



Moth & *the* Flame



**ADVENTURES WITH THREE
MYSTIC ADEPTS OF OUR TIMES**

Memoir of artist, entrepreneur, philanthropist,
organic foods pioneer & spiritual wayfarer

Arran Stephens

O.B.C. PhD, Hons

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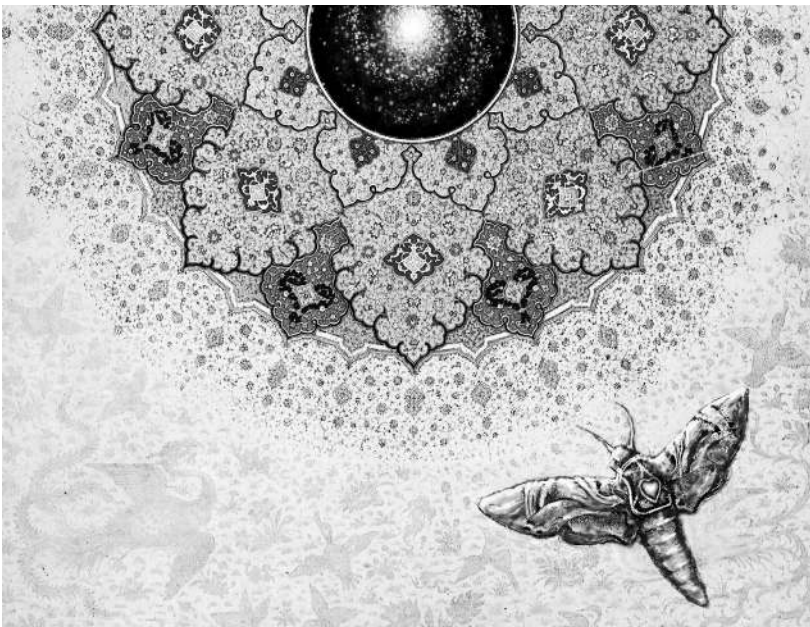
Dedication

*To all who walk the way of love, earth-stewardship & service;
To Ratana, my life-companion; children, grandchildren,
extended family, friends, translators, helpers, you!
To Kirpal—compassionate Friend & Preceptor,
I offer profound gratitude.*

Can a miniscule moth bring its truth
to life for you, O friend?

Words are too poor a medium to convey the ineffable.

A myriad like me got drawn into orbit;
had I become One with the wondrous Flame,
who would be left to tell this tale?



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Foreword

I write from the perspective of being a longtime student of comparative religion (both East and West) and of spirituality, a teacher of peace studies, and simply as a fellow traveler on life's journey. And what an exciting journey of discovery Arran Stephens has been on, beginning in his teens as he struggled to find life's meaning and purpose.

His early odyssey took him from his native British Columbia to California and New York, as he explored the venues of the artist and the excesses of the times. We relive with him the turbulent era of the sixties and share in auspicious encounters with Allen Ginsberg, Eden Abhez, and others on the leading edge of the counterculture. Then, fueled by an intense inner yearning, Arran embarks on a painstaking search to find a genuine spiritual mentor. After some false starts and promising leads, in 1964, he learns of the great Indian sage and mystic adept, Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj. That first contact awakens a deep recognition and triggers several profound mystical experiences. As a result, his life undergoes a transformation. Now, sixty years later, Arran remains deeply involved in the study and practice of an age-old, yet surprisingly modern spiritual path—not as a monastic recluse—but as a civic-minded family man, artist and highly successful pioneer in the organic foods movement.

With loving care, Arran weaves the times and teachings of his mentors into the tapestry of his own growth and struggles. The pages overflow with picturesque descriptions of life in India, including details of trips to the pristine Himalayas, to the dusty byways of rural villages, and to shrines and pilgrimage centers. Many of his accounts reveal things which defy explanation by ordinary standards of understanding, including miraculous healings and the sudden appearance of the Masters to individuals many thousands of miles away in times of need.

The reader is provided a rare opportunity to witness the daily activities of living Saints and their interactions with people of all walks of life - from presidents and princesses to simple rural workers. One encounters in action the deep humanity of these servants of humankind, as well as their extraordinary qualities of transvision, protection, and access to inner spiritual dimensions. We are treated to memorable meetings with Raghuvacharya, renowned among the yogis of Haridwar, who late in his lifespan of one hundred thirteen years, became an advanced practitio-

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ner of the inner path, and we encounter a wide range of humanity from venerable Tibetan Lamas to two former hardened criminals.

In *Moth & the Flame*, the reader encounters an individual's struggle with the apparent paradoxes of the spiritual life: effort and grace, separation and union, death and life, pain and ecstasy. One glimpses the profoundly transformative personal relationship which lies at the heart of mysticism—that of the competent adept and the sincere wayfarer.

—**Arthur Stein, PhD**, Professor of Political Science, co-founder of the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies, University of Rhode Island, co-author of *Let There Be Light: Experiencing Inner Light Across the World's Sacred Traditions*.

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Preface

Moth and the Flame is the journey of a spiritual seeker and artist, whose life (mine) was guided by several spontaneous mystical experiences as a struggling teenage artist during the Beat milieu of the 1960's. These inexorably led me on an journey to a great spiritual Master—a Master for the ages. My testimony had its genesis in an unquenchable longing that came to life in the '60's and blossomed in India in his presence. That story begins unfolding in Chapter 6, and if you want to skip the drama of my early search, go straight there.

In brief, my journey begins in 1944 on the family farm nestled in a valley in the blue green hills of Vancouver Island; in '57, an abrupt move to Hollywood and the music industry at 13, followed by dissolution of the family at 15, then pursuit of art, life on the streets, addiction, a suicide attempt, followed by monastic refuge. There, encounters with a mysterious inner Light triggers my quest. At 19, follows a major art exhibition in San Francisco, a brief epiphany in the Mendocino hills, then an abyss of despair in New York City. From the ashes of a former life, a new one in the making, my future Preceptor appears within; I apply as his student, although continents separate us, and was initiated into the mysteries of the Beyond at twenty-one.

When I arrived at Sawan Ashram in India in January, 1967, meeting Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj in person for the very first time, I bowed before his august presence and blurted out the sins of my tumultuous teens. "I have been a terrible sinner," He looked deep into my soul with gleaming and forgiving eyes, and said, "**Master is for sinners! Every Saint has a past and every sinner a future.**" My burden was lifted.

I had the inestimable good fortune to spend a total of seventeen months with him over the remaining seven years of his awe-inspiring life. He treated this unworthy one as a father would a prodigal son. How can I begin to express adequate gratitude? Even a monarch would have exchanged a throne for such an opportunity, had they known who he was. I joyously embraced the simple austerity of ashram life. "**Write down what you see and hear, that you may not forget,**" he advised, soon after arriving. Diary notes of life at the Ashram and on tours accompanying him to cities, towns and dusty villages across northern

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and central India, subsequently evolved into a manuscript under his encouragement. Along with recording profound experiences, conversations, detailed questions and answers plus a brief history of the ancient lineage of **Sant Mat** (Path of the Masters), my account also records a number of miraculous and historical events. “Miracles are the result of hidden laws of nature with which we are as yet not conversant,” (Kirpal Singh). Miracles were never displayed in public, but often were revealed secretly to the devotees in times of trouble. That I am alive till today is also a kind of miracle; in 2011, I was at death’s door. My doctors warned, “You may only live one or two more months.” Daughter Gurdeep also played an essential role in that miracle, described in chapter 81, Divine Intercessions.

I was present when a visiting Berkeley professor and his wife turned up at the Master’s door in Rajpur in the Himalayan foothills, to discuss spirituality. After patiently listening to the intellectual questions and the Master’s beautiful and direct responses which I recorded, the lady said, “You say that God is everywhere and in all things. Why then do we need to seek the help of an intermediary, a Guru?”

Master Kirpal replied with great authority, *“The God in you is asleep. In the Master it is awake! He is competent to awaken others. Light comes from Light, and life comes from life.”* Masters have the power to awaken souls and by directing their supercharged attention on them, are able to effortlessly lift them above the five senses and into radiant realms. I saw that countless times with Kirpal and his Successors. *It still happens.*

Under his guidance in India, I meditated a minimum of four to six hours daily—sometimes more, attended Satsangs (spiritual discourses) and Darshans (informal, more intimate question and answer sessions). After earning the trust of Ashram secretary, Dalip Singh, I was given the blessing of typing up some of the Master’s voluminous English correspondence with hundreds of seekers across the globe, all the while absorbing as much as humanly possible. Every moment was precious.

Almost seven wonderful months went by, and then, one full-moon night in the Rajpur garden, he asked me if my mother loved me. *Three times!* I said yes. *Three times.* He gently informed me, “tell your mother that her son is coming home soon.” I was thunderstruck as I had hoped this paradise on earth would never end. The next morning as I stood alone out in the garden, I silently wept, feeling like a baby separated from its mother, dreading the coming separation, watching as my tears dropped

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in slow-motion into the Indian dust at my feet. The all-knowing Master walked out of his bungalow straight to my side, placed his hand on my shoulder and assured with a smile and love coming from his eyes, ***“I’m not leaving you!”*** He has kept His promise.

On the poignant eve of departure, I asked Maharaji, as he was known, if it would be all right to start a wholesome vegetarian restaurant back in Vancouver to serve the community. I sensed a void in the society I was raised plus I needed a meaningful vocation. He gave his blessing, saying, “The Master-Power will be extending all feasible help and protection, both inside and outside.” What more was wanted?!

“Because you now have experience,” he added, “you will not be just repeating what you’ve learned like a parrot.” It’s only what we live and practice that will give power to our words.

Little did I know what was in store and how marvelous, bumpy and strange my journey would be! With his blessings, a hope, a prayer and my remaining seven dollars and a \$1,500 loan, I started Canada’s very first vegetarian restaurant, the Golden Lotus in the fall of 1967. It was the right thing at the right time and place. Despite almost failure a few times, and some difficult lessons, the restaurant began to thrive and became very popular. The loan was repaid. However, I dearly missed the Master’s enlivening presence and within a year, left the Lotus with others and was back in India again, with no idea how long I would stay. At the end of five months at the ashram and traveling with the Master again, in 1969, I was introduced, had an arranged marriage, and fell in love. In that order! That story, *Arranged Marriage* unfolds in chapter 41. Six weeks later, Ratana, my new bride, bravely accompanied me to Canada where we worked side by side as equals, beginning a foundation upon which our future family and ethos would be built.

The natural food revolution that we helped pioneer, began in the 1960’s and 70’s as a rebellion against denatured, highly refined, chemical-laced food and the western meat-centric diet. This revolution began in several places simultaneously across North America and Europe by other young idealists; together we founded the first trade association of its kind, Organic Merchants, or OM in 1971, a precursor to bigger things. We were pawns of destiny.

Our enterprise grew like topsy and faced many challenges along the way. Little did I know then, but over the decades that little seed grew

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and went on to become a global leader in the organic food sector, directly employing over 750, and indirectly, thousands more.

Chapter 76, **Full Circle**, describes some of the challenges faced, which were both harrowing, amusing and miraculous. We were tested, but not meant to fail, for the cause for people and planet was bigger than any individual. The enterprise grew and grew, gaining many plaudits along the way. Despite frequent obstacles, the company, Nature's Path Foods, was consistently ranked North America's top organic breakfast brand for the past 25 years and independently voted as "Canada's 100 Best Companies to Work For," and "100 Greenest Employers." Its modicum of success enabled significant support for endangered species, hospitals, universities, community gardens and food banks across North America. It's like my dad told me as a boy, **"Always Leave the Soil Better Than You Found It."** It was our duty. Of course, the idea of Soil is synonymous with Mother Earth and our inherent need to protect Her.

The affection received from the Masters, the ethical values learned, and the blessings showered all through our lives, are more valuable than any material wealth or the name and fame of this temporal world. Truly speaking, love is our most precious heritage. Love is the only commodity that increases when shared.

Now, having reached my eighth decade, aware of the inevitable union of soul with the great soul of the universe, the reins have been handed over to son Arjan, daughter Jyoti and other capable leaders. Dues have been paid. What's left is meditation and service, painting, tending the garden and leaving a legacy.

Although my story may, on the surface, seem to be autobiographical, it has a higher message than my life's passage, which, like yours, is a mere blink in the eye of God. Some readers—both old and young—have written how an earlier incarnation of this book helped bring to life for them the spiritual path and a new direction. Not from me, but from God and Guru overhead, within. What is Guru? It means Bringer of Divine Light. Nanak said, "Shabd (Divine Sound and Light) is the Guru, and Surat (attention) is the disciple."

Behind the waves on the surface of this life, has been the refuge of daily meditation, wherein I, or anyone, under right guidance, may discover the healing, Ringing Radiance—the all-pervading Music of the Spheres, the Unstruck Sound, known variously as

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Naam, Logos, Word, Shabd, Tau, Kalma, or Saut-i-Sarmadi by past Masters. What that is and how to experience it, will be explained ahead. Meditation strengthens the positive qualities of the soul, solves problems and helps us to become better human beings. However, meditation's main goal is the attainment of real Self-knowledge—not the egoic self, but union of the drop to the Ocean of All-consciousness. The next step is God-realization. Uniquely, higher Masters never charge for their teachings or initiation nor call themselves Masters! They are just too humble.

My connection with the great Kirpal was ignited in New York City in 1964, and did not end when He chose to leave the mortal coil on 21st August, 1974. Book I concludes here.

In Book II, Chapter 52—*Divine Darshan*, is a brief chronicle of long separation, from agony to ecstasy. Despite being in leadership roles, unbeknownst to others, I was being hollowed out by longing for the presence of the beloved. Simultaneously, there was divine presence. I cannot explain this mysterious paradox and purifying fire!

Four years after Sant Kirpal Singh's passing in 1974, a misadventure in the Indian desert, all options exhausted, I entered for the first time through the tall open gates of Kirpal Ashram in Old Delhi's Vijay Nagar. I was drawn by a burning desire to know the truth of succession, I discovered to my great delight, a haven of peace, but more importantly, the Master again in his renewed form of Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj, the acclaimed poet-saint. He was there all along, but I hadn't yet the eyes to see. My extraordinary times and experiences with him over the next eleven years of his remarkable life, you will find ahead.

After Sant Darshan Singh merged with the Eternal Flame in 1989, there was renewal again. One lightbulb fused and another took its place. One Light, many lamps. The Present Master, Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj, grandson of Sant Kirpal Singh, is deeply steeped in the eternal mystic tradition. His additional background in engineering, IT and technology, enabled him to communicate and spread the science of spirituality to the modern world on an unprecedented scale. His every action has been flavored by care and love for others, seeing as he does, the God in all, saint and sinner alike. My travels, experiences and interviews with these two Masters fill the second-half of *Moth & the Flame*. All three—Kirpal, Darshan and Rajinder, have each been outwardly very different, yet each diffused the same universal light, love and competency to one and all.

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By competency, I'm referring to the ability to awaken souls and transmit firsthand inner experience of inner Light and Sound to their students at initiation.

Shortly before his physical demise in 1989, Sant Darshan Singh personally exhorted me to publish my manuscript into book form as soon as possible. In early 1999, when I left the finally completed thick manuscript with the Living Master, Sant Rajinder Singh, I really didn't think he would read it due to the demands on his time from seekers across the globe, but felt that even if he held and put his attention on it for just a few minutes, that would be more than sufficient. Four days later, to my astonishment, he called me into his office and said, "Arran, when I began reading your manuscript, I couldn't put it down. I read continuously for the next thirteen hours!" He even made a few minor corrections. Imagine having a Master edit your work!

Journey to the Luminous—*Encounters With Mystic Adepts of our Century* was finally printed and published in English in 1999, and soon sold out, with all proceeds donated to charity. A Spanish edition, ***Viaje a lo Luminoso*** has been through two paperback printings. ***Moth & the Flame*** is the updated and expanded version of *Journey to the Luminous*.

Work on the Hindi version began in 2017 by my young friend Akshay Bishnoi, a gifted architect and devotee who felt there was great value in it for India. In 2020, the Covid-19 global pandemic struck and snatched away millions over the next 2-3 years. Unfortunately Akshay was one of them in 2021. He called me the day before he died where the hospital had just run out of oxygen. Akshay knew he was going to the eternal realms with his beloved Master, something he had presciently written about two years earlier. Despite the huge personal tragedy, Akshay's wife Akanksha, while completing her PhD, continued work on the book but by the end of July 2022, around 80% was still left untranslated. I wondered how or if a Hindi version would ever manifest in my lifetime.

Fortunately, the universe conspired to make it happen when my dear Chotabhai ("younger brother") and well-known Indian film director, Ajay Kanchan, in whom I saw both empathy and command of languages, heard the inner call to make this chronicle available in India, and although not formally initiated, Ajay committed himself to this daunting seva. When he realized the magnitude of the task ahead, how much work and time it would take (Ajay happens to run a successful marketing firm in Delhi), he felt hopeless and despondent. On September 24, 2022,

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first, Sant Rajinder appeared to his inner vision, and then Master Kirpal, specifically telling Ajay in no uncertain terms that he was on the right path and would have to complete the translation within four months! Normally this would have taken two years. It was an urgent work that, as Sant Kirpal told Ajay, Hazur (Baba Sawan Singh) wanted done and shared in India where it all originated. Ajay got it completed and proudly presented two handsomely printed and bound copies on January 26, 2023 as promised!

Similarly, French, Hungarian and Spanish versions have all been done in record time. I am grateful to the translators for their loving and dedicated service—to Agnes Reythey in Budapest, Amina Bamana in Paris, Robert Charbonneau in Montreal, Luis Infante and Maria Consuelo in Bogota and Ajay Kanchan in New Delhi. This all unfolded without my doing.

If any wayfarers discover some resonance, a little glow, some fragrance in the pages ahead, then my job is done, with gratitude. The imperfect 'pipe' takes no credit and begs a thousand pardons wherever his 'rust' has tinted the pure elixir.

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*The symbol of a moth and flame
often recurs in mystic literature. She represents
the soul of a seeker or lover having found
the Eternal Flame, her Beloved.*

*Poised in flight, she's intoxicated with wonder &
ardor in the presence of what she lives and dies for;
not a physical annihilation,
but a sacrifice of the lower self.*

*With the image of Shah Jahan's huge
golden carpet (following page),
which I first beheld in amazement in the
Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1964),
I've taken the liberty of adding a radiant nebula
at the center in place of script
and a seeker moth at the edge,
representing the soul.*

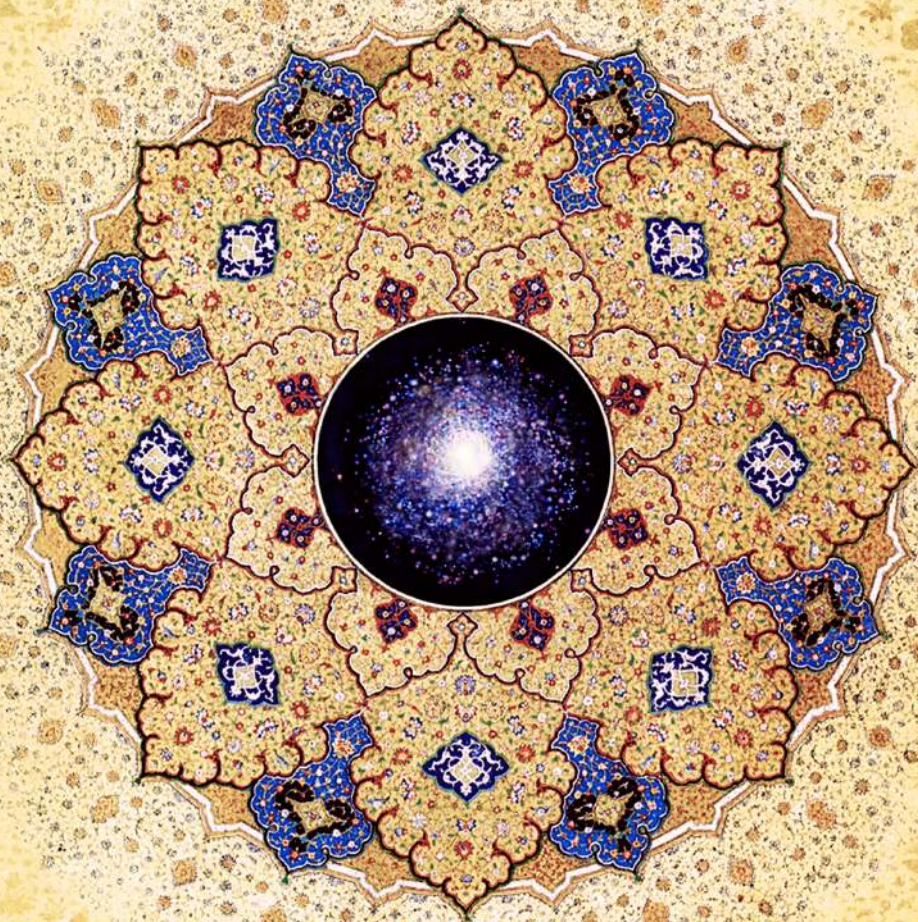
She exclaims:

***'When you are wholly with Him,
You are Him. When that happens,
"i" will be no more!'***

*Moth & the Flame Cover, Inner Planes of Creation, book design,
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painter.*

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1 Beginning of the Beat

*The Radiant Sun of which we speak, never sets;
Our World is upheld by its Light.*

The past forms the basis of our present life and the intricate relationships we have with everything and everyone. If we consider our evolution from a spiritual perspective, we may perceive a slow but inexorable progress from the darkness of ignorance towards the fully conscious Light of our real essence. *Inner awakening may also come suddenly without warning, often prefaced by some kind of shock in our lives.* Each individual is placed in circumstances uniquely critical to awakening, but, like Sleeping Beauty, our soul awaits her Prince—or in other words, the divine spark. This I would ultimately discover.

My parents were farmers and artists; our berry and vegetable fields were caringly wrested from the unspoiled forests of Vancouver Island, with mountains rising on three sides. On the 6th of January, 1944, while unloading sacks of potatoes off the back of the pick-up truck, Mum went into labor, and I was born, joining my older brother Godfrey, stepbrother John and Happy, our family collie dog.



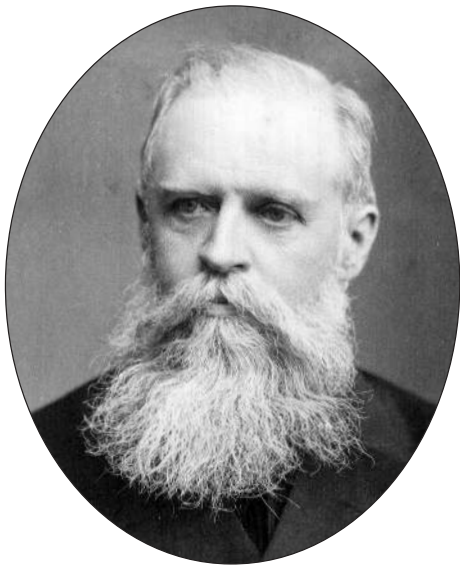
*John, Arran, Godfrey, Rupert & Gwen, with Happy (dog)
Mountain Valley Farm, Glenora, Vancouver Island - 1946*

For a while we lived in a hand-hewn log-house overlooking the Goldstream Valley, most fortunate to live in proximity with forests, streams, ocean, lakes, fresh air and mountains. Nature was everywhere. Few places on the planet can rival the remaining magical, yet-unlogged spaces of Vancouver Island.

Recollections of My Indian Career, the gilded leather-bound autobiography of great-grand-father, J.M.. Cripps, fired my vivid child's imagination, its musty pages detailing life in colonial India from 1840-1878. Only thirteen copies of *Recollections* were ever printed; each illustrated by exquisite original watercolors by Agnes, my great-grandmother.

She painted tombs, temples, bullock carts, rivers, fortresses, ports-of-call and mountain passes in India during the British Raj. Grandmother Grace, who passed away before my birth, was born in Peshawar—India's wild North-western Frontier (now part of modern Pakistan). The other twelve copies of the book are now untraceable. The University of British Columbia has professionally scanned the book and made it available to institutions across the world.

In my child's mind's eye, India's mystery beckoned, like a distant voice from some



General J.M. Cripps

faded dream. This, and an illustrated *The Jungle Book / Mowgli*, by Rudyard Kipling, were my favorite reads. It was the old photographs and illustrations that captured my imagination.

In summer I would tan so darkly that my parents would call me 'Little Hindu', which to me was a high badge of honor. As a boy with a voracious reading habit, I often longed for the mythical land of Mowgli, Rishis, Yogis, heroes, Gita, Avatars, Mughals and more.

But, India! Why this fascination? Perhaps one reason may have been that my great-grandfather J.M. Cripps arrived in India in 1840 as an ensign recruit in the East India Company's Bengal Lancers at age 16. The Duke of Buccleugh steamship he was on from Britain, carrying 80 passengers and crew

crashed on Point Palmyras Reef in the Bay of Bengal and was evacuated before it sank. In the first expedition to Afghanistan in 1842, the entire British regiment was wiped out with the exception of Dr. William Brydon who lived to tell the tale. Cripps was fortunate to be on the second Afghan campaign, which fared much better, but it was a desperate, running, shooting battle the entire time, with many casualties on both sides. Having seen a great deal of action in the field for about seven years, including the Sikh Wars (1845-49), Cripps worked his way up the ranks, served mostly in Punjab province as Lt. General and retired in England with



*Bolan Pass, North Western Frontier
Watercolor by Agnes Cripps, circa 1870*

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the rank of General, having lived in India for 38 years.

Fluent in Hindi, Punjabi, Pashto and Farsi (in his early career, he was often the official translator), he wrote that he felt more at home in India than his native England. Cripps' colourful 1888 memoir, sparked my boyhood interest. That book, given to my father by his mother, Grace Cripps Stephens, and from him to me, is a prized possession. However, I apologize for, and do not condone the racism and injustices of the colonizers, nor the terrible and heartless things the East India Company did in India causing famine in Bengal and feeding the Opium Wars in China! (A relative, Sir Stafford Cripps, of the Cripps Commission, helped dismantle the British Raj in India. Sir Stafford was a friend of Gandhi, a vegetarian, and his daughter Peggy married a Ghanain noble, Joseph Appiah). The General's memoir, and later studies of India's spiritual literature, art and mysticism, made me feel perfectly at home when at last I arrived in India at 23. Back in Canada, before leaving for India, I had learned to read and write Gurmukhi (Punjabi), so that I could better understand the teachings of the Mystic Adepts in their original language. On the day of my marriage in the Master's presence and with several hundred celebrants, He made a remarkable disclosure, that *I was my great-grandfather* and had come back as "a result of reactions of the past!" But, I'm getting ahead of myself.



In my eleventh year I was sent to summer Bible camp. Religion was a huge mystery to this otherwise unchurched boy, soon to be immersed in resounding sermons, hell-fire warnings, salvation's promise, verse memorization and the love of Jesus.

One day, the minister called me to his office and asked, 'Do you want to be saved from eternal damnation in the name of our Savior?' Scared out my wits, I said, 'Yes!' 'Then you are saved!' I was thus dismissed, somewhat underwhelmed, for I had imagined salvation as something supernaturally tangible, and momentarily mourned the vacuum. Nevertheless, a natural prattle with the Divine soon began in my heart. *The old hymn He Walks With Me and He talks with me*, swam in my consciousness as a form of reality, like a mantra, but I had no idea what a mantra was. My askings

were mostly confined to finding lost marbles or winning a race.

I felt called to the ministry, seeking a door to God. Learning of my zeal, Dad took me to the pristine forest behind the farm, a place of extreme beauty and peace. 'Arra-boy, this is our church; this is our cathedral,' he gestured with a sweep of hand as we stood overlooking the verdant Goldstream Canyon at our feet, while fir and cedars towered above. A whisper of distant waterfalls and wind caressed the moment, imprinting it. I then entered his faith of nature-communion. Organized religion, its institutions and ministers, he felt, often divided people by race, nation, outer observances and dogma. When pressed on the subject, he quietly maintained that churchianity imprisoned, rather than freed the spirit. He believed in a Higher Power. In one of his songs he wrote:

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*The time will never come / When He will turn His face /
From rich or poor, or close the door / On any creed or race...©*

One day two boyhood friends and I stood quietly in chest-high ferns in another glade of that sacred forest. An enchanting ringing seemed to come from everywhere, within, nowhere, and now-here—the Player unseen. When asked if they could hear it too, my pals looked at me blankly. In the years to come I would discover others who listened deeply to this same creation-tone. Wordsworth glorified *sermons in stones and books in rivulets*; Thoreau attuned to his Distant Drummer; and Plato listened deeply to the Music of the Spheres.

Mum loved the feel of the earth; a connoisseur of unnoticed beauties—the subtle patterns in a stone, the color of a leaf, a tiny wildflower springing from emerald moss, water dancing in sunlight, maidenhair ferns waving on a wet canyon wall; she had the gift of enabling others to see as she saw. Following deer paths through the forest was always an education as she pointed out the wildflowers and plants of the region, giving us both their common and Latin names. As well, she would bake and take cookies to the abandoned elderly, allowing me to tag along on her merciful errands. Her strength of character and artistry inspired many, although she rarely suffered fools gladly. We felt the strength of her disciplining hand! How she met and became friends with the great Emily Carr, one of Canada's greatest artists, is a story in itself.

Dad raised unique varieties of vegetables, berries, and fruits. Renouncing modern chemicals and mechanization, he discovered simple, economical methods to strengthen soil fertility and the health of plants. The message of his life could be distilled into a single, simple teaching—certainly one to guide my future path:

*'Arraboy, **Always leave the soil better than you found it.***

Extolling the virtues of the lowly earthworm and organic mulch, he wrote in *Sawdust Is My Slave* (1951), *Earthworms, in the Utopia I had created for them, worked day and night to improve my soil by burrowing through it, digesting and spreading humus... I couldn't lose, for when they died, I still had their remains to provide my plants with rich plant food... I had never had a slave before, except my wife, but this didn't put me far ahead for I was her devoted slave also...*

When not toiling the land, his spirit soared through music and verse. Lyrics for hundreds of songs, poems and articles flowed from his pen, despite an inability to read music (he would hum his melodies to a pianist who would translate them to musical notes). Here's one,

This Earth is Mine:

*This Earth is mine to have and hold, this dust beneath my feet.
God gave me hands to cherish it, to help the hungry eat;
And if I treat it as my friend, ten times it will repay;
The sweat, the toil, my good red soil, this Earth is mine today.
This earth is mine to have and hold, it lies beneath my feet;
I know that on the summer dust, the steam of rain is sweet;
And when I'm weary, old and worn, I know that I can say,
'I'll pass it on to other hands, more fertile than today.
'It waits for me with loving arms, this Earth is mine that day.©*

Moth & the Flame - Beginning of the Beat

A Guy Like Me

*Across the plain, my yellow grain
lies restless as the sea;
How could this all be given to a guy like me?*

*To fill my need I sowed the seed,
and now repaid I'll be;
How could this all be given to a guy like me?*

*The seasons change with splendor,
my ceiling is the sky;
The earth my master, cruel and tender,
happy man am I!*

*The sun, the rain, the wind, the snow,
the rapture to be free,
How could this all be given to a guy like me?*

*Two arms that gladly share my toil,
or hold me tenderly;
And this has all been given to a guy like me.©*



Mum

Perhaps to initiate his twelve-year-old son into one of the more questionable rites of manhood, Dad took me hunting one night on a backfield of the farm. 'Pit-lamping' involves blinding a deer in the high-beams of a vehicle's headlights, thus allowing the 'brave' hunter to shoot the defenseless creature. On this particular night we startled a family of four deer dining in the strawberry field, their eyes glowing eerily in the glare of our lights. Dad put his 12-gauge shotgun through the window and blasted the nearest animal, filling the cab with a deafening roar and the smell of gunpowder. The wounded deer leaped away into the darkness. The next morning, a few hundred yards from the shooting, lay the stilled doe. When her belly was slit open, a remarkably human-looking fetus slid out. It was pretty shocking, and the smell of evisceration was awful. Overcome with remorse, Dad never again touched his extensive gun collection (he was a captain in the Scottish Infantry in WW1), nor did he eat venison again. In fact, nine years later, his tenderheartedness led him to avoid eating the flesh of any animal until he died in robust health at eighty, having completed his daily five-mile walk.

DIZZY, The Cat: Goldstream Berry Paradise—our farm—was sold the following year. Along with an idyllic childhood, I was parted from my beloved cat. From the time he was a fuzzy little kitten, I had trained him to turn like a whirling dervish whenever I circled my finger in front of his face, thus earning him the name 'Dizzy.' We were closer than words could convey, and followed me everywhere. I had never known real grief before, but the enormity of the loss of the farm, the blue-green mountains and my beloved Dizzy, hit me like a ton of bricks. On parting, I wept uncontrollably, while Dizzy yowled in the field, vainly trying to follow our car as it rolled down the tree-lined Humpback Road for the last time. Dizzy was left to fend alone on the abandoned farm, as I too would have to learn to survive far away in the concrete jungles of L.A., San Francisco, and New York City.

From our pristine island, we traveled by ferry across the Strait of Juan de Fuca, then by train, far south to smoggy Hollywood, California, where Dad pursued his musical dreams. At thirteen I learned to my dismay that violent gangs controlled the

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With 'Dizzy', my orange and white tabby cat in a two-room log cabin which I built in the forest behind the farm with an axe and handsaw (1956)

schools and streets, where the wary and the strong survived. No fan of gangs and not particularly large or strong, I learned a little Okinawan jujitsu for self-defense, which taught that even someone small or weak could use the momentum of someone much larger and stronger against them. In grade eight, I had only taken a few lessons before becoming the unprovoked object of attack by the toughest gang leader in Le Conte Jr. High, a tough school on the edge of East L.A. When the bully ended up unconscious on the ground without my having to strike a blow, I sensed a hidden life-force, called chi, or prana. After this unusual experience, the superstitious gang left me alone, to my great relief.

We settled into our rented palm-shaded hacienda in the Hollywood Hills. One hot afternoon as I was watering the plants, a lean, orange-white tomcat walked up the front steps toward me. Beneath the grime was a remarkable resemblance to my long-lost friend. 'Dizzy, is that you?' I whispered, circling my finger in front of his face. To my utter amazement, that scraggly cat started to turn around in circles. Next, he was purring and blissfully rubbing my leg. Sweeping him into my arms, I ran to the house, yelling, 'Look, look, it's Dizzy!' Somehow, he had crossed the Juan de Fuca Strait, and traveled 1,500 miles overland to find his boy in the middle of a city of millions. What a story Dizzy could have told! Who says animals don't have souls?

The following song, *The Lord Looks After His Own*, was selected as the theme-piece for Perry, a feature Disney film, on the condition that all 'Lord' references be deleted, but Dad refused to change what he felt was a true inspiration—and thus the big time passed him by.

*The chipmunk is lucky, he doesn't know it,
Chews on a nut, but didn't grow it...
The goose flies south, his mate beside him,
He has no map nor course to guide him.
Though winter creeps down and down the mountains,
Turns the waterfalls to crystal fountains,
the Lord looks after his own...*

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*Gone is the glory of the sun,
gone is the summer rain,
Though only blue notes fill the air,
lovely spring will come again.*

*Though life will bring you tears and sorrow,
All men will share that great tomorrow,
The Lord looks after his own.*

—Rupert Stephens

At fifteen, my secure, trusting world abruptly ended: mum and dad separated, brother Godfrey roared off on his Harley motorcycle for New Orleans and high adventure, while my school grades went from an almost perfect score in grade nine to straight F's in grade ten, with the exception of an 'A' in art. Confused and dispirited, my once-together family scattered to the winds, and I decided to follow my brother in the way of the artist. For several desperate years, while spewing forth paintings and verse, I identified with the Beat generation and its icons. The Beat and the bohemian were rebels against the norms and limits of established society, predating the hippie era by several years. Painters, sculptors, poets, writers, jugglers, jazz musicians, anarchists, scoundrels, existentialists, drug experimenters—all sought something not quite definable, yearning to break through the self-prison to find, to know, to dance with the muse. I absorbed the best art I could from my contemporaries in an effort to find my style, if not my self. Art school was not in the cards; mine was the hard-knock variety. At seventeen, one of my poems appeared in *The Mendicant Poetry Journal*; by twenty, several one-man shows of paintings were under my belt—but nothing came close to satisfying great restlessness and a growing spiritual hunger.

Substance abuse and excess characterized the sixties. Scrawled on Venice and North Beach alleyways were its pagan slogans: "Art is Love is God" and "Blessed, blessed oblivion...It's Cool & Cool is everything!" Rebellion, anarchy, booze, drugs—soft, hard, psychedelic, uppers, downers, promiscuity, madness and drunkenness were cool, and God was 'dead' unless He or She or It existed as a reflection somewhere in a riff of Bird's alto sax or a moment in tripping poetry. The most memorable mescaline insights were back-door, trap-door entries to lower astral, telepathic, ancestral, animal, comic book, surreal stream-of-consciousness places, where matter thinned just enough to allow some flotsam and jetsam of paranormal awareness to slip through. What about the price of entry? How many of my peers had I seen consumed by drugs and alcohol, haggard, dragged away and locked up, violated and forgotten?

*I have seen the best minds of my generation
destroyed by madness, starving, hysterical, naked,
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn
looking for an angry fix...*

HOWL & Other Poems, by Allen Ginsberg

There were some bright lights as well as black holes in this cultural galaxy. Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, Paul Repts' *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, Aldous Huxley's *Doors of Perception*, Gurdjieff's *All And Everything* and *Meetings With Remarkable Men*, Alan Watts, Kerouac, Gary Snyder and others, to name a few, helped broaden my limited horizons. I met a few spiritual seekers—although apparently I was not—and

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befriended the reclusive Eden Abhez, author of the song *Nature Boy* made world-famous by crooner Nat King Cole.

*There was a boy,
A very strange enchanted boy
They say he wandered very far
Very far
Over land and sea
A little shy and sad of eye
But very wise was he
And then one day
A magic day he passed my way
And while we spoke of many things
Fools and kings,
This he said to me
"The greatest thing you'll ever learn
Is just to love and be loved in return"
"The greatest thing you'll ever learn
Is just to love and be loved in return"*

Eden was a very loving altruist, a light on my path, and the first vegan I'd ever met, part of a handful of health and fitness devotees from the Hollywood Hills, including Gypsy Boots and his friend Al Jacobson, founder of the natural food company, Back to Eatin. Yet every hope, each oasis, turned into an empty mirage. The sun might have been rising for others, but mine was a furtive life in self-imposed shadows. Often broke, I slept on the beach, drunk on cheap wine or high on drugs, sometimes crawling into a cardboard box to mitigate the winter cold. When hungry, I ate discarded food, or begged. Whenever I could, I painted. Misery was my companion, relieved and exacerbated by illusive excesses, a course which took but two years to break body, mind, and spirit. Like Rimbaud, I tried stringing garlands between the stars and dance, but could sustain neither the tightrope nor the frenzy. Having known hunger, poverty, danger, and addiction, by seventeen I was a haggard alcoholic and drug-dazed atheist railing against the Author of pain. One day dragged into the next, as mind grew black as Poe's raven. Jimmy-the-Beard, a derelict poet, appeared on the boardwalk, taunting me with a line from e.e. cummings: 'How do you like your blue-eyed boy, Mr. Death?' And he walked on, cackling.

With no further will to continue my misery, I dragged my feet across the cloying sand and entered the waves on Venice Beach. Pounding, chilling surf frothed up to my neck, push-pulling my rag-doll body through the vortex. Soon, no more torment, I thought, before succumbing to the cold, turbulent sea.

As I slipped beneath the waves, inexplicable serenity began to glow within, coupled with an urgent beckoning to discover life's purpose and begin anew. It was not too late! I struggled to disengage from the powerful undercurrents, and emerged at the foaming edge. Shivering, I staggered across the expanse of cold gray sand and fog. Tormented, yes. But quitter? *Never!*

Moth & the Flame
2 Heart Of Light

After a short unhappy spell of separation, my parents realized the great love they always had for each other and reunited (remaining together for the rest of their lives), but I felt damaged. Even if Hope had plucked me from watery oblivion, I was unable to forgive, nor pry loose depression's shadowy fingers. The stark poem of Vladimir Mayakovsky haunted me:

*...Do you note, behind protruding nostalgia,
the shadowy billow of laughter's surf?
I am as lonely as the only eye of a man
on his way to the blind.*

In a Venice Beach coffeehouse, another burnt-out comrade described a monastic retreat, not far away. 'The Fountain of the World' sits near the top of Chatsworth Mountain,' he explained, eyes bright with hope: 'It's free, and we'd be welcome, as long as we follow the rules and do some work. The folks there practice brotherly love and walk barefoot!' 'Brotherly love? Walk barefoot?' I asked, incredulous. 'It has to do with their vows of personal poverty and non-injury to living things,' he explained. 'Some of their buildings are built around trees, rather than having them cut down. We can stay as long we like. It's worth checking out!' We packed our few belongings and headed for the hills. Like a wounded dog, I craved a quiet glade to rest and heal beneath.

The Fountain of the World was high above the smoggy Los Angeles basin, surrounded by tall eucalyptus, poplar and pine, house-size boulders and dry sunbleached hills. Almost from the minute we left the car, soft zephyr-like breezes started sweeping away the cobwebs from my mind. Obligatory group sessions called "Concentrations" were held in the main hall each evening, where thirty or so monastics would stand in circles with closed eyes, hands upturned, chanting such affirmations as 'Love One, Love One...' or, 'Be positive, be positive...' over and over, from very slow and low to very fast and high-pitched. Despite initial feelings of embarrassment and weirdness, I eventually settled into the routine. One week after arrival, I had an experience that profoundly changed the course of my life.

During an evening Concentration I became quite detached from the outer surroundings and entered a condition of heart-flow prayer—a sort of unceasing entreaty to the Unknown. While gazing with closed eyes into the dark void, I became cognizant of a comet-like light speeding from the distance straight toward the center of my head, growing brighter and brighter with every moment. A wave of circular, evanescent, golden whiteness burst upon my vision. Then came another bright comet, and another, unceasing rhythmic, and mysterious. It was as though I had entered the living heartbeat of the Cosmos. In that heart of Light I experienced intoxicating waves of Unconditional Love. For all I knew, the body and the world simply ceased to exist. All that remained was boundless, scintillating radiance and awesome energy, proceeding simultaneously in all directions. After what seemed an eternity—perhaps only a few minutes—this reality/vision subsided, intruded upon by the activities of monastic life.

This was my first taste of a state of Reality—something beyond the senses, beyond intoxication; perhaps something I had always been blindly groping and hoping for.

Moth & the Flame - Heart of Light

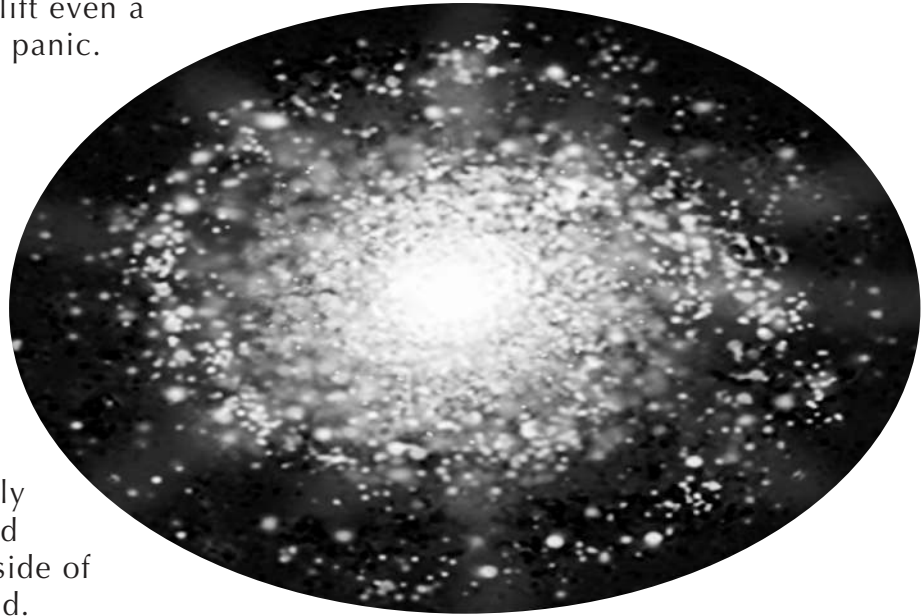
Accompanying the experience of Light came an all-knowingness, a love freed of egoism. Once separated from that blissful, numinous state, numerous questions and doubts quickly assailed me. The head of the monastery was a kindly woman in her seventies known as Elder Nikona. If anyone could explain what happened, I thought it would be she, and so, not without trepidation, I knocked upon the door of her cottage, and was invited inside. With mixed emotions I asked about my mysterious experience. Elder Nikona admitted, 'I do not know what this Light is that you have experienced, my son. But I do know that by it you have experienced a blessing of a very high order.' She smiled and patted my hand. I thanked her and excused myself to walk alone in the night, lost in thought, questioning, wondering:

To whom can I turn for help? What is this Light? Am I chosen for a higher calling, or have I lost my mind? Who am I? What is my destiny?

Over the next few days I sought from others but drew blank and unsatisfactory responses, as well as questioning looks. I seriously questioned my sanity.

A few nights after my first encounter with the Inner Light, I was awakened in total darkness from a dreamless sleep by a constant thundering roar on all sides, a stupendous waterfall of sound pressing into my being. Inability to lift even a finger led to desperate panic.

'God! I'm dead! Help me!' I cried, though no sound escaped numb lips. Physical paralysis and lack of bodily sensation were complete and terrifying. With Herculean effort I eventually began moving fingertips, then toes, and gradually the rest of my alienated body—a mere husk inside of which the real me lived.



I began searching through the monastery's well-stocked library, and discovered a translation of the millennia-old Bhagavad Gita (The Celestial Song), the celebrated sermon of Krishna, the avatar, to his disciple Arjuna, the warrior-prince, who trembled and wavered in his duty when called to action on the battlefield of life. The Gita examined morality, religion, duty, yoga, meditation, and the goal of human existence, an elusive goal that can be attained by realization of one's immortal higher Self. Self-realization, the Gita affirmed, led to ultimate freedom from the cycle of births and deaths, through realization of the Paramatman, Overself, or God.

Something inside resonated to the ancient message; one passage in particular whispered to slumbering memories, setting them astir:

*Let the yogi sit in Sidh-aasan,
in a place neither too high nor too low,
...And, fixing gaze at the root of the nose,*

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*He should make his mind as still
as a candle's flame in a windless place.*

When I sought knowledge from my brother-monastics about yoga and meditation, they warned that their study and practice were forbidden at the Fountain of the World. Ever a rebel, I soon found a solitary place on the mountain away from prying eyes. Here I would go daily to sit straight-backed, left leg folded under, right leg folded on top, hands resting upturned on each other, thumbs touching, eyes closed, the body and mind a laboratory; my secret temple. The burning pain which quickly developed in my Westernized legs was excruciating, but with determination the time for sitting was gradually increased each successive day from a few minutes to half an hour, from half an hour to an hour, and longer. The outer form was irrelevant. What mattered was the fact that whenever I sat like this, after a few minutes the soft golden Light would return, imparting a delectable inner state. Each encounter left me strengthened; each plunge into the billowing radiance helped heal the sickness in my heart. I began to realize how disciplined behavior strengthened the connection to the divine and conversely, how dissipation weakened it. Even Michelangelo had an earthy saying: 'What one expends in acts of dissipation by night cannot be put into the sculpture by day.' The causal relationship intrigued me.

At night, too, I would slip from the men's dorm while others slept, following a long and precarious trail through bushes and rocks to sit alone atop a huge prehistoric boulder overlooking the dark valley, and the few lights of the monastery below. These late vigils under the glittering stars were rewarded with further joyous and radiant experiences, although encounters with the lower mind and its fecund phantasmagoria left me shaken and fearful. First-hand, I began to realize that a cosmic, benign force is always in service of the aspiring seeker, but a corrupt power lurking in the darker corners of the mind is also there to assail and test one's resolve. Despite such unwanted intrusions in my practice, I persevered in solitary struggle, intensely invoking God's protection, throwing myself on His mercy, even shedding tears. Then, as reward, like candy for a child, the Light would return and banish the phantoms. I could now begin to empathize with Saint Anthony of the North African desert and what he endured in a lengthy and celebrated battle with the forces of darkness, immortalized in the medieval art of Pieter Bruegel and Matthias Grünewald.

In one of my own paintings, I gave another twist to the theme of Anthony's temptations based on my own overblown struggles. Mine depicts a many-headed dragon—metaphor of the mind, tormenting the desert sage. After nearly ten years of solitary meditations and struggles in a mountain cave, Anthony finally discovers the secret of the Inner Light, surrounds himself with it and overcomes the forces of darkness. No mere ascetic, Anthony goes on to rescue many early Christians from the cruelties of the Roman circus, and is today the patron saint to the Coptics of Egypt.

Two months passed. Increasing pressure was being brought to bear to renounce the world and become a full-fledged monastic brother. This vow meant renouncing a fledgling art career, money, property (not that I had any), family and friends on the outside, and living a life subservient to a puzzling theology with Krishna Venta, their departed founder, at the top. From talks with his few remaining original followers, and reading magazine articles and mimeographed pages, I learned that

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Venta, a white American, vainly claimed that he was none other than the long-awaited and final Messiah, the Buddha, Krishna, Isaiah and Jesus all rolled into one, yet his alleged behavior with followers left much to be desired. I was neither ready nor willing to surrender life and freedom in blind obedience to anyone. To the questions that dogged my existence, I longed for answers that rang true on all levels.

When the day of ordination arrived for several probationary monastics, I had already made my decision to leave. Each step through the monastery grounds felt as though immense psychic weights were about my ankles, making movement exceedingly difficult. I looked around and noticed several crones whispering inaudibly, while directing their combined focus upon me, holding me. Definitely weird! With every ounce of will I struggled up the stairs leading to the open road, but once off the Fountain's property, I felt light as a feather and my feet took wings. I ran and ran till I could run no more, down that mountain road.

The Lake Shrine:

With high hopes and no money, before the day was out, I found myself for the first time at the gates of the Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine in the Santa Monica Mountains—founded decades earlier by the yogi-saint Paramahansa Yogananda, who came from India to bring the science of kriya yoga to the West. The peaceful, meditative aura and jewel-like beauty of the lake, the gliding swans and the bright atmosphere drew me many times over the next few months. I'd hitchhike there from my studio in Venice Beach, to meditate and read from Yogananda's marvelous Autobiography of a Yogi, in which I discovered numerous references to the Divine Light experienced by saints and seekers of various times, places, and faiths. The extraordinary and often miraculous accounts of India's great sages and scientists of the spirit beckoned powerfully. Yogananda was a Christ-like man of great wisdom, but he had consciously died in 1952. After his well-documented death, Yogananda's body remained in a state of incorruptibility for weeks. But now, where to turn? I wasn't able to recognize his exalted stature among the kind and helpful monks I met. While returning to old haunts and dreams of art a few miles south in Venice, I sporadically visited the Lake Shrine to reflect on the meaning of life and to escape the chaos of my life.

Ever a rebel and daredevil, one full-moon night, unnoticed and in secret, I climbed over the locked wrought iron gate that guarded the lake shrine, quietly navigated the shadowy path I had often paced in daylight hours, and found my way to the far side of the lake, beneath the lotus gate, next to a large stone urn containing some of Mahatma Gandhi's ashes. While swans glided silently across the lake and ghostly white marble statues of Jesus, Buddha, St. Francis, Quan Yin and Krishna looked down from garden prominences, this seeker sat in lotus posture with closed eyes, inwardly seeking help, understanding and wisdom. As he sat wrapped in silence, an ever-unfolding panorama emerged from the ether, and the hours rolled by. As consciousness receded deeper, he began to glimpse radiant beings extending blessings, comingled with waves of bliss.

Returning again to Venice Beach, I asked my heart how I could possibly reconcile such sublime experiences with my once-again besotted existence. One of my difficulties was that initial mystical experiences were quite overwhelming, if not bewildering. There were very few reference points. However wonderfully inspiring

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and great, how could past Masters and their words give practical guidance to the living? Then, how to reconcile the conflicting claims put forth by a plethora of teachers and followers? How was one to determine their validity and reach? One thing for certain, this new-found Light was the source of good and holy power, perhaps the unseen Source of all life and intelligence in the universe. Could it possibly be enough to transform a dissolute human life?

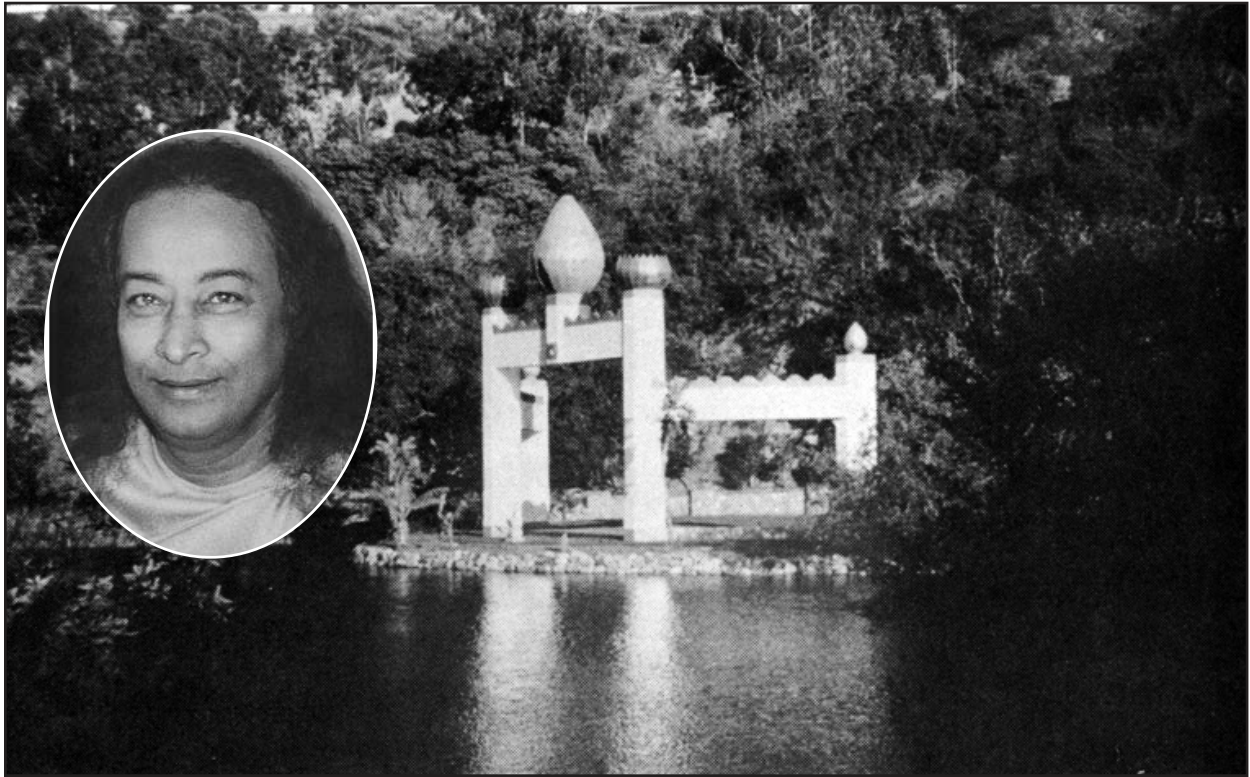
Pythagoras, the ancient Grecian mathematician, philosopher and mystic, had referred to the Science of Light, which, when mastered, can alter the structure of matter. With its aid, Pythagoras demonstrated his mastery of the elements by controlling an eagle and a rampaging bear which obeyed his higher will.

A remarkable experience involving an aspect of the power of this same Light befell some friends and me in 1963 in San Francisco. While strolling through a late-night crowd, one member of our party skipped ahead onto busy Market Street and directly into the path of a speeding bus. I was suddenly aware of subconscious gears shifting, and the prescient Observer emerging—both to witness and participate. Everything and everyone appeared dreamlike, in slow motion. Into this thickness came a sudden rush of adrenaline and a loud cry, ‘Look out!’ came automatically from my mouth. A brilliant flash of Light enveloped the entire scene. Everything stopped, frozen in time-silence—the bus, the people, and all sound. In that split-second pause, only the would-be victim was able to break the stasis and move free from the path of certain death. The eerie stillness was replaced with the roar of stillness. A brief suspension of time and space became enveloped in Light; a life was saved! A mysterious miracle had occurred, and all who were witness were profoundly thankful and mystified.

In the quest ahead, however lacking in maturity or wisdom, I never hesitated to investigate any teacher, religion or teaching. In some quarters, followers were adamant that their holy book, bible, or body of teachings passed down from past Masters was now the embodiment of the Guru or Master, and to be followed unquestioningly. Many claimed their path to be the highest, and eagerly sought converts. I craved an unsealed revelation, a living teacher of universal stature, yet he or she would have to be the humblest of the humble—if that were possible—whose teachings were universal and free (I had always instinctively felt that Truth should be free to the sincere seeker—never a business, as so many of the New Age groups and established religions have become); one who could answer all burning, relevant and timely questions; someone who embodied what he or she taught; who didn’t place much stock in outer rites, rituals and dogma.

Such periods of God-longing and search were short-lived and unstable, satellites partly shot through the Earth’s atmosphere, only to be recaptured and pulled back by the gravity of desires and attachment. From 1961 to 1964, with one or two exceptions, the springs of Divine Light all but dried up as this prodigal profligate wandered and squandered the spiritual capital we all come into the world with. Again and again I sank into the abyss of drug addiction and despair. The inevitable dark night of the soul engulfed me. Drained and spent, selfish, egotistical and irreverent, I watched the chasm open before me, and I was fearful of the consequences. Yet there was always a faintest awareness of God, the Watcher, the Recorder, the Waiter.

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The Self-Realization Lake Shrine, Malibu
(Inset: Paramahansa Yogananda)

Following a solo exhibition at a major San Francisco art gallery at 19 years, I left for lovely Mendocino County whose rolling grassy hills invitingly beckoned to a damaged soul.

In long and solitary walks through tawny wind-swept December fields, came flickerings of renewal and bonding with the Earth Mother. Resting beneath a magnificent solitary oak, one could but marvel at the sun's rays filtering through richly illumined layers of rustling dead oak leaves and then the eyes, breaking into prisms and inward meaning. The solidity of the world became diaphanous, translucent; every feature containing its nimbus, its glowing edge. The Inner Light, which had been lost for two years, began to resurface like a flood of hope and joy in the form of myriad sparklings across the wash of external sight. In a poem of sorts, I then attempted to capture that fleeting ecstasy, barely able to move the pen:

*Through the portal of the eye
All beings have Light & spectral color.
Lending from his splendor, the Sun said,
'Take a little PEACE of me,
& let it be your Light for the night.'*

Too soon, alas, the inner/outer Light dissipated. Unable to hold or to surrender to it, I nevertheless knew that from the Luminous my peace and salvation would one day come, if only the layers that separated us could be peeled away. For now, my spiritual quest was sullied, but a rude but merciful awakening was speeding toward me like a night train careening around a hidden bend in a tunnel.

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Ah, Rabindranath! Who could say it better than you?

Obstinate are the trammels but my heart aches when I try to break them. Freedom is all I want, but to hope for it I feel ashamed. I know that there is priceless wealth within Thee and that Thou art my best friend, but I have not the heart to sweep the tinsel that fills the room. The shroud that covers me is a shroud of dust and death, I hate it, yet hug it in love. My debts are large, my failures great, my shame secret and heavy, but when I come to ask for my good I quake in fear lest my prayer be granted.

—Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali*, p. 28, Scribner Poetry, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, NYC, NY. USA



Airan

3 Glimmerings

*None is poor, O Bhikha.
Everyone has rubies in his bundle;
But how to open the knot
He does not know,
And therefore he is a pauper.*
— Bhikha Sahib (1713-1763)

En route to Tangiers, I arrived in New York's Greenwich Village. By prearranged plan I was to connect with an artful friend from Los Angeles who had our tickets and traveling money. Snow fell as I waited by Washington Square where the fountains had already turned to ice. Hours passed with no familiar face in sight. When the last Village coffeehouse closed, I was out on the street, freezing, thinking wistfully of my mother, my fate and survival. With suitcase in hand, less than forty dollars, light shoes and thin clothing, I aimlessly walked the bitter streets, hoping for warmth and refuge, yet wary of strangers. There was cruel beauty in the snowflake patterns swirling about the cold streetlights. Somehow I survived the long night and those that followed.

According to a Hindu proverb, one uses a thorn to remove a thorn. Suffering can be a dross-burning fire and the journey's goad. After some trials, a spare room and studio were found, while New York was buried under a mantle of heavy snow. I painted 18 to 20 hours a day, preparing another major exhibition, and the quest, like a smoldering coal under dead ashes was uncovered by a favorable wind and re-ignited.

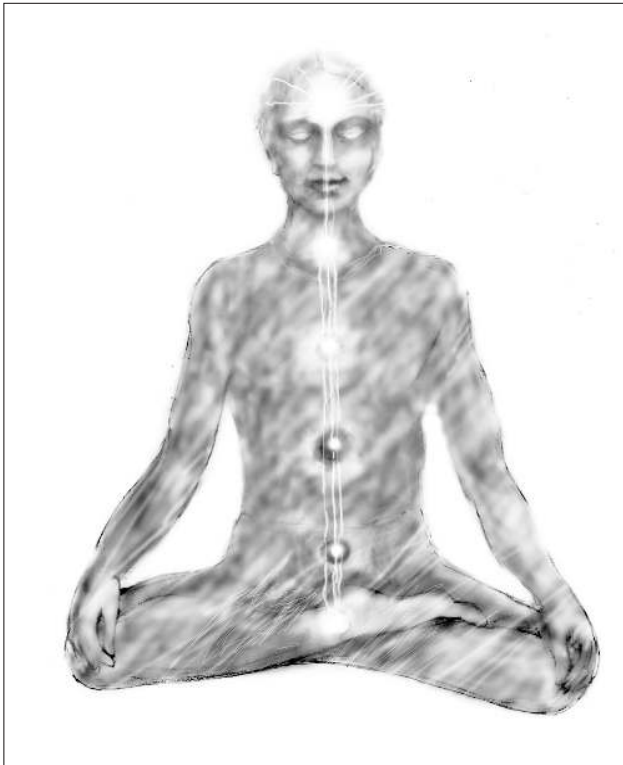
In the basement of Weiser Books, I discovered the *Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* by the great medieval saint of Tibet, who is depicted in ancient art with his right hand cupped to his ear, listening to the Song of the Gods; *With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet* by Alexandra David-Neel; *The Secret of the Golden Flower*—a sacred text on Chinese mysticism; *All and Everything*, and *Meetings with Remarkable Men* by G.I. Gurdjieff; Osborne's biography of the silent sage Ramana Maharshi; and works by Sri Aurobindo. These fed my ever-growing hunger for the spiritual life. There were great sages, to whatever spiritual heights they had attained, some of whom offered no specific technique or system, while organizations offered techniques for pay, but had no living Master. The seeker has to find his or her way through the maze unless awfully lucky to just have treasure land in one's lap.

While the world outside my door was covered by an eerie mantle of ever-deepening white snow, alone in the orb of imagination I was a yogi perched in a grotto amongst the crags, the neighboring walls deep canyons, their windows cavern mouths. After a two-year lapse, daily meditation recommenced. In the absence of a spiritual guide, I developed a simple technique of visualizing two triangles, one above and one below, and would bring them together in my mind's eye. If concentration were unflinching, at the moment of their intersecting a spiritual Light would flood the darkness. After some practice, the radiance began to disclose the presence of a brilliant figure within its center, a form filled with luminosity and power so intense, the features were indistinguishable. This I took to be the

Moth & the Flame - Glimmerings

illuminated Buddha-Christ-Self.

I saw my body astrally transparent, with its multicolored chakras revealed with glowing intensity. The secret of T'umo or yogic heat employed by Tibetan yogis in freezing conditions was briefly unveiled, as psychic fire from the thousand-petaled lotus (located in a higher dimension paralleling the cranial area) was drawn down in a steady stream into the navel plexus. Upon reaching that center, glowing heat spreads to every part of the body. I tried to capture the transparency of the subtle body with paint and brush on canvas. The results, although interesting, were but crude and inaccurate material representations. At times of detached focus, the room's atmosphere became filled with a ringing thunder. These brief and isolated experiences blessed and lifted an otherwise empty existence.



My paintings were exhibited at Thompson Galleries in Greenwich Village, alongside two large and rare original oils by Gustave Doré, arguably the greatest illustrator of the 19th century. Renowned for his astounding etchings for Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Dante's Divine Comedy, and Milton's Paradise Lost, Doré was not so well known for his oil paintings on canvas, which actually were filled with a sublime use of color, illumination, form and depth. On the opening night reception, a terrific thunderstorm burst over the city. Not one buyer or reviewer showed up, even for priceless Doré! The exhibition was a complete flop

Apart from a few glimmerings, the past three and a half years had been a denial of all that was healthy and

holy. I had been steeped in darkness, intoxicants and selfishness, but by now I was weary of the gutter and my health was deteriorating. I craved the firmest discipline and order. At this crossroads, I was introduced to the local Gurdjieff meetings. The next nine months were spent avidly studying under the tutelage of philosopher-pianist Willem Nyland in New York. I earned my bread variously as house-painter, grocery deliverer, furniture-mover, and waiter in The Paradox, the world's first macrobiotic restaurant, while otherwise exploring new dimensions in art, diet, health and spirituality.

Then in his late seventies, Nyland had spent twenty-four years off and on with the enigmatic George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff in France, while working in espionage for the Allies during both World Wars. Gurdjieff exerted tremendous influence over some of the most renowned writers, musicians and thinkers of the West during the second quarter of the 20th century. Nyland, in turn, was passing along what he had received, and was the best teacher I'd met so far.

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The Work, as Gurdjieff's teachings in practice were known, contained traces of Truth gleaned during extensive travels and studies with monastic Sufis and Lamas in the Near and Far East. His principal teaching was that we are all "asleep" and must awaken in a higher sense through various esoteric practices, including self-remembering and sacred dance. The dance involved movements synthesized from Mevlevi and other dervish orders, aimed at bringing the participant into harmony with self and the cosmos.

While benefiting from the practice of self-remembering, a teacher and support group, plus my ongoing exploration of other teachings, I felt that some of Gurdjieff's ideas did not hold water. He maintained that the soul perished with the physical body at death; that man 'does not have a soul, but has the possibility of developing a soul;' that reincarnation and transmigration do not exist; eating of meat develops will-power and it was OK to consume alcohol. I could not agree. Gurdjieff's approach aimed at shocking students from their 'sleep,' but his sometimes drastic methods have often been called into question. I was eventually left high and dry in Gurdjieff's mysterious intellectual desert. Rafael Lefort, one of his direct students later commented, 'Gurdjieff was more than a teacher but less than a Master.' How could I know a Master even if I met one? How could the blind find the Way?

Nine months of intensive study nevertheless rewarded me with sharpened focus. I was grateful for the mental and work disciplines taught by Nyland, the strengthening of the body through hard manual labor, and especially for a deeper exposure to the divinely inspired mystical verses of Jalal-u-Din Rumi, a 13th-century Sufi mystic Adept. But one wanted more than poetry. Rumi commended disciples and readers to the company of the *Friend*, but where, oh where could such a Friend be found?



*Friend! Sit near one who
knows the condition of your heart,
and who can make it whole;
Rest awhile under the shade of a tree
laden with fresh and fragrant flowers.
Loiter not in the marketplace,
going from shop to shop,
as idlers do.
Go straight to one who has
a store of honey with him.
Take hold of the garment,
O brave soul!
Of one who knows well
the spiritual regions of the journey,
Who is your true friend in life,
or in death;
In this world, and in the next.
- Maulana Rumi*

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I thirsted for living waters, the oasis of a perfected one who had a store of honey with him, which Nyland opined no longer existed, ridiculing my search for a perfect Master as pure folly. I wasn't offended. My yearning had grown white-hot. The destiny train was accelerating, and nothing could now derail it.

I crossed paths once again with the American Beat poet Allen Ginsberg in Greenwich Village. He had recently returned from India and loaned me his copy of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. This sublime spiritual treasure seriously affected the course of my quest as its pages unfolded the awe-inspiring life of the nineteenth-century Bengali saint. Ramakrishna's high degree of illumination was palpably present in exquisite sayings, supported by the records of his spiritual experiences and affirmed by the subsequent attainments of his direct disciples. As I read on, I learned how Sri Ramakrishna, as an act of conscious love, used his realized power to elevate the consciousness of close disciples. Sometimes a slap on the chest or a piercing glance would be sufficient to transport his students to the samadhi, or super-conscious state.



Ramakrishna's holy life further convinced me of the reality of the spiritual path, the necessity of a competent living adept as guide, and the requisite discipline of mind and senses. His loving devotion to and direct mystical union with God was a far cry from the dry intellectual path I was on.

An impartial study of Sri Ramakrishna and the lives of other genuine saints reveals a familiar pattern, however counter it may seem to popular Western psychological and philosophical movements. Part of this pattern entails sublimation of the energy

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path, directing it from the downward senses, upward and inward to higher centers within the mind, and to dimensions beyond. I became convinced that the purity and self-control that Ramakrishna, Buddha, Jesus, Rumi, and others like them embodied, were necessary to the path of spiritual success. It would not be an easy undertaking, for the powerful steeds of the five senses continuously drag the attention downward and outward into the world of matter and illusion. This worldly tendency runs counter to the inward and upward centripetal flow—back to our divine Origin.

When I returned the Gospel three weeks later, Allen was visibly overjoyed, explaining, 'The night you borrowed Ramakrishna, thieves broke into my apartment and stole my entire book collection. Your borrowing Ramakrishna was very auspicious for me! This is the only book not stolen!' Very auspicious for me as well. I asked Ginsberg, 'What did the holy men of India tell you?' He replied with a laugh, 'Go back home to America and get married!' He thought that that was hilarious. Who knows? We were not to meet again.

In the pursuit of transformation, alcohol, drugs and cigarettes fell away like dead skins. Animal flesh felt unwanted by my body. First red meat, then fish and fowl and even eggs were discarded and replaced by the bounty of the vegetable kingdom. Accepting the discipline of continence with help from the constantly implored Divine, I turned from my former life, and never looked back. Because of this new way of living, the vitality of my body was renewed; various ailments disappeared, and with them, my haggard old-man appearance.

An unexpected meeting on a busy Lower Eastside street with a former acquaintance validated my new course, as I listened to the shocking news that our mutual friend, a talented twenty-one-year-old writer, had just been found dead in his flat from a drug overdose. After going our separate ways, my heart, while saddened, overflowed with gratitude at being spared for the great quest ahead. I would never touch nor miss meats, drugs or intoxicants again.

Creatures of habit are we, but unless we have a glimmer of something greater, it is difficult or impossible to leave the lesser

*Sow a thought, reap an idea;
Sow an idea, reap a habit;
Sow a habit, reap a character;
Sow a character, reap a destiny.*

—Anon

My quest took me to a kind and erudite Indian Swami-monk at the Ramakrishna Vedanta Center of New York, as well as to meetings by devotees of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Echoes of Truth were immanent in Aurobindo's words, in what he called the "Light of the Super-mind," but he too was no more on the earth-plane. Each nurturing step brought me closer to the life of the Light. It didn't particularly matter what group or spiritual practice I was exposed to, for whenever I closed my eyes, an engulfing experience of universal Light would come. I went to the Church of Swedenborg to study the teachings of Emmanuel Swedenborg, a 18th-century Western mystic and polymath, and often escaped the busy and noisome streets to pray/meditate in Catholic cathedrals. Though inspired by the great teachers and their messages, like the saints' statuary, the church and scripture were silent and lifeless. Inspiring, but not alive. My longing heart was broadcasting in all directions: 'Lord, send me a true Master—a **living** Master!'

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Where to go? All the great ones were gone from this world, or so it seemed. Where was the living Master? Was he or she in some unknown monastery or village in Turkey, Tibet, Japan, or India? I had no clue. Since conditions in America did not, to my mind, seem favorable for such development, I looked to the East. I went to shipyards looking for work aboard Orient-bound freighters, but the door kept clanging shut. Resolved not to accept anyone less than a living Christ, a Ramakrishna, a Buddha, or a Rumi, I was determined to search and search until found.

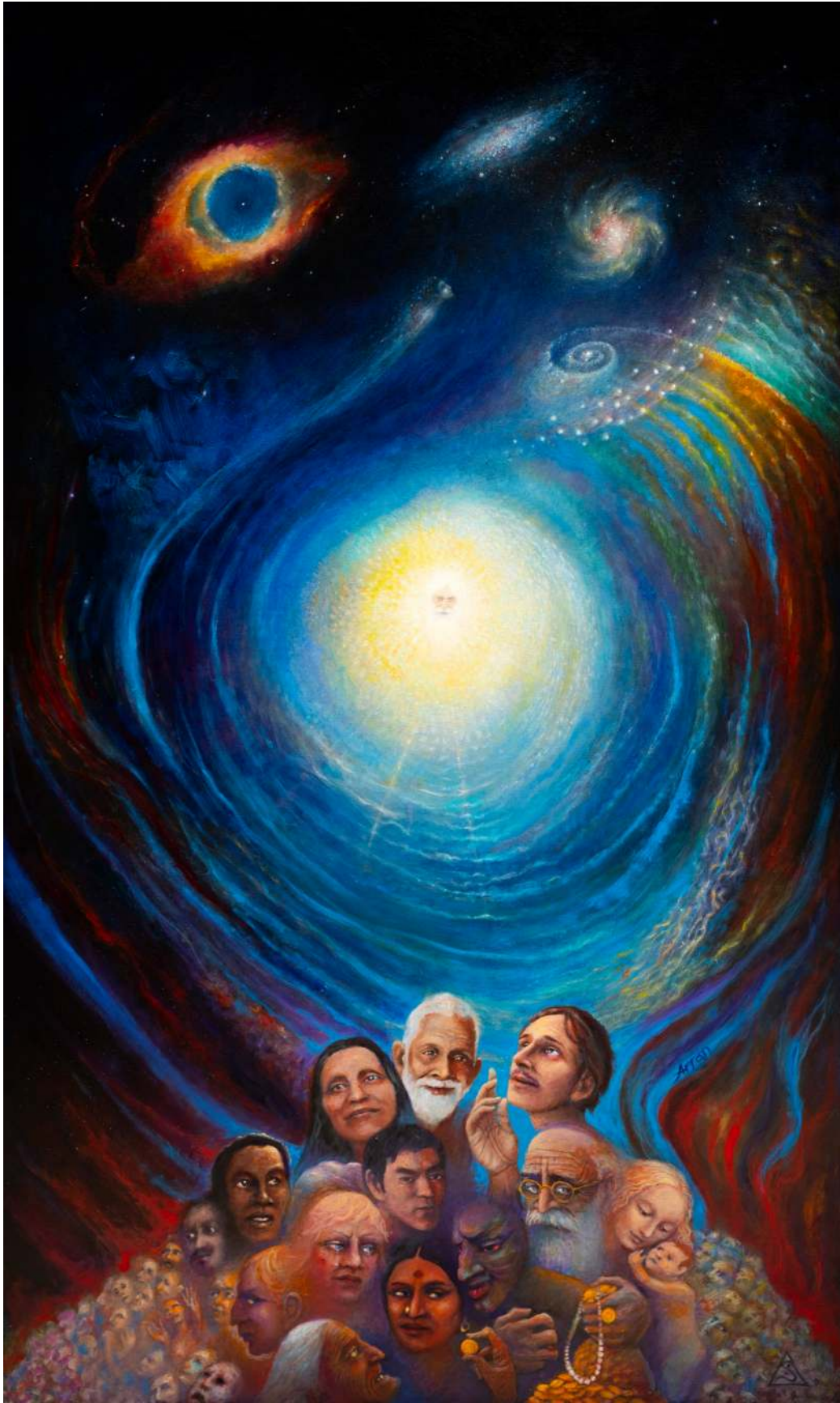
Paradoxically, one doesn't find a Master. In the fullness of time, in response to the soul's keen yearning—if not just 'dumb luck' good karma, the Master finds the disciple.

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Artwork on the following page:

The Arising II—is a recent attempt to portray various faces of the human condition: greed, avarice, anger, lust, confusion, vanity, human attachment, age, grief, insecurity, etc. A bespectacled scholar realizes the futility of book-knowledge too late. A mother's attachment to her child. An abused soul weeps over the tragedy of a life she had no control over. a young woman and her aged version look upon the futility of gold. A greedy man wants possession of both—gold and her. The masses have already fallen into the inevitable. Some are awakening, beginning to lift their gaze beyond the horizon of banality. A questing youth, his soul on fire, looks up and and is astonished to witness a wonder in the Cosmos.

If you look minutely into the middle of the Light in the center, you might see a faint image of the luminous Master. I've included in the cluster of faces and races below, two well-known 20th century Indian sages, both of whom impressed me as a young seeker—Ananda Moi Ma, known as the bliss-filled Mother, and Ramana Maharshi—the silent sage of self-enquiry. Above all is the Master-Soul, one with the Light of the Nameless Absolute, beyond all the lower realms—physical (*Pind*), astral (*Anda*), causal (*Brahmand*) and Supra-causal (*Par Brahm*). The realm known to Mystics as the True Home of the Soul. We honor all the brave souls who have undertaken the Journey!



The Arising II

Moth & the Flame
4 Face Of A Prophet

From 1964 to 1965, my life revolved around art and the inner quest. After three years abroad, my brother Godfrey turned up at my seventh-floor walk-up studio on New York City's Lower Eastside. His eccentric genius manifested in flowing, semi-abstract totemic sculptures; a boyhood apprenticeship with Kwagulth chief Mungo Martin served him well.¹ Godfrey's murals and sculptures were scattered over several continents in coffeehouses, galleries, collectors' homes and museums. Although hopeless with finances, his macho charm, remarkable memory for poetry, and storytelling made him the life of every party. Of a different, more introverted nature, I had struggled to blossom in his shadow, but by now was disenchanted with the superficial art scene. Former wild and egocentric heroes toppled from their pedestals, supplanted now by worthier ones—the past masters of several spiritual traditions, representing the pinnacle of human development. However, it was my brother who unwittingly played a role in my greatest discovery.

One afternoon Godfrey returned with a large, empty picture portfolio that he found abandoned in a nearby alley. He gave it to me to keep my drawings in. Neatly printed on its inside cover were the name and address of Paul Caponegro, one of the city's foremost nature photographers. Coincidentally, I knew Caponegro from the Gurdjieff group, as he was being groomed to succeed Willem Nyland. This chance discovery seemed fraught with implications. Apprehending my quarry at the dispersal of the next Gurdjieff meeting, I briefly explained the need to speak privately. Paul laughed and set a date three days hence to meet at his East Side apartment, which turned out to be only a few blocks away from my studio in a better part of the city. Inexplicably anxious, I counted the days and the hours and the moments.

After being welcomed, Paul disappeared into the kitchen to prepare coffee, allowing me an opportunity to inspect a collection of fascinating images on the walls of his well-appointed apartment. Among studies of rocks and ferns were photo portraits from a bygone era. Judging by the subjects' looks and attire I presumed they must have been Eastern mystics. A tiny photograph of an immaculate-looking white-turbaned man with chiselled features and a long, snow-white beard drew my attention like a magnet. His regal yet otherworldly face was the epitome of beauty and serenity.²

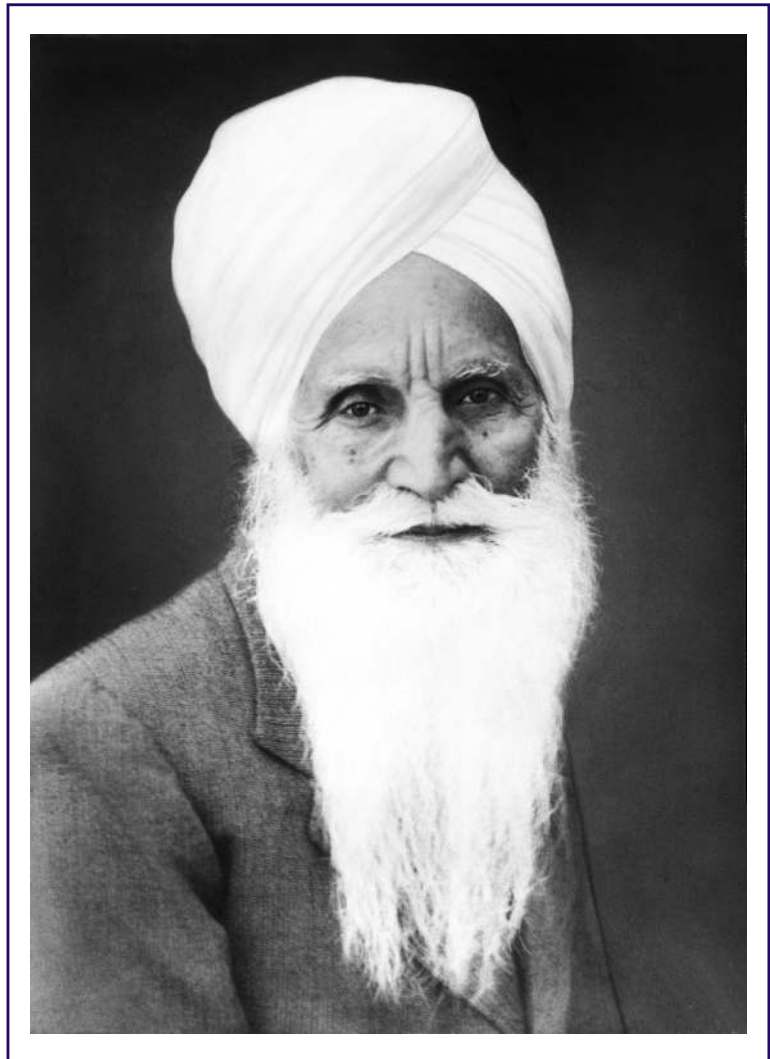
While I stood witlessly staring, Paul entered the room and handed me a photograph of a different, yet equally extraordinary stranger.³

In the moments that followed, I stood transfixed before the rugged visage of one who radiated power and compassion, his eyes aglow with an inner bliss. As I held this otherwise inanimate picture, subtle gears began shifting. The boundaries of matter began to dissolve as exhilarating currents seemed to move up my spine. With open eyes the periphery of vision sparkled. It felt like the top of my head was gently opening into a universe of Light. Wave after surging wave of diaphanous luminosity billowed forth from the face in the photograph, yet simultaneously from within my head. The lustrous eyes of the Familiar Stranger were within the center. Once again, I felt loved unconditionally, as I did when first opened to the Light three years earlier. Then, from far away yet very distinctly, ten words formed in my consciousness:

'If God has a face, He must look like this.'

