity of gods...Millions worship them in spite of their subordinate position. They each perform a certain function in carrying on the work of the world, in producing human bodies, and in keeping those bodies going. They are agents of the supreme power in serving mankind. They are not gods to be worshipped. Who will worship his servants? They are subordinates in the grand hierarchy. But each of them has certain powers and prerogatives, and within his own sphere he is all-powerful. He carries on according to definite laws and rules laid down for his government. These again are laws of nature. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva may be regarded as servants of the negative power...Still lower than these three, there is another current or god or power who is also one of the working forces, helping to carry on the administration of the physical universe. His name is Ganesh. He stands practically at the foot of the list of subordinates whose business it is to serve mankind and help to carry on the work of this world. In the subtle regions close to the earth, there is a great host of beings called devas, devtas, spirits, etc....They are somewhat above ordinary men and help to serve man in many ways. They have great power and are quite willing to serve people who live in harmony with them. Last of all is humanity itself, at the very foot of the grand hierarchy. If man works in harmony with all those powers above him, he will

surely receive help and will eventually rise to the position where he will find a Master and then accomplish his final return home.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book II p. 138

Orientalists know them as the Hindu trinity; Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. These are the sons of Kal Niranjana, the kings of the lower worlds. The female counterpart of Kal Niranjana is Shakti, who represents a minor creative current. Out of the union of these two great currents...the three subordinate currents flow into the lower worlds, and to these are attributed the creation of all the lower worlds. These three became creators, lords, and governors of the lower worlds under their father, Brahma, and mother, Shakti. They are more directly under the supervision of Shakti, their mother. They represent the creative powers of the Kal, for they carry the creative power from the greater powers above. These negative, creative powers become personal, take individual form and assume individual duties. These three have been accepted since ancient times as the Hindu trinity of gods...These negative powers, however, are only servants to man, although millions worship them in spite of their subordinate position. They each perform a certain function in carrying on the work of the world, in producing human bodies and in keeping these bodies going. They are only the agents of the SUGMAD, and not gods to be worshipped. They are almost menials in the grand spiritual hierarchy, but each has certain power and prerogatives, and within his own sphere he is all powerful. Each must carry on according to the definite laws and rules which are laid down for his government. These are laws of nature, and the trinity, no matter what religion it may be represented as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, may be regarded as servants of the Kal Niranjana, the negative power. Lower than these three, there is another current of power, or god, who is the working force helping to carry on the administration of the physical universe. His Hindu name is Ganesh, but other religions give him different names. He stands almost at the foot of the ladder of subordinate whose business is to serve mankind and help carry on the work of the world...These great hosts of beings are called devas, devtas, bhuts, prets, and by other names. They are beings somewhat above the ordinary man, and they help to serve man in many ways. They have great power and are quite willing to help those individuals who are in harmony with them. Man is the in-between being, between the spiritual hierarchy and the lowest of beings...But if he works in harmony with all of those powers above him, he will surely receive their help and will eventually rise to the position where he will meet with the Mahanta, the Living ECK Master, and then succeed in returning to the heavenly world, his true home.

Example Nineteen

Both Johnson and Twitchell argue that the teachings of the Masters are the oldest known. Yet, Twitchell does make one obvious alteration in his passage when he refers to the mastership as "The Vairagi, the Ancient Order of the Adepts of ECK Masters."

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters pp. 262-63

This psychology of the Masters is both the oldest and the newest psychology known. It is the oldest because its main points have been known and taught by the Masters ever since they began to

instruct students on this planet. That was so long ago that no historians can even attempt to trace it. It was old ages before the Vedas were ever heard of, and it was only when the pure teachings of the saints began to be obscured and corrupted that the Vedas came. It was long before the Chinese sages began to speculate upon the abstruse and the unknown, the occult and the mystical. It was old long before the great cataclysm change the face of the continents and raised the Himalayan mountains to their present height. It was old when the first known empire, stretching back into Sat Yuga, the Golden Age, built its civilization upon the great plateau which is now Tibet and the Gobi desert. It was old before the Sanskrit language was spoken in that central empire of prehistoric civilization; for the Master's system has watched the decline of Sanskrit and the simultaneous decline of all known civilizations. It must be remembered that mastership is not a product of modern civilization. It has been the chief factor in producing all civilizations, including the modern one. Masters have existed in this creation for millions of years. Always during prehistoric eras, while the majority of the race was on the decline, descending toward what we now call primitive savagery, the Masters held aloft the torch of spiritual truth, pointing for all who had eyes to see it

