

The Myth of the Perfect Masters Lineage

Summary of the main historical facts

[Back to The Indian Background Index](#)

One of the myths concerning the so-called "Perfect Master" is the idea that there is only one authentic "Master" or "Satguru" on the planet at any given time. Followers of Prem Rawat believe that today that "Master" is him.

This is an intricate issue, already well documented on [this website](#) (see the various documents in [The actual place of Maharaji's movement among Indian religious groups](#) section); but some may want to have an overview of the whole story, without all these long - and maybe boring - documents. Here, then, is a summary of the main information needed to understand this complex story.

In the 19th century, a new spiritual current emerged in the Punjab, that part of India in which Sikhism enjoyed its greatest strength. This current was constituted of two distinct groups: **Santmat** and **Radhasoami**, both of them having the same teachings (Naam - the 'Holy Name', Nectar, Bhakti - devotion to the master, Shabd - light and harmony, quoted everywhere in their writings on their practice) and the same doctrine. Radhasoami is basically a more popular version of the Sant mat teachings. The two men who founded these two movements (and whose names are incidentally confusingly similar) had the same gurus and teachers in the Sant tradition of the Sikhism in Northern India (see the various documents at <http://www.ex-premie.org/papers/SSM.htm>).

Sant Mat/Advait Mat

Founder: **Shiv Dayal** (alias Shri Paramhans Dayal Ji Maharaj, alias Swami Advait Anand Ji Maharaj, alias Shree/Shri Dada Guru) 1846–1919.

His master was Swami Anandpuri 1782-1872 (see <http://www.ex-premie.org/papers/31-79.htm>), as well as a couple of other gurus/saints of the Sant tradition, and maybe also Shiv Dayal Singh (homonym, founder of Radhasoami – see below). Having several gurus, even simultaneously is a common thing in India.

- Shiv Dayal is the origin of several branches of Santmat today, in India and elsewhere.

- Swami Sarup/**Swarup Anand** Ji Maharaj (the 2nd master – alias Sarupanand, alias Hari Har Baba - 'master' of Shri Hans) 1884–1936 was the official successor of Shiv Dayal. He is the origin of the Advait Mat group based in **Guna** (in **Shri Anandpur**, Madhya Pradesh, India).

Whilst Swarupanand was alive, and after he passed away, many gurus claimed his spiritual heritage ... including:

- The gurus of **Shri Nangli Sahib** and the gurus of **Shri Nangli Tirth** (see [The Indian Group claiming Swarupanand's Successorship](#));

- Swami **Vairag Anand** Ji Maharaj 1898–1944/46 whose fate is uncertain (it looks like he's been discharged after some 'scandal', or because he got very sick - he died in hospital after suffering fits). He is named 'The Third Master' in the official lineage of Sant Mat (see [The 'Paramhansa Advait Mat' Book](#)). He also had several successors including presently living gurus, and he was the first guru of the **Shri Anandpur (Guna)** branch of Sant mat/Advait mat;

- and **Shri Hans** (1900-1966) - Prem Rawat's father and guru - who also claimed he was Swarupanand's heir. Shri Hans was also a disciple of Sawan Singh of the Beas Radhasoami Satsang (see below) in the years 1920 (see Dr Lane <http://www.ex-premie.org/papers/lane.htm>), and he started his own group in 1930 - before Swarupanand's death in 1936 ! His teachings on Name/Holy Name is similar as what's taught in Sawan Singh's Radhasoami tradition, Shabd Brahm (Light and Harmony are taught by both Santmat and Radhasoami).

The Sant Mat tradition has found its greatest success in several Westernized versions, ECKANKAR and the 'Church for the Movement of Spiritual Awareness', as well as the 'Divine Light Mission' (alias 'Elan Vital') under the Guru Maharaj Ji - alias Prem Rawat (see <http://www.ex-premie.org/papers/shabd>).

[htm](#)).

Radhasoami

Shiv Dayal Singh Sahib (alias Soamiji Maharaj) 1818-1878 (not to be mistaken with Shiv Dayal 1846-1919 see above) – creates the Agra Radhasoami Satsang in 1861. He was a disciple of Tulsi Sahib of Hatras (from the Sant tradition where Santmat originates) and Girdhari Das (died in 1861) - but he left this group and created his own lineage. Regarded as the founder of Radhasoami; he popularized Surat Shabd yoga, and expressed the teachings of Sant mat in a simplified and easy to understand manner (Dr Lane).