Moth & the Flame - Face of A Prophet

This audio-visual experience was too much for any rational mind to absorb! I was completely undone. Struggling for a point of reference, I broke away and recovered my senses. With the picture cradled in my hands, I walked over to Paul and asked, 'Is he a Sufi?' 'In a way, yes,' he answered with a quizzical smile. 'Is he still living?' I asked with trepidation, as all the great teachers I had so keenly read about were no more of this world. He nodded in affirmation. Relief. 'Tell me more,' I cried, but Paul changed the subject. Still bathing in the afterglow of bewildering transcendence, Paul's words seemed so far away from me. On leaving, he handed me a book with a worn look and tattered cover. It was called *A Great Saint, Baba Jaimal Singh*. 'You may find this of interest,' he commented. The author was Kirpal Singh.



Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj
(1858-1948)

I took home my threadbare treasure and read through the night, this detailed biography of a little-known nineteenth-century spiritual Adept known simply as Baba Ji (Baba Jaimal Singh). The book was however, far more. Every page opened up new yet ancient possibilities, explaining spirituality as a universal science, devoid of ritual, dogma, or blind belief. The book was a guide, a clear map and a genealogy of Sant Mat—or path of the Masters. Nothing he said contradicted the ethical or spiritual teachings of other authentic lineages that I was already familiar with. Levels of mystic experience were explained, affirming my limited excursions yet far transcending them. Kirpal Singh—a living practitioner, spoke eloquently of life's true purpose, while unraveling hidden scriptural meanings and universal mystic teachings throughout the ages. He emphasized the importance of experiencing for ourselves the inner Light and Celestial Sound-current, which is at the core of all great religions and wisdom teachings. I had heard the lower strains of this Sound, but never before realized its true significance:

It was, said Baba Ji, the path most economical in effort and the one most rewarding for reaching back to the Primal Source of all life and light. Its secret lay in the insight that if the soul was to merge back into the point from where it had descended, the way of ascent must be identical with that of descent. The Nameless One, when assuming



Param Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj
(1894-1974)

While on his 1963 world tour of North America, a complete stranger walked up to Sant Kirpal Singh and exclaimed, 'Sir! You have the face of a prophet!'

Moth & the Flame - Face of A Prophet

Name and Form, had projected Itself into Shabd, Naam, Kalma or the Word. It was this spiritual current whose primary attributes were melody and effulgence that was responsible for all creation...

All sages, in their own different ways, had testified to the working of the Word or Naam Power...

The music and glory of the Word spread through all creation and permeated our being. If only the Atman [i.e. the individual soul] could be contacted with it, it could use this "string from the Nameless Lord" to reach His Door. But the soul in its downward descent had loosened the link and had forgotten its real nature. Acquiring the gross coverings of body and mind, it had lost sight of its native home and identified itself with its prison.⁴

In spite of my peripheral experiences with the Sound and Light of Creation, returning to the Source of it all would require living help:

Baba Ji indefatigably emphasized the necessity of a living Master for success in the field...

The spiritual journey was not a matter of intellectual disquisition. It was a question of practical ascension. Without his enlivening touch the soul could not awaken from its slumber and get attuned to Naam. The Jiva Atman [the embodied soul] was too far lost in the gross material to contact Shabd on its own account. Besides, the inner way was not an easy one and even if the soul could transcend physical consciousness and enter the realms within, it could not proceed very far on its own...

He did not promise spiritual attainment in some future life after death. He gave a taste of it here and now...⁵

As if a bell had been struck, my inner self responded radically. Although he spoke in third person and made no self-claims, his words were redolent with authenticity. The name Kirpal (pronounced Kirpaul) began to revolve in my mind like a rosary. Had I at long last found the Guide? On the last page was an address in India. Taking the plunge, I wrote and asked for a blessing on my life, balancing as it was on the cusp of twenty-one.

Poor Paul! I returned to badger him with many a question. He was quick to point out that he wasn't a follower and maintained a healthy skepticism. However, he confided: 'I attended one of Kirpal Singh's talks on his 1963 world tour, which took place in a large church in Boston. I couldn't understand a word of what he was saying, but, *Something* happened to me then which I have never experienced before or since. But first let me caution you that there are some Adepts from the East who have developed subjective powers which cannot be rationally or objectively evaluated.'

'Please continue,' I asked, barely suppressing my excitement.

'From where I stood at the back of the church, I observed a sphere of bright golden-white Light above his head. This Light pulsated, spreading wave upon wave across the audience. It was the most extraordinary thing I have ever witnessed.'

Paul's non-devotee status made his testimony even more meaningful to me. The puzzle-pieces were falling into place. Meeting the Master in person became my passion. *Was I just picking up in this life where I left off in the last?*

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1. The Kwagulth are a First Nations people of the coastal areas of British Columbia, renowned for their woodcarving skills.
 2. Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji (1858-1948).
 3. Param Sant Kirpal Singh Ji (1894-1974).
 4. Kirpal Singh, A Great Saint Baba Jaimal Singh: His Life and Teachings, (Delhi, India: SK Publications, 1993), p.. 85-86.
 5. Ibid., p. 88.

5 Seeing is Above All

After an agonizing wait, when Sant Kirpal Singh's first letter finally arrived from India, sealed in a hand-made pale green envelope, I was ecstatic. Couched within fatherly words was a tingling grace-current, and with it, a perceptible lightening of ancient burden. He directed me to attend the local satsang, or 'truth gathering', held every Sunday in downtown Manhattan.

Working as a waiter at the Paradox, an eclectic macrobiotic restaurant popular among the emerging counter-culture, I served musicians, poets, artists, workers, health-seekers, ordinary folks and a few truth-seekers. The Paradox was a fertile and exciting bed of new ideas on philosophy, life and diet. One evening, toward the close of business, I became involved in a profound discussion with Bernie, a customer, and Richard Lane, the Paradox owner. As our exchange deepened, Bernie glibly remarked, 'I have heard it said that if you want to see God, close off your eyes and ears.' As a soul on fire—willing to try anything—while standing amongst the empty cafe tables and chairs, I closed my eyes and plugged my ears to the external world and found myself traveling through a luminous, starry universe. Upon opening them a minute or so later, I was stunned by the immediacy of an alternate reality parallel to the one we are normally aware of.

Somehow or other, I had convinced Richard—who had the wheels—and Bernie to accompany me the following week to the Friends Meeting House in Washington, DC, to attend Kirpal Singh's seventy-first birthday celebration (he was in India at the time). Among the hundred or so celebrants, we met T.S. Khanna and his wife Mohini, both elderly disciples initiated by Baba Sawan Singh in the 1930's. Khanna Sahib shared several miraculous stories and personal experiences with two great spiritual Adepts.

The three of us stayed the night at Khanna's home, where Master Kirpal himself had resided a few months earlier on his second world tour, at a time, alas, when I was intensely questing in New York, but unaware that only a few hundred miles south was the one whom I sought. When I bedded down on a folding cot in the darkened living room, Kirpal Singh's full face unexpectedly appeared in front of me, created from particles of effulgent Light. For more than an hour, this remarkable vision remained until sleep drew its veil. In proportion to my experience, faith in the competency of this Master was growing; I increasingly trusted that he would be the chosen instrument to guide me back to God in this lifetime.

Over the next few weeks I often prayed, Let me not die without the gift of Naam! and submitted my written request for initiation. During the period of waiting, the Master-power twice reached down, past the barriers of mind and ego, deep into my dreams. In the first dream-which-became-a-vision, Kirpal appeared, accompanied by his departed Master, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, floating in a royal blue sky. They both sat cross-legged, hands folded, dressed in white raiment, knees almost touching, their unwavering gazes focused on me for more than an hour. I became filled with childlike wonder and gratitude as I looked back and forth from one Master to the other, absorbing their serene, smiling faces, twinkling eyes, and radiant white beards. Unity flowed between them, to me, and back again. Something of eternity was conveyed, but mere words beggar description. A giddy bliss touched the borders of my waking state for days afterwards, immensely superior to any

worldly intoxication.

In the second vision, my future Guide sat at a distance in rural India. Several devotees squatted before him on khaki-hued sand under a bright cerulean-blue sky. In Kirpal's tanned hands was a small pouch containing dust garnered from the threshold of his Master, which he was about to pour upon the foundation stone of an ashram, or spiritual school. As he loosened the drawstrings and tipped the bag, its contents began to spill. Simultaneously, the dust became incandescent and flew across the distance into my eyes, blinding me with its intensity. Immediately my phoenix-soul soared up through layers of ever-increasing brightness and cosmic melody. Later, upon returning to a numb and tingling body, I wept inconsolably, yet with residual inebriation. Torn from the bosom of reality, my soul desperately longed for return!

For weeks I lived in the hope of receiving an answer and daily checked the barren mailbox. Then, one happy day his letter arrived. I was accepted for initiation, and on March 28, 1965, Ben Ringel, the local New York representative read me the instructions.² Preceding two meditation sittings, a detailed description of the inner regions, the ruling powers, and the charged names that allow interior passage through—one for inner Light and another for Sound—were given. Finally, the rays of spiritual dawning filled the vacuum of my boyhood longing. This is what 'saved' was truly meant to be. My feet were on the Path at last.

Initiation has been described as both a rebirth, and an infusion of attention from an Adept to an aspirant, independent of the physical distance between them. While initiation is a foretaste and the introduction to a clear-cut scientific method of meditation and personal transformation, it is not a mere formula. Nor is it a graduation. 'Perfection walks slowly and requires the hand of time,' said Kirpal; permanent union with the Beloved is attained after a long journey, one which passes through metaphorical thorns and rugged passes as well as soft flowering meadows. Initiation experiences of Divine Light and Sound had by each aspirant vary greatly, depending on background and receptivity. If awakening ever seems sudden, it is the result of lengthy preparation—possibly the fruit of progress made in past lives—and the touch of a true living Adept.

I left for retreat on a quiet farm in New Hampshire, run by fellow initiates Russell and Judith Perkins, following a disciplined schedule of meditation balanced by some physical labor, reading spiritual books and long walks through the woods. Although some progress must have been made (not readily apparent to me), I soon discovered how little my mind and senses were under control. In the wealth of Sant Mat literature, there are frequent references to the various stages of the inner journey. The first great breakthrough is said to occur after the student transcends physical consciousness, gains entry to the astral focus between and behind the eyes, and there beholds the radiant light-form of the Guide. Access to higher stages of the path cannot occur until reaching the inner Master. Continually frustrated in hundreds of attempts to reach that coveted experience once more, one day I resolved to shut myself in a small closet and not come out until my inner vision was opened. I was determined to storm the gates of heaven, for they would not yield to any ordinary supplication! My resolution, however, dissolved after a few hours, compromised by the need to answer the call of nature!

Full of frustrated aspirations, I was comforted by these words of the great Soami

Moth & the Flame - Seeing is above all

Shiv Dayal Singh (1818-1878), a Master of the spiritual science, who shared the anguish and struggles of the disciple, as he himself must have experienced in the early stages:

*Ode to the Satguru:
Long and dreary has been the struggle
with the mind but all in vain;
All potent art Thou and can do aught,
then why this delay?
...the arch enemy of the mind is but a waste;
O sow in it the seeds of love!
This noble path of the Masters
Shall suffer a great setback
If I succeed not in my endeavors.
I cry from my egoistic reason
And do not resign myself to thy will...
As a branch fallen from the tree,
I am cast away from the Real Home...
Purify my heart with Thy Satsang;
for there it will separate itself from the body
and contact the Mystic Sound,
And then will it drink Amrit [nectar]
from the fount of immortality,
And then will pains and miseries disappear
and soul will have no fear;
Then will I contact the Sound Principle [Word or Shabd]
and gain the love of my Swami [Lord],
O Lord! make me Thine own:
I have come, for I seek shelter at Thy feet.³*

As the days and nights passed in semi-retreat, glimmerings of the wonder of the spiritual path began to dawn, and a few inadequate words—like bubbles rising from the depths—found their way to the surface:

*How beautiful God's Creation is,
Through eyes of love so freely bestowed.
Each breath and sigh become living beads
On the rosary of remembrance.
Forest buds swell in the warm spring sun,
And burst dull mortality with delicate bloom.
Once hidden, Your fair countenance fills all-space,
And I, less than an ant or tiny fish,
Lie inebriate on the surface of the Deep.
Within this fragile temple of body
Resounds the sacred bell, the drumming thunder,
Everywhere, nowhere, and now here;
The universe opens into harmony.
The Sun of Divinity, thinly veiled, You step into my dreams;*

Moth & the Flame - Seeing is above all

*Eyes that even momentarily consume such Countenance
Are imbued with purpose, if not Love's madness.*

*Invisible harmonies spread like gossamer in the wind;
You pass by, luminous tresses entangling everything.
Willingly am I undone, drawn into undeniable love.*

*In the body of Light are Truth and Wisdom,
Guides to the wandering children of mind;
In that brightness is the promise of glory;
A troth in the bosom of divine affection.*

*Plucked like a soiled puppy from the gutter,
I am washed by One whose very name is Compassion;
Then a clod, now an atom of Light in limitlessness,
I dance and breathe by the life of the Word.*

I now felt strong enough to brave the world and revisit my folks on the West Coast, wishing to share with them my blessings. When the bus I was on reached the Canadian border, I was anxious, for in the past I had worked without permit, and was now about to test my commitment to truthfulness. A man ahead was pulled out of line and detained. I was intently engaged in silent repetition of my initiation mantra. 'How long have you resided in the USA?' asked the Customs Officer. I honestly replied, 'Five years.' Looking over my shoulder, he called out, 'Next!'

A million lines of Light:

After returning to Vancouver Island, I worked as a gardener and then mushroom farm laborer, while living in a small, drafty wooden shed in my parents' backyard garden. One evening as I sat in meditation, Mum burst through my door crying hysterically. After a few minutes, she became calm and related her strange experience:

'I was in the living room with Dad and Godfrey, when I started looking at your painting of the Master above the mantelpiece. Wherever I moved around the room, his eyes followed me. Astonished, I asked, "Kirpal Singh, can you see me as a person?" Then, oh! I can't describe it! A million lines of brightest Light came from every direction and struck me right here!' she pointed to her forehead, in the center, about 1/2" above the eyebrows.

I laughed and assured her, 'Everything is OK, Mum. The point where the Light struck you is your third eye. Master just showed you that he sees you. He knows and loves you. Don't worry!'

She had been suffering acute bursitis attacks every morning for more than a year, which were becoming progressively worse, resulting in the loss of use of her left arm. The day after this spectacular experience, my parents decided on their own not to cook or eat any meat in the house, so long as I stayed with them. Coincidentally, Mum's bursitis disappeared. A few days later they were invited to a steak barbecue at my half-brother's, and the following morning her bursitis returned with a vengeance. Upon resumption of a vegetarian diet, the pain went away. Her arm remained normal for the rest of her life.

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Although never formally initiated, Mum was quite receptive spiritually. On one of their moves between California and the Northwest, my parents encountered a fierce rainstorm. Mum was tired and claustrophobic. Surrounded on four sides by large trucks, speeding along in excess of 70 mph, she screamed, 'We're going to crash! I'm going to let go of the wheel! Oh God, help me!'

At this point two large, tanned hands appeared and gently covered hers. 'They were Kirpal Singh's hands! I recognized them from his pictures,' she insisted. Disengaging from traffic, she pulled their little Rambler over to the shoulder. Looking to the mountains she saw the dark rain-clouds part, allowing the sun's rays to shine down in dramatic splendor through the peaks and across the valley floor. Within the center of the brilliant sun appeared the turbaned figure of Kirpal smiling and waving to her.

Every time He [the Perfect Master] gives initiation to anyone, He creates [or transfers] an astral image of himself in the disciple. And from then on, the Master never leaves the disciple. The double, or other self, or image of the Master is sometimes what we call the inner Master...

The Master sometimes calls these Doubles of Himself his agents. They do his work, taking care of all his disciples. They have the power to act without limit. They can do what the Master wishes them to do, and they obey his orders. The human side of the Master...may not know what is going on in the life of that person. It may be on the other side of the globe. He will not be aware of the details, but he can know them if he wishes...

If the Master had a million disciples, he would have an astral double of himself in every one of them, and that agent of the Master would look after the disciple at all times, reporting to the Master here only in cases of extreme emergency.

—from a letter to a disciple by Baba Sawan Singh

All in good time: Three months after initiation, I sent my self-introspection diaries that all initiates are asked to keep, along with a letter and a list of questions to the Master. I waited, and waited for an answer for six months! Finally a letter of apology arrived from Dalip Singh, the secretary of Sawan Ashram, for he had misplaced the Master's original reply! Enclosed was a carbon copy of his extraordinary five-page, single-spaced letter. After addressing me affectionately, his first advice was the important link between service to humanity with inner progress: '*You should progress more on the Path when there will be better chances for your helping others.*' Then he proceeded to answer a wide variety of questions. Following are a few lines from that cherished missive:

The Five Shabds are the varying types of sounds heard within, each denoting the spiritual planes up to Sach Khand. As a matter of fact, the Sound-current is One but there is All-Consciousness, slightly less Consciousness, partial Consciousness predominating [over] Maya, another region where Maya and Consciousness are at par, and the last where Maya predominates and Consciousness is at a lower ebb. The five charged names denote these stages.

Practice makes a man perfect. You can improve gradually by increasing the time of your sittings. The holy meditations should not be a mechanical routine of just sitting for a certain time but it should be of austere loving devotion dyed in reverential humility when you stand a-begging at the Divine Door of the Lord...

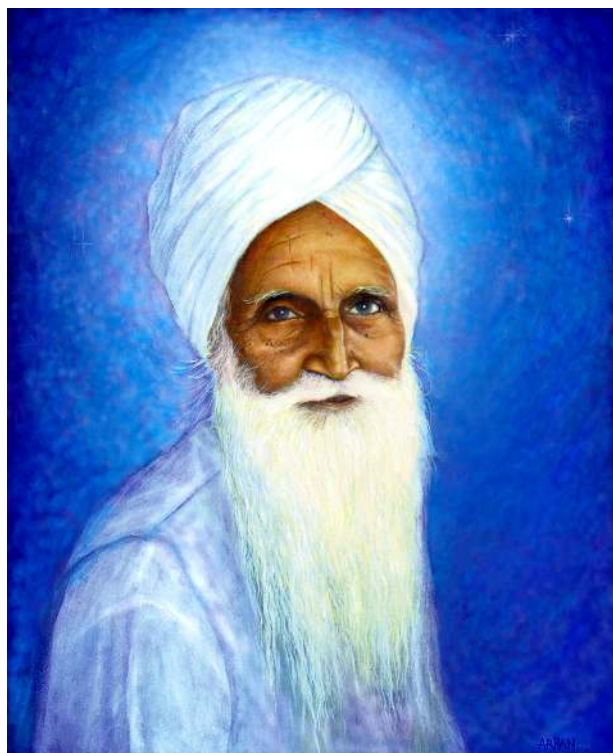
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Q. Can even a sinner like myself attain to Godhood in this very lifetime? Sach Khand?

A. Yes, even you can attain to Godhood during this lifetime provided you work for it strictly according to the behests of the Master. You have been granted the sacred boon of initiation which is a safe visa to Sach Khand, and it is up to your earnest efforts and steadfastness which would bless you with your wish in due course.

Miraculous Supplier:

Spiritual yearnings constantly smoldered like quality incense: slow-burning, yet subtly perfuming. Despite hard labor and simple living, I couldn't seem to scrape together enough money for an extended trip to India. More importantly, I didn't have my Guru's requisite permission. In 1966, as consolation, I visited The Sanctuary in Anaheim, California. Formerly a Unity Church with gardens and guesthouse, the property had been acquired as the headquarters for the Master's work in the West. At the outset of my brief stay, I discreetly planned to paint portraits of the Masters and donate them to the Sanctuary. I visualized two stretched, primed, fine linen canvasses, various paints and materials. In the margin of a preliminary pencil sketch, I wrote down the planned dimensions, 24" x 30". The next morning, I caught a bus to my parents' place in Santa Monica (they had moved again), about 100 miles north. When I arrived, no one was home, but a large package wrapped in heavy brown paper was stuck between the screen and front door with my name on it. The sender was identified merely as: K. NYC. According to the postmark, the parcel had been shipped two weeks earlier from New York. Tearing away the paper, I found two stretched, primed, linen canvases, size 24" x 30"! This was but one of many manifestations to come of what others might call miracles. When we attune to the higher Self, all the forces of Nature come to our aid.



While working on the portraits of the Masters, I did little more than hold the brush. They became alive to me, and sometimes like a child, I would ask permission, 'Excuse me, may I work on your nose? Your eyebrows?' The eyes of the portrait of Kirpal Singh Ji, especially, follow one from any angle, a peculiarity noticed by many. Returning to Vancouver, I opened the East West Gallery, a venue devoted to fine art from both Western and Eastern cultures. While painting portraits and landscapes, I lived a spartan life behind a partition in the back of the store. In addition, I worked for the local School Board in grounds maintenance, raking endless rocks off playfields, eager to save up enough money to go to India. One day a stranger entered the gallery and said, 'I was walking by, and some Power dragged me back. What in the world is going on here?' she demanded. Pointing to Master's photograph, I replied, 'He did it.'

'Look at those eyes! I belong to a yoga group, and many of us are seeking something higher. If you'd like, I'll introduce you.'

A week later, as we entered the kitchen leading to Ananda's yoga center, several people were casually talking. This was unfamiliar territory, and my attention was wholly focused in **Simran** (charged repetition of the Holy Names). A young woman walked over and point-blank asked, 'Do you mind explaining something? As soon as you entered the room, I experienced an incredible Light all around,' she exclaimed, 'like someone setting off a flash bulb.'

'The Light you have just experienced,' I replied in awe, 'was due to the grace of my spiritual Master whom I was remembering; it had nothing to do with me. That was just a foretaste...' As a knot of people gathered around, I described Surat Shabd Yoga—the Science of the inner Light and Sound-current. Comparing it to several other systems—hatha, raja, kriya, and kundalini yogas—I respectfully pointed out the relative benefits and limitations of each. Over the next two years, more than twenty-five from this group came for initiation, many of whom formed the nucleus of our young spiritual community.

A thousand times brighter than a thousand suns:

The Master's letter of August 31, 1966, arrived, answering more questions:

Q. Just how high is Christ?

A. The initiates of the Living Master do meet the form of Christ in their astral travels... It is no surprise if you glimpsed that radiant form within... Always repeat the charged names mentally when you see any form within and if that stands before simran know it for certain that it is genuine and friendly, and will be helpful for your inner journey on to the True Home of the Father... The reference of Lord Christ being 'A thousand times brighter than the brightness of a thousand suns,' is an allegorical expression of Sat Purusha's divine glory, whose each hair is resplendent with divine light of a million suns put together.

Q. This is a dreaded question and I must ask what will become of me—what will I do if you leave the earth plane forever? To whom should I look for guidance? Who will be your successor?

A. Please rest assured that ever since initiation you are under constant protection... and it will continue till eternity. ...Always look within for guidance and all help will be forthcoming from above. You should be happy to know that I do not propose to leave the earth plane so soon as there is still much work to be accomplished, that has

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been assigned to me by my Satguru. God willing, when I leave this plane, that Power will continue to work at some other human pole, who will be notified in due course, whose company will afford you all necessary guidance outside.

Darshan is a Sanskrit word, and in Sant Mat terminology translates as 'vision,' or 'glimpse'—internally or externally—of the Lord, or of a perfect Saint. In eight letters written over these two years, I sought permission to come to India, for I craved darshan like a fish craves water, like a child its mother, a lover the beloved. But, his requisite written permission was withheld. Despite my anguish, there was a sweetness that was quite intoxicating!

*Friend of the friendless!
Grant the solace of just one Darshan-glimpse!*

January 12, 1967: 'Leave all and follow Me! The time is now or never.' That is how I interpreted a thrilling morning meditation. I straightway closed the gallery, quit my labor job, and bought an unrestricted ticket allowing a stay of years in India, if necessary. Two hundred dollars remained, an amount unlikely to go far, but worldly money was the least of my concerns. If God provided until now for the birds of skies and creatures of the fields, forests, deserts, mountains and the watery depths—and for my favorite Christian saint, humble Francis—surely He would care for me as well. January 20, the morning of departure, arrived and I was seriously beginning to worry, asking my heart, 'Am I following the Master, or am I following my mind?'

With growing trepidation, I recalled the saying of Sejho Bai, a woman saint of sixteenth-century India:

*If God is displeased with you, reconciliation
comes only through the grace of the Saints,
but if the Guru is displeased with you,
then who can reconcile you to God?*

Until now I hadn't seriously questioned my impulsive decision. It occurred that I could even be sent back to Canada in disgrace. The heart prevailed, and heart assured the monkey mind, 'If Master turns me out, I will stand by the gate and watch him pass by. I will be content with that!'

When was love never a challenge to reason?

While I packed my old battered suitcase, heavy footsteps thudded across the outside entrance. I could hear the squeaky mailbox open, a letter falling, the clank! of the lid, and steps fading away. I rushed outside and opened the mailbox. Like a nest-egg, a blue aerogram-letter was waiting for me, the rubber-stamped address of Sawan Ashram, India on the back. The Master's letters never came directly from India; they were always sent in bulk to Mr. Khanna for further distribution—but not this one.

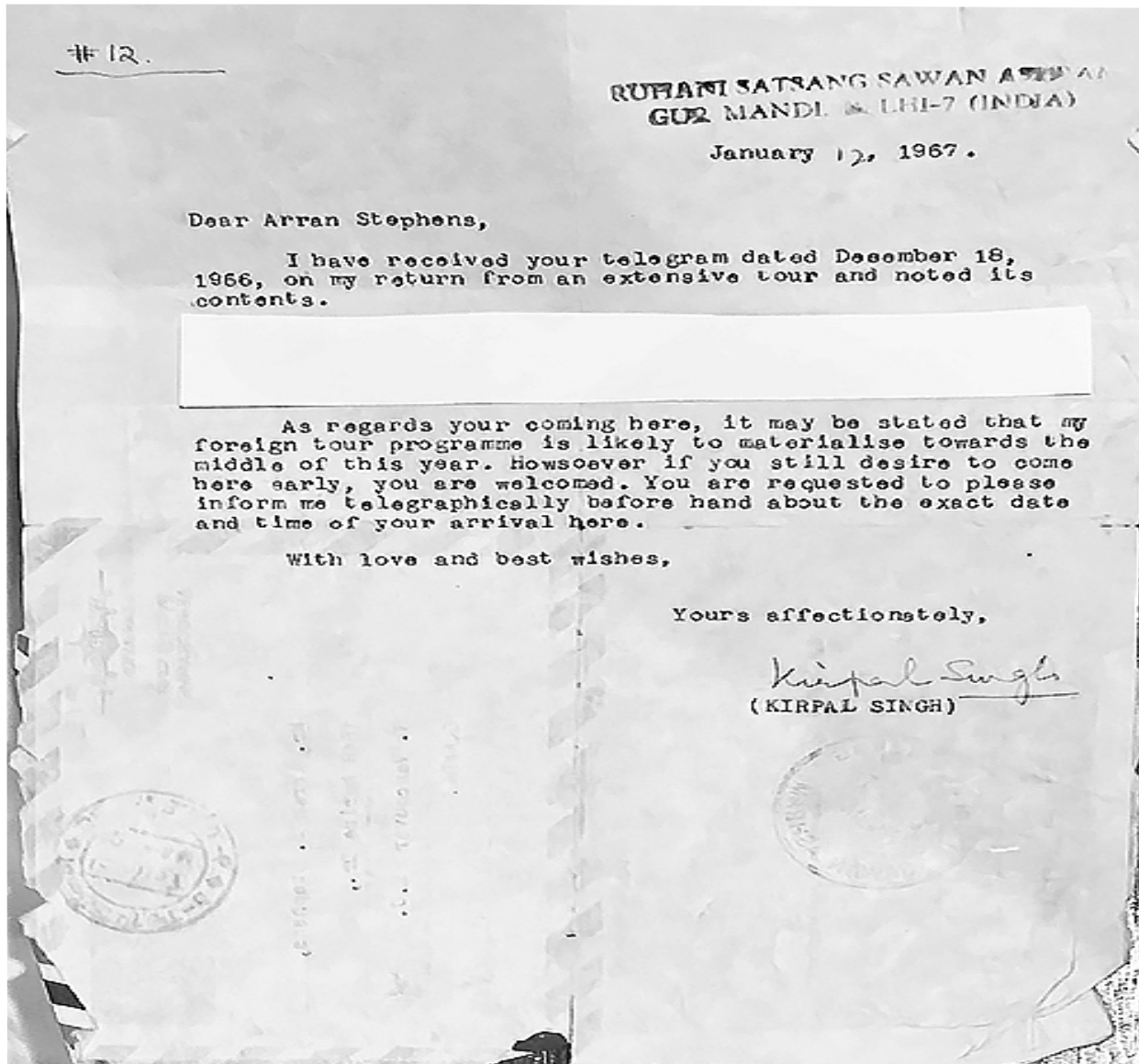
With pounding heart I carefully unsealed the delicate envelope and first noted the date: January 12th, 1967, the same day 'I' decided to leave all. What really struck me was his permission, at last: '... if you still desire to come here early, you are welcome...'

If I still desired?

In a swoon, I sank to the floor in wonderment. He knew; it was the Guru's play all along, exquisitely timed! A thousand thanks flowed like a mantra as I telegraphed the Master to warn of my arrival, grabbed my things and rushed to catch the plane—and

possibly the transformation of my existence.

From You I came; to You I shall return...



1. I later discovered that this experience coincided with the Master's receipt of my application for formal initiation.
2. Whenever it isn't possible for a Master to be physically present, he may authorize one of his representatives to convey initiation instructions. The representatives merely act as agents; it is the Master who takes over the karmic account of the new initiates, and it is he alone who grants the mystic experience.
3. Kirpal Singh, *Prayer, Its Nature & Technique* (Bowling Green, VA: S.K. Pub., 1959).

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6 Mother India!

The airliner touched down at Palam Airport, disgorging passengers into the chilly January night. I had entered another world for which nothing could have prepared me. Despite the boisterous din and babble in and about the teeming airport, I felt received and embraced by Mother India, as her children know her. I stooped and touched the tarmac with my hand, reverencing this ancient land.

After customs inspection I was greeted by Gyaniji, the articulate silver-bearded ashram secretary; Princess Khukhu, daughter of the Maharaja of Jhind; and Eileen Wigg, an Englishwoman who had lived several years in India.

Khukhu drove her jeep at high speed through the inexplicably familiar, dilapidated streets of Delhi, honking at everything in her path. A mantle of darkness and pungent mist enveloped the city. By the roadside, shawl-and-blanket-robed figures clustered around dried cow dung fires for warmth; people on bicycles appeared wraith-like in the jeep's lurching beams. Men and bullocks pulling burdens piled impossibly high on wooden carts appeared sporadically out of the gloom, around which we deftly maneuvered. India was awakening to another day.

I asked my companions if we were near the ashram yet. Hands firmly gripping the wheel, Khukhu turned around, heedless of the road, and replied, 'Every moment brings us nearer to the Master!' Her fierce devotion was proverbial. As we drew close to our destination, I closed my eyes and wept the tears of the unworthy, and in the flood, the reality of my separation dawned as I was swept towards an infinite Sea.

The car hit a big pothole, jolting me back to the external environment. Sights and smells exclusive to India impinged upon my senses. Passing through the narrow lanes of Shakti Nagar and over a clattery bridge, we arrived at Sawan Ashram. The cries of awakening birds greeted us as pink light kissed the dawning sky. Entering the ashram's wrought-iron gates, we rolled through a corridor of large banyan and eucalyptus, then turned ninety degrees to the right. On our left were clean white buildings, which served as the living quarters of the ashramites. Several hundred feet further we passed the Master's house, enclosed by a low-walled garden hedged by blooming roses and bougainvillea. I had heard of his fondness for roses. His mother's name was Gulab Devi, *Goddess of the Rose*.

'Master is resting and will see you later in the morning. He has just returned from his Bombay tour. Someone will call you,' Khukhu explained, with a proper British accent. After casting a wistful glance toward his door, I was escorted through another fragrant rose bower (Indian roses are incomparably fragrant) and on to my spartan room. Once inside, I became aware of tangible energies breathing through me.

At 8 A.M. I was startled from my otherworldly reverie by a knock on the door. 'Master will see you now,' called a voice from the other side. I was escorted to his residence, heart pounding wildly, fearful, like a sheep being led to sacrifice. The thought of meeting the Word incarnate was almost too much to bear. Will this be my beginning or my end? After removing shoes, I was led through a large screen-enclosed porch to a dimly lit parlor. We continued towards a bright doorway and through it to the durbar, or court, of this spiritual king—his modest bedroom study.

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There before me was the Master. Although decades have passed, that first meeting, even the sound of the rustle of his clothes, remains forever imprinted in my heart and mind as though it had existed from the beginning of time. He sat cross-legged on a neat low bed, dressed simply in white cotton kameez shirt and baggy sylvan pants, white turban on his head like a careless crown, dark blue vest with not one, but five pens in the breast-pocket, brown hands resting in his lap.

He waved me into the room. 'Hello! Hello! Come in! Won't you sit here?' as he offered a Western chair. Instead I sat on my knees on the floor before him, wondering how all this could be happening. Taking my work-callused hands in his soft, strong, brown ones, Satguruji affectionately patted and stroked them. His silent gaze penetrated into the depths of my soul—uncritical, loving, accepting, human-near yet holy-far. Of itself, my head lowered and soon felt his hand atop it, full of the weight and light of the Father. *Merci, mon Dieu*, at last! My battered ship found its harbor, these eyes their cynosure. Remorseful of my wild teens, I confessed, 'I have been a terrible sinner!'

He answered in deep, rich tones, '**Master is for sinners!**' He also assured, "*Every Saint has a past and every sinner a future!*"

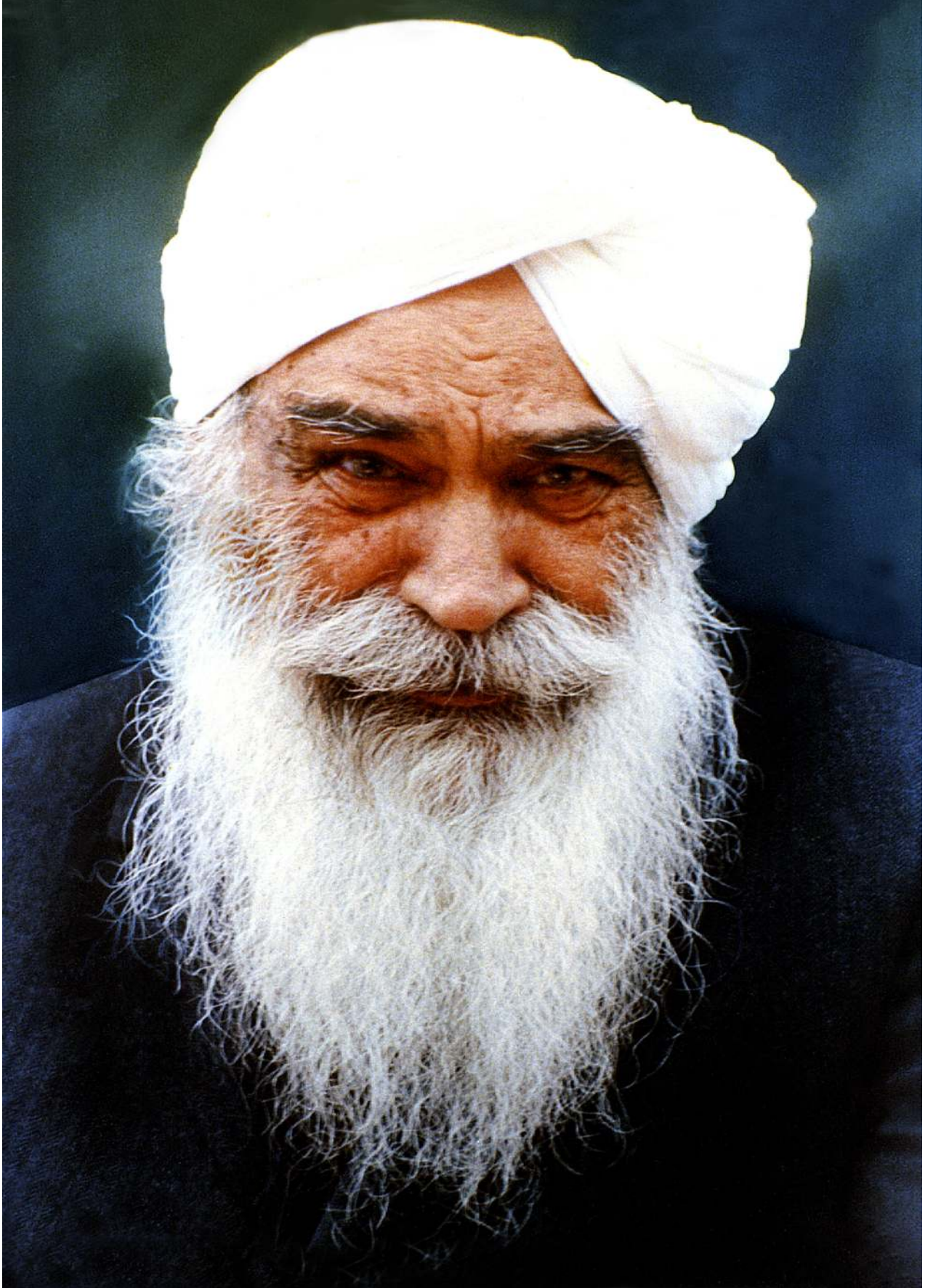
My karmas were then and there lifted. A long silence elapsed.

'I cut short my Bombay tour to be here when you arrived,' he said, breaking the hush.

Dumbstruck, I was incapable of responding. Why would someone as great as he, one whom countless thousands loved and revered as Master, do so much for such a poor, unlettered, and unproven youngster sitting dazed at his threshold? With the passing moments, such questions became subsumed, answered by love alone. And as he continued holding my hands, I observed up close his otherworldly mien—an essence that photograph, brush, chisel, words or notes could only hope to, but never fully capture, nor comprehend.

He smiled and beamed, eyes almost hidden in the folds but for the untrammelled light dancing in their liquid depths. His face, god-like in an Old Testament way, bespoke a universe of meaning beyond my knowing, each line and furrow and a thousand fine waves in his silver beard proclaiming a rugged, yet electric and resplendent perfection. I was home with my Father. *At last!*

Moth & the Flame - Mother India!



7 Sawan Ashram

Ashram is the Sanskrit word for refuge, a sanctuary, a place of higher learning, a quiet place in nature specifically suited for imparting spiritual knowledge from master to disciple. When the land for Sawan Ashram was acquired, it was a sparsely inhabited forest on the outskirts of Old Delhi. Dedicated in 1951, the ashram's foundation stone was laid by Sant Kirpal Singh himself, sprinkled with dust he had gathered from the threshold of his Master's Dera or hermitage. (This recalled for me my earlier vision of cosmic dust, and its unusual significance.)

Over the years, an urban tide surged around the ashram's perimeter, and the area became a busy town. However, the moment one passed through the wrought-iron gate, beyond the outer babble and traffic's din, one entered an island-oasis, saturated with brightness so palpable that I sometimes chortled, 'this charged atmosphere can be sliced, served on a plate and eaten!'

The ashram was an international school of longing and awakening, a nucleus around which innumerable hearts were caused to turn and flare, to orbit in a kind of dervish dance without form. I soon learned, however, that ashram life was not a 'piece of cake.' Facing and changing mind's habitual tendencies is ever a formidable task—one often prefaced by intense personal turmoil. But for those willing to sacrifice their lower nature for the higher, there is no better accelerator of inner growth when combined with individual practice of the Word. Visitors to this mystic perfumery, whether buying or browsing without commitment, inevitably received some of the Master's fragrance, or grace, as largesse.

I soon settled into the rhythms of this esoteric community, enjoying it immensely. The experience was an intensely personal one, centered in the Master-teacher/disciple-student relationship. There were profound lessons to be learned from the discourses and informal sessions, if not from just observing the Master in a kaleidoscope of actions and interactions. Trying to put one's deepening understanding into practice during the daily round was a constant challenge. One learned, like the 12th century Scottish king—Robert The Bruce's persistent spider, that success at any level often requires many a temporary fall.

There was immanent beauty and charm in Sant Kirpal Singh's discourses whether delivered in his native Punjabi and Hindi, or in fluent English (learned in youth while attending a Christian mission school). He was also well versed in classical Persian, and his knowledge of the world's religious scriptures was nothing less than encyclopedic. He knew by heart the 1,400 page Adi Granth of the Sikhs, and whenever he wanted to illustrate a point, freely quoted the Bible, the Koran, Vedanta, and luminaries such as Rumi, Buddha, Bulleh Shah, Wordsworth, Emerson and others. No matter how obtuse a subject, he picked up its universal thread in a way that both scholar and unlettered could comprehend his gist. His language was simple, powerful and unadorned; his accent difficult to identify and challenging for the Western newcomer. He was fond of parables and maxims drawn from village life. His sense of humor was highly developed, but so subtle and dry, it would sneak up and catch one unawares. Once caught in it one might almost expire from laughter. He once joked, 'A saint who never laughs is a sad saint.' When someone once asked him, 'Sir, how should we address you?' he chuckled and humbly replied, '**Just call me Mister Zero.**'

Talk about beauty, I was wonderstruck with the beauty and charm of the Master; I could go on looking at his remarkable, chaste and dynamic form endlessly. I could never get enough, and filled my thirst through the eyes.

Harish Chaddha, the editor of the Urdu and Hindi Sat Sandesh magazines, shared one of his experiences: 'I had once again been late with the Master's work; I went to him like a truant before the class teacher. But to my surprise the Master was not forthcoming with the usual reprimand. Instead he started off by talking of the special purpose God has in fashioning each individual object in creation. Then, planting his eyes on me, he ended, "I believe God made you to serve as a touchstone for testing the patience of a saint!"'

His first discourse that I attended was informally delivered in a local disciple's garden on January 28, 1967. He spoke of one of the greatest of human frailties, certainly one of mine, that of judging others. Excerpts follow:

If we realize that death is certain, there will be a change in our life. We must remain attentive in meditation; if not, the mind will think of others and judge their actions. Instead of the good in others, we take their negative qualities to be our guiding factor. Beware, for, 'As you think so you become.'

God has said: 'He is my loveliest child who sees Me in others.'

Thoughts are very potent. Have a sweet tongue, honeyed with humility; it should not injure the feelings of others. You aspire to love God, yet you curse those in whom He resides; injuring the feelings of others is a great sin. If you have to face a person with evil qualities, it is better to move to one side. It is easy to seek God, but very difficult to mend yourself. If we realized that God resides in others, would we want to hurt them? If others won't give up their evil ways of hurting, why should you depart from your sweet ways of helping?

I have selected the best piece of advice; now it's up to you to follow it or not. God has given us this tongue to glorify Him and to sing His praises; not to hurt the feelings of others.

Whether meeting him one-on-one or in huge throngs, practically everyone experienced an unforgettable loving power emitting from his eyes. Even if that glance lasted no longer than a flash, it seared deep into the psyche. Many, upon seeing him for the first time, would start quaking in their shoes and burst into tears, including those who had forgotten how. His glances would run the gamut of father-stern to mother-tender in the blink of an eye, yet shining through the mask was an immutable theocentric, consciousness-raising Light. Like the Masters of ancient time, Sant Kirpal Singh was one with the heart of Light.

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In the mornings, Master often put visitors into meditation in the ashram courtyard. Instructions were detailed and accompanied by sweeping hand gestures contracting to a point between the eyes, which he would tap with his finger to demonstrate the location of the third-eye. On this particular morning, I had been long peering through the camera, just waiting for the perfect moment. Finally, he looked penetratingly through the camera, and into my being. **Click!** Then, eyes closed for the inner journey.



*Sweet tongue, honeyed with humility,
O Nanak, is the essence of all virtues.*

Moth & the Flame
8 Birthday of Light

Knowledge is the child of scriptures;

It is love that is their mother!

—Persian poem

Diary, February, 5 & 6, 1967: Human streams pour through the gates from across India to celebrate their beloved teacher's birthday. The ashram's three acres seem to swell in order to accommodate the masses that fill every nook and corner. Many poor folk (some extremely so) travel hundreds of miles on foot, bicycle, bullock cart, bus and train, enduring hardships unimaginable to Westerners, with cheerful resignation. Representatives are also present from Pakistan, Iran, Ghana, South Africa, Germany, Tibet, Burma, Indonesia, France, Italy, America and Canada. As I observe from the sidelines, the Master's pleasure is that of a father meeting long-separated children.

The managing committee wants to decorate the ashram for the festive occasion, but Master's express wish is to keep it unobtrusive, careful to discourage the start of external rituals in any form. However, the devotees' harmless persistence prevails, and his simple bungalow is gaily garlanded like a Christmas tree with fragrant strings of marigolds, jasmine blossoms, and a multitude of tiny colored electric lights.

The langar [free kitchen] is crowded with Indian women and men working around the clock, cooking huge cauldrons of steaming vegetable subje, spicy dahl and more than 60,000 chapati wholewheat flat-breads which fill an entire room from floor to ceiling! Throughout the crisp winter night, groups of villagers sit beneath the stars around fires for warmth, blending voices and hearts in beautiful bhajans [sacred hymns of past saints] that continue on and on and on. As I walk through the ashram I'm greeted lovingly and invited to sit and sing with them. Their smiles are brilliantly offset by their dark skin. My heart is exceedingly glad, and overflows with love toward these simple, good people—my spiritual brothers and sisters.

On the evening of his 73rd birthday, the Master addresses a throng that packs the ashram from one end to the other:

Since I have met my Master, I have given up discriminating between man and man; there is only soul. It is not a question of intellect or learning which enables us to meet the Lord; it is a question of LOVE.

Without earnest prayer from the heart of hearts, no one has realized the Great Reality. Without love, no one has met the Beloved. The Almighty is controlled by the true devotee, I tell you! If you want to go on Haj [pilgrimage] to Mecca, go by way of the sea, not the dry desert. The desert sand is the way of intellect, and the sea—the flow of your tears—is the best way to meet and merge with the Lord in the true Kaaba of the heart.

Life is a game like chess; you must be careful how you play. One wrong move and you may forfeit the game. People play stocks, money and horses, but here you have to stake your love if you want to attain self-knowledge and God-realization. Kabir says, '**Now I want to play the game of chess with God: If I lose, I become Yours; if I win, You become mine.**'

Moth & the Flame - Birthday of Light

February 6, 4 A.M. Meditation of effortless effort: While the sangat chants lyric verses from Kabir Sahib, the white-clad Master emerges from a doorway. A ripple sweeps across the sea of 18,000 souls and their responsive singing trails off in mid-verse. After sitting half-lotus upon the dais, Maharaj Ji's heart-quenching eyes move across the audience, alighting upon this person and that. Suddenly his eyes are upon me. Startled like a deer in headlights, I'm in a frozen panic. Read like an open book, there is no escape from his gaze. All extraneous thoughts subside; fear transforms to affection. There's a loving power, electrical, a taste of bliss as a silent bridge forms between us, the crowd now forgotten. Long after his eyes move on, they remain. Twenty minutes pass. None speaks, none moves. To lift even a finger, to scratch, to blink, to break this delectable, luminous state, would be a sacrilege to an unwritten, unspoken code. With the sangat thus primed, Master commences meditation instructions:

Meditation is the process of withdrawing the attention from the world outside, and focusing it at the seat of the soul in the body, behind and between the eyebrows. This point is known as the inner eye, third eye, the single eye, Shiv netra, tistra til, or the divya chakshu. In order to withdraw our attention and focus it on this point, mind must be controlled and stilled.

Sit in one pose, a little apart from the person next to you so that if they move you are not disturbed. And move not your head, limbs or eyes. Sit straight but relaxed with no tension in the body below. Sit still, please. To be still does not mean moving!

Arms sweeping inward, Master's hands contract to form a circle in front of his eyes; he then taps the point between and a little above the eyebrows.

Close your eyes as in sleep, and look sweetly, lovingly, intently into the middle of the darkness lying in front of you. You will see a dark veil. That which sees the dark veil within, without the help of your physical eyes, is the inner eye. Do not put any strain on your physical eyes, nor turn them upwards, for that will result in headache or heat in the head. Pay no attention to the breathing process...let it go on naturally.

There are two currents working in the body; one of motor-currents or prana or the vital-airs, and the other of surat, or attention, which gives us the sense of feeling. The Saints do not touch the prana currents which govern breathing, circulation of blood and growing of hair and nails. The pranic system of breath-control is the way of yogis and not that of Sant Mat [the Path of the Sant Satgurus]. The Saints' way is to concentrate surat or attention at the single or third eye while mentally repeating the mantra of five charged names which act as an 'open sesame' to the higher planes.

As you look within, you will see a sky, or blue sky. If you look minutely into it, you will find it studded with stars, or pinpoints of Light. If so, locate the Big Star out of them, and fix your whole attention on that. Then you may see the inner Sun or Moon. If so, focus all your attention into the middle of it; it will break into pieces, and you will cross it. Beyond you will see the radiant form of the Master or his Master...

He continues with the esoteric instructions, until everyone is absorbed.

...Become the eye itself. With eyes closed, go on looking constantly without a break directly in front of you. Those who are initiated, repeat the five charged words, one by one, very slowly, mentally, internally, at intervals, so that your inner eye is not disturbed. Those who are not initiated, just sit in sweet remembrance of God...repeating with the tongue of thought any name of God or Saint which you hold dear. Any effort on your part stands in the way; let yours be an effortless effort, and you will find that

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your soul will be withdrawn from the body as easily as a hair drawn from [soft] butter. It is by the grace of the Guru that we see.

Stillness washes across the assembly. Effortlessly, my attention withdraws inward and upward into brightness.

*I am only a bubble in a cosmic sea,
moved by wave upon wave of bliss.*

Whenever mind wanders from the focus, dialoguing, the silent mantra brings the wayward dog to heel. An hour passes, punctuated by the Master tapping the microphone. 'Leave off meditation. Those who saw the Guru Saroop [radiant form of the Master] in meditation, please raise your hands.' Several hundred arms shoot up around me. He again asks, 'Those who saw both the form of the living Master and his Master within...' Over a hundred raise hands in affirmation. A disciple of Hazur



Baba Sawan Singh, by the name of Baba Bela Singh, raises both hands, exclaiming 'Sacha Padshah, Sacha Padshah!' [True King, True King!]. Bela Singh is a retired railroad official—tall, straight-backed, snow-white beard, in his seventies and highly regarded for his impeccable character. Another of Hazur's disciples stands, a blind man in his forties, his clothes poor and worn, a seeming victim of circumstance. Trembling and unrestrained, a high-pitched wail emits from his throat, forming the words, 'Saaawaan Kiiirpaaal! Saaawaan Kiiirpaaal!' Shivers go up and down my spine. I look to the Master's face to see his reaction, knowing his aversion to external show, but all I see is compassion.

In the preliminary stages of development, a few experience uncontrollable ecstasy upon seeing the radiant Master within, and are unable to differentiate between God, the Light of God, the God-Man, or even their own self. This state has been referred to in Sufi literature as mast, and the person who experiences it mastana, or God-intoxicated. Like Saint Paul, one identifies with his or her Master: 'It is I, yet not now I, but Christ who liveth in me.'

Speaking over the microphone a third time, when he asks if we saw inner Light of any description, thousands of hands rise, about 80% of those present (including several who later admitted they had come only to scoff). As one old Sikh emphatically exclaims from the crowd in colloquial Punjabi, 'Wha Wha!' (Wonder! Wonder!), his long gray beard wagging.

Throughout the day, government leaders, saffron-clad yogis, Sikh leaders, including Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh, Sufis Bhikh Sahib and Nizam-u-din Nizami, Tibetan Lama Bakula, and numerous others sit on the platform with the Master, drawn by his universal spirit. It is highly unusual for different religious leaders—especially Hindu and Muslim—to sit together in such a harmonious assembly. Several of India's renowned mystic poets, including the Master's son Darshan, recite their sonorous compositions in Urdu and Punjabi language.

Sacred hymns from Sikh scriptures are sung with great majesty and beauty by the famed

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Chelaram sings to the accompaniment of vina, harmonium, cymbals, and heart-throb-like tabla drums. Only twice a year does Master allow musical instruments to be played at the ashram, his focus being on the inner Unstruck Melody. Divinely inspired outer music can ignite the spirit, depending on the receptivity of the listener, and how closely it may resemble inner Cosmic harmonies. But, even the best remains only a reflection of Reality.

During the long celebrations, a sturdy Jat farmer rises from the audience asking permission to speak. When Master assents from the dais, he makes his way to the microphone and relates:

'Brothers and sisters! Like many, I was confused after our Great Master Sawan left this world in 1948. There were many theories and conflicting reports as to succession, so I kept to myself, trusting that He would sort it out in time. One night, two years ago, my village near Amritsar was invaded by hostile Pakistanis shooting guns and looting homes. Several tried to grab me, but I ran for my life. They followed, hot on my heels, bullets whizzing past my ears. While running across a field, I stumbled and fell headfirst into an irrigation ditch. Afraid that my end had come, I began praying fervently to my Master.

'You can imagine my amazement when Hazur bodily appeared in the company of this Great One we see sitting here before us today. These Masters took hold of my arms and carried me beyond danger's reach. Then they disappeared—but not before Hazur disclosed the identity of Sant Kirpal Singh and where I could find him. O, my brothers and sisters, it is a great blessing to be enjoying again the same grace and love we had in Hazur's presence.' He folds his hands and bows, tears of gratitude rolling down weathered cheeks.

Bowing back to the disciple, Master smiles and adds, 'It is all Hazur's grace and benignity. Miracles are the result of the operation of hidden laws of nature, with which we are not as yet conversant. A devoted disciple sees many a miracle operating in his or her life. The hidden hand of the Master looks to our welfare in difficulty and danger, wherever we may be.'

Following satsang, the multitudes are organized into long lines and efficiently fed. It is my joy to join the many serving this bounty, ladling lentil dahl from serving pails and passing out thousands of chapatis. The plates are made of big leaves pinned together with tiny twigs. After all eat their fill, the leaf-plates are gathered and fed to grateful cows outside the ashram walls. Perfect recycling!

In the evening, Master speaks again for two hours. Here are a few gems gleaned from his mine of wisdom, difficult though it is to ruffle the enchantment by the act of recording words to paper:

A hungry man is an angry man, and to speak of God to an angry man is a mockery. We must serve those naked and hungry Gods moving on Earth.

Hindu scriptures describe the beautiful hansa (swan) of paradise, which feeds only upon pearls, whose beak separates milk from water. This hansa is an allegorical reference to the realized soul. When you rise up into super-conscious awareness in the Fourth plane, you are none other than He; soul then cries out "Sohang," or as Mansur, in a state of unity declared, "Anna'l Haq" [I am the Truth], or as Christ proclaimed, "I and my Father are One." You have been designed by the Creator to feed on the pearls of Naam; you have been endowed with Vivek [discrimination] to separate the milk of

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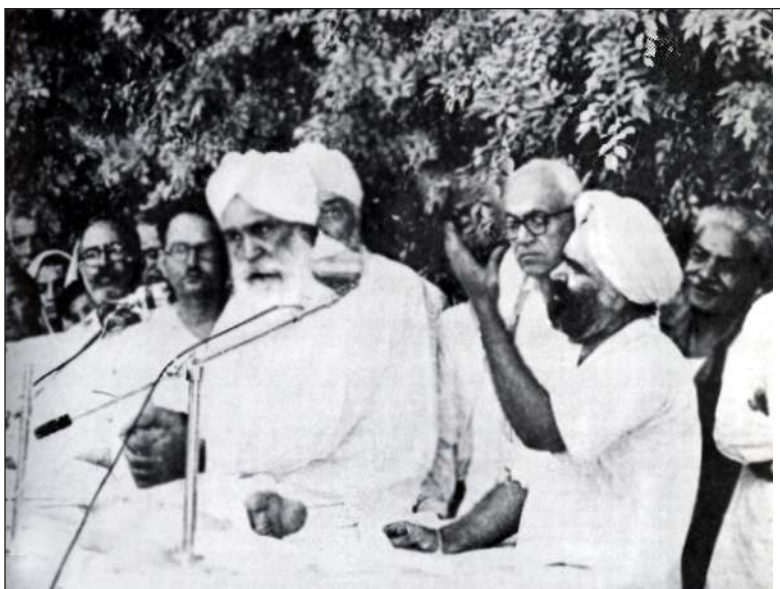
truth from the water of Maya [illusion]. You were meant to differentiate right from wrong, truth from untruth. Realize that your true abode is far beyond the trinkets and trash of this impermanent world. Unfortunately, you have become like a scavenger crow consuming the excreta of the world and yet you do not care to leave it for the Truth.

Once a shepherd found a lion cub and brought it up with his flock of sheep. In due course the cub identified with the sheep and would bleat and chew grass just like the

rest. After many months passed, another lion came along and saw what had happened. He took the young lion who thought he was a sheep to a pool of water and forced him see his true reflection therein. Then the lion roared and bade the other to also roar, so that he might know he was the king of all other creatures. When he roared, the flock of sheep panicked and ran away. The Master is the lion that comes to show us what and who we really are—that we too are lions (conscious entities) in the company of sheep. The pool in which we find our true reflection is in the amritsar or mansarovar located on the third plane. The roar which awakens us is the divine Sound of God which created all worlds, and which takes us back to our True Home. It is the Master who makes the Sound audible within us; it is he who shows us that we are of God's same essence.

It is easy to find God, but difficult to become a human being in the true sense of the word—a wholly integrated human. Self-realization precedes God-realization. First, Know thyself! Become a true human first; then it is not so difficult to realize God.

A realized soul is like a sound, fully cured brick; when placed in a building's foundation, it gives strength to the entire structure.



Darshan Singh, the Master's son recites verses composed for the occasion.

1. Kaaba, also known as the "Black Stone of Abraham," is enshrined at Mecca—the focal point for practising Muslims—and which the faithful prayerfully circumambulate. To the mystic, Kaaba is in the heart—not outside.

2. Maharaj Ji: Pronounced "Maha-ra-jee," means 'spiritual king'—a term of great endearment and respect.

9 Naam Initiation

*Search for the Sun which never sets,
Listen to the Music which lasts
throughout eternity.*
- Jalal-u-'din Rumi

Diary: Early morning, February 7: Sunlight penetrates the damp haze and an occasional crow caw from the trees overhead drifts across the red brick-sand courtyard. Outside, the ordered chaos that is Delhi awakens throughout its dilapidated, labyrinthine and smoky streets. Within these walls of plaster and brick, four hundred sit in a screened-off area near the langar anxious to be amongst those accepted for initiation.

Today is the first time I observe the Master in person giving initiation. He arrives and deftly moves through the orderly rows of candidates, countenance serious, his eyes hidden behind furrowed brows. Inwardly concentrated on what for him must be a transparent spectacle, without hesitation he singles out approximately fifty individuals and motions for them to leave. A Master knows who and when, as he receives inner direction in this selection process from his own Master within. In an earlier heart-to-heart session, he revealed, ***'Master can see into the lives of those coming to him just as one looks at the contents of a glass jar; he can tell whether it is pickle or jam, salty or sweet.'*** He knows who is ready and who is not.

When several of the rejected protest and weep, he assures, 'Sister (or brother), it is not yet time. Attend more satsangs and study the teachings of the Saints. Abide by the vegetarian diet a while longer and avoid all intoxicants. God will help you.' Two separate individuals actually manage to change his decision with their sincere pleas and promises. Perhaps this is their first direct test from the Guru. I learn that the divine Will working through a living Adept is flexible, especially when a cry comes from the core of one's heart. Kirpal is fond of quoting this Rumi verse:

***Even if an arrow has been released from God's bow,
The Murshid [Master] has the power
To turn it from the half-way mark,
Back to the quiver whence it came.***

347 remain, including a young man blind from birth. Detailing a wondrous cosmology of the five spiritual regions which begin only when the body and its chakras are transcended, the Adept proceeds to reveal to the initiates the five sacred Names of power, repeating them aloud until the audience remembers. Impregnated with the attention of the realized Master, this ancient Gur-mantra helps collect the scattered attention at the inner eye focus. Furthermore, it functions like a passport to the regions within and fully protects the initiate from any negative influences or entities.¹ As he repeats the Names aloud over and over again, the atmosphere becomes charged. Once memorized, detailed meditation instruction is given.

At the close of one hour's silence, the Master meticulously makes a written record of the various inner mystical experiences reported by the novitiates. I am in awe as the blind brother relates various details of the Master's features, the color of his coat, the shape of his lotus-like eyes, the position of a mole on his face. Brij Mohan Sharma, my translator, comments, 'There are other initiates who are outwardly blind, but whose inner vision is

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open. In Sant Mat, the definition of blind is one who is unable to see the inner Light.' Thirty minutes of bhajan follow. Bhajan is a separate sitting for listening to the inner celestial Sound-current. At the conclusion, Master moves closer to the new initiates. Orderly rows dissolve and re-congeal around his wicker chair, as he enjoins them to keep a unique spiritual record of all failings in thought, word, and deed, as well as detailing their experiences and any difficulties experienced within.²

'Please send your diaries to me every three months for further guidance where necessary. Initially, you may find failings increasing; actually your failings may not be increasing, but awareness of them increases. Only by becoming aware of your shortcomings can you uproot and replace them with their opposite ennobling virtues. When you develop receptivity, and fill out your introspection diaries with love and regularity, you will find me in front of you.

'Attend Satsang regularly, and give the bread and water of life to your soul before you give food to your body... My Master used to say, 'Leave hundreds of important works to attend Satsang, and leave thousands of important works to sit for meditation.'

'When you are initiated by a true Master, his astral form takes its abode in your third eye. He's an Unpaid Counselor both in this world and in the beyond! Don't forget: in this human body, the true temple of God, you can progress one hundred times quicker than after death—so make hay while the sun shines!

'The initiates have a great concession: at the time of death, your Master will come to receive you, and not the angel of death. He usually appears several days or weeks before death to advise you of your coming departure from this world. I'm talking now of those who keep the precepts. For those who do nothing with the gift of Naam, He may or may not appear before they leave the body. But regardless, Master is responsible for your ultimate liberation. Those who are not initiated are taken by the angel of death to Dharam Rai—the Lord of Actions—who metes out punishments and rewards strictly according to their past actions, and after reaping these, they still have to come back into the gyres of this world. That is why Krishna has said, 'Bad deeds are like iron chains, and good deeds are like gold chains.' Both are binding, and both are the cause of further rebirths. We have to become neh-karma, or karma-free, by attuning with the holy Naam.

'In your final moments, and much beforehand if you have gained proficiency in meditation, Master's radiant form will take you to a higher stage where you can make further progress. ***I tell you, at the time of death, the initiate will be as happy as a bride on her day of marriage!*** He may then place you in the first, second or third stage, or may take you direct to Sach Khand. In some cases, where worldly desires and attachments are predominant, he will allow another rebirth, but in circumstances more congenial for spiritual growth.

'This is purely a spiritual practice and not an 'ism'! Remain in your societies and in your religions and learn this as a science.

'You are my children, and I have love for the soul in you, the God in you. Be regular in your practice, keep in touch, and go jolly! The Master-power will always be with you.'

Initiation for the children: Separate from adults, ninety boys and girls aged five to fourteen are given initiation into the Sound-current practice. In most cases they will have to wait until maturity to be given the five names and the theoretical side of the teachings. With the simplest of words and gestures, Master instructs them in the correct posture

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for hearing the Unstruck Sound. Amazingly, most of these normally energized, playful fidgeters manage to sit as instructed for forty-five minutes! Gurudev then slowly walks between the rows and lightly taps each child on the top of their head with his forefinger, then helps them to stand. Several require momentary support while sensory currents gradually return to their bodies. One by one they shyly confide remarkable experiences; about sixty report the inner vision of the Master or his Master within. One twelve-year-old Hindu boy, beads of perspiration on his forehead, with gaze inwardly focused, whispers: 'I had darshan of Issa Massi on the cross. His body and face were filled with Light.'³ Another boy blurts out, 'I saw you, Maharaj Ji! You showed me my report card, which is due next week. With your grace I passed all subjects with good marks!' As Master looks around, his eye catches mine, and a beautiful smile lights his face.

Several report seeing the Master discoursing to multitudes on the astral and causal planes (as above, so below), and heard mystic melodies ranging from jingling bells, big bell, gong, conch, thunder, drums, sitar, violins to flute. Like a doting grandfather, he pats his charges before they scamper off to proud parents watching from the sidelines. Such mysticism is positive, effortless and spontaneous. When the innocence of a child is combined with the spiritual power of an Adept, the inner way is opened to a greater degree and in less time as compared with most adults. The Masters teach young and old alike to receive the Kingdom of Heaven in an innocent, trusting and childlike way.⁴ I see in Kirpal a perfect innocence.

Is it not said, ***child is the father of man?***

1. These names, if given by anyone other than a true living Master or his authorized agent, or if learned from reading spiritual literature, or heard from a tape recording, would carry neither charging nor protection. ***Who would take their burden of karma?***

2. Sant Kirpal Singh devised this unique chart at the beginning of his mission after analyzing self-introspective and self-correcting habits of several past Saints. Many are the disciples who experienced first-hand the promise of spontaneous visitation while sincerely filling out the diary.

3. The term Issa Massi (Master Jesus) is widely used throughout India, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Pakistan. St. Thomas, a direct disciple, traveled through these countries and established the world's oldest continuous Christian community in the Indian State of Kerala.

4. When the child comes of age, providing he or she is ready for the final step, the second half of initiation is given—the sacred mantra, meditation instructions and a sitting for inner Light. This is done with the permission of the parents and at the discretion of the living Master.

Moth & the Flame - Naam Initiation

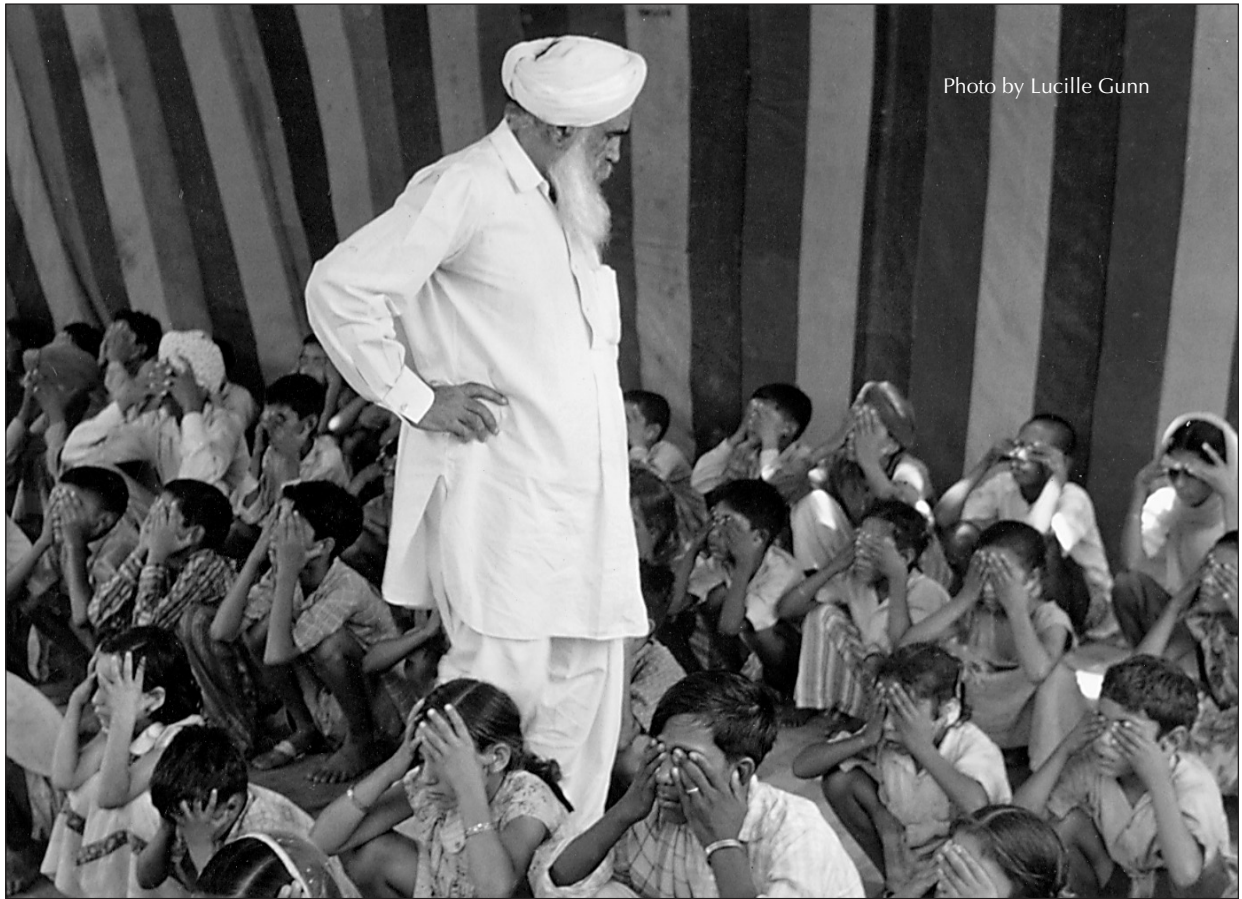


Photo by Lucille Gunn

10 The Master's Son

Towards the celebration's close, I wander over to the Master's house where a quiet man in his forties is standing with welcoming deep-set eyes, greying beard, pale green turban and Western clothes. It's Darshan Singh, the Master's physical son.

'Hello, dear brother,' he says softly in excellent English while taking my hand in both of his. Pleasantries exchanged, and disarmed by his charm and lack of pretense, I inquire, 'What was it like to have been raised in the home of a perfect Master?'

'Master brought me to Hazur at an early age,' Darshan replies. 'You have probably read that when he was searching for the truth, God in the form of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji appeared in his meditations in 1917, actually seven years before meeting him in person at Beas in 1924.' I nod in the affirmative.

'In 1926, at the age of five, I approached the Great Hazur on my own, "Sir, will you kindly give me Naam?" Hazur smiled and said, "I will give you a very sweet enaam (enaam means 'reward')," and he gave me some sweets, which we call patassas in Punjabi. After I went away, I realized that this couldn't be the same Naam my father was having in his meditations!' We shared a laugh, and Darshan continued, 'So, I again approached the Great Master, and remonstrated, "Hazur, I want the same Naam my father practices!" Then Hazur made me sit down, and put his finger on my forehead.

'After a few minutes he asked me, "What do you see?" "I am seeing the inner sky. I am crossing the sky. Now I am seeing a big bright star in the heavens." Hazur said, "That is enough Naam for now." I ran up to my respected father, and breathlessly exclaimed, "Bau Ji, Bau Ji, how far have you got Naam? I have got it up to the stars!" So, I was blessed with initiation by Hazur, as was the Beloved Master.

'My respected father was very strict, yet so loving. He would not let us take our breakfast unless we had given adequate time for meditations. As strict as the beloved Master was, he would provide everything for me, without my asking for it. It was a home filled with awe and love.

'As a young lad studying in the College of Lahore, I would return home from my studies to find the Beloved Master either working late into the night writing his magnum opus, the Gurmat Siddhant, or sitting cross-legged, immersed in deep samadhi, where he would remain the entire night. And when I arose for my meditations at three or four in the morning, Master would still be sitting there, working on the manuscript or in deep meditation. At one time these sleepless nights of his went on uninterruptedly for more than six months.

'During the day the Master worked dutifully in a responsible government post, overseeing hundreds of subordinate officers and their staff. It was not until he retired as Deputy Assistant Controller of Military Accounts in 1947 that he turned to devote the rest of his life to spreading the spiritual mission of our great Hazur under his orders.'

At my request, Darshan recites one of his recent poems, carefully translating each verse into English as he proceeds, his stature growing before me. The final verse bespeaks a lyric union of the soul with the Lord—a very subtle disclosure, a secret unbragged.¹ Darshan's glistening eyes briefly roll upwards as the faintest expression of ecstasy crosses his face. I wonder if the 'union' alluded to is but a poetic metaphor, or could it be the real thing?

Moth & the Flame - The Master's Son

Darshan disappears for a few minutes and returns with a copy of his book of Urdu verse, *Talash-i-Noor* (Quest for Light), published in 1965, and signs it for me. Sant Kirpal Singh wrote the foreword to *Talash-i-Noor*, giving rare praise for Darshan's universal vision of brotherhood and the quality of his verses. Many distinguished literary awards were received for this and subsequent books by the Poet, including four Urdu Academy Awards.

Inspired by Darshan's reminiscences of his father's superhuman endurance, I ask Master Kirpal later that evening, 'If we attempt to meditate all night, will we be sustained in our worldly activities during the daytime?'

He replies cryptically and emphatically, '***This is the Bread of Life!***'

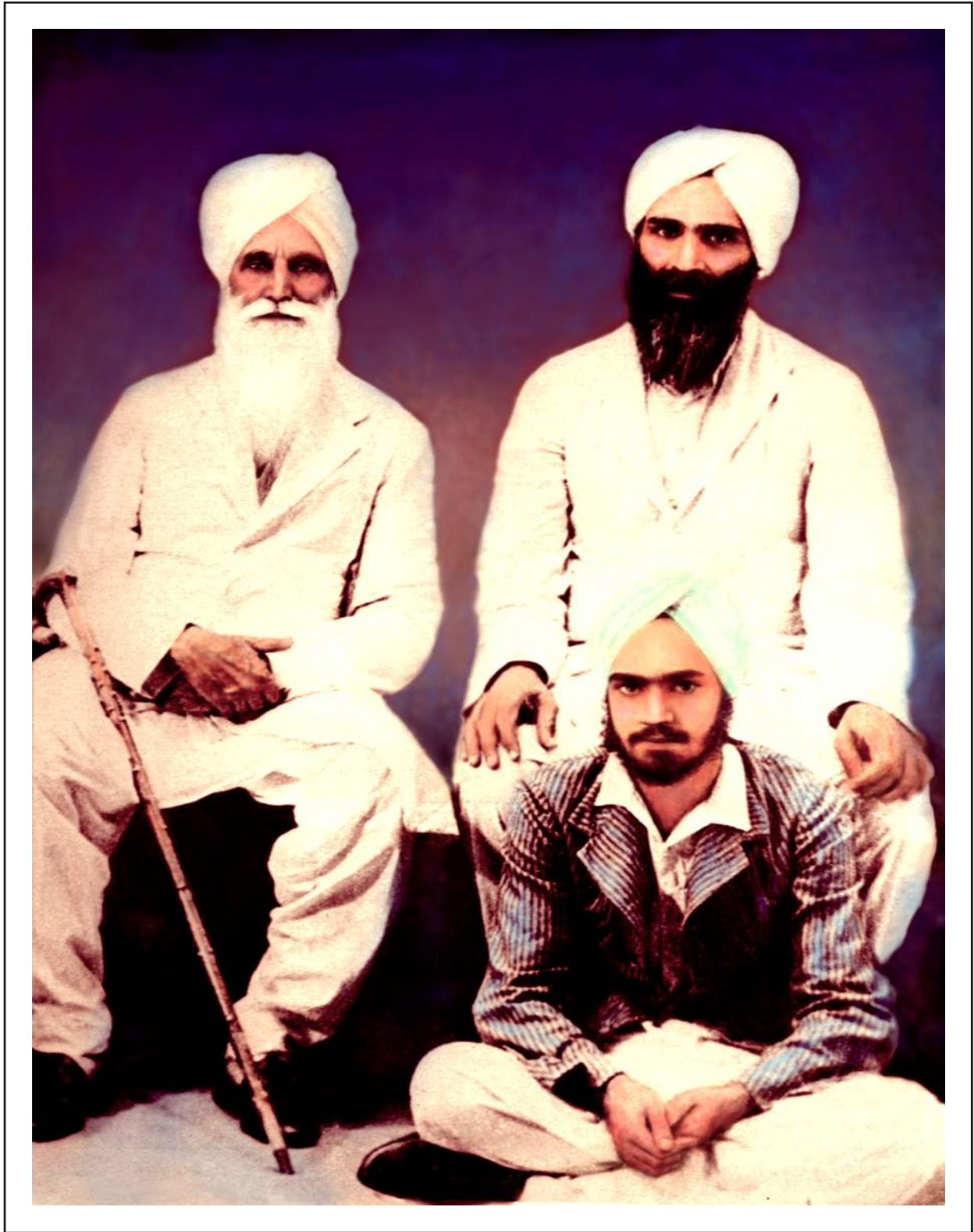
I persist, 'But it would only be possible with your grace.'

'Grace is already there. It is up to your steadfast efforts to have it. A strong man revels in his strength, and a weaker man wonders how he got it. This strength cannot be attained in one day. You have got to work for it, you see. Rome was not built in a day; time factor is necessary. A man is known by two things; desire, and need for sleep. A Saint is one freed from both. What is God? Man minus desire. What is Man? God plus desire.'



Sant Darshan Singh, (1921-1989)

1. Eleven years later, under much different circumstances, when this same poem that hinted "union with the Beloved," was again read to me by Darshan, it resolved an enigma regarding his level of spiritual advancement (See chapter 51, *Divine Darshan*, Book II).



Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, Sant Kirpal Singh, & son Darshan Singh
circa: 1939, black & white photo retouched by the author

11 Karma, Hell, Siddhis & Healing

*Everything in the universe is the fruit
of a Just Law, the Law of Causality, the Law
of Cause and Effect, the law of Karma.*

—Dhammapada of Gautama Buddha

Karma is a word much bandied about these days, but the average understanding of the immutable principle it represents is casual at best. The law of karma, or action and reaction, plays a major role in the evolution and devolution of life. Karmas have been classified by the Saints of the Sant Mat tradition into three distinct categories:

Sanchit: The storehouse of karmas going far back into innumerable incarnations from the unknown past;

Pralabdh: Fate, or destiny, or that portion of the sanchit [store-house karmas] that constitute our living present from which there is no escape however we may wish and try. According to the Masters, about seventyfive percent of our life is predetermined.;

Kriyaman: The karmas we perform as free agents in our present life, and by which we make or mar our future. Twenty-five percent of our life is what we make it.

When one is initiated into the inner science of spirituality by a fully competent Adept, the radiant form of the Guru takes up residence in the student's third eye—the seat of the soul, located between and behind the two eyebrows. As one develops proficiency and receptivity in the spiritual practice, this form begins to appear in palpable glimpses within—without any visualization or imagination whatsoever (in fact, visualization and imagination in Sant Mat is discouraged, as *God is One Who comes of Himself*). There are many instances of this radiant form appearing to the seeker long before knowing of the physical Master. Sant Kirpal Singh refers to this, and other dimensions of spiritual grace as the God Power, Christ Power or Master Power that begins the process of guiding the initiate in the present and the future, while winding up old karmic debts.

The pralabhd or fate karmas that created this present life and which govern major events such as birth, intellect, health, sickness, wealth, poverty, status, marriage, children, fame, ignominy, etc., are left in place, and when fulfilled, the individual has no choice but to leave this world at the time of death, to wander as a disincarnate spirit in the astral plane, then to be judged by Dharam Rai (the lord of death), who allots rewards and punishments according to past deeds and unfulfilled desires. The soul is eventually forced to re-enter the physical plane through a womb-door (animal, human or otherwise). The trauma of birth wipes out the memory of past lives, and in most cases, the jiva (embodied soul) lives out its days in a state of spiritual ignorance.