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book II pp. 140-41

The teachings of the works of ECK is at once, therefore, both the oldest and the newest known. It is the oldest and the purest of the known works of God since its revelation...The ECK Masers have instructed the devotees of this spiritual works so long ago, that historians of the human race cannot attempt to trace it on this planet. It was ages old before the Vedas of the Hindus were ever heard of, and it was only when the pure teachings of the ECK Masters began to be obscured and corrupted that the Vedas arrived here in this world. ECK was taught to those who were receptive long before the Chinese sages started to speculate upon the abstruse and the unknown God. It was old long before the great cataclysm changed the face of continents and raised the Himalayan Mountains to their present magnificent heights. It was old, of course, when the first known empire stretched back into the Satya Yuga, the golden age, and built its civilization of the great plateau which is not Tibet and the Gobi desert. Naturally it was old when the Sanskrit language came into existence in the central empire of the prehistoric civilization known as the great Uighur empire. The Vairagi, the Ancient Order of Adepts of ECK Masters...has watched the decline of all known civilization. The Mahanta, the Living ECK Maser, is therefore not a product of modern civilization as many believe. He has been, as well as the Order of the Vairagi, the chief factor in producing all civilizations, including the present modern civilization. The Mahanta, the Living ECK Master, has existed in this world for millions of years...As always, during prehistoric periods when the human race was on the decline in descent toward savagery, the ECK Masters have held up the spiritual truths as a torch lighting the way for all those who had eyes to see.

Example Twenty

Both writers here are presenting their tradition as something special. But Twitchell seems to go a step further and argue that all religions originally came from his tradition, Eckankar. Also, while Johnson compares Sant Mat with other Hindu systems, Twitchell avoids reference to any Indian philosophy, Hindu, Sant Mat, or otherwise.

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Masters pp. 263-64

The real science of the Masters, as presented in this book, must never be confused with the various Hindu systems, philosophies or religions. IT is none of them...Hindu philosophies have many features in common with Sant Mat; but the most essential elements of this science are quite unique and not widely known in India among the vast majority of Indian scholars. This is because the Hindu pundits have been so preoccupied with their own systems of learning that they have never taken the trouble to investigate the real science of the Masters.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book II pp. 140-41

The works of ECK must never be confused with the various systems of philosophies and religions, for the ECK is neither a philosophy nor a religion. Many of the world religions and philosophies have features which are similar to ECKANKAR, but the most essential point to make here is that the reason for this is that all religions and philosophies are the offspring of ECK. It is the fountainhead of all life; therefore, all other things are the children of ECK. It is for this very reason that so many preoccupied with their own systems of religions and philosophies seem to find something in ECK which appears to be like their own. It is because their founders have taken from ECKANKAR...

Example Twenty-One

Bad karma, described in these passages as sin or evil, is said to impede one's spiritual growth. While various religious books and teachers have attempted to delineate exactly what constitutes sin, Johnson and Twitchell claim that only a Master can do so. There are other strong similarities: Twitchell fully embraces Johnson's position that if the mind is pulled upward toward spirituality then this is good and if it is pulled downward via the "five evil passions" it is bad. In addition, Twitchell adopts Johnson's dislike for utilitarian ethics. Although the messages are basically the same, there are a few slight variations between Johnson's and Twitchell's writings. For instance, when Johnson makes reference to Indian literature, Twitchell leaves this out (but he feels free to use Indian terms like dharma). Also, for Johnson the cure for evil is spiritual "light" experienced during meditation, whereas for Twitchell it is both "light and sound."

Radhasoami Literature: The Path of the Master pp. 338-41

Karma is bound up with all forms of sin and evil, as well as righteousness. These three cannot be separated. Both sin and righteousness create karma. In the sacred literature of India, dharma, "righteousness," is doing right, obeying the law, and this means doing "what is to be done"... But nowhere is it told exactly what sin and righteousness are, per se. And that is because all people go by a book of laws. No one except the Masters has attempted to tell what the substance of evil is or the essential conduct of doing right...Religious leaders simply write down their commandments in a book and assign penalties for their violation. Nearly all of them sum up the matter by saying: "Do the will of God." And when we come to a little closer investigation of the matter, we find that the commands of the lawgiver are assumed to be the will of God. Who is to tell us what the will of God

is? Of course, the priests and the prophets and the kings. But if we challenge their credentials to speak for God, they call us bad names...What constitutes bad actions? No clear conception of the fundamental nature of these transactions can be gathered literature from the literature... It [a fundamental principle] is as follows: Whatever bears the quality or character of any of the five evil passions, or in any way hinders or delays the soul in its progress toward spiritual freedom, is wrong. Whatever raises the consciousness is right...Another guiding principle is: To keep on the path of spiritual progress, the mind must be maintained at its center behind the eyes; any action pulling it down from there retards progress and can, therefore, be called wrongdoing...The simple sum of the matter is that no one is to be impeded on his way to the light. Any given act that has the effect of helping another party in his spiritual progress is to be considered good. The ultimate effect upon the higher interest of all concerned must be the prime consideration. Do not be misled by that old but erroneous maxim: the greatest good for the greatest number... That saying has been used for centuries to justify murder in the name of society. Nothing can be moral or good if a single individual has to be sacrificed to gain it...the cure for evil is unobstructed light. When this occurs, as in the case of the Master, then all evil vanished as darkness disappears in the perfect sunlight.