The six main successors to Shiv Dayal Singh (<http://vm.mtsac.edu/~dlane/rs1.html>) were:

- 1/ **Rai Salig Ram**, who started his ministry in Peepal Mandi, Agra;
- 2/ Seth Partap Singh (Shiv Dayal's brother), who held his satsangs in Soami Bagh, about 3 miles from Agra city proper;
- 3/ Garib Das (sometimes spelled Gharib), who settled in Delhi near Sarai Rohilla;
- 4/ **Jaimal Singh**, who established his satsang at Beas in the Punjab;
- 5/ Narayan Dei (Radhaji), Shiv Dayal Singh's wife, who reportedly initiated women into the path in Agra;
- 6/ and Sanmukh Das, who initiated sadhus into the path at Soami Bagh.

These above 6 main successors created 3 main groups, each one of them claiming to be the only heir !

- 1/ **Radhasoami Satsang (Soamibagh or Peepal Mandi)** (original ashram), near Agra – founded by Rai Saligram (Bahadur) Mat Prakash, (alias Hazur Maharaj) - died in 1898.

'Official' successors:

AJUDHIA PRASAD, "Lalaji Maharaj" died in 1926;
GUR PRASAD, "Kunwarji Maharaj" died in 1959;
AGAM PRASAD MATHUR, "Dadaji", still in charge.

- 2/ **Radhasoami Satsang (Dayalbagh)**, near Agra.

'Official' satgurus:

Sahabji (**Anand Swarup**) Maharaj (1913-1937) who created Dayalbagh around 1915 (not to be mistaken with Swarupanand from the Santmat group - see above).

Mehtaji Sahab (1937-1975);

Dr Makund Behari Lal (1975-2002).

3/ **Radhasoami Satsang (Beas)**, created by Jaimal Singh (1838-1903, initiated by Shiv Dayal Sahib), Dera Ashram, Beas, Punjab.

'Official' satgurus:

Sawan Singh (alias Huzur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj) 1858–1948;

Faqir Chand: 1886-1981 - official successor appointed by Sawan Singh;

Successor: Dr. I.C. Sharma (still in charge).

But after Sawan Singh's death the Beas group split in several branches. Their main gurus were:

a) **Charan Singh** 1916-1990 (Hazur Baba Sawan Singh's grandson) and official successor;

b) **Kirpal Singh** 1894–1974, founder of the Ruhani Satsang in Gur Mandi, Old Delhi, the main group.

Charan Singh and Kirpal Singh have several successors these days.

Conclusion

There are now dozens, and maybe hundreds of groups claiming the Santmat/Radhasoami heritage - including groups hiding it ! Many of these groups are well established in West, Elan Vital/ Divine Light Mission being only one of them - and Prem Rawat (as well as his father) never mentioned in any of their official lineages.

Dispute over successorship and quarrels seems to be a characteristic common to all these groups - many of them suing each other for more than 50 years !

As Patrick Wilson states: "Lineage is almost meaningless and irrelevant except that it brings to attention the precious way Guru's and maybe more so - their disciples - value it when it suits them, and it shows how naive and pompous their thinking can be.

The value of looking at Lineages in as much accurate historical detail as possible, is that it demystifies the 'spin' that there has always been a clear transmission of power from Guru to Guru. Nothing could be further from the truth. Hence a premie might learn how incredibly 'unlikely' it is that their Master and 'Knowledge' are so unique and also may be able to understand the more prosaic reasons behind their Master's perceived status and the social context that made him what he is.

In other words, given the social conditions and influences that Maharaji grew up in, it would be hard to imagine that he could have grown up thinking that he were anything much other than a Perfect Master (without any 'Divine Intervention' needed)."

Other references to Radhasoami/Sant mat lineage

RADHASOAMI AGRA GURUS AND BRANCHES:

<http://members.tripod.com/~dlane5/g1.html>

Unknown Beas Radhasoami Lineage:

<http://www.angelfire.com/band/radhasoamisantmath/>

Patrick Wilson comments on Prem Rawat's Lineage:

<http://www.ex-premie.org/papers/glentoros.htm#pw>

Sant Mat - Surat Shabd Yoga, Contemporary Guru Lines & Branches:

<http://www.santmat-meditation.net/guru/chart.html>

THE RADHASOAMI TRADITION. A Critical History of Guru Successorship, by David Christopher Lane, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy

<http://vm.mtsac.edu/~dlane/radhabook.html>

[Top of Page & Main Site Links](#)