The souls of those fortunate to have found the protection of a qualified, unbound Master and initiation, also quit the body at the appointed time, but have already begun to become familiar with soul's journey through individual spiritual practice. Perhaps most importantly, once freed from the trammels of the earthly body and sensual desires, the souls of initiates have protection from Dharam Rai and are not subject to transmigration into lower forms (below the human form), but are taken to higher spiritual regions as merited by conduct, devotion and practice. From the inner planes, such souls evolve and joyously progress back to their Original Home, never to return to the realm of fleeting joys and sorrows, severe justice, decay, death and relativity. Where unfulfilled worldly desires are still uppermost, or to settle some old residue of give and take, the

initiate takes rebirth in a suitable family and circumstances congenial to spiritual development. Liberation is assured within four lifetimes, but the Master exhorts, 'Four lifetimes? Why not do it in this life!' And, 'in this human form, we can progress one hundreds of times faster than after physical death, so make hay while the sun shines!'

The Masters have said that if one wishes proof of this process of joyful and conscious transition, go and sit at the bedside of any devoted disciple at the time of death. Then it can be said, as it was in the time of Jesus and his initiates:

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Guru Arjan sings in the Adi Granth:

Anand payee meri ma, Sataguru mai payaa...

O my mother, I'm in ecstasy, for at last I have met the True Guru.

While pralabdh or fate, and the limitations and mortality of the flesh apply to all who are born, in the case of initiates of a God-realized Adept the severity and duration of difficult karmas are considerably toned down, like a minor injury or illness in exchange for something far more serious. In this context, the Masters have described the mitigation in Punjabi: 'Sooli ka kanda hogia' [a pinprick for the gallows].

The formation of kriyaman or day-to-day karmas is reduced by the cultivation of ethical virtues, self-introspection, simran, satsang, meditation, spiritual devotion and thoughtful choices. Our actions—whether we are consciously aware of them or not—lead to inescapable consequences—except in rare cases of intercession. According to the Adepts, the ratio of pre-destination and free choice is approximately seventy-five/twenty-five percent. Giving regular time to accurate meditation practice gradually leads to great bliss and divine experience, while erasing many a debt. For this, the Masters from time immemorial have advised the ten percent tithe: i.e., the egoless tithing of a portion of one's honest earnings in the service of humanity and the Creator—as this removes any poison from our earnings and expands the heart; more importantly, the ten percent tithe extends to meditation. Ten percent of twenty-four hours is approximately two and a half hours—the early morning hours being most conducive. Not an easy habit to begin and maintain, but one yielding tremendous transformation. Meditation on Light and cosmic Sound, when coupled with the performance of selfless service to others, purifies the soul and yields the fruit of greatness.

Sant Kirpal Singh Ji often came down with a mysterious fever following the giving of initiation with Christ-like, or Buddha-like solicitude. Masters assume the karmic burdens of many lifetimes of their initiates, burning them in the abstract fire of Naam. Sometimes Masters transfer karmas to themselves and suffer vicariously without a murmur of complaint. As mysteriously and suddenly as the symptoms of illness may manifest in the body of a Saint, they also disappear when the debt is paid. If the sanchit karmas were not assumed, there would be no way for the jiva or individual soul to become totally free. The immutable law of justice, of endless sowing and reaping, of endless birth, death, and rebirth—known also as the Wheel of Life—is circumvented through an Intercessor who represents the merciful and tenderhearted aspect of the Divine.

In a letter to Dr. and Mrs. Brock, Baba Sawan Singh Ji has stated:

No initiation is possible without payment of karmic debt. People may be thinking that Saints lead a life of ease. They have crowds of followers, and so forth and so on. But the Saint's duty is most difficult. He carries a heavier responsibility than

Moth & the Flame - Karma, Hell, Siddhis & Healing

a captain of a ship in a storm. This sea has a bottom and shores, but compare it with the sea of existence through which Saints guide the soul and make it one with the One. The more your soul is elevated, the better your service. There is no doubt that pretenders, in the garb of Saints, have done enormous harm, but such is the case in other walks of life as well...²

Sometimes, like Baha'u'llah, Christ, Guru Arjan, Tegh Bahadur, Mansur, Milarepa, Shams Tabriz and others, the Saints may be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice at the hands of orthodox fanatics and political schemers quite ignorant of their genuine spiritual stature. A consciousness unfettered by pain, fear, anger, or retribution is capable of calmly blessing even the executioner, as did Jesus when he prayed for his crucifiers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Guru Arjan, when being tortured and boiled alive, responded, Tera Bhana Meetha Lagay or, 'Sweet is Thy Will.'

The following story from the life of Baba Jaimal Singh illustrates the compassionate nature of the Saints:

Moti Ram and Baba Ji:

Once when Baba Ji was at Ambala [approximately 1885], a seeker by the name of Hukam Singh applied for initiation. This seeker was a friend of a devoted disciple, Moti Ram, a tailor who worked for the British regiment stationed there. Baba Ji refused to grant his request. Hukam Singh approached his friend who, in turn, approached Baba Ji, but to no avail. "He is not yet fit for the Path," the Sage observed, but Moti Ram was not to be put off. He pleaded again and again for the case of his friend.

'I have told you before: his karmas don't permit it. So what can I do in the matter?'

'Holy One, all the more reason you should take pity on him; for if you don't, then who will?'

'Moti Ram, do not press me further. I would rather initiate four hundred others than this friend of yours.'

A Saint cannot refuse a devoted disciple for long and would even pass through fire for his sake. When Moti Ram repeatedly pressed, he [Baba Ji] gave way, adding: "But as soon as I have initiated your friend, I shall not spend another moment here, but proceed straight home." True to his word, Baba Ji, as soon as instructions were over, packed his scanty belongings and entrained for Beas. Whoever expressed a desire to follow him there was told to come two weeks later.

On reaching his hut, Baba Ji lay down in bed, and when local visitors came to see him, they were in consternation for they found him in the grips of a deadly fever. Doctors and medicines were sent for, but Baba Ji would take nothing. About a fortnight later, the fever subsided; and when Moti Ram received the news, he hastened to see him and begged forgiveness: 'Sir, if only I had known what it was to mean for you, I would not, for the kingdom of three worlds have pressed you to initiate my friend.'

Baba Ji was in a communicative mood and revealed: 'So heavy were the karmas of Hukam Singh that, but for the intercession, he would, for the next seven lives, have passed through the most trying sufferings and ordeals.' Moti Ram humbly thanked him for his unfathomable grace; but Baba Ji, true to his innate humility,

simply replied: 'Such was the Will of the Lord.'³

Astral Hell: Not long after arriving at the ashram, a boil formed inside my left ear. The pain was excruciating, but I struggled to accept it as a gift, an opportunity to repay some old and ugly karmic debt. What seemed to intensify the suffering was a constant, very loud inner sound coming from the left side of my head. Without any choice in the matter I was unable to escape its screaming intensity, mindful that the Master often told us never to listen to inner sounds from the left side, as they have their source in the Negative or Kal power, and as such are debasing to the soul. Only the inner sounds emanating from the right side and from above are from the Positive pole, or Dayal (the Merciful), the current that draws the soul back to its Source, its center and Unity. Try as I might, the left sound prevailed and I was unable to notify the physical Master of my situation.

During the second night of steadily progressing agony, I had an incredible excursion into an astral hell. In the past, I had often wondered if "hell" was merely a fairy-tale, a fabrication created to scare people into behaving in a socially acceptable way, or a metaphor for the sufferings of this physical world. Certainly the founders of the world's major religions referred to a hell or hells as well as a paradise or paradises. The Masters in the Sant Mat tradition teach that astral heavens and hells do indeed exist as temporary abodes of the disembodied spirit, wherein good and evil karmas are judged and reaped. Once the accounts are cleared, the souls are then returned into a fresh incarnation on the physical plane, to sow and reap again. The chains of iron wrought by bad deeds, and the chains of gold formed of good, bind the soul and perpetuate existence in the wheel of transmigration—termed in the Sant literature as Chaurasi Lakh or the Wheel of Eighty-four [8.4 million species]. The object of the seeker is the cessation of suffering; to get off the Wheel, and to be of service. One who is bound cannot remove the shackles of others.

In my own strange experience, the Master allowed me to enter the astral inferno and view it from a safe vantage point. There, one could see great numbers of souls in basically human shape, suffering in intense fire and anguish; some immersed in burning lakes while others were contained in places of unspeakable filth and degradation. Some were moaning; many cried for help. The Master protected me in an impenetrable bubble, impervious to the heat, suffering, and stench of that place. I saw for myself that hell exists, and that certain souls are sent there to pay off heavy crimes and misdeeds. Fortunately, hell is not a permanent place or condition, for once the karmic load is paid off or atoned, such troubled ones are released to pursue a higher and nobler path in their spiritual and ethical evolution—and a fresh round of incarnations.

When I returned from that surrealistic inferno, I had to face my own physical hell in the form of an ever-intensifying earache. When the pain reached unbearable proportions, I dragged my ball-and-chain body in the direction of the Master's residence. As it was after midnight, I didn't want to disturb him and decided to turn back. I had been taking a homeopathic remedy given by Dr. Moolraj, but without any apparent effect. Not long after staggering back to my room and torture chamber, it felt as if a cannon exploded in my head. The boil had burst, and the blood and pus that drained out from my ear over the next few hours soaked two towels.

By 7 AM the pain again reached a crescendo. In desperation I again dragged the body back to Master's house and asked to see him. Edna, standing by the door commented, 'You look like death warmed over!' Master was sitting cross-legged on his bed, nodded

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me in and asked, 'Why didn't you come to me sooner?' 'I didn't want to disturb you,' I replied. 'There's no question of disturbing. Hmmm....'

Master turned to his big black medicine case (about the size of two briefcases), and looked through the hundred or so small glass vials in it, which contained homeopathic remedies (he was an expert homeopath). After a while, he found a big white aspirin-like tablet, shook it onto his palm, looked at it intently for a few moments and then asked, "Would you like?" Still in great pain and claspng a bloody towel to my left ear, I nodded slowly and opened my mouth, while he placed the pill on my tongue. In that instant all pain disappeared and the bleeding stopped. I thanked him from my heart, but the Master would take no credit, humbly deferring to the medicine.

'To whom do you turn when in pain?' I asked.

He pointed to his third-eye location between the eyebrows and replied, 'I turn to my Higher Self.'

'Is the Higher Self one's own Satguru?'

'Higher Self is God!' He responded emphatically. 'You see, sometimes pain arises even with Masters,' and added, 'It was the homeopathic medicine you took earlier that drew the boil to a head. In future, come to me sooner.'

I bowed to the one from whom my relief came. How many ugly karmas had just been washed away? *O mind, always give thanks for adversity, for troubles are gifts of absolution in disguise.*

Siddhis (supernatural powers): The Masters have all powers, but these are normally held in reserve. Whenever Saints do employ spiritual powers, it is under exceptional circumstances and then only to save, help or awaken the seeker or disciple. Ability to perform miracles is not the sign of a true Master and is considered a lower power which impedes inner progress.

It is necessary here to give a word of caution regarding riddhis and siddhis, or the supernatural powers that one very often comes to acquire in the practice of yogic discipline. They are to be scrupulously avoided, as they are positive obstacles in the way of true spiritual progress and the attainment of self-realization and God-realization.... These temptations assail one in the second stage of the journey, but prove of no avail to one who adheres to the Path, and is firm and steadfast in his sadhana [spiritual practice].⁴

I had earlier overheard the Master stating quite bluntly, 'Miracle-seekers are not truth-seekers,' while adding the Biblical quote: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all else shall be added unto thee.' On learning that one of his older initiates had taken to mastering lower powers with the help of mantras, the Master wrote to congratulate him for having regressed from college to primary school! Upon receiving this ironic reprimand, the initiate was filled with remorse and gave up dabbling with such practices.

Spiritual Healing: Related to siddhis is the subject of spiritual healing, widely embraced by numerous New Age enthusiasts, occult societies, and several mainstream religious groups. The Masters of Sant Mat view spiritual healing from a very different angle of vision:

Sufferings demanding spiritual healing fall mainly in the domain of physical troubles, that may include mental agonies such as a nervous breakdown, etc. These being the reactions of the past, karmas demand adjustment and as such

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are to be borne by the victim. The healer conducting this service takes the karma on his head, to be borne by him at a later stage. The bit of spiritual attainment he has achieved in silencing his mind is dissipated. Moreover, this process of healing is



Stygian Lake by Gustave Doré

administered on weaker minds, which usually fall prey to their own sentiments or tendencies. What can ordinarily be cured by undergoing a bit of suffering and medicine, is exchanged for spiritual dissipation, and the debt remains standing, awaiting adjustment at a later stage....

The Masters advocate right living and right thinking. A simple and truthful life will lead to happiness and joy. If, however, some suffering due to the evolution of past karma comes, its severity and duration is greatly toned down by the intervention of the gracious Master Power, like a penny for a pound, or a needle prick for the gallows....

The healing administered by Jesus and other Masters was of a higher quality. When you merge in cosmic awareness and lose your identity you become so spiritual that even thinking of a person or a touch of the hem of the garment will induce healing.... You have not to exert on your part to heal others; it is faith that cures.⁵

*Be ye not deceived, God is not mocked;
for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—Bible*

*How will you become a clear mirror
if you resent being polished? —Rumi*

1. Kirpal Singh, *Wheel of Life: The Law of Action and Reaction* (Delhi, India, SKRM Pub.), p. 11.
2. Sawan Singh, *Spiritual Gems: Extracts from Letters to Seekers and Disciples* (Beas, Punjab, India: Radha Soami Satsang, 1965) p. 43.
3. Kirpal Singh, *A Great Saint: Baba Jaimal Singh*, (Delhi, India: S.K.Publications, 1993), p. 72-73.
4. Kirpal Singh, *Crown of Life—A Study of Yoga*, (Bowling Green, VA: S.K. Publications 1961).
5. Kirpal Singh, *Spiritual Healing Circular*.

12 Ashram Vignettes

After considerable pestering, Dalip Singh, the ashram secretary-treasurer, and distant relative of the Master, eventually allows me the privilege of typing some of the Master's correspondence during breaks in my five to six hours daily meditation schedule. The need to balance contemplation and serviceful action is apparent, as my mind and body rebel against further practice. While Dalip Singh has a reputation for being very strict and abrupt, with me he is most kind. Each evening he presents the ashram's account transaction ledgers to the Master in person who scrutinizes each entry, apparently oblivious to a few of us who might be present and eager to soak up some extra darshan and extemporaneous wisdom.

'During his official career, Master was so careful in his outer behavior,' Dalip Singh shared one day, 'that he would empty the ink from his fountain-pen before leaving government office. He did not consider that ink his own; it belonged to the company.' In my mind's eye, I picture the Master emptying his fountain pen each day, and am staggered by the implications of such integrity in the small things normally taken for granted.

When commissioned to continue the spiritual work of his Master in that same year, Sant Kirpal Singh lived off his modest government pension. Throughout, he never accepted money, food offerings or gifts for his own personal use, with one exception that I know of. Shortly after I arrived in India, an elderly widow dressed in threadbare cloth arrived at the ashram. Working hard and long hours sewing and mending clothes for a pittance, she spent her savings—a few paisas (a paisa is India's smallest coin, worth only a fraction of a cent), the widow bought a packet of sweets, and took the long bus ride from her village to the ashram. Her ruling passion was to offer these sweets to her Guru, wanting nothing else. Hunkering down on the ground at the back of a crowd of several hundred, she became overwhelmed by a sense of unworthiness in the Master's presence and quietly wept. Rising from his wicker chair, Master rushed into the throng and took the bag of sweets from her hands, asking: 'Please dear mother, may I have some?' He ate a piece and returned the rest to her as parshad. This further illustrated his omniscience, yet to the casual observer, his action was puzzling.

Adjoining the Master's apartments is a porch, a large airy terrazzo-floored white room enclosed by screens facing rose gardens on three sides. From early morn till past midnight a never-ending stream of aspirants comes and goes. Master frequently moves between his bedroom-office, an intervening living room and a white wicker chair in the porch, which creaks delightfully whenever he settles into it. There he meets and listens, advises and blesses. Several times throughout each day the Master distributes heaping handfuls of parshad to devotees who gather here. Even chipmunks, sparrows and finches flit in and out with parshad that spills to the floor. Parshad means divine grace, freely given without consideration of the beneficiary's effort or virtue. Any food or flower freely given from the hands of a person of realization becomes tangible parshad, if not a catalytic meditation-booster. In the past few weeks I have received such a huge quantity of puffed rice from his hands, I add buffalo milk and eat it like breakfast cereal.

Here on the porch, one gets an intimate glimpse into the Master's mission. I often witness him opening his wallet to those whom fate has dealt a cruel economic blow. Usually the truly needy are too shy to ask for help, but he always seems to know the

Moth & the Flame - Ashram Vignettes

ones in real need. The Sikh scriptures sometimes refer to the ideal Saint as *Gharib Niwaz*—literally, Home of the Poor. I also see the materially wealthy, the politically powerful, and learned scholars humble as dust, all seeking alms of grace from this great equalizer. All sorts come to his door, seeking marriage blessings, names for babies, business blessings, a physical cure, advice on this or that, consolation to the bereaved, comfort for the injured and ill, and to offer thanks for blessings already received. Some seek improvement in meditation, to have doubts resolved, or to ask forgiveness for some dark deed.

Stigmata and the Buffalo Boy: One night on the porch I ask, ‘Master, your disciple, Mrs. Gordon Hughes of Kentucky, with whom I have been corresponding, has purportedly received the stigmata or wounds of the crucifixion on her hands and feet, which bleed at Christmas and Easter. I have also read accounts of other stigmatics such as Padre Pio, Saint Francis, and Therese Neumann. How and why is this?’

His answer is most revealing: ‘As you think, so you become!’ And he continues, ‘Once a seeker went to a Master. The Master asked him, “Whom do you love most?” He replied, “I love my buffalo most!” His Master then told him to go into a room and think only about his buffalo. Two days later the Guru returned and told this fellow, “All right, come out of the room now.” He answered, “I can’t, my horns are too wide for the doorway!”’ His face wreathed in smiles and soundless laughter, Master continues: ‘But you see, this degree of identification and concentration is very rare. As you think, so you become.’

I venture again: ‘How can we be rid of the ever-asserting ego?’

Scrutinizing me with soul-piercing eyes, he replies: ‘It is only when you rise above the three planes—physical, astral and causal—and become One with the Controlling Power of the Universe.’

Chaddha Sahib asks, ‘Why do you never spare yourself, Maharaj Ji? Why are you ever rushing here and there, giving satsangs, neglecting rest, regardless of the cost to your personal health or comfort?’

‘I am simply carrying out the will of my Master,’ he replies. ‘He has assigned to me certain tasks to accomplish, and as long as even a single breath remains, it is my duty to complete them. How else can I show my face before the Almighty?’

Earlier in the day, a humble devotee wandered about the yard expressing his infectious feelings in a lyric song. It is impossible to translate the subtle tones, rhyme and meter; only one ecstatic phrase I understood:

*Doctor Kirpal has entered the hospital of Sawan Shah,
And the joy of the afflicted knows no bounds.*

Consoling a disciple complaining of increasing deafness, the Master says, ‘Why do you worry about it? Deafness is a blessing! You are saved from thirteen percent of the sense impressions, but more than that, you don’t have to listen to other people’s complaints!’¹

Diary, February 12: Master plays with Mary Howard, an angelic six-month-old baby with golden curls, while her American parents look on adoringly. Two weeks ago Master had coaxed Mary into taking her first steps.

Master holds aloft a bright yellow film canister. From a squatting position Mary reaches, but Master moves it toward himself. She stands, and toddles closer, hands outstretched. He now holds it higher. Only after continuous effort does he give, and rewards her with a touch on the top of her head, and Mary’s smile rivals the sun.

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Such sweet fun between a Master and disciples is referred to as leela—or divine play. Everything within these sacred walls is a thinly veiled play of consciousness. Under his expert guidance, our inner Light-child emerges, learns to crawl, walk, reach and fumble for Godhead. Once the Adept's company is reached, he steps back, as if to say go higher. If lucky enough to reach the first or second stage of the inner journey, we are exhorted ever onwards to the next!

Instilling a sense of urgency combined with the inculcation of patience and perseverance in the quest for inner realization, a true Master continually nurtures a deepening awareness of the higher Self, drawing us back to the Source. And many are the exquisite moments which hang on the pauses between the words and actions of the fully awakened being, where time stands still. He says:

Love burns the lover, and devotion burns the one you are devoted to; he has to take care of everything for you when you are devoted. Love seeks happiness for the Beloved, not for the self, mind that...

So, devotion seeks blessing from the Beloved, but love seeks to shoulder the burden of the Beloved. And devotion throws the burden on the Beloved! Love gives; love does not require the presence of the Beloved in order to love. One who loves, he loves, that's all...a lover is never alone...The Beloved resides in him. They are one, whether near or far. So devotion asks, and love is silent and sublime, devoid of outward expression. Such is the ideal of love. The best of all I have come to know is love. God is Light and Consciousness, but that Consciousness is now enveloped by matter. ***You are not matter. You are sparks of Light. Be one with the great conflagration of Light!***

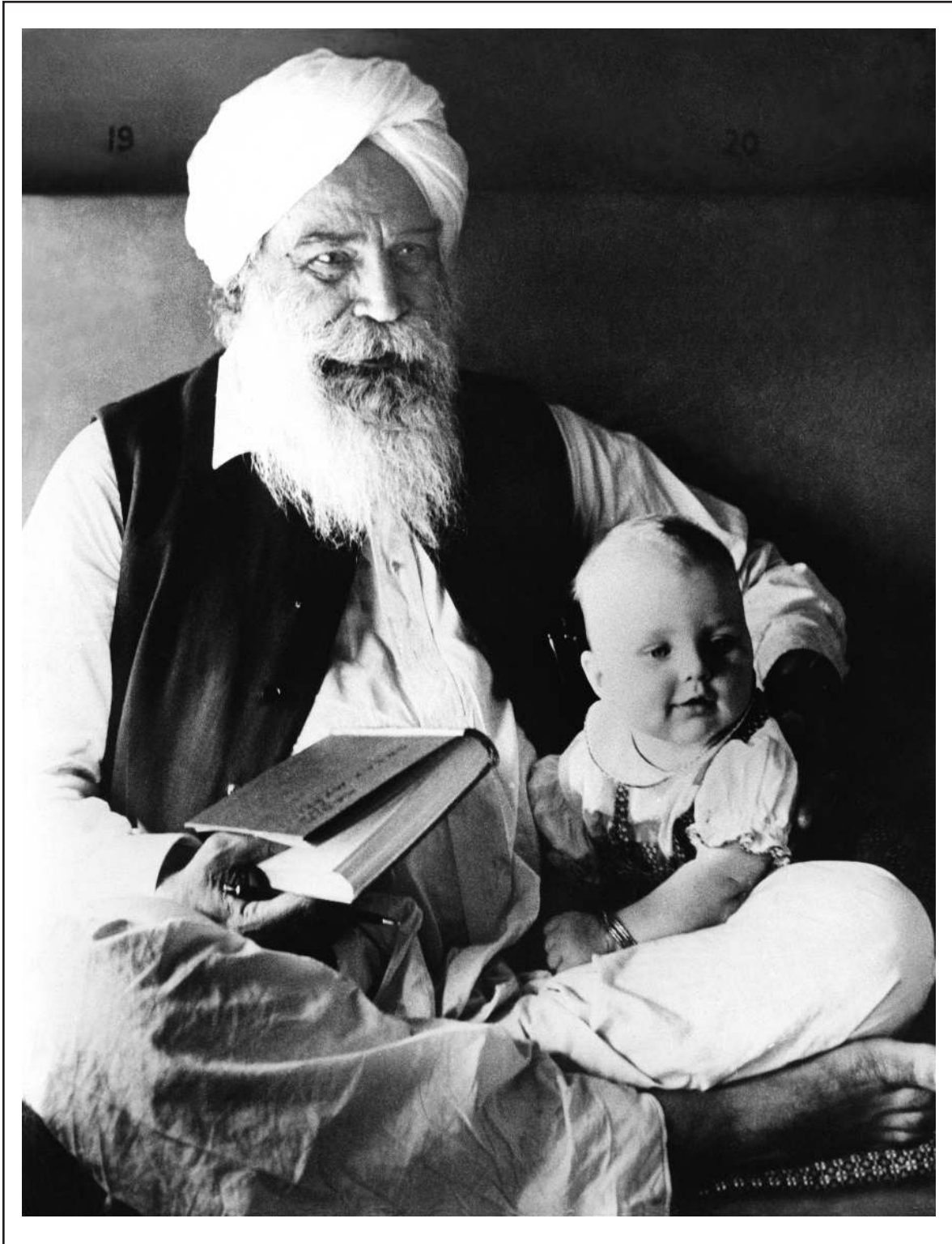
Ashram Characters: The colorful cast of ashram characters intrigues me. This is just a partial list, and some appear early or later in my story:

Ganga Dutt: He's in charge of tape-recording the Master's discourses, fiddling with the electric cables, batteries and microphones. He and his assistant have humorously been dubbed by Jim Howard as Wire-Das—Servants of the Wire. Ganga Dutt organizes large ashram construction crews, and gets them moving with his shouts of 'Chello! Chello!' ('Move! Move!'), so I have nicknamed him Chello-Das. He meditates regularly. Jim approaches him today and asks, 'Ganga Dutt, you must have made a lot of progress in meditation,' to which he replies with a humble smile, 'Sahib, I am like a tree without any leaves, and cannot give shade to anyone. And I'm so rooted in the ground, I cannot even whip myself up to God!' Oh, Ganga—you speak for me...

Ram Saroop and Mohan Singh, respectively, are the drivers of the ashram cars—a 1957 Studebaker Champion station wagon, and a new Ambassador. More about Ram Saroop later on. Mohan, in his thirties, has become my friend, and he is a strong, devoted servant of the Master. Initiated at an early age by Hazur, he lives with his wife at Sawan Ashram. Mohan has had many wonderful and extraordinary experiences with the Masters.

Gyani Bhagwan Singh—learned in Sikh scriptural lore, is one highly articulate gentleman, a long-retired Indian Railway official and an initiate of Hazur since the 1920's. He is on the ashram's managing committee, and serves as general secretary.

Edna and Stanley Shinerock have lived at the ashram for several years. Stanley, an accountant, works for the Canadian Embassy, and Edna assists foreign visitors in adjusting to ashram life.



Master & Baby Mary
1967 - photo by Lala Howard

Moth & the Flame - Ashram Vignettes

Gursharan plays classical Indian bamboo flute—beautifully.

Ram Ji is a delightful fellow around my age, who comes from a very poor family. His job is to clean, cook and serve. Each time we pass each other in the hallway, we make a game of the Indian tradition of touching the feet of one's elders, laughing like crazy in our display of mock subservience.

Ayat: In his late teens, Ayat also comes from a poor background. Master brought him into his service—cooking, ironing, and cleaning. There would be many millionaires and rulers who would gladly trade places with Ayat, but not the other way around!

Master Pratap: He is the Music-Master, whose story comes later.

Harish and Bimla Chaddha: The Chaddhas have long resided at the ashram, serving the Mission in various ways. Harish is a newspaper correspondent, editor of the Master's monthly magazine, and author of several publications including the full-length Hindi book, *Pita Poot* (Father and Son)—an account of the Guru-disciple relationship between Hazur and Sant Kirpal Singh. Chaddha is ever ready to expound and pontificate on anything from 'cabbages to kings.'

Princess Narendra Kaur Narendraji, daughter of the Maharaja of Jhind, came to the Master after her husband—an air force pilot—died in a jet plane crash. Fiercely devotional, she lives in a small house within the ashram with Vera, her teenaged daughter.

Bibi Hardevi Raja Ram (a.k.a. 'Tai Ji') is a prominent devotee of Hazur, elderly widow of Raja Ram, and major domo about the ashram. She is mentioned in Dr. Julian Johnson's book, *With A Great Master in India*. She became blind in the late 1930's, but upon Kirpal Singh's intercession to Hazur, she was given back her sight. Before leaving in 1948, Hazur asked Kirpal to look after Tai Ji. A true disciple lives in a condition of complete obedience and surrender to his Master—but such obedience is exceedingly rare.

Pundit Dhani Ram Sharma: A retired civil servant, polite, formal and devoted sevadar of both Sawan and Kirpal. Pundit Ji is in charge of book sales and initiation records.

There are hundreds of inspiring disciples from all religions, castes and socioeconomic levels who come regularly to attend the discourses and darshan sessions. Many selflessly serve the Master's mission in myriad ways, but have regular family life and full-time careers beyond the ashram walls. Some outstanding examples of this whom I have come to know—whose output of service for the Master at the ashram defies comprehension: Mr. Sethi—Master's main personal secretary; Brij Mohan Sharma—intoxicated devotee and astute businessman; Bhadra Sena—scholar, author and correspondence secretary (whose hen-scratch handwriting I find extremely challenging to decipher); Dr. Vinod Sena (Bhadra's son)—head of the English Department of Delhi University (and one of the world's foremost Y.B.Yeats scholars); Darshan Singh, who is high up in India's civil service; he handles difficult correspondence with impeccably neat handwriting, plus many noble female sevadars whom I only know and address as 'Bhen-ji' (sister) or 'Mata-ji' (mother).

Baba Sawan Singh Ji once commented to Julian Johnson and Kirpal Singh in the 1930's, that when the Masters come into the world, they bring their own staff with them. Such association is preordained from past lives; they just get transferred from one place to another at the appointed time.

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*Love alone is the cementing force
that binds the Master and the disciple.*

—Kirpal Singh.



Soon after arrival—January, 1967

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1. According to the Masters, we receive thirteen percent of our sense impressions through the ears (sound), approximately eighty-four percent through the eyes (sight), and the remainder through the nose (smell), tongue (taste), and skin (touch or feeling).
 2. From a 1963 tape-recorded intimate session between Kirpal Singh and American disciples.

13 Slapped Into the Beyond

Moments spent in the company of my Master were infinitely more valuable than all the petty treasures of this faithless world. As time passed, a subtle love began to permeate consciousness, profoundly altering all perceptions. A former life seemed but a distant dream; freed from the influence of alcohol and drugs for three years, nothing could remotely compare with the divine intoxication I now experienced. The presence of the Master was a perfume which engulfed all who drew near. The sweetness it awakened far surpassed the pleasures of sense, intellect, accomplishment or fame. Recently, Master stated 'God is an Ocean of intoxication.' I was merely sitting on the shore, and while endless waves rolled forward, it was impossible not to be sprayed with some benison from the Ocean's edge.

Since arriving at the ashram, however, lack of any particular inner progress in meditation dissolved preconceived notions of sudden samadhi in the Master's presence. One morning, I had an opportunity to ask him about it in a non-complaining way. 'It is due to your attachment to the outer form of the Master,' he chuckled, and added, 'The other will come in due course!' Grateful for the promise, I backed out of his chamber and went back to meditate.

'Brother, Master wants to see you right away!' exclaimed a breathless sevadar who found me saddened on the far side of the ashram a few days later. I ran over to the porch and entered the inner sanctum. 'Why are you walking about with such a long face?' Master demanded. I was tongue-tied, unable to respond. 'Long face! Long face! Why the long face?' Startled by his blunt prescience, I struggled for words. 'Maharaj Ji, I'm running out of funds, and have to leave.'

His mouth dropped open and ample eyebrows raised up incredulously, 'What?! Don't think of the future and don't think of the past. Make best use of the living present and put in maximum time for meditations. You are a dear child of the Father and are to stay here with me!' He pulled from his pocket a big roll of rupee notes, and removed the rubber band which held them all together. 'If you ever need anything, come directly to me!' While thanking him, I declined his kind offer, not wanting to impose.

Master then warned, 'They're not all saints here, mind that!' There was nothing I could hide, for I had imagined that many of the ashram's colorful characters were on some higher plane, and he wanted to disabuse me of this fantasy. In a recent satsang he warned, 'The Master is like a cow who loves to give her sweet milk to the calf that comes from a distant pasture, but the ticks living on the udder only drink her blood.' I prayed, 'Let me be such a calf.'

Shortly thereafter, a \$100 money order came unexpectedly from my mother. I timidly approached the Master and asked if I should borrow some money until I could cash the draft in downtown Delhi, as otherwise my pockets were quite empty. He peeled off some notes, asking, 'Will this be enough?' and insisted I accept it. I cautiously accepted some rupees and returned the rest. It took a full day of navigating the chaos of downtown, going from bank to bank before finding an institution that would convert the note into rupees. A day or so later, I proceeded to Master's house, absorbed in the idea of settling my debt—if such were possible. How could a slave of mind hope to repay the emperor of hearts?

After an anxious wait, he suddenly emerged onto the porch, smiling and greeting.

Moth & the Flame - Slapped Into the Beyond

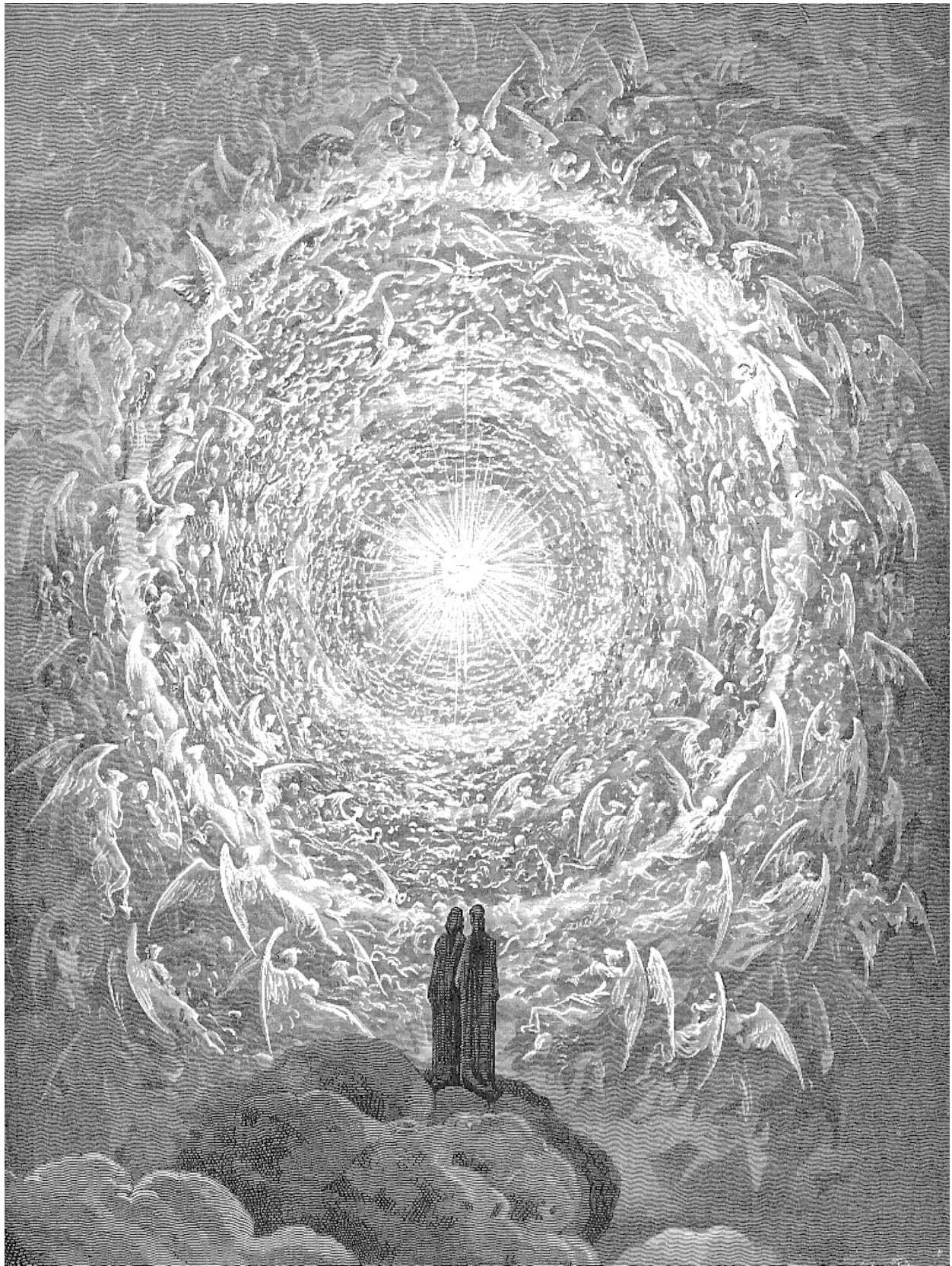
I stammered, 'Master, here is the money you kindly loaned me.' He chuckled and pushed my hand away. I insisted, but again he refused. As he turned his back, I sneaked the rupees into his coat pocket! But, while looking in the opposite direction, he omnisciently caught my hand in his right, suddenly turned, and lightly slapped my face three times, back and forth. He disappeared into the crowd, leaving me stunned, my ears ringing, and the impression of his huge, beaming countenance in my mind.

In a most vivid dream that night, Mohan-driver appeared and conveyed a message; I was being called upon to help spread the Master's teachings in the West. Suddenly I was wide awake on the inside. The Satguru appeared in the distance dressed all in white, clearer than daylight. Without moving his limbs, his form accelerated straight towards me; now he was directly in front. His right hand moved back as if to strike, then swung with full force towards my face. When his hand connected, there was exploding-imploding lightning. He was all that remained, and his holy visage began to glow brighter and brighter with an incandescence eclipsing the sun, a vortex of stupendous luminous power. I was dragged into and through its center, then catapulted into the Beyond at great speed over vast distances, becoming a mote of freed awareness, momentarily part of and one with an Ocean of ecstasy and grace. Angelic music and wondrous beauty flowed through everything. This Ocean had no water, edges, bottom, nor end. The word 'ocean' is no more descriptive than 'sky' or 'infinity'. Love-consciousness abided, and my actuality was no more than a tiny bubble floating in titanic majesty.

Alas, this dip into the Cosmos was not destined to last for long. As the elements of ego-self began to re-congeal, trickster mind was crying for my return somewhere far below in relative darkness. Against my will, I was torn from eternity, sent back, for my consciousness was unacclimatized and contained impurities incompatible with the realm. Descent took place with great speed, and from every side came a high pitched keening—a kind of musical friction as soul plus mind skidded down through successive layers, until softly and silently re-entering a lifeless, barely recognizable body through a vertical aperture in the forehead. Upon return to the prison of physical existence, I wept again. Although separated from that Life of Life, indescribable bliss saturated awareness for days.

God comes to His lovers in many ways, in many forms. To me He came in the guise of my Guru and His slap, which conferred a brief taste of Eternity, an advance installment from which to draw strength whenever weak, dry, uninspired, or in trouble. Greatly fortified, I prayed that someday I might be worthy of serving the Master and the creation in some small way.

Moth & the Flame - Slapped Into the Beyond



Etching by Gustave Doré

14 Music-Master

Early Spring, 1967: Maharaj Ji and his caravan of two crowded cars prepare for a two-week Satsang tour of Agra, Indore, Baroda and Ajmeer. Extremely weak from 'Delhi-belly' (amoebic dysentery), I'm left behind, heartbroken for I had so wanted to go! Just before getting into his car, Master pauses and waves me over, saying: 'If you feel better by this afternoon, you may come to Indore with Master-ji by train.'

Master-ji as I then learned is the nickname of Partap Singh, a widely acclaimed master of classical and devotional Indian vocal music. He is also called Pathi-ji ('hymn-chanter'). His task is to sing soul-stirring bhajans (hymns) of the Saints, around which Master Kirpal bases his discourses. Master-ji has incredible built-in volume control, and whenever the electricity fails, rendering microphones useless, as often happens here, Satguru Kirpal will give him the nod. There is something almost supernatural about Master-ji's beautiful and evocative voice, which, without loudspeakers, can carry across huge crowds. Partap Singh stands a little over five feet, and the white beard which frames his noble face is about a third as long as he.

Against insistent advice of several well-wishers and the commanding Dr. Mool Raj to stay put, even the thought of staying in the empty ashram is unbearable. Bricks, mortar and memories are no consolation. I simply must be with my beloved Guru! Master-ji and I hire a three-wheeler, broken springs and all, to take us to the train station. I grit my teeth, as every bump and jolt from the pot-holed streets sends sharp pangs into my gut. Most auspiciously, all cramps disappear the moment we board our Gandhi-class (third-class) coach. Even though we sleeplessly pass the next night and day in our sweltering, over-crowded berth—jolted, jostled and covered with soot from the black smoke-belching coal-fired engine—my sadhu-like companion and I spend most of our time in blissful meditation. Master-ji lies on the bare metal floor wrapped in a thin muslin sheet (his unwound turban) like a moth in a cocoon, meditating, while passengers sitting on benches above try not to put their feet on him, little knowing his exalted status in the spiritual world.

At one point, Master-ji's face emerges from his shroud, emanating serenity and beatitude. In lovely broken English, he says, 'My Master Sawan with me all night. He ve-r-r-y beautiful, ve-r-r-y bright! Face like full moon! I love, He love. You love, a-a-l-l-l is Love!' We both laugh a long time, like drunkards in a tavern.

After some gentle prodding, Master-ji shares a little of his life:

'I chela [student] of Shahanshah. Shahanshah write many God-songs, and teach me all ragas [modes] of Indian classical music. Shahanshah once great champion wrestler of Punjab, then become vairagi sadhu [a renunciate]...spiritual wrestler! You know I many times sing bhajans of Shahanshah in satsang. Master very much love and respect. Very powerful meanings in his bhajans. Shahanshah also came to Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, many times. He see Hazur one with God... and the beauty of God, both! I came to Hazur maybe thirty years ago, and took Naam. I also see Master Kirpal with Hazur many times; he already most great disciple of Hazur. Baba Kirpal already Saint, he like older brother to us. Hazur give hukam [order] to Master Kirpal to sit by his side, conduct satsang and help sangat [congregation]. Once he sit by Hazur at big initiation. Hazur give order, 'Kirpal Singh, you give Naam!' All see Light and hear shabd dhun [Sound

Current]. Big shakti! [spiritual power]. I there.'

'How did you come to this Master?' I ask.

'When Hazur left chola [physical coil] I verrry upset! No want live this world! My born name, Partap Chand, from Hindu family, but then I decide not to shave, not to wear shoes until I find Hazur and happiness again. Not go anywhere! Hazur say to sangat, "Kirpal Singh my very own self." But I not care. Then Master Kirpal write me letter: "Master-ji, come and visit me in Delhi." I not listen. Again he write, but I not answer. Third letter said, "If you don't come to me, then I will have to come to you!" I think, "What I lose in going to see?" and take train to Delhi. When I reach Sawan Ashram, I see Hazur Baba Sawan Singh sitting in Master Kirpal's chair. I no believe! I rub my eyes! Hazur still sitting there, so I bow head to his feet. When I get up, look at him, Master Kirpal there! He say "Stay here with me. Serve Hazur and sangat." I call wife and son from Punjab, and never leave!' After a pause, he clarifies his own position: 'Arran-ji, I only music-master, but our Master is Ruhani (spiritual) Master.'

Master-ji now begins teaching me the words and melody of a Hindi bhajan.

I did not know

*I did not know mind had drawn a veil
But You were here within me;
I searched for You in the Q'uran
and other sacred scriptures,
But did not know You were
in the book of my heart;
I looked from door to door
But did not know
You were in search of me;
I searched from house to house,
But did not know
You resided in my home;
I was looking for a gem,
But did not know
the Treasure-house was within me;
I thought the world was full of thorns,
But did not know that within me
was an blooming garden;
I tried to find a hiding place,
But did not know there was no place
where You were not present;
Shahanshah was looking for a name,
But did not know
that You were Nameless.*

Moth & the Flame - Music-Master



*Music-master—Partap Singh & Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj
1963 - photo by Lucille Gunn*

Moth & the Flame
15 Indore & Ujjain

*How can the love between You and me sever?
As the lotus abides in water, so do You in Your servant;*

*As the chakor bird gazes unblinking at the full moon
Throughout the long night,
So do I, Your servant, gaze upon my Lord.*

*From the beginning of time 'till the ending of time,
There has been love between You and I.
How can such love be extinguished?*

*Says Kabir, 'As the river plunges into the ocean,
So does my heart enter, and become one with the Beloved.'*

—Kabir Sahib

The timeless plains, farms and villages of Madhya Pradesh roll by as the train's clickety-clack, clickety-clack continues for the next twenty-five hours. There will be an occasional stop while hordes of colorful passengers scramble in and out. 'Garam chai! Garam chai! ('Hot tea! Hot tea!') call out chai-wallas, holding up clay pots (one-use disposable and recyclable) of steaming hot, cardamon-fennel-fragrant, milky sweet tea under our faces peering through the open, but barred train windows. For a mere 25 paisa coin, they part with this stimulating beverage, then the steam-whistle blows, pistons and wheels turn, and the train lurches forward again.

Tired and begrimed, we arrive in the orderly city of Indore, warmly greeted by local organizers. We are escorted to Ram Krishna Dharamshala, a combination community center, Hindu temple and hotel complex where we will stay for the next few days. Expectancy is on every face; Master's arrival is well overdue.

After a jammed program in Agra and a long, exhausting journey in searing heat, Maharaj Ji and his dusty party finally arrive by car at sunset. Never have I seen him so weary as he slowly labors up two flights of stairs. With his hands, he lifts uncooperative legs, step by step, his face wincing. When I move forward to offer help, he brusquely waves me away. After reaching the top, he enters his room, pulls a curtain and reclines on a bed. Wrenched by his physical condition, I retreat to my room, moved to tears.

Amazingly, Master emerges fifteen minutes later, countenance youthful, pink-cheeked, bubbling with life and radiance. He meets crowds of seekers late into the night, far surpassing the endurance of those half or one-quarter his age. One can imagine his at-will access into the high, high regions of spirituality and rejuvenation.

The evening discourse takes place in an open park before thousands of Indori citizens, including many of her leaders. A large fancy silken cushion is placed on the platform, but when the Master mounts the dais and notices, he frowns, picks up the cushion and flings it far into the night before settling down on a plain unpadded sheet. Disdainful of pomp and show, he is simple

Moth & the Flame - Indore & Ujjain

and humble.

While poignant verses from Kabir and Arjan Dev are chanted, Kirpal Gurudev casts handfuls of marigolds into the delighted audience. Seated at the front, blossoms flung from his hand strike my face and torso. If my body is a harp, each flower's impact is a thrumming of its strings, and the resonance continues for the duration of satsang. His gentle voice pours like honey into the collective consciousness, and the silence between phrases of wisdom vibrates and enfolds everything. To know, to experience this bliss, foretells of some future pain of separation. But, as Longfellow says, 'It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.' Later, I gather up thirteen fragrant marigolds which struck me earlier—some in my lap, some on the carpet, priceless...

Tonight many including the writer witnessed the Master physically changing back and forth into the form of Hazur as he sat on the dais. While riding back from satsang with him, I ask about this numinous manifestation. From the front seat he replies, voice redolent with humor, 'What's that? There must have been something wrong with your eyes!'

'Yes thank you, Master.'

In the state of divine Unity, no differentiation exists; essence flows back and forth:

Whoever knows the mystery of One, becomes One.

If fortunate to find such a doorway, one may experience the Formless essence personally aspected as Father or as Mother, giver of the milk of pure white Light and divine knowledge.

Guru Arjan Dev sings of the multifaceted Godman, the embodiment of humanity with divinity:

Tu mera Pitta [You are my Father]
Tu hai mera Mata [You are my Mother]
Tu mera bhandap [You are my true relative]
Tu mera bhrata [You are my Brother]
Tu mera Rakha sabni t'hai [O my Protector everywhere]
Ta bhao kayha Akhara jio [Why should I have any fear?]

In the morning we visit sprawling, but immaculate Gita Bhavan on the outskirts of Indore; its director, Bal Mukunda, a recently initiated disciple, shows us around the temple-complex, dedicated to several deities of the Hindu pantheon. Inside the main ornate structure, Master Kirpal shares a white marble dais with about twenty-five orange-robed renunciate swamis. After long-winded introductions and speeches by others, the capacity audience is finally treated to his discourse on the Path of Naam, while polychrome statues of Krishna and other deities stand sentinel behind. From the perspective of a God-realized Adept, there is no paradox in religious diversity, for such a one sees the cosmic dance of Unity behind the veil.

*The One remains, the many change and pass,
Life like a dome of many colored glass
stains the white radiance of Eternity.*

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—Shelley

We visit a newly built eye hospital, part of Gita Bhavan, which is blessed and inaugurated. It is most encouraging to see intelligent men and women of various religions and societies drawn to this path without breaking with their own faith, family, customs or rituals. In this context, Jesus assured his listeners, 'I come not to break the law, but to fulfill it.' As students advance on the path of love and gnosis, rites and rituals may fall aside like husks. Once one has tasted the kernel within, ritual becomes non-essential, but an option that may be exercised for those who wish to maintain socioreligious observances. The Masters don't interfere.

Pritam Das of Ujjain: We make a side-trip to Ujjain, a large town, fifty miles from Indore. Several thousand attend satsang beneath a colorful canopy. From there we flow (that's how it feels) to the ashram of a local holy man, Baba Pritam Das, to eat and rest. For the next three hours, the Master and Pritam Das sit on a couch to the side, holding each other's hands, sharing sweet memories of Hazur, from whom both received their spiritual treasure. Pritam Das, with his snow-white beard and aquiline profile, has a remarkable physical resemblance to their Master. As the day draws to a close, Pritam Das escorts everyone through the Sahaj Yog Ashram, surrounded by fruit trees, vegetable gardens and wheat fields. We are given stalks of fresh green chickpeas to peel and chew (delicious!) as well as fresh papaya. It is rare to see Master so carefree as he leisurely inspects various crops and plants without hordes of seekers crowding him.

The Indian sky has turned all shades of gold, vermilion and crimson. Master and Pritam Das stand together under the mango trees, bathed in the sun's setting glow. A thick peace lies over the land. We bid farewell and motor back to Indore, just in time for evening satsang.



Satsang with Swamis - Gita Bhavan, Indore

Moth & the Flame - Indore & Ujjain

After the public talk, hundreds follow the Master back to the dharamshala, where he sits in an armchair in a large room jammed with people from wall to wall. Many are the pairs of eyes and ears, but they are like one big eye and one big ear, straining to catch every glance, to hear each word. One after the other, seekers new and old come forward.

One asks, 'Maharaj Ji, what benefit might a stranger have if he happened to be passing by and overhears part of the initiation instructions or surreptitiously learns the five charged Names?'

'When this same question was asked of Hazur, he replied, "If a dog happens to run through a cotton field, does it mean that he will come out wearing a three-piece suit?"' Laughter fills the room. Seriously, one requires the acknowledged acceptance of the Master of the time.

A new man makes his way, close to the Master's knee: 'Maharaj Ji, may I trouble you with some questions?'

'Yes, to the best I know.'

'For the past ten years I have been searching for a Godman, but all in vain. I have been to Rishikesh, Hardwar, Banares, Himalayan hermitages, Beas and several other holy places. I have sat at the feet of many Gurus and received various initiations, including initiation into the five Names.'

'Did you see Light?'

'No, Master, all I ever received were words, empty promises and never any experience. No Light have I seen. I performed many practices, meditation and yoga techniques but still the inner veil has not been rent! I am totally lost if I cannot find God!' While he weeps, Master lays his hand on the man's shoulder.

The seeker continues, 'I had almost given up the quest for Light as a will-o-the-wisp. Having your darshan, I confess great attraction. I do feel some Power. Will you please grant me the holy Naam?'

Master asks him, 'Haven't you already received initiation?'

'Yes, Guruji' he replies, 'several years ago I took Naam from another teacher in the Sant Mat tradition, but even though I put in three to four hours daily for meditation, I have never experienced anything within.'

'Why don't you go back to him and request experience along with the Names?' Master urges.

'I tried, Maharaj Ji, but it isn't possible to get near enough to speak or ask questions, as such an honor was reserved only for V.I.P.'s.' He starts to cry, because he thinks Master is refusing him.

'Dear friend, don't be disheartened,' Master comforts. 'First of all, don't row in two boats. Don't mix up spiritual practices; do one thing wholly and solely, with full attention! Leave off the past. Have respect for your former gurus; don't condemn them. I have all love and respect for them. If you find someone who can practically open the inner way, you should follow him with single-minded devotion. Kabir says:

Jab lag na dekho aapni naini, Tab lag na pateju Gur-ki-bani.

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*Unless I see with my own eyes,
I cannot believe even the words of the Guru.*

'That's a very rare qualification! If others can give the inner way, by all means go to them. If not, you are welcome here. If you are thoroughly satisfied, you are welcome to come tomorrow morning and have a sitting along with the others, and if you receive anything, it is all due to the Grace of God and my Master working overhead. There is nothing to be disheartened about, mind that!'

The next morning he and a hundred others are internally connected and started on the El Camino Real. In the months to come, I am to see this poignant scene reenacted in many places.

Eyes Like Lightning: I happen to walk past the room where initiation is taking place and peer through the slats of the wooden shutters on the unglazed window, curious as ever. I can barely make out the Master in the dim light, sitting on a low wooden platform facing in my direction, with the new initiates before him. He is repeating aloud the five Holy Names, helping them learn the Gur-Mantra. He notices me spying and fixes his piercing gaze on me for a few seconds. Suddenly, a blinding beam of Light shoots from his eyes to mine, physically bowling me over backwards. In utter awe and exhilaration, I hide behind the wall, heart pounding!

Although only four days have passed at Indore, a profound bonding has occurred, evidenced by the tears shed by hundreds upon Master's departure. Several touch their foreheads or hands to the dust where he passes, and I, the dry Westerner, envy such spontaneity and simplicity.

It is not my destiny to remain dry.

***Shabd is the Guru,
and Surat, the disciple.***

—Guru Nanak

Master-ji and I board a rusty twenty-two-seater bus, bound for Baroda, a long ride towards the south-west of India. Scorching heat is amplified by the bare tin roof and more than sixty passengers. Its unpadded metal seats must have been designed in some fiendish place for the long-of-leg! We stop in a barren region (not a living tree or plant in sight) to pick up loin-clad Bhil tribesmen wearing hunting slings wrapped around their wide turbans. The one closest to me suddenly vomits on the floor. I try my failing best to accept the heat and other conditions as gifts of the Lord. Master's car then passes on our right. Eyes close in remembrance; cool and fragrant mystic breezes waft over from the direction He passes, and mind stops complaining.

The mind is its own place, and in itself,
can make heaven of Hell, and a hell of Heaven.—John Milton

It is past 9 in the sweaty, sultry evening when we reach Baroda, a sprawling city of several million. As the bus roars away, leaving us in a diesel cloud, Master-ji exclaims, 'Oh, oh! I forget Baroda address of Maharaj Ji!' We laugh like it's the funniest thing in the world, and agree that He will take care of us, so why worry! By rickshaw we proceed to a gurdwara built over the place Guru Nanak visited five hundred years earlier. From the granthi, we obtain permission to stay. In perfect comfort we meditate, eat, and rest.

In the morning, the friendly priest gives a lesson on the vina, a traditional stringed instrument with a long fretted neck and two large gourd sound-chambers attached to the underside. The vina's haunting if not beautiful note-bending sound has no parallel in Western music, and its timbre and tone are said to resemble the sound-current in Daswan Dwar—the third spiritual region. Master-ji takes off for a walk in a nearby bazaar and soon returns with a gentle giant by the name of Kartar Singh, a prosperous merchant and the local satsang leader who just happened to be purchasing vegetables for the Master's free kitchen when he and Master-ji literally bumped into each other. More laughter!

Kartar delivers us to a palatial former residence of the Maharaja of Baroda, then ushers us into a huge bedroom, where the Master rests upon a canopied bed. Seeing us, he sits up, perfect feet peeking out from under baggy sylvan trousers, skin color like honey-golden amber, unlike any other. I find it impossible not to bow before such unpretentious majesty. 'You have the Indian disease!' Master jokes about my bowing, which I don't mind at all. 'People were out looking for you until after 1 a.m. I was not worried.' His eyes are giving sport as he adds, 'but others were!' I'm one big smile.

In the evening, a mammoth crowd gathers to hear the Master's two hour Hindi discourse. I only managed to get the following:

God working through the Guru can connect you to That which has no mother, no father, no brother, no equal. A genuine man of realization never calls Himself a Master. When Nanak was asked, 'Who is your Guru?' he replied, 'Shabd or the Eternal Sound Principle is the Guru, and Surat [the Attention] is the disciple.' A true Master always considers himself to be the servant of servants.

Moth & the Flame - Baroda

In 1963, Sant Kirpal Singh was invited to speak at the Grand Mosque of Paris. After listening carefully to his message, the head Mufti requested a memento. The Master gave him a photograph of Hazur which he then inscribed in Urdu, using his pen-name, Jamal:

*Ghulam-i-ghulama Jamal.
Jamal, the Slave of Thy Slaves.*

It is the morning of initiation and departure. Of sixty new seekers, only one man cannot hear the sacred inner Sound at the first sitting. Even when put aside for a second session, he experiences nothing. Master frowns with apparent impatience, seemingly in a hurry for the next leg of our journey. He touches the new initiate's right ear, and after less than a minute, taps the top of his head. The meditator opens his eyes and with a stunned expression, reports hearing loud ringing bells within.

According to the Adepts of Sant Mat, the internal sound of the big bell is the first important level of shabd or Sound-current heard within; it is the inner Bell that exerts magnetic attraction upon the listener, thus drawing soul-consciousness into the astral plane. Regions above and beyond the astral heavens reverberate with even finer and more compelling melodies and are filled with radiant scenes of such exquisite beauty and grandeur that the beholder is overwhelmed and enraptured. There is no earthly parallel. Khawaja Hafiz, a Persian sufi mystic set afloat these reminders more than seven centuries ago:

*From the turret of Heaven, a call bids you Home,
But fallen into the snares, you hear not.
No one knows where the mansion of the Beloved lies,
But sure enough, the chiming of bells proceeds therefrom.
Take the seals from your ears and hearken
unto the Voice of emancipation calling you constantly.
Attach not to the ephemeral world of matter,
as the elixir of life is showering from above.
The beat of Love sounding in the Heavens,
Sends blessings to the souls of the devotees.*

—Hafiz

When Francis of Assisi took shelter in a cave from a raging storm and opened his heart to God, he received a profound vision of Christ accompanied by loud pealing of church bells in and around him. While engaged in deep prayer, St. Theresa of Avila also heard God speaking to her through the medium of inner bells, although initially fearful. While meditating in the Cave of Hira, prophet Mohammed heard inner bells, transforming into the voice of Gabriel, which then dictated to the unlettered shepherd boy the inspired Q'uran.

Jacob Boehme of early Germany was also conversant with the inner path of Celestial Sound, which was gifted to him by a mysterious Master from the East when Jacob was just a young boy mending shoes:

If you should in this world bring many thousand sorts of musical instruments together, and all should be tuned in the best manner most artificially, and the most skillful masters of music should play on them in concert together, all would be no more than the howlings and barkings of dogs in comparison of the Divine

Moth & the Flame - Baroda

Music, which rises through the Divine Sound and tunes from Eternity to Eternity.
—from Jacob Boehme's *The Aurora*

The inner sound has nothing to do with the medical condition known as tinnitus, although several who have heard unbidden strains of the music of the spheres within initially sought help from doctors. There is, however, no cure for God but God.

The more I travel with the living Master, the more it becomes obvious that he, in his time, is in harmony with the Divine Will and thereby in control of the cosmic tap—for those in this time, who seek the inner way.

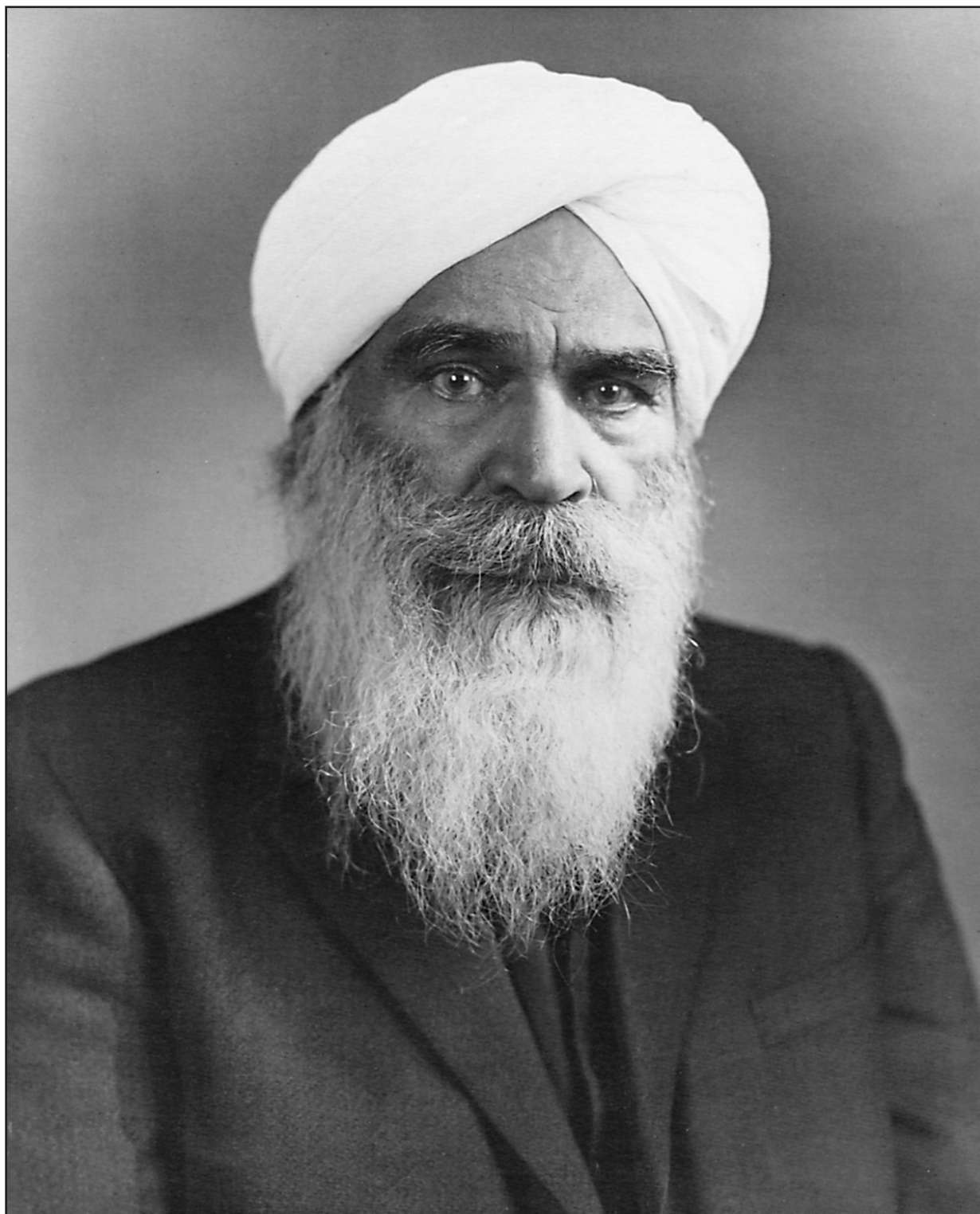
Five centuries earlier, Guru Nanak taught the helplessness of ego-centered attempts to realize the Divine—before Whom one must become humble as dust:

You have no power to speak or to be silent,
No power to ask or to give.

You have no power over life or death,
No power over wealth or state
For which you are ever restless.

You have no power over spiritual awakening,
No power to know the Truth,
Or to achieve your own salvation.

Let him who thinks he has the power, try.
O Nanak! none is high or low, but by His Will.



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj

Photo by Harris & Ewing, 1963

Moth & the Flame
17 Mira Bai of Chittor

*I seek a Physician who knows the secret
of this world and the next,
That I may tell Him of my condition
and be cured of the malady of transmigration.¹
—Mira Bai*



Classical Indian miniature, Mughal style

Moth & the Flame - Mira Bai of Chittor

Our caravan exits Baroda, rolling north up the Grand Trunk Road. The GT Road spans the sub-continent from the mighty Himalayas down to India's southern tip, one of the better contributions of former Mughals and the British Raj, though the GT can also be a hair-raising adventure.

It is my uneasy privilege to ride in the same car with the beloved Master. Uneasy, not because of India's road hazards, but because I have the unmistakable sense that he is peering inside my innermost mind, aware of every uncontrolled thought, every secret. As I experience this tension, somewhere between fear and gratitude, he unexpectedly turns around from the front seat, gives me a quick look and comments, 'Until one can meet the Inner Master and converse with Him at will, outer guidance is necessary.' His sudden words transform into a mantra, a prayer that repeats itself over and over. My yearning for 'at will' communion increases with each breath, each heartbeat.

In the afternoon we stop for lunch by the roadside, beneath the cooling shade of a huge banyan tree that spreads its protecting arms overhead while sending vines—airborne roots, actually—to the earth below. Vivid sap-green wheat fields, patches of bright yellow mustard flowers, and rows of tall sugar cane march into the distance, fenced by spangles of pink and red blooms on cactus hedges. Basant! Indian springtime! Beauty abounds in everything!

The Friend carefully peels and cuts a cantaloupe, then personally serves everyone; only then does he himself eat a thin sweet slice.

At dusk, our caravan pauses briefly for chai and leg-stretching in the medieval Rajput city of Chittor. Across the cobbled road and behind the tents of the bazaar, high, orange-red sandstone ramparts of ancient fortresses are gilded by the setting sun. These ancient walls which once held back mighty armies now resound with the twitters and cries of thousands of roosting birds. Calling me to him, Master leans out the car window and asks, 'Do you know that this is Chittor, the place where Princess Mira Bai lived? You know of Mira? She overflowed with love and intoxication of God. Her Guru was Ravi Das, the cobbler-Saint.'

Having already learned to sing two of Mira's hauntingly beautiful Hindi bhajans, Master's history lesson assumes special meaning for me. Mira's songs are among the most poignant and lyric in the rich Sant tradition. The story of her God-inspired life is even part of India's multicultural school curriculum, where children of all religious backgrounds learn her devotional songs by rote.

Master continues, 'Due to her devotion and worldly indifference, members of her family sought to kill Mira. Her sister-in-law put a poisonous snake in a basket of flowers and sent it as a gift. When Mira accepted, it is said that the snake bowed before her and said, "Fortunate am I to meet a true lover of the Lord."

'Mira's brother-in-law starved a lion, then set it loose on the secluded path Mira walked every day—the path to the temple where she sat for meditation. Upon seeing her, tradition says, the lion bowed his head on her feet; "At last I have found a true devotee! Now I have attained much benefit from having your darshan!"'

Master chuckles, 'This is the outcome of true love for God. Such love has great power, you see. Such love can perform wonders!'

*O All-pervading One, I am dyed in Your color;
When other's sweethearts live in foreign lands,
They write letter after letter,*

Moth & the Flame - Mira Bai of Chittor

*But Mira's Beloved lives in her heart,
And she sings happily day and night.²*

Mira Bai began her quest worshipping the Deity with form—including statues of Krishna—as her early verses attest, but after years of intense search she finally met the great saint Ravi Das and became his disciple. In due course, Mira reached the spiritual pinnacle of Sach Khand. Later songs show her evolution from form to the Formless, her gratitude to Sant Ravi Das, and the efficacy of Surat Shabd Yoga—by the practice of which she attained liberation from the otherwise interminable cycle of births and deaths.

*Mira man mani, Surat sahel asmani
Mira is now convinced; her soul soars into the Beyond.*

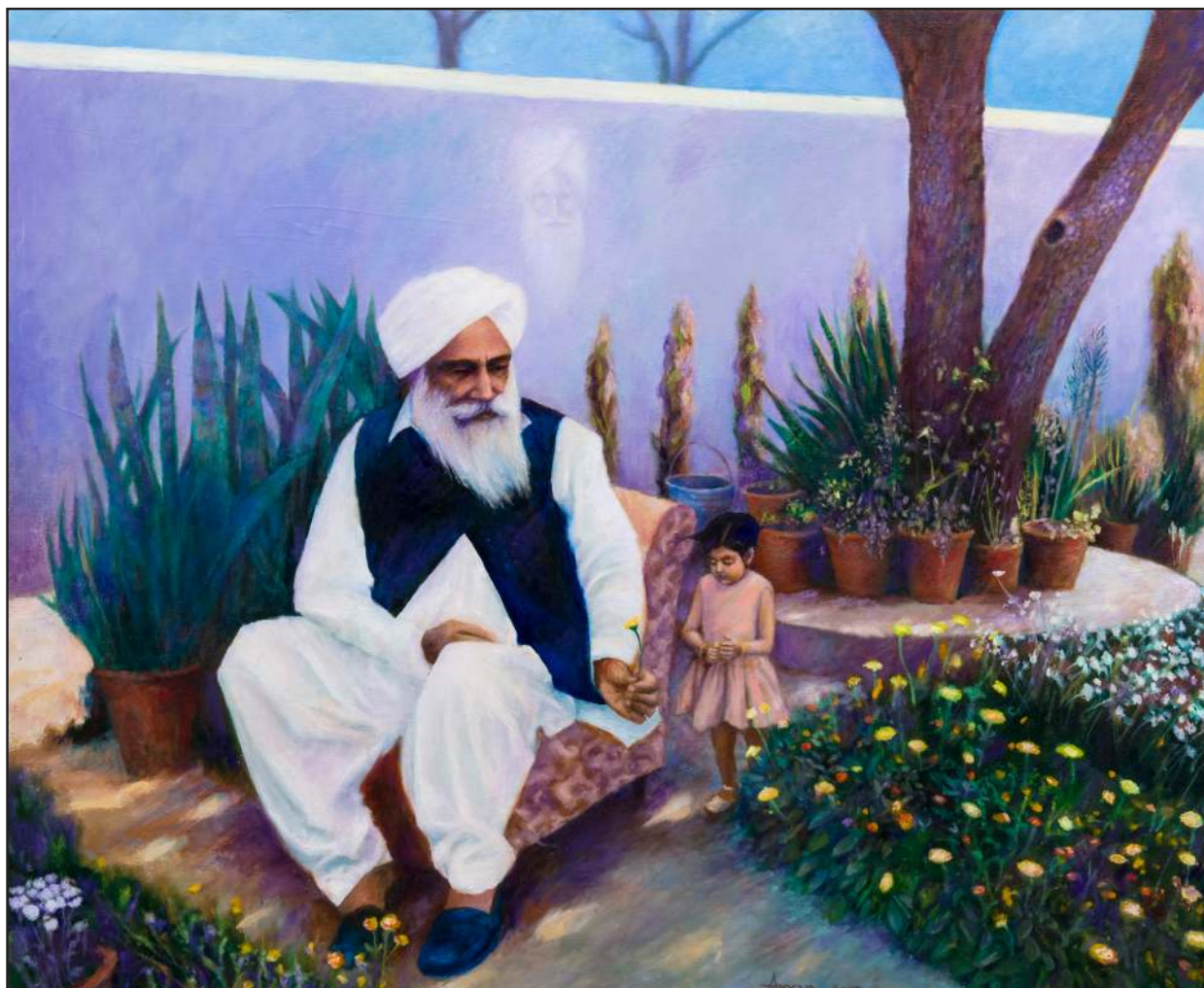
Ajmeer: We reach Ajmeer late at night. The morning sun uncloaks and gilds ancient palaces, temples, mosques, low mountains, Anasagar Lake, and Ajmeer's generous people. Sere desert, thorny shrubs, and rocky tan hills surround the old stone city, so typical of Rajasthan. After returning from a long exploratory walk, I find Master sitting at ease in the sun-dappled shadows of a towering mango tree within the spacious walled garden of our hosts, Kartar Chand and family. Only a handful are present and the conversation is relaxed. I watch as a two-year-old child plucks a marigold and toddles near. The Master accepts her flower with sweetness and attention, then lovingly returns it.

'Why have so many Saints kept unshorn hair and beards?', I ask.

'Saints are the worshippers of Nature!' Master responds vigorously, 'Nature intended man to have a natural appearance. Nature is beautiful except when tormented by the hand of man. The beard was provided as protection. Those who keep it rarely experience throat or chest ailments.' He emphasizes, 'I'm not advocating or starting any new religion, mind that! Nor am I encouraging anyone to change the society or religion to which they already belong.'

My mind is an open book to him. I have been secretly wanting to follow the Master's example and keep my own hair unshorn, perhaps even wear a turban. I then express curiosity about the biblical Samson, about whom it was inferred that he derived his superhuman strength from his unshorn hair and his chastity. When he lost both to Delila, he also lost his tremendous power. Master replied obliquely, 'If a man were to keep his hairs unshorn in the West, he might find employment a problem,' and adds, 'Whatever is cut grows again. Even a man who shaves can have progress within, is it not so?'³

I nod in agreement, but continue to wonder. According to certain yogis, uncut hair conducts a subtle energy essential to the practice of kumbhak yoga—an obscure practice involving withdrawal of the vital airs or prana from the chakras below up to the sahasrar—the thousand-petalled lotus in the astral plane. The fruit of this practice can result in a state of suspended animation, superhuman strength, and prolonged life. There are documented cases of kumbhak adepts supporting the full weight of an elephant or a truck on their bare chests. Some have been buried alive for long periods—for weeks and months, then revived. Through kumbhak yoga or even judicious use of breath, one can extend one's lifespan.



In the garden of Kirpal, Ajmeer

‘Your days are not numbered; your breaths are numbered,’ Master adds. ‘By regulation of breath, life can be prolonged. Conversely, by wasting breath through acts of dissipation, one’s lifespan is shortened.’

In contrast to most yoga systems, Sant Mat or the Surat Shabd Yoga involves withdrawal of the surat or attention, altogether by-passing the treacherous path of breath-control and kundalini (specific yoga techniques which aim to awaken the serpent energy—lying dormant at the base of the spine—the practice of which can generate great heat in the body. Awakening the kundalini prematurely can also lead to insanity). In addition, there are no requirements to shave or not; the practice of anything of a potentially harmful nature is eschewed. The path of the Adepts may be practiced by the physically fit or infirm, the old or young, or by those of any religious background—the ‘isms’ are left in place. Of the path of the Sound-current, the Master writes:

As a river springing from the snowy peak of a towering mountain flows toward the sea, it undergoes many changes of setting, shape, motion, and appearance, and yet its waters remain the same. If one could discover this audible life-stream

within oneself, if one could discover its lower reaches, one could use it as a pathway leading inevitably to its source. The currents might at certain points enter gorges and rapids but nevertheless they are the surest way on the upward journey. Be a range howsoever unscalable, the waters will have cut a pass and carved a passage, and he who will avail himself of their guidance would never fail to find a way. And since this Naam or Word-current springs from the Anaam or the Wordless, he who holds firmly to It will inevitably reach the starting point, transcending plane after plane of varying relativity until he arrives at the very source of name and form; thence to merge into That which has no name or form.⁴

Chisti's Tomb: Ajmeer is renowned for the memory of the great saint, Shaykh Mouinudin Chisti (1136-1236 A.D.), an early Sufi preceptor of Sultan-ul-Azkar, as the path of the Celestial Sound-current was then known in the Middle East. Chisti, who was born in Sanjar, Persia, received initiation from his spiritual Master, Khwaja Uthman Haruni in Nishapur. From there, the Saint made a lengthy journey on foot to India, eventually settling in Ajmeer, despite initial opposition from orthodox Hindus.⁵

Between satsangs, I have the opportunity to visit Chisti's tomb with Santokh, who serves as my guide through the old city. Many legends and miraculous stories concerning the great Chisti survive to the present, some no doubt having grown with the telling. Because of his love for the downtrodden, Chisti was known as Gharib Niwaz, 'the Abode of the Poor.'

With the passage of centuries, an elaborate mosque and esoteric school was established over Chisti's humble tomb. The twentieth-century Sufi mystic, Pir Inayat Khan, also lived and taught here. Khan was familiar with a branch of the inner science, evidenced in his own words:

It was the Saut-e-Sarmad, the sound of the abstract plane, which Mohammad heard in the cave of Ghar-e-Hira when he became lost in his divine ideal. The Q'uran refers to this sound in the words: 'Be! And all became.' Moses heard this very sound of Mount Sinai, when in communion with God; and the same word was audible to Christ when absorbed in his Heavenly Father in the wilderness. Shiva heard the same Anahad Nada during his Samadhi in the cave of the Himalayas. The sound of the abstract is always going on within, around and about man. Man does not hear it as a rule, because his consciousness is entirely centered in his material existence.

—Pir Inayat Khan, The Mysticism of Sound

Santokh and I walk barefoot through the beautiful multi-arched ancient sandstone and marble buildings, aware of a lingering presence. We inspect two gargantuan iron cauldrons ten feet wide and fifteen deep in which tons of rice are cooked every year and sold to hordes of pilgrims who trek from all over India and abroad to attend the celebration of the anniversary of Chisti's birth and death days. The death anniversary is termed Urs (literally, 'Wedding Day'), as death, to the lovers of God who have achieved union with Him, removes the final veil from the face of the Beloved.⁶

The extraordinary devotion of our Ajmeeri hosts Kartar Chand, his wife, daughter and sons is evident in every detail. Kartar, a prosperous sugar merchant, is a shaven Hindu though his sons have been brought up as Sikhs. The example that this harmonious family sets has inspired hundreds of all faiths to traverse the path. Our words, if not backed up by practice, have no power. Kirpal is fond of quoting, 'An ounce of practice is worth tons of theories.' He said that even if one is initiated into the highest path but

Moth & the Flame - Mira Bai of Chittor

doesn't practice, what good is it? In that case it is like having an effective medicine for the disease, but if that medicine remains locked in a cupboard, how can the patient expect a cure? About those who behave badly, he asks, 'If a dog bites someone, who gets blamed—the dog or the Master of the dog?' Unfortunately, it is the latter.

The day before leaving for Jaipur, our next stop, Master asks me in jest, 'Would you like to return to Delhi by elephant? You'd like? Just say, and I will arrange!'

The next morning I find myself astride a great tusked beast, with dark, gentle eyes. As brother elephant lumbers ponderously up an incline to the gateway of the Jaipur fortress, a strolling musician serenades us with his violin-like sarangi. When the ride is over, we find shade under a cluster of peepul trees. In their branches, we are entertained by a family of wild acrobatic monkeys, who win our applause and payment in bananas.

From the graceful pink sandstone redoubt on the promontory above, a handful of brave Rajput warriors held back Emperor Aurangzeb's hordes, bent on subjugating all of India. After a valiant struggle, the Rajputs were no match for the huge armies and perished to the last. The Rajput women committed suicide rather than surrender and be violated. These beautiful fortresses whisper a rich and tragic past of patriots, martyrs, and heroes.

It is the Saints, the Masters, who have sustained and nourished India's soul throughout the chaotic millennia. Their wisdom and message of individual salvation has spread to all countries of the world. I know that spirituality is not bound to any physical locale, but whenever I see a map of the Indian sub-continent protruding from the great landmass above it, down into the Indian Ocean, I cannot help but ruminate on her vaguely heart-like shape. Does our planet of elements have a heart? If fortunate enough to become attuned to the Infinite, one may feel its pulse everywhere, yet here in India, perhaps more than anywhere. She may be overcrowded and burdened with great difficulties, but India's spirituality endures. It permeates the dust, the centuries-old dust trodden by the Saints and lovers of the One.

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1. Darshan Singh, *Streams of Nectar*, Wiley Eastern Ltd, New Delhi 110 002, 1993, p. 145.
 2. *Women Saints of East and West*, (London: Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, 1972), p. 56.
 3. Kirpal Singh was born into a Khatri Sikh family. Although he became a universal man, Kirpal Singh continued to respect and observe the outer aspects of his traditional faith. During his period of search, he studied and mastered many forms of yoga. In the biography *Pita Poot*, author H.C. Chaddha chronicles in Hindi hitherto unknown incidents, spiritual practices and experiences from Kirpal Singh's extraordinary early life prior to his first contact with his Satguru. In one such example, Kirpal, in his tireless attempts to realize God, spent many winter nights from dusk to dawn meditating while standing in a frigid pond, water up to his neck. Mr. Chaddha related to me, 'Maharaj, that was a very great tapas [austerity] you performed.' Master replied, 'That was no austerity; it was the only way one could withstand the inner fire of kundalini.' Kirpal Singh was also a firm believer in regular exercise, fresh air, pure diet, and continence to restore and maintain good health. Even into his sixties, he could perform the most difficult of yoga exercises. He wrote, 'The curative power is already within the body; doctors merely help to clear the way....'
 4. Kirpal Singh, *The Crown of Life: A Study in Yoga* (Delhi, India: Ruhani Satsang, 1970), pp.144-147.
 5. John A. Subhan, *Sufism, Its Saints and Shrines* (Lucknow Publishing House, 1960).
 6. Shaykh Chisti's successor was Qutub-uddin (1186-1237), whose successor in turn was the famed Baba Farid (1173-1266), known as Shakar Gunj, or 'Storehouse of Sugar.' When just a young boy, Farid would sit for daily prayers with his devout mother. She would hide a piece of candy under her son's prayer mat, and after prayers were completed, he would reach for the candy Allah always gave him. One day his mother forgot to put the candy there. Realizing her forgetfulness, she became afraid that her son might lose his faith in Allah when he discovered her simple ruse. But Farid's heart was so pure, and God was so in love with him, the treats miraculously appeared. Thus his saintly reputation spread.