Eckankar Literature: The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, Book II pp. 69-70

Karma, of course, is bound up with reincarnation. It is separated into two parts; cause and righteousness, which are the basic factors that create karma. It is the disobedience of the Law of Dharma, which is rightness or righteousness, the law of life or what ought to be done, that brings about karma for the individual or groups. But nowhere does anyone tell you exactly what cause or righteousness might be which causes the karmic forced to enter into the life of man. This is because all people go by the laws of God. Nearly all commandments say "do right," but few know what is being said here except the Living ECK Master who gets to the heart of the problem. Most religion, instead, write down their laws in a book and assign penalties for their violations. Nearly all of them sum up the matter by saying, "Do the will of God." When this statement is investigated it's found that the commands of the law-giver are assumed to be the Will of God. Those who are and have been responsible for the Will of God statements have been the priests, prophets and kings and, of course, the dictators. Once their credentials are challenged they are upset and quote their authority from some religious writings. They have no understanding of what constitutes good or bad conduct...The Mahanta, the Living ECK Master, says that whatever bears the quality or character of any of the five mental passions, or in any way hinders or delays Soul in progress and unfoldment toward spiritual freedom, is wrong and brings karma. Therefore, whatever creates good karma is right and whatever creates bad karma is wrong. If a certain act has the effect to delay any one else on the path of spiritual liberation then that course of action must be considered wrong. No one is to be impeded on his way to God-Realization. But if any given act has the effect of helping another party in his spiritual progress, then that is to be considered good...The ultimate effect upon the higher interest of all concerned must be the prime consideration. The old slogan "the greatest good to the greatest number" is unfortunate for it is utterly misleading. Sometimes it is used to justify murder in the name of society, but nothing can be morally good if a single individual had "TO BE SACRIFICED TO GAIN IT." Therefore, the cure for evil is the unobstructed sound and light. When this occurs, as in the case of the Living ECK Master, then all darkness and evil vanishes as does the night disappear when the sun rises.

Harold Klemp on Paul Twitchell's Association with Kirpal Singh

It's important for us to know that someone like Paul, who reaches the heights of spiritual attainment in this lifetime, doesn't get there the easy way. We somehow knew and felt the great compassion he showed as the Mahanta, but so little has been said about him that we never knew what trials he had to go through before this could develop. I've read letters in which he openly admitted, over and over again, his selfishness and how he had hurt people.

About two years after he separated from his wife, Camille, he had the experience that he later wrote down in *The Tiger's Fang*. This experience came in late 1956 or early 1957. From the time he and his wife actually separated until about 1963 when he met Gail, Paul tried to find another person with whom he could share his life. He knew he had a mission, and he knew he needed someone to help him with it. He dated a number of different women, but it was a rocky road he traveled.

As late as 1961, the breakup of one of his relationships so distressed him that he spent every night for the better part of a week in church, praying for forgiveness. And this was after he'd had the experience recorded in *The Tiger's Fang*.

One might think that the instant he had experienced God Consciousness, he could have risen above the human emotions. This is one of the popular myths that has been put upon people by those who don't know any better. When the God Consciousness comes in, it does not immediately dissolve all the habits that have developed over a number of years. Instead, the ECK gradually begins to move the person into circumstances which are best to allow him to grow. It's usually done under great protest. We don't like it. I called my first book *The Wind of Change*, which refers to the ECK; and when the change comes, we resist. We fight it. This is true whether one has the God Consciousness or whether he has the initiation of the First Circle, which comes in the dream state.

For a few years Paul was a member of Swami Premananda's church in Washington, D.C. When that association ended, he came in contact with the works of Kirpal Singh, who was based in India at the time. Paul had some experiences in which Kirpal Singh came to him in his room. They began to correspond. When Paul wrote to tell Kirpal Singh about the series of discourses he was working on, Kirpal Singh replied: "Let's see what you have. Perhaps we can use them."

Paul was a prolific writer. Kirpal Singh was very interested in Paul's account of his experience in *The Tiger's Fang* and he even offered suggestions. He said, "When you talk with these Masters, ask them questions like, 'What is the process of death? How did the creation of the worlds come about?' " It was interesting that Kirpal Singh knew Paul had the ability to go into the other worlds, come back, and report on certain things.

Kirpal Singh told several of his close followers that his line of mastership would end with him, and that the mastership would then be picked up in one of the Western countries. But I sincerely wonder if he recognized Paul, a former chela, as being the carrier of this Light and Sound of ECK.

Paul sent his manuscript of *The Tiger's Fang* to Kirpal Singh in India, which triggered a series of letters back and forth. It caused a very disagreeable situation when Paul wanted the manuscript back later. Paul had admired Kirpal Singh for a long time, but then they had this little falling out. Perhaps they worked it out later.

Excerpted from **"The Writings of Paul Twitchell"** by Sri Harold Klemp



Was Paul Twitchell Ahead of His Time?

Although Paul Twitchell's reputation has been tarnished because of his plagiarisms and biographical redactions, it is also true that he created one of the most successful religions to emerge from the 1960s. Some longtime disciples, such as Doug Marman, argue that Paul

Twitchell was a spiritual pioneer who compiled some of the world's great wisdom in an accessible fashion for those in the West who might not otherwise receive such teachings. No matter how one may ultimately view Paul Twitchell and his contributions, it is remarkable that in less than six years (from 1965 to 1971), he built the foundation for a spiritual movement that has centers across the globe and has touched the lives of millions.