18 Dantal & the Lord of Petrol

Diary: Ajmeer is several hours behind us. There is no sign in evidence as the car suddenly veers off the highway to the left. The Master and his party are expected at Dantal, a farming village some fifty miles west across a tortuous, road—what amounts to nothing more than a rutted dirt path. Dust plumes kicked up by our lurching car rise high into the cloudless air, a signal to all within sight that someone special is on the way, for cars rarely pass here. Thick dust covers our windows, and as it shakes free, we glimpse the ancient land.

Here and there are sudden out-croppings of rocky terrain, dark islands in the dun-colored sand. New wheat covers fertile and irrigated patches with rich green. Farmers behind wooden plows are pulled by black, horned oxen or leathery camels, manuring as they plod along. The men of this region uniformly dress in white cotton dhoti and shirts, but their heads are crowned with the brightest of orange, purple, or red turbans. The women working at their sides are dressed in vivid ghagra choli—long flowing red, green, blue, yellow, and purple skirts with tiny mirrors sewn onto them. Their blouses and scarves are elaborately embroidered, their wrists and ankles bedecked with silver bangles—colorful splashes punctuating the starkness of the land.

Plunging deeper into the countryside, our caravan grows as peasants drop plows and run toward the cars. After four long years, Maharaj Ji has returned! Turning back to peer through the dust-wake, I see scores of laughing, bobbing heads, white teeth, dark skin, turbans and veils askew, joyous families running en masse. Lurching along the crests and falls in the path, we arrive at last at Dantal nestled at the foot of a hoary mountain. The beauty of such an unspoiled place thrills this refugee from modernity.

In no time, the car is surrounded. Mohan-driver says, ‘Whole village, all Master initiates, five hundred! Very few no initiated, one or two peoples. Very simple peoples! Very much love Maharaj Ji!’

We drive the final leg through a narrow road choked alternately with tangles of banyan and mango tree roots, slow-moving cows, and blithely unaware pedestrians. Finally the narrowness and incline bar further passage. Master alights to greet his beloved children, many of whom try taking the dust from his shoes, applying it to their foreheads. I am almost swept away by the noisy river-like human mass and have to push and squirm to keep up. With obvious difficulty, Master labors slowly up the steep rocky path between a narrow corridor of buildings, the mountain towering directly overhead.

Before a little house, he pauses for breath and mounts a flight of stairs, entering a tiny, darkened, two-room dwelling. I barely squeeze through the compacted crowd outside. After adjusting to the darkness within, I see Master holding the hand of someone lying under mosquito netting. The veil drawn aside, I see a man with a strong, broad face, split with a huge smile; love glistens in his eyes. Master turns to me and says, ‘See his rosy cheeks? See how robust he looks? You would never suspect that he has been bedridden for so many years. You see, he is paralyzed from the waist down.’

As a silent interchange of loving glances passes among us, the man says something in Hindi. Master translates for me, ‘He says, “It is due to my bad karma that I am bedridden, but it is my good karma that Master has come!”’ Only a strong few can accept so graciously. He is Pundit Ghansham Das—a learned disciple of Hazur. The success of Master’s mission here is greatly due to Ghansham’s exemplary influence.

Moth & the Flame - Dantal & the Lord of Petrol

Before taking leave of this dear brother lying physically helpless but spiritually awakened, Master reveals, 'It is for his sake I have come all the way here! Even the slenderest strands of love are stronger than ropes of steel.'

Master bids adieu and amazingly jogs down the rocky hill to where more than a thousand villagers wait, chanting Mira bhajans beneath a brightly patterned canopy. For two hours, the Master pours his heart into these lovely people, who drink each word, each gesture, each glance, enraptured. Strong tides are flowing! A handlebar-mustachioed farmer sitting near me is wholly lost in the sight of his Beloved, and a smile stretches from ear to ear as he rocks back and forth, tears streaming his cheeks. I glance around for a moment and see spiritual ecstasy sweeping the crowd. Today the tears are not of pain, but of joy.

Late in the day as we take leave of Dantal, the sky darkening, the car is again pursued. This time I'm in Master's car. With eyes sparkling, he turns his head from the front seat, 'These people are simple, God is simple and he (the Master) is simple too!' His face is aglow, chuckling.

'How many from this village saw the Radiant Form at Initiation?' I ask.

'Ninety-nine out of a hundred. There was only one man who could not see.'

'The Radiant Form of the Master?,' I ask (in the West, ten to twenty-five per cent might reach this stage at initiation).

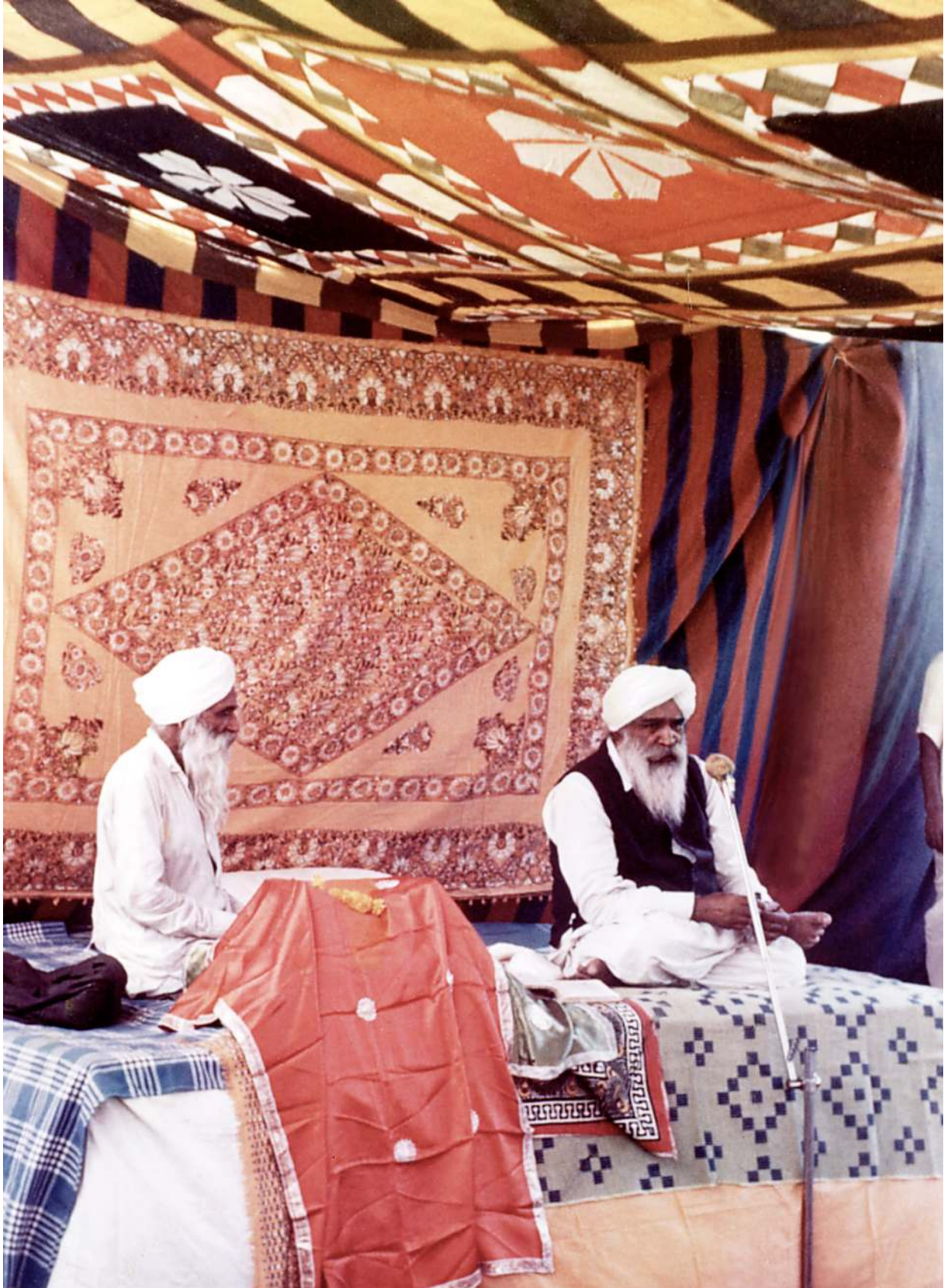
'Yes. When I first visited Dantal four years ago, several hundred came for initiation and were given a sitting. Meanwhile another seventy-five arrived and asked to be initiated also. They were given instructions, the Names, and put into meditation separate from the first group. More from outlying districts arrived, also requesting Naam! This third group was also given a sitting. Then the first and second groups had to be attended for Sound. A fourth group arrived, but as it was so late they had to be turned away.'

Time, which bears heavily on modern society, means little to those living by the seasons, by the rising and setting of the sun, the monsoon cycle, the sowing and harvesting of crops, the whole gamut of rural life. We might consider this a backward place: no newspapers, no cinemas, no radio or television, no billboards, no rushing and pushing pace, no noise, no pollution, no hospital, no jail. Hewers of wood and drawers of water, their faith ingrained from cradle to pyre. Religion and spirituality are as much a part of their life as food and water—perhaps like tens of thousands of other villages across India, only here, idol worship has given way to the path of the Masters.

Lord of Petrol: 'Forgive me, Maharaj Ji, but I forgot to get petrol (gas) for the car, and now we are out,' confesses Ram Saroop, touching his ears—which is the Indian way of saying, 'I'm guilty.' The highway is still many miles distant. Master rebukes Ram Saroop for being so careless in his duties and then does a strange thing; he begins praising petrol like anything: 'Petrol is one of the wonders of the world, it is the proverbial demon carrying the load of industry and commerce; it runs great factories and propels cars, ships, and airplanes. Petrol has helped annihilate distance....petrol has lightened man's burdens....' In no time it seems the car reaches the main highway safely, a span of fifty miles on an empty tank!

Realizing what has happened, Ram Saroop folds his wizened hands and bows before the Master. 'Maharaj Ji, you have saved us again!'

'What?' Master replies, 'I have done nothing. I have only praised petrol, and petrol has helped us!'



Pathi Ji and Maharaj Ji in Satsang, Dantal, 1967 (A)

Moth

19 Western Rajasthan Tour

*Love is both the beginning and the end of the path.
In this way, God's love and our own are identical,
for one who has divine love has reached God.*

—Kirpal Singh

15th March, 1967: Another ten-day tour begins—this time, Western Rajasthan: In this hot, dry, thorny land, many seek respite from the sorrows and uncertainties of worldly existence. The simple and the sophisticated, young and old, the sheep and the tiger, all drink from the same well to find



quickenning in the company of the One for whom there is no stranger and no enemy.

While traversing the narrow, pocked road south of Delhi, the rear tire of our overloaded Ambassador car blows out on a deserted stretch. The mission's old blue Studebaker passes by and stops a little ahead. Out steps the Master to inspect the damage and tire-change while I stand idly by, watching him. Turning, he rebukes me firmly, 'Why don't you sit and meditate!' I back away and immediately sit in bhajan beneath the shade of a kikkar thorn-tree. The reprimand of the Friend is a jolt, an awakening, as self begins to dissolve into the celestial Sound-current. My truest ally is the Word; my enemy the lower mind. Mind seeks separate existence, whereas the Friend, union. Whether in his presence or deep in the bliss of meditation, even the most skeptical, agitated monkey-mind finds a 'peace which passeth understanding.'

Moth & the Flame - Western Rajasthan Tour

Hanumanghar, March 15. The white-clad Saint sits in a wicker chair facing an open courtyard, conversing with twenty or so fanned out before him. I emerge from my room, still in the afterglow of meditation. 'You sing bhajan for Master?' Tai Ji asks. Confused, I think she means listening to the Unstruck Sound, for bhajan has more than one meaning. She corrects with a giggle, 'No, No! Sing bhajan!' The following hymn of Guru Nanak flows from my heart to his, and fills the nighted courtyard:

Santa Jana Mila Har Jas Gayo
In the company of Saints, glorify the Lord,
Kota Janama kaye dukha gawayo
In this very lifetime find relief from all sorrow,
Jo chahata soi mana payo
Where every wish is fulfilled;
Kara Kirpa Haar Naam divayo
O graciously bestow the gift of Naam;
Saraba Sukha Haar Naam Berdayee
Supreme, unalloyed bliss-giving Naam.
Gur Parshada Nanak Mata Payae
By Guru's grace did Nanak come by Knowledge Divine.

Night descends suddenly in Rajasthan. Like the sparrows, most people have left for their homes. Only the Master, Mohinder Singh—the local group leader, Dr. Lal Singh, and I remain. A deep detachment from the world has taken root, and I long for a life of meditation in seclusion, free from distractions. Some of my Indian brethren might say my inclination is a result of sanskaras or impressions carried forward from previous incarnations. My Western friends might think I seek an easy way out. I have no inkling of the intense life of action and responsibility that lies ahead.

'Master,' I ask, 'should I give up all worldly ambition and spend full time meditating in an effort to reach the Goal in this life?'

'Hazur did not give Naam to yogis who lived from the offerings of others,' he replies, 'but if they were truly after spirituality, He would give it only after extracting their promise to meditate at least six hours daily—three hours for themselves and three hours for the people from whom they begged! Everything must be accounted for. Even a glass of water, if given out of devotion, has to be paid for. The person who gives has some motive behind it, and if you accept, your account is debited. If you have little or no spiritual capital, then you become bankrupted.'

'If a soul is really in earnest, God has ways of taking care of their needs so their devotion and spiritual practice remains unbroken. Such cases are rare. Practically all Masters except for one or two earned their livelihood by the sweat of brow and were householders. Work with detachment as much as will provide for basic necessities. Whatever is left over should be shared with others, and devote your spare time to meditation.'

I ask, 'How much time did Master meditate?'

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'I used to put in a maximum of sixteen to eighteen hours a day,' he replies, 'in shifts of four to eight hours at a stretch; five to six hours a day minimum as a householder, under the orders of my Master.'

After bidding good-night, I retreat to my spare, unlit room, pondering his attainment, while simultaneously trying to fathom my direction. Eventually, attention recedes within.

*When intellect exhausts itself, from inky darkness
soul launches into the luminous void;
a moth flutters toward the Midnight Sun.*

In the morning, Maharaj Ji addresses an open-air assembly:

One who knows will never say that He knows. Who does not know will always brag, 'I know!' A true Master will never say he is a Master, for he sees God as the Doer of everything, Who knows his knowing, and that he of himself knows nothing.

After initiation, our two-car caravan departs, pushing for hours across arid Rajasthan. Sand dunes, bright turbans, and camels flash by as I keep my head partly outside the stationwagon's window in a bid to minimize the suffocating 120° F heat. Twelve of us are crammed into this improbable space. Farmers eke subsistence from the parched land. Cactus and thorn-bush fences contain thin cattle while keeping out thieves. Flat lands, empty sand, reddish hills, black rocks, red stones, majestic buttes, thatched huts, patches of bright green, water-holes, hundreds of temples—huge temples and tiny one-person temples—life in the slow lane. Lakes and wells are few and far between. Where there is water, there is life; where there is life are people, and among the people, there is always a tiny handful hungry for the higher way.

Padampur. Diary: March 18. For three days we are guests of Jagir Singh, a wealthy farmer and village chieftain. Upon freshly plowed fields, hemmed by mango and guava groves and high adobe walls, more than 3,500 villagers listen to the Satguru from Delhi. Late in the afternoon, Jagir Singh and family take our party on a guided tour of their large mango and guava orchards. I discreetly follow with my old eight-millimeter movie camera. While filming, Maharaj Ji walks right up to the lens as I'm peering through. 'What is this?' he asks, rather sternly. Tounge-tied, I hand him the camera, wondering if I'm in trouble.

Suddenly his demeanor changes. 'I want to take your picture too!' he says with a chuckle, aiming the camera at me and then around at the gathering crowd. Soon, the spool of film is exhausted. Although I normally wouldn't admit it, I'm really overjoyed to be in the picture, thinking, 'Now, I'll have something to show back home, taken by none other than him!' To my chagrin, however, when I open the camera back in our room, the entire film spills out, exposed and ruined. Diwan Chand laughs, "Oh-ho! brother, Master wants you to use the camera of your third eye!" *Whatever.*

Ganganagar, Diary: March 22-24. After brief satsang stops in Karampur and Fathui villages, we arrive in Ganganagar, a dusty frontier town surrounded

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by fertile fields and a grid of tree and pampas-lined canals. We take up residence in a large dharamshala. Our first night is to begin with Master's discourse in a large canopied square in the center of town, but the air turns unseasonably cold. Strong winds shake and lift the overhead canopy while we chant before the empty dais. Thunder and lightning suddenly shatter the atmosphere and a few heavy raindrops fall, followed by a roaring downpour, filling the roads with dancing rivulets.

Satsang shifts to a large Hindu temple attached to our dharamshala four blocks away. Several hundred of us run, laughing, slipping, and jostling through the muddy thundering lanes. The raging storm knocks out the city's power. Candles and lanterns are lit as we file into the eerie temple and sit cross-legged before an ornate altar. Every sound echoes beneath cavernous vaulted ceilings; candle flames cast weird shadows across an eight-foot high milk-white marble statue of Ram Chandra, Avatar of Vishnu.¹ Whispers cease. We become aware of the unmistakable sound of Master's footsteps crunching sand against the marble floor, echoing sharply along the walls. After removing his shoes, Maharaj Ji sits cross-legged on a low wooden table next to the altar. For the next half hour, he looks penetratingly into the audience without speaking or moving, while candles and lanterns accentuate his haunting beauty. Outside, the storm continues to rage. Next to the Master, who, as always, is oblivious to distraction, a temple priest nervously mutters prayers and waves candles before his mute white idol.

Ram Chandra was a Hindu incarnation of the Preserver aspect of the Divine. Tonight, Master describes the four phases of Rama, the function of Kaal (Time, also termed the Negative Power) and of Akaal, (the Timeless, or Positive Power):

Coming to the aid of the devotees of his era, Rama incarnated into this world to wash away all the unhappiness that the sages, the rishis [meditating forest-ascetics], and munis [sages] were suffering at the hands of evil forces; this is the work of the Avatar. When any country is badly run and riots begin, control is put into the military's charge and when the trouble is corrected, rule returns to civil administration. So it is on a larger scale, when the world retrogresses to a state beyond its own control, God's Power manifests in the form of the Avatar, who settles chaos and misery and restores righteousness.

Tulsi Das, author of this great epic, tells of the two manifestations of the same Power, which are superimposed upon each other. However, there is a vast difference between these two: the Master's Rama and the world's Rama. Kabir, too, tells us:

*One Rama was the son of Dasrath,
One Rama is vibrating in each being,
One Rama is Creation's play,
One Rama is distinct from all.*

The main comparison is between Rama which manifested in the Avatar Ram Chandra, and the Rama which is different from or above all other

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powers. The Avatar, Ram Chandra, or Lord Rama, who is stated to have been the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Preserver, was born the son of King Dasrath and was competent in fourteen supernatural powers.

Avatars are like benefactors who come to give decent food and clothing to the prisoners, to temporarily alleviate their sufferings, yet in spite of this they are still bound in the prison of the world. The Masters come to free us forever from this prison and escort us back to the heavenly abode of our Father.

Naam is the Maker of both Avatars and Masters. Somewhere this great Power is working in the Avatar like a commander-in-chief of an army, and somewhere It is working in the Master like a viceroy. Both are expressions of the same power, but with different functions.

As Kabir has said, "God has made Negative and Positive, for He wanted to enact the play of creation." Both are God's great Power, which He uses in His own design of creation. That Power is the Sustainer of everything—It is the background behind everything; Its methods of working are varied, that's all. Avatars punish the sinners and reward the righteous; Masters free the attention from the prison of mind and senses and rejoin that attention or soul to its Source. The Avatar's job is to restore and maintain order in the world that it may remain inhabited by souls; the Master's job is to uproot souls from worldly habitation, pull the soul above mind and senses, and connect it to Naam Itself. So Negative and Positive both draw their Power from the One Lord.

The morning following the storm, a frail elderly woman is carried up the steep narrow stairs to our dharamshala's roof, where Master holds court. Pouring forth a tale of woe, she weepingly implores him to release her from the miseries of old age. Although an old initiate of Sawan Singh, she has lost contact with the inner Light and Sound. Master asks directly, 'Mata Ji, do you really want to die?' She croaks, 'Yes.' The Master smiles and walks over to her chair, puts his thumb on her wrinkled forehead, and commands her to close her eyes. Master's brow is furrowed in concentration; he then asks what she sees inside: 'Astar! A great bright star in the inner sky!' After removing his thumb, he says, 'Learn dying while living,' impressing upon her the need for preparation before the coming final change. After reassuring her of Hazur's constant protection, he returns to a large room where others wait.

Among the new aspirants is a venerable sadhu with dreadlocks piled high on his head. In his fifty-year search, Bhagat Ram performed austerities such as Panch Taap (the austerity of five fires, i.e. sitting between four fires, with the hot sun overhead); standing on one leg continuously for several years, meditating in the jungles and in icy Himalayan caves like Shiva; wandering penniless across the sub-continent from one pilgrimage spot to another. And, like the seeker from Indore, he'd received initiation from several gurus but until today, was still bereft of the treasure of Naam. Later, when describing his initiation experience with Master Kirpal, an inner bliss transforms his wrinkled old face, for Bhagat Ram has secured the radiant form of the Guru Dev, his glistening eyes proclaiming, 'I will ever be bound by thy Love!'

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Only five are unable to hear the Unstruck Melody. When Maharaj Ji has them sit again for listening, while standing over them, he closes his own right ear with his thumb. I and several others sitting in the room copy his example. At the end, when he asks of their inner experience, the result is unanimous; everyone, including those who heard nothing at first, now report clear, loud pealing of the big bell in their body-temple. When he turns from the new initiates to ask what the spectators experienced, three attempt to describe inner flights beyond relativity to Par Brahm.

Diary: March 24. On the open road once again, the direction of our compass is God—Who is in all directions. During the five-hundred-mile return journey, the old Studebaker breaks down ten times in the heavy rains. Each time she coughs back to life again as toothless Ram Saroop coaxes and supplicates her in the strangest mixture of Hindi and English. Twelve of us share this ride. I sit between him and Mool Raj. Hand firmly on the wheel, Ram Saroop addresses me, 'O Sahib! 1955 Champion Studebaker, American car! Master Power, Ram Power, Guru Power, very great! O Sahib, God Power very great.' Having exhausted his English repertoire, Ram Saroop lapses into singing the Ramayana at the top of his lungs:

*Ram Naam, rattan amolak, Gupat khajana,
Pita ji, mooay varney do.*

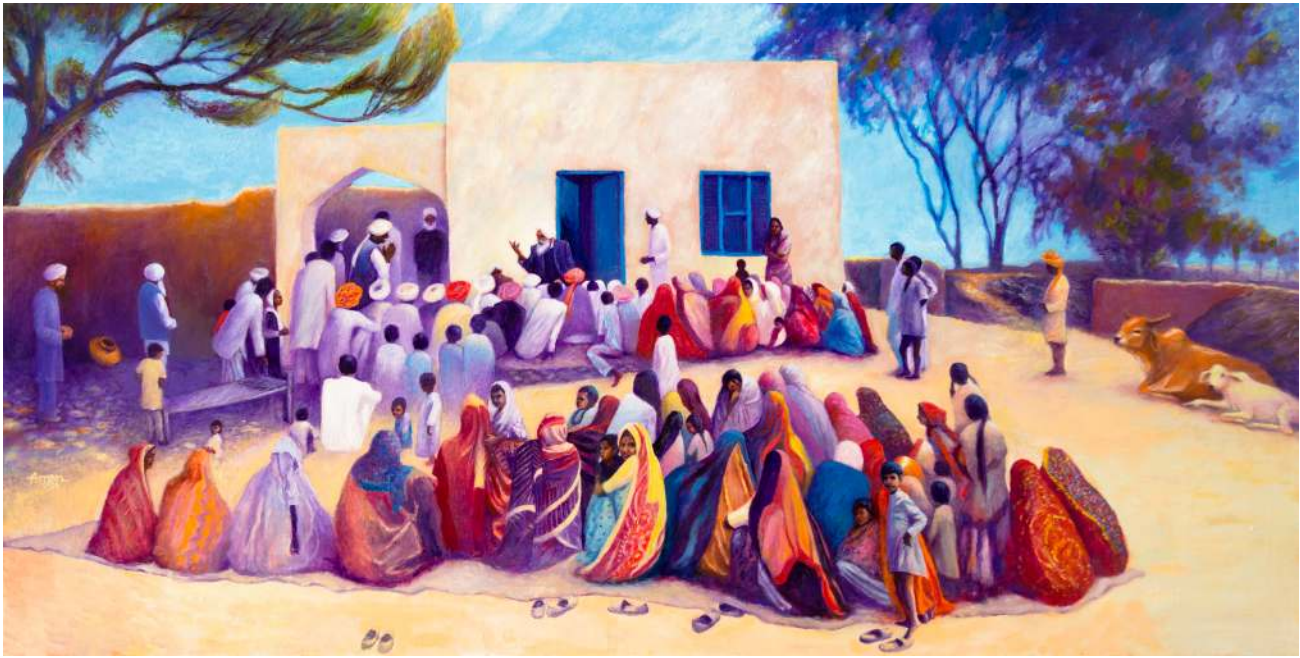
The Name of God is a priceless jewel
O my father, let me be betrothed to Him.

To keep from sleeping at the wheel, Ram Saroop sings from the Ramayana's endless verses at the top of his lungs, his sparkling dark eyes inebriant, godly. En route to Delhi, our hearts and voices spontaneously join in singing various hymns of the Saints. We stop occasionally for 'pachees meel chai' (25-mile tea), strong enough to keep Ram Saroop going another twenty-five miles, or 'pachaas meel chai' (50-mile chai), very strong tea indeed!

The Beloved Master, who had gone ahead in another car, awaits us with open arms when our weary caravan straggles into the Delhi ashram.

There is an unshakable sense that every detail of our journey has already taken place on a higher level of being. Even in dreams, it is the same as waking, it is always He. In every face, everywhere, it is His face.

This silent, unitive and effortless communion continues on for the next day and night, and then some. Only when taken for granted does grace dissipate, leaving this jiva stranded and longing in the world of opposites.



*The Saint & Villagers, Rajasthan
(painting by the author)*

1. Rama's heroic exploits are captured in Sanskrit verse in the ancient religious classic of Hinduism, the Ramayana. The original Ramayana was composed thousands of years ago by the forest sage, Valmiki, purportedly centuries before Rama was even born. Many spiritual truths lie hidden in the pages of the Sanskrit Ramayana and its more contemporary Hindi successor, the Ram Charitar Manas, written by Goswami Tulsi Das. The fantastical and supernatural tales of both scriptures are beautiful allegories, containing deep mystical teachings on the devotional path. But, what was meant to be literal is usually taken as figurative, and the figurative as literal. Nineteenth-century Tulsi Sahib of Hathras, a great mystic Adept, divulged that in a previous life, he was Tulsi Das, and had come again to clarify and demystify his teachings, which he recorded in the Ghat Ramayan [The Inner Ramayana of the Body]. The Ghat Ramayana is a powerful esoteric record of Sant Mat teachings written in the common language of his time and place.

20 T h e L o t u s F e e t

March 27: It was my good fortune to find the Master completely alone this morning, sitting cross-legged on his bed working on fat bundles of correspondence. Approaching cautiously, I ventured to ask a question that had been on my mind for over two years:

‘Hello, Master?’

‘Yes, what is it, please?’

‘I have read in your book, *Godman, Finding A Spiritual Master*, that both Baba Jaimal Singh and Baba Sawan Singh had the *padam rekha* or lotus line on their feet as one of the physical signs of spiritual mastery. I wonder if Master would please....?’

Wordlessly smiling, he glanced down at his right foot resting on his left knee, and pulled off the white sock.

Looking very closely at the sole of his bare foot, I saw a very long, deep, slightly curved line running along the center, starting about three inches from the heel. Joining this central ‘stem’ near the ball of the foot (the solar-plexus point of reflexology) was a flower-like constellation, where many lines joined together in a large star (the ‘lotus’), radiating finer curved lines up and outward toward each toe. Maharaj Ji traced his index finger along the central line to ensure that I understood. Unconsciously, I moved closer in order to see better. A sweet delicate perfume, like perfect jasmine after a rain, was emanating. Like the chakor bird,¹ my head felt pulled closer and closer until finding repose on his foot; ecstatic bliss suddenly surged into my consciousness.

‘Let me see your foot,’ he asked after I came to. When I bared my foot with the intention of showing my usual non-lotus lines, even they somehow had now disappeared. My sole was quite blank; I felt intensely exposed and unformed.

‘If one is born without the lotus, can it ever develop?’ I managed to ask. His answer was silence, while gazing on me with compassion.² As there was nothing left to discuss, I thanked him and took leave.

Over the next few months, I experienced many unusual manifestations in the Master’s presence, and when comparing notes with others at the ashram, I was not alone. For example, on his broad forehead, three radiant vertical lines often appeared. At other times the natural forehead creases coalesced into crescents, orbs and the sanskrit OM sign. Sometimes, in his presence, all thoughts of body and of self would go. His form would then begin glowing, increasing with every heartbeat. On occasion, Kirpal—the man, would actually disappear, leaving only a sphere of boundless Light spreading in all directions. This lent profound meaning to his humorous and deprecating reference he once or twice made to himself as ‘Mister Zero’.

Such manifestations appearing in the visage of past Saints are mentioned, though rarely, in several ancient texts and scriptures. Mystic yoga treatises refer to three nadis or subtle energy channels: ida, pingala, and shushumna, which, while present in everyone, lie dormant waiting their awakening. These conduits allow energy to pass between higher spiritual regions and the corporeal body through the *tisra til* (third-eye) center, and downward to the lower chakras or ganglionic centers at the throat, heart, navel, generative organ, and rectum. However, only in the central channel, between and behind the eyes, in the *shushumna nadi*, can the Celestial Melodies be heard. Through this aperture, also known as the Third Eye, the distilled and etherialized spirit rises up, drawn towards its

Moth & the Flame-The Lotus Feet

Source.

Another stage on the soul's journey comes when an archetypal vision of luminous feet manifests within the meditator's steady gaze, a prelude to meeting the complete image of the Adept before it descends from the astral plane above. As fantastic as it may seem, a golden dust-like brilliance emanates from the Lotus Feet into the seeker's awareness. This dust has been referred to by various mystics as an elixir of life and the progenitor of higher knowledge.

*Take care to retain attention within the two eyebrows;
purifying mind and body, fix gaze at one center;
penetrate then the Beyond, behold Reality face to face,
where, O Tulsi, the dust of Saints spreads a wondrous carpet of Light.*

—Sant Tulsi Das

Such mystical experience is by no means exclusive to the Far East. In the Revelations of St. John we find:

*His feet shone as burnished brass,
His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow;
And his eyes were as a flame of fire;
And his feet like unto fine brass,
As if they burned in a furnace;
And his voice as the sound of many waters...
And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*

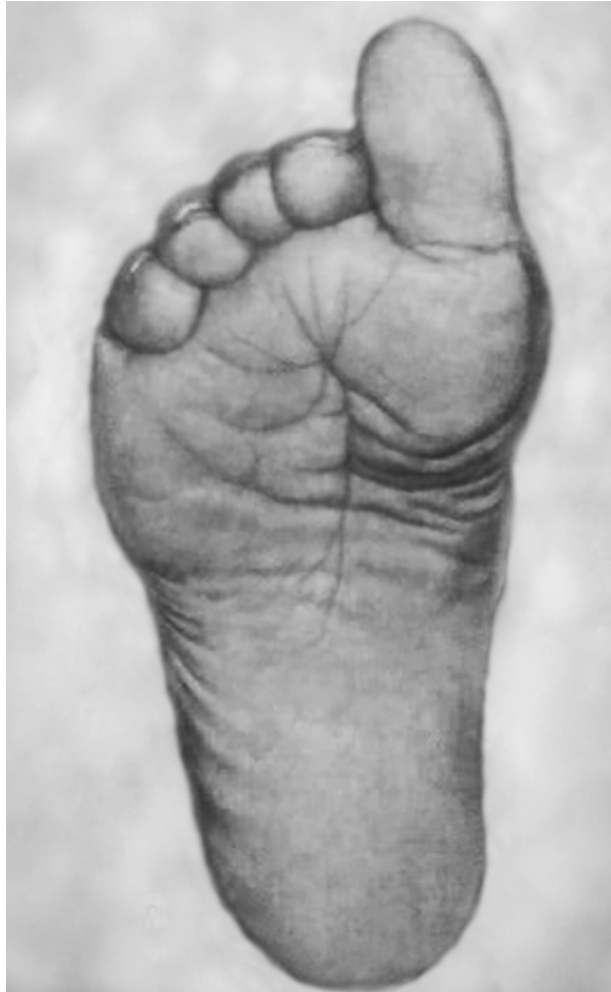
In her devotion, Mary Magdalene washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and dried them with her hair. Jesus accepted her above the hypocrites despite her assumed 'fallen' condition. Her love and repentance absolved her. *I forgive thee, for thou lovest much.* What is sin? According to the Masters, a sin is anything that takes attention away from God. So, there are obvious gradations. Kirpal often said: 'Love the sinner, but hate the sin.' Saints see the soul shining in all who come to them; their job is to help remove the layers which obstruct our original purity. When the so-called religious leaders incited the stoning of a 'fallen woman', Jesus said, 'Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.' Who is without fault or sin? Who could cast a stone?

*Guru is the washerman and the disciple is the cloth;
He applies the soap of Naam that washes away all filth.*

Four centuries earlier, Bhai Gurdas, an advanced disciple of Guru Arjan, penned this verse extolling the vision of the lotus feet:

*I wish and long for the dust of his feet
—the dust that has created the Universe.
His lotus feet are the true wealth and a haven of peace,
granting ineffable vision, leading souls Godward
with a glory indescribable and incomprehensible.
Not this, not that; I bow before thee again and again.
— Bhai Gurdas Kabit 72.219*

Moth & the Flame-The Lotus Feet



The Padam Rekha, or Lotus Mark on the sole of Sant Kirpal Singh Ji

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1. In Indian lore, the chakor bird is in love with the the appearance of the full moon, and gazes at it the entire night, its head slowly following the moon across the sky, until its head rests on the ground.
 2. With sustained spiritual practice and grace, somewhat similar lines may form on the sole of the foot over a lifetime. It's not something that can be faked.
"As you think, so you become."

21 The Ancient Legacy

*Throughout the ages
the line of Gurus has been in existence.*
—Gurbani

Spirituality has enjoyed numerous flowerings within the world's great religious traditions, underpinned by the illuminations and revelations of individuals. The Realized Being, in whose person the fullness of mystic experience fuses with gnosis or spiritual knowledge, appears in most if not all of these traditions. Such ecstatic heroes embody a kind of theology of Light based on their receptivity to the Word or Logos, the Naam, Shabd, Udgit, Kalma, or Sarosha, as the God-into-expression power is called in various languages and traditions. As the seeker makes progress, he or she comes to fathom the true meaning behind the revelatory utterances of saints. Christianity and Islam, although not initiatory in their official exoteric forms, do contain such streams. Although the Church attempted to substitute itself in the place of individual prophetic inspiration, illumination emerged from time to time in individuals like Meister Eckhardt, Jacob Boehme, Emmanuel Swedenborg, St. Theresa, and many others.

Sufi and Shiite streams within Islam have acknowledged and honored a divine anthropomorphism manifesting in human form, which draws practitioners toward their own goal of union. Some of the brightest stars in the Sufi galaxy include Mansur, Shamaz Tabriz, Hafiz, Rumi, Najmuddin Kubra, Mueen'u-din Chisti, Ibn Arabi and Bulleh Shah.

In the Buddhist tradition, India's Bodhidharma and Tibet's Milarepa appear as brilliant flashes in time. The Jewish Balshemtov of Russia was a transcendent example of the mystic knower. Spirituality in India flourished under Mahavira of the Jains, in Mira and in Ramakrishna Paramhans. It emerged in the Chinese Master, Lao Tsu, in the Persian prophets Zoroaster and Mani, and numerous others.

As the Word, Logos, or Tao is blind to outer labels, it often moves across religious and family lines. A keen seeker would pay scant attention to the external religious form, nationality or genetic race of the enlightened, just as the shape and color of a bottle has little relevance to what is inside—form being merely a vessel to contain the essence.

As I am about to accompany the Master on his forthcoming tour of northern India's Punjab, my heart picks up a beat. I have long contemplated the peerless quality and variety of this region's heritage of spiritual sons and daughters, and their relationship to the present dispensation.

Punjab actually means 'five waters'; the fertile province is defined by the Beas, Ravi, Satluj, Chenab, and Jhelum rivers. Aryan, Greek, Afghan, Persian, Mongolian, and Turkish armies poured through Himalayan passes into this rich and fertile region, bringing with them new religions, ideas, and arts, cross-pollinating local culture, customs, and bloodlines. Despite invasions and tyranny, the Path of the Masters took deep root here and managed to survive prevailing orthodoxy's frequent efforts to restrain or eliminate it.

Sixteenth-century India was witness to two great spiritual teachers of universal scope: Kabir Sahib of Banares, who came from a low-caste weaver family, and his contemporary, Guru Nanak of the Punjab. Their teachings focus on the perfect science

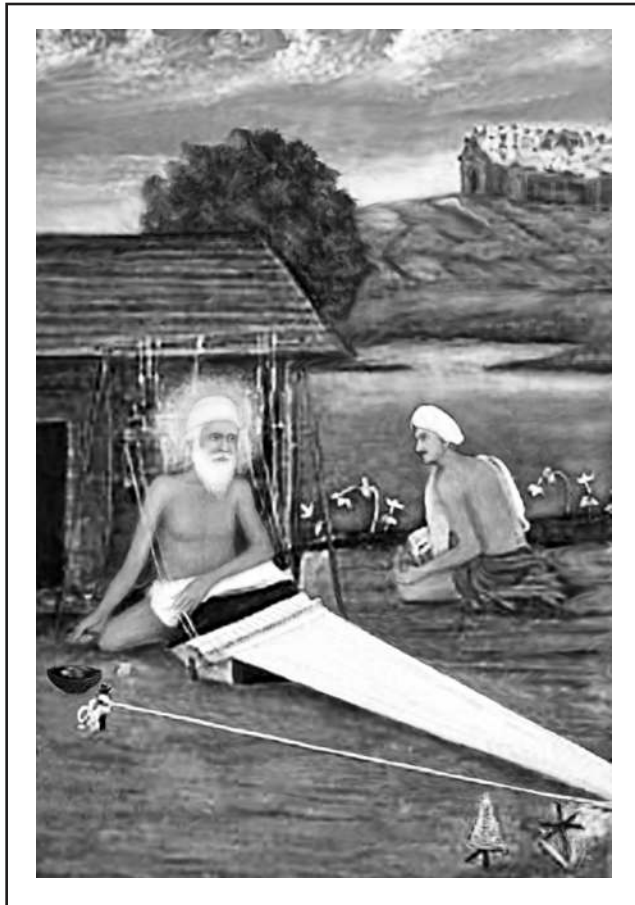
of inner Light and Sound—as well as to outer expression in compassion and selfless service to all creation. Both Saints taught the limitations of idol worship, rites, rituals, fasts, pilgrimages, and casteism. They were much more than mere social reformers as some historians have dubbed them.

The Sikh Gurus: Nanak (1469-1539), considered Guru to Hindus and Pir to Muslims, was first in a lineage of illumined Masters known as the Ten Sikh Gurus. Nanak traveled widely on foot, north to Tibet, east to China's borders, south to Sri Lanka, and west to Baghdad and Mecca—an incredible feat, considering the absence of trains, cars, and airplanes. His contemporary, Kabir Sahib (1399-1519), taught in and around the pilgrimage city of Benares and was also embraced by Hindus and Muslims alike. Although it is taught that Nanak was born spiritually perfect and had no need of any Guru, his prolific writings proclaim the need for such in almost every verse. Some believe that in his youth Nanak encountered Kabir and several other holy persons in the forest where he realized the 'True Bargain of life' (Sacha Sauda), although there is no external proof other than the important fact that their teachings are identical in every essential aspect. Whether this historical issue will ever be resolved is less important than the fact that both lived and sang the unity of the One Creator, of the One Divine Light immanent in all forms, realizable within. Both spoke of the five spiritual regions and of the five holy names. Both emphasized the importance of finding a perfected living teacher or Satguru. Both advocated the transformative power of satsang, the receiving of ethical and spiritual instruction, and of meditation on Sat Naam or the True Name. Although dialects and styles differed, their terminology and cosmology were identical. Their original approaches both found prolific expression in sacred poetry and song.

In the Sikh lineage, Angad followed Nanak, Amar Das followed Angad, and Ram Das followed Amar Das. In 1604 AD, the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, completed his compilation of the Adi Granth or Granth Sahib, comprising approximately 1,400 large pages in Gurmukhi script. This remarkable scripture contains the writings of six of the Gurus (the prolific and beautiful verses of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur were added later by the tenth, Guru Gobind Singh), all of whom used the nom de plume 'Nanak.' Thus they came to be known as Nanak the First, Nanak the Second, Nanak the Third, and so on. Included in the Granth Sahib are the verses of many other saints of realization, belonging to various religions and castes. By far the largest selection belongs to Kabir Sahib. In it, we also find the verses of Dhanna Jat, the farmer; Saina, the barber; Sadhna of the butcher caste; Nam Dev, the calico printer; Ravi Das, the cobbler; Shaykh Farid, a Muslim divine; Raja Pipa, a king; Ramanand, the Brahmin; Ramanuja, the Reformer; the blind poet-saint Sur Das; Trilochan; Beni; Bhikan; Jai Dev; and Parmanand. One of the earliest original versions also contained a hymn of Mira Bai.¹ The Tenth Guru, Gobind Singh included none of his own, although he also was a poet and author of several books and plays.

In Guru Arjan's court were many of India's greatest scholars and musicians who spent years collecting, sorting, and copying verses by hand. Under his inspired guidance, each of the Granth Sahib's thousands of verses was designated one of thirty-one different classical musical measures, or ragas, so that future musicians could know which melody would be best suited for each verse.

Kirpal Singh referred to this inclusive scripture as 'a banquet hall of spirituality' because of its rich diversity of Saints from all backgrounds, castes, prevailing religions and professions. He wrote:



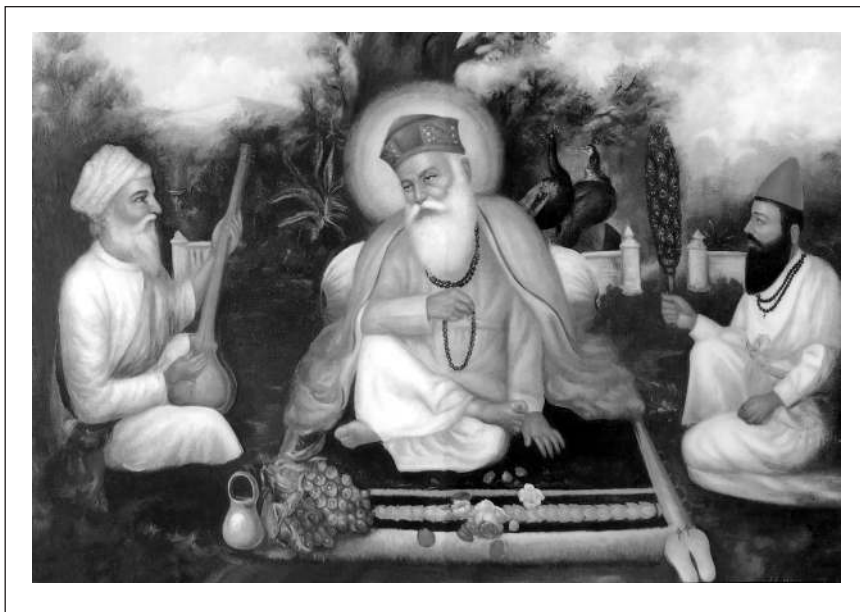
Kabir—the Weaver Saint
(Author's rendition of a 19th century miniature)

The Sikh scriptures occupy a unique position in religious history. They represent not only the first deliberate attempt to present the oneness of all religions, but are composed in a language that is still alive and not a thing of the past. Hence they have lost none of their pristine freshness and have not been wholly buried under the debris of theological interpretation. Being mainly in the form of devotional lyrics, their appeal is not merely expository. They speak of the whole man, singing of his problems, his weaknesses, the vanity of the world and the eternity of the Absolute, beckoning him on to greater and ever greater effort, towards his divine home.²

Guru Arjan Dev's fame as saint, scholar, and patron of the arts spread far and wide. Even the emperor Akbar the Great (1542-1605) twice visited Guru Arjan and became a pious admirer, donating a large tract of land surrounding Amritsar for his work. Arjan's great learning, humility, and universal vision endeared him to the masses, but also earned resentment from the narrow-minded orthodoxy. When the Guru was later falsely accused of undermining Islam and Hinduism and brought before Jahangir, the fanatic son

and successor of Akbar, he was asked to change the Adi Granth. Guru Arjan replied to the emperor:

I regard all, whether Hindu or Muslim, rich or poor, friend or foe, without any hatred or partiality. ...As to the erasure of hymns in the Granth Sahib, I cannot erase or alter even one iota. I am a worshipper of the Immortal God, the Supreme Soul of the world. There is no monarch save Him; and what He revealed to the Gurusis written in the holy Granth Sahib. The hymns which find a place in it are not disrespectful to any Hindu



Guru Nanak with his trusted companions, Mardana (playing the rebek) and Bala.
Painting by unknown Indian artist.

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incarnation or the Prophet Mohammed, blessed be his name. It is certainly stated that prophets, saints, and incarnations are the handiwork of the Immortal God, whose limit none can find. My main object is the spread of truth and the destruction of falsehood; and if, in pursuance of this object, my perishable body must depart, I shall account it great good fortune.

The gentle Guru's enemies concluded that he would yield to no ordinary threats, so they put fetters on him and began to torture him in various ways. He was ordered to sit on red hot-iron plates, super-heated sand was poured upon his head, and was put inside a huge iron pot filled with water, with a burning fire underneath. Not once did the Guru utter a cry nor beg for mercy. When his friend, the Muslim Sufi Hazrat Mian Mir witnessed his torture, he wept and begged permission to use his supernatural powers to bring down a rain of fire upon his imperial tormentors. Guru Arjan replied that although it also was in his power to do this, the way of the Saints was in submission to the will of God.

I bear all this torture to set an example to the Saints of the True Name, that they may not lose patience or rail at God in affliction. The true test of faith is the hour of misery.

He then uttered the famous words,

Tera Bhana Meeta Lagay (Sweet is Thy Will).

After the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, Nanak's dispensation continued unabated through Hargobind (1595-1645), Har Rai (1631-1661), Har Krishan (1656-1664), and Tegh Bahadur (1622- 1675). The number of their disciples steadily increased. Tegh Bahadur also received a martyr's fate at the hands of the fanatic Aurangzeb, the last of the Mughal emperors, who ordered his beheading. Before his tenth year, Gobind Rai, son of the martyred Ninth Guru and his spiritual successor was already fully cognizant of his divine mission.

Aurangzeb ruled India with an iron fist and forcibly converted all in his grasp to Islam. Those who resisted were crushed or enslaved. Over the next three decades the Guru infused courage into the terrorized populace to rise up, defend and reclaim their freedom and dignity. Thus, in 1699, when tyranny was at its zenith, the Tenth Guru established the Khalsa, or brotherhood of the Pure Ones, to protect the weak and innocent and to defend the right to practice one's faith.

Guru Gobind Singh functioned as both Saint and Avatar by exhorting his followers to be Sant sipahi or warrior-saints—chaste, fearless, ethical, fair, honest, and compassionate. He created and organized a defensive army, and never took the role of an aggressor. He claimed neither territory nor possessions won in battle, nor would he allow his followers to loot, rape, or pillage as was common practice. Among his followers were a large number of Muslims whom he loved and respected, encouraging them to keep their distinctive customs, dress, and names. The Guru was indefatigable in his efforts to liberate the people from hatred and superstition. He enjoined worship of one Supreme Being—the Akaal or Timeless—through daily meditation, selfless service, and a code of ethics that has endured to the present time.

The achievements of the Tenth Guru were extraordinary. He was a prolific mystic poet and author of several important works; brilliant general and military strategist, master archer, undefeated swordsman, and a competent spiritual Adept who had fully traversed the inner planes of creation. Tens of thousands sought his guidance and protection. Many maharajas, maharanis and even enemy soldiers and Muslim generals like Budhu

Shah, Saiyed Khan, and Saiyed Beg who initially opposed him on the battlefield became his ardent disciples. Historians have described famous battles when the Guru's non-professional army comprised of farmers and tradespeople beat back professional armies ten times their number. They were like Galahads who declared, 'I have the strength of ten, because my heart is pure.'

I was present when a pacifist asked Master Kirpal how it was possible for Guru Gobind Singh to have been a Master and also take up arms. 'Look here,' he responded, 'if someone were to come here to kill you, should I let them? I will be the first to lay down my life for you!'

The punjabi word sikh is the language equivalent of the Sanskrit shishya or 'disciple'—one who learns. The outer religion and Sikh rituals only developed after the departure of the tenth Guru. Sikhism is the most recent of the major world religions, claiming approximately 20 million adherents. The writings of the Sikh Gurus, Hindu Saints, and Muslim Divines incorporated in the Adi Granth have not yet been altered, but they have been inadequately interpreted and translated by those who have no inkling of the inner way. The Gurus themselves embodied religious tolerance and love, making no distinction between Sikh and non-Sikh.

*The highest religion is to rise to universal Brotherhood;
Aye, to consider all creatures your equals.
Conquer your mind, for victory over self
Is victory over the world.³*

After Guru Gobind Singh: One of Sant Kirpal Singh's many significant contributions to posterity was that he provided important, otherwise missing historical linkage between the Gurus and the spiritual lineage of Sants of the twentieth century:

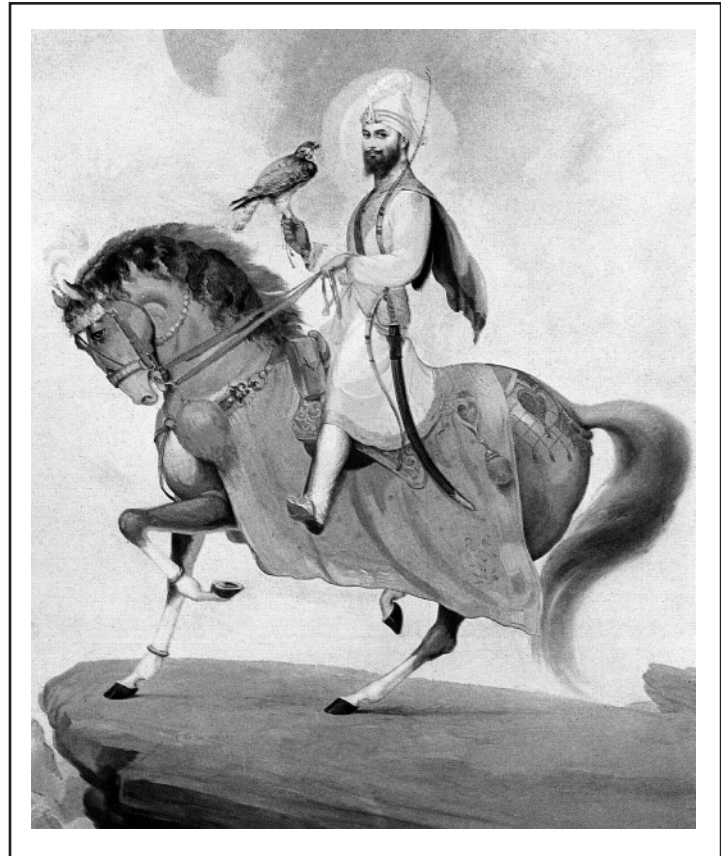
Guru Gobind Singh traveled widely, penetrating the Himalayas in the North and going to Deccan in the South. During his extensive travels, he met and lived with the ruling family of the Peshwas and initiated some of its members into the inner Science. It is said that one Ratnagar Rao of the Peshwa family was initiated and authorized to carry on the work by Guru Gobind Singh. Sham Rao Peshwa, the eldest brother of Baji Rao Peshwa, the then ruling chief, who must have contacted Ratnagar Rao, showed a remarkable aptitude for the spiritual path and made rapid headway. In course of time, this young scion of the royal family settled in Hathras, a town thirty-three miles away from Agra in Uttar Pradesh, and came to be known as Tulsi Sahib (1763-1843), the famous author of the Ghat Ramayana, the Science of the inner Life-Principle pervading alike in man and nature. The vita lampada of spirituality was passed on by Tulsi Sahib to Soami Ji—Shiv Dayal Singh (1818-1878).

The link between Tulsi Sahib of Hathras and Soami Ji of Agra is likely to be overlooked, but there can be little doubt of the same. From the manuscript account of Baba Surain Singh, the Jeevan Charitar Soami Ji Maharaj by Chacha Partap Singh, and the book entitled Correspondence with Certain Americans by Shri S.D. Maheswari, we learn that Soami Ji's parents were the disciples of the Hathras Saint and frequently visited him at his home for his darshan, and attending discourses whenever he visited Agra. It was he who named their son, Shiv Dayal Singh (Soami Ji). Before the birth of the eldest child (Soami Ji), he (Tulsi Sahib) prophesied that a great Saint was about to manifest himself in their home; and after his birth, he told the parents that they need no longer come to Hathras, for the Lord Almighty had come in their midst.⁴

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The Hathras Saint took a keen and lively interest in casting the life of Soami Ji in his own mold. He initiated the young child at a very early age; and Soami Ji, on the last day of his life, told his disciples that he had been practicing the inner Science from the age of six.⁵

Shiv Dayal Singh (Soami Ji) of Agra was the Master of Baba Jaimal Singh (Baba Ji.) After Baba Ji attained realization, he returned to the Punjab and settled on deserted land overlooking the banks of the Beas, where he spent a great deal of time in meditation whenever he was not engaged in military service. In due course, Baba Ji found his great disciple in the person of a handsome young engineer by the name of Sawan Singh Grewal, and empowered him to carry the spiritual torch into the twentieth century. Sawan Singh became known as Hazur, the Great Master, and the size of his following became enormous.



Guru Gobind Singh—the warrior/poet/saint
(watercolor by unknown Indian artist)

1. Max A. McAuliffe, *The Sikh Religion* (New Delhi, India: S. Chand & Co., 1963).
2. Kirpal Singh, *Crown of Life - A Study in Yoga* (Bowling Green, VA: SK Publications 1985), p. 220.
3. Kirpal Singh, *The JAP Ji - The Message of Guru Nanak* (Bowling Green, VA: S.K.Publications, 1987) p. 113.

4. In 1986, Sant Darshan Singh shared with me unique details on the life of Sham Rao Peshwa (Tulsi Sahib). These were his words as I recorded them:

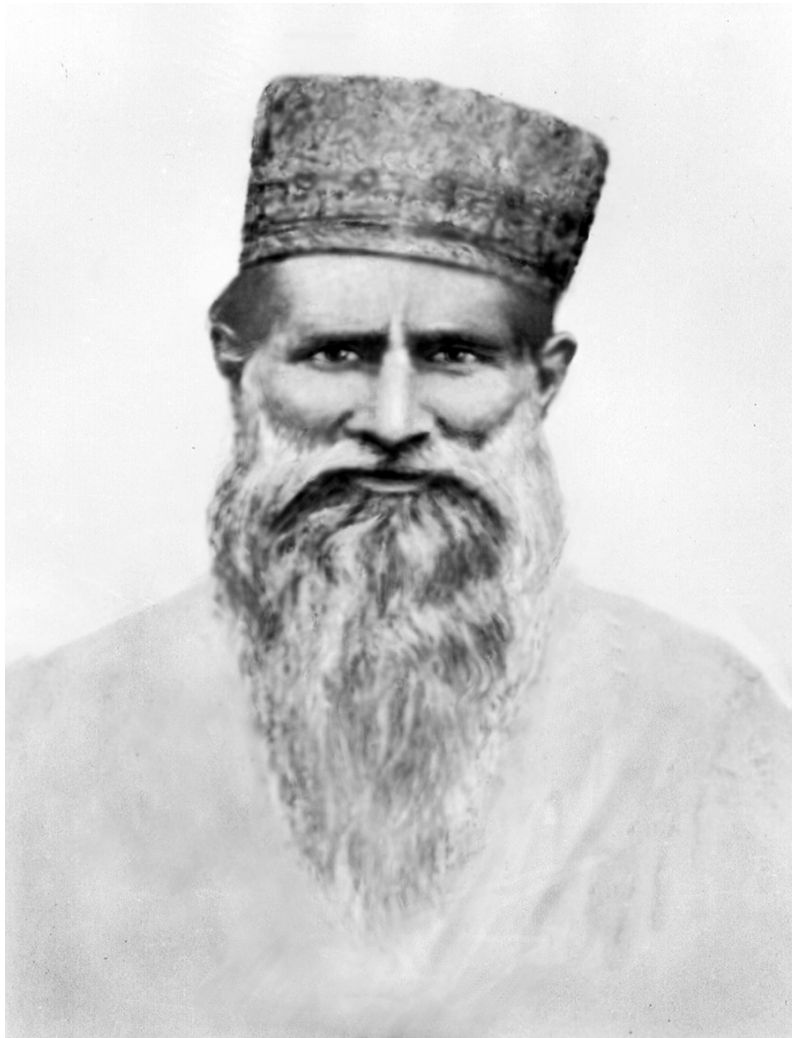
‘Sham Rao Peshwa was born in 1763, the crown prince of the Peshwa dynasty, but, like Gautama Buddha, he was indifferent to kingship and the intrigues of courtly life; his heart was filled with detachment. On the evening before his coronation as king, a great dust storm arose in answer to his prayers. He mounted his horse and rode off into the raging storm, never to return, with orders that none should follow him. He traveled widely, eventually settling in the north at Hathras where he became known as Dakhani Baba (Sage from the South).

‘He was also known as Tulsi Sahib, as distinguished from the earlier fifteenth-century Tulsi Das. In addition to his famous Ghat Ramayana (Ramayana of the Body), he wrote the Shabdavali and Ratansagar (The Jeweled Ocean). There is sufficient circumstantial evidence that Ratansagar was named after his Guru, Ratnagar Rao, who was initiated by Guru Gobind Singh Ji... Before Tulsi Sahib departed this world in 1843, he passed the

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torch to Soami Ji of Agra. Tulsi Sahib stated that he was Tulsi Das in a former life, and because the latter's Ramayana was so greatly misunderstood and interpreted in a literal rather than a figurative or allegorical sense, he came back again as Tulsi Sahib. His Ghat Ramayana, especially the sections on Balkand and Uttarkhand, explain in detail the true significance of the spiritual allegory in such a clear manner that there can be no room for equivocation.'

5. Kirpal Singh, *A Great Saint: Baba Jaimal Singh - His Life & Teachings* (Bowling Green, VA: S.K. Publications, 1993), pp. 7-8.



*Shiv Dayal Singh 'Soami Ji' of Agra
1818 - 1878*

22 Punjab - The Land of Five Rivers

Diary, 6 AM, April 4, 1967: Myriads of small-bird twitterings and raspy crow-caaws resound from the ashram trees overhead as Mohan and Ram Saroop rope piles of luggage onto roof racks. 'Take your seat, please!' Master points me to one of the waiting cars, while bidding farewell to the gathering crowd, closing in like bees to honeycomb. Soon, engines will cough to life and carry us northward to the Punjab.

I came for God, but as unexpected bonus, I've gained entry to India's sacred heart—her people, history, and shrines. Exiting Delhi's teeming labyrinth, we embark on the narrow cobbled road which passes through hundreds of farming villages and towns. In several places the way is lined with those who have been patiently waiting in the sun for hours, just for a glimpse from the Satguru. I ask, 'Mohan Ji, without telephones or other means of communication, how do these people know when or where Maharaj Ji is coming?' 'Some advanced souls talk with Master in meditation,' he replies. 'They know Master's plans and tell others.' I wonder if our dependence on gadgets has rendered us less receptive to such subtle realities.

Patiently, expectantly, villagers salute their Preceptor with hands prayerfully joined or open, wafting over their faces and heads palpable glances sent their way. Darshan is an active but silent process where the eyes become cisterns of a higher, devotional existence. 'The tongue of Love is dumb and mute,' Master says from the front seat. Then, in the sustaining bread and water of life aspect of the Guru—reminiscent of Christ—he adds, 'They eat and drink me!' Here and there, as we slowly pass, I hear plaintive sighs through the car's open windows. Many run again to the front of the procession, darshan after darshan. There are some for whom the Light is dimmed neither by the *darkest night* nor by *physical distance*.

*In the presence of Beauty, who can fault the eye?
Who is to blame—the lovers or the Beloved?*

Chandigarh—City of the Moon: By mid-afternoon, we arrive in Punjab's modern capital lying at the feet of the blue Himalayas, which seem to hover in the air to the north. Chandigarh, City of the Moon, was designed by Le Corbusier, whose unique imprint is evident everywhere in massive curving, almost surreal concrete structures, housing projects, parks, gardens, and wide, tree-lined boulevards. The great French architect captured India's past and translated it into a contemporary city of beauty.

Evening satsang is held on a field in the town center. A multi-colored canopy hoisted on twenty-foot poles, billows overhead in the gusting wind. Ten thousand have gathered to see and hear the Saint from Delhi. I jot down but a few moments from his two-hour discourse:

This body is a wonderful house in which we live, but we have lost the Indweller. There was a simple man who had his horse stolen. When the theft was discovered in the morning, he exclaimed, 'Thank God I have been saved!' People asked in amazement, 'Why are you so thankful? Haven't you just lost your horse?' 'Oh, had I been riding that horse, I would have been stolen also!' The people laughed at his foolishness. But, truly speaking, he was very wise. Do we not lose the rider while saving the horse of the body? We are the rider, the Soul, a conscious entity, a drop from the Ocean of All-Consciousness.

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After some time, tears begin flowing down my interpreter's cheeks and all translation ceases. The familiar words, pyar, prem, mohabat, ishq, and bhakti sweeten the discourse. These names in Hindi and Urdu denote stages of divine Love. The audience sways and ripples like a wheat field in a breeze, and a wondrous shimmering network of Light—like an inverted golden basket—covers all, permeates all. Without interpretation, nothing now remains to distract from the luminous presence. As the chanter sings from the Adi Granth, each verse's hidden meaning unfolds. Both are intuitively synchronized—one singing a line, the Master commenting—and never a moment's hesitation. The charged atmosphere rises to giddy heights, one plateau after another. Worldly comparisons fall short, though I am reminded of a virtuoso sitar and tabla performance.

Later, the interpreter rediscovers his tongue and the pen begins to move:

An oyster is valued only when a pearl is found within its shell. Similarly, our life is highly prized only after we have realized the priceless pearl of Realization.

Where there is reality and genuineness, you will also find imitators who are like the flowers of the seemul tree which bloom but carry no fragrance. Like the bagla [a small white heron, indigenous to India], they dress in white, seemingly meditating, but as soon as they spot a frog or a fish, it is in their beak! Such poseurs prey on the unwary, and inspire lack of faith... Did not Christ in His time chase the money-lenders from the Temple, saying 'Go ye out, Pharisees! Ye have made my Father's House a place of business!'

April 5, 8:00 AM: Hundreds are put into an hour's silent meditation. While walking through the sitters, Master's garment happens to brush my sleeve; without opening eyes, one knows it is he. Intense spiritual currents surge within for the next twenty minutes. Finally, he taps the microphone and asks, 'Leave off meditation please!' But one fortunate woman has gone so deep, nothing avails in bringing her soul back. Only after Master directs Sheila Massi to massage her neck in a certain way, does her attention partially descend to the eye-focus. Absorbed in super-consciousness, the return to the gross and dross of physicality leaves her weeping inconsolably.

Speaking of tears, it is a sight to see—tall, strong, proud tillers of the soil, disciplined soldiers, police officers, merchants, new brides, old wise women, and complete strangers—becoming undone in the presence of the Friend. Surely the garden of the divine is watered by tears, for whichever way I turn I see stoics and skeptics, professors, doctors, lawyers, illiterate peasants, the wealthy and poorest of the poor, powerful and powerless, Easterner and Westerner, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Zoroastrian and Jew—all leveled by the common denominator of love. Kindness, charity and a helping hand are some of its visible manifestations. Tears are the distillation of our body, mind, and soul. Within a single tear shed in longing for God, there are a thousand verses, songs and sacred books.

Kalkaji, April 6: We leave Chandigarh in the morning's half-light for the mountain-ashram at Kalkaji. After reaching our destination, we embark from the vehicles, climb to the top of a high hill, then descend a narrow footpath into a verdant ravine. In grassy meadows below stands a solitary, simple white-washed brick structure with billowing awnings spread out for shade where more than a thousand wait. Master-ji's thrilling voice echoes across an encircling amphitheater of mountains. Three or four long-separated disciples break ranks and fling themselves before their Preceptor. Nimbly side-stepping the would-be feet-touchers, he mounts the white-sheeted dais. His words bear

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the weight of attainment, like the earth their mountains. The verdant hills, the smoke-blue peaks and azure sky form a perfect backdrop. The world elsewhere is oblivious of this simple king—though no potentate of worldly domain is he, this emperor of hearts.

*Sing O heavens and be joyful O earth
And break forth into singing O mountains!. —Isaiah 49.13*

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Baba Sawan Singh, as a disciple, stood at the side of his Master, Baba Jaimal Singh in the Murree Hills. Sawan expressed appreciation of the beautiful scenery to Baba Ji, who replied, *'My child, you do not understand. **You and I were here before these hills were even formed.***'

Pinjore Gardens: We depart Kalka around 11AM and by mid-afternoon arrive at the fabled Gardens of Pinjore. I sit cross-legged on cool marble in the shade of a sandstone cupola supported by slender columns, eyes riveted on the Friend nearby as he partakes of a small meal.¹ Eyelids close of themselves, as wave after wave of bliss wafts from his direction, simultaneously within. Somewhere along the way, mischievous Tai Ji places an ice cube against my forehead, testing my concentration. This drives attention deeper. After a few minutes, I become dimly aware of giggling at the periphery. Eyes open gradually and refocus on the Master, seriously staring back at me from ten feet away. Minutes pass. With a sweeping arm, he gestures to the stairways, descending terraces, fountains, and buildings flanked by troop-like ranks of lush mango and lichee orchards laid out in perfect symmetry spreading for miles into the valley below. Under his breath he mutters, 'There are five levels.' Heart silently asks, How many levels are there in your words?

Majori Village: We reboard and traverse a dusty, pot-holed dirt-path for several miles through farmland. After a sharp turn up a wide path hedged by thorn-topped mud walls, we reach Majori. The artist in me is enamored with the congruity of the bright landscape and the ochre tones of adobe architecture; the sky bright blue above. Baba Lehna, the village chieftain, rushes forward to bow respectfully but instead is embraced affectionately by the Master. We are led through narrow twisting corridors past fat, sleepy buffaloes and arrive at Lehna's humble dwelling. Seeing me unmindful in the high-noon blaze (as Kipling said, 'Only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the mid-day sun'), Master calls me to his side in the shade. Hilarious Punjabi tales are swapped, and the air is filled with intoxicating laughter. After a while these rustics beseech Father to bless their humble homes, and thus begins a walking tour where babies, sweets, fruits, and scriptures are blessed. They offer everything they have, which he accepts for a moment and returns. Their grateful and brilliant smiles aren't easily erased from the slate of my mind. What I experience in his presence makes me want to dance and shout from rooftops, 'He who sent us into this world has come to take us back!' But legs stumble and the tongue is dumb.

A saint is an ocean of love and when tides rise in it, even the people sitting on the seashore get drenched. If you want to cultivate love, you must associate with a Master-soul, for then you will both see and experience great overflowing tides of love in his eyes.²

We return to Chandigarh for three days, where I am boarded with the Hastir family. Vishwanath Hastir is a well-placed civil servant, plus homeopathic doctor who never charges for his diagnoses and medicines.³ My hosts anticipate every need with such cheerful generosity that I am ashamed for my past selfishness. I resolve to emulate their

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example. 'We believe,' he said, 'that the guest is God.'

On our last evening, Vishwanath finds in me an eager listener: 'As a university student in 1936, I often visited the house of Sant Kirpal Singh in Lahore during the time he was writing his magnum opus, Gurmat Siddhant ('Philosophy,' or 'Wisdom' of the Masters). In fact, we lived on the same street, Ram Galli Lane. Ram Galli means the Lane of God, and because we had such a great Saint living next to us, it seemed that God was indeed near! Master detailed his son Darshan, who was also my close friend, to research relevant verses from the scriptural treasures of Persian and Arabic mystics for inclusion in Gurmat Siddhant. I was also given some service collecting quotations. When completed, Gurmat Siddhant's approximately two thousand pages were read before Baba Sawan Singh in the presence of many others.'

I interrupt, 'Were you there?'

'Yes, I had the good fortune to be there also, at least for part of the reading. When the recitation was completed, Baba Sawan Singh reverently placed Gurmat Siddhant on his head and proclaimed, "This is the greatest book on spirituality written in centuries; listening to it has the same uplifting effect as attending satsang. Although published in my name, Kirpal Singh is its author.'" Following a Guru-disciple tradition, Sant Kirpal Singh signed his work in the name of his Master. Vishwanath continues, 'To give some idea of the size of Hazur's satsangs at Beas towards the close of his mission, and of the enormous quantities of food cooked and served freely to all who came, the quantity of salt alone was more than seven hundred pounds.' I calculate that if the salt content were 2%, then the total food, including chapatis, which are salt-free, would have been in excess of 60,000 lb. per satsang.

April 7: Of the many initiated this morning, more than twice as many women than men witness the luminous form of the Master within. Five women and four men experience total sensory withdrawal from the physical body. I specifically ask the Master why some collapsed on the ground during sitting. 'If one sits erect, falling over is avoided,' he answers, and adds, 'Because of their devotional nature, women often progress faster than men.' When I ask about the special position for listening to the Sound-current and the speed of transcension, he confirms my experience: 'When sitting in the bhajan posture, the soul withdraws from the body faster than in any other position.'

Gobind in the Guru: At high noon we bid adieu to the Hastir family and are on the road again. Twice our caravan stops along the winding, hilly highway as hundreds of villagers seeking blessings surround Master's car. In the middle of a deserted stretch of jungled ravines and hills, Maharaj Ji suddenly tells Mohan to pull the car over. A second later, a jeep speeds past from the opposite direction. Its driver suddenly slams on the brakes, sliding into a 180-degree turn. Out leaps a Sikh Major in full army uniform. Master, in the back seat, opens his door and the Major runs over and flings himself on his feet, blurting, 'My Lord, when driving past, I saw Guru Gobind Singh Ji appear in your form. Who are you, Guruji?' He had never seen or heard of Sant Kirpal Singh Ji before! The prescient Master replies, 'I am only a humble servant of the Guru.'

We have just passed Baba Sawan Singh's Dera at Beas. The golden domes of the Satsang Ghar shimmer in the distance, and gradually disappear as we move along. This remarkable building was designed, and its construction supervised by Sawan Singh himself, who by profession was a gifted engineer. Through half-closed eyes, I glimpse Hazur's ghostly image riding a white horse, keeping time with our car. I turn around to look at Master. He is silent, his eyes brimming with a million remembrances.

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Kiratpur is our next halt. Ancient and rugged dun-colored hills ring the town on three sides, a river to the west. Kiratpur gained great sanctity throughout the Punjab as the sixth Guru, Hargobind, and his son Har Rai, the seventh, lived here. A local family generously vacated their home for our use. I'm given a bed on the rooftop, but when a light rain begins to fall, I am moved under the verandah just three feet from the Master whom I can see and hear through the unglazed window. Until past midnight, eager young Sikhs come seeking answers and the removal of doubt.

April 8: Around 3 AM, I rise for meditation; Master has been resting for the past two hours in the darkness, close enough for me to hear his rhythmic breath. My meditation is re-channeled as I become aware of a faint rustle of sheets. The Master sits up, near yet unseen. Unexpectedly, and barely audible, I hear him whisper-singing some verses. Honing in on his voice, I recognize lines of the Jap Ji—the sacred verses composed by Guru Nanak five hundred years earlier:

*Ek Onkar, Sat Naam...
There is One Reality,
The Unmanifest-Manifested;
Ever existent, True Naam—Conscious Spirit,
The Creator; pervading All;
Without fear; without enmity;
Timeless; Unborn, Self-existent,
Complete within Itself.
Through the favor of His true servant, the Guru,
God may be realized.
Truth was when there was nothing,
Truth was before all ages began,
Truth exists now, O Nanak,
And shall exist forevermore.*

The Jap Ji's thirty-eight stanzas, one flowing into the next, portray a beautiful lyric tapestry of the macrocosm, leading to the finale:

*Air is the Master, Water the father, and Earth the mother,
Day and Night are the two nurses in whose lap the whole world is at play.
Our actions: good and evil, will be brought before His court,
And by our own deeds, shall we move higher or be cast into the depths.
Those who have communed with the Word, their toils shall end
And their faces shall flame with glory,
Not only shall they have salvation, O Nanak,
But many more shall find freedom with them.⁴*

Master finishes, and the silence begins to resonate. In the ringing thunder, my soul skirts the awesome chasm between death and life. The Adepts—and Master Kirpal is unquestionably one of the greatest—wing far beyond, administering to countless denizens on the inner planes, as many disciples have, and do witness. I marvel that while emancipated from the husks and shells of rituals, he still observes and respects the traditions into which he was born. The Sikh scriptures tell us, 'The true Master is also the true Disciple.' And, while the initiates may stop and start thousands of times, the Masters begin simran only once.



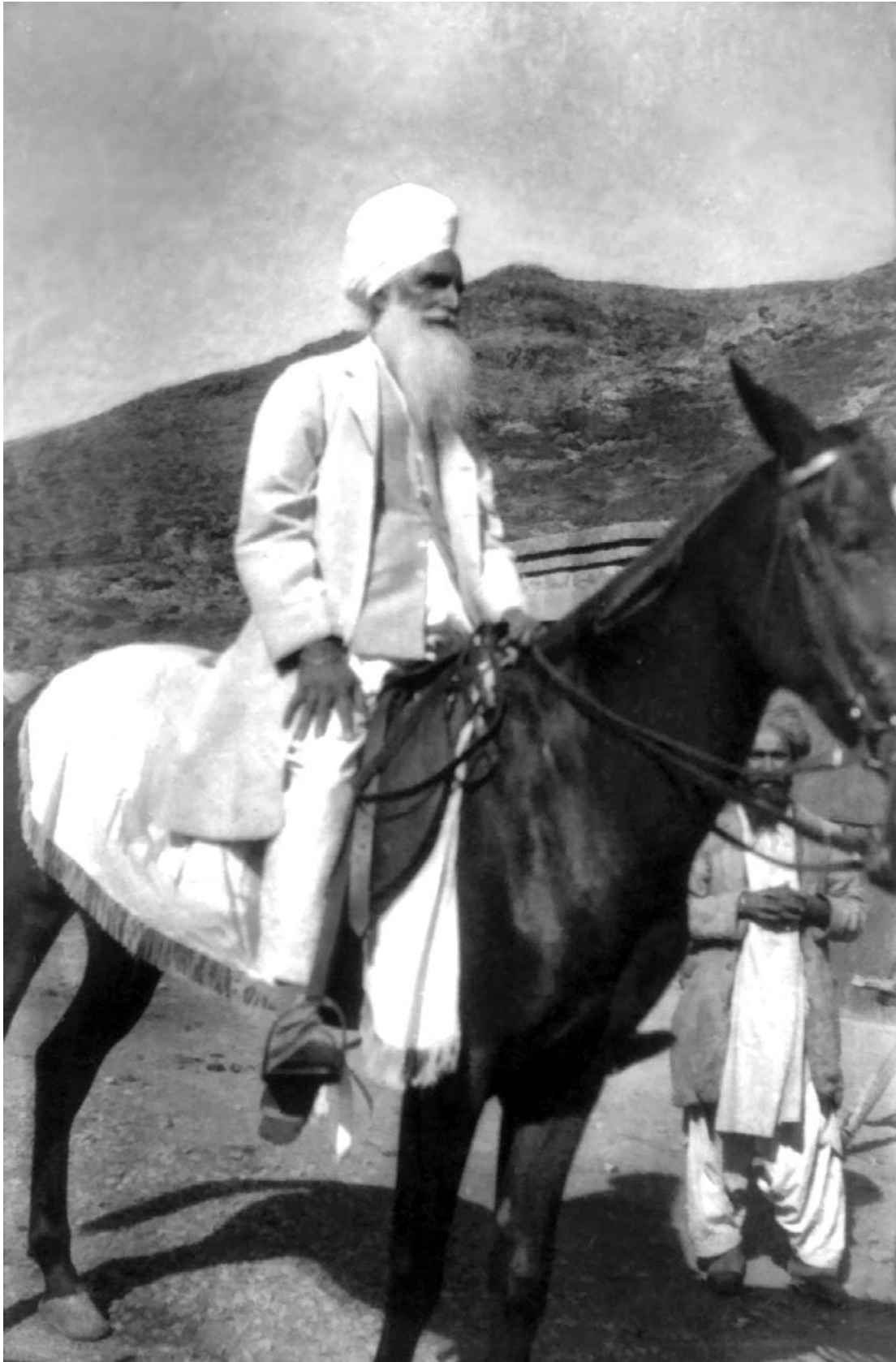
Sant Kirpal Singh giving satsang in the presence of Hazur - early 1940's

While taking tea and fruit with him at 7 AM, Gurudev solicitously inquires after my welfare, to which I reply that I am very comfortable and very happy! By eight, Pathi-ji's thrilling voice, amplified, echoes off the crenelated hills. Kiratpur's entire populace sits before the Master who proclaims the purpose of existence. He moves amongst them, an ageless Messiah in an ageless setting. The camel and ox, palm trees, adobe and stone buildings, bearded patriarchs, wise mothers, and bright-eyed children adorn the scene; this is a page torn from the Bible. Here, a few pearls have been plucked from his talk:

If even a dog will clean the ground with his tail before sitting, how can we expect God, who is all purity, to sit in an unclean place? If God's image is not reflected in us, it is because the mirror of our heart is not yet clear.

Naam is the true paras, or Philosopher's Stone, reputed to have alchemic property of changing base metal into gold. Once, a man saved the life of an alchemist and as reward, was gifted with the fabulous paras for one month only. Our man went to the market to buy iron so he could change it into gold. 'The price of iron is too dear. I will wait for its price to drop.' He waited until the next day, but the price, instead of dropping, had risen sharply. And thus, everyday thereafter, the price continued rising. He kept procrastinating until the month had passed. The magician returned to claim his stone. Had the foolish man bought the iron, even at a high price, he could have turned it into gold. Similarly is the case with the disciples. What you have received is of infinitely greater value. While the Philosopher's Stone may turn iron into gold, a Saint can turn you into a Saint! But if you continue putting off your spiritual practices, procrastinating, frittering away valuable time in outer pursuits, you will find this precious life gone. Then it will be too late. Don't put off till tomorrow what you can do today. Make hay while the sun shines!

Paramhansa Ramakrishna was a simple bhakta (devotee) and didn't pose like other sadhus; he had experience of transcendent Reality. When asked by Naren (Swami Vivekananda), 'Master, have you seen God?' Ramakrishna replied, 'Yes, my son. Not only have I seen God, but I see Him even more clearly than I see you!' At another time Ramakrishna held open his hand before Naren, saying, 'If this is a plate of honey, and you are a bee, how will you eat it?' Naren replied, 'I will come to the edge to eat it, so



Hazur was a superb horseman.

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that my wings may not become immersed in the honey and I drown.’ Ramakrishna said, ‘This is the sea of Immortality! You will not die! Plunge headlong into it!’

If the Master cannot give you experience by opening your third eye then he too cannot see. Go to an able person. If a teacher is only matriculate, he cannot give you a Master’s Degree, but do not degrade lesser teachers, respect them. My advice is to go to someone of the highest degree, who not only sees and knows the Reality in all its phases, but who can also make you see That.

Remember: wife without husband, elephant without tusks, bird without feathers, body without eyes and calf without milk is just like a soul without a Master. The barren land, which receives no rain, is no different than a human being bereft of Naam. A well without water, a house without light and an orchard without fruit are like a soul cut off from God’s divine Light and Melody...

April 10 Kanpur is a sleepy little village at the end of a long dusty road where lies the rustic beauty and soul of Bharat. From the top of a three-tiered brick house, I look across golden-green fields spreading into the distance, hemmed by blue-purple mountains that float above the valley. Peasants bend and labor in patches of alfalfa, wheat, onions, barley, tall sugar cane and bright yellow mustard. Directly below me, hustle and bustle rises from the langar; devoted hands prepare spicy lentil dal, curried cauliflower and potatoes, pakoras (vegetable fritters), rice pilau, and chapatis. More than a thousand sit beneath awnings on a newly harvested field. Responsive chanting echoes across the ancient land.

I’m startled from my reverie by exploding firecrackers, signaling arrival. Like one long separated, I run to greet and follow the Master to the second-floor. Pictures of Saints adorn the walls. Pointing to one of himself, he asks me, with a laugh, ‘Who is that fellow? Do you know who he is?’ I know nothing, but manage to click the shutter.

While tonight’s satsang concludes with a bhajan from Kabir, plaintively rendered by Pathi-ji, Master’s lion-like eyes half close, then turn up in their sockets for several minutes. He is like Aslan—the mythic lion of Narnia—in whose roar the universe manifests and unmanifests.

Guru in a Hurry: Later, when alone with him in his room, I express a troubled observation: ‘Why is it that in so many places we have visited, the followers of _____ have tried to disturb your satsangs and spread negative propaganda? I have seen them tearing down your tour posters.’⁵

‘During the time of my Master,’ he answers, ‘there was much opposition from the Akalis (an ultra-orthodox sect). They would say, “Don’t look into the eyes of Sawan Singh. He’s the Negative Power!” But whoever was against Hazur, after seeing him became his staunchest follower. Once, when Hazur visited my home village of Sayyed Kasran, Akalis came and threw stones in the satsang. Hazur said, “Thank you for your kind reception!” And on these words, they were changed. Just see the angle of vision he was coming from!

‘It is also happening like that, except now, opposition is from _____. They also say, “Don’t look into Kirpal Singh’s eyes! He’ll mesmerize you. He’s the Negative Power!”’ Master smiled, ‘But whoever comes here gets first-hand experience of what they cannot get elsewhere. Hundreds come to me where they have something with God’s Grace. The cat will be out of the bag, I tell you! I received one letter from their forerunner in the

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West—a chiropractor—who wrote me, “If any man has inner experience of Light and Sound at initiation, his life-span will be cut short by two years.” Can you imagine? Now their followers are afraid of asking for any experience. Would you like your life to be cut short by two years? Has your life been cut short?”

I reply, laughing, ‘No.’

‘In the letter, he asked, “Does this experience affect the nervous system?” I said, “No, one becomes fresher, enlivened. Light and Sound are the Bread of Life.” That letter is with me in the ashram. Further, they quote from scripture which says: “It is Satan-ish for the disciple to be in a hurry,” that “hurry is the work of Kal—the negative power.” Yes, the disciple should not be in a hurry. But can the disciple complain if the Guru is in a hurry?!” His laughter is filled with Light. It was often the practice of Masters of antiquity to bestow initiation upon only a select few and even then not until the probationers had passed through extremely difficult trials testing their sincerity and faith. But in the present age, with its particular needs, time limitations and human frailties, Masters have opened up the flood-gates, making true spirituality more accessible than at any other time in history.



Ludhiana is our next stop. It’s one of Punjab’s major cities. The ashram here—one of sixty throughout India—is managed by Gobind Ram. As I get to know this colorful disciple, I discover one totally motivated by loving zeal.

‘Gobind Ram, tell me your story,’ I ask my grizzled friend, to which he replies, ‘Sahib, you don’t want to know!’

‘Yes I do! Please tell me so I can learn.’ After some coaxing, he heaves a sigh, ‘Aachaa [all right]. Before I came to Maharaj Ji, or shall I say before he picked me from the gutter, I was very, very bad. I was a gambler and a smuggler. I was addicted to drinking, opium, and ganja [marijuana]. My temper was uncontrollable, and everyone feared me, including the police. In broad daylight, I used to yank the gold necklaces and nose jewels from wealthy women. Although I had hoarded up a fortune, I was miserable and restless; my conscience never allowed me a moment’s peace, thinking of all the suffering I had caused, but I was helpless to change. As I grew older, I began to pray for deliverance, knowing I would have to pay dearly.



I took this photo as the Master looked out the window in Kanpur Village

‘A few years ago Maharaj Ji came to Ludhiana. What a Godly beauty! What a power! If I could find any mercy in this world, I knew it would come through him! I pleaded, ‘Maharaj! Give this worthless sinner your Naam!’ He said, ‘Yes, you can be initiated providing you mend your ways. You must return all your ill-gotten gains, or you will never become free. Devote your life to serving the needy and to the spiritual practices, which will be revealed to you.’

Gobind Ram continues, ‘Not knowing from whom I had stolen, I stuffed all my ill-gotten money and valuables into a big sack and went to the center of a busy intersection where I dumped it onto the ground. I called out as loudly as I could in all directions, “Come! Take according to your karma!” The rush of all those people was a sight to see!’

I have met another ex-dacoit, whom I refer to as Daku (not his real name). In 1959, the Master gave a discourse in Daku’s home village, the subject of which happened to be the redemptive grace of the Sant Satgurus. Historical examples were given —Mary Magdalene, saved by Jesus; Sajjan Thug saved by Guru Nanak; Valmiki, a robber who became a Saint, and the author of the original Ramayana—to show that change is not only desirable, but possible, even for those who have trespassed all moral boundaries.

‘There is hope for everyone, providing they are sincerely repentant and desire to change,’ but, Master added, ‘Not even God can change one who doesn’t want to be changed. Only that sin is forgiven which is done no more!’ However, Master declined to initiate Daku at this time.

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After a few weeks the repentant Daku arrived at Sawan Ashram accompanied by all the members of his gang. They were all initiated and completely changed their lives by adopting the Master's ethical and spiritual teachings. In time, their village—a place once known for evil became known for good. Master often referred to Daku, 'Now he is putting in six hours of meditation a day. Even robbers can become Saints! Every saint has a past, and every sinner a future.'

A few weeks ago at the ashram, Daku came down with a case of acute appendicitis. He was in obvious pain, and the doctors advised he be operated on immediately, but Master demurred, 'wait and see.' Another day passed, and Daku's suffering increased commensurately. Again the Master's advice was sought; again, 'Wait until tomorrow.' The heavy debt had to be paid and the Master didn't want it to be deferred to another lifetime. That morning, a village herbalist arrived, and went straight to Daku as though inwardly directed. After a brief consultation, the herbalist pierced the middle of Daku's left ear and tied a loop of thread through the hole. He then brewed a strong tea of neem (margosa) leaves, prized for antiseptic healing qualities, then immersed a towel in the tea and applied poultices to the ear. As predicted, a huge amount of pus discharged over the next few days and the swollen appendix returned to normal. Daku was completely healed.

My mind speculates on the karmic dimensions of this case, of suffering and grace, and the unorthodox ways of the Saints. The Master can use any medium he chooses to bring someone to health, if it is in accordance with the divine plan.

Book learning vs. Reality: Speaking of the vast difference between academic knowledge, and direct, immediate mystical experience, Maharaj Ji relates the story of Kabir and Sarbajit:

Perhaps you have heard the story of Kabir and the learned pundit? After reading many books and winning many debates, the pundit announced, 'I am now to be addressed as Sarbajit, the Invincible!' He went to his mother and declared, 'O mother, call me Sarbajit now. I have gained so much knowledge that nobody can defeat me in religious debate!' His mother, who was very wise, said, 'Go to Saint Kabir and if you can win him over, only then will I call you Sarbajit.' So, the vain pundit loaded up a bullock cart full of books and went to the house of Kabir Sahib. When Kabir asked about the purpose of his visit, the pundit replied, 'Either you give me in writing that I am Sarbajit the Invincible, or enter into debate with me.'

Kabir Sahib humbly acquiesced and gave him in writing, 'Sarbajit is the winner and Kabir, the loser.' But when he took this paper home to show his mother, it read, 'Sarbajit is the loser, and Kabir, the winner.' Sarbajit became very angry and returned to Kabir with his demands. Again Kabir wrote, 'Sarbajit is the winner and Kabir, the loser.' Sarbajit ran home to show it to his mother, but again the paper read, 'Kabir is the winner and Sarbajit the loser.' A third time he returned to Kabir, but this time Kabir flatly told him, 'O Pundit, you speak of what you have read and studied, whereas I speak of what I have experienced; the two can never agree. If you have some inner experience of Reality, only then come and talk with me.'

April 13 - Faqir Chand of Hoshiarpur: Master lets me tag along in his car to a holyman conference in Hoshiarpur, about an hour's drive from Ludhiana. Sadhus in saffron robes, and other representatives of Hindu and Sikh faiths, gaze out upon an audience of several hundred from a large dais. Master Kirpal, as the guest of honor, is warmly

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received. Among the holy men is Faqir Chand, head of this ashram and the successor of Maharishi Shivbrat Lal. Rai Saligram, who was one of the chief disciples of Soami Ji of Agra, initiated Shivbrat Lal. Faqir Chand was linked to the same path of Light and Sound, but through a different lineage than that of Baba Ji and Master Sawan.

While smoking a hookah on stage, Faqir Chand launches into a colorful discourse. In his description of the inner spiritual regions, I take notice when he mistakenly reverses the experiences of the third and fourth planes.

After leaving Hoshiarpur, Master, from the front seat, carefully cuts and peels an apple and passes the pieces around. From the back I ask, 'Maharaj Ji, what is the fate of those disciples of a lesser Master who has advanced spiritually to, say, the second or third stage, but not the ultimate Goal [Sach Khand]?' I have Faqir Chand in mind.

'Their progress will stop,' he answers. 'They will not be able to go farther than their guru.'

Will the people who follow them derive lasting benefit?'

'No.' End of discussion.

Ludhiana—Questions & Answers: We return to the Ludhiana ashram late in the afternoon. Hundreds have been waiting, meditating and singing bhajans. After a brief rest, Master invites questions. A woman describes her difficulties in stilling the mind in meditation, a common complaint.

M: 'Do you keep the self-introspection diary?'

Woman: 'No, I am illiterate.'

M: 'Do you give fifty rupees instead of five?'

Woman: 'No.'

M: 'If you can count up to fifty and know the difference between five and fifty, why can't you count your mistakes?' Master chuckles. 'Keeping the diary means keeping track of the impediments and imperfections in our lives; then weed them out! If you don't check your lower tendencies, how can you go up in meditation?'

An old grandmother slowly rises to her feet. 'I don't see anything in meditation now, but I used to see a lot before.'

M: 'You are not meditating accurately now. There is something lacking in your concentration. There is a cure for not seeing, but there is no cure for not meditating. Meditate regularly, with single-pointed attention in the manner already revealed to you, and the inner way will be opened again.'

An elderly man stands with folded hands. 'Master, I am a disciple of Baba Sawan Singh Ji. For many years I haven't been able to sit in bhajan due to severe pains in my hips, but now that you have come, I can sit and, with your blessings, the inner vision has opened again.'

Master humbly replies, 'It is all due to Hazur's grace that people are benefiting. I am only a puppet in his hands.'

A white-bearded Sardar comes forward to confess: 'Maharaj Ji, forgive me, I have started drinking. Please forgive me, I will never drink again.'

M: 'O' Baba, it is pardoned, but don't drink again, and see towards your white beard. Your white hairs are a sign that the angel of death is approaching. What are you doing in your old age?'

Recitation without Naam: A renowned Ragi⁶ once came to Baba Sawan Singh, listened to his discourse which focused on the futility of external religious practice—such as formulaic prayers, fasting, rituals, blind faith and scriptural reading—comparing that with the supreme blessing of being linked to the Unstruck Melody of Naam, via the agency of a living Satguru. The Ragi was profoundly affected. After the satsang was over, he approached the great Master and asked, ‘Hazur, I have been reading and reciting the scriptures most of my life. I thought this was Naam. Pray tell me, what is the benefit of this as compared to the Naam which you speak of?’

Hazur asked him to fill up a nearby piece of paper with zeros, and when the Ragi finished doing so, Hazur asked him, ‘Bhai Ji [respected brother], what is the value of the zeros?’ The Ragi replied, ‘Nothing, Hazur, they are just zeros.’

Hazur then asked him to put ‘one’ before the zeros and asked, ‘Now what is the value of what you have written?’

The Ragi replied, ‘Hazur, it is inestimable. No one can count that high.’

Hazur concluded, ‘Bhai Ji, singing the scriptures without Naam is just like all the zeros on the paper. It has little value, but when you get Naam from a perfect Saint, it is like putting One before them all. Then your life becomes infinitely precious.’

Reformation of an alcoholic: An alcoholic was initiated in Ludhiana on the ‘67 tour. While half-heartedly agreeing not to imbibe again, within a few days his old craving overpowered both will and reason. Two years of steady drinking and deterioration ensued. As much as he wanted to reform himself, he was helplessly caught in the grip of addiction. One day he overcame his shame, and traveled to Delhi to seek the Master’s help before whom he pleaded: ‘Maharaj Ji, please don’t make me promise not to drink for I know I haven’t the strength to keep it. I do not want to be false to you. Please help me reform, for my life is in ruin, and my family is badly affected. I cannot change myself.’ And he fell on his Satguru’s feet, crying. Pleased with his confession and honesty, Master told the fellow, ‘All right, you may drink, but promise me just one thing.’ Master looked at him with a mixture of sternness and compassion. ‘Promise that you will never drink in My presence!’

After giving his solemn word, the man returned home and kept the bottle at bay. However, after a couple of weeks the old craving began tormenting him again. He remembered his promise, but since Kirpal Singh was five hundred miles away, he reached for a bottle he had earlier hidden under his bed. With trembling hands, he poured a glass, but as he raised it to his lips, he had the shock of his life, for the Master was standing across the room looking at him. He rubbed his eyes, but the Master’s form remained. He really wanted that drink! To avoid the Master’s gaze, he closed his eyes and quickly raised the glass. Before the liquor was in his mouth, he received a tremendous slap. From that moment on, he never touched liquor again.

*A drunkard, a lover and a moth begin their circling of the Flame;
Friend, I found a great bargain, the sacrifice of mine and wine.
Trading, I found the inebriate eyes of the Beloved
Dancing me in the tavern of the Timeless*

Raho, Bersian & Nawansher: From Ludhiana, we motor on to Raho, birthplace of the grandfather of avatar Ram Chandra. In the 17th century, Raho had become a flourishing Mughal center, renamed as Sirhind. Guru Gobind Singh’s two young sons were cruelly

Moth & the Flame - Punjab - The Land of five Rivers

bricked up alive inside a wall by order of Sirhind's ruler. Within two decades, Sirhind was razed to the ground by the forces of Banda Bahadur, and its original name restored. The ashram here is situated in a large building more than four hundred years old, one of few that escaped destruction. Overgrown mounds of ancient bricks and rubble remain scattered throughout the largely abandoned town, mute reminders of the past. Nearby flows the lazy Satluj River, where my ancestor Lt. Gen. Cripps and the British army came within a hair of losing a decisive battle against the forces of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. We spend the night here on the ashram's roof beneath the stars. In the early morn while meditating, a small bird alights on my head, a special honor. After breakfast, we move on to Bersian village, where satsang is held in the fields of a cultivator. At its conclusion, an old man stands and addresses the Master: 'Maharaj, my name is Amar Chand. Several weeks ago, my only son, Chanan Ram became deathly ill, but he did not have the benefit and protection of initiation.' His voice quivers with emotion as he continues, 'While sitting by his side, I closed my eyes and Hazur suddenly appeared in your company. Your radiant form came closer and you gave the clear order to convey the secret of the Five Charged Names to my son, as his soul was about to depart. I therefore directed him to close his eyes and repeat the five names mentally. After a few minutes, he opened his eyes and mouth and repeated, "I am seeing the light-filled images of Hazur and Maharaj Kirpal. They are telling me, 'Prepare to leave this world. It is not your permanent place. You have to leave now.' Father, I bid you farewell." I was satisfied. He then closed his eyes, and his soul took flight into the Beyond.' Grateful tears roll down Amar Chand's weathered cheeks as he concludes, 'As I am an initiate of Hazur, now my son is yours. The almighty power is One and we are bound in it forever.'

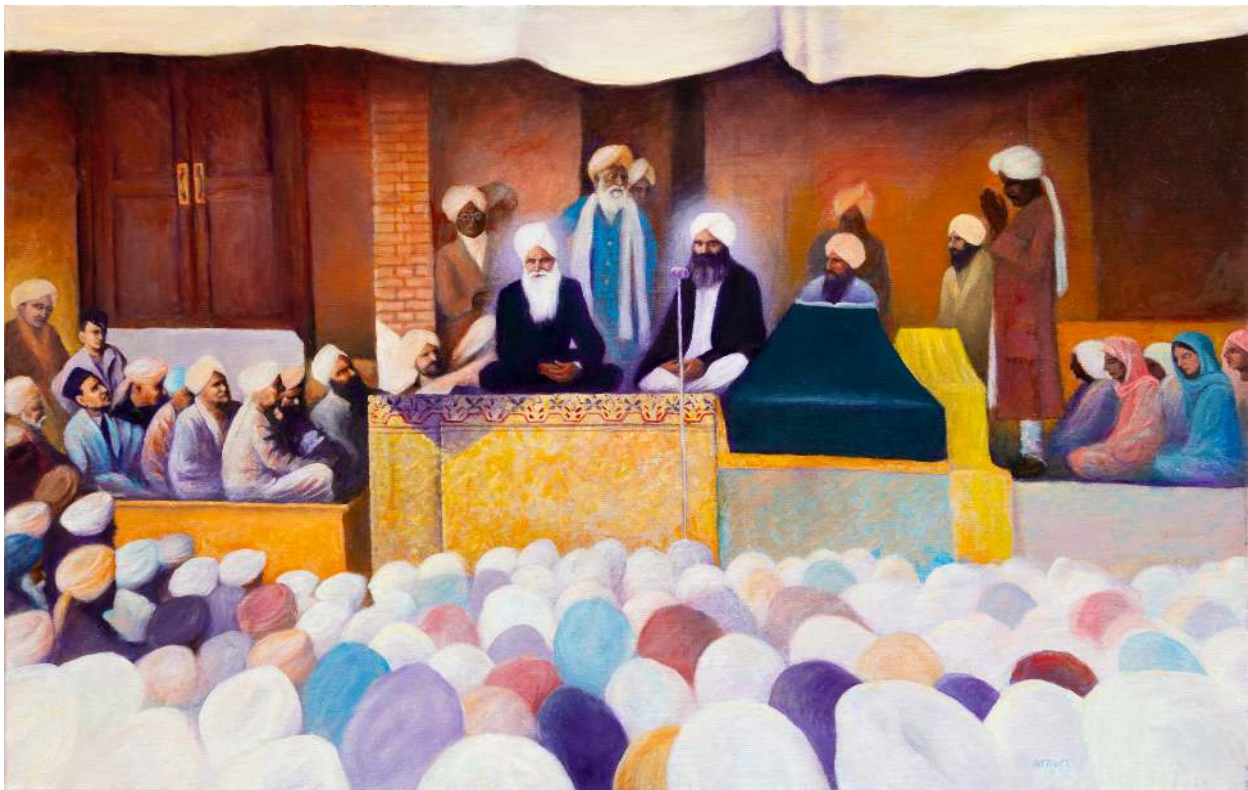
In the fierce heat of the afternoon (120 F.) I'm invited upstairs to take rest in the Master's room. Mysterious and alleviating cool breezes waft through it. Initially I am fearful that my thought patterns, so apparent to him, might defile the super-sublime atmosphere. While lying upon the bare floor with my head towards the nearby reclining Master, anxiety subsides as grace-currents allow attention to quickly withdraw.

Later, one muses, How can a frail bulb withstand the Power-house? How may a broken cup contain the Ocean? It is said of him, 'He drank the seven seas and yet his lips remained dry.' In the golden ripeness of late afternoon we drive a few more miles down the tree-lined road to the town of Nawansher.

On the following day, Master speaks of gratitude and remembrance:

There are so many mountains and trees on the face of the Earth, but she does not grumble. Once she was asked if there was any burden which was too great to bear. The Earth replied, 'Yes, the only burden I cannot bear is an ungrateful heart.'

My Master, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh used to say, 'For those who remember the Lord in their dreams, I am prepared to make shoes from my own skin for their feet.'



*Hazur Giving Darshan as Kirpal gives Satsang, circa 1939
Painting by the author, oil on canvas*

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1. In an early undated hand-written memo to himself, Kirpal Singh outlined his personal dietary, sunbathing and yoga exercise regimen. He allowed himself only six to eight ounces of food per day. This original memo is on display at Sawan Ashram.
 2. Kirpal Singh, Portrait of Perfection, (Delhi & Bowling Green, VA: S.K. Pub., 1981).
 3. Homeopathy is widely accepted and practiced in India, England and Europe.
 4. Kirpal Singh, Jap Ji—the Message of Guru Nanak, (Delhi & Bowling Green, VA: SK Publications, Sixth edition, 1981)
 5. I was taken aback by organized opposition to the Master and his mission of love and peace, but this was nothing new, from a broader historical perspective.
 6. Ragis are professional singers of Sikh scriptures and are held in high regard within their large community. The Saints of the mystic Word, however, have unequivocally stated that even the most sublime outer music cannot take one to the higher spiritual regions.

Moth & the Flame
23 Two Towels

One evening, Tai Ji (Bibi Raja Ram)—the elderly lady in charge of Master’s food and clothing (who often sent me platters from his kitchen on tour)—began remembering her golden days with Hazur, which I recorded. Dr. Julian Johnson had written of her sight being restored through divine intervention in the original edition of his book, *With the Great Master in India*. This powerful tale illustrates the depth and magnitude of Kirpal’s devotion, and Hazur’s reciprocity to his great disciple:

This goes back to about 1940. I had purchased some very good quality towels from the bazaar and felt like giving two of them to the Great Master, Hazur Maharaj Sawan Singh. My husband and I drove to Beas with those towels, and when we reached there I placed them at his lotus feet and said, ‘Maharaj Ji, please take these two towels for yourself.’ He said, ‘No, child, I don’t need them. I won’t take anybody’s things.’ I said, ‘All right, you may pay for them then!’ But Hazur deferred.

‘No, please take them,’ I insisted. ‘You can give me the money, whatever they cost, but you must take them.’ Hazur kept silent for some time; finally he said ‘All right, I can do one thing. I will take these towels on one condition—that you take two



The Disciple and his Master, circa 1938

Moth & the Flame - Two Towels

of my used towels in exchange for your new ones!’ ‘What else do I want?’ I replied. So he called one of his attendants, Bibi Ralli, and said ‘Bibi Ji, go in the bathroom and bring two towels.’ I placed the new towels at his lotus feet and the Master gave me his, which I placed on my head in reverence. Baba Sawan Singh said, ‘All right, child, I am giving these two towels to you, but first promise me that you won’t give them to anyone else.’ ‘All right, I won’t give them to anybody.’

‘Even if your husband asks you for them, will you promise not to give them to him?’ ‘Achaa, okay, I won’t give them to him.’

‘So this is final?’ ‘Yes, final.’

‘All right, you take them.’

Afterward, at about 4 PM we started from Beas to go back to Rawalpindi, about seventy-five miles away. On the way, my husband said ‘Let’s see Sant Kirpal Singh when we pass through Lahore.’ So we went to his place, but I begged my husband, ‘No, please don’t go there, because he may want to take my towels!’ He assured me ‘No, no, he won’t do anything like that.’ When we reached there my husband went in, but I hid myself and would not face Sant Kirpal Singh. When he was in one room, I would run to another, so as not to face him. Bhapa Ji—as we used to address Sant Kirpal Singh then—asked ‘What’s the matter with Bibi Ji? She is not facing me today. What’s wrong with her?’ My husband said, ‘Oh, she has got something, but she is hiding herself so that you will not ask what it is and take it!’ Bhapa Ji laughed and sent his wife, Bibi Krishna Wanti, to fetch me. He asked me ‘What’s this? What have you got with you? Did you bring something from Beas, from our Satguru?’ I had to admit, ‘Yes.’

‘Alright, then please show me.’

‘No, no, I won’t.’ Bhapa Ji asked why. ‘Because I made a promise with my Master that I wouldn’t give it to anyone.’

‘Well, don’t give it to me, but at least show me.’

‘Alright, I’ll show you.’ I pulled those two towels from my handbag and, while holding them, showed them. Bhapa Ji asked, ‘Just let me see them.’ He took those two towels in his hands, placed them on his head as a token of respect, and then touched them to his heart and wept. Afterward he asked us to stay for the night, but I said, ‘No, no, you might take these towels!’

‘Oh, no, you just relax for the night,’ he said, so we agreed. That night he asked, ‘Until morning—while you are here please loan these two towels to me.’ He took those towels to his room and lying there alone, he placed them on his heart and began to shed tears in the sweet remembrance of our Master Sawan. During the night he composed a poem concerning those towels, and in the morning when he got up he said, ‘Before you go home, please do one thing for me. Take this poem, go back to our Satguru at Beas, and then go to your place.’ My husband used to pay great respect to him, and agreed to return to Beas.

We took that poem back to Maharaj Sawan Singh Ji. When we arrived in Beas, Maharaj Ji said, ‘You were here yesterday. What brought you back again?’ I said, ‘Master, I am in trouble. I feel very bad.’ ‘Why? What happened?’, he asked.

I answered, ‘We went to Kirpal Singh. My towels were going to be snatched away, but I saved them.’

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'You did a courageous thing. I thought Kirpal Singh would snatch them from you!'
'Master, he is not such a torturer!' my husband said, *'Maharaj Ji, she has done a great injustice to him. Kirpal Singh was placing your towels on his head and heart, and weeping inconsolably.'* Hazur Maharaj said, *'Oh, I could have given him towels too! Why did you make him weep?'* I said, *'How could I give him the towels after promising you that I would give them to no one? All I can do now is give you the poem he has composed.'*

Then Hazur said, 'All right, come on, first sing the poem he has sent to me.' Then I sang that song.

After hearing the poem, Hazur said, 'It's a great pity, he has felt too much. Now you should go back to Kirpal Singh and bring him to me.' I said, *'No, no, I won't go now. He may take my towels again. I must keep them here. I won't go!'* Then my husband said, *'Well, I'll go.'* He went to Lahore again and brought Kirpal Singh Ji back to Hazur. I was sitting in the Dera at that time and again opened my bag to see that the towels were safely kept. When they came, it was late at night. Restrictions for others at Beas did not apply to Kirpal Singh or my husband, as Hazur loved them so dearly. They might come at midnight or 1 AM and nobody could bar their entry to the Master.

All together we went back to Master Hazur. Sant Kirpal Singh bowed before Hazur, who said, 'Look here, Kirpal, she was really sympathizing with you.' Bhapa Ji replied, *'She did not sympathize at my home.'* Then Hazur said *'No, she felt it when you cried, but she could not give the towels to you. But why did you cry? I would have given so many things to you. Come on, Kirpal Singh, what do you want? Tell me, sit down!'* And he sat down with folded hands, saying, *'No, Master, everything is fine. I want only you.'*

'But I've got so many things I'll give you.' Then Hazur said to me, *'Why did you come now? You have your towels with you.'* I said *'I have come to see what things you are going to give him. Master Hazur said, 'Come on, Kirpal, tell me what you want!'* And he, sitting with folded hands, said, *'Master, I want you only.'* Then Hazur took Kirpal's hand and, placing his own hand upon it said, *'Now I give my own self to you.'* At this, Sant Kirpal Singh Ji became very happy and bowed before his Master.

I said 'Oh, Master, you have given everything to him. It is too much! You gave me only towels!' Then Hazur called Bibi Ralli and said, *'All right, you go and bring my sweater that I was wearing at night.'* She brought the sweater and Hazur gave it to Kirpal Singh, saying, *'I used it this night and last night too. It's not washed, but you can wear it.'* And again he said to Bibi Ralli, *'Go and bring the cotton shawl that I use when I sit in meditation.'* Then he gave that shawl to Kirpal Singh and said *'Look here, Kirpal Singh, I am giving my most precious thing to you today, this shawl; there is some secret concerning it.'* But his great disciple never asked what the secret was. I was just sitting there, watching everything. Then Hazur himself said, *'This cotton shawl was given to me by my Satguru Baba Jaimal Singh. I have kept it as a very precious trust; tonight I hereby give it to you.'*

This is not the end of the story; it is still to come. After a while we took leave of Hazur Maharaj and returned to Sant Kirpal Singh's residence in Lahore. Bhapa Ji took those gifts from his Master to his room and kept them where he used to sleep. Thereafter he never slept on that bed, but down on the floor where his bedding

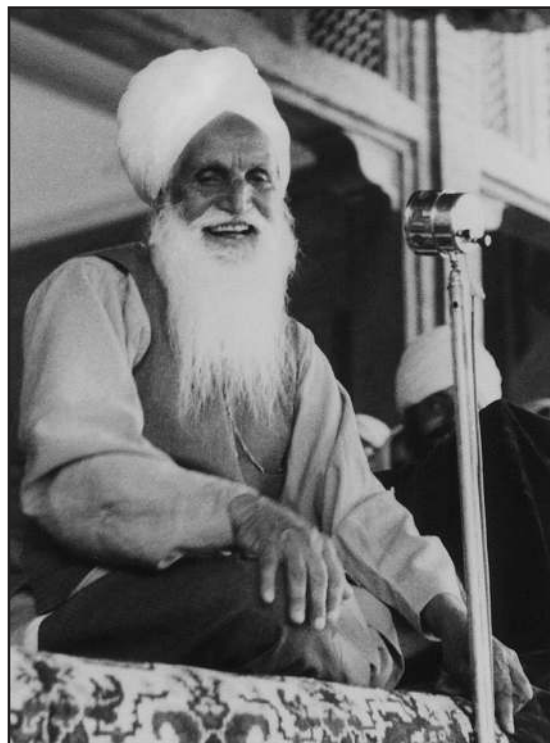
Moth & the Flame - Two Towels

remained. At night, from another room we saw him before his bed, sometimes laughing, sometimes weeping, sometimes just bowing out of respect before those things.

Such was the love of Kirpal for his Master that his unspeakable reverence was transferred even to the objects associated with Hazur.



Hazur and disciples on a stroll.
Kirpal, with dark beard, literally following in his footsteps.



Moth & the Flame

24 The Crown of Love

Kirpal Singh was thirsty for knowledge from childhood. He voraciously read through an entire library, but at the end of every book of religion, biography or philosophy, he penciled the words, 'No way out.' During this period of intense search and pining, he divulged that his pillow often became drenched with tears.

His innate compassion expressed itself towards the suffering of others. He served the sick and dying in hospitals, as well as in the streets during virulent epidemics, with no regard for his own safety. These were the days before antibiotics were available. His capacity for hard work was legendary, and he had an intrinsic inclination towards spiritual practice. His ability to foretell events even as a child is well known and documented, but he prayed that this gift be held in reserve.

Kirpal Singh was born into a family of meat-eaters, although he steadfastly refused to eat meat as a child. His father, Hukam Singh would press him to eat meat, to which the boy replied, 'Father, isn't meat from dead animals, and would you have me make a burial ground of my body?' His parents would smile and let the boy have his way.

Another time, his father told him, 'Pal, our friends will be your friends, and our enemies will be your enemies.' Kirpal replied respectfully, 'Father, your friends will be my friends, but your enemies will be my friends, for I have come to love all.'

When his father suffered a debilitating stroke and consequently lost his memory, Kirpal patiently taught him to speak again. Around 1917, he suffered a second stroke and memory loss and once again the dutiful son taught him to speak. When fully recovered, Hukam Singh addressed his son: 'Pal, I am extremely pleased with you. Ask for anything you want—wealth, children, fame and the like—and if a father's blessings have any effect, you will certainly have what you desire.'

Kirpal replied, 'I do not want earthly things, I wish only to meet God in this lifetime.' His father said, 'I have not seen God, but if there is God, you shall certainly meet Him!'¹ Shortly thereafter, Kirpal began having visions in meditation of a radiant being whom he took to be Guru Nanak. For the next seven years, this luminous form conversed with him, took his soul to higher planes, and bestowed many revelations. During this period, Kirpal composed several poems in praise of his radiant Guide, although he remained unaware of Its living physical counterpart on Earth.

In 1924, Kirpal, who was very fond of rivers, took a train to the Beas River station about thirty miles from the city of Amritsar. When he asked for directions to the riverbank from Bua Das, the train-master, the latter asked if he had come to see the Saint of Beas. Always keen to meet with the holy, Kirpal took directions and walked three miles to the Saint's dera or hermitage. Hazur was inside taking his meal when Kirpal Singh arrived, and not wanting to disturb the Sage, he sat and waited outside. When Hazur at last emerged, Kirpal was wonder-struck to see the same majestic personage who had been guiding him within for the past seven years. He asked, 'Maharaj, why this delay in meeting You?' to which Hazur replied, 'This was the most opportune time.'

'The Guru appears when the chela is ready—even to the most skeptical mind,' Kirpal reminisced of his first meeting. 'Perhaps none of you have been so skeptical as I was. I was afraid lest I go to somebody who had not met God, then my life would have been

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spoiled.'

The twenty-four year mystic bond between Sawan and Kirpal that followed was unique in the history of Masters and disciples. Some have found a parallel in the depth of their relationship to that of Shams Tabriz and Rumi, Bulleh Shah and Shah Inayat, Guru Ram Das and Arjan Dev. In the final analysis, there are no such things as comparisons. Love is the beginning and the end of the journey.

On June 11, 1939, Baba Sawan Singh wrote his beloved disciple:

*May the compassion of the Lord of thy soul be with thee,
May the Lord of thy soul help thee ever and anon.*

Dear Kirpal Singh Ji

Radhasoami.² I have received your loving letter and am happy to read its contents. My dear, saints inherit discomfort in life.

*'When the crown of love was placed on my head,
Sighs were given as cash grant, and desert as property.'*

*'We are puppets in the Lord's hands,
We are dragged by our destiny;
We go wherever we are ordained to,
Nanak, how true it is!'*

We have come into the world to serve the Lord. Keep yourself engaged in meditation and complete the course of spirituality. But the service of His creation is equally essential. Look at me; I remain engaged in the service of humanity from morn till night. Sometimes I do not get sufficient time to do meditation, but Hazur Maharaj (Baba Jaimal Singh Ji) used to say that service to humanity is no less important than meditation. And, if you feel that people do not pay as much attention to our love as they should, we do not expect any compensation for our services to the satsang.

All sorts of people come to satsang. There are some whose hearts are overflowing with love and are ready to sacrifice their all—body, mind, and money. There are also some that indulge in tall talk and calumny; they are ever ready to slander. But our duty is to love all. If they do not give up their wicked ways, why should we leave our noble ways? My advice to you is that you should do satsang while fulfilling your official duties honestly and also complete your course of bhajan and simran. I am greatly pleased with you. You are serving the Lord with all your resources—body, mind, and money.

Convey my Radhasoami to Bibi Krishna and love to children.

Yours, (signed) Sawan Singh

Within a few short years of his initiation, Kirpal Singh, who had already accessed the first two inner regions, assiduously cultivated his Master's gift and crossed the remaining higher spiritual realms. When the union of his soul with the Supreme Being was consummated, his inner and outer perfection was complete. Throughout their long relationship, Kirpal Singh devotedly served his Master's mission.

The Last Days of Hazur: According to Master Kirpal's own words, on the morning of October 12, 1947, Hazur summoned him to his bedside:

'Kirpal Singh! I have allotted all other work but have not entrusted my task of Naam-initiation and spiritual work to anyone. That I confer on you today so that this holy and sacred Science may flourish.' My eyes were filled with tears, and afflicted as I was, I

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beseched: 'Hazur! The peace and security that I have sitting at Thy feet here cannot be had in higher planes...' My heart was filled with anguish, I could not speak any more and sat staring—Hazur encouraging and caressing me all the time.

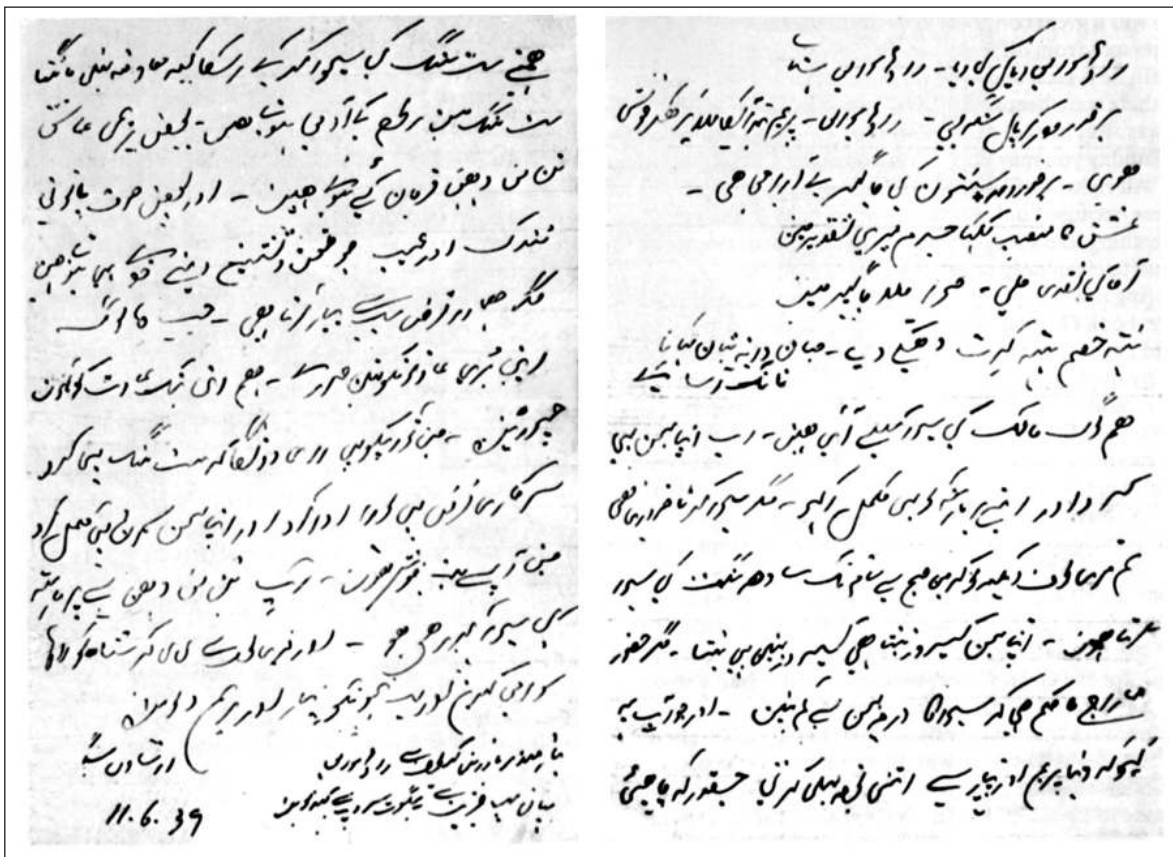
After this whenever I had the privilege to be in seclusion with Hazur, He talked about the interior affairs of the Dera and instructed me how to act when he departed forever...

One night Hazur, mentioning his inner esoteric experiences, remarked, 'The sun has risen high. Can the people of Jullunder [a city in Punjab] also see this sun?' Those sitting nearby were ignorant of this secret expression. The opinion of the doctor in charge was, like the others beside him, that Hazur's brain did not work properly on account of illness. A little later at night when I went to him, Hazur repeated the same question, addressing me, 'Kirpal Singh! The sun has risen high. Can the people of Jullunder also see this sun?' I replied, 'Yes Hazur, the sun has risen high—and not only the people of Jullunder but also those living in England or America who will traverse to inner planes can see this sun.'³ Thereupon Hazur said: 'You have correctly answered my question.'

Similarly Hazur made mention of several hidden secrets but those around him were hardly able to grasp what he was hinting at—this being a subject familiar to those only who are practical inlookers and spiritually skilled. What, therefore, could other poor fellows know about them? Surveying the surrounding occurrences and events, Hazur observed:

'It's a pity that the followers of Sant Mat also are becoming a prey to misconception. The teaching of the Saints is "See with your own eyes. If you do not see with your own eyes, do not even believe your Master..."'

On another occasion Hazur said: 'Kirpal Singh! The people will flock to the place where facsimile of Hazur's original letter to his beloved Disciple:



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they would find the riches of Naam. When Baba Ji came from Agra, he brought with him neither money nor followers. He fetched within him only his Guru, and through his blessings the present Dera came into existence. You obey the orders of your Guru. If an obedient wife acts according to the bidding and wishes of her husband and the people call her bad names, let them say so. You have to carry on the mission under the orders of your Master...Tell everybody to meditate fondly and invert within to reach the astral form of the Master.'

Consequently, during Hazur's lifetime and in strict conformity with His wishes, in November 1947 a proposal for 'Spiritual Satsang' was laid before Him, the main objects of which were solely the ethical and spiritual benefit of mankind in general, irrespective of caste, color, or creed—which was heartily appreciated by Hazur, saying: 'I am wholly and solely at one with thee in this endeavor,' and directed me to give it practical shape...to present spirituality to mankind in general in a lucid and scientific form...

The subject of illness of Saints too, no less, is a perplexing event. The fact of it is that this illness of Hazur was the result of the weight of karmic debts, of the deeply heaved sighs and tears of those afflicted among us. Outer dealings of Saints also set the best example of the exalted human standard of living and character. They voluntarily take upon themselves the burden of their own initiated souls without a murmur or mentioning a word of complaint, and this becomes their usual task.

Every day Hazur grew weaker and weaker in body. From the night of March 29, 1948, to the morning of April 1, unusual restlessness and visible 'fluttering' was seen visiting his physical frame. This symptom was also created for putting to test those surrounding him. Throughout the period of His illness Hazur said many a time, 'If a person proficient in bhajan and simran sits by me, I feel comforted and relieved. Therefore those who come to me or sit near me should do simran.' Accordingly, at the time of appearance of this symptom of 'fluttering of the body,' Hazur again spoke several times in these words, 'If the person who has to do the work of spirituality after I depart comes and sits by me, my trouble will be gone.'

To comply with this evidently last wish of the Master, the near relatives of Hazur came and sat in bhajan and simran one by one by the bedside of Hazur, but there was no relief whatever...

On the morning of 1st April, 1948, it was extremely benevolent of Hazur to afford a chance to this humble servant...through the assistance of a lady⁴ in nursing service of Hazur—to be by the side of Master, in seclusion, for about ten or fifteen minutes. At that time with a heavy heart I sat near His bed and prayed to Hazur: 'Master! Thou art above body and bodily influences, unconcerned to comforts and discomforts, but we humble and helpless beings are afflicted hard and cannot endure the sight of Hazur's thus suffering bodily. Thou hast all powers. We would be extremely grateful if Hazur very graciously removes this indication of disease on His body.'

It is true that prayer succeeds where all other human efforts fail. Hazur with His utmost benevolence accepted this prayer...When I opened my eyes, Hazur's body was in a state of perfect repose, [his] forehead shining resplendently. He opened His mercy-showing lovely eyes...and cast a glance at my humble self—both eyes gleaming with radiance like a lion's eyes. I bowed my head in solemn and silent adoration and said, 'It is all Hazur's own benignity.'

Hazur steadily kept gazing for three or four minutes into my eyes, and my eyes, in silent wonderment, experienced an indescribable delight which infused a beverage-like

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intoxication down to the remotest pores of my entire body—such as was never before experienced in my whole life. Then those mercy-showing eyes closed not to open again. In his last moments Hazur was all peace.

When he breathed his last, I put my head upon his feet and said, 'The sun of divinity which had risen has set, and I have no words to express my grief.'

Thus in His 90th year, on the morning of 2nd April, 1948, at 8:30, this brilliant Sun of Spirituality, after diffusing His Light in the hearts of millions, disappeared to rest below the horizon at Dera Baba Jaimal Singh.⁵

It was a time of great bereavement for the devotees left behind. In the remarkable photograph that follows, we see the crowd, the dust and clamor, the funeral bier being borne on the shoulders of disciples and family. In the foreground, Sant Kirpal Singh is seen, his right hand slightly raised in a gesture of calming and direction.

In the last rare image from that time, behind the coffin on the sandy river bank, the poignant figure of Sant Kirpal Singh stands straight, his head bowed with folded hands. The cremation soon took place and Hazur's sacred ashes were immersed in the flowing waters of the Beas as darkness of night covered the land. Then, in conformance to his Satguru's wishes, Hazur's Gurmukh disciple quietly departed for Delhi, and shortly thereafter, the Himalayan mountains, to prepare himself for the great mission ahead.



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1. 'Pal' was the affectionate name that he was called by his family. In this regard, Kirpal fondly told his disciples of the power of parental blessings.

2. Radhasoami, or Radhaswami, is another name for the Supreme Being or Anaami, introduced by Soami Ji of Agra in the late 1800's. This term was used as a greeting and farewell by Baba Sawan Singh Ji. Radha signifies the soul, and Soami the Lord, thus 'Lord of the Soul.' The name Radha Soami contains a clue to the spiritual science:

*Radha aad surat ka naam, Soami aad shabad nij dhaam
Radha is the name of the primal soul current (surat);
Soami is the name of the primal source of shabad (Word) -
—Sar Bachan - Prose (Beas, India: Radha Soami Satsang).*

As the name Radha Soami became contentious and even litigious with several successory groups claiming its rightful use, Sant Kirpal Singh rarely referred to it, but whenever addressed by the greeting, 'Radha Soami', he would return it in kind with utmost respect.

3. Guru Nanak, when nearing his earthly end also spoke of this inner Sun to his outer son, Siri Chand (who was ignorant of it) and to his devoted follower—Angad who understood it and succeeded him.

4. Bibi Ralli went to Kirpal Singh and implored him, 'Hazur's condition is precarious, and you had better come.' Then she took him to the bedside of the ailing Hazur.

5. Excerpts from A Brief Life Sketch of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, (Delhi: Ruhani Satsang, 1949, Darshan Singh, Portrait of Perfection - A Pictorial Biography of Kirpal Singh, (Bowling Green, VA), 1981.

The Crown of Love



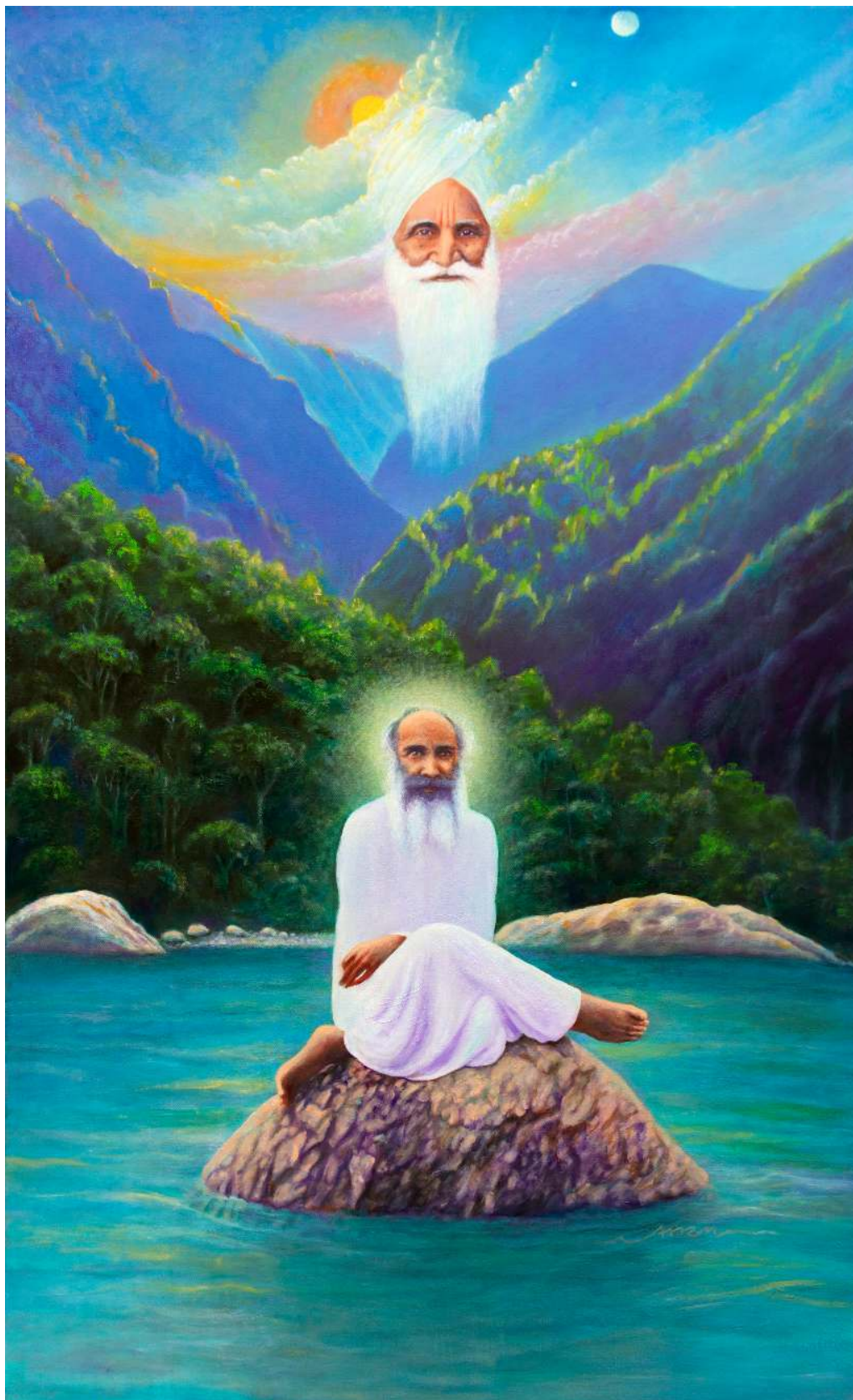
Funeral Procession of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, April 2, 1948

*In this painting, I've attempted to capture the pathos,
the heat, the dust, the throng as the sun sets,
heading to the banks of the Beas for cremation.*

*What's remarkable about the original photograph is how
Sant Kirpal Singh stands out in the crowd,
hand raised in a calming gesture.*

*One can almost hear the sorrow of the mourners,
even though their Master, in his spiritual form is deathless,
his protection unending in all the worlds.*

Moth & the Flame
25 Himalayan Retreat



Following Hazur's mahasamadhi and in compliance with his wishes, Kirpal Singh left for Delhi. For the seeker and the lover, only Truth and the Beloved count. On April 13, 1948, the new Master held his first satsang at Darya Ganj, Delhi, wherein he gave a humble description of his role:

Just as the commander of an army grows old and sits in a tent and keeps a boy as an orderly to send his messages to the outside—so this is my position, that of an errand boy.

Each Saint has his mission in life and comes with a definite instrument of instruction. As soon as he completes his job, he retires from this world and goes back into the spiritual ocean from which he sprang, leaving the work of further reorientation to his successor. Even if the predecessor has to do something for his followers, he does it through the living successor to whom he entrusted the work on retirement; and only the latter, as a brother-in-faith or Gurbhai may help his brethren on the physical plane...

Our physical life is destined by the Almighty and each one of us must play his role as allotted. I have no choice in the matter...I am a puppet in his hands and a flute through which he plays.¹

Shortly thereafter, Kirpal Singh went to Rishikesh, a secluded place in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains. He said, 'In the wilderness, I would put in sixteen to eighteen hours in meditation...' The Master's favorite spot was a large rock in the middle of the Ganges River, just above the town of Rishikesh. On that bare, rugged rock he would sit, uncushioned, immersed in samadhi, awaiting further orders from his Master.

He rented accommodation in a house called Rani-ki-Kothi on the northern banks of the Ganges. It was to here that he invited his wife Mata Krishna Vanti, son Darshan, daughter-in-law Harbhajan Kaur, and young grandson Raji to be with him for several weeks. He put them into meditation for six to eight hours at a stretch. In the breaks between, he went for long walks around Rishikesh, a renowned pilgrimage center. He sometimes took along members of his party and visited the sadhus and holy men in the area.

He ate simple food—a meal in the morning and another in the evening. One day he said, 'Now let me make some chapatis for you,' and then he prepared chapatis for all. He then told his family and those with him, 'I am cooking chapatis for you today, but in the future you may not be able to get the same amount of time from me.'

He shared some of his encounters:

'I went all over Rishikesh. I met intellectual wrestlers and those performing the elementary steps: postures, saying prayers, rites and rituals. Most of them were doing hatha yoga practices, which are very arduous and beset with difficulties and dangers. The pranas, or the vital airs, have to be controlled, regulated, and directed properly, which is not easily done. For an average householder it is very difficult and time-consuming. The saints do not recommend such practices in this age; people are not physically fit to undertake this type of yoga.

The transcendence of physical consciousness that a yogi pursuing the path of pranas achieves only after a long and arduous discipline is attained by practitioners of the Surat Shabd Yoga sometimes at the first sitting at the time of initiation.

It is the quality of sehaj, or naturalness and ease that makes the Surat Shabd Yoga accessible to all. The music of the divine Word is vibrating in all alike, and he who

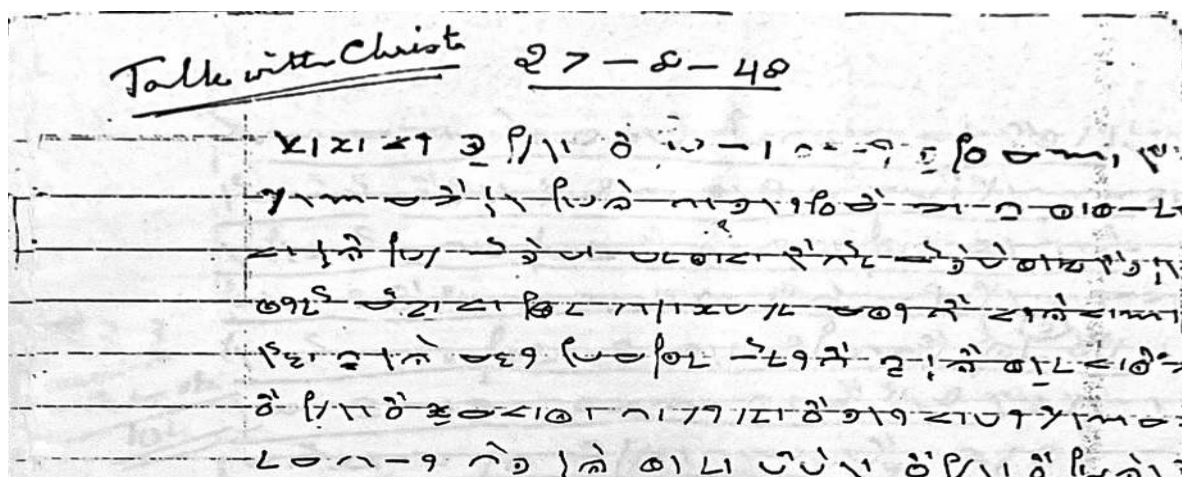
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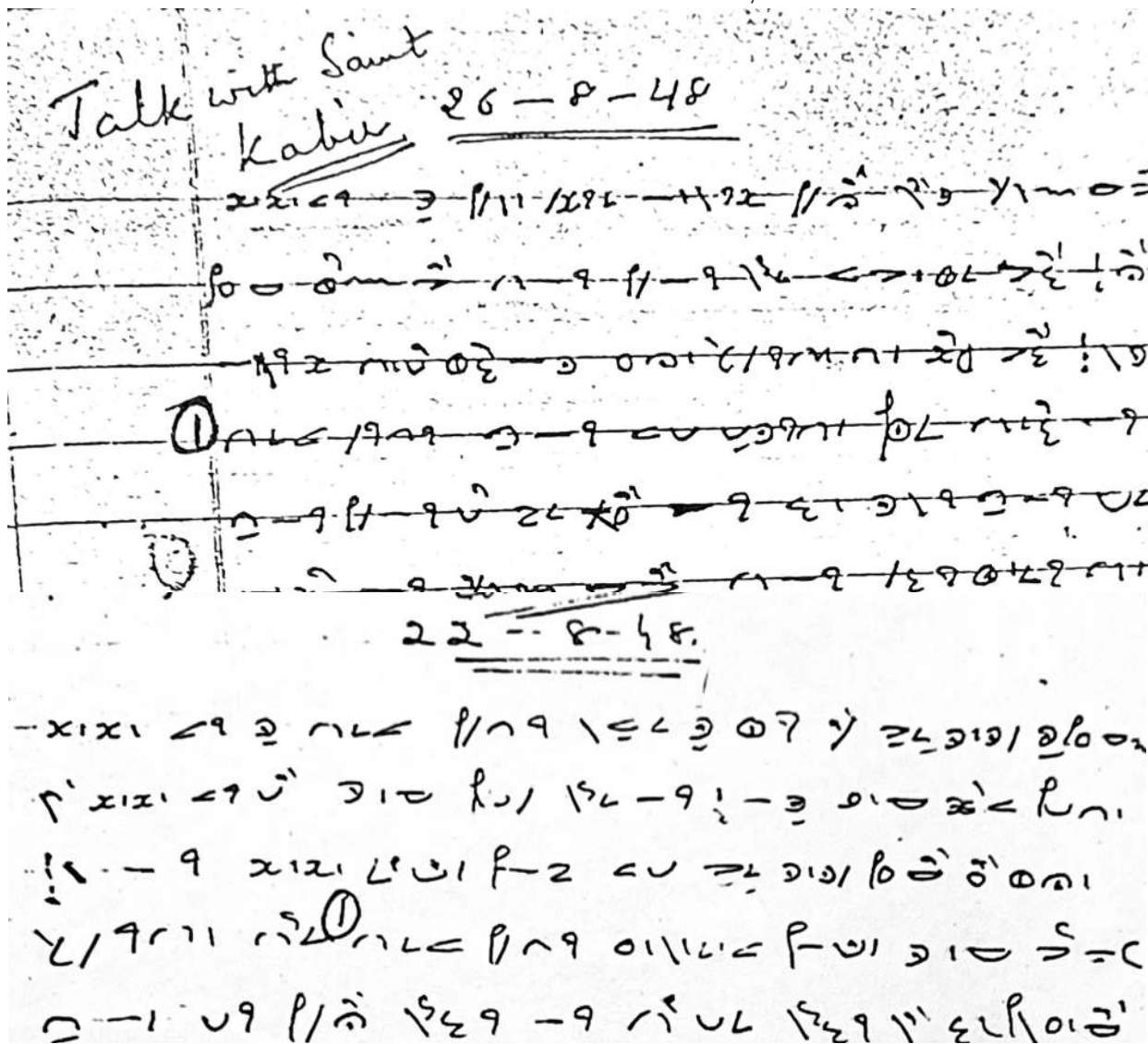
follows its path needs no special requirements, whether physical or intellectual. It is as much open to the old as to the young, to the sinners as to the saints, to the simple as to the learned, to women and children as to men. It is the highest form of yoga, which takes the soul to its Source.

In Rishikesh I met only one man who was rising above body-consciousness, Raghuvacharya. That man's habit was so kingly that he would never stand to greet anybody. When he saw me coming at about two hundred yards, he stood up...He loved me and I loved him. In our talk, it came out that Raghuvacharya went to the first plane, Sahansdal Kamal...He said, 'What I learned by going through all the Shastras, Vedas, and Upanishads, you speak of from inner experience.'

In between meditation and walks in the foothills, Kirpal Singh kept meticulous diaries of his inner experiences and dialogue with the ascended Masters, including Hazur, Baba Ji (Jaimal Singh), Jesus, Kabir, Nanak, Zoroaster, Guru Gobind Singh, Tulsi Sahib, Rumi and others. These notebooks were written in a coded language of the Master's invention, which he employed for the sake of privacy. They contain scores of margin notes in English in his own inimitable handwriting. In 1978, I was fortunate to receive a copy of the entire diaries covering hundreds of pages. Towards the end of his retreat in August and September of 1948, the Master was introduced within to each of the founders of the worlds great religions and movements, including Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan, Guru Gobind Singh, Soami Ji, Shams Tabrez, Maulana Rumi, Hafiz, Chisti, Nizam-u-Din Auliya, and other illustrious Adepts. Unfortunately, no one has yet been able to properly translate the diaries.³

After more than five months in Rishikesh, the new Master received orders from Hazur and Baba Ji to return to the world and begin his great mission of liberating souls from the bondage of mind and matter. I'll post some examples below:





1. Portrait of Perfection - A Pictorial Biography of Kirpal Singh, Bowling Green, VA: S.K. Publications, 1981, p.50.
2. Darshan Singh, the Master's eldest son was an avid amateur photographer, and to take the original B&W picture on which this painting is based, he waded out into the middle of the Ganges River with water up to his chest. There, he waited in the glacial-melt waters for more than an hour holding a Kodak box-camera, until the Master's consciousness returned to his body. Upon opening his eyes, Darshan clicked the shutter. The artist has taken the liberty to add Hazur's image overhead.
3. These secret diaries remained hidden away for thirty years and were discovered in Sawan Ashram in 1978. They have not as yet been properly translated.

26 First Western Initiates



Dr. Harold Brock and Sant Kirpal Singh, California, 1955

In the year 1907, Kehar Singh Sasma, a learned disciple of Hazur, traveled by steamship from India via Hong Kong to Vancouver, Canada. He also lived for a while in Yakima, Washington. Due to his education and fluency in several languages, Sasma was hired as an interpreter for the Canadian Pacific Steamship Lines, and later for the Canadian Pacific Railroad Company, when large numbers of Indians—predominantly Punjabis, as well as Chinese—migrated to work the sawmills, timber camps and railways in British Columbia and northern Washington.

Kehar Singh often discoursed to mostly Caucasian audiences in churches and other meeting halls in Vancouver, B.C., Seattle, Port Angeles, Portland and northern California. His understanding of Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh religious teachings, and his references to the possibility of someone living on earth in this very day and age who could actually connect the individual with the inner Light and Sound of God, created considerable interest wherever he went.

A Port Angeles dentist, Dr. Harold M. Brock and his wife Genevieve, attended one of those early talks. Mrs. Brock had been an editor for Ladies' Home Journal for some years. After the lecture, Mrs. Brock, a spiritually receptive individual, approached Kehar Singh and asked him about the man with the white turban and long white beard whom she saw hovering above him. Kehar Singh realized that it was the subtle form of his Master she was seeing. In due course, the Brocks, who had been sincerely seeking Truth, were put in touch with the Great Master, Hazur

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Baba Sawan Singh and began a lengthy and deep correspondence with him. They sought and were approved for initiation, which Hazur authorized Sasmās to convey. As the first western disciples, the Brocks were eventually authorized to function as Hazur's initiating representatives for the next three and a half decades. In those days, there was little Sant Mat literature available in English, and the magnificent and in-depth letters of Hazur served as the principal source of the Master's teachings in the West.

In one of his letters to the Brocks in the early 1920's, Sawan Singh predicted:

*We are expecting much from America... The day will come when your people will turn to Sant Mat (The Path of the Masters)... Some day the Great Work there will assume much larger proportions. You may look confidently for it, in your own time. Be ready for it.*¹

And again,

One point is not to be overlooked at this time. In America every man and woman who is initiated is selected by the Sat Guru under the direction of Sat Purush (the Supreme Being in Sach Khand) for a definite, two-fold purpose:

First, that the disciple himself might be free from the bondage of the wheel (of transmigration) and taken to his own home in Sach Khand. Second, that he may perform a definite service in laying the foundation and carrying forward the work intended by the Father for Sant Mat in America. There is a very great possibility there, and we hope and expect much from all of you.

If anyone selected falls by the wayside and fails to carry out the work intended for him, that is his great loss. He will one day see how much he has lost by his failure.

*But those of you who remain faithful and go on working to the best of your ability must one day realize how great is the work you have done and how great is the reward which awaits you. It is my wish and hope that each one who is fortunate enough to get Naam in your country may be useful in the hand of the Supreme in doing this very great work. Keep always love and harmony among yourselves and allow nothing to sidetrack you. Hold fast to the Sound Current, and let no fancy scheme of the Negative Power draw anyone aside. Above all, be faithful to your Bhajan and sit with mind fixed upon the center. It is thus you will all get strength enough to withstand every assault of the opposing powers. **You will carry on until victory is attained, and thousands in your country will see the Great Light.***²

The Brocks wrote Hazur asking about spiritual succession after one's Master leaves the body. In his letter dated December 17, 1925 Hazur replied,

Your question as to whom to look to for guidance if the present Master goes out of life is very appropriate. The Master leaves the physical form in time like other people, but remains with His devotees in the astral form as long as the devotee has not crossed [beyond] the astral form. All internal guidance will be done by him and it is he who will come to take charge of the soul at the time of death. And in case a devotee rises above the eye-focus now and meets him daily, he will meet him inwardly there as usual. He will continue to discharge his inward duties of guidance as before, only he cannot give instructions outwardly for the simple reason that he has left the physical vehicle. The functions which would be performed through the physical frame only, will now be done by his successor. All outward guidance will

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*be done by the successor, and the devotees of the Master that is gone will love the successor no less. They will get the benefit of the outward instructions from the successor. Correspondence will be done with the Successor, and **you will know who it is.***³

Almost thirty years later, on August 17, 1955, Dr. Brock met Sant Kirpal Singh in northern California on his first world tour. He personally gave the Master the manuscript of eighty-eight letters dating back to the Brock's earliest correspondence with Hazur. On the next day, during a morning meditation in Santa Barbara, Master Kirpal placed his hand on the head of the elderly doctor, and the latter, who by his own admission, had never experienced much in the way of spiritual visions, was suddenly blessed with the radiant vision of his Master Sawan, along with his spiritual successor, Sant Kirpal Singh.⁴

Let me first introduce myself... I am eighty-three years old and have been in the practice of dentistry for fifty-five years. Mrs. Brock, a very gifted woman, died about ten years ago.

It was in the year 1910 or 1911 that Mr. Kehar Singh Sasmās came and told us of the then Living Master, Sawan Singh. We were given the initiation by Mr. Sasmās under the directions of the Master. In our correspondence, I at one time asked, in case he passed on before I did, would I know who the new Master would be? And he said I would. So I was quite satisfied when Mr. Khanna put me in touch with Sant Kirpal Singh.

India has a background of thousands of years of recognizing the spiritually enlightened ones, while to us in this country the coming of such a one is new and of great importance, and we hope to have the Master back again, at an early date. In Sant Kirpal Singh, I think every one recognizes the unbounded spirit of love that permeates Him and everything He does, regardless of who or what people are or may have been...⁵ —Port Angeles, WA Feb. 2, 1956

Dr. Brock, devoted pioneer of Sant Mat in the West, peacefully passed away as he approached the century mark, held in great esteem by both Masters and their disciples.

Additional testimonies from Sant Kirpal Singh's 1955 tour:

We are disciples of 15 and 7 years respectively, and were so greatly impressed on our first meeting him. He greeted, embraced and accepted us as brother and sister, which warmed our hearts and made us aware of the wonderful love that exists between us. He brought to us not only heartfelt love but most of all he gave to us a tremendous spiritual uplift as well as a visionary Darshan that we had not experienced heretofore. We were privileged to travel and attend many of his Satsangs here in California and to observe him closely.

To be in his presence is comparable to basking in the radiance of a warm and pleasant shower of spiritually manifested love. We feel a great loss now that he has returned home, however, our lives have been enriched and we are most grateful for having had him even for a short while.⁶ —Ethel & Frank Bartee, Long Beach, CA. February 2, 1956.

When Master Kirpal Singh came to our vicinity (in 1955), we noted and accepted him as a really healthy ideal type of spiritual stature and character... Watching him closely I was impressed by his consistent level of consciousness. He was not up

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one moment in ecstasy and the next in a compromise of what we knew. Duality or separateness was not visible.

Then one day I looked into his eyes, and within that instant, I reviewed all that I knew and had a glimpse of the more that he was... To test his conviction and to see if his level of consistent high consciousness could be disturbed, I was after him constantly. He himself told me one day that for the first seven years he never once questioned Master Sawan Singh, but just sat at his feet, and that I was so aggressive... He could answer questions that I had not been able to ask of anyone—even some who claimed Adeptship...

One night, in a room with him, I was aware of his body breathing very fast—and then suddenly I could detect no breath. Suddenly, through me ran a feeling that I was in the presence of death... A fear ran through me, penetrating deeply into my awareness. I wondered, what had I gotten myself into? Then in succession, I gained my equilibrium and the illuminating thought came through that here I was in the very midst of what I had been practicing to masterfully attain. At this moment, like an avalanche and flood, my whole being was absorbed in the same intense condition of divine Love... Every part of me was again torn apart into a nothingness, and swept up into the most complete surrender, saying with the greatest feeling within and through myself, 'Father! What have I done! Forgive me for not recognizing you!... Through SatGuru Kirpal Singh, I realized the Father touched God, loved God even more, and the resulting experiences taught me to cry often for God... To me, by Divine Grace I beheld the nature of Kirpal Singh—and He is Love, Light, Truth, God, my Goal, Hero, Example—my own True Self by whatever name... And from this place of consciousness as I know Him, will I tell of Him; from this level of consciousness, will I move as dynamic action.'⁷

—Walter Paul Baptiste, founder, Yoga Philosophical Center, San Francisco, California, 1955.

1. Spiritual Gems—Letters of Maharaj Baba Sawan Singh to Disciples, Radha Soami Satsang, Beas, India, page 262

2. Ibid., p. 281-282.

3. From *Foreign Correspondence of Hazur (privately published)*

4. According to T.S.Khanna and others who were present when the Master asked all present to describe their individual inner experiences.

5. Bhadra Sena, Editor, *As They Saw The Master*, Delhi, India, Ruhani Satsang publications: 1956. p. 18-19. This remarkable out-of-print book contains 101 impressions from those who met the Master for the first time on his 1955 world tour. These include extraordinary testimonies from a number of Sawan Singh's first American disciples.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

27 Helper of the Helpless

May 16th, 1967—the Passing of Mangat Ram: I am moved by the great love that exists between the disciples of Hazur and the living Master—their elder spiritual brother. I had grown fond of one of these, an elderly man with noble bearing. Mangat Ram was tall, straight-backed, hawk-nosed, elegantly dressed in dark Nehru coat, white churidar pyjamas and white turban, Punjabi-Hindu-style. Whenever we met, we always greeted each other with a namaste bow, or a hug. Mangat Ram just left this world. I had the good fortune to spend most of the night massaging his body and sponging his fevered face. In the early morning I retreated for meditation to a nearby room. Unbeknownst to me, Master had physically come to Mangat Ram, just as his soul was withdrawing via the third eye. Tai Ji called into his ear, 'Mangat Ram! Has Maharaj Ji appeared inside yet?' He whispered 'Hanji...yes. I am going and not returning. Hazur and Maharaj Ji are here calling me to come Home.' The outer Master laid a gentle hand on Mangat Ram's forehead, and all restlessness in his body ceased. His spirit was never to be troubled by limitations again.

At this moment, I was sitting in bhajan in a nearby room. A message came from within: *the bird is released from its cage*. Roused by sounds of lamentation nearby, I opened my ears and shuffled with benumbed legs in the direction from where all this noise was coming. In a different room I found the Master, standing behind a bed upon which laid a still form draped in a white sheet. Quite jolly, he asked, 'You want to see the dead body?' I nodded. When he withdrew the sheet covering Mangat Ram's head he said, 'See how peaceful he is? Just as if he were asleep.' It was the first time I had ever seen death up close. Mangat Ram looked peaceful, if not beautiful—a slight radiance on his brow.

Accompanying the funeral procession to the cremation grounds, I saw a tiny bundled form of an infant lying on an unlit pyre, next to that of old Mangat Ram, reminding me that just such a graphic sight of life's temporal nature inspired Prince Siddhartha to renounce the pleasures of royalty and seek enlightenment.

After the pyre was ablaze, we sat near the Master under the shade of a banyan tree. Many of the deceased's friends and relatives were weeping, although his devoted wife was calm, knowing that her life-companion was released from mortality.

Mangat Ram led a virtuous life, rarely lost his temper and spoke little. Every morning, as he walked several miles from the ashram to his silk shop, he would take a great stack of chapatis and distribute them to all the homeless cats and dogs in the neighborhood. While I write, the pyre burns and relatives wail. Master poignantly remarks, *'Even the dogs and cats will be weeping for Mangat Ram.'*





I managed to take this photo at the cremation grounds, while the Master was talking to his son, Darshan Singh Ji.

May 18, 1967: A new visitor arrives from San Francisco

seeking spiritual consolation. In her sharing, Sandra Foth allows me to record her words:

The first time I met Master was in San Francisco on his 1963 world tour. Although my mother expressed doubts whether she could maintain the vegetarian diet due to her illness, Master initiated both of us the next morning anyway. Although I never ate meat again, Mother did and abandoned meditation. She was very sick and in pain for the next eighteen months. One day, out of the blue, Master appeared to Mother and told her, 'In three weeks you will leave the world, and I will take you back to your True Home.' He also told her to be loving—boy, was she ever difficult to get along with! And he also told her to discontinue eating meat, and to put in maximum time for meditation.

I was amazed at the change. From then on, Mother became wise and loving. When she spoke, it was as if Master was speaking through her. She meditated a great deal, and threw out all the meat and alcohol in the house, and her pain vanished. As she grew weaker, I called in our Catholic priest to administer last rites, but Mother told him, 'I don't need any Last Rites! My Master has come to take me back to God, and there is nothing to hold me here now.' The presence of peace and radiance surrounding her made such a deep impression on the priest that he wrote to the Great Master asking for initiation.

The Major and the Frenchman:

Helper of the Helpless

A physical education instructor has just arrived from France, seeking initiation. While he had read translations of the Master's works, he understands only a few words of English, and the Master speaks no French! There are some hilarious attempts at sign-language between them, and eventually an interpreter is located in Delhi. Normally, initiations are given on the first Monday of each month, but Master decides to make an exception. An Indian army major also wants to be initiated, and both are invited up to the tree-shaded flat rooftop of his bungalow. The translator, myself and Brij Mohan are also present. While seated on a cot, the Master conveys the sacred mantra of five names, asks for closing of eyes and gives out instructions for meditation. I peek at my watch; exactly 11 AM. Master lies down and immediately begins snoring. I have difficulty suppressing the giggles, a childish reaction soon overwhelmed by intense spiritual grace gathering within the arena of the third eye.

About an hour passes in this manner, while the Master softly snores the entire time. When I glance to my watch, the second hand moves to 12 noon exactly. At that very moment, the Master gives a little snort, and quickly sits up, swinging his feet to the ground. 'Leave off, please. Alright, what did you get?' The Major and the Frenchman, if not everyone present, has had the similar experience of seeing the huge Red Rising Sun of Trikuti—the predominant feature of the Causal region. Master's methods are inscrutable, powerful and mysterious.

Two days later, the Frenchman becomes very unhappy because since initiation he hasn't been able to see any inner Light again. He interrupts the Master in the middle of an important meeting with Muni Shushil Kumar, a renowned Jain sadhu and co-founder of the World Fellowship of Religions, along with several other prominent religious leaders. I happen to be present off to the side, a silent witness. When his insistence gets the Master's attention, he complains miserably, 'Maitre, no light see. Noir! Nothing!' Master reminds him of his experience at initiation, but the new initiate is adamant. Master sits him down on the floor in front and bids him to close his eyes, then places his forefinger between the man's eyebrows, holding it there for the next 15 to 20 minutes. Otherwise ignoring him, the Master carries on normal conversation with the dignitaries in the room. A couple of humorous and lively exchanges ensue with the Master waving his other hand around. For the entire period, he never removes his finger from the man's forehead. During a brief lull, Master looks at the fellow sitting before him as if for the first time, and pulls away his finger. Suddenly, the Frenchman leaps up in the air, crying, 'Oh! Oh! Very much lumiere! Brilliance! Extraordinaire! Oh! Oh! Merci mon Maitre!'

God helps those who help themselves, but He also helps those who don't, won't or can't. The sun shines on everyone, and grace is without limits.

28 The Vale of Kashmir

In the third week of May, a caravan of several carloads departs for fabled Kashmir, leaving behind the populous and sweltering plains. With a party of nine, I leave via sleeper-train, and arrive at the hill-station of Pathankot at ten the next morning. We transfer to a rickety old bus, a noisy black smoke belcher, and begin ascending a narrow road which leads over high mountain passes with hairpin curves. To the left is a sheer drop-off, at least a thousand feet straight down; to the right, steep rock walls. Less fortunate twisted and rusting hulks litter the bottom of the gorge. With tightness in the stomach, one prays, one accepts! Twice, our driver has to go back and forward a couple of times to maneuver hairpin corners—and only our Maker knows what lies around the bend—perhaps an equally careless vehicle speeding from the opposite direction! At places the road is supported by cantilevered logs and rocks jammed into crevices hand-hewn into the sheer cliffs; rock and scree are held back by a not-too-reassuring basket weave of willow saplings. One can only surrender—there is no turning back!

We stop for the night in the alpine village of Batote, perched high on a promontory. The view in all directions is magnificent and endless. Raj Kumar Jain, a Supreme Court advocate, his wife, and I go in search of clean water to bathe away the journey's grime of diesel smoke, sweat and dust. Hiking across bouldered terrain, we locate an icy spring pool. Nearby, three Ladhaki mountain men prostrate westward towards Mecca, reciting Namaz—the prayer of faithful Muslims. Watching from a respectful distance, I am struck by the beauty of their faith. The Koran enjoins: 'Those who remember Me, I remember them.' And, 'I am closer to thee than thy jugular vein.'

After they depart, we take our icy ablutions. In the course of conversation, Jain says, 'I worshipped God in the form of universal Mother, and practiced a form of meditation. Sometimes Mother blessed me with her visions. When Master came to Indore three years ago, I attended satsang and was profoundly affected. The next day, I went to the temple for worship as was my habit; lo, before me, instead of the stone statue of the goddess was the radiant form of the Master! From that moment on wherever I looked, I saw him in front of me, a constant blissful vision unaffected by eating, sleeping, walking, or bathing. I became like a madman—not mad for this world, but mad after God! After three days, Master's subtle form disappeared, unfortunately. Now we hope to live always at his feet, serving the mission.'

The Jains are a minority in India and don't consider themselves Hindus. Jains follow a lineage of Buddha-like Saints. Mahavira, the founder of Jainism (500 BC), roamed the forests in a detached naked state, practicing austerities and intense meditation until attaining enlightenment. Like Buddha, Mahavira established a spiritual path that included ethical living, non-violence, vegetarianism, selfless service, renunciation and meditation. By and large, Jains have been very successful in business, but those with ascetic inclinations become monks, nuns or sadhus. Of these, the most rigorous become *digambar*, or 'sky-clad,' renouncing family, property, wealth, name, desire, everything, including all their clothes, and as part of their ascetic vows, never remain in one place for more than a few days, lest they become attached. Only a handful are inspired to follow such extreme external renunciation.

Moth & the Flame The Vale of Kashmir

The following morning, I sit next to Anita Bhenji on the bus, the articulate principal of Panipat's largest girl's college. In the course of conversation, she articulately shares her extraordinary awakening to the path: 'I had been searching for answers to the riddle of existence, and had strong spiritual yearnings from childhood. Several months before meeting the living Master, his radiant form would come to me during my prayers. One night, he transmitted to me from within the first three initiatory Names, and then took my soul to those higher regions. My prayers to meet him in this world were answered when he came on tour to Panipat. Brother, what is your experience?'

Srinagar—Venice of Asia, 21st May: After crossing the last great mountain pass, and emerging from a dark rock tunnel, the long descent into the Vale of Kashmir begins. In wonderment I gaze upon the exquisite panorama. In all directions, sparkling snowy peaks form a protective phalanx about a fecund valley, which, in its immensity, disappears into the hazy bluish distance. The base of every mountain up to within several hundred feet of the snow line has been terraced, the result of hundreds, if not thousands of years of toil. These fertile beds are filled with water, iridescent green rice shoots and other assorted produce. From the distance, as we move along, sky and clouds, apricot, mulberry, almond and walnut trees, water and paddy, reflect in myriad terraces which appear to move as we do, kaleidoscopic-like shattered mirrors. Columns of tall, straight cypress and poplar line the road and clear babbling streams. Kashmir is famed for the quality and flavor of its fragrant rice, fruits, nuts, seeds and berries!

We pause to rest by a mighty spring, the source of the Jhelum River. From a natural subterranean tunnel in the mountain rock, purest water gushes up into a huge roiling pool, full of tame fish which eat from one's hand. In perfect symmetry, this emerald pool is surrounded by ancient trees and gracefully arched medieval pavilions of marble. A stone tablet carved in Persian glyphs echoes a sixteenth century emperor, understandably blinded by beauty, 'If there is Paradise on earth, it is here! It is here! It is here!' Downstream from Jhelum's cradle, we wash away travel-grime in the clear, biting cold water.

Lovely Srinagar, the 'Venice of Asia' greets us. Canals interlace this city of steep gabled wooden buildings, while merchants and tourists ply waterways in graceful wooden shikara boats. We proceed to the sprawling estate of Sardar Jaswant Singh Chhabra, whose family operates a chain of dry cleaning stores. Jaswant Singh is more than a businessman; he is munshi, or scholar of Persian literature, and his eyes reflect a heart intoxicated with God and his Master, Hazur. We are treated as beloved family members.

The thorned rose—August 24: A woman humbly offers a sheaf of roses to our Gurudev. He separates the blossoms and hands them out to all the surrounding disciples. On the third rose, he winces from a thorn's prick, and comments, 'No roses without thorns.' We all wince with him. Is it that love's beauty is never without some pain? When he hands this very wine-red rose to me, I pray, *Never let me be a thorn in your side.* At his gentle bidding we enter meditation. It is in these blessed hours that the real meaning of communion is revealed.

The Five Dacoits—August 25: While attempting meditation, I drifted off and dreamt of being attacked by five cobras, each a different vivid color. A long and desperate battle ensued, in which I was armed with a sword, but as soon as I succeeded in

cutting one serpent, another would attack, and one severed would rise up again as two! They were winning, but I fought on. Eventually they gave up and went away. After waking, I went to Master for guidance, assuming I had done the right thing in fighting the snakes and driving them away. As soon as my description was finished, he censured, 'Why didn't you do simran?!' Each cobra represented one of the five deadly passions which are vanquished by Simran of the five Names. The next morning, after a long meditation in a room shared with several others, I fell asleep, and was overcome by unworthy desires. Disgusted, I went in search, and found the Master sitting in the garden:

'Master! I feel I am being torn in half. Master is pulling on one side and the Deadly Five (lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego) are pulling on the other.'

Leaning forward, planting his penetrating gaze on me, he says: **'Look here! Master is stronger than these five. Keep your eyes on Him and not on them. They obey Him. Say you want to go into a bungalow but there are five vicious dogs guarding the entrance. How will you enter? You simply call for help to the master of these dogs. He will say a few kind words to them; they will obey and let you enter safely.'**

'Sometimes certain desires may not even be your own. They may be thought-transferred by others. Be like a rock, not sand. Even big waves strike a rock, and bounce back, whereas sand absorbs them. Since you want to make spiritual progress, as an unmarried, it is better not to remain alone in the room with the opposite sex.'

Inwardly, I promise to always be on guard.

Shalimar and the tears of the dog: Later in the day, about thirty accompany the Master to the fabled Shalimar Gardens built four centuries earlier by Moghul kings. Eyes drink deeply as we climb an enchanting path beside a splashing crystal stream. Overhead spreads the leafy arms of gigantic, barrel-trunked Kashmiri maples. There is a mystical play between the beauty of Nature and the beauty of the Master. As I muse thus, he turns and catches my eye, sweeps his hand in the air and quotes Guru Nanak:

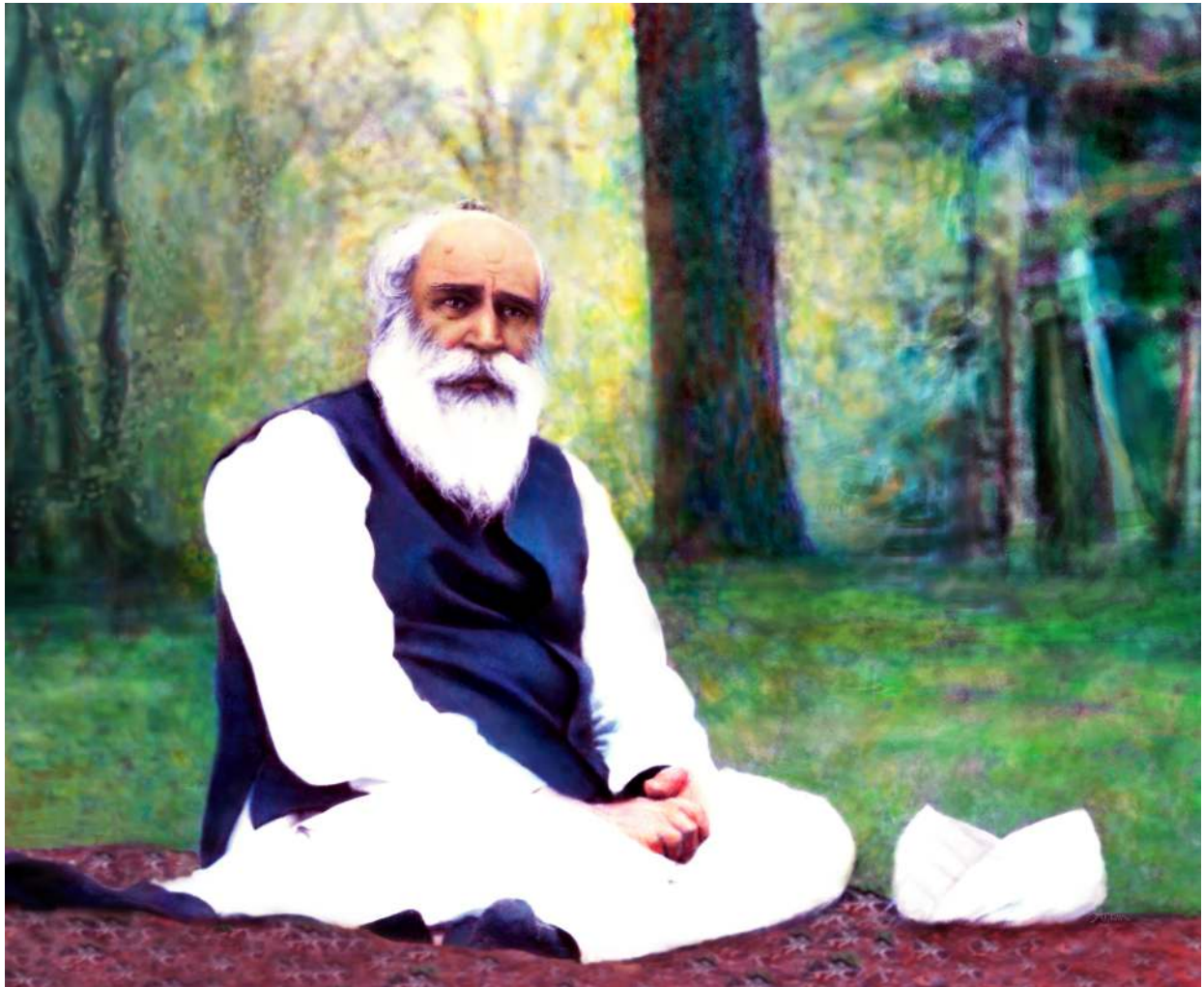
*Everything in this world will one day perish.
Be not attached to its ephemeral charms.*

We pause awhile and Master sits in sidh-aasan upon a large stone platform straddling the stream. We gather 'round to watch and receive handfuls of fresh cherries from his hands. In the distance downstream, I notice a stray dog trotting in a deliberate straight line, slowing only when he is within six feet of our group. Ignoring others, the dog looks humbly up at the Master, who returns a compassionate gaze. The dog then lays his head upon the Master's feet. Never have I known a dog to weep, but tears begin rolling from the eyes of this conscious entity in a mongrel's body, who has come only for the Satguru's darshan! Master gives him parshad and a touch on the head. Fulfilled, the animal sadly departs. Who knows? perhaps to die and return as human, for only in human form can soul find liberation. Did this cur once inhabit a human form, but through some dark deed, forfeit it? All I know is that the Master's compassion embraces all, and accelerates evolution of sentient beings—be they human, animal or angel. Even trees and flowers seem to come more alive by the glance and touch of a Master.

Moth & the Flame The Vale of Kashmir

Pahalgam: We depart for the mountain resort of Pahalgam, one of the world's most beautiful jewels. Beneath a flawless azure sky, hemmed by lofty peaks, we arrive and follow Master on foot up a grassy slope. He sits on a carpet; tall whispering deodar cedars stand sentinel behind. He removes his turban and sets it by his side. For the first time I am seeing his dome-like forehead; his hair at the sides is long and tied in a knot at the back, like Rishis of yore. While gazing upon us one by one, we are stopped in our tracks at different levels on the slope, and unbidden, sink to our knees. Nothing is spoken, no one moves. As celestial gears shift, radiance fills the air, billowing in and around the Master's physical form, passing back and forth between he and his disciples. Magically, all phenomena of nature vanishes. Only the jewel in the Light remains. *There is no Kal.*

*A thousand thousand suns aglow and rising,
Shattering, engulfing, uniting;
And here the Formless dwells in a man.*



Master Kirpal - Pahalgam Meadow - 1967
- painting by the author from a B&W photo -

Mind can never grasp Pure Essence in its totality; it can only fiddle around at the edge. A wakeful night passes; a single blanket and love's glow are my only protection. My small room has an inward view, and a layer of ice has formed in the sink. At seven in the morn, Master puts his disheveled crew into contemplation. He himself sits with us for two charged hours. This meditation takes soul deeper and farther than ever before, again attesting to the power of my Master's proximity. He quizzes each of us about our inner experiences.

The morning air is still at the freezing level when the sitting is over. He asks, 'Are you not cold?' I reply, 'Thank you, Master.' 'Well, are you hungry?' 'I'm fine, Master.' He chuckles and says, '**Love knows no heat and no cold. You even enjoy your hunger when you are with me!**'

A Miracle: Several miles beyond Pahalgam, our caravan wanders through grassy meadows and evergreens. We stop to enjoy the scenery, the quietude, and the rushing river. A shepherd passes with a large flock of brown and white sheep. Master walks off by himself and I follow at a distance. How rare this freedom from the clamoring crowds! He stands on the sward, breathing affinity, innocence and purity towards all life.

The river frolics behind us. Master reclines on a blanket to the front of me, his body apparently sleeping. High up the mountain, I see three young men from our group recklessly racing down the steep slope. I gasp as heavy-set Kapoor loses control and falls head-first at full speed about fifteen feet through the air, landing hard on the rock-strewn bottom.

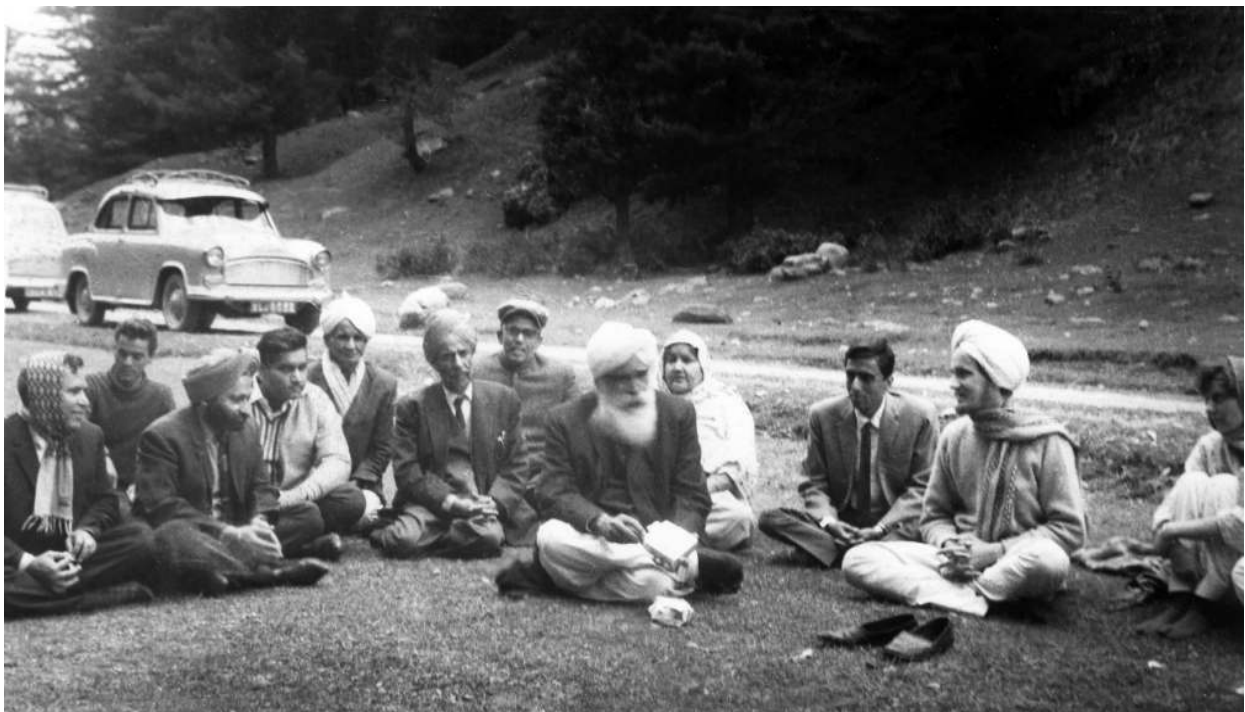
Master is apparently asleep, gently snoring while Kapoor is airborne. At precisely the moment of impact, Master rolls over, stands up facing me, and slaps his side by the ribs three times, precisely at the same spot of Kapoor's certain injury. Kapoor, however, stands up, completely free of injury and pain. When I approach the Master with mouth agape, he brushes off the entire incident. I only convey what these eyes have seen.

Jesus may have lived in Kashmir: Many of Kashmir's original inhabitants are apparently of Jewish ancestry, and are known as 'the People of the Book.' The Ahmadia Muslims of the region recognize the special prophetic mission of Jesus (as does the Q'uran), and vehemently insist that Jesus visited Kashmir. The mountain trail from Afghanistan, which passes into Kashmir, is to this day called Issa-i-Maidan or the Meadow of Jesus. Legend has it that Jesus tarried there a while. In the old quarter of Srinagar is the Rozabal tomb—which displays two feet carved in stone, with prominent nail wounds. The Rozabal legends, and ancient scrolls in an old Buddhist monastery in Leh, the capital of Ladhakh appear to corroborate the visit of Jesus to the region.

Departure: Mrs. Chhabra laments, 'When Master was staying in our house, we were so happy. It was just as if God was here with us. But now that he is gone away, our house will seem so empty!' She and her husband Jaswant were married in the presence of Hazur in the late forties, an event documented on color film. The grandeur of Hazur, with his snow white beard and regal bearing were captured for all times. How this movie came to Master Kirpal is very interesting. The film's owner happened to visit Kirpal Singh Ji in Delhi, but did not accept him as the Master. Master very lovingly offered his brother-in-faith anything his heart desired

Moth & the Flame The Vale of Kashmir

if he would just allow a copy of the movie to be made, but he refused. Sant Kirpal Singh continued in his loving way, when suddenly the visitor remarked, 'If you can give me the grace to glimpse our beloved Hazur once again, I will gladly make you a copy.' The Master just touched him on the head, and immediately the departed Hazur appeared to the visitor's inner gaze. The grateful disciple immediately handed over the precious film and wouldn't hear of accepting a penny for it.



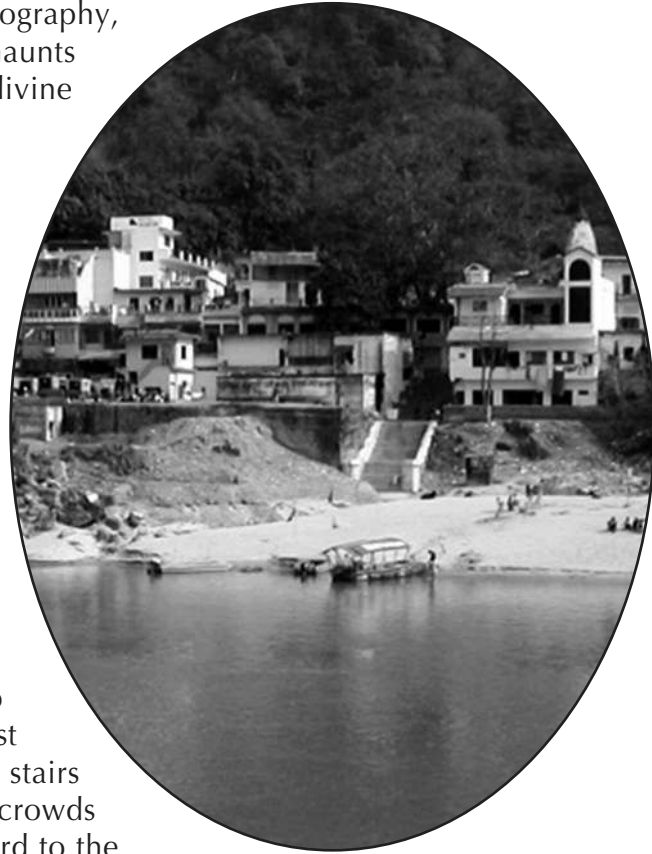
With the Master by the Jhelum River, Kashmir

29 Rishikesh & Hardwar

*When my mind became as pure & limpid
as the waters of the Ganges,
God ran after me, crying, "O Kabir! O Kabir!"*

Diary, June, '67: 'Please make yourself ready. We leave for Hardwar and Rishikesh tomorrow morning!' Master announces. Currents of joy and soaring expectation fill me. Since my teens when I first read Brunton's *Search in Secret India*, and Yogananda's *Autobiography*, I had inwardly longed for those sacred haunts where rishis and yogis of yore pursued divine knowledge with singular zeal.

Setting forth at the crack of dawn, our cars parallel the mighty Ganga upriver, and arrive at Hardwar by noon. This ancient religious city teems with ochre-robed swamis, pundits and pious pilgrims. Incense, mantras and temple bells fill the air; statues of Ganesha, the elephant-headed god; Shivaji, the blue-throated Himalayan yogi-deva; Sheshnag, the thousand-headed serpent representing the support of the physical plane; Lakshmi, the many-armed goddess of prosperity; Durga, riding her tiger; avatars Rama and Krishna, Hanuman the monkey hero king—all invite devotees to worship. Vast stoneworks and marble terraces, endless stairs and ornate shrines line the river, where crowds perform ablutions, offering water eastward to the souls of departed ancestors.



Absorbing this remarkable spectacle, one is reminded of Guru Nanak's Hardwar visit 450 years earlier. After observing similar rituals, Nanak began scooping water in his hands, throwing it to the West in the opposite direction. A large crowd gathered, and their priest spokesman demanded an explanation. The great teacher replied, 'Oh, I'm watering my fields in the Punjab.' They chided him, 'That's ridiculous. How is it possible for you to water your fields five hundred miles away?' Nanak replied, 'If your offerings can reach the souls of those long departed, surely this same water will reach my fields in Punjab!' By Nanak's simple example and highly charged presence, his audience realized the ineffectiveness of outer rituals, and the process of their awakening began.

For centuries—and even to this day—pilgrims held the belief that a bath in the holy Ganga will wash all sins away. Kabir in his time reminded pilgrims that if the fish which spends its entire life in the Ganges does not lose its bad odor, how can man even think that by such an ablution his soul will be cleansed? Investiture of miraculous properties to physical objects is the common practice of the priestcraft and the simple-minded.

Moth & the Flame - Rishikesh & Hardwar

Kabir, Nanak and other divine mystics speak of an inner purifying water, found only in Daswan Dwar, the third spiritual region: when the soul reaches this stage and bathes in its nectarous waters, the karmas and sins collected from innumerable lifetimes are cleansed. Thus purified and uncovered, soul radiates with a brightness exceeding twelve suns. She (soul is often referred to in the feminine) then may proceed to the higher spiritual regions in the company of the Guide.

A white bridge spans the wide river over which we cross to the uninhabited side where Ganga Mayi (Mother Ganges) flows clear, swift and cold from the Himalayas down to the vast Gangetic plains. As life-provider for India's millions, Ganga is indeed a mother-sustainer. While immersing my feet in the cold currents, Master sits nearby in sidh-aasan beneath a towering neem tree, giving darshan to several sadhu-renunciates. Above and beyond the hodgepodge of temples and ashrams on the opposite shore, jungled foothills stretch into the bluish distance. I ponder the possibility of having lived here before.

Master shares a glimpse of his earlier life: 'I came to Hardwar more than thirty-five years ago, to meditate in solitude on this very bank. Then Haridwar consisted of only a few temples and ashrams, and people were afraid to cross the river to this side [now a beautiful park]. It was then all jungle, infested with snakes and scorpions—but they never bit or harmed me. I found it a good place for meditation. Now Hardwar is commercialized and noise-some.' He walks to the river's edge, recounting times when he would swim and allow the current to carry him several kilometers downstream.

Between Hardwar and the smaller, less commercialized village of Rishikesh upriver, our car slowly passes more ashrams and temples. Milling crowds of sadhu-mendicants of all ages, male and female, some with long matted hair, prayer malas, shiva-tridents and ash-besmeared bodies, beg for alms. Some sadhus engage in incredibly austere forms of yoga. Various sects are delineated by yellow, orange, white or red robes. Some have shaven heads, some are bearded, some have white forehead markings, some red, some are learned and renowned scholars. Some are genuine; most are engaged in elementary stages of yoga. Some are shameless pretenders and crooks, preying on the unsuspecting.

From the front seat, Master shares more of his own history:

'In 1948, I went to Uttarkashi, up-river from Rishikesh, and invited all hermits and sadhus from their retreats. When they gathered together I asked, "Brothers, who can give experience of Light?" Only one man came forward who had that competency. He could give inner Light to others but his method was to concentrate on the flame of a candle. After one or two years of practice others would begin to see the light inside. You people are given Light the very first day.'

Raghuvacharya: We drive to an embankment high over the Ganga, stopping at the Darshana Mahavidyalaya Ashram and Sanskrit School, founded by the venerable scholar and sage, Sri Raghuvacharya. We descend a flight of steep stone steps to a cluster of whitewashed buildings overhanging the sparkling river. When the 111 year-old Raghuvacharya emerges from a door, we have the rare opportunity to witness an authentic Yogiraj,¹ and a Saint, meet and embrace.

Master has also come for the sake of Mangat Ram's widow, to be present at the immersion of her husband's ashes. A Pundit leads a procession to the riverbank where Vedic rites are performed, prayers intoned and ashes poured upon the water. A few hundred yards upstream is the rock upon which the Master practised intense meditation for several months in 1948.

Moth & the Flame - Rishikesh & Hardwar

Three of us escape the sweltering heat and swim in the slower, deeper waters of the river, despite crocodile warnings. As I swim to the far side, I turn and see Master watching from the cliff. People said I was followed by a crocodile, but I never saw it.

In a large room of Raghuvacharya's hermitage, we eat, then rest on the smooth cool floor. The supine but lordly one is a few feet away, attention totally withdrawn and absorbed in the inner spiritual regions. All breathing, all movement of his body slows until entirely still, like a marble carving, and remains so for the next 20 minutes. At this sight I am chilled and alarmed. I whisper my anxiety to my friend Brij Mohan. 'Dear brother; not to worry,' he assures. 'This is usual course for Maharaj Ji. He will return after a while. You don't know these things. This is his mystery.' It's a mystery I'd dearly love to know!

Yogishwar, an Englishwoman and disciple of the late Swami Sivananda, is my afternoon guide to Rishikesh. She has short-cropped silver hair and is dressed in orange renunciate's robes. I ask how she came to be here.

Yogishwar answers, 'In 1963, I was practicing sadhana [spiritual discipline] in London under the guidance of my guru, Swami Sivananda. One night I entered a deep meditative state, and within brilliant spiritual Light a great Master appeared, with incomparable beauty and power. He was in the Sikh form with long white beard and high turban. Next, another being of Light appeared. The first Master gave me detailed directions to go to such and such a place in London and meet the Living Master. I had no idea who these beings were but having learned to trust my inner direction, I went to the indicated place and met Sant Kirpal Singh for the first time (then on his world tour and in London). He informed me that Swami Sivananda had just left the body that day. Naturally, this news came as a great shock!

'When I was shown a photograph of Baba Sawan Singh Ji, I recognized him as the great Master who had first appeared in my vision. I was initiated that very morning by Sant Kirpal Singh. Again Sawan Singh appeared; this time revealing much more of his transcendental immanence. And again Master Kirpal appeared. Hazur then said to me directly, "Kirpal Singh is my Spiritual Son. He will take care of you."'

I ask, 'Why have you continued to wear the saffron robes and shave your head like a renunciate, when that is not our Path?'

Yogishwar explains, 'I have taken life-long vows of renunciation under the instructions of my guru Sivananda whom I continue to honor and love, but my spiritual salvation and passport through the higher planes is in my relationship with Master and his Sant Mat lineage. Master Kirpal is my spiritual Father, and is fully aware of my aspirations and attachment to Swami Sivananda. He respects my unique relationship to the Divine.'

After putting me in my place, Yogishwar invites me to Sivananda Ashram, a stone's throw down-river on the opposite side of the road from Raghuvacharya's hermitage. She points out a universal worship temple and Sivananda's samadh (tomb). We peer inside the door of a decrepit cell where Yogishwar had spent years in yogic practice. She jokes about the rats and bugs who kept her company, stating that spartan Sawan Ashram is pure luxury by comparison.

When we return, we find Raghuvacharya and Master up (just as Brij Mohan had promised) and talking. The sprightly Yogiraj is in an effusive mood: "Before meeting Maharaj Ji in 1948, I had, by rigorous practice of Patanjali's Asthanga Yoga, traversed beyond the six chakras and inner stages up to Sahasrar—the Thousand Petalled Lotus

of Light. Sahasrar is headquarters of the astral plane and the final stage of most forms of yoga. Other Yoga systems and their practitioners are unaware of the existence of anything beyond Brahm—the causal world, or second stage. Since meeting Master, he showered grace on this soul, taking it beyond what is possible through yoga.”

The venerable sage continues, ‘Twelve years ago, I became very ill and died. When surat (attention) withdrew from my lifeless body into higher planes, I saw Hazur, and before him was Maharaj Kirpal requesting Hazur to extend my life another fifteen years, as he wanted more work from me! Hazur nodded his head in acceptance, and thus I am here today!’

We move to the stone courtyard outside, directly overlooking the shimmering river. Raghuvacharya asks to see Master’s right palm—which he indifferently extends while looking into the eyes of each of us, and not without a twinkle of humor. After careful examination, Raghuvacharya becomes animated, hopping from one foot to the next like an excited adolescent. Speaking aloud in a deep, booming voice and tracing his index finger along the Master’s palm he exclaims, ‘Never have I seen such a palm! Come, see for yourselves!’ All surge forward to see Master’s flawless, deeply-lined palm. In rich tones, Raghuvacharya declares, ‘Not even Rama and Krishna had such a hand. You have the hands which belong to God! Whomsoever beholds such a palm is blessed!’ In vain he stoops to touch the Master’s feet, but is restrained by him.

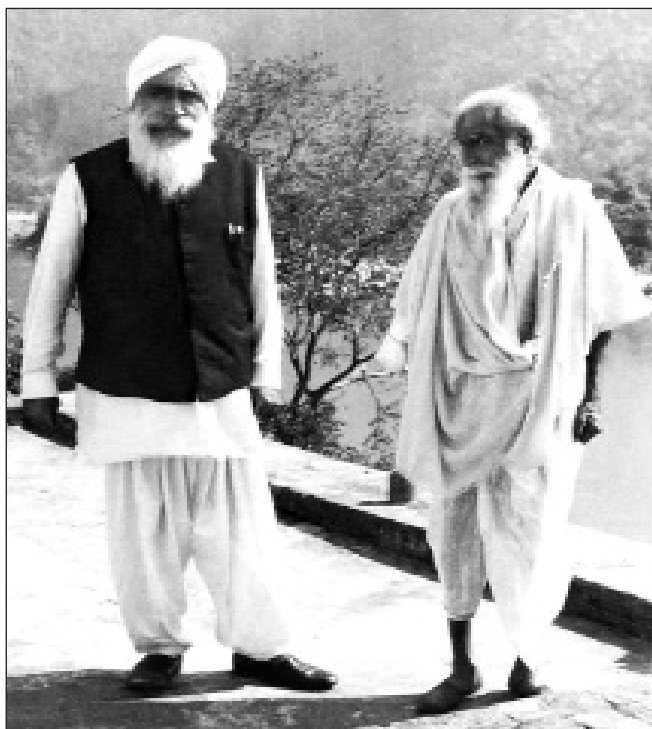
‘Maharaj!’ Raghuvacharya implores, ‘stay with me; rest a while in my hermitage! Six months here will rejuvenate your body and add years to your precious life!’ But Master gently laughs and demurs. He has no luxury of time, for the flock he has, demands nurturing and the ones yet to gather beckon; the harvest is rich, and laborers, few.

I had studied Chiero’s scientific system of palmistry prior to my coming to this path and my irrepressible curiosity wants to see what Raghuvacharya’s palm reveals. The venerable yogi proffers his hand. I’m pleased just to hold his hand in mine, and do not seriously analyze it. Physically, Raghuvacharya stands 5’ 6”, about 140 lb. with deep-set eyes under betel brows. His beard is white and his sparse long hair is swept back and tied in a knot. Possessed of humor, wisdom, and ojas—the power which accrues from long celibacy—Raghuvacharya radiates a veritable halo of light.

The illumined Raghuvacharya passed away in 1971 at the age of 113. His body was discovered sitting upright in a full lotus meditation posture. Sant Kirpal Singh Ji drove up to Rishikesh to personally ignite his funeral pyre and consign his ashes to the river.

1 Yogiraj translates as ‘King of Yogis.’

Moth & the Flame - Rishikesh & Hardwar



*Sant Kirpal Singh & Sri Raghuvacharya
-at the latter's ashram-school by the Ganga*



Yogiraj Raghuvacharya speaking from the dais at Sawan Ashram (1858 - 1971)

Moth & the Flame
30 Rajpur Diaries

12 June 1967: Rishikesh fades into bright memory as the serpentine road takes us over low mountains covered in lush tropical forests—true jungle. Night is falling by the time we reach the Master's old foothill estate, a few miles above the town of Dehra Dun. Turning around from the front seat, he fixes me with a twinkle in his eyes, 'This is lion country...and there is one Lion in these hills they haven't caught yet!'

Master acquired the 207 Rajpur Road acreage in the early fifties. Similar estates, many now crumbling, line both sides of the highway. Rajpur provided the English sahibs respite from the relentless summer heat of the plains. It was in this tranquil setting that Sant Kirpal Singh penned his many books.

After taking food tonight, I voice appreciation of the meditation-conducive surroundings, mercifully removed from noise and pollution. Over the chorus of crickets and frogs, Master comments, 'Here it is not yet spoiled, 'though the poison of the cities is approaching. Nature is beautiful except when tormented by the hand of man!' I ask of Emerson, Wordsworth, Blake, Dryden and Thoreau, mystics in their own right. Compressing volumes into a few words, he answers cryptically, 'Poets are half-Saints, I tell you! Poets go rarely where Saints come down rarely!' And, the session ends. We retire to our rooms, and Master's words continue to revolve: 'Poets go rarely where Saints come down rarely.' Is it not that great poets sometimes had flights from here to there experiencing the Light and Harmony of the Divine?

*To the illumined mind, the whole world burns
and sparkles with Light.*
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

*From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony
This Universal frame began:
From Harmony to Harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.*
—John Dryden

On the other hand, the true Saints—embedded as they are in far higher regions—rarely allow their attention to descend—and then, to the extent required for carrying out their sublime mission and mundane necessities.

At Rajpur, my daily schedule is to rise long before dawn, meditate for several hours, take fruit for breakfast, have darshan, and then hike alone in the mountains, returning to the residence before late afternoon. On my third day, Tai Ji warns me of lions and snakes in the jungle. I do not share her fear, although I did meet a large wolf in the forest and came across the bone-strewn lair of a large carnivore. From his wicker chair, Master comments, 'I used to sit in meditation down there on the irrigation canal,' pointing through the huge mango grove towards the jungle. 'Cobras often came and stood before me, for hours together.' Master raises his forearm, hand down, imitating a hooded cobra. 'Then they would just sneak away. Once a cobra slithered into the satsang at Delhi, reared up on its tail and spread its hood before me. The people got up and cried, "Snake! Snake! Let us kill it!" But I told them, "What harm is there if a snake has come? Let him listen and enjoy the satsang." For one full hour the snake stood there and after

satsang was finished, he just went away without harming anyone. This is the result of love.

'I tell you, if you have love for God in your heart, nothing can harm you. Nothing can sting or bite you.' After a pregnant pause he continues, 'It sometimes happens that one whom you have harmed in a past life is reborn as a snake to repay an old debt.'

The Goddess of Rajpur: One of my morning hikes takes me up along the uninhabited jungle-covered mountain ridge directly behind the Master's sylvan retreat. At its summit I discover a small solitary temple with a tall pointed dome, a mute white sentinel overlooking the green valleys below. It is noontime and very hot, and a heavy stillness hangs in the air. Although the building had been recently whitewashed, its plaster surface is cracked and in disrepair. As curiosity gets the better of me, I leave my shoes outside, unlatch an iron chain, and crawl through a Lilliputian door, wary of snakes. Inside the tiny vaulted chamber it is cool and dark. As eyes adjust to the gloom, I notice several smoke-stained niches set in the walls. These contain incense-reddened images of Ganesh and a goddess, possibly Kali or Durga. An eerie feeling pervades the chamber.

Being a devotee of That which is beyond form, I am not attracted to man-made idols or deities of the illusory astral plane. At the same time I am on their territory and do not wish to disrespect divinity in any of its many forms. Sitting firmly in the lotus position, I remove my watch and lay it on the floor. Eyelids drop, closing off the external world as I slip into a meditative state.

After an hour or so, rustling sounds outside rouse me. My tender feet consider the countless thorns and sharp stones littering the mountain path, so I squeeze through the tiny door to the outside to gather my shoes. I am startled to see a large troop of wild Hanuman monkeys squatting along the embankment, observing me warily. After latching the door, I cautiously approach them. Suddenly, as one, they leap into the gum-trees, swinging from one flexible tree to the next, rapidly descending the mountain. I run after them down the hill at break-neck speed like Mowgli, the wild wolf boy in Kipling's Jungle Book—forgetting my watch in the temple. The next morning I climb the ridge again, to reclaim my timepiece. The latched door is exactly as I had left it, but the watch within is gone. In the evening, I share my adventures with the Master.

With a playful smile he exclaims, 'The Goddess of Rajpur has stolen your watch!' Seeing my curious expression, he elaborates, 'This valley was once haunted by a goddess who caused great mischief. The temple on the mountain was built to propitiate her, and she has taken your watch!' I laugh heartily at his joking.

Later that night, upon returning to my unlit room, the apparition of the goddess manifests before me, emanating strange green, yellow and blue crystalline energies, somewhat austere and malevolent. Remembering that simran of the five charged names not only helps withdraw the sensory currents to the eye-focus, but also wards off any apparitions of the negative power or mayaic illusion, I begin to voice aloud the sacred mantra. The subtle form of the goddess gradually disintegrates into the ether. Nothing the Masters utter is to be taken for granted.

Renunciation vs. Marriage - 17 June 1967: Here in Rajpur, a sense of deep detachment and spiritual yearning has possessed me. 'Master,' I request, 'I don't want anything of this world, or the astral, or causal planes. I want to be one with the Lord.' He replies, 'When the devotee desires only God, God does not refuse him.'

I have observed strict continence for several years now after a dissolute adolescence,

proving for myself the Master's words, 'A lamp burns splendidly when it has oil within, but if all the oil is leaked away, how can there be light?' But there are times when the carnal mind troubles me and behaves like a fly on a dung-heap. When I approach him about my common dilemma, he advises, 'Always keep the mind occupied with something useful, such as mentally repeating the five charged names. Keep it occupied, as vacant mind is home of the devil! And secondly, avoid looking into the eyes of others. Something is passed through the eyes. The eyes indicate what color a person's soul is dyed in.'

Seeking clarification, I ask, 'Master, in the West, if you don't look into people's eyes, they think there is something wrong with you, that maybe you are dishonest, whereas in the Orient, looking into the eyes of others may be considered impolite.'

'In that case, you can look towards them, but not into them.

If you are stronger, you will influence them, but if they are stronger, they will influence you. If you feel lusty thoughts entering your mind, then come into the presence of the Master. If you look into the eyes of a higher soul, that is another matter. Two-thirds of the teachings are passed through the eyes, and the remainder through word of mouth.'

I express the desire to remain celibate for the rest of my life, to retreat to the forest to devote full time to meditation and realization. His response surprises me deeply. 'Marriage is no bar to spirituality. One needs a life companion in weal or woe to help each other realize the ultimate Goal. Outwardly renouncing and running to the jungles cannot overcome desire. While living in the forests, you will find distractions there too—from birds, animals and insects. There is also the question of where your food will come from. Renunciation is the negative way. Mind is like a donkey; if you pull it you will be resisted. But if you push it backwards, his inclination may be to go forward in the direction you want it to go. If you renounce the world outwardly, desires will still creep in. It is better to be in the world, but have your mind in the forest, renounced at heart. In other words, be in the world, but not of the world. Let your boat remain in water, but let not water enter your boat.

'Once, missionaries went to a certain country and preached, "Thou shalt not beat thy wives—this is a sin." The people asked among themselves, "Do they beat their women in America?" And as a result they began beating their women. This is the negative way, you see; mind works this way. Not all the Masters have lived totally celibate lives. Not everything is bad, mind that! There is a legitimate use for everything, but one should not misuse it. For example, if you go to a garden and sit beneath the shady trees and enjoy the fragrance of the flowers, the garden-keeper says nothing, but if you spoil the garden or uproot any plant, he will turn you over to the police. If you live a completely celibate life, never marrying, still the desires and sensuous urges arise. Many desires have to be liquidated in this life.'

Letting that sink in, he then gives a special antidote for the wiles of the mind: 'Put in more time for meditation sweetly and buoyantly and, when you sleep, go to sleep in the lap of the Master-power.'

Everything he says is profound, but this hits like a ton of bricks. Marriage? Me? The next morning, I ask, 'I have been mulling over your advice about having a life-companion, you know, a wife.'

'Yes?' he leads me on.

'Well, I was wondering, if I marry, I would want it to be for life. Since I'm



afraid of the high divorce rate in the West, maybe my chances there wouldn't be so good.' I am having a hard time getting the next part out: 'Would it be all right to marry an Indian girl?' I have nothing against Western women, but I am being propelled along tracks already laid.

'No harm,' he answers. Whew! I sigh inwardly in relief.

Moth & the Flame - Rajpur Diaries

I haven't the faintest idea how to go about getting a wife, especially an Indian wife! I also express guilt over not paying my way while with him. With a shake of his massive head, he dismisses my misgivings: 'You are one of the family and there is no need to feel any imposition whatever. And perhaps some day you may be instrumental abroad with His grace.' I mumble with gratitude, 'Thank you Master...I'm just a puppet.' He continues, 'All these things come from God overhead...'

I then comment about meditation sittings sometimes being utterly sublime, yet at other times barren, dry, and uninspired; sometimes overtaken by sleep or mental garbage. He advises, 'Your meditation should not be a compulsive automatic thing of duty only. You should sit in meditation like a Prince. Be jolly and full of joy!'

'Meditation is invariably best when sitting in the Master's presence,' I interject.

'That is because of my charging.' He then quickly deflects personal credit and adds, 'That is His charging Presence. When you sit with Him, are you then doing so out of compulsion? No! Quite buoyant! So, when you sit, sit buoyantly like a Prince!'

18 June: Master points his finger to each one of us, 'Perhaps you may become ambassadors of the Golden Age.' What does he mean, I wonder? This reference is the first (but not last) time I hear him give promise of a more enlightened era to come for humanity and earth. With his impulse comes a sense of individual responsibility to assist in some way, but how, one can only wonder and pray for humble guidance.

19 June: 'Did Guru Nanak have a Master?' I ask.

'Some come with a degree, and others attain it while here. What difference exists in their attainment?' After a long pause, he adds, 'Guru Nanak and Kabir were contemporaries.' He also mentions a Sant Rehn, another contemporary of Guru Nanak. From his remark, I surmise that Master is alluding to spiritual connections between these great beings—even a teacher-disciple relationship, despite the absence of historical proof. By tapping within, the Masters can know everything about the past, present and future, but it may not be in full accordance with popular history.

Mussourie & Sakya Trezing Rimpoche: After taking leave of Master's presence, I join a party of seven for a long hike up to Mussourie, an old tourist town perched atop the big mountain directly to our north. One can drive fifteen miles along a switchback road, or take the steep seven-mile mountain path, mostly up. After getting the Master's blessing, we leave on foot.

As the day progresses, temperatures exceed 100 F. We arrive in Mussourie around two in the afternoon, weary from heat, thin air, and the strenuous climb. From our vantage, the magnificent snow-covered Himalayas of Tibet—'the roof of the world' hover in the blue distance. Refugees from that mysterious land operate dozens of stalls throughout the Mussourie markets, selling traditional silver, coral, and turquoise jewelry, t'hankas (intricate hand paintings on paper or silk scrolls depicting mandalas, saints, and deities for external concentration), and other arts and crafts. Sales to tourists and collectors help support these gentle refugees and their threatened ancient culture and Buddhist faith. East moves West.

As we enter Mussourie, we pass a prominent sign in Tibetan script outside a large, handsome building. Prayer flags flutter in the breeze along the top of the walls and roof. Ever curious, I halt our troupe and poke my nose into the courtyard. A warmly smiling,

red-robed Buddhist nun appears from a doorway, bowing and inviting our climbing party within. We gingerly follow. Once inside, we are introduced to the highly venerated nineteen-year old Sakya Trezing Rimpoche, spiritual leader in a nine-hundred-year-old tradition. The Sakya lineage, I am informed, is the second largest Tibetan Buddhist sect, wherein succession passes through an unbroken bloodline. Along with the Dalai Lama and more than ten thousand of his countrymen, Rimpoche fled his beloved homeland and was granted asylum in India. Once formal greetings are over, the educated and articulate Sakya Trezing and I discuss some of the inner traditions of Buddhism and its Tibetan variants. I recall lines from the Tibetan Book of the Dead:

O nobly born, when thy body and mind were separating, thou must have experienced a glimpse of the Pure Truth, subtle, sparkling, bright, dazzling, glorious, and radiantly awesome, in appearance like a mirage moving across a landscape in springtime in one continuous stream of vibrations. Be not daunted thereby, nor terrified, nor awed. That is the radiance of thine own true nature. Recognize it...

Within those radiances, the natural sound of the Truth will reverberate like a thousand thunders. The sound will come with a rolling reverberation... Fear not. Flee not. Be not terrified. Know them (i.e., these sounds) to be [of]...thine own inner Light.

It is late afternoon when we bid farewell to our young, yet learned and gracious host. After wandering through the Mussourie bazaar, we realize that the sun is rapidly sinking beyond the mountains, and the enveloping darkness will surely make our steep descent along the twisting path precarious. Striding through the busy thoroughfare, we bump into Karam Singh, the Master's carpenter, and exult at this improbable meeting. With a laugh on his strong face, Karam announces, 'Master send Ram Saroop for you. Waiting down hill, around corner!' Then, as mysteriously as he appears, Karam moves off into the foot-traffic and disappears from sight on some mysterious errand before we have time to question further. Sure enough, down the road and around the bend waits Ram Saroop—beaming a warm, toothless grin, exclaiming loudly, 'God-power, Christ-Power, Ram-Power, bring me! Champion Studebaker, American car!'

After we disembark at 207 Rajpur Road, I retire to my dark room for meditation. This night, I am beset with an unsought visitation, a seemingly endless pantheon of larger-than-life Tibetan deities in full color; wrathful, flaming Herukas, serene Buddhas and Tibetan saints appear in a procession within the void. Simran surrounds me with a protective shield. My experience appears to have been triggered by the contact with an authentic mystical lineage embodied in the Sakya Rimpoche. As these archetypes emerge from the astral plane, they are submerged into the Light of simran, never to return.

23 June—control of the attention: Every morning and afternoon meditation sittings are given for the Dehra Dun initiates and those visiting from Delhi. Most of the sittings are followed by informal question and answer sessions. An elderly woman complains, 'Maharaj, I cannot see anything within, because my attention is distracted by my arthritis pain.'

Gesturing with a pointed forefinger to the crook of his other arm, Maharaj Ji says, 'When you go to a doctor for an injection, you look away and divert your attention so that you will not feel the pain of the needle. Similarly, fully direct your attention to the Third Eye-focus; you will see the Light, and the pains of the body below will not be felt. It is a matter of controlling the attention.'

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He speaks of Bhai Mani Singh, an advanced disciple of the Tenth Guru, who was captured by imperial Mughal forces and condemned to death by dismemberment, joint by joint, beginning with the fingers. When the executioner became impatient with this tedious process, he began to take a shortcut by cutting off an entire arm. In the midst of his torture, Bhai Mani Singh withdrew his attention from bodily awareness and laughed at the executioner, exhorting him, 'Follow your orders, and cut these limbs joint by joint!'

Rajpur Gems, 24 June - from a satsang discourse:

Always reserve a place in your home for worshipping the Lord, even if it be only the corner of a hut. That body is beautiful in whom God is remembered; wherever such a one sits, that place becomes beautified. The Guru himself may be poor and without fine clothes, but with him you will enjoy bliss and peace of mind. If we have his company and are given hard work; if we have to sweep the floor, wear coarse cloth and sleep on a sack, still that is far better than the company of the affluent who are far from God. Simple living, fewer desires and high thinking make a real man. That place where we get sweet remembrance of God is the best place, no matter if it be in a poor hut. All our wealth and possessions will someday be burnt. Therefore, we should spend time to seek eternity in the company of a Sadhu or Saint. If God is with us, love is with us—and then, even dust is gold.

Once Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, was asked why there was no hair at the back of her head and none on the front. She replied that the hair at the back of her head was pulled out by the worldly people—and the hair on her forehead was rubbed away because she had been pressing her forehead at the feet of God's Saints, but they would not accept her.

God may appear in a hut or a palace. Saints have appeared in all guises. The light-seeking moth—the true seeker— will pay little attention to the outer form; he seeks only the Light.

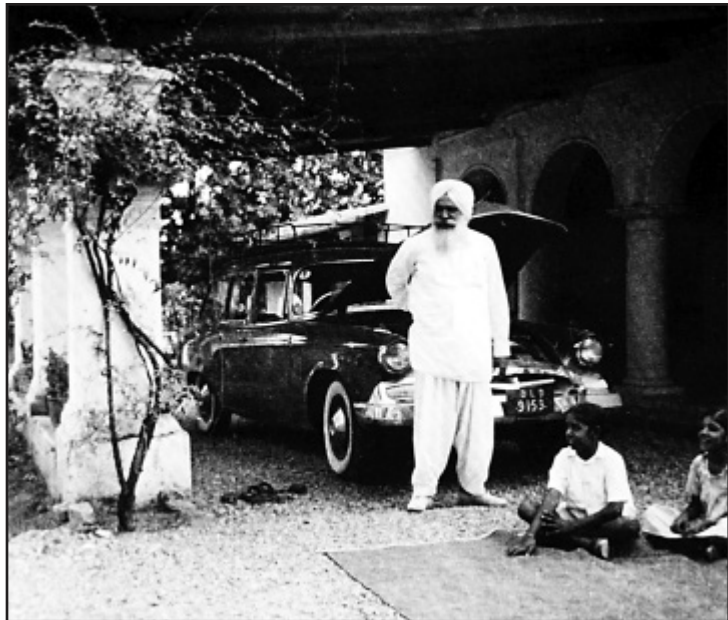
Learning is a Garland of Flowers—26 June: Dan Melnick, philosophy professor from the University of California at-Berkeley, and his wife, are on sabbatical leave and happen to stumble upon the Master in Rajpur. I'm present as the professor volleys questions. After patiently answering, Sant Kirpal Singh relates the following parable:

'Once two seekers went to a Master. One was learned and the other was illiterate. The teacher said to the illiterate man, "I will charge you my usual fee, but for the learned man I will charge double fee." The learned man asked, "Why charge me twice as much? I am already learned." The Master replied, "I am charging twice as much because I have to first make you an unlearned man!" We have to unlearn everything we have learned. But, mind that, I don't charge any fee—it is Nature's Gift, like sunshine, water, and air. If you tell an intellectual man to climb the stairs, he will begin questioning, "Oh, how many steps are there? What if I fall? How high is it? Why should I climb?" Now, take a simple man; tell him to climb and he will go right up. The house of our body is on fire and what we must do is not ask why it is on fire, but get out of it, the sooner the better. You can ask later.'

The professor then stresses the importance of intellectual development and education.

'Dear friend, I fully agree,' Master replies. 'Education helps to develop inner faculties for having a right approach to life's problems. Learning is a garland of flowers round the neck of a practical man. He will explain many things from the vocabulary at his

command, but a man of learning without a practical life is like a beast of burden that has loads of books over his head! Bookish knowledge is all a wilderness and gives no way out! A learned man without experience revels in the pudding like a spoon and gives to others but is unaware of its taste. An unlearned man with a practical life does enjoy the taste of the pudding and gives examples from daily life with the limited vocabulary at his command. Both the learned and the unlearned have to tread the same path of withdrawing from outside to rise above body-consciousness. The ABC of higher learning begins there. Then he sees the Light of God in all and becomes a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan.'



Master in front of the old Studebaker stationwagon,

The professor's wife, who has been silent most of the time, speaks up: 'If God is within us, and everywhere, why do we need to seek the help of an intermediary or guru?'

'The God in you is asleep. In the Master it is awake. In whom God is awake, He is competent to awaken others. Light comes from Light and life comes from life!'

27 June: While strolling down Rajpur Road to the post office, three Sikh youths greet me and I them, although we are complete strangers. These university students have walked more than three hundred miles from their home in the Punjab, seeking adventure.

'May we ask why you have come from such a prosperous country all the way to India, adopting our customs and dress?' I tell a little of my story, and invite them to meet the one who drew me. They eagerly follow to the Master's room, where they receive parshad from his hands and paternal guidance.

In the midst of their conversation in Punjabi, Master turns and remarks in English, 'Once a special foot-race was held in India between men of different diets. The race was more than two hundred miles in length. One man was vegetarian, one was fruitarian, and the others were meatarians. The fruitarian finished first and won the race. The vegetarian was second, and of the many who started, the meatarians who finished were last.'

I relate the story of Dr. Moore from England who walked non-stop from California to New York when she was well into her fifties. When asked what her 'fuel' was, she replied, 'Grass!' Master comments, 'Grass is very strong. Just look at elephants, horses, and oxen. I knew a doctor in Lahore who had very simple living and eating habits. He would eat only one item a day, and every day it would be different, but always vegetarian. He never mixed his food nor ate four or five different courses at a meal. He proclaimed "I will never die by old age." He was a good man and his prescriptions were always effective. Every day he bathed in a cold stream and on the way back home, he gave money and free medicines to the poor. He lived to reach a very great age. He was

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killed in an accident a few years back, and thus he never died from old age!' Master chuckles.

Amritsar Within: Every afternoon at about three, after days of clear blue sky and sunshine, clouds gather above the Rajpur mountains, quickly followed by lightning, thunder, and sudden rains. The monsoon is upon us. Today, a small group of us meditate with the Master for two hours under cover of the open verandah, while the rain performs its ritual dance.

A six-year-old meditator sits rock-still for the entire session. Tapping the top of his head, Master helps him to stand. 'Kya Dekha? What did you see?' he asks. The boy's attention remains withdrawn, as indicated by his eyes partly upturned. With folded hands, his eyes focus on the Master and he then divulges in great detail his wondrous mystic journey. Brij Mohan translates: '...and I reached a region dominated by a shimmering lake with many bright flames burning along its edges. In its center was a great Temple of Gold, with tall spires and shining domes. When I entered that Pool and bathed in it, I became filled with happiness and wonder, such that I cannot describe. I then proceeded beyond the lake, along a shining marble path. A huge sun appeared, rising high in the heavens, its light far brighter than many suns of this world.' At a loss for further words, the little boy places his head on the Master's feet, who pats him lovingly. 'This is the Amritsar located in the third plane, Daswan Dwar,' Master shares. 'When soul bathes in it, the karmic slate is wiped clean; then it is ready to proceed further into the Beyond.' Mortals seldom attain such an advanced stage, yet here before us a young child has traversed it within the space of two hours, clearly by the grace of his preceptor.

After a pregnant silence, the Master adds: 'Every moment try to learn something. Every day I am learning, even from children. All through life I have been a student of the Mysteries. Whoever thinks, "I have attained something, I have become something," has lost everything. Who can boast that he has learned everything? Newton said, "I am merely picking up pebbles from the seashore of knowledge."'

A young Westerner moves up to his chair and confides, 'I saw a large bright sun-like light. It burst, giving way to a golden-red rising sun; a radiant figure appeared in its center, but I couldn't make out his features—all was Light! This form stood before simran and transformed into Master's face, except you weren't wearing a turban.'

'Sometimes the inner Master is seen wearing a blue coat or a white coat. Turban or no turban, surely you can recognize your Friend!'

Question: 'Do the huge radiant orange sun and the radiant white moon I am seeing within belong to the astral plane or higher?'

Answer: 'The huge radiant sun belongs to trikuti [the causal, Brahm, or second stage], and when one breaks open this sun, one meets the Master there. He manifests on all higher planes. Whatever he is seen doing outside, the same he is doing on the inner planes also. The moon you refer to is in Daswan Dwar [in the third spiritual region]. Always keep attention fixed at the center of the Light and let it not stray away. Don't look at the waves emanating from the Light, but keep to the center. In this way, Light will burst to let you pass through it. When all attachments are removed, the inner form of the Master manifests of itself; he will speak to you and reply to any question you put to him.'

Question: 'I'm wondering... does the inner form speak just like the outer form? For example, when you reveal your holy Self within, there is a kind of thought-emanation

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from the inner form that solves all problems, but is the inner speech which you refer to something different?’

Answer: ‘Spiritual emanation! Sometimes also the Inner Master’s lips move and clearly worded answers are given to questions put to that form when receptivity is developed. Look intently into the middle of his forehead or his eyes or whatever you see before you, and relax completely. You will find that the spirit will be withdrawn from the body just like a hair is drawn from soft butter, with little or no effort on your part.

Question: ‘Is all criticism, even of frauds, to be eschewed?’

Answer: ‘Never with resentment, malice, or hatred. Take those aside to correct if wrong. Never in public.’

Question: ‘If one is forced by circumstances beyond his grasp to tell an untruth, yet to his own self he is true, will he suffer spiritual setback?’

Answer: ‘Don’t tell lies, but in certain cases, half-truths are alright. If a man is running from someone who wants to kill him, and the killer meets you and asks if you saw where he went, you could tell him something to the effect which would not give away the intended victim.’

‘I have a terrible problem, Master,’ I confess.

‘Terrible? How terrible is your problem?’

‘I am a complete slave of my mind.’

‘Who is there who is not a slave of their mind? If you abide by the rules of your teacher, you will become the most beloved pupil. But we follow only to the extent our mind allows us. If mind is surrendered, then it is easy to see God; there is no doubt about it.’

A few days pass. After listening to a discourse on the various aspects of service to the needy, poor, and sick, I get fired up with zeal and approach the Master: ‘How may I serve you?’ There is such great intensity in his eyes as he focuses his attention on me, that I become paralyzed, afraid. The tension is broken by his two-word reply. Just two words, ‘Do Bhajan!’ while his eyes gleam like a lion’s.

Despite the commission each Master has, the magnitude of their gift of initiation, disciples are not relieved of their responsibility to act ethically in executing their worldly duties. They are expected to earnestly strive to advance within through regular meditation. In innumerable ways, the Masters help their beloved ones. Individual spiritual practice and effort lessen the burden of self and the world, if not the Master’s load.

Like a child, I ask too many questions—helpless to stop, yet eager to learn. He is kind and never refuses—even if it be childish prattle. ‘How can we help the Master?’ I ask.

‘One can help the Master spiritually only after rising beyond the three worlds [physical, astral, and causal]; by submerging the individual ego and becoming one with him—a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan. Such cases are rare, of course.’

The Humility Message: Master beckons me over to where he stands beneath the arched verandah, and hands me six 5" x 7" cards. ‘You may please type up,’ he says. Grateful for such a task, I retreat with my treasure. Once alone, I examine the cards closely. Each is covered on both sides with his beautiful penmanship in microscopic size, complete with crossed out words and changes. For the next two days I struggle to decipher this approximately 2,400-word message, sometimes pondering a particularly difficult

squiggle for a long time until it becomes clear. When the typing is completed, the copy is personally examined by the Master and approved without changes for release. (Several years later, I met Reshad Field, Sufi teacher and author of *The Last Barrier*. After taking my hands in his, Reshad confided, 'Not a day goes by when I do not read this most inspiring message.' He pulled out a well-worn wad of paper from his breast pocket; I recognized it as Kirpal Singh's timelessly inspiring Humility Circular—the very same one transcribed from those six 5" x 7" cards. 'It has been my constant guide,' Reshad affirmed.)

The following is an excerpt from this powerful message on Humility and Simplicity:

'Humility,' says Lacordaire, 'does not consist in hiding our talents and virtues, in thinking ourselves worse and more ordinary than we are, but in possessing a clear knowledge of all that is lacking in us, and not exalting ourselves for that which we have, seeing that God has freely given it us, and with all His gifts, we are still infinitely of little importance.'

So the truly humble man may accept sometimes the praise which men give him, and quietly passes it on to God, keeping nothing for himself.

The man who is not truly humble behaves in a very unnatural manner when not praised by men. He becomes upset, loses his patience and even becomes angry. He repulses them with his irritation and creates an awkward situation. Sometimes he suppresses his feelings and remains silent; but he cannot forget the things that are said about him; they haunt him again and again, and do not give him peace of mind.

The humble man makes no fuss. He is at harmony with himself and others. He is gifted with a wondrous feeling of peace. He feels safe and secure, like a ship in harbor, unaffected by howling storms and lashing waves. He has found refuge at the Lotus Feet of the Lord and the storms of changing circumstances have no power over him. He feels light as air. The burdens, which we carry all our life—the burden of the self and its desires—he has lain aside, and is ever calm and serene. Having given up everything, he has nothing to lose, and yet everything belongs to him, for he is of God, and God is in him. Having broken the bondage of desire, he is as happy with a piece of dry bread as with a sumptuous meal. In every situation and circumstance of life, he blesses the Name of God.

He who would be humble regards himself as a student. He learns many new things, but what is more difficult, he unlearns many things. ...A scholar came to a Saint and said, 'O Seer of the Secret, tell me what I may do to live the life divine.' And the Saint said to him, 'Go, unlearn what thou hast learnt and then return and sit before me.'

He who would walk the way of humility must renounce his earlier ways of living... the opinions he has formed, the standards to which he is accustomed... The things the world would worship are to him of no value. His values are so different from those of other men. Rich food, fine houses, costly dresses, positions of power and authority, the applause of men, honors and titles no longer attract him. He feels drawn to a life of simplicity. He is happy in living a hidden life in the Hidden Lord.

He is dead to the world; he is alive in God. At times he actually behaves like one dead. Yes, the truly humble man is, in that sense, the 'dead' man. He has 'died.' God alone lives in him. His self has been annihilated. His self has vanished into God, and only God remains. God works in him and through him, and God emits in his eyes. God speaks in his words. On his feet, God walks the earth; and through his hands gives His

benedictions to all.

Such men are the real strength of the world—its illumination and inspiration. To see them is to commune with God, for God dwells in them. They are the living, moving Temples of the Lord. They are the ones who keep the world intact, though they do not know it themselves. The whole earth depends on them without anyone being aware of it. Their hearts and minds are in tune with the Great Heart and Mind of humanity. They are in complete accord with all that lives. They give their love to all living beings, as though they were the sons of the one sweet Mother. They have broken all fetters and entered into the freedom of the children of God. God does their will, because they have merged their wills in His. God fulfills their least desire, for it is He Who desires all their desires. They are the little saviors of humanity.

Mother's Love—Rajpur Diary: Cool moonlight spreads through tree gaps, causing the whitewashed stone path-markers to glow in the dark. Around 11 PM I quietly steal through the shadows, along a path I have come to know intimately. Standing unnoticed beneath the over-spreading foliage of giant lichee trees, my eyes drink the sight of the white-clad Father, resting on a charpai in a small clearing amongst the roses. Brij Mohan bends over the resting Master, applying compression-massage to his legs. In my heart of hearts I often craved this seva, but felt much too impure and timid to ask. I creep silently on tiptoes until very close. Brij Mohan looks up, noticing me. 'Shh!' I gesture with finger to lips, then point to Master's limbs, making massaging motions in the air, then point back to my chest. Brij Mohan smiles knowingly. Understanding my wild wish, he steps aside. So, with heart in my throat, I lean down and begin pressing Master's legs, copying Brij Mohan's technique. The moment my hands touch his legs however, Master whirls around and confronts me with 'Eh?' I am scared out of my wits!

'Oh, it is you.' He lies down again and fulfills my wish. My very hands become intoxicated with the touch of his holy form—an intoxication that will remain throughout the night and part of the next day.

After a few minutes, he speaks, 'Two letters have come for you. Did you get them?' I reply in the affirmative.

'That's alright.'

'One letter was from my mother. She and my father send their loving gratitude.'

'What does your mother say? Does she love you?'

'Yes, Master.'

'Does she want you to come home?'

'She is happy that I am happy.'

'No. Does she ask you to come home? She must miss you.'

'Yes, she misses, but doesn't ask me to come back, though she probably wants me to. Since my sixteenth year I have been mostly separated from my parents, so they are used to my being away.'

'But you are changed now. How old are you now?'

'Twenty-three.'

'Hmm. Seven years. Does your mother love you?' he asks again.

Again I reply in the affirmative, and add, 'At one time I was so strongly attached to my mother and father, I thought that if they were to die, it would also kill me.'

'And now how do you feel?'

'Now I know they are in your care.'

'A mother's love is very strong. My mother loved me so much... Once when I returned to my parents' home in Lahore, my mother, who was upstairs, heard my voice. She ran to the balcony and fell down from there to the ground. She loved me very much.'

I am amazed, as his words seem laden with human emotion. After all these years, he still enshrines a deep love for his mother. This indeed is a lesson for me.

'When do you plan on going back?'

'Whenever you send me back, I will go.'

'That's all right; you'll always be with me. Your mother must love you?' This is the third time he asks this question. I am puzzled why he keeps asking.

'Yes, Master, she loves me very much.'

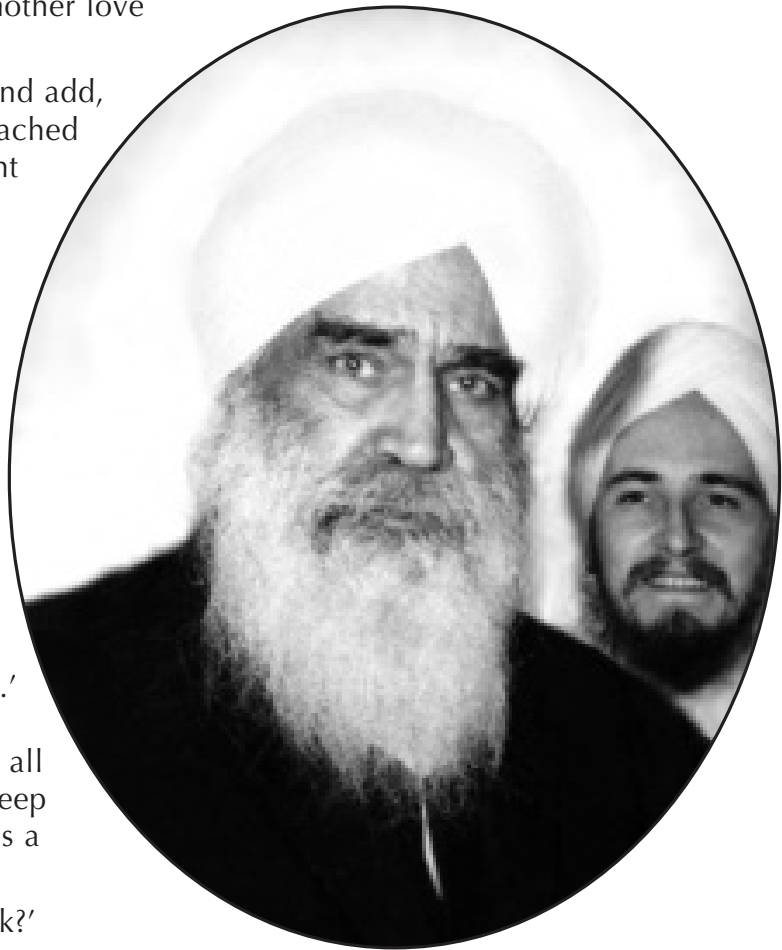
'Then tell your mother her son will be coming back soon.' In this way he breaks the news that my days in India are numbered.

I am choked, and reply, 'In you, I have found my true parent.'

'Yes, that is true, but according to the flowing pen of God you have been joined to your family, and as such you have some responsibility toward them.' There is a long pause, as I continue to massage his feet.

Again he repeats, 'My mother loved me so much...instead of coming down the stairs, she fell from the balcony upon hearing my voice...' Long poignant silence.

'In her letter, my mother described a dream/vision she had,' I mention. "In it, she boarded an airplane, but as she got on, she had a premonition that it would never return. When she was seated, and the plane was aloft for some time, she looked around and saw that there were no other passengers. Then the engines began to fail, and the propellers were sputtering to a stop. Dark ocean waves could be seen far below, but she was not very afraid. She looked to the cockpit, to the pilot. The pilot turned around, and the pilot was you, Master! You then took her by the hand, and out through the cockpit



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window. While the plane crashed into the ocean below, you led her across the sky into a glorious rising Sun. That was the last thing she remembered. She now knows that you will take her across the ocean of existence.'

'Alright, when you write,' he says, 'send my love to them, and tell them that their son is returning soon.'

The next morning I stand pining outside his house, tears dropping into the dust. The knower of hearts comes out, concern written across his brow. With heat in my breast, I blurt out; 'I never want to leave you!'

He replies forcefully, 'I'm not leaving you!'

Omnipresent Master: Each morning before sunrise at Rajpur, I walked into the garden, following the narrow path and the irrigation canal, past towering mango groves, past the fragrant jasmine bushes and the guava trees, down into the valley where the furthestmost edge of the property runs. There my vigils for the divinity within were kept, wrapped in a blanket until dawn slowly unfolded, bursting with the song of life as it does in Rajpur. On several unforgettable mornings as I sat there alone, I heard unmistakable footsteps coming closer and closer, sharply crunching the gravel path.

*Do I hear some sound? Is it the footsteps of the Beloved?
Or am I being tricked by the beating of my heart? ¹*

I would gladly abandon meditation, everything, just to watch Master once again, shaking off his black loafers and sitting quietly atop the stone wall, ghostly radiant in the moonlight, not more than ten feet away. He accepted my presence—never a word passed between us.

On a morning such as this, after he had retreated to his house and the sun spread its roseate glow upward over the eastern foothills, I emerged from meditation. While the Light lingered on, my heart was being squeezed by thoughts of separation, and with it, unspeakable sadness. In a swoon, I stumbled down the path into a tangled ravine where the wild jungle begins. 'Is this heavenly dream coming to an end so soon? Without you, O' Master, life will have no meaning. You have taken my heart...' Grief blurred my sight.

Sorrow soon gave way to a subtle tingling descending on all sides from an invisible source. Sparkling radiance and joy-bells flooded awareness as I turned in the fluid atmosphere, beholding the cosmic Master in front of me. In slow motion, I lifted my eyes to the sky, and he was there! His transparent mien and blissful Light were in the trees, the stones, and the hills. Whichever way I turned there was the form of the omnipresent One! Unspeakable delight overflowed as I giddily retraced the uphill path, my loving Lord preceding, echoing the eternal Christ:

I shall never leave thee nor forsake thee.

31 Separation's Noose

We return to Delhi and time is running out. The Omnipresent Master is elusive to inner sight, and the experience of great joy towards the end of my Rajpur sojourn is scuttled by the dread of leaving. Each day weighs heavily, despite profound meditation. For nearly seven months I have been daily spoon-fed on the ineffable-incomparable. An addict of the Friend wonders how to survive withdrawal.

July16: While alone in my room, divine love's sweet anguish becomes a poem, a song, a surge. The inner Light is powerful and does not allow sleep. In the morning I approach the Master, full of zeal: 'I have written a song that I would like to sing for you.'

'Then sing it to your own self!' His stiff reply acts like a Zen koan, throwing this mind into a swirl for hours, until finally it falls back upon itself, at peace. Much later a few of us sit cross-legged on the lawn around him in the garden as night's sable veil enwraps all. An electrical power failure followed by unusual silence spreads throughout Delhi; a full moon begins to rise on the deep indigo horizon. Out of nowhere Master says to me, 'All right, you may sing your song now.' A plaintive melody accompanies the madly devotional lyrics:

*The Sun of Truth shines in splendor,
For they who at thy holy feet surrender,
Sataguru Ji, O, Sataguru, Sataguru Ji
My life, my truth, my everything,
It is for thee my heart does sing,
Lifted by the sight of thee,
I know that thou hast set me free...
All who live by the outer sun are blind, O' Lord,
But they who live by the Light of thee, only they can see...
Every breath and every heartbeat,
Intensifies my thirst and longing—
For a vision, for thy vision in the Light.
In the night I weep for thee, O' Lord,
When will you come to me?
Kirpal, Kirpal, Kirpal Gurudev, Sataguruji.
Now at last thou hast heard my cry,
Filled with Light before my eye;
Yearning for the Lord to meet,
At last I have found thy lotus feet.
Gurudev, Gurudev, Gurudev Kirpal, Sataguruji...*

The full moon has risen high overhead, bathing everything with soft luminescence. Breaking the delicious long silence, I ask, 'Master, please say a few words on the condition of Separation.' He is silent for a while.

'In the Punjabi language there are many words of such expression not found in English, he replies. 'The Tenth Guru expressed in Punjabi verse,

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Mittera Piarey nu, Haal mureeda Kahenna...'
[O beloved Friend, please tell Him of my condition.]

'Bhingh, bhingh' Interrupting himself, he asks, 'In your country I believe the butcher simply cuts the neck of the cattle, is it not? But in India he first picks up the sheep or goat by the legs and then throws it down on the ground, full force—before cutting its throat—and if the knife is not sharp, then...?'

Master proceeds with the verse,

"'Bhingh, Bhingh, Kasai-an t'ha Saehna.' Just like that goat in the hands of the butcher, is how I feel in the pangs of separation from Master!'" Sawan. Kirpal. Tears fill his eyes but do not fall...long pause.

'And the Tenth Guru says, "We are drinking anguish from a cup covered with thorns." But you see, there are no words to convey the beauty of the original...'

Old friends: I share a dream from the night before in which the Master told me we were old friends. He comments, 'We are all old friends, you see.' That sinks in. Long pause.

The meaning of yoga: I relate the plight of Bill Bliss, a Canadian yoga teacher who has written me from Rishikesh—a refugee from real tyranny experienced at two prominent yoga schools. 'Master, he would like to meet you, but now he's extremely cautious about entrusting his spiritual welfare to anyone.'

'Tell him the real meaning of Yoga is to yoke, or reunite the soul with its Source.' Master advises. 'We don't entrust our spiritual welfare to any person. That belongs to God alone—but where His Light is manifest in man, we should feel no hesitation to go there and learn the mysteries of the Beyond from him. Perhaps what keeps us from going is the ego.'

Everlasting wealth is with the Saints, even in poverty: 'God is already residing within you. God is also in the poor beggar. He can appear in him,' Gurudev Kirpal continues. 'NamDev, a great Saint of the fifteenth Century, was so poor he had no more than four farthings—but he was actually the richest of men. I would say he is now a millionaire!' (laughter)

True identification: 'Once Hazrat Mian Mir met with Akbar, the great Moghul. Mian Mir was outwardly very poor, but spiritually awakened within. When Akbar asked him, "Who are you?" the Saint replied, "I am Moghul!"

"How do you say this?" the Emperor demanded. The Faqir replied, "Because I have met you!"

'When you meet the Master fully, you also become the Master; you imbibe His nature and attributes.

'St. Paul said, It is I, yet not now I; it is the Christ that liveth in me.

'And Hafiz has said, I am no more Hafiz; I am He that lives in me.

'So whatever you have received here with His Grace,' (Master plants his eyes upon me) 'you should take back to America and share it with others. Because you have experience, you will not be repeating parrot-like what you have learned. What you say will only affect others if you have experienced it.'

Buddha, or Buddhist: On another day, an orange-robed Burmese Buddhist monk asks, 'Master! Help me to become a better Buddhist.'

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'I wish you to become Buddha, not Buddhist!' he replies.

Kneading the clay: At another evening darshan, the Master bluntly asks Jim Cluett, a newly arrived policeman from New England, 'Why have you come to India?' Jim innocently and sweetly replies, 'To have you mold me like clay, Master.'

Master retorts gruffly, always unpredictable: 'Then become clay first! Then I'll knead and mold you like clay!' An electric silence fills the room. This is a test, no doubt about it. Master's face suddenly breaks out in a gracious laugh, and he stretches out his arms, making a kneading motion with his fists towards Jim and then in a circular movement to everyone in the room, uttering, 'Kneading, kneading, kneading!' Relief!

Independence Day—August 15: Today's satsang is so large, it has to be held on tented grounds outside the ashram. Using the theme of India's Independence, the Master asserts the need to become independent from the tyranny of the mind and the five dacoits (robbers) of lust, anger, greed, attachment, and ego. Five minutes into his discourse, a torrential monsoon storm bursts over Delhi, and the canopy overhead begins leaking like a sieve. 'This is the time of your examination!' he announces over the microphone, 'Your clothes will be wet, but you will be quite safe.'

He pushes away an umbrella held by an eager attendant, for those sitting before him are not provided such comfort. For two full hours, the Master delivers a matchless discourse punctuated by thunder and lightning. Miraculously the loudspeakers keep up, though they too are soaked in the pounding rain. But for a mere handful, the soggy audience remains. I find the rain transubstantiated into particles of Light. The vast congregation is transported into a state of bliss, evidenced by their eyes and faces. As Master finishes, the physical sun breaks out. With a chuckle, our Gurudev pronounces, 'Now, your examination is over!'

Pages of notes made with fountain pen have been obliterated by the rain. However, these few lines are still barely readable:

Most of the time has already passed.

Little time is left.

*If you are just sitting,
stand up immediately.*

*If you are just standing,
start walking.*

*If you are walking,
start running fast.*

Don't look to the left or the right.

You are running a race toward God!

32 The Velvet Steel

*O' Cupbearer, even your rebuke
has infinitely more beauty
Than all the dimpled smiles
of this world—or the next.*

When a lump of iron is forged into a sword, the Smithy applies intense heat from his forge until the metal glows white-hot and softens. Skillfully and painstakingly he hammers the pliant mass over and over, folding and pounding it into shape upon the anvil. Many a time will he heat the forming blade to incandescence, only to repeatedly plunge it into cold water. The Smithy is not afraid of the violent and noisy steam, nor the sparks, clamor, and heat that rise up around him. He does not shirk the danger of his profession, for he has forged countless blades, in myriad shapes and sizes. By layering, tempering, purifying, and strengthening the steel, he produces a sword that can cut through other steel and withstand many a battle-blow.

In the interests of the student, there are times when the great Teachers apply similar disciplinings, temperings, and trials. The reprimand or displeasure of a fully conscious being is no less than an expression of corrective love. A lover is sustained as much by a frown as a kindly look; while everyone feeds on the latter, not everyone can withstand the former. Even the passing of a test is in itself a gift, a grace upon the student, a merit that cannot be claimed.

Within my own limits, I was dimly aware of my Smithy's workings, and more than once entered the fire of transformation and became uncomfortably familiar with the heat, the hammering, and the tempering. There were times when, out of foolishness and pride, I displeased the God in him. There could be no worse punishment than the turning of his back or the drawing of a veil over the inner vision. The outer Master didn't have to say a word! As he once casually remarked: 'Outwardly my hand is soft and gentle, but beneath the glove is a hand of steel...' He was compassion's essence, but a great disciplinarian nonetheless. I was to earn his displeasure, discover the steel, and eventually be brought closer.

An important meeting was called at Sawan Ashram, attended by many distinguished and learned Indian initiates, including the ashram's managing committee. The Master invited presentations of original ideas on how to best further the spiritual mission. During their learned dissertations, I was mentally criticizing: 'Oh, he doesn't meditate... This one doesn't keep a diary... That one doesn't even see the Light... How can they hope to further the great cause?' Towards the end I was unable to restrain my impetuosity and asked to speak a few words, blind to my own pride. When Master nodded, observing, I stood, heart pounding, and announced, "All these fine talks and lectures are very well and good, but unless we practice what we preach, unless we go within and experience the divine Light and Sound ourselves on a regular basis, up to and including meeting the Radiant Form, I doubt we can effectively further the Master's Cause."

While there may have been a grain of truth in that, my delivery smacked of ego and intolerance, little taking into consideration the fact that divine Power works through many people for noble ends, regardless of inner access. So what if one were blessed with a taste of a vision, if pride stole away its sweetness? And if the tongue became

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harsh with others? Such a person could not measure up to those who were noble, kind, humble, and good, but perhaps somewhat deficient in meditation. (Sometimes inner experience is withheld from the initiate, for the Masters best know the time, the place, the measure and the readiness of the student.) Regardless of who we think we are and our relative positions in the world of time and space, we were all once denizens of the highest realms as atoms of the great and perfect Sun. My insensitive pronouncement had the effect of dropping a bomb on the august assembly. I had blundered in the mine-field of hearts and was about to pay dearly.

Master stood. He said, "It appears our Western friend is not in the full know of things." That was the understatement of my life!

He was not pleased. After speaking briefly in Hindi, the meeting abruptly adjourned. What had I done? Under which rock could I hide?

*When I fell from grace, I left the dream of eternity;
Tho' waking to this world, Your fragrance lingered on.*

*O revive the splendor of the night;
Let me be its willing sacrifice!*

*A moth of little zeal fluttered before the Flame of Beauty;
felt its heat, singed her wings, and timorously withdrew.*

*Immolation, or union is not permitted in moth-dom,
so long as self and fear remain.*

*Some other sweet night she will pine, and try again.
And, so, the rebuke of the Beloved was a shame that,
unseen by others, became a wondrous benevolence.*

*When the Beloved says, 'Nothing for you,'
please tell me what is left?*

*The grape, the olive and the seed
Only yield their valued essence
Under the press and the screw;
Coal cannot become diamond
Content on a soft and comfortable bed.
How many lifetimes does it take?
Who can say it is this, or that?*

3 3 Indifference & Redemption

For three interminable days and nights following my blunder, the physical Master turned his back to me. Not once did he look my way even if I walked near him or sat right at the front in satsang. Perhaps I no longer mattered or even existed, and consequently, my heart wilted like a sapling deprived of water, light, earth—everything. Behind the indifference of the Beloved there is always a higher purpose, but there is little solace in such knowing when one is caught in the wringer, when adolescent faith is pushed to the wall.

No matter how hard I reprimanded myself for such unmanly behavior, I had no control over a constant flow of tears. I stood in a corner of the porch, repenting, looking toward the One who refused to return my yearning gaze. In open satsang today, unbeknownst to me, he said in Hindi, 'The sahib weeps for me out of love—how many of you weep for the Master?'

As a past recipient of much attention, I felt especially loved—a claim truthfully made by practically everyone who spent some time with him. He was now showing me the impersonal aspect of love, if I daresay, love's cruelty. He was wearing away resistant ego and leveling the clods of pride. Like a master physician, he knew the malady and the cure. My ego-disease was chronic and deep-rooted, and required immediate, if not dramatic treatment, like the lancing of a painful boil.

On the night before my leaving India, Master was smiling and ebullient while scooping handfuls of parshad from a large basket into the outstretched hands of an amorphous cluster of devotees. One by one they left, full of happiness. Finally I stood alone before my Maharaj, half bowing, cupped hands timidly, uncertainly stretching towards him. He had just scooped up another big handful, then fixed me sternly with his gaze and dumped it back into the basket, commenting icily, 'Nothing for you.' Turning on his heel he walked to his inner rooms leaving me shocked and ignored. I spent the balance of the night in turmoil, alternating between calm faith and writhing in despair; one moment surrendering to the test, the next rebelling. I desperately clung to sweet memories and the living Light. The long night dragged on and on.

When morning finally arrived, I wandered helplessly to his door, remaining there unmoving from eight onwards, but nary a flicker passed from him to me! A continuous procession of fortunate others passed through that portal and were lavished with affection. Returning the same way, I envied their ecstasy, their shining eyes, thinking, 'Though I am a thorn in your side, please never cease loving me. Forgive my prideful tongue! How may I regain your favor? Keep my faith intact. Lord, let me not leave India like this!

By eleven, all hope had drained away, and I, little more than a hollowed-out shell, was still waiting, vainly hoping. Master looked up from where he sat on the rug, not more than twenty feet away. He seemed to be looking at me; a huge, jolly smile lit up his face.

'Hello! Hello! You are there? Come on. You will be leaving India soon? Here, you would like some parshad?' Did he mean me? I wondered, and glanced over my shoulder, but no one was there. When I incredulously pointed to my chest, he nodded and waved me in. Before time to think, I was there, bowing, grateful this terrible ordeal was over. I held out my hands as he scooped handful after handful of puffed rice parshad into them

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until it overflowed onto my lap and over the floor! He was God-intoxicated and God intoxicating, unmindful of the spillings. He then dropped several large squares of burfee, my favorite sweet, on top, knocking more puffed rice to the floor. Leaning forward, he said, and so lovingly, 'I am giving a special talk tonight and I want you to be there!' *Cloud Nine!* After he left, I gathered up all the crumbs.

Accompanied by a tape recorder, I returned around 3 P.M. Maharaj Ji was sitting on his bed surrounded by thick bundles of correspondence files, head bowed over a particular letter, brow furrowed in concentration. After several minutes he acknowledged my presence.

'Yes?'

'Master, I was wondering if you would consider sending a taped message back to the West.'

He took the mike, furrowed his brow in concentration, and communicated the following verbatim on August 19, 1967:

Dear Arun⁷ is coming back to the United States after a period of seven months which he spent here developing in the spiritual way. I send this message of love and best wishes to each one of you over there. You are all dear to me, whether you are working in the east or the west of the United States, Canada, Europe or South America. We are all working for the same common goal and I wish that you make progress as quickly as possible.

We should do our best and leave the rest to the Master Power working overhead, who will extend all feasible help and protection unasked for. Blessed are they who have been taken into the custody of the Master, through whom God has condescended to bring you back to your Real Home, in this earthly sojourn. I wish each one of you to introspect your lives daily and weed out all imperfections, so that your mind may become as limpid as water—which may reflect your True Self and the Overself. If you take one step Godwards, God will take millions of steps to receive you.

You have all been on my mind, and really I love you all, so it is but natural that we reciprocate the same... and feel separation... and wish to meet physically as early as possible. God willing, it may be early next year when I may be among you and glad to see you all in person. Many things cannot be conveyed through words—it is heart that speaks to heart. Simply turn your attention towards Him who is always over your head. If you don't transgress the commandments given by Him, you will be nearer to God and there will be nothing to be afraid of in the Three Worlds [physical, astral, and causal].

I wish you all to love one another so that people may know you are coming to the Master, who wishes to cement you all in the silken bonds of love so that you may not feel any duality whatsoever. We are all one in God, but that unity is unfortunately forgotten. There are two ways to come out of that oblivion: one, weed out all imperfections through self-introspection; and the other, devote time to meditation in the accurate way as prescribed—with all loving devotion. Good action will result in good fruit, but unless the little ego is eliminated from within, we cannot have oneness with God. If you eliminate the 'I' from 'w.o.r.l.d.' that leaves 'Word':

Word was in the Beginning, Word was with God, and the Word was God. Without the Word was not anything made that was made.

You are in Him and He is in you, so I wish you all speedy progress on the Way.

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And that you can have only when you do your best and leave the rest to the Master Power overhead. The more you will put in time for meditation—by weeding out all imperfections by self-introspection—the sooner you will reach your Goal. I send you all again my best wishes and love, and wish each of you progress on the spiritual way. Kirpal Singh.

After a minute or so of pregnant silence, the Satguru continued, ‘Some prayer here, you see—I’ll just recite a prayer which will give you uplift in your own way:

*O’ Love, who is it who can do this, but Thou?
O’ the lifter of the lowly, the Lord of all creation
Who hath made me the object of esteem by all;
He whose touch defileth others,
on him too is Thy mercy, O God.
Yea, Thou makest the low great and mighty
—and feareth not anyone.’*

The tape recorder came to the end of its reel, but I was immobilized; even if able to move, by some unwritten code, movement would have been tantamount to sacrilege. Spiritual grace made visible mighty and cosmic suns continually rising up through the Master’s corporeal body as the veil thinned. Though he added several more lines to the prayer, these escaped into eternity.²

Evening Satsang was given at the home of Sheila Mata, a devoted elder disciple living in the district known as Rajinder Nagar. As soon as we arrived, rain began falling and satsang shifted indoors. The crowd crammed into three smallish rooms plus verandah, pushing me from behind closer and closer to the Master. Soon, his feet were under my legs, his knees within inches of my face. The exquisite discourse seemed to be directed at me—although I’m sure others would claim the same—and all would be correct! Whether it was heaven or heaven-on-earth, I could not differentiate. Being so close to the Source, my head was spinning with intoxication. Somewhere a mystic knower has said: A thousand barrels of wine flow through the eyes of the Beloved. Afterwards, I could hardly stand and needed support of others to walk.

After returning to Sawan Ashram, I was summoned and the Master gave to me the following advice:

‘Firstly, one by one weed out all imperfections through self-introspection. Only then can you be truly happy. It is easy to seek God, but very difficult to become a Man. When you become a Man in the true sense, then, I would say, God Himself will run after you like anything. He will seek you.

‘Secondly, become humble and speak humbly—sweet tongue honeyed with humility is the essence of all virtues. Humility, humility, humility! We must be extremely careful not to be proud and egoistic. Never think you are perfect.

‘So, eliminate your own shortcomings. If you sow a bad thought, word, or deed, that will multiply a hundredfold. If you sow a loving thought, word, or deed, you will reap that reward. But still you have to be rid of egoism. Only by contacting the Light and Sound regularly can the ego be subdued. Take this message back to your country.’

I said, ‘Although anyone could say anything to you or about you, you remain unaffected, but imperfect ones like me are affected by what others say, and often react adversely.’

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Admonishing this argumentative mind, he replied with urgency, *'But you have to become perfect!'*

'I will try my best.'

Master: *'Try? Try? Try is the word of an intellectual man. Try is only an excuse. You have got to DO if you are to succeed!'*

His words reverberated across all levels of my being and I felt bewildered by the enormity—and impossibility of the task. His attainment was my only hope.

*'You will be leaving me physically, but He will be with you always. The Master Power will be extending all feasible help not only **within**, but **outside** also.'*

Leaning forward, understanding my intense longing to remain forever with him, Master raised his forefinger and commanded, *'Put chains on the legs of time!'* Soft, barely audible, but blindingly intoxicating mutual laughter elevated these moments to the heights. The prayer, *'Please never leave me,'* escaped my lips. His visage glowed, a life-giving sun, a vortex, magnetically in-drawing while from his mouth came another assurance, *'I am not leaving you!'*

I bowed to capture and hold forever that perfect image behind the eyes, to inscribe his promise in the book of life. Facing him and backing out of the porch, I returned in solitude to my room to pack. Exactly seven months to the day had passed since arriving in India.

At 1:30 AM the taxi came to take me away. Like an angler's line, my hungry glance was cast across the courtyard, wishing, wishing again to draw him out, to see him just once more. The ashram was quiet but for the car-motor, a few crickets, and a distant barking dog. I espied a flickering light behind the shutters of his darkened bungalow, moving from room to room towards the door. My wish-fulfiller emerged, torch in hand, striding quickly to where I stood outside, dumbfounded. This love wasn't for a human being, but for the God and Lord of all the worlds, whom I saw in Him. Patting the top of my head he said, *'Good-bye and God bless you.'*

*From the Ocean's bubble this sound arose,
You and I are not different;*

*Do not think I am separate from you,
You and I are not different...*

*Hide not the fairness of your face from me,
Yes, remove the veil and come,
You and I are not different.*

—Rumi

1. Master pronounced my name 'Aroon,' not an uncommon name for boys in India, like Arun Kumar, or Arun Singh. It means "Morning Light," when the sun starts to rise above the horizon. Something aspirational to experience within!

3 4 Back to the West

The twenty-four-hour flight disgorged passengers into La Guardia Airport. New York City's raw energy, decay of the sixties, and conspicuous materialism flowed past in jarring kaleidoscopic clips. Combined with travel fatigue, I was experiencing mild shock. India's grinding poverty and overpopulation were eclipsed by her great spiritual wealth and enduring family traditions, a sharp contrast to this inner destitution. Yet a hidden glimmering, even here, begged awakening in myriad hearts. One could hear it with the ears of the soul.

The words of the Nazarene emerged, re-voiced and empowered by the living Master:

*I am the Vine, ye are the branches.
So long as ye are embedded in the vine, s
hall ye bring forth abundant fruit.*

I wanted nothing more than to be in the Master's service.

Jonas Gerrard, a commercial artist in his early twenties, drove me to meet and speak with groups in New York, Boston, and New England. Filled with the intense ardor and conviction of one just returned from seven months' immersion in the presence of a Godman, I exclaimed, 'Our Master is so great that if he wished, he could appear even here and now!'

The power of the moment encapsulated us. As we barreled along the freeway at seventy miles an hour, the transparent, shimmering form of the Master began to manifest, smiling and standing upon the hood of the car. Was it a hallucination or reality manifest? 'Gerrard, you see? Fifteen thousand miles are nothing; nothing at all. If we cannot bask in his physical aura, this, our intense remembrance, is the next best thing!'

Again the Christ-words echoed through my mind:

'Whenever two or more are gathered in my name, I am there.'

The long journey across the United States to Vancouver was made by car and Greyhound bus, sharing with small groups along the way. Low-key satsang centers were scattered across the continent. One of many highlights of this American pilgrimage was my meeting with the legendary Mrs. M. Gordon Hughes of Kentucky. For more than two years we had exchanged correspondence and were eager to meet. One of the first Kirpal initiates in North America, she was also a poet and painter extraordinaire.

David, a fellow-initiate who drove me all the way from New Hampshire, turned down the quiet Louisville street, shaded from the heat by tall elms. After climbing the creaky stairs and ringing the doorbell of a very old house, I was greeted by a stout woman nearly six feet tall, eighty years of age, and crowned with frizzy reddish hair, not exactly as I had pictured her. 'Welcome, Honey,' she drawled with a strong southern accent. 'Why, 'ah knew you win you wuz a tadpole, and 'ah wuz a frawg!' And she gave a hearty laugh, and me with her!

She showed me to the living room where a beautiful oil painting hung near the fireplace—a younger Master Kirpal, probably in his fifties, with a Ryder-esque moonlit sky and ocean behind him. Mrs. Hughes had painted this picture entirely from an inner vision several years before having heard of the Master, when he was yet unknown in America.



Mrs. Hughes' spiritual pilgrimage is most beautifully expressed in her own words:

It was in the year of 1928, springtime in Kentucky, April, the month of the brightness of yellow daffodils and white narcissus. For two years and seven months I had been very ill. All the physicians and all the specialists I had consulted for my pain-wracked body said I could not walk again, that I could not even sit up again.

It was the hour of midnight. I lay there in the solemn weirdness, desolate and alone. I felt that I had come to the brink of the crossing into the Great Adventure. I was trying to think. I was trying to go back through my past life, endeavoring to live it once again. I did not want to die. I had so much, seemingly, that I wanted to do. The awful darkness seemed to close in all around me. I seemed to be suffocating. Desperately, I tried to move. Frantically, I tried to call someone. This seemed utterly impossible. I was in an agony of loneliness and despair.

Suddenly, a Great Luminous Brightness appeared in one corner of my room. It grew brighter and brighter. Within the center of this radiant Light, a form appeared, the most glorious Being I had ever seen. He stood there, tall, slender, magnificent. His beard was white and glistening. His vivid blue eyes were filled with divine compassionate flawless love, glowing as an angel standing in the sun. His glance was penetrative, inspired and keen. His robe and turban were white, pure and softer than that of the rarest edelweiss on the alpine snows, and yet emitted myriad scintillations of Light and color. The palms

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of his beautiful hands were clasped together and held against his heart. I thought this must be God. I stared at Him in amazement. He stood there looking at me kindly and graciously. Then, He walked slowly toward me and passed into my emaciated body.

The next morning, instead of finding me dead, as they probably expected they would, my family was astonished to see me rise from my sickbed, entirely healed and every whit whole.

At this time, I had never heard of a Great Master, but then and there I started a worldwide search for some information about this divine Being. Leaving the Episcopal Church, I took up the study of Christian Science, the White Brotherhood, Self-Realization, Rosicrucianism, the I AM Activity, the Baha'i Movement, and so on and on, year after year, turning wearily away from them all. I studied; I searched; I investigated. I spent hours and days in libraries looking through religious books. I could not find anyone who could give me the information I so earnestly desired.

Twenty years passed, and again in April in the year of 1948, I saw this Being before me again and again, and often in company with another Great Son of Spirituality. There were times when I soared into the Beyond, and saw there two beings, one tall, slender and blue-eyed, the other sturdy and strongly-built and with dark eyes as of a dove, and the two of them talking to another Being whom I later learned was Guru Nanak, the first Guru of the Sikhs.

I continued my search.

*Another April! It was springtime in 1952. One morning, a friend telephoned me. She was passing through Louisville from Los Angeles, to Florida. She asked if I had heard of Dr. Julian Johnson, who was born and reared in Kentucky, and who had gone to India in search of the Great Master. I had not heard of him. She told me about his books, and in time I received *The Path of the Masters* from India. I read this book and felt that at last I was on the right road.*

In due course of time, I discovered Mr. T.S. Khanna of Washington, D.C., and on September 29, 1952, I went to the Capital City and through this blessed soul, I took the Great Master's initiation.

I asked Mr. Khanna to show me the former Master's portrait, and when I saw the picture of Baba Sawan Singh, I saw the glorious Being who had appeared to me with healing in his wings in 1928 and my long search was ended.

In June of 1955 I met the train as it pulled into Union Station in Washington, D.C., which brought His Holiness Sant Kirpal Singh Sahib from India to America... I watched him as he stepped from the coach, the radiant sunburnt Son of Sawan Singh, the beneficent Herald, the emancipator of true soul liberation. He looked exactly as I had seen Him so many times in Sahansdal Kanwal [the headquarters of the Astral Plane] and the higher Heavens with our Beloved Sawan Singh. There was something more than handsome about Him... here was an inner splendor, a singular spiritual magnetism in the flash of His dark eyes, a marvelous sweetness and kindness in the firm lines of his mouth, a royal grandeur and bearing of Freedom in the poise of his tall and strong figure...the Saint from Sat Naam! Who has seen Him? Who can forget Him?

He held up his right hand: 'You see!' He said. I saw!'

In the present, Mrs. Hughes rambled on in her southern drawl, sharing her extraordinary journey:

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'In that fresh and magical time after initiation, the Masters took my soul higher and higher; even to the fourth plane. I was filled with divine intoxication upon experiencing the splendor of those realms. In the second and third planes, I would see everything happen in this world before it happened. Being a somewhat foolish and impetuous woman, I began to divulge what I saw. But, oh, did I pay for my indiscretion, when Master brought down the curtain on my inner vision. What was once effortless became impossible. For four long years, I was barely able to see any Light. Things are better now, but I must guard my tongue!'

I then asked Mrs. Hughes about the stigmatic wounds that she had reportedly received several years earlier, told to me by Elsie Cowan. She replied: 'These wounds manifest in my hands, feet and side only at Easter and Christmas when I relive a former time with Jesus, and experience the wounding of his crucified body in mine,' I remembered Master's words in India, 'As you think, so you become,' and his marvelous story of the buffalo boy and the Saint. If the stigmata seems implausible, the wary reader is referred to the biography of the late Padre Pio, a twentieth-century Catholic mystic of Italy, whose bleeding Christ-wounds were extensively photographed and scientifically documented.²

Mrs. Hughes' telephone rang. When she got off, she said, 'My, oh my! That call was from a man just released from the hospital. He was in with double pneumonia; the doctors declared his case hopeless. Today, Master appeared, hoverin' over his bed, and passed into his body, just like he did to me in 1928. He pushed away the oxygen tent and walked out of the hospital. If you want, you can meet him before you leave.' Unfortunately, I had to catch the bus. Standing tall on the porch, she called out in her Kentucky drawl, 'Honey, there are angels of Light flyin' round your haid. You take care, now.' I felt her blessing. Not long after, Mrs. Hughes left her body for the last time.

After visiting and speaking to several hundred people in various towns across America, I returned to Vancouver with barely seven dollars to my name. Piara and Kuldeep Nagra graciously let me stay in their basement while the nascent lotus began to stir.

*Listen, friend. You aren't 'you.'
There is a mighty YOU which is an ocean
in which have drowned a billion 'yous.'
- Rumi*

1. Bhadra Sena, editor, *As They Saw the Master*, (Delhi: Ruhani Satsang, 1956), p. 7-10.

2. Nesta De Robeck, *Padre Pio*, (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1958).

3 5 The Golden Lotus

Before leaving India, I had consulted the Master about right livelihood, a way to earn without compromising ethics, in an environment conducive to spiritual practice. I was already too familiar with uncongenial workplaces. 'There is a crying need in North America to provide wholesome, artfully prepared vegetarian food in an atmosphere of mutual respect,' I opined. 'Once people discover how delicious, healthy and inexpensive it is, many will embrace a compassionate diet. For those already vegetarian, there are no places to dine out. I'd like to establish a vegetarian restaurant, provide literature on health and spirituality while earning an honest livelihood. Perhaps it may also become a channel for the Master's teachings.'

'Good idea!' he replied positively, and added, 'Master Power will be extending all feasible help, both inside and outside!' I knew about the inside help; it was most comforting to know about the outer. And, it came to pass, in ways far beyond my expectations.

Back in Vancouver, a for-rent sign in a defunct second-hand store caught my eye. Within moments of entering I began to experience a slightly blissful state. While not normally prescient, I was certain that this was the future home of the business. I was about to discover how clearly fixed mental images can manifest in the objective world through unrelenting effort. Others may call this process creative visualization.

A lease for the store and a four-bedroom suite upstairs was negotiated on a hope and a prayer. Those with means whom I initially approached had no interest in investing in my risky scheme, but a humble bank-teller saw the vision and agreed to co-sign a \$1,000 loan—a huge sum in those days. Another \$500 soon arrived unexpectedly in the mail from a family friend. After settling the modest rent, phone and utility deposits, I negotiated the purchase of the entire assets of a failed restaurant ten blocks away for \$500. As I didn't have a car, I carried all the equipment on my back and in a shopping cart. Within two months the Golden Lotus—Vancouver's first vegetarian restaurant—came into being on a \$1,500 budget and 12-16 hour work days. Many unique and wonderful people were drawn through the doors like bees to honey, some as customers, some as employees, some as questers. Quarters upstairs housed the growing circle of workers and the living room became a communal meditation space. While there is a golden lotus on the inner planes, the worldly lotus began to bloom.

The late sixties saw Vancouver swarming with war protesters and hippies. The threat of nuclear holocaust loomed; President Kennedy had been assassinated; drugs were rampant and the young and disenchanting took up the popular refrain: 'turn on, tune in, drop out.' A few were serious seekers who responded to the message of the Masters, which emphasized tuning in to a higher principle and the performance of work and service as a form of devotion. The Lotus was not merely a business; it was a refuge from drugs and junk food, a transformative catalyst for positive redirection, a tent in the caravan of *Baraka*. Baraka, the Sufi term for Grace, uses a focal point, a place in the material world from where transcendence can manifest. Like a trader's caravan, tents are pitched, wares displayed and bartered. When the job is done, tents are folded, the caravan moves on, and sets up shop elsewhere. The wares are the seeds of change and renewal. On a higher level, it is Baraka; to the world, it is a paradigm shift. Dynamic

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grace is a constant, like a Kaaba-stone, while the place, people and time may shift and re-shuffle to revolve about its hidden locus.

Intrinsically I was a loner and my naivetè in the art of administration resulted in many valuable, sometimes humorous, sometimes difficult lessons in humility. Quitting was never an option, no matter how tough it got. Whenever the spirit triumphed over human foibles and limitations, the result was pure joy—the joy of service to another, no matter how humble or fallen. In the fine balance between work and inner practice, when service comes before self, lives are transformed—to the degree that responsibility and receptivity are embraced.

As with most new, undercapitalized ventures, particularly the restaurant genre, the finances of the Lotus were frequently uncertain. In the early days when nary a soul showed for dinner to eat the many varieties of delicious creations so artfully prepared, I would ask my co-helpers to join me in meditation in our spotless kitchen. Within ten to fifteen minutes of focusing on the all-surrounding Light, a crowd would inevitably appear at the door. Our vocation was a front for mystic and platonic love, not love a front for material gain.

It wasn't uncommon for customers to feel exhilarated and unusually peaceful after eating our satvic or pure food. Hippies would ask, 'What are you putting in the food, man? It's making me high.' The secret ingredient was simran, loving, mental repetition of the charged names, while preparing and serving. Master once told me, "Whatever you say simran over, with full attention, becomes parshad." Sacred thought has profound effect; like wind, it's invisible, but everything it touches is moved. Spiritual uplift is a by-product of inner practice, often felt even by unwary bystanders.¹

After a highly complimentary, tongue-in-cheek feature review by well-known columnist, James Barber in a local paper, the Golden Lotus became very popular (and thus I began to learn the value of public relations). Along with the ever-expanding clientele, many arrived at the door wanting work and a place to stay. As long as everyone agreed to follow the rules, they were welcome to visit or stay upstairs. Amazingly, the rather monastic rules—including regular meditation and celibacy—were accepted and experimentally followed. Like all others, I drew no wage in the first nine months, although everyone's basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, medicine, transportation, books and spending allowance were taken care of. Before the year was out, bills and loans were repaid and all began receiving hourly wages, benefits, room and board.

The numbers attending our weekly gatherings outgrew the upstairs and the venue shifted to the YWCA. Walking through the neighborhood, I could relate to the quandary of the user, the turned-on, the tuned-in, and the dropped-out; I had been there. Every poor lush, every desperate junkie, every paramour and thrill-seeker is intrinsically after bliss. Truth, Consciousness and Bliss are the qualities of the awakened soul, but true bliss cannot be found through the physical senses, wine, drugs, money, fame, sex or possessions. When the Emperor Babar offered Guru Nanak a goblet full of bhang, a preparation made from marijuana, he demurred and sang:

*The intoxication from opium, bhang, and wine
Leaves one poorer in the morning,
But the intoxication of Naam is such that
Day and night, Nanak is absorbed in its ecstasy.*

According to the Masters of Sant Mat, intoxicating drugs of any kind as well as

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alcohol—another drug—cloud the mind and impede spiritual unfoldment. And, Sant Kirpal Singh warned in a letter, drug dependence could lead to a lower animal rebirth.

In the beginning, Kuldip Nagra generously shared her delicious Indian recipes and culinary skills. By trial and error, I learned some arts of cooking and nutritious food preparation. The first full-time helper to appear was Norah Lee, one of God's originals. Then in her fifties, Norah had varied successful careers behind her in real estate, as horseback guide, plumber, and bulldozer operator (Time magazine ran a full page photo-article on her in the early 1950's driving a huge bulldozer). Several years earlier, Norah had been bankrupted after guaranteeing a loan to a slick promoter. In the aftermath, her only possessions were a little Nash Rambler car, which she lived in, a set of clothes, one pair of shoes, and her book of hymns and inspirational songs. When her shoes wore out, come ice or snow, Norah went barefoot for the rest of her long life. Before coming to the Golden Lotus, another Sant Mat guru had initiated Norah, but the absence of any spiritual experience kept her seeking. "When I was living at Yasodara Ashram on the shores of Kootenay Lake," she explained, "I came across Kirpal Singh's book, Naam or Word. That night Master entered my soul, filling me with his marvelous splendor and love." I asked Norah, "Wouldn't you like to be initiated?" She replied, "It's not necessary; Master has already done it." I assured her that he had indeed established his spiritual connection with her, but to be able to develop it to a greater extent would require formal initiation. Eventually, she agreed.

Norah was very skinny, but strong as a big man. Once she went on a forty-nine day fast while working ten hours a day in the kitchen. Her only food was the juice of half a lemon every two days. Forty days into the fast, Norah decided to reorganize the storage room, and was throwing around 100lb. sacks of brown rice like they were only 25.

Whenever I tried to pay her, she wouldn't hear of it, saying, "The good Lord has directed me here to be of service to my fellow man. After all my money was gone, I decided never to work for material wages again. I'll be happy to just have a little corner to stay in, and if there's anything I can do, that would be a blessing for me." I assured Norah that if it were in my power, she would always have a home and never want. For more than twenty years she lived with us. Embodying the spirit of the faqir or renunciate, Norah often spent entire nights in meditation, her scrawny neck enclosed by a cardboard collar of pins to waken her in case she nodded off in sleep (not a practice the Masters endorse), but once she made up her mind, none could change her.

'So Norah,' our friend Herb asked, 'what is the secret of your good health and long life?' She snapped, 'I always stayed away from doctors and men!'

Cheerful, iron-willed, songs of God on her lips and in her heart during the good times and the not-so times, this remarkable woman/angel moved through life, frequently helping others in need. Many poor souls were the grateful recipients of her unsought largesse (after an uncle had left her an inheritance).

November 8, 2006, on her 94th birthday, Norah checked out from the earth-plane, and her usually strongly wrinkled face was remarkably clear and 'young' looking. She was on her way, having left her body 'like a hair out of butter.' The day before, when a nurse had asked how she was doing, Norah replied in a strong, clear voice, 'I'm fine! And I'm going to die in my bed tonight!'²

David Leeworthy was another original—one of many seekers who came through the Lotus, contributing to, and gaining from it. He was a tall slender lad with long wavy hair

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and dreamy, far-off eyes. A few days after our first meeting, he described a life changing experience, '...walking down the hill on Fourth Avenue, looking westward towards the Lotus, I saw Kirpal Singh sitting cross-legged—about the size of a pea—right where the restaurant is located. His form kept expanding, until it filled the sky.'³

1964, the year that I had come to the Path of Light, brought with it a new way of thinking, speaking, and living. With a daunting vow of celibacy, I tried to see all as sisters, mothers and brothers. After three years of continuous practice, the benefit of what the saints call Ojas—the power accruing from transmuting base energy into meditation and service, began to manifest. Ojas reduced the requirement for sleep from eight hours to four, and enabled the achievement in seconds of concentration of what would otherwise have taken many long hours. It allowed the body to work without fatigue, and the frequent cuts sustained in the kitchen healed within hours. Ojas, which is gained over a long time, is, however, easily lost in a burst of anger or a wave of lust.

Such commitment does not go untested, especially amongst the young and vibrant. Carnality sometimes entered my mind, but I kept busy and dared not forget that the Master within was watching everything. His personal and specific-to-me advice in Kashmir, 'Avoid being alone in a room with the opposite sex,' saved me on several occasions, when I felt like a canary about to be devoured by the cat. I was given a new life, and if this body which had been renewed and consecrated were to be given, it would have to wait for its life-companion.

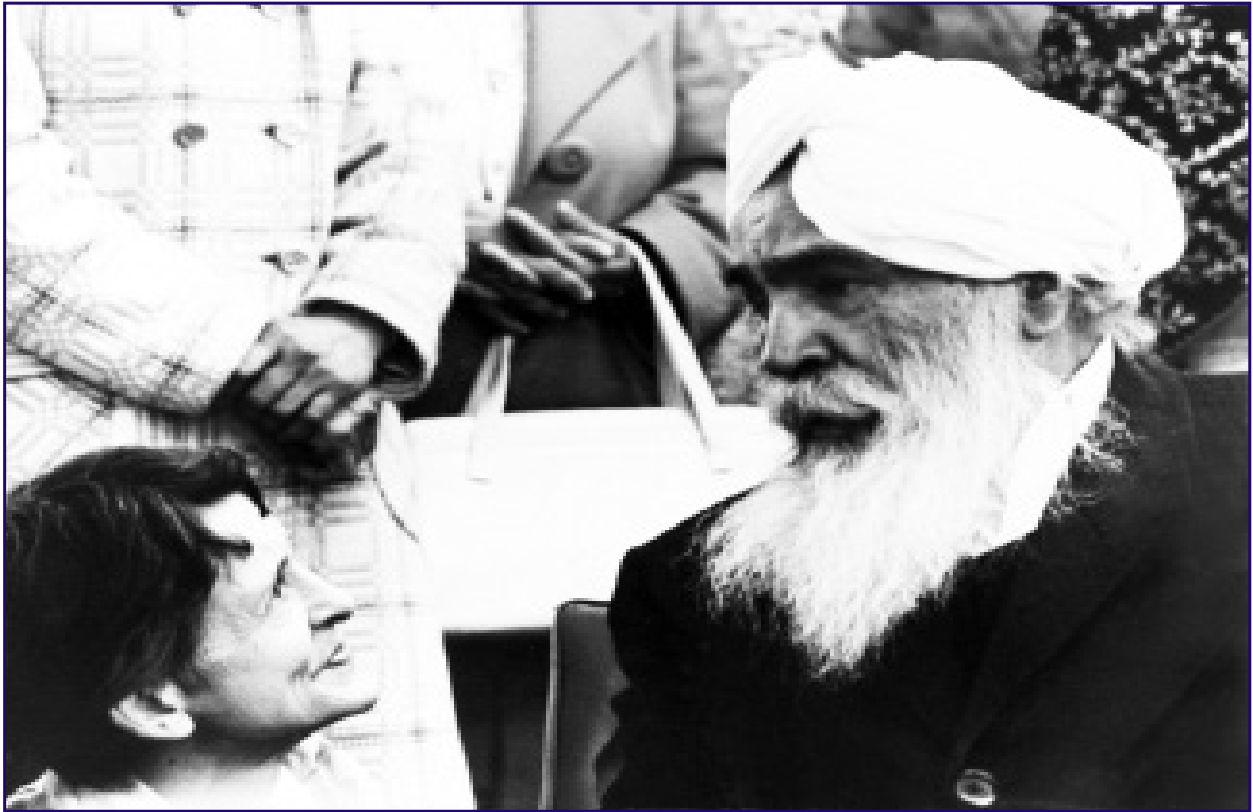
Intimations of Return: In early September of 1968, Bruce King, an architect friend and I drove 300 miles to the interior of British Columbia in search of reportedly free Crown land in the hopes of eventually establishing a permanent meditation center. After the second day of exploring, we camped by the roadside under a canopy of brilliant stars and rolling sagebrush hills. After meditating for an hour, I fell asleep. In the early morning came an auspicious dream, which was not a dream:

It is India; my job is sweeper in the courtyard of the Master. This courtyard, however, is that of Kabir Sahib. My broom is the Indian type, short of handle and I use it in the Indian fashion, squatting. The dust, sacred dust, billows 'round, becomes bright, flying into and through my eyes into infinite, luminous space...

Upon waking, this consciousness was suffused with wondrous and intoxicating possibilities. As soon as a public telephone was found, I called the Lotus and asked Elighte if any letter had come from India. Indeed one had, and in it Master granted permission for Bruce and Misha to come for the first time, and to my unworthy self to return to him.

*The Masters see more in a brick than you do in a mirror.
They were bathing in the Divine Bounty before the world existed.
They lived for lifetimes before bodies were born.
They saw the harvest while the wheat was still seed.
They understood the meaning when it was unformed.
They found the pearl before there was an ocean.*

—Rumi



Norah Lee with her spiritual Master, Vancouver Airport, 1972

1. I once typed a letter from the Master in response to a housewife who asked if she had to continue cooking meat for her non-initiate husband. The Master advised her to continue preparing him non-vegetarian food, but while doing so she should engage in sweet Simran of the five holy names, and in due course, her husband would automatically lose the desire to eat meat. And it came to pass.

2. Account courtesy of Kolin Lymworth who was with Norah near the end.

3. In 1970, David went to India and studied with the great Master for two months. After a personal interview, Kirpal Singh commented to a bystander, 'He will become the source of many books for many people.' David, who later changed his name to Kolin Lymworth, founded Banyen Books in Vancouver, which has grown to become one of North America's largest alternative bookstores.

36 Baba Ram Dass

October 23, 1968: Two days before departing for India, my friend Russell Perkins and I visited Ram Dass, the former Richard Alpert, PhD, then in retreat at his father's large New Hampshire estate. He had recently returned from a life-transforming trip with his Indian guru, Neem Karoli Baba. We found Ram Dass alone and unpretentious, in a small white cottage surrounded by rolling lawns and trees. As fellow wayfarers who had both gone East for wisdom and found our respected Gurus, we discussed many commonalities of the spiritual journey.

Neem Karoli Baba, a powerful and enigmatic Hindu holy man, had shaken the foundations of Alpert's existence. He even renamed him Ram Dass (servant of God). The former Harvard professor and psychedelic pioneer turned to the path of devotion, spiritual practice, and seva or service—of the blind, service of those incarcerated in the prison system and service of the dying. Ram Dass gave Russell and I his opinion about the psychedelic movement, 'LSD opened doors for a lot of people, which was important in the context of the evolution of a materialistic, up-tight America, but acid (LSD),' he contended, 'cannot take one to the Goal of self-realization.'

While discussing particular spiritual practices, I asked Ram Dass if he were familiar with the little-known Surat Shabd Yoga—the yoga of the Celestial Sound-current. He affirmed that he had come across references to Naad Yoga in the Naad Bind Upanishad, one of the major Hindu scriptural commentaries, which declared that the OM or aum sound issued from Brahma, the Creator, and this divine music or vibration brought forth the three worlds—physical, astral and causal. Nirgun bhagats, or worshippers of the formless, meditate upon aum as the most direct and efficient means of returning to the Causal-Creator. Indeed, Ram Dass was experimenting with a variety of meditation techniques, including Naad Yoga, considering it acceptable to listen to any inner sounds, including those coming from the left side. He showed us a pair of yogic earplugs from India that he used to shut out external noise while engaged in this practice.

I respectfully pointed out that the Gurus in the ancient Sant Mat tradition had enjoined the practice of listening to the sounds coming from the right side or from the center of the forehead only. According to their teaching, the inner Melodies heard from the right or center of the forehead take one back to the Positive Power—beyond Brahm [Par Brahma], while sounds emanating from the left side were debasing.

While such terms imply conditions beyond intellect, we nevertheless discussed samadhi, bhakti yoga, karma yoga, and Sri Ramakrishna's allegory of the cotton doll and the salt doll. Ramakrishna had likened the meditator's savikalpa samadhi experience of God to a cotton doll—when it enters the ocean, it becomes saturated, yet still retains its original form; the higher samadhi—known as nirvikalpa, Ramakrishna likened to a salt doll—when it enters the ocean, it dissolves its separate identity, and becomes one with it.

Moth & the Flame - Baba Ram Dass

I found the highly articulate Ram Dass warm and sincere, his presence quietly joyous. The company of those on the Way, regardless of outer labels, imparts a unique delight. After a while, we parted company.¹ As much as I and others had hoped, Ram Dass was never destined to meet Master Kirpal.



Ram Dass, circa 1969

1. I was working on this short piece about Ram Das in a Baltimore hotel room in September of 1993. At about 2 AM I stopped and went to bed. Eight hours later, I serendipitously encountered Ram Dass in the lobby of the Baltimore Natural Foods Expo Hall! In the midst of a crowd of conventioners, we enjoyed an unfettered sharing. This was our third meeting, and our previous one in Vancouver in the early seventies was unsatisfactory, for fame and his Guru status had perhaps made him arrogant, which he later acknowledged. Now I encountered a humbler, more down-to-earth, and joyous Ram Dass. We embraced. Later in the afternoon, at a packed public lecture for members of the natural foods industry, Ram Dass scattered food for thought and his presence more roundly exemplified *'being here now.'*

Spiritual practice and sincerity develop compassion, detachment, honesty, integrity, and dedication to service without thought of reward. While hilariously poking fun at himself and at established social values, Ram Dass helped show the relevance of integrating eternal values into one's being and one's livelihood, regardless of vocation. Ram Dass became increasingly imbued with a Buddha-like compassion, even after a stroke in 1998 rendered him partially paralyzed.

37 'Tis Pilgrimage Enough

A rather fateful telegram arrived one day before my scheduled departure from New Hampshire to India:

I WILL BE ON CONSTANT TOUR DURING NOVEMBER DECEMBER AND TILL END OF JANUARY WITH EXCEPTION OF FOUR DAYS. BETTER POSTPONE YOUR AND OTHERS TRIP TILL END OF JANUARY PLEASE STOP KIRPAL SINGH 10/25/68.

In numb shock, I read the telegram over and over. The hand of the Beloved moves in mysterious ways; obedience meant forfeiture of my prepaid ticket. Far worse, I would remain a fish out of water, far, far from the Master's enlivening presence.

That entire night I was kept awake by a titanic struggle: to go or to obey. By the first flush of dawn, resigned to my fate, I sent the following telegram to the Master:

...FLIGHT POSTPONED FARE FORFEITED

IF ONLY I MAY PLEASE THEE TIS PILGRIMAGE ENOUGH...

The last line, a quote from Jap Ji, expressed my struggle and submission in a single phrase. The others who were to go with me decided to disregard the telegram, or perhaps interpreted it more liberally. I was bound and could not escape his order even one iota. By bus, I headed back toward the West Coast three thousand miles away. I was met at the Columbus, Ohio depot by initiates David and Pat Hughes, and accepted their kind offer to stay overnight. The moment we arrived at their apartment, the phone rang. Judith Perkins from New Hampshire was on the line with an urgent call for me, 'I didn't know if you would be there or not, but took the chance. I don't know how to begin, or even if I should be telling you this, but...'

'But what?' I asked, my heart in my throat.

'It's not going to be easy on you, but another telegram just arrived from Master and he says:

YOUR TELEGRAM RECEIVED ON RETURN TOUR
YOU MAY COME...KIRPAL SINGH

What a quandary! I was down to my last \$100. David and Pat came to the rescue, loaned me \$600, which covered my ticket, and drove me to the Columbus airport at breakneck speed. My hastily boarded plane reached England's Heathrow Airport several hours later, alas, too late by five minutes to connect with my charter flight! I watched it lifting off into the sky. With the last of the money, I bought a one-way ticket to Kuwait, hoping to intercept the charter group scheduled to stay overnight there before departing for Bombay.

When, many hours later, this fatigued wayfarer arrived in sweltering Kuwait, he was arrested and interrogated by the military, under suspicion of being an Israeli spy. Admittedly, it did look rather odd—a white man in a turban with a Jewish-sounding name, a one-way ticket, and no money whatsoever. With bright spotlights shining in my jet-lagged eyes, I tried again and again to explain, but no one listened. Questions, accusations, and threats were shouted at me. Initial fear turned to resignation as I began to do simran. After several rounds of the holy mantra, I looked over the heads of the crowd which had gathered to gawk and noticed a BOAC stewardess making her way towards us. She listened to my story and spoke urgently in Arabic with the officials. After listening to and translating, she convinced the authorities that I was okay, that

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my story must be checked out. After some tense minutes and telephone calls, I was released. My stewardess-angel confided, 'They were about to take you to a prison in the desert. No one would ever have heard from you again. Very fortunate I came along.'

The familiar faces of Bruce and Misha from Vancouver bobbed through the crowd of burnooses and veils. On the way to the charter group's hotel, we stopped in the Arab bazaar to purchase a branch of the most delicious fresh dates I had ever eaten. It is said that Prophet Mohammed lived off dates, camel's milk, and barley bread. Such morsels are truly Allah's blessings in this sea of sand and barren rocks. Hamd'ullah! Thank God! After more delays in Kuwait and strange experiences in a run-down Bombay hotel, we finally reached Delhi, tired and starved for darshan.

How blessed it was to pass again through the gates of Sawan Ashram, into its timeless and almost blindingly bright dimensions. It was high noon as we approached on foot within a hundred yards of Master's house. Suddenly he emerged from the Porch to step outside to an awaiting car. Turning from its open door, he suddenly looked in our direction. His powerful glance took away my breath, and the time/distance between us disappeared. My storm-tossed boat again found its harbor. How happy, how loving this reunion! His gentle hand patting my back as I touched his feet. For my ears alone, he confided, 'When your telegram arrived, I felt pity on you.'

That night, he synchronously shared an episode from his own life, illustrating how love and surrender can change even the mind of the Beloved.

'Once Hazur left Dera with the instruction, 'No one should follow me to Dalhousie.' Many others did not obey him but I considered that I was bound by his orders. After two weeks I was deeply feeling the pangs of separation.

In the madness of that separation I wrote a poem to the Master. It was the season of springtime, of Basant. I wrote, 'For others this is the season of Basant—of springtime and happiness; others are enjoying the eternity of your existence, but for me this is Baas-aant.' Baas-aant is a play on the word, changing its meaning from 'springtime' to 'the end of happiness.' This poem was duly conveyed to Hazur, and on hearing it, Hazur suddenly announced he was returning. He came straight to me in Lahore.

You see, the slenderest strands of love are more powerful than thick ropes of steel. Just on these few words, the Master changed his plans and came to me.'

Moth & the Flame
38 Raji & Mata Ji

Not long after returning to my ashram spiritual home, I watched discreetly from the porch as the Master in the adjoining room spoke with his son Darshan, daughter-in-law Harbhajan Kaur, and a handsome Sikh gentleman in his early twenties. Catching me out of the corner of his eye, Master beckoned me over. He had just placed a flower garland around the young man's neck. Beaming at me, he asked, 'Do you want to know what I looked like when I was a young man? See here to Raji! He looks exactly like me. I too was a little plump like him! The only difference between us is that Raji ties a fashionable turban and I always tied a simple turban!'



The eve of Raji's departure for the West

Raji, Master Kirpal's eldest grandson, is about to leave for America for further studies. His mother, Harbhajan Kaur, shared what transpired later that night:

'On the day Raji was to leave India, I went to the ashram to find out if the Beloved Master was going to accompany us to the airport to see him off. When I got there I asked the Master if he would be free that evening. Master said, "Oh, I am very busy. I have no time." After he said that I did not dare speak further, but in my heart I was feeling sad and dejected that he would not be able to accompany us. After a moment the Beloved Master looked up and said, "Don't you know I'm very busy tonight! I have to go to the airport to see Raji off. If I don't go, who is going to wipe off your tears?"'

When the first child was born to Darshan and Harbhajan in 1946, Sant Kirpal Singh traveled by train from Lahore to Delhi especially to see him. The child was four days old, and when Master Kirpal first saw him, he touched the baby's cheek with his index finger, saying, 'Yes, there are many old memories with this one.' Then the baby grabbed Master's finger and put it into his mouth.

Baba Sawan Singh personally selected his name Rajinder, or 'King of Kings,' but he was affectionately known by his nickname 'Raji.' As Raji grew up, he was noted for his exceptional intelligence and gentle nature. He attended IIT, one of India's finest

Moth & the Flame - Raji & Mata Ji

engineering universities in Madras, graduating with highest honors, and was accepted for graduate studies at the Illinois Institute of Technology, near Chicago. Master himself selected the university, and directed him to be in touch with his representative there, Olga Donnenburg, whom Raji subsequently regarded as his American mother.

Master Kirpal Singh told Darshan and Harbhajan to have Raji's things packed and ready to go 15 days before the date of departure. He then had Raji come and stay with him at the Ashram those last 15 days, where he personally instructed him in the finer aspects of mysticism, meditation, the teachings of the Sikh Gurus, and comparative religion, so that Raji would have a better knowledge of the teachings of the Saints.

On the last day, the Master had a pair of his own shoes put down on the floor in front of Raji and told him, 'Let us see how they fit you.' Raji gingerly put his feet into the Master's shoes. They fit perfectly. Then Master said to Raji, 'Now your feet are in my shoes. So when you go to America, you should always walk on the purest path. Remember, people will judge me by your behavior.'²

Mataji—the Master's Wife: Several times I had noticed a very elderly woman, all dressed in white, silently entering or leaving the Master's bungalow in the mornings. I discovered that she was Mataji (Mother) Krishna Wanti, the elderly wife of Sant Kirpal Singh. Mataji was the picture of piety. Each morning she went quietly from her separate room to pay obeisance to the Master, whom she no longer considered as her worldly husband, but as the manifestation of the Lord. I respectfully addressed her in the traditional Sikh greeting, 'Sat Sri Akaal, Mataji.' (Sat: Truth; Sri: Respected; Akaal: Eternal, Immortal.) A lovely smile lit up her face, and she responded huskily, 'Sat Sri Akaal ji, betta (son)!' Incredible sweetness flowed from her presence.

Mataji returned to her spiritual abode on April 3, 1970. Her frail form had suffered from throat cancer for about four years. On this subject the Master afterwards remarked,

'Many people who have experienced this sickness have suffered greatly and have screamed aloud with the agony that it causes, but with the grace of God, through having direct contact with Him within, Mataji was spared the pinching effects...'

Eventually Mataji was unable to get around anymore, and while the Master was on tour in the latter part of March, her





Mata Ji Krishna Wanti—the Master's wife

condition worsened. On March 30, (1970) the Master asked her if she was ready to leave and she replied, 'Yes, in three days.' The Master thought for a moment and then said, 'Well, three days, that means April 2nd—I will be very busy that day (due to the commemoration of the death anniversary of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh). The 3rd would be better, in the early afternoon, say 1:30 p.m. I will be more free then.' (Sant Kirpal Singh was in control of life and death.)

At about 1:00 PM on the third it was noticed that Mataji's condition had become very serious. When told about her, the Master said, 'I know it.' The Master went to Mataji and looking down at her very kindly, asked, 'Are you prepared?' She looked up and said, 'Yes.' The Master said, 'Are you sure your heart is absolutely clear—

with no hatred for anyone?' She replied, 'Yes, I have nothing against anyone in my heart.' The Master asked, 'Then why are you not smiling?' With this, her face...began to glow with joy. Ripples of laughter came forth and she looked radiant with happiness. Taking hold of the Master's hand she said, 'Forgive me, if I have ever done anything to offend you.' The Master smiled compassionately. She said, 'Both forms are here—I am seeing you outside and inside.' The Master said, 'All right, now close your eyes and relax,' and with these words he returned to his room. Within ten or fifteen minutes, Mataji had left.²

1. Young Rajinder obediently lived up to his grandfather's lofty expectations. After moving to the Chicago area in 1968, he graduated with highest honors in electrical engineering, and earned a distinguished career with Bell Laboratories. His noble qualities and equanimity of heart and head endeared Raji to his new friends and colleagues in America. He was able to maintain a fine balance between his worldly and spiritual responsibilities, while keeping in frequent contact with the Master and his parents. In time—twenty-one years to be exact—it was not so surprising that this gentle, loving, and intelligent grandson would be chosen to inherit the mantle of the Satguru and his global spiritual mission.

2. Portrait of Perfection: A Pictorial Biography of Kirpal Singh, (Bowling Green, VA/ Delhi, India: Sawan Kirpal Publications, 1981), p. 189.

Moth & the Flame
39 Devlali, Poona & Satara

Love leads into the world of light!
—Sadhu Vasvani



The Master with devotees, Indore, 1968
(Bruce King photo)

The next five months are spent in close proximity to Friend, Father, Beloved...how do I describe one who is beyond all labels; who is one with the Light of all? I cannot even begin.

Misha, Bruce, Leonard (from New York), and I accompany the Master on car-treks to Indore, Devlali, Poona, Satara, and other towns and cities. On occasion, Father invites me to sing and share a story or two with the Sangat. (Prior to, and during this period, he gave a series of forty intimate talks to visiting Westerners, later published as Morning Talks). His specific replies to unvoiced questions never cease to amaze everyone. Heart-whispers seem omnisciently answered before being clumsily voiced. Souls in proximity are lost and found in a state of remembrance.

Devlali: We stay a few days in a humble ashram on the edge of a dense jungle in south-central India. The Sabarmati River flows less than half a mile away. Getting to the river involves trekking through wild gullies and dense jungle. Each day I go there to swim and

meditate. Strewn along the banks of the Sabarmati are millions of smooth round pebbles ranging in size from small marbles to large plums. On closer inspection, I discover them as semi-precious agate, tiger's eye, lapis, and amethyst...however, I am after the jewel of great worth, and leave these baubles in the dark sands.

A simple farmer has attached himself to the Master for the last three tour stops. His inner receptivity is such that he leaves his body within minutes of being in the Master's presence. Today, like the others, finds our farmer flat on his back, corpse-like. On the way back from blessing the langar, Master stops for a closer look. With much amusement, he directs words to Bruce, Misha and myself, 'What should we do with him? Shall we bury or cremate the body?! Is he not a dead man?' After several hours in the higher planes, this meditator's soul finally returns again to his corporeal form.

Mouni Baba: A colorful personality from Devlali joins our caravan. Mouni Baba is a renunciate monk, swathed in orange gerua robes. Straight-backed, short of stature, broad of brow, shaven head, toothless, pot bellied, and about 65 years of age, Mouni Baba has taken a vow of silence and communicates by writing on a small hand-held chalkboard. We become close friends, and I learn his story as he scribbles, shows and erases.

'As a child, I was more interested in God than anything else. I became learned in Sanskrit, practiced Ashtanga yoga, performed many austerities. By age twenty, I had studied with different gurus and had quite a number of my own disciples. By forty, several thousands acknowledged me as their guru. As I progressed in pranayama (breath control), the fire of kundalini awakened suddenly. My whole body and head felt like it was burning in fire. Much heat! This happened about twenty years ago. Day and night for several years this kundalini fire was burning me. I went to so many saints for help. Although they prescribed cures and mantras, nothing worked. About fifteen years ago Sant Kirpal Singh Ji came to my town but since he was a grehasti (householder) and I was a sadhu (monk), I felt very hesitant to accept him. But I did go and explained my difficulty. He made me sit for meditation, put his holy hand on my head, took me high up, inside. Kundalini was finished, just like that! (He snaps his fingers). Kundalini is dangerous. Surat Shabd Yoga goes much higher.'

I ask, 'Mouni Baba, you know Master's rule about not initiating those who live off donations. How did Master accept you for initiation? What were his conditions?'

Mouni Baba replies, 'Maharaj Ji told me I would have to earn an honest living and asked what profession I could take up. I told him, "Maharaj Ji, the only thing I know by which I can make a living is palmistry." Then he advised me to carry on that line of work.'

Sadhu Vaswani & the Mira School for Girls: On the way to Poona—our next stop, Master invites Bruce to sit on the front seat beside him. Overwhelmed with this honor, Bruce appears somewhat panic-stricken. With a poker face, Master says, 'If you think that by sitting by me, your clothes will be soiled, you can take a bath later!' He laughs heartily. Sadhu Vaswani of Sindh was a renowned educator, philosopher, humanitarian, prolific author and mystic, revered as a saint by tens of thousands from both the high and low castes. In the early days of India's struggle for independence from the British, Vaswani was almost as widely known as Mahatma Gandhi. At the height of his fame, at the age of 40, he left his post as principal of one of the largest colleges in India, and renounced the world, as he said, "to announce the Eternal." After several years of esoteric study and practice, he settled at Poona, and established the Mira School for Girls, at a time and place when females were largely considered unfit for education. He opened the doors of his school to many who were destitute, and by example, taught those of means

Moth & the Flame - Devlali, Poona & Satara

to serve the lowly and needy, as though they were serving God Himself.

To Sadhu Vaswani, spirituality included the practice of deep prayer and meditation, as well as service to the holy and the needy. He churned out over 40 books in English and 200 in the Sindhi language. In his heart of hearts he knew that someday God would lead him to a perfect Master. By the time he was in his eighties, the Mira Schools were well established and highly regarded internationally. One day, while browsing through the major daily newspaper of Poona, he saw for the first time, a picture of Satguru Kirpal Singh and an advertisement for his impending visit. Sadhu Vaswani exclaimed, 'This man! This man will give me God!' He was initiated shortly thereafter, further distinguishing himself as a devoted practitioner of Surat Shabd Yoga.

Sadhu Vaswani passed away not long after, and was succeeded by his able nephew, Dada J.P. Vaswani. On our visit to Poona in January of 1969, we are treated to the remarkable sight of Dada Vaswani and the Master touching each other's feet.

Vaswani Ji personally escorts us through the entire campus, articulately fielding our questions. In honor of the Master and guests, children sweetly sing verses from several traditions in Hindi, Marathi and English. We are deeply inspired by Dada Ji's words:

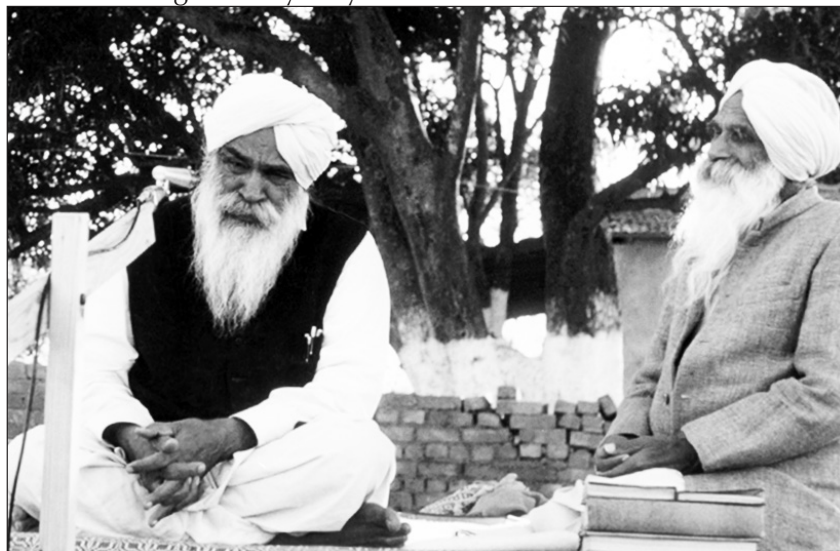
There is darkness in the world today—the darkness of selfishness and strife, of cruelty and hatred and pride. And, again and again, in hours of silence methinks, I have seen Mother Humanity shed tears while her children grope in the dark, busy preparing nuclear weapons, preparing to destroy themselves. Humanity is as an orphan crying in the night, crying for the Light.

Sant Kirpal Singh is the very picture of love and renunciation. To draw near him is to bask in the sunshine of love. And for the love of God, he has renounced everything. I have nothing, he says, except the Name of God!

A man came to him, one day, and saying: 'Sir! My daughter has had a brain illness for several years. Can you heal her?'

In humility, Sant Kirpal Singh answered: 'I have nothing except the Name of God. And the Name of God is a great healer!'

Satara: From Poona we drive further south to Satara. It is a strange and beautiful land of hot, fertile plains, farms, villages and dramatic up-thrusting ancient rock formations. Here, Master's Hindi discourses are translated into the local dialect. It is said that in India the dialect changes every fifty miles. Satara is a small town nestled at the base of a mountain



butte that rises several hundred feet above the plains

When the morning meditation is finished, Maharaj Ji asks everyone what he or she saw within. When it is Master-ji's (Pathi-ji's) turn, he just looks up into Gurudev's eyes, folds his hands together, quietly laughs and replies 'Aap!' ('You!')

Moth & the Flame - Devlali, Poona & Satara

Lenny, Bruce, Misha and I climb to the summit of the flat-topped mountain crowned with an ancient fortress and ramparts, which encircle the entire area of several acres. Here, Shivaji, the Maratha hero-prince and his brave warriors held back northern Mughal invaders. The view in all directions is spectacular, God-inspiring. As we explore the lofty and heavily treed plateau, we wander into a cool, circular glade of Banyan trees. The tangle of roots and trees form a kind of veil to the world, inviting one to meditate. There, in the almost perfect circle of the glade, one sits and enters infinite space between the eyes.



40 The Cosmic Palm

The systematic study of palmistry had been a fascination since my eighteenth year. I had sufficient proof that the lines of the palm often reveal an uncanny window into each person's past, present and future destiny, as well as their hidden character. I had since discontinued reading palms, considering that practice, along with astrology, to be inconsequential for travelers on the path of the Masters. Those under the protection of a perfect Adept, and who have crossed the stars, sun and moon on the inner journey, are no longer controlled by astrological influences.

One night in November of '68, somewhere on a tour-stop in central India, I passed by the open door to Master's temporary quarters and saw him talking to Tai Ji, who was sitting on the floor crying. He looked up and beckoned me in from the dark. 'Tai is crying. She thinks she is going to die, but I'm showing her that her life-line is long!' he said with a certain jolliness. 'Do you know palmistry?' he asked. 'A little,' I replied. He showed me her hand, and of course he was right; there was no disruption to her life-line. Tai Ji, distracted from self-pity, asked, 'You like read Master's hand?' How many times had I hoped for this? 'Oh, yes!'

I cradled that magnificent hand in mine. The skin was a golden-brown on the back, while the palm was pinkish, with graceful, deep, flawless lines. I recalled the historic meeting with Raghuvacharya, the yogiraj of Rishikesh, and my glimpse of the Master's hand then, but it was not so close and studied as this present opportunity:

A peculiar large star/lotus-like configuration of lines crowned the top of his straight, deep, and very long Destiny line, beneath the middle finger on the mount of Saturn. On his forefinger Jupiter mount was a perfect Ring of Solomon, symbol of self-mastery; a perfect Mystic Cross appeared between the Heart and Head lines; and the Sun Line prominently passed across all major lines. His intellect line swept from one side of the hand to the other. Such marks accompanied by an almost symmetrical balance indicated the Murshid-i-Kamil, or Perfect Man, with fully developed potential. After tracing the major lines, I began to look for minor ones and discovered two or three tiny superfluous 'worry' lines, possibly indicating betrayal from individuals close to him. But could I presume to speak to him of the human side of the divine? I became tongue-tied. My knowledge was limited, and what if I were wrong? As the moments stretched in silent struggle, full knowing that my mind was an open book to him, I began to experience a spiritual tingling of consciousness and a receding awareness of normal time and space. His hand was very close to my face; I was aware of nothing else.

An extraordinary experience then took place: tiny little balls of white light appeared, traveling continuously along his lines, leaving minute glowing trails like fading phosphorescence. It was like seeing a simulated atom with electrons spinning about the nucleus, only here, a Godman's hand was the nucleus, and the lines of his life, head, sun, heart, and destiny were the electron paths of Light-energy. I kept watching this cosmic play, until the Master brought me back with a clearing of his throat. Reverently, I took his hand and pressed it against my forehead.

'Master,' I gasped, 'I am incapable of reading your palm!' His knowing smile was his only reply.

I confess to having developed my own morbid fixation, convinced that I would die of, or suffer a serious head injury around my thirtieth year. At least that's what my palm

Moth & the Flame - The Cosmic Palm

indicated. One evening, as mind continued deliberating this possibility, I happened to walk into the Master's living room, which suddenly erupted into laughter. About twenty regulars were sitting around him.

'You are going to live a long life!' Master said. I looked at him, uncomprehendingly. He repeated it, and added, 'We were just talking about you. There is a saying in India, 'If someone whom you are discussing appears, he will live long!''¹

One day, as several sat around him, Master mirthfully addressed me, 'You look like a Pathan!² Who are you? Are you an Easterner? A Westerner?' He turned and exclaimed to the others, 'He was born in the West by mistake!'

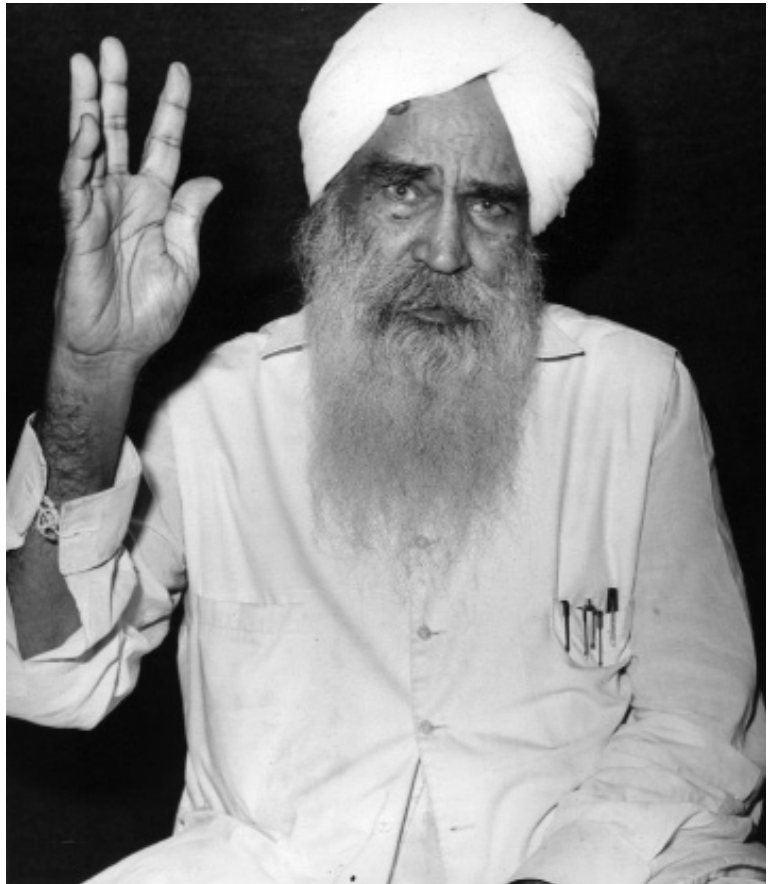
He then asked, 'Do you wish to die in India?' Who could fathom him?

A few words stumbled out in reply, 'Yes, with you, Master.'³

The words of a poem by Rumi welled up, but, finding no path of speech, remained within:

*I am not of the East and not of the West,
Not of the land and not of the sea;
I belong to the soul of the Beloved.*

*I have seen the two as One,
And One I see, One I know, One I adore!
The First, the Last, the outward, and the inward too!*



In this photo of the Master, the major lines of his right hand are clearly visible. Note the string in place of cuff links!

1. This occurred some fifty-five years ago. The Beloved Master left his mortal coil for the last time in 1974, in my thirtieth year, which was a form of trauma/death/rebirth for me.

2. Pathans are light-skinned, tall mountain people located in Kashmir and northern Pakistan.

3. On each of my three stays with Sant Kirpal Singh in India, he asked this same question. "Do you wish to die in India?" Each time, the reply was the same, "With you, Master."

41 Arranged Marriage

February 7, 1969: Today follows the Master's seventy-fifth birthday celebration, and Sawan Ashram is overflowing with humanity. During a program lull, my friend Hasmukh Vyas approaches: 'Arran-ji, you would like to marry an Indian girl? She is Master's disciple from very good family. She is M.A. degree! She is lecturer at a girls' college in Moradabad, you see.'

Surprised, I reply, 'Well, I don't know...Whatever is His Will, but she must be devoted to the Path.'

'Oh yes, very qualified—nice girl, M.A. degree, college lecturer, good caste. Very qualified!' While I emphasize devotion, on a different wavelength Hasmukh emphasizes her exceptional qualifications. Not wanting to limit the Divine will in anything, I agree to formally meet that evening in the presence of elders and others from the proposed's family in the Master's dining room. As we file through the doorway, I am introduced to a pretty, modest, and determined young woman of twenty-two. 'Namaste Ji. How do you do?' She speaks with a strong British-Indian accent. 'My name is Rattan Mala Bagga.'¹

We sit at opposite ends of a long dining table awkwardly looking at our plates, surrounded by relatives and a couple of her friends. Mutually shy, we ask a few guarded questions of each other. While conversation passes around, I find myself stealing a few glances in her direction and am surprised to catch a few returns as well! Eyes quickly and properly avert to plates.

Too soon dinner is over; Rattan Mala and family prepare to leave for Moradabad, a hundred miles by train. Her granny, Mela Devi, or 'Baeji' as everyone calls her, is a wise old initiate of Hazur. She confronts me outside and expresses a well-justified fear of the feringhi, or foreigner: 'I have heard the Americans leave their wives. This is my daughter, my most priceless treasure! What have you to say about it?'

'Baeji,' I reply, 'in my life, there is only one woman; only one marriage. See, even my hand says so,' showing her the single line below my little finger. She hugs me, pounds me on the back, and with a huge toothless grin exclaims, 'Shabash!' ('Very good!'), proudly showing off her future son-in-law.

The family had once been powerful, with confectionery factories, mansion, and many servants, but in recent years, hard times descended and the factory and mansion were auctioned off. Due to this, I am told, there won't be much dowry. 'No dowry!' I insist. 'A good and loving wife; a life-companion of noble character is more than I deserve.'

'Namaste Ji,' we say to each other in sweet parting. After the passage of days, head swirling with gripping implications, I am struck by cupid's arrow—the kind that cannot be extracted. Although I know hardly anything about this young woman, I'm certain of our intertwined destiny. Simultaneously, unbeknownst to me, in the old city of Moradabad, she is struck by the same arrow—I am the one she decides to marry—but in her case, she faces the wrath of the more conservative elements of her prominent khatri-caste family.

'You want to marry a Bhangi [a low-caste sweeper], a Chamar [those who handle the dead]! This will defame our noble clan!' one of her uncles yelled at her. While she is thus harangued and tormented, I am blithely unaware of her trials. She later confides, 'Master was supporting me, and for one time in my life I completely surrendered to His

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Will. Otherwise I couldn't have done it. Although my mother, grandmother, aunts, and uncle Hira Lal who were initiated understood and gave me support, Bau Ji [her father] and two of my uncles were vehemently opposed. Fortunately, Baeji ruled the family. Once I had made the decision to marry, no one could change my course.' During the stress of these two weeks, she loses 15 of her former 110 pounds.

I go to the beloved Master, seeking assurance. 'It is God who puts such like thoughts in you,' he says. 'Tai! Tai ko bulao!' He calls in Tai Ji, who then hands me a folded Nehru-style coat of fine grey material. 'This' Master coat—for you. You wear on wedding!' she orders.

Master urges, 'Try it on; I wore it once. Let us see how the coat fits!' Naturally I'm overawed, not knowing whether to wear or revere it. I first revere it. After more encouragement, I try it on. Despite my near six feet height, the coat is very large in the shoulders. After all, it was tailored for the broad-shouldered Master. 'You can go for a re-fitting,' he said. My whole life is being refitted, I muse silently.

Rattan Mala and family are summoned back to the ashram in late February. The British-educated princess Khukhu-ji calls me over to where she and Eileen are standing under the shade of a neem tree, 'Because you are a Westerner, I think you should get to know your future wife a little better. I have arranged for both of you to meet in my house for one hour. This is not done in India, and especially here in the ashram! I will stand guard outside the door while you sit apart and ask whatever you want to know about each other. Only one hour, mind you.' She told us exactly how far apart we were to sit!

In that brief interlude in Khukhu's house we get to share some history, poetry, dreams and goals. We are then called to the Master's house, with a few relatives and well-wishers. A big suitcase is brought forth, from which saris, suits and scarves of many colors and descriptions are personally given to Rattan Mala by the Master. He is playing the role of father to both of us, and will not see his Indian daughter married without dowry! If the Master were only a renunciate, he would not understand nor participate in this side of his disciples' lives, but he is the Complete Man, the Insaan-i-kamil.

The Princess then presents a classical Indian filigree necklace and earrings, then Brij Mohan and Mohini Sharma warmly add a solid gold bangle. When I protest this extravagance, Brij Mohan lovingly insists, 'Dear brother, you have no say in the matter. She is also our daughter!'

Master raises his hands, eyes upturned: 'O God, I was running towards You like anything! Then You bound my legs, my arms and neck with chains! With manacles and handcuffs! And I was running towards You like anything!' he chuckles. Behind the mirth is portent of great changes ahead. With my ascetic tendencies, he sees need to experience through marriage and family life the tender bondage of responsibility and human attachment before further inner development is possible.

'When Socrates was pressed by family to be married,' Master continues, 'he agreed on one condition, "Give me the most disobedient wife! That will be best for me." And one night when Socrates was up late discussing philosophy with his friends, his wife became so angry she poured his supper on his head! That was good for his progress, you see!'

Engagement: On the evening of March 3, Master calls all Westerners, a few close Indian disciples, and Rattan Mala's family to his living room. [Misha taped the following exchange]:

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Master, chuckling: 'Who is the minister of all this?'

Groom: 'You, Master!'

Master: 'What is the ritual or custom amongst you about marriage?'

(He points to Stanley.) 'You know better.'

Stanley: 'No ritual or custom, Master, for the engagement.'

Master: 'What is "engagement"? Any special thing to be done?'

Edna: 'No, Master, he just puts a ring on the girl's finger, that's all.'

Master: 'That's all? Only a ring? And if the ring is lost?' He chuckles, 'The ring which has bound him—which binds both souls together—is stronger and cannot be broken. Anyhow this is a memento, hmm? How will the marriage be performed? By some church man, or whom?'

Stanley: 'A Sikh wedding, I think.'

Master: 'Look here, I never interfere with the isms. All are dear to me. So, how would you like to conduct your marriage? If according to the Church, we can arrange for a missionary to come over here, or there in a church.'

Groom: 'Maharaj Ji, I humbly request that it be done in the Sikh way.'

Master: 'I'm not converting anybody to Sikhism. What about marriage?'

Tai Ji: 'Tomorrow morning.'

Master: 'One day's engagement only?' he says with the sweetest, most incredulous look. 'They last for months, is it not?'

Stanley: 'Normally, yes, Master. We didn't have an engagement, Edna and I—we just got married.'

Master (to Stanley): 'Would you like a priest here to conduct the marriage, or what?' (As Master keeps directing his questions to Stanley, the situation becomes ever more hilarious.) 'How would you like it?'

Stanley: 'Arran's getting married—not me!'

Master: 'I'm just inquiring whether you would like to have your marriage conducted according to the Christian rites or what? I have no objection.'

Groom (stammering): 'If...if Master has no objection I would prefer the Sikh...'

Finally, Master seems satisfied: 'That means the marriage is to be performed before God through the hands of some blessed people in the presence of many. So, you desire to perform it according to Sikh rites?'

Groom: 'Yes.'

Master: 'I am a man; I love all. Alright, where is the girl?' Rattan Mala comes forward, and we both bow spontaneously. She gets his right foot, I the left. 'Knock your heads!' he says. Intoxicating mirth envelopes all. Master holds up the bride's ring, with eight different jewels surrounding a pearl. Examining it closely, he asks, 'One pearl? Alright, take it.'

He places gentle hands upon our heads, saying, 'Alright, God bless you! That's alright. Now tomorrow, you want to be married according to Sikh rites? Do you all agree, you people? He wants it to be done according to Sikh rites—with no imposition from me, not in the least. Our blessings are there. It is the unseen hand of God working behind the scenes which unites them. This union comes about as a result of the past. He's

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an Indian! [pointing to the groom] His great-grandfather was a General of the Punjab in India. So unfortunately, or fortunately, you were born there (in the West) and you have been brought back to India! Your great-grandfather was here in the Punjab, in what year?’

Groom: ‘He lived in India from 1840 to 1878.’

Master: ‘So it is these reactions which have brought you back here.² Alright! God Bless you, with all best wishes. In the morning, sharp at eight, all you friends be there. He’s already bound, you see, but he’ll be bound by the silken bonds of love, which cannot be broken—which are stronger than iron chains, is it not? Alright, God bless you. Go and take your food please, and good night to you all.’



How palpable the joy and peace which fills my last solitary night! The Holy Spirit descends in force several times, touching, blessing, showering a normally world-bound consciousness with luminous ecstasy and supernal awe. Behind diaphanous veils awaits the Spouse of all souls.

*The Lord, the Bridegroom, has entered into my soul
...and I have known the loveliness of His beauty.*

—St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Holi Wedding, March 4, 1969: Our wedding day coincides with Holi, an Indian festival that celebrates the triumph of good over evil. Astrologers consider Holi to be inauspicious for weddings, like, no one gets married on Holi! Masters are above such superstitions.

We meet again, as sacred hymns from the Granth Sahib drift across the courtyard from the meditation hall where the marriage knot is to be tied. Everything feels strangely familiar and marvelous, as though this drama has been enacted before. The bride, wrapped in a red and gold sari, has her large dark eyes lowered. Master ties a fragrant veil of fresh flowers upon my pink wedding turban which was earlier selected by Baeji.

Master says: ‘You are having a big load on your life now. You’re not to run all alone but you have a big load to carry!’ He sweetly laughs. ‘All responsibilities, of course. This ceremony shows that you are entering into the householder’s life. You’re not a bachelor anymore. Now others will know you have true matrimony and will have respect for you. A life-companion is an asset to be with you in weal or woe. The ultimate goal of both

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of you is to know God. The real union of the soul comes only then. Now it is a union of physical body with physical body in this earthly sojourn.'

Master hands us fragrant flower garlands: 'First, she'll put the garland around your neck and then you'll put one around hers, signifying that you accept each other. First she accepts you, then you accept her.' The garlanding is done. 'Bow your head. Remain devoted to her! Now you [to Rattan Mala]. That's alright. God bless you.'

Four Stages of the Soul's Matrimony With God: The groom is led separately to the Meditation Hall, which selfless hands have transformed into a Gurdwara, or temple. The scriptures sit on a specially draped platform at one end, read aloud with great reverence by Ashram secretary, Gyani Ji. Soon the Sangat (congregation) breaks out in joyous refrains, accompanied by dholak drum, harmonium and jingling cymbals. Several hundred well wishers have already gathered by the time Master Kirpal enters. He sits on the floor near the front, but respectfully to the side of the Granth Sahib. Gyani Ji then selects relevant verses on matrimony, while the Sangat chants: Palley tanday lagee... 'Take hold of the Beloved's hem...'

As a symbol of union, the bride and groom hold opposite ends of a long scarf while slowly circling the scripture four times...

When the fourth circling is completed, the congregation showers the couple with rose petals.

The Master stands before the assembly of hundreds—if not a thousand, now filling the entire hall. He first speaks in Hindi and then in English:³

Marriage means the taking of a life-companion, to be with one another in weal or woe, enabling both to meet God, their ultimate goal. Both should live very amicably, in a loving way, as God has united them, not any earthly power. The girl was born in the East, the man in the West, and now the unseen hand of God brings them into union together. Whom God unites, let no earthly power separate. Husband and wife should work as one soul in two bodies for a happy life in this earthly sojourn.

If any mistake is committed, we should seek forgiveness, as forgiveness washes everything clean. If anything comes from Above, we should submit to His Will; then there is no conflict... And, we should be humble; 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven'... All virtues should abide in us; virtue or Righteousness means good thoughts, good words, good deeds. Sweet tongue, honeyed with humility, is the remedy for all ills in life.

Ever since leaving our Father's Home, the desires of the world have attracted us here again and again, with the result that the world has become imbedded in our hearts, in the subconscious reservoir of mind... Let mind be depleted of the world and become filled with sweet remembrance of the Lord, so much so that it overflows...

Many names have been given by Masters to denote that Power which is One, which resides within every heart, reverberating everywhere... When you see God's Effulgent Form with your inner eye, you will begin to hear the Music of the Spheres resounding in all creation. This Music is the Bread of Life, and the more you come in contact with It, the more love will overflow within you... When the state comes where you remember God by any name, you'll be full of joy and sweetness. For instance, when you have eaten one very sweet mango, later on when you just hear the name of mango, you'll again feel sweetness within you. God-man gives you contact with the sweetness of the

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Elixir of Life, the Priceless Jewel within; then naturally when you say, 'God! O' God!' you'll have sweetness within you. That is the first stage of your communion with God...

The second stage will come when the Sound Principle or Music of the Spheres becomes audible all twenty-four hours of the day, without closing your ears. When you have developed the Light within, you begin to see the same Light outside too. Then the second stage of your soul's matrimony with God arrives.

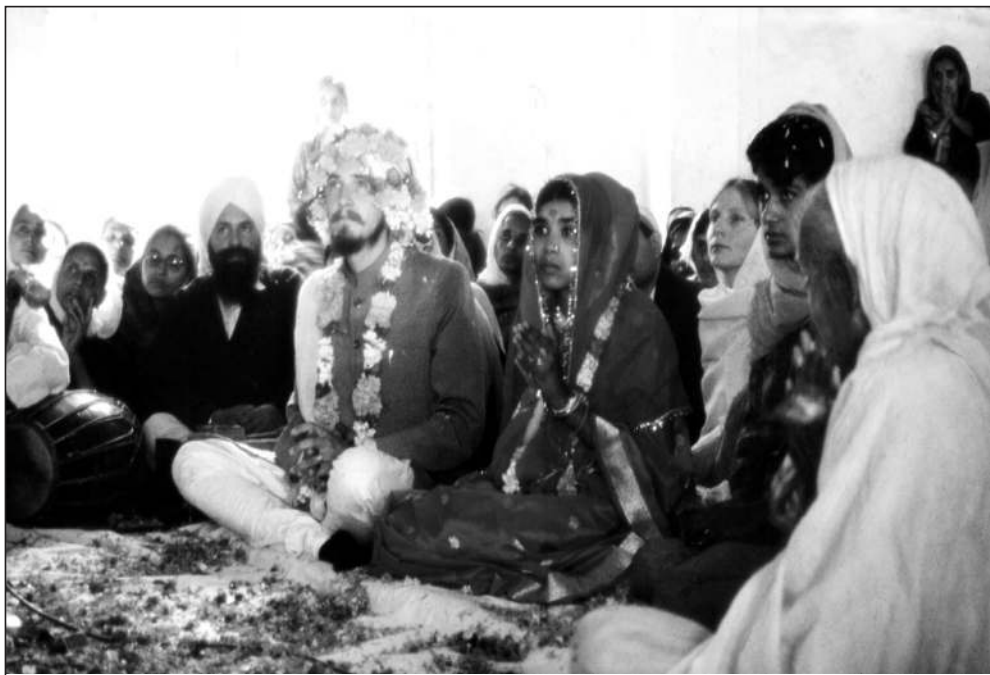
The third stage will come when you see the Lord within, without and everywhere! You will see the whole world as His expression, and you'll go into raptures! Then, while in the world, outer things won't attract you; you'll be detached. A time will come when you will see virtues and evils—everything—and yet you'll remain unattached. This is when the third stage of your communion with God is developed.

Last of all, when the fourth stage arrives, inside, outside, everywhere, you will see the Lord, and hear His Melody of the Music of the Spheres reverberating throughout all creation. You'll sometimes be so absorbed, you'll forget your own self and all ego will go. That is the soul's permanent Matrimony with God, about which Mira Bai has said: 'Mira Bai sada sohagan, Vaar paya abhinashi. Now I have the eternal matrimony with God.'

That is the highest aim in life, and what is meant by the four turnings 'round the scriptures. This is the marriage ritual amongst the Sikhs, started by Guru Ram Das under the instructions of Guru Amardas in 1637 AD, and has been the custom until now.

First turn, second, third and last of all when you reach the final stage, we throw flowers. Then you have attained success in life. Throwing flowers means you are a good couple, you have reached the ultimate goal. And this is before both of you. You are my children! I wish you happy life here and hereafter.

When the marriage ceremony is complete, we move back to the porch and sit cross-



The bride and groom at the edge of life's great adventure.

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legged before Father. He leans forward in his wicker chair to offer advice:

'Hear me, what I have to say! You are a bridegroom now. Nobody can deny—so many witnesses. Not one, hundreds!' He looks around at the gathering, 'So many responsibilities now on his shoulders.' He turns back to us, 'God has united you; remain united until the last breath. In this life, and even hereafter, let no power disunite you. Behave nobly, in such a way that people may respect you. Like a flute, be vacant from within so that the Master may make sweet music of your life. Be of service, not only to your own self, but to all others as well. This human form is the highest rung in creation, with quadrupeds, birds, and reptiles as your younger brothers and sisters. Love all, and be the source of happiness to them. And whomsoever has brought you up in life, serve them to the best you can.

'Last of all, you have to leave the world, say in a hundred years or so. Remain in contact with God so that you may be blessed here and hereafter. My wishes are always there. God Power never leaves you until He unites you with God. And this book, Gurmat Siddhant, I give you, although it is in Punjabi. It gives the practical side of spirituality. Do you know how to read Gurmukhi [Punjabi script]?'

Rattan Mala replies, 'No.'⁴

'Oh my Lord! Anyhow, it is a treasure of what I have found depicting the practical life on the spiritual way, and verified by the sayings of all Masters from every religion. The theoretical part is in a separate volume, each volume comprising about one thousand pages. This will be your guiding principle in life. So I give to both of you. Take!

'This is no conversion. As a man to man! I love everyone here; those who want to perform marriage according to the Arya Samaj, Sanatan Dharma [Hindu], Muslim, Sikh, or Christian viewpoints, may do so... So, be a man and turn out to be a perfect man in due course.'

'Thank you, Master, thank you.'



Moth & the Flame - Arranged Marriage

1. Rattan Mala translates as 'Necklace of Jewels.' In the frontispiece of the custom bound volume of Gurmat Siddhant given us the day before the wedding, Master wrote our names, curiously changing the spelling from Rattan Mala to 'Ratana Ji' [Jewel]..

After the wedding, the young bride and groom apprehensively entrained for Moradabad to seek her father's belated blessings. After respectfully touching his feet, he shed a few tears and embraced me as a son, profusely apologizing for not having given any wedding gifts. 'Bauji, you have given the most priceless treasure of all—your own daughter, whom I have sworn to honor, protect, and love, for always!' I remonstrated. Bauji then confided, 'One year ago, I had a dream that one in your form would carry Rattan off to Amrika [America]!'

2. Baba Jaimal Singh taught British Officers Gurmukhi at the time Lt. General Cripps was a commanding officer in the Punjab. When reading of Baba Jaimal Singh's life before my initiation, ancient memories were stirred. I often wondered about this.

3. The Master's wedding discourse is lightly abridged for brevity.

4. I learned to read and write Gurmukhi in 1966, before leaving for India. Ratana was already fluent in Hindi, Sanskrit, English and spoken Punjabi.

42 Seeds of Transformation

Two weeks after the wedding, a huge booksellers' convention took place on the Ram Leela grounds of Delhi. The Master invited the Western initiates to accompany him there to explore and reveal his future model for a home for humanity. At the Manav Kendra booth and bookstall, pictures and words spelled out his vision to incorporate sustainable farming, treating animals humanely and service to humanity—providing homes for the aged and indigent. It would also provide a children's school of high excellence, free medical treatment for the community, using a variety of allopathic, homeopathic and ayurvedic systems, plus a universal library on spirituality. Through sound education, he taught, the veil of ignorance and superstition can be lifted.

For the previous two decades, Sant Kirpal Singh had worked unceasingly to bring the heads of various religions and spiritual groups together to understand their commonalities and lessen sectarian strife. In the early fifties, the Jain monk Muni Shushil Kumar founded the World Fellowship of Religions (WFR). Sant Kirpal Singh Ji was nominated and unanimously elected by all religious heads from dozens of countries as its president, year after year. As such, he presided over four major world conferences. While much progress was made in gathering religious heads together, he noticed the tendency among the leaders *'to erect water-tight compartments of their own faiths*, hence the need for a shift, in his words:

Good work has been done through the World Fellowship of Religions. Now men can mix with others—but one danger is ahead. Leaders of the World Fellowship of Religions are wanting to strengthen their own formations, in spite of the fact that the inner way is the same for all... To combat the danger of religious chauvinism, it was thought necessary to start the work of regeneration from the roots. Man-making must take precedence. This can only be done by inculcating in people...the humanistic idea of unselfish love and selfless service, with special emphasis on man-service, land-service and animal-service (animals being our younger brothers and sisters in God). This idea took concrete shape in 1969 with the decision to set up...Manav Kendras.¹

In the midst of the teeming book bazaar, the booth displayed the Master's many written works in more than a dozen languages, plus many volumes on world religions, yoga, mysticism, Persian poetry, and spirituality borrowed from his own personal library. While browsing through, I was surprised and delighted to find several rare volumes. I pulled out an old tome on mysticism and as I opened it, some folded, handwritten papers slipped out and fell to the ground. When I picked them up, I soon realized their significance. These were original hand-written letters from Dr. Julian Johnson (a former missionary and surgeon who became a devoted initiate of Baba Sawan Singh) to Kirpal Singh, and two letters from Kirpal Singh, dating back to the 1930's dealing specifically with Dr. Johnson's major literary work, *Path of the Masters*. They revealed Johnson's great esteem for Kirpal Singh, his fellow-disciple, and the in-depth involvement the latter had in the preparation and editing of the *Path of the Masters* manuscript. At Kirpal's insistence Dr. Johnson made numerous changes, toning down his harsh criticism of various religions, however, some missionary zeal remained. The letters contained numerous margin notes in the Master's pen.²

Dr. Zakir Hussain, the President of India, dropped by the Manav Kendra display. The

Moth & the Flame - Seeds of Transformation

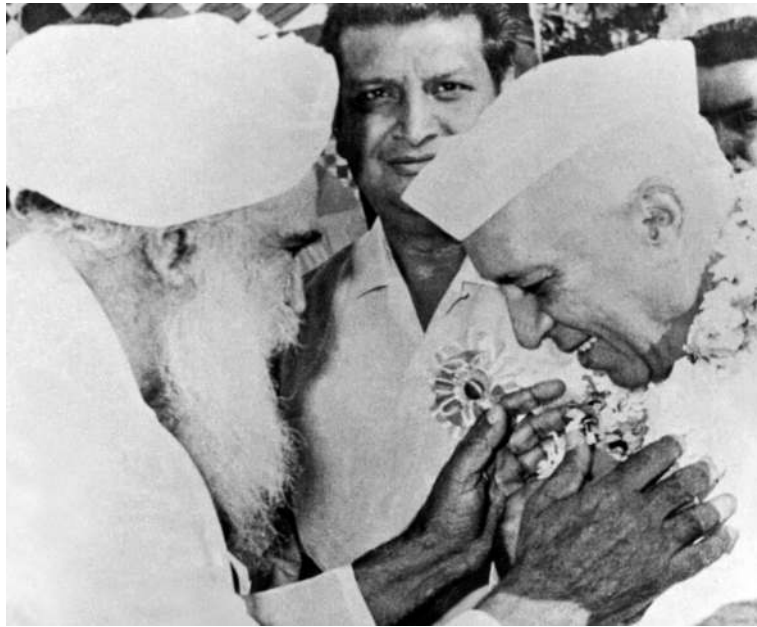
Master, who was on close terms with the President, introduced me and we shook hands. We discussed Islamic mysticism and Sufism in some depth. The fact that Dr. Hussain, a Muslim, was President is credit to the broad-mindedness of predominantly Hindu India.

Spirituality, Future's Only Hope: Independent India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was an avowed agnostic most of his life, and as a secularist, was remarkably free from religious and racial prejudice. Nehru became recognized as one of the twentieth century's great political leaders, men of letters, statesmen, and humanists. He was singularly dedicated to the welfare of his country, and had little time for personal religious or spiritual considerations. Towards the end of his illustrious career, however, Nehru met privately with Sant Kirpal Singh on several occasions, seeking his counsel. After one of their last meetings, Nehru thoughtfully remarked to all within earshot. 'Spirituality is the only hope for the world.'

I asked Maharaj Ji, 'Did Pundit Nehru ever receive initiation from you?' Looking at me with a slight smile, he enigmatically replied, 'Yes, we have talked about these things, you see.'

According to an eye-witness, Nehru's last dying words were, 'Maharaj Ji! Maharaj Ji! Maharaj Ji!' ('O King! O King! O King!')

Nehru's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi, also deeply revered the Master, as did his daughter Indira Gandhi, who became India's first woman Prime Minister.



Sant Kirpal Singh blessing Jawaharlal Nehru

All-party political rally:

Around the time of our wedding, the Indian Government gave an unusual recognition to Sant Kirpal Singh and his contribution to the nation and the world at large, inviting him to an all-political party outdoor rally. As he addressed the huge throng, I was struck by two keynotes, which I jotted into my journal.

While encouraging citizens of the world's largest democracy to exercise their voting franchise, the Master urged all to evaluate the ethical character, honesty and service record of the candidates, and vote on that basis—*not along party, caste, race, or religious lines.*

'In ancient times,' he said, 'rulers sought the guidance of Saints and Sages whenever their nations were faced with grave crisis. Because political ambition or desire for personal gain does not sway the angle of vision of the wise, they are often able to intermeditate and bring peace to warring factions. Politicians can affect the minds of the people but not their hearts,' the Master declared, then beautifully added, '**The heart is the domain of the Saints.**'

Moth & the Flame - Seeds of Transformation

The Masters draw no distinction between initiate and non-initiate, saint or sinner, 'high' and 'low.' Their message calls for a spiritual revolution and transformation within each individual.

After nearly six months in India, my thoughts began to turn towards Vancouver—and a much neglected business. I didn't have enough money for my bride's airfare, but kept quiet about it. The Master, however, divined the situation and insisted on arranging her travel costs and he gave me \$2,000 (subsequently repaid, although he never asked).

Obtaining passport, ticketing, exit visa, clean bill of health and immigration approval is a lengthy process in India under the best of circumstances. For an Indian citizen in those days, this was a monumental challenge which could take many weeks or months. As my ticket could not be changed, I dreaded the probability of leaving my young bride behind. She and I raced through Delhi by tuk-tuk scooter—first to the passport office. When we arrived at the huge government complex that occupies an entire block, anxiety mounted at the sight of long, slow moving queues. As we waited in line, we were delighted and grateful to see Darshan Singh, the Master's son, walking out from an adjoining room. He led us into his office and called for chai and biscuits. Darshan happened to be one of the highest-ranking civil servants in the Indian government, but he was the essence of self-abnegation—a center of calm in the midst of this hectic beehive. Somewhere between the third biscuit and the second cup of chai, all of Ratana's paperwork was done. We tried to thank Darshan Singh, but he demurred, 'It is all the beloved Master's doing, brother and sister!'

By scooter, we dashed over to the Canadian Embassy, encountering more long line-ups. Ratana's visa was the very last approved that day, and I had to leave India that night—with or without her.

A Master is a human father-teacher, and simultaneously above and behind the stage, pulling many invisible strings with impeccable timing. We were blessed and sent off to our new life together in the West.

1. Portrait of Perfection: A Pictorial Biography of Kirpal Singh, (Bowling Green Virginia/Delhi India: Sawan Kirpal Publications, 1981), p. 168. Sant Kirpal Singh used the term 'man' for 'humanity'. This was before the feminist movement made language more gender neutral. However, the Master made no distinction between male and female. All were embodied souls, conscious entities inhabiting envelopes of mind and matter. He often used the term, 'child humanity.'

2. Despite my desire to hold onto these precious and historical letters, I returned them to the Master at the ashram in the evening. Now untraceable, it is a pity that these were not copied or photographed.

43 Ascetic to Householder

My sari-clad bride was welcomed with showers of rose petals at the Vancouver airport, then embraced by Mum and Dad, the Nagras and Golden Lotus co-workers. We settled into a little room above the restaurant, sharing a bathroom with fourteen others. It took some time for Ratana to adjust to life in the West, as she deeply missed her family, friends, and the rich traditions of India. We worked an average of twelve to sixteen hours a day at \$1 per hour, to get the restaurant firmly established.

A tavern for grace: We soon received a personal letter from the Master, dated 27 May, 1969, which offered profound inspiration and guidance in our enterprise:

You should be fair yet firm for the dear ones working with you... If all of you will work in a team spirit with renewed zeal and enthusiasm there is no reason why the business should not flourish and earn rich dividends... Try to manage the affairs in such a manner that everybody is kept cheerfully busy with proper work for which he or she is best suited. This will prove very much helpful for maintaining their morale high... I wish that your restaurant should serve as a tavern for divine grace... when every visitor should carry a pinch of divine fragrance by your kind, courteous and generous behavior...

In three months we had saved \$1,000 to make a down payment on a little two-bedroom house with a garden. Ratana was already pregnant with our first child, and we had had our fill of communal living.

Two more letters came in which Master wanted to set me straight:

One thing of great importance, which I would like to stress, is that you must not meddle with the affairs of others directly or indirectly... Everybody has a right to seek improvement in his or her own chosen manner, and should never be interfered with unless they seek your personal guidance or assistance... Never look on the faults or shortcomings of others nor hear any idle gossip or censure...

I am sorry to say that I have received letters... stating that... you are too dictatorial and show little regard for the suggestions of others.

How my ego needed trimming! How abysmal, my people skills! I had spent too many years as a virtual ascetic. His last letter left me feeling despondent and unappreciated for all the work I thought I had done. I contemplated a move to a new city. While repenting thus, I began to feel a glowing presence in the living room. Master's astral form appeared out of the very air, solidified and embraced me. All was forgiven in love! He seemed to pass or absorb into my entire body until he disappeared. Despondency changed to delirious joy.

In his next letter of December 10, he said:

The love of the Master... sometimes has to take the form of a mild reproof for the child's own good. It was a mark of his grace and love for you that the Master's form appeared before you when you shed tears in remembrance. I am pleased that you are continuing as group leader... and wish for you to forget what has happened in the past.

Although the numbers were growing, considerable agitation began among the more left-leaning team members to turn the Golden Lotus into a commune. After much soul-searching, we decided to make a clean break and sold the restaurant to the group for a paltry \$3,000 while sincerely wishing them all success. Ironically, the commune became so unwieldy (too many chiefs), that it was again privatized by those who had earlier most

Moth & the Flame - Ascetic to Householder

vehemently clamoured for collectivization! But by then it was too late and the Golden Lotus became defunct. On the bright side, several of our former comrades went on to found successful enterprises of their own.

I opened a little store up the hill from the Lotus, selling Indian bedspreads, clothing, classical musical instruments, organic and healthy foods. The food component, despite extremely limited offerings that were available in 1970, soon edged out other wares and it became apparent that our destiny was linked to the good earth and good food. Ratana supplemented our income by baking eggless muffins and making caftans from hand-printed bedspreads right up into the ninth month of pregnancy. Then, into our lives came a beautiful baby girl. During the painful miracle of birth, while repeating simran aloud, my wife received the vision of Sawan and Kirpal in blazing light. The Master telegraphed his congratulations and added: 'You may name the baby Shanti' ['Peace' in Sanskrit].

Master Kirpal's wise teachings were both practical and spiritual:

'Just as a check can be cashed at the counter, similarly the manifestations of Divinity can be had at the eye focus, which you can reach safely under the protective guidance of the Living Master, and for which you have a passport in the form of sacred charged Names. These Names carry his Life Impulse...

Time factor is essential and, as such, much patience and perseverance are required. You sow a seed in the soil. Let it remain hidden within the earth and construct a strong hedge around it and strive for its regular watering and weeding in every possible way.

You should become a source of help and inspiration to your less gifted brethren who may better their lots by following your example. Please note an ounce of practice is better than tons of theory. The world is fed up with preaching... One developed soul will be helpful for many others. Spirituality cannot be taught, it must be caught like an infection which is passed on to others who are receptive... Just live like a fragrant flower which blooms in a forest and fills the atmosphere with its rich fragrance.

You are the master of your destiny full of higher potentialities. You are simply to make exertion to change for the better, and firmly stick to your resolutions. All else is to follow of itself...

Service is considered an ornament to a beautiful person that adorns and elevates his/her soul to become a clean vessel for His Grace...The secret of selfless service is to deny the reward or recognition of any type and on the contrary consider one's self as an humble instrument...

Remember :

***The salt of life is selfless service;
The water of life is universal love;
The sweetness of life is loving devotion;
The fragrance of life is generosity;
The pivot of life is meditation;
The goal of life is self-realization.***

—Excerpts from the Master's discourse, July 26, 1962.

44 New-Age Entrepreneurship

By the late sixties, Western society had traded its wholesome heritage for a diet of refined junk foods laced with sugar, fat, preservatives, and additives. What was whole had become white; white bread, white rice, white sugar, white flour (and dominance by white, eurocentric society). The use of highly toxic pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers in modern agriculture was widespread, dangerous, and non-sustainable. Winds of change blew fresh ideas into the collective mind as nutritional research demonstrated time and again the vital link between poor diet and degenerative disease. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* first alerted the scientific and lay communities about the disastrous effects of agricultural chemicals on the environment leading to the extinction of many beneficial animal and insect populations, the precipitous and related rise in cancer and other ailments across the spectrum. Research by others strongly corroborated her findings. In the early sixties, whole wheat bread was only available at one small outlet in Vancouver, and one good doctor was writing prescriptions for it!

"Men dig their graves with their own teeth and die by those fated instruments more than the weapons of their enemies."—Thomas Moffett.

From the sixties and into the seventies, a handful of young, socially-conscious individuals in various parts of North America and Europe pioneered the first natural foods stores (as distinguished from 'health food' stores with a focus on supplements, cosmetics, books and herbs, but which offered little or no foods) and a few cafes. Forging alliances with organic farmers, these mostly long-haired visionaries developed, evangelized and popularized difficult or otherwise non-existent unadulterated organic whole foods, organic produce, whole-grain breads and cereals, yogurt, sprouts, soy foods, herbs, fresh juices, vegetarian and vegan foods, natural supplements, and hundreds of other products which ultimately caught on and improved the health and eating habits of the Western world.

The scientific principles of organic agriculture were discovered and promulgated by Sir Albert Howard in his *Agricultural Testament*, first published in England in 1940. This book is a classic. Howard's ideas were promoted in America by author and experimental farmer, J.I. Rodale of *Organic Gardening Magazine*. Other early organic farming trailblazers were his son, Robert Rodale and Paul Keene, founder of Walnut Acres (1946). I first discovered Walnut Acres' organic products through its mail-order catalogue in 1965. But that was about the extent of it. Into the seething '60's, the macrobiotic food movement was born, based on the teachings of Georges Ohsawa, a Japanese food philosopher. Then came Fred Rohe of New Age Natural Foods in San Francisco, who started America's first real natural foods store in 1965; Michio Kushi and Paul Hawken ran *Erewhon*, Boston (1966); Frank Ford of Arrowhead Mills; Mike Potter of Eden Foods and many others such as Shadowfax, Llama, Toucan & Crow, and Tree of Life were early pioneers. My farmer Dad's early experiments in 1951 with commercial mulching and avoidance of pesticides have already been mentioned in Chapter 1.¹

Perhaps the earliest proponent of regenerative organic agriculture (long before those lofty words were coined), was the former African-American slave, George Washington Carver, PhD (1864-1943), the eminent scientist, author, inventor and mystic, who is largely credited for saving the farmland of the Southern region of the United States.

On January 1, 1971, it was our privilege to open LifeStream, Canada's first large natural foods store. It was Dad who suggested the name. LifeStream was a play on the esoteric

term, the Audible Life-stream of Creation. Free fresh carrot juice drew in crowds; an electric-powered 20" stone-buhr mill, visible through a window from the street, ground tons of fresh whole-grain flour every day; alfalfa sprouts were grown in our nearby warehouse/factory; fresh nut butters were roasted and milled to order; natural candy bars and cookies were extruded and baked; egg-free cakes and muffins popped from the ovens; pies, crunchy granola, bulk foods, and wholesome artisanal breads were baked and sold by the thousands. These were firsts for Canada.



Inspiration came from such diverse sources as: Hippocrates: *'Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food.'* Genesis: *'Lo' I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of the earth, and the milk of animals that feedeth on it; to you it shall be for meat,'* Back to Eden, by Jethrow Kloss, a book on self-healing using natural herbs and vegetarian diet, and others. Like the Golden Lotus, Lifestream was a conduit for change at the right time and place. School teachers brought entire classes to see how wholesome foods were made. Lifestream became so busy that it was often difficult to wade through the crowds of shoppers and hangers-on. We had a revolution on our hands! On impulse, I gave half the business to a friend who became a working partner. Sales doubled every year for seven years, and the business quickly branched out into wholesale distribution. Another joined, and we three became equal shareholders.

A separate small vegetarian restaurant in the rear of the large store was started by a gifted pianist and carpenter who built and slept in a coffin, *'To remind me that I have to leave the body!'* He convinced us to buy his no-profit, no-loss cafe. Ratana ran it as a tight little ship, and that's when I began to discover how astute she was. Her cafe which did only 15% of the big store's volume, soon outperformed it in terms of profits, underscoring the Japanese proverb: *'Grow a small garden well.'*

The natural foods revolution was a significant part of an emerging societal paradigm specific to the Americas and Europe. The post-war generation wanted and demanded better quality and more wholesome alternatives to mass-produced supermarket choices. People were getting sick and diseased in record numbers—not by starvation, but by over-consumption of meat, sugar, fat and other unhealthy foods. The time for change had come. But what was the power, or the hidden hand behind this new dynamic paradigm, which included a growing and widely spread belief in non-sectarian spirituality and global awareness? Some might posit that it was nothing less than the hidden workings of a higher power. Enterprises that the movement spawned were material, not spiritual; they were there to grow, provide livelihood and service. And, make a profit or perish.

Quite apart, was and is non-commercial charity, service to society and spirituality. In keeping with the ancient traditions of Sant Mat (unlike monastic orders and sects), not only did the Masters live off their own earnings or pensions, but no one in the

Moth & the Flame - New-Age Entrepreneurship

organization was paid for their volunteering either, regardless of position. The teachings, meetings, literature and initiations are always free. In the case of donations, they are unsolicited and only accepted from initiates. This sets the spiritual science in an unassailable position.

Within the Hippie movement, which was in full swing in the 70's, were many spiritual seekers. In Vancouver, large numbers of young people came to our free programs at the YWCA—sometimes as many as 150. The community was strong but undisciplined; many had problems staying drug-free, some had ethical issues. The Master had been very clear about my responsibility not to meddle and judge, but to exercise both detachment and compassion when others slipped or deviated, or when their negativity was directed at me, or to anyone in a position of authority. It was a difficult line to walk. There were, however, great rewards whenever someone was raised up and their life transformed, which happened with ever-increasing frequency.

The Master made it crystal clear that he wished his students to be part of, and to meaningfully contribute to society; not to change their outer religion; not to abandon families or society; to complete a good education and work diligently; to be ethical, honest and kind; to maintain loving relations with one's parents and neighbors—while enjoying the benefits of meditation on the inner Light and Sound. The Masters never interfere with anyone's freedom to choose. They never say that theirs is the only way, or that they are the only way.

Bauji passes—from critic to devotee to freedom: In 1971, Ratana and one-year-old Shanti visited India. Bauji—her father had become terminally ill with tuberculosis and was slipping fast. Prior to our wedding, he had vehemently opposed the Master and, coming from a staunch orthodox Hindu background, even stamped on his picture. With time the hostility gradually softened and his vision expanded. Bauji had five daughters and desperately wanted a son to carry on his name, but every time a male child was born it would die within a few days. His prayers to the gods and goddesses were in vain. One night he had a beautiful dream in which Master Kirpal appeared and presented him a basket of fruit. His wife then conceived and a son was born. From that moment on, Bauji began to have faith. On his last day, family members gathered close around and he humbly asked for forgiveness. He then shared, 'For some time I have been thinking of going to Delhi to take Naam from Maharaj Ji, but now that is not possible. Hazur and Maharaj Ji have appeared within; they have come for me. They tell me I must go with them.' Bauji paused, blessing his family with his eyes, and repeated aloud his favorite name of God, 'Ram, R..a..m, R..a..a..m..m,' and was gone.

At the moment of Ratana's personal grief, her tearful presence manifested in far-away Vancouver while I was driving to work. Even her sobs were audible in the car. Heart-strings play in unison

1. By 2023, only a tiny handful of the multitude of the early organic food pioneering companies remained independent. All others had either been bought out by large multinationals or folded (thankfully, we remained independent). Organic farming and products steadily and inevitably progressed from fringe to mainstream. From a few thousand acres farmed organically in North and South America in the sixties, by 2022, millions of acres converted to regenerative organic agriculture, employing millions globally. The move to regenerative organic farming, ecologically and socially-responsible enterprise and government is critical for the health of not only humanity and biodiversity, but the very future of the planet.

45 Glimpses from the '72 tour

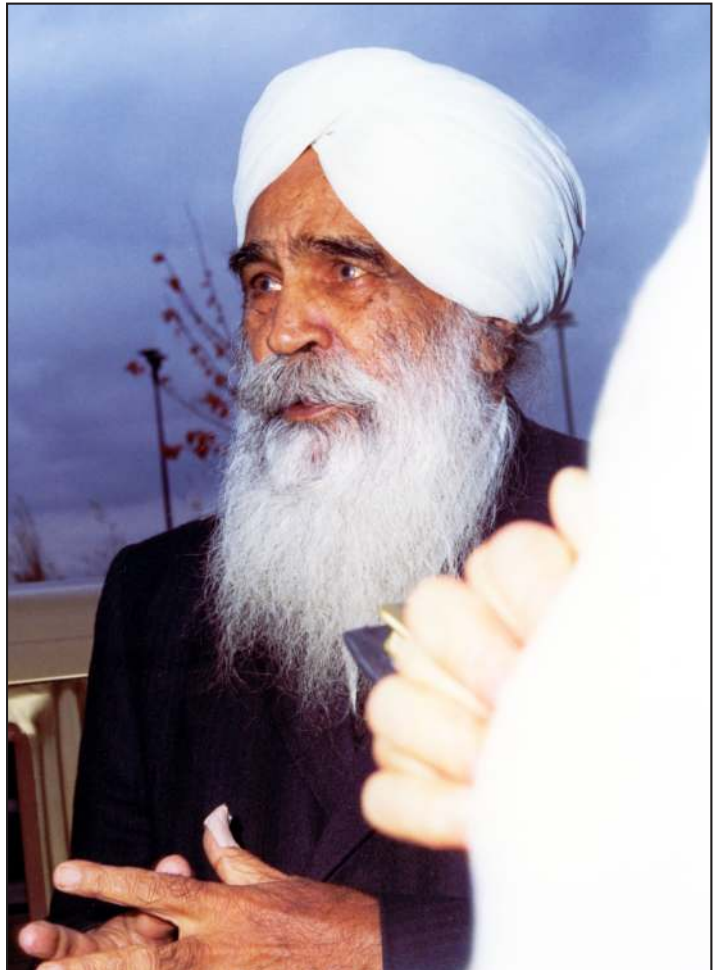
In 1972, Sant Kirpal Singh blessed Vancouver on his third world tour—which included Europe, North America, Mexico, and South America. Before arriving in Vancouver, Ratana and I witnessed his historic tour stops at Harvard Divinity School in Boston, Sant Bani Ashram in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Montreal, but as the tour was well documented by others, my account focuses on otherwise uncovered highlights.

The True Language: Quebec was undergoing strife over French/English language issues. Addressing a large Montreal audience, Kirpal Singh said,

I am glad you have love for your France and your French language. I beseech you to have love for your Home, the language of which is love. God is love. Love is innate in our soul, because we are of the same essence as that of God. And the way back to God is also through love...So speak in love, think of love, let all your affairs be saturated with love...No language is sacred, no language is not sacred. All are sacred in which you speak of love.

Back in the lobby, outside the elevator, Master stopped to talk to several visitors, his back to me. On the shoulder of his black coat I espied a loose hair, a beautiful long white beard hair with seven perfectly formed curves. My only thought was to snatch it without being seen. I waited and waited, heart pounding, excited, fearful. Would he notice? Would I get caught? Suddenly my hand shot up and plucked its' treasure! This time, I was greatly relieved not to be caught. I recalled the Master once saying that someone kept a hair from the beard of the Prophet Mohammed in a jeweled casket, commenting that it was revered because that hair came from a man who had known God.

Vancouver Arrival: Hundreds jammed the airport, waiting to catch a glimpse of the Param Sant. In their wisdom, Canada Customs officials held up the Master for over an hour, despite his physical age and impeccable international credentials. When his white turban was finally spied moving through the crowded terminal, word spread like wildfire. There was jubilation and weeping. When the authorities and other passengers asked and were told that a great spiritual Master was arriving, all clustered around, wanting to have a glimpse, adding to the congestion. When he passed through the glass doors, his



Moth & the Flame - Glimpses from the '72 tour

hands were joined together and his brilliant eyes swept the crowd. The airport suddenly became silent, holy as a cathedral, and supercharged. The crowd swept out into the street, as people clustered around an awaiting car.

At the hotel suite, a Mr. Hill, reporting for The Vancouver Sun newspaper conducted an extensive interview, and as it progressed the reporter became so uplifted in the Master's presence he forgot himself, and after a while gave up writing altogether (the recorded interview was



Arrival at Vancouver International Airport

never published). Others who had packed the room were thrilled to hear his illuminating responses to a wide variety of questions or just to sit and watch. My mother who was present was reduced to tears. At one point I asked, 'Mum, can you follow Master's answers?' With eyes overflowing, she just smiled at me and cried some more, following on a level more sublime than words. Dad, on the other hand, was very fidgety. At the conclusion of the interview, both parents stood to leave. As the Master passed by, mum grasped his hands and held them for a while, thanking him for all he had done for her son. 'That's alright. God bless you. God bless you,' he replied, looking into both parent's eyes. When she released her grip, he turned and went to the kitchen.

I felt a twinge of regret that their meeting had been so brief. As they moved out the door, Harcharan ran from the kitchen, saying, 'Master sends this to your dear mother and father as parshad!' It was a gift of an apple and an orange. That evening on the ferry back to Victoria, Dad, an apple connoisseur, carefully peeled his fruit and slowly ate it, slice by slice. He commented, 'You know, that was the best apple I have ever eaten in my life.' He was thoughtful for a long time and said, 'It must have been because the Master blessed it.'

Vancouver Sun interview with Sant Kirpal Singh Ji (lightly edited for brevity):

Q: In 1948 in Rishikesh, some of your disciples claimed to have seen you avoid a flood by walking across the water. Is this true?"

KS. Not on the water, but ankle deep. A flood was coming of five or six feet in depth, and that subsided.

Q: Your ankles were immersed?

KS: Yes.

Q: But the water was five or six feet deep?

KS: The government ordered all those on the riverbanks to clear off because a flood

Moth & the Flame - Glimpses from the '72 tour

was coming. I was sitting (in meditation) on one large rock in the middle of the river, but that flood never reached me. When I passed over it, the water only came up to my ankles.

Comment from Mr. Khanna: '...everyone was pleased to see the grace of the Master.'

KS: The grace of God! (Chuckling).

Q: How much have you enjoyed your World Tour so far?

KS: I am ordered by inspiration from God, under the orders of my Guru.

Q: It has been said that you do not practice miracles, because?

KS: I do not advocate miracles.

Q: Why?

KS: Why? Miracles are according to the laws of Nature, as yet hidden to us. Those who are firm in their love of God, naturally so many [miracles] come up of themselves, without their wishing for it. As Christ has said, 'Thy faith hast cured thee.' To exert as spiritual healers do, that I don't advocate, because in that case, they have to exert and afterwards find themselves spiritually depleted. Then they have to restore the lost power. I advocate a higher form of healing; those who take the name of God or the God-in-man may be healed spontaneously by the mere touch of the hem of their garment, as in the case of Jesus and other Masters. Then be healed. I advocate such a healing, which comes of itself by faith.

Q: Now I'm sorry, I'm a slow writer.

KS: Take your time, take your time. I am a man like you. Go on with me as a man to man.

Q: Are you God?

KS: I am not God; God is in me. I tell you, the sun is the sun. If one ray of the sun enlightens the world, do you mean a ray can be the sun?

Q: I see now.

KS: (Chuckling) So God is God. Even the Masters who came always declared, 'We are the messengers of God, sent by Him into this world to revive the realization of God already existing.' They manifest Him. Do you understand? God resides in every heart! Masters who have realized themselves and realized God give a demonstration to others of how to withdraw their attention from outside and come in contact with the God-Power within them. They open their inner eye to see the Light of God...

Q: Can everybody become a Master?

KS: True Mastership is a selection from God. There is no voting in the court of God. Presidents are elected by votes. You see? This is a selection from God.

Q: (Joking) Is there a senate way up there, somewhere, voting?

KS: God alone! God is all alone. The Masters have said that He is the Lord of all and everything. How can the Masters be God? The sun is the sun; and the ray of the sun cannot be the sun. But the ray is no other than the sun, too.

Q: Do you watch television?

KS: Sometimes I see it, but I have little spare time. Television is inside, of course. Outside is just a scientific invention.

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Q: What do you mean when you say 'Television is inside?'

KS: When your inner eye is open you can see the inner Light and higher planes of creation. 'If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of Light.' Is the scripture not forthright? The Masters open the inner eye, single eye or the third eye to enable us to see the Light of God. So, the human body is the true temple of God in which He resides, and we as souls also reside there. Our attention, which is the outward expression of the soul, is identified with the world outside. Unless the attention is withdrawn from the outside, how can we see within? But this demonstration of how to withdraw the attention from outside, that is the work of those who have realized God. They give a demonstration of that process. Those initiated see within and testify that it is so.

Q: Did you fight in a war?

KS: I was detailed to the firing line as an accounts officer for about five months, in 1921. (Kirpal Singh was involved in payroll and requisitions, in a non-combatant role).

Q: Are you pleased with the recent Vietnam near-settlement, or almost settlement?

KS: This is at the level of countries. If men rise above 'isms,' and kings and presidents rise above countries, then there will be peace. Each citizen has his or her own rights. Kings and presidents should make their own countries blooming, and then help others to bloom also. Wars and incidents come up as a reaction of past karma. Our wish is that there should be peace for the entire world.

Q: When you met (then British Columbia Premier) W.A.C. Bennett in 1963, what did you think of him personally? And did you see God in him?

KS: He was very polite. I met him. Radiation and love affects everybody.

Q: Did you think he radiated love?

KS: I radiated love! (Chuckle).

Q: What did you think of Vice President Johnson when you met him?

KS: When I met him, he agreed with me. We had a one-hour heart-to-heart talk. Kennedy and his brother wanted to meet me, but unfortunately, he could not. On my way to Vancouver, he was assassinated (November 23, 1963). Kennedy's friend, Russell McGuire (from Greenwich, Connecticut), was initiated. He passed away. I stayed with him in his residence for one day.

Q: Is there anything in particular that you want to say to the media?

KS: I have to say only one thing: God made man with equal privileges—all born the same way. Are not our bodies similar? Our outer and inner construction is the same. We have the physical body, intellect and Self, or soul, which is a conscious entity; a drop from the Ocean of All-consciousness. And as we have the soul in us, we are of the same essence as God. The One whom we worship is the God-power, the creator of all, permeating the entire creation. As man, as soul, and God, we are all One. Unity already exists—but we have forgotten.

Q: What do you think of art?

KS: Man should develop physically, intellectually, and spiritually. The difficulty is that people have advanced physically, artistically and intellectually, but know little or nothing about their own Self. We are spirit—conscious entities. We are soul. We have given food to the physical body; we have given food to the intellect, but what food have

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we given to our soul? The Water of Life and the Bread of Life within us is the food of the soul. That exists within us to enable us to come in contact with All-Consciousness, or God.

Q: What do you think of the creative aspect in man?

KS: God said, 'I am One and wish to be many,' and all the Universe came into being. The human form is the highest rung in Creation; all other bodies, including the angels and elements have been made subservient to man. And only while we are in this human body can we learn to know God, and in no other.

Q: Do you think that there is intelligent life living on other planets in the universe?

KS: Yes, personally I do think so, although scientists, in general, do not.

To serve humanity means serving God, too. Those whom you see, if you do not love them, how can you love God whom you have not seen? So, Masters come to open our single eye.

Kirpal Singh's first public talk was given in the Kitsilano High School auditorium, which proved insufficient to hold the more than one thousand who had come, including the mayor of Vancouver. The next day, the venue shifted to the larger Unity Church on Oak Street. Every seat was filled, and several hundred sat on the floor, in the aisles and up on the stage. There was no room to move, and fire regulations were ignored. I drove the Master to the church, and we were running late. 'Master's here!' someone shouted as he entered. Some whom I knew and many others, surged forward, just to be near, to touch the sleeve of his coat, to catch his eye. In this regard, there was no difference between East and West. Upon his entering the crowded hall, all rose spontaneously from their seats, returning his silent namaste. The silence was a stunning teaching in itself. He slowly glided through corridors of happy, wonder-stricken, tear-filled, and curious faces; eyes wordlessly searching eyes, greeting, smashing conceptions and misconceptions with every glance.

Five acres of boggy, forested land twenty-five miles from Vancouver were donated for the purposes of developing an ashram. The Master stated carefully: 'It is easy to start ashrams, but difficult to maintain them.' Although it had been raining for days, several hours before his visit to the site, the sun broke out and warmed the atmosphere. Once there, he put more than three hundred into meditation for about half an hour, and then, to everyone's delight, chucked apples to each person, laughing as they clamored for the blessed fruit.

During one of the question-and-answer sessions, a local representative of a popular meditation group stood and asked, 'Kirpal Singh, what do you think of and T..... Meditation?' There was a lot of attention, because maybe half the people here had already paid for and tried this technique. He replied, '..... is a very good psychologist, but not a Master of the inner way of spirituality. I would say that he has failed to demonstrate the experience of the Self and the Overself.'

After this two-hour session, the Master was about to enter the car. I held the door when he turned to Ratana: 'Aren't you going to invite me to your home?' We hadn't, due to his whirlwind schedule, but had been secretly wishing. Ratana quickly replied, 'It is your home, Maharaj Ji!' At his command, we detoured to our little two-bedroom house. Walking into the kitchen, he noticed his picture on the wall and asked, 'Does he eat?' Ratana replied, 'Yes, Maharaj Ji, He is the Giver.' He just chuckled. We sat before him

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upon the new Indian rug we had just bought, in the remote possibility of his visit. He was silent, savoring the atmosphere. After a few minutes, he commented, 'That home is beautiful wherein the love of God abides.'

Being a relatively new father, I asked, 'I was wondering how to best bring up children in the West.' He replied, 'Children are spoiled first in the home, in the schools, and then in the streets. If you want to control your children, see who their friends are. Don't let them run wild in the streets. As parents, set the best example in your own home. See to their friends.'

'Master, I was wondering about the LifeStream business, if we should try to limit its growth.'

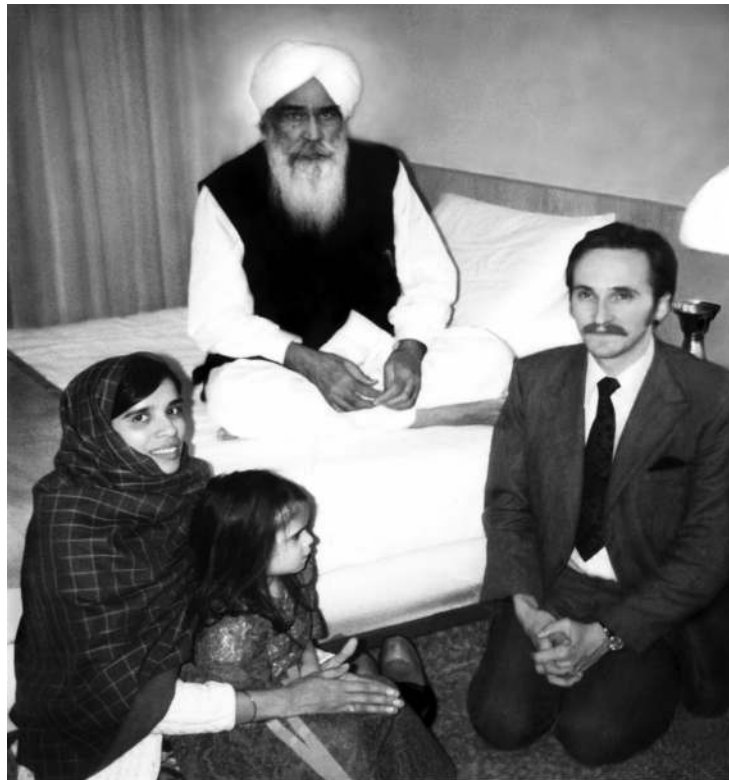
He drilled me with a puzzling glare, 'Why? It will provide more opportunities for more people.'

I asked, 'But what about the responsibilities? I feel the burden weighing heavily on me.' With a chuckle he replied, 'Then, distribute your responsibilities!' I felt that burden lift and thereafter never looked back, nor felt further guilt about building a successful business.

Commenting on my decision to remove turban and unshorn hair a year earlier, he said: 'When you adopt something out of love, don't change, please!' I had misinterpreted

his message in a circular called 'Receptivity' wherein he asked his followers not to change the society into which they were born. He clarified, 'That was not for you!' I felt so badly. He consoled me, 'What is done is done.' Then and there, I decided to regrow my hair and kept the turban for the next thirteen years.

Someone took a polaroid of our meeting. Master graciously signed and dated it, 11.11.72



72

Kirpal Singh 11/11

Initiation: On November 11, two hundred and twenty-two people assembled in the Unity

Church for initiation, the largest number at any stop on his North American tour. Master sat on the dais and seemed displeased. 'Weed out!' he said to me, but I didn't know what he meant, why, or how. Finally, he tapped the microphone and asked, 'Who here

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is the follower of another Master?' Some rustling took place in the audience. Finally a young woman stood and walked up to the dais. He asked her, 'Who is your Master?' She replied, 'Lama Kalu Rimpoche' (a renowned Tibetan Buddhist teacher).

'Why have you come?' 'To have your blessing.' The Master politely turned her away. Apparently there was some reason he would not initiate this soul. The second the big doors boomed shut at the back, initiation commenced.

Here was an ocean without shores.

A devout Quaker woman who had received a very good initiation experience, later approached me in the hotel hallway: 'Will you please tell Kirpal Singh that I would like him to take back the initiation. I feel that it may be in conflict with my concept of the Christian faith.' I listened incredulously, but before I had a chance to respond, the Master emerged from his room down the hall! I gingerly conveyed to him her message. He looked at me with a mixture of great authority and compassion.

'You tell her,' he said, 'that the Christ Power, God Power, or Master Power has taken possession of her life and will never leave her! She may leave the Master but Master will never leave her.'

From Death to Life: *Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage.*

I first met John Wannop within the walls of Matsqui Minimum Security Prison in early 1970. At his request and with the permission of Reverend Cropp, the prison chaplain, I spoke to about forty prisoners about attaining inner freedom through meditation and the Path of the Masters. There was great interest. The next time John and I met was during the Master's visit in 1972. John tells his story best:

On an April day in 1959 a man stood before a judge in a courtroom after being found guilty of murder, and heard this sentence: 'You shall be taken from here to the Okalla Prison and there you shall wait until the 23rd of July, and then you shall be taken to a place of execution where you shall be hung by the neck until you are dead--and may God have mercy on your soul.'

With this sentence passed, the Judge ran from the courtroom with his wife following close behind. I was the man who stood before the Judge, and with the sentence began the awakening of knowledge and life.

I was taken to Okalla and put into the Death Cell to await the end. While there I began to think about many things, of my life and what my death would be. I was looking for something to die for even at this late stage--and couldn't find a thing--not even with the help of the priest... I had gotten hold of a booklet called Yoga Life and came into contact with Dr. Ananda... He visited me and loaned me the Gita and some other books to read. In the process I had copied the symbol 'OM' and placed it on the wall of my cell.

One day, while I was sitting and thinking about what was said to Arjuna by Krishna in the Gita, that 'if a man has Me in his thoughts when his material body dies, then he will come to Me,' a wonderful thing happened. The 'OM' symbol began to grow and glow in the brightest yellow color, and with it was a hum (like an A-flat on the musical scale). These things continued until I was bathed in a golden radiance and heard a Sound that transcended anything that I knew or felt before. It permeated me and engulfed my senses and I felt a total peace that was beyond understanding. While in this state I met an entity/man who told me not to worry, for everything was going to work out and I would have something to live and die for. This was a month before I was to be hung.

The day after this experience Dr. Ananda came to see me and I told him about it.

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Finally, he told me that he could no longer help any further and that I should write to Kirpal Singh in India for he alone could help me. I wrote to the Master one week before I was to be hung, and three days later I was told that my death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

I heard from Master in August. The letter told me of a path I could follow and be wholly in tune with life. I was sent a book—the Jap Ji of Guru Nanak (translated by Kirpal Singh)--which I read like a drowning man clutching a piece of wood. The first sentence that hit me was, 'God made man and man made religions.'

I was transferred to Stony Mountain Penitentiary in Manitoba in February 1960 and there settled down to do the major portion of my time... William Rattray came [from Ontario] to see me in 1961, and conveyed Initiation to me on behalf of the Master and though I did not have the Golden Sun experience again, it was an experience I would not soon forget.

Things began to happen--little things like the custodial staff trusting me; other inmates coming for advice and understanding of their problems; some members of staff using me as a liaison, an unofficial Inmate Committee member to make sure events such as Sports Day, concerts and special programs ran smoothly. I was given the Radio Room job to run the radios of the institution, and this gave me an open cell so that I could get to other inmates who had troubles of any sort. This continued for the balance of the ten years I served before applying for parole. But parole was denied.

In 1970 I was transferred to the Matsqui Minimum Security Institution in B.C. Here I came in contact with Arran and the Vancouver Satsang group and was now able to attend on an infrequent basis. I came up for parole again in 1971 and again was deferred for two years. I have deep regret for some of my actions, and a deep respect for the results of those actions; I have tasted both sides of the pill of life. The culmination of this tasting came for me in November 1972 when the Master came to Vancouver.

On Friday night I was at the Unity Center in Vancouver and finally saw the Master in person. Meeting some of the many [correspondence] friends I had made over the years, at the same time, brought together all the years of waiting. After the talk, I went to the motel where Master was staying and awaited the arrival of Ted Cropp (the prison chaplain). I was given the honor of seeing the Master in his bedroom. Ted and I were brought in and sat on the floor in front of the Master. All of the questions that I had wanted to ask him for the last thirteen years were answered by my just being able to sit at his feet and gaze into his wondrous eyes... I went to the other talks and each time I saw the Master I was lifted further into the state of total immersion. I did not realize how total it was until the Sunday he was to leave.

The Master's departure from the airport on the 12th November left no dry eyes. Many would never see their Master again in this lifetime.

A well-heeled stranger approached the Master sitting before the crowd and asked, 'Why are these people crying?' Master looked deep into her eyes and answered, '**Love.**' And she burst into tears.

Farewell - Vancouver Airport, November 1972



And the Enlightened Shall Reign:

After Sant Kirpal Singh left Vancouver, he spread his message and grace to thousands in California, Texas, and Florida. When in Dallas, I invited my Texan friend Frank Ford

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to meet him. Frank was a large-scale organic farmer, and as the founder of Arrowhead Mills, was a true pioneer of the organic food movement; he was also a staunch born-again Christian. After the public discourse, Frank and I found ourselves alone with the Master in his hotel suite. 'So glad to meet you!' Master thrust forward his hand in Western greeting. By way of introduction, I mentioned that Frank had run for Texas Senator against the former American President, Lyndon Johnson, but, disillusioned with politics, Frank turned to farming in harmony with nature, commenting, 'Politics is like a dog chasing his own tail.' Kirpal Singh focused full interest on Frank and stated, ***'To grow a blade of grass is more than a patriot's work!'***

We moved to the bedroom, where the Master sat cross-legged on the bed while Frank and I sat nearby on chairs.

Frank then leaned forward and sincerely asked in his Texan way: 'Kirpal Singh, sir, I certainly recognize and appreciate the great spiritual work you are doing which is helping so many people throughout the world. Sir, I was wondering; do you consider that the great work which you are doing, and the work which I and others are doing, witnessing for Christ and healing the land with natural farming, will help to bring about the New Age?... a rebirth of Man's consciousness to a more spiritual life?'

Master pushed back his turban a little and stroked his long white beard. A few moments of pregnant silence followed; the atmosphere around and flowing out of him was practically dancing with Light.

'I tell you,' he said, 'the day will come when the Khalsa, not necessarily those who have the outer form of Khalsa, but those in whom the Light of God is fully effulgent, shall reign over the world!'¹

I didn't quite catch or believe what I heard, so I asked, 'Master, they shall what over the world?' He spelled it out so there could be no room for equivocation: ***'R.E.I.G.N. Reign over the world!'***

1. The origin of the idea of the Khalsa has been dealt with in chapter 21, 'The Ancient Legacy.' Khalsa literally translates as 'pure, effulgent, without stain or blemish.'

46 Third Pilgrimage

February 1, 1973: In the midst of labor pangs, Ratana's mind turns inward with great focus, and she once again beholds the Master's radiant vision. While calling on God's Name, she gives birth to our second daughter, the bright-eyed baby, whom Master named Gurdeep [Lamp of the Lord]. In October, we four pilgrimaged to India.

While meditating on the plane for some time, then looking out the window upon worldly stars, a poem of sorts comes while winging the distance between continents:

*I behold a myriad glittering stars;
deliver me from their beauty, O Maker,
take me to the strength of suns.*

Diary, October 18: I arrive by train at Pathankot in northern Punjab, most eager to see our beloved Father again (Ratana, Shanti and baby Gurdeep stay with family in Delhi for now). The picturesque Pathankot ashram sits by the side of the Ravi River, surrounded by wooded foothills beyond which are the mountains of Kashmir. I proceed straight to a freshly white-washed columned building. Under its porch sits the Master, a large retinue of Indians and Westerners at his feet. I pray for inner receptivity. A few minutes after greeting I settle amongst the crowd. Any open seams between the present and our last meeting are soon sealed.

Master is jolly; questions are invited and I ask, 'Is there an ebb and flow to Grace?' Silence. His attention is bearing on me. As he continues to look without answering, I continue, 'Spring, summer, autumn, or winter? Sometimes grace overflows, and at other times it's difficult to become receptive to even a tiny drop.'

He replies indirectly, 'The physical presence of the Master has some effect... the radiation is very strong there. Others at a distance can have the same benefit when they develop receptivity. Even those who are not very receptive, can become so. If stones are put near water, they become cold, you see.'

Increasingly intoxicated by his proximity, I ask, 'How can stones become the water?'

His eyes understand my madness and its cause. He replies, twinkling, 'Yes... slowly they are worn down.' Long pause. Suddenly he asks, '**Why become a stone?**' The Master-power engulfs me.

Mind, in the Now, is incapable of questioning further.

For the next two days, the tour proceeds southwestward from Pathankot through many towns and farming villages of this northern region of Punjab. At every stop, the Master faces throngs of keen seekers. The demands on him are enormous. In one place, not wanting to be separated, I literally walk in his footsteps as large crowds swarm in. Suddenly turning to me, I almost bump into him.

He looks me in the eye and finishes the answer to my question of the 18th: '**Grace is always there, but sometimes it gushes forth!**' Once again I'm awestruck by his timing and prescience.

During a discourse in Dasua, a farming town, just two lines from his comprehensive two-hour discourse sink deep:

Moth & The Flame - Third Pilgrimage

As a child has come out of the mother, so our individual soul was born out of God, Who is love. If the love of God becomes the ruling passion of our life, then that will affect the heart of God.

A dilemma: The next morning, Master is racked with a terrible cough. While coughing, he puts everyone into meditation, and asks us to sit without moving. He continues to clear his throat near the microphone as he sits before the silent congregation. I have a bottle of homeopathic cough remedy in my pocket and while sitting with closed eyes, I struggle between the compassionate urge to offer it, and the desire to follow instructions to the letter to meditate and not move a muscle. It is a quandary. After some indecision, I get up and hand Master the medicine. To my surprise he shakes out a handful of the tiny pills and swallows them, thanks me and returns the half-full bottle as parshad. His coughing stops. When I return to an abbreviated meditation, inner grace is sudden and profound. It was the right action, after all.

The Bulb, or the Light? Later in the day, an American asks, 'You have said that when we meditate, we are not supposed to concentrate on your physical form. Is that right? We're supposed to concentrate on the Light?'

'When you see the bulb (pointing to an electric light) from which light is coming, do you see light or the glass over it? What attracts you? Light, I think. Not the glass.'

*To the illumined mind
the whole world burns
and sparkles with Light.*

- Emerson

Going Jolly: As several disciples were departing with tears in their eyes, not wanting to leave, the Master told them, 'I wish you all to **Go Jolly**. Let your face shine. Bright eyes, hopeful face. No brooding, no wrinkles in your forehead. Learn to smile. Joy, you see. It is just giving the oil to the machine. When you get something, be thankful for what you've got. Go on further.'

47 Manav Kendra & Beyond

Kendra Diary, 1973: With a large contingent of visitors from many countries, my family and I travel all day by bus over the bumpy and chaotic 150 km road from Delhi. We arrive after nightfall in the Shivalik hills, a few miles south of Rajpur. In the chill morning, I sit on a treed knoll overlooking Manav Kendra. Lush flower gardens, mango trees and terraces frame a perfect oval pool, 350 feet long by 200 feet wide—the Mansarovar. Like some beautiful turquoise eye opening to another world, the Mansarovar reflects pure blue sky overhead—an invitation to contemplation. This pond replicates the shape of the inner Mansarovar of the third grand spiritual region, where soul is distilled from mind and matter.

The Master's wide, columned, white residence is set back from the pool, approached by low terraces and a broad stairway. Several huge, lush trees, recipients of his protection, pass through the house which has been built around them. To the left stands a four-story water-tower; to the right, a free hospital and dispensary; behind that, a school for poor children; next to it a home for the aged and indigent; the langar and visitor's residence. Here and there are neatly tended vegetable and flower gardens, a fruit-tree nursery, inter-religious library, cows, grain fields, nightingales, wild parrots, sparrows, cicadas—clean, orderly, spacious, harmonious. In the distance float the blue Himalyan foothills, foot-steps of the gods.

This land was acquired four years earlier when it was nothing but arid bush and a few trees. At the time Manav Kendra was being constructed all the experts were searching for a spring to supply water for the project. The Dehra Dun valley is often faced with a shortage of water, and after much research it came to the Master's notice that the engineers were unable to locate any spring. Then Master got up and requested the engineers to try digging at a certain spot. This spot is believed to be the one in which Guru Gobind Singh's horse became stuck three hundred years ago, as he was passing through. Upon digging, water was found and it seemed to hold great potential for a powerful source. The drilling machines were set, and digging began. However, the spring was not supplying enough water. The work continued but all efforts to draw the water out with the intensity needed seemed of no avail. Again it was brought to the Master's notice that they were not succeeding. Master came to the spot where the digging was going on and asked everyone to sit in meditation for half an hour. Then the engineers once more attempted to draw the water out. The water came up, but still it was not strong enough. When everyone was at the point of giving up, the Master took out one cupful of water and drank it. To the relief of all, the water then started to gush from the spring with great force. The supply was enough to not only fill the Mansarovar and meet the needs of the Kendra, but also to help the surrounding area whenever it was faced with shortages.¹

The Mansarovar's waters are calm, mirroring the white stone rim, shrubbery and flowers, palm, neem, cyrpress and banyan trees, mountains, and surrounding graceful buildings. When mind becomes as clear and still, unrippled by thought-pebbles and wind, it reflects the Self, clear and bright.

Guru Gobind Singh Tree: On the Kendra stands a magnificent ancient tree. From its massive trunk emerge five different varieties of trees. Three hundred years ago, the Tenth Guru tied his horse to this very tree and camped under its branches. He prophesied that

one day a great Saint would establish a spiritual community at this very spot.

Manav Kendra was built with tremendous effort and selfless service. The Master guided the work day and night, as thousands toiled to bring the noble project to fruition with little assistance of heavy machinery. He told the visiting Dr. Giri, then President of India, 'God is my banker, and I'm spending like anything!'

November 17: Master's health has been very poor of late. His body is undergoing pains in the back and legs. Many of us have come to the understanding that he is vicariously working off our karmic debts. His suffering mysteriously disappears, or lessens enough that it does not interfere whenever he is called upon to conduct satsang or provide succor to the endless stream of humanity at his door. If he does feel it, he doesn't show it to others. After informal satsang tonight, I sit alone under the Gobind Tree, praying to the Master-power to allow me the privilege of sharing, and thus lessening his pain. As if in answer, shooting, fiery pains develop in my back and legs. The suffering becomes unbearable! After several hours, I gaspingly beg the Inner Power to take it back, and it is graciously, and instantaneously lifted. Ordinary humans are incapable of shouldering—what to speak of understanding such a burden as his.

I stagger over to Master's residence, not knowing if the sevadars will bar my way or let me enter. At the door, Ganga Ram asks, 'Do you know massage?' I reply, 'A little,' and he smiles and gently pushes me into Master's bedroom where he is working on correspondence. Despite bashfulness, I am impelled to stand behind him, and begin massaging his back and shoulders. I am struck by the sight of two small loose hairs and a fleck of lint on the lapel of his black coat, exactly as in a dream the night before. When I mention it Maharaj Ji comments, 'It is better to massage the Master in dream.' As I continue massaging his shoulders, a note of tragedy is struck when he comments, '**It is time to exchange these limbs for new ones.**'

I involuntarily exclaim, 'No! Master!' Heart is writhing.

Tai Ji, on hearing me, looks up and asks in Punjabi 'Ki gal hai, Maharaj Ji?' ['What's the matter?'] He translates what he just said to me. Tai Ji begins to remonstrate vociferously, 'Maharaj Ji, you cannot go! You mustn't talk like that! Who will look after us? You mustn't go!' He keeps silent. He is preparing us.

In the morning, we learn that the raging war between Israel and her neighbors is over. The likelihood of the world becoming incinerated by nuclear holocaust by competing world powers over the state of Israel has been frighteningly real, and the Master has been monitoring it daily. This morning, his countenance is the picture of health and joviality, in sharp contrast to the night before. With a sigh of relief he says, 'Thank God it is over.' He would never take credit for such an intervention.

Massage and medicine seem to afford his body some relief, but it is the opinion of the writer and others that he accepts treatment not for himself, but for blessing the ministrants. By shifting attention, Masters can turn pain off and on at will, but some payment is exacted, exchange for the tremendous burdens of their followers that they willingly shoulder. These are the karmas of the initiates and of others, for the Masters sometimes compassionately intervene to prevent humanity from destroying itself, if not the planet. The Power which sustains and keeps the world intact, also works through the Saints to bring about necessary change. That is why it is acceptable to pray to God in the form of a Godman, and why such prayers bear abundant fruit. When Dr. Johnson once asked Baba Sawan Singh if it was acceptable for a disciple to pray to his Master,

he replied, 'Prayer is the very life of a disciple.'

Four year old Shanti boldly approaches the Master and demands parshad as though it is her right. He says 'How about phul (flower) parshad?' Flowers are brought and given, first to the girls, then everyone else. After shooing away the local sevadars, Master warns us not to give them any presents or tips. He emphasizes the need for selfless service, and that gifts will spoil the sevadars and their seva. He also alludes to Jesus having lived in India, lending substance to ancient legends and records existing in Kashmir and Ladakh. He says, "Jesus did not die on the cross."

Return to Delhi: As Master passes through the crowd, he turns to baby Gurdeep cradled in her mother's arms. He looks into her eyes and she looks into his, beaming and exulting as he pats her little brown cheek. In Hindi, he says, 'Asi purani yaar,' [We are old friends]. Then turning to the onlookers, he asks, 'Wouldn't you like to be like this?'



During the building of Manav Kendra

Diary, November 25, 1973: Question and answer session:

Q. 'Master, sometimes when sitting in bhajan I become so absorbed in the Abstract Sound, my body becomes numb and falls over, and I cannot move it for some time.'

M. 'You don't feel numbness when you are absorbed?'

Q. 'No. But the body just falls over and I can't move.'

M. 'That is but natural. When you come down, come slowly... The Power within will send you back. He's watching your progress...'

Again, he asks me, 'Do you want to die in India?' And he chuckles, his private joke between us.

Bombay Trip, December 10, 1973: One of the senior sevadars informs me that I am to accompany the Master in his car to Ajmeer, Bombay and Baroda to serve as masseur, whenever necessary. For the next twelve hours continuously I dwell on this seva in my mind as we make the long drive from Delhi. However, to my chagrin this duty is transferred to Master's simple servant, Hayat, with the words, 'Let Hayat. He knows better.' The Saint's holy body tosses in pain hidden from public view, but no complaint passes his lips. He does not rest, for day or night he is in the service of humanity; he is drawn hither and thither by its need. He knows best. Perhaps some distance is better between us. Despite the distance, inwardly he shows many wonderous things. Tonight, I have the most marvellous dream of Master looking deep into my soul, while His face resides above the Mansarovar pool, his beard partly immersed in the deep waters, yet it is dry. Behind, rise some indistinct golden buildings.



Tonight, in satsang at the home of Kartar Chand—Ajmeer-walle, so much spiritual Light emanates from the locus of the Master's form, washing over the sangat, I find its ecstasy almost unbearable. While sitting motionless in the gathering, soul flutters across the no-space between us, to dash against, and be enveloped by the emanating Flame. As Master's temporal form wears away with age, the divine in him becomes more palpably transparent and luminous.

December 24, 1973: Several South Africans are about to depart and are understandably sad. One asks, 'How can one Go Jolly naturally, Master?'

'When you become in tune with Nature. Go into the open air! How long will you continue to remain in the dark room of the body? Take heed that the Light within you be not darkened.'

Christmas Day: The Master, with his full white beard and rosy cheeks is just like Father Christmas. He asks us, 'How many candles do you think there are on the birthday cake of Lord Jesus Christ?' And answers himself: '**One Big Light!**'

January 22, 1974: Ratana and I have come for a private interview to ask Master's opinion on the advisability of adopting Rakesh, her eight-year old brother. We are brought to the upper story of his house. *Obeisance*. Father-Master touches our heads with his hands. I'm silently thankful to see his daughter, my wife glowing and growing. I become lost in the majesty which is his, and Ratana nudges to remind me why we came. I explain the loss of Rakesh's father, the family's situation and dim prospects.

He says, 'Why don't you adopt me?'

She says, 'You have already adopted us!'

He says, 'Adoption would be cumbersome.' We ask his advice about boarding schools,

but he is not in favor and suggests that if Ratana's sister Girish immigrated to Canada she could help the family twice as much. Then he says: 'If you think that because you have only two daughters and are going to adopt him because you have no son, that is not the way...*Don't worry!*' He smiles knowingly. Mutually, silently we wonder if he means what is passing through our collective mind.³

I ask what we can do to correct our child's behavior. He replied, 'It is because one of you is strict or gives an order and the other excuses her. She becomes spoiled.' He directs a sharp look at us. 'You know very well how to beget children, but not how to bring them up. If one disciplines the child, the other parent should cooperate and not contradict.'

Q. 'As a father, how much time should I give to the children, as my first duty is meditation?'

M. 'Until they learn to stand on their own legs. Until they are at least twenty years.' Master then warns that if our children become westernized too much, they won't listen and will do as they please. He therefore advises that they should maintain connections with India and her time-honored cultural, familial and spiritual traditions. We take leave, both awed by his hint about a future son.

Make out your will! (from my India Diaries, Sawan Ashram, February 1974):

Perhaps two hundred foreign guests are seated about the Master for a heart-to-heart discussion on meditation. The conversation picks up:

M. 'It is always better to make out a Will before you sit for Bhajan! [Bhajan: meditation on the inner Sound-Current]. The other day one man said that he was dragged up inside and his thought was of dying. I told him "Make a Will before you sit for Bhajan! After all, you have to leave the body someday." That power drags us up and out [from bodily awareness].'

Q. 'Someone asked me the meaning of the words, Bhanwar Gupha.'

M. 'That's the cave from where the Light is sprouting forth like a waterfall, shooting out. Sahansdal Kanwal, Trikuti, Daswan Dwar, Bhanwar Gupha and Sach Khand: Bhanwar Gupha is the Gate into the True Home of your Father. Bhanwar means Whirling Light, Gupha means cave; whirling cave of Sound and Light!'

The Master planted his bright, gleaming eyes upon me, encouraging me. With some trepidation, I added, 'One time, not long after my initiation, while attuning to the Sound-Current, I heard the plaintive melody of Flute. Prior to the Flute, the inner music of sarangi [Oriental violin] came with full force, filling my soul with rapture.'

M: 'Yes, yes!' (Master seemed very interested).

Q. 'And then appeared an infinitely huge whirling cave, from which the Flute was playing, reaching out and simultaneously drawing my tiny soul across great distance into its vortex; incredible, awesome, intoxicating!'

M: 'Yes. Make out your will!' (The Master's face was beaming, with soundless laughter. We were all caught up in the divine mirth).

48 Unity Of Man

*There is only one religion—the religion of Love.
There is only one dharma—the dharma of truth.*

*There is only one God—The Omnipresent,
The Omniscient, the Omnipotent.*

*There is only one language—
the language of the heart.*

—Kirpal Singh

The ashram committee members were crestfallen; they had been pressing for a grand celebration of the Master's eightieth birthday, but he would hear nothing of it. At their lowest moment, he turned the tables. If a conference were organized where the main focus was humanity, not religion or his birthday, only then would he consent.

Sant Kirpal Singh was the foremost 20th century pioneer of interfaith dialogue and peace work on a global scale. Several conferences had been convened in the past but as he explained, this congress would be all-inclusive. Thus the doors were flung open and invitations extended to all corners of the world. The ashram underwent a massive building program. More than a hundred new second and third-story rooms were rapidly constructed, and the banging, sawing, hammering, plumbing, electrical, brick-laying and painting went on twenty-four hours a day for several weeks. More than 350 guests arrived from twenty countries. Each room held as many beds as could be squeezed in, all of which were immediately occupied, even if plaster and mortar were still wet. All visitors were housed and fed at no charge. Thousands began arriving from all parts of India. Every available hall outside was rented and local disciples shared their homes with people they had never met before. The entire ashram perimeter was built up as stories were added to existing buildings.

It was sad to see half of the beautiful rose garden covered by new construction, but the fragrant blossoms sacrificed their existence for a greater cause, a teaching in itself.

Oh, how we Westerners love our privacy, order, and silence! It was hilarious to see preconceptions of serene ashram life blown! There were profound lessons amidst the chaos, especially for those sharing crowded rooms. In the large meditation hall, talks and meditation sittings were given for the foreign guests on one side of a thin, six-foot-high canvas screen, while on the other, a group of local carpenters busily constructed wooden beds, doors, and window frames for the unfinished rooms. Normally the work stopped during talks and sittings, but one day, as more beds were urgently needed, Master allowed the carpenters to continue while he put the crowd into meditation. The hall, being made of concrete and plaster, caused every sound to be amplified and echoed. The screen was certainly no muffler. Over the din, Master raised his voice, 'This is your examination!' He then left the hall to attend to other things. His wonderful dry sense of humor was at play. For the next two hours, the majority sat through the din. If one surrendered to the Divine working through these carpenters, each hammer-blow was a kind opener of inner vision, their laughter and joking a joyous wash.

When Master returned and tapped the mike, we opened our eyes. About seventy-five percent of the people remained sitting peacefully as he had left them. 'Leave off, please! Now, your examination is over! How many of you saw the radiant form of the Master?' A very large number of hands went up. 'How many talked to the inner Master?'

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About fifteen. 'How many of you saw bright Light?' Practically every hand went up.

This calls to mind an incident from the life of Sri Ramakrishna. A devotee used to spend his mornings



in meditation at Dakshineswar Temple. Every morning at ten, a loud whistle from the other side of the river would go off, causing him great irritation. After several weeks, the whistle drove him almost insane with anger. He went to Ramakrishna, and told him how bothered he was by the noise. Ramakrishna lovingly explained that the whistle was really a manifestation of the Divine. 'Meditate on the whistle; surrender to it.' When the devotee followed Ramakrishna's advice, he was quickly transported to a deep state of bliss.

Lisa, an Italian woman arrived who would leave her body quite frequently and effortlessly. All she had to do was look at the Master, and the life-currents would evacuate through the eye-center and her body would slowly become immobile. Sometimes her soul would be absorbed on the inner planes for hours.

Yogi Bhajan, the founder of the 3HO Society, arrived at the ashram with a large retinue of American Sikh converts. Yogi Ji was of gigantic stature, with a big black beard, flowing robes, jewelled rings, necklaces, and a commanding personality. Master Kirpal was also a big man, but Yogi Bhajan physically towered over him. When Master spoke of withdrawal of sensory currents versus yogic breath-control methods, Yogi asked to see an example. We all followed them to a little room where Lisa had been out of her body for several hours. I squeezed through the crowd and slipped past the guard into the room to see what was happening.



She lay in bed, with a blue shawl about her blissful face, looking like the Madonna. Yogi Ji tried to bring her back by vigorously rubbing her neck, but to no avail. He then asked one of his followers to rub her feet hard which he did for several minutes—everyone watching, but her soul remained in the higher planes. Master had a sweet smile and remained non-judgmental. Yogi Ji said, 'We'll be back to give her another treatment,' and I naughtily quipped, 'We're the ones who need the treatment, not her,'

and received a sharp look.

Two hours later, Lisa's soul returned of its own accord. She wandered over and stood outside the Master's gate. While looking at him for a few minutes, her body gently collapsed to the ground, as again soul winged into the Beyond.

After seeing so many sincere seekers about the Master from so many countries, religions and races, the Yogi remarked to me, 'You are your own Guru!' His comment did not mesh with my experience but I kept quiet. In a letter, I related the incident to the Master. He replied, "'You are your own Guru" is only a mistaken idea and does not conform to the original teachings of the Sikh Gurus. None can transcend body consciousness all by oneself, develop step by step spiritually, and ultimately reach Sach Khand, the True Home within, except through the grace of God conveyed through the instrumentality of a perfect living saint. Such a one is the chosen vehicle to give his life impulse to the sincere seekers, intuning them to the Mysteries of the Beyond. However, we have love for all and should remain on good terms with Yogi Bhajan and his followers.'

Baha'ullah: A young follower of Baha'ullah and the Baha'i Faith drops by the ashram and sits in the gathering before the Master. He asks, 'Sir, I heard that you're a Perfect Master, and I wanted to verify this for myself. Are you, or are you not, perfect?'

The Master replied, 'See here, my friend, I wish to speak to you man-to-man. Now, tell me what it is that you want for yourself?' The Master asked if he was meditating, whether he was seeing any Light inside, or if he had met Baha'ullah in meditation (Baha'ullah was the second prophet and pillar of the Baha'i Faith, which arose in Iran in the 19th & 20th Centuries). The young man spoke more in terms of his feelings and faith, rather than by his own experience. The Master said, 'I have great love for Baha'ullah, and since you love him also, I have great love for you...' Later on in the discussion, Master cuts to the chase, 'Baha'ullah was conversant with the inner way of Light and Sound...the followers have forgotten.'

Let the reader read this brief quote of Baha'ullah from his Hidden Words, and try to imagine what his condition was like, whether or not his inner practice was the same path of Light and Celestial Melody:

Myriad of mystic tongues find utterance in one speech,
and myriads of mysteries are revealed in a single melody;
yet, alas! there is no ear to hear, nor heart to understand...

What the past Saints and Masters have experienced, can also become our experience. Revelation is never sealed. Revelation requires rigorous inner practice, coupled with grace. There is always a living Master somewhere who holds the key, but in many ways it is more difficult and demanding to follow a Living Master than a Past Master no longer present to give specific guidance and disciplines necessary to achieve realization. There will always be questions that scripture cannot answer. And as to the young man's question, the Master in his humility never claimed to be a 'Perfect Master.'

Mind your own business: A few days later I flipped on the tape-recorder during a Q&A session. Susan Horatchek from Germany asked about her seeing Darshan Singh in her meditation, along with the Master, and why that was so, but he chose not to comment on it. Later in the session, I asked a loaded question: 'What will be the role of your ashrams in the future?', in a risky attempt to draw the Master into possibly revealing something about the future of the Mission after he was no longer among us. I had heard

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others ask him directly about succession, but he would tell them to mind their own business. Besides, it seemed an unworthy question while he was still with us.

He saw through my ruse and replied strongly: 'Mind your own business!' My heart sank. After pausing to let that sink in, he then continued in a barely audible voice: 'No king wants his son to be a minister, mind that. He wants his son to be a king like himself.'¹

The Conference: More than one hundred thousand responded to the call to participate in the World Conference on the Unity of Man, which was sponsored and funded by Sant Kirpal Singh's non-profit, non-denominational spiritual organization.

A huge throng more than a mile long, headed by the Master and religious leaders of various faiths, walked in peace through the old streets of Delhi from the Gandhi grounds to the Ramlila grounds, along a main thoroughfare. The spiritual leaders and participants bowed before the symbols of faith: the historic Church of St. Stephen, Fatehpuri Mosque, Gurdwara Sis Ganj, a large Hindu temple and a Jain temple.

Scores of luminaries, dignitaries, religious leaders, swamis, bishops, lamas, bhikkus, pundits, priests, yogis, and shaykhs addressed the throng from a huge platform for the better part of three days.² India's foremost political leaders, including Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, delivered insightful addresses that were surprisingly spiritual in nature.³ Darshan Singh Ji recited several of his Urdu verses, including these two, translated below:

All places of worship are symbols of the One Beloved.

*Bow your head when you see a temple,
and salute when you see a mosque.*

*When the flowers of the church, mosque and temple gather together,
Spring will blossom forth in Your garden O Lord.*



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The essence of Sant Kirpal Singh's conference message:

Truly speaking, unity already exists...We have forgotten this unity—the lesson has only to be revived...The challenging task before religious and spiritual leaders is to bring about a radical change in the ethical, educational and economic status of humanity. Economic uplift is essential, because a hungry man is an angry man, and to talk of God to him is a mockery.⁴

For devotees, the best part of the event occurred at four in the morning on the Master's 80th birthday. His friend, Pir Vilayat Khan of the International Sufi Order, spoke of this profound moment in history as an opportunity to ignite peace and divine unity. Swami Ved Vyasand dramatically intoned ancient Vedic hymns, and Yogi Bhajan gave a rousing speech. The three of them flanked the Master as bhajans from the past Masters were rendered in classical raga by Bibi Harbhajan Kaur—the Master's daughter-in-law, and by the Yogi's Sikh followers. I gathered together a group of about fifteen Westerners to sing Amazing Grace. These bhajans and songs awoke a unity of yearning, and opened the gates of receptivity. The last presenter before the Master was Darshan Singh Ji.

With the wave of a hand from the Beloved Cupbearer,
the tavern is humming with life and the cup is ever on the move...⁵

For those who understood the language, and here the Easterner was at a distinct advantage, each line brought forth sighs, clapping and exclamations of 'Wha Wha!' amongst the 100,000 beneath the tent. It was now 5 AM and the microphone was passed to the Master. He began with a humble verse from Baba Farid,

*Kala merey kapra, Kala mehnda veysh,
Ganahi pariya mai phera, Log kahey Darvesh.
Black is my cloth, black, my raiment;
Full of low qualities am I, yet the people address
Farid the sinful, as Darvesh...*⁶

He spoke from the heart, expressing his embarrassment at the praise of mortals, claiming that he was nothing, but for the grace of his Master Sawan. He then recounted in intimate detail his first meeting with Hazur in 1924, as though it had just happened yesterday. Kirpal's face was aglow, filled with a beauty indescribable. He added that just as a Commander sends forth his errand boy to do his work, he was nothing more. God sends the water of life; he was nothing more than a conduit.

In his nothingness, he was everything, and the spring of existence.

Dawn of the Golden Age: Later in the day, he spoke again to the vast throng in Hindi, with words of prophecy:

People say that we are in the Kali Yuga, the Iron Age of darkness, and that before we enter Sat Yuga or the Golden Age of spirituality, there will be pralaya or destruction and dissolution. But no, we are entering the Golden Age, and already I am seeing the rays of its dawning on the horizon... The Golden Age will not drop down from the heavens, but will be born in the human heart.

Over two thousand were initiated on the last day. We who were there shall not forget the spiritual power under the walled-off tent as the charged Names were given by this man of realization, then repeated over and over by the new, and what mysteries were revealed in the following hour of silence.



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1. Neither I nor anyone else in the room, to my knowledge, made the connection that the Master might possibly be referring to his own son, Darshan Singh, whose role in ashram affairs had been consistently prominent, but unobtrusive. While transcribing this particular tape in the eighties, I was struck by the dimensions of his veiled answer.
 2. Some of the many religious and spiritual leaders present were Catholic Archbishop Fernandos of Delhi, Pir Zamin Nizami (head of the Darga Sharif [shrine] of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia), Muni Shushil Kumar of the Jains, Nichidatsu Fuji (Buddhist leader from Japan), Pir Vilayat Khan (International Sufi Order), Rev. McWhirter (Anglican) of London, Lama Lobzang Bakula of Ladakh, Swami Ved Vyasanand of Rishikesh (leader of 50,000 sadhus), and Yogi Bhajan.
 3. Other political leaders of prominent stature who took part in the conference were Swaran Singh (Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs), G.S. Pathak (Vice President), Jagjivan Ram (Defense Minister), Gyani Zail Singh (future President of India), and Dr. Karan Singh, Ambassador to the United States.
 4. Portrait of Perfection: A Pictorial Biography of Kirpal Singh, Bowling Green, Virginia/Delhi, India: Sawan Kirpal Publications, 1981, p. 250, 256.
 5. Darshan Singh, Cry of the Soul: Mystic Poetry, (Bowling Green, VA: SK Publications, 1977, pp. 70.
 6. Darvesh is the Sufi equivalent of 'Saint of God.'

49 A Pair of Shoes

*Love burns the lover, but devotion
burns the one he is devoted to...*

Last minutes: We have been waiting awhile in his living room, anxious to say our good-byes, anxious not to say good-bye. The taxi waits, purring in the courtyard outside.

I take Tai Ji aside to another room, and ask, 'Would it be possible to have a pair of Maharaj Ji's old shoes?' She looks at me curiously and says, 'Ik mint,' [one minute] and leaves to speak privately with the Master. She comes back with a musty shoebox, bound with string and says, 'Here. Master say you have! You very lucky. I never throw away Master's old shoes.'

I thankfully accept, untie the knot and look inside the box to my treasure. There are the shoes, covered with mold and dust. I take my handkerchief and wipe them - size 9. Somehow I had thought his feet were much larger; he always seemed like a giant to us. Once the thick layer of dust is removed, the leather is amazingly shiny; the more I rub, the more they reflect like new. Heart sings, 'These shoes have been the altar of a myriad hearts.'

A terrible foreboding is growing within that we might never see the beloved Master again. He calls Ratana, Shanti, baby Gurdeep and me into his bedroom to gift us with meditation shawls, each shawl a different color, and parshad.

Leaving him has always been intensely difficult for me. At the physical level, separation is inevitable, though we may pray it not be so. And these last moments with the Merciful Lion are definitely the hardest ever. Heart is being wrenched and dragged. We turn to go, but I run back again and collapse on his feet, hugging them, wetting them with tears.

His hand is upon my shoulder, gently patting. 'Please,' he says, the last words he will ever speak to me in person, '**My heart is also not made of stone.**' His eyes glisten with tears. We walk backwards from his court, trying to cup and hold unbearable beauty within the heart forever.

This was our last meeting in the world, as we knew it.

Moth & the Flame - a Pair of Shoes

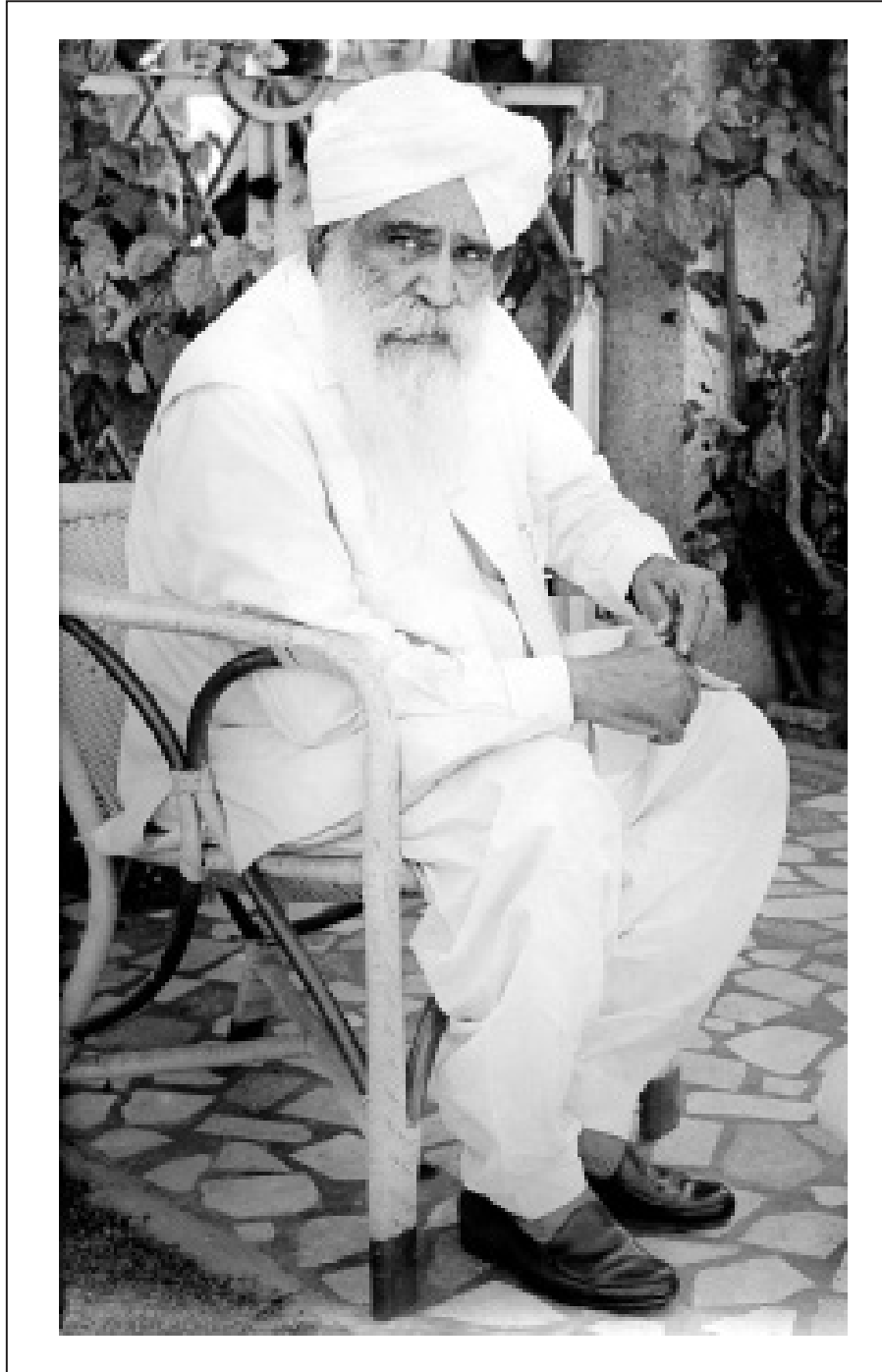


Photo by YS Rajput 2

- 1. There is a wonderful story of Nizam-u-din Aulia and his disciple Amir Khusrau; how the latter traded with a poor fellow-disciple all his vast worldly treasures for a mere tattered pair of their Master's shoes, and when Khusrau reached the Aulia's door, Nizam-u-din said, 'You have got a very good bargain!'*
- 2. The shoes in this photograph are the same he gave.*

Moth & the Flame
50 The Last Darshan

*'So, Springtime is upon us now. There will
be more fragrant Saints, I tell you...'*



The Last Satsang
August 15, 1974

Despite failing health,
Master never failed in his
loving duty to the sangat.

Following in the Master's
footsteps is his son,
Darshan Singh
(pale grey-blue turban)



The Last Darshan—A brief account of the last days of Sant Kirpal Singh before he consciously entered Mahasamadhi for eternity:

Master allowed nearly twenty Western disciples to be with him at the end... There were moments of such beauty, of such peace; they transcend the memory of his suffering. His humor at other moments was so subtle that any feeling of hopelessness that we might have felt never took hold. Yet there were moments also of terrible foreboding. On the evening of August 2, a disciple asked if she could see the Master privately after the darshan. He said, 'Yes, as long as there is breath...'

On August 6, he told us, 'When you look at the Master with devotion, you are repaid in kind. The realm of the Saints is that of all-forgiveness.' Then there was a spontaneous moment of lightness when Master suddenly leaned forward and thrust out his hand towards a German disciple who had expressed some doubts, 'Touch me,' He said, 'I'm a man like you.' The young man grabbed hold of the outstretched hand...

Master's last darshan talk was held on the roof-terrace just outside his bedroom on the evening of Saturday, August 17. The weather was hot and oppressive. Master was on a white bed, sometimes sitting, sometimes lying, sometimes almost unable to speak. There were long pauses. There were moments of radiant beauty...

He started by asking us gently if we had any questions; he looked at everyone, but no one wished to speak. After a long silence he then said pointedly, 'No questions anyone? No? Any doubts...?' After a while, he made this statement, 'These are selections by God. They send the fruit—certain people to administer certain things. They know when to come and when they are going back. They won't let you down, mind that.'

Michael, a young American asked, 'Master, why don't you heal yourself? You are all-powerful.' Master repeated, 'Why don't you heal yourself...?' Then a radiant smile appeared on his face and he asked so sweetly, 'Anyone whom you love, if he gives you something, would you refuse it? Tell me. What does he hope for you? He should gladly accept it...' ²

After answering the few last questions he drew out of those gathered around him, Master concluded this last session with his great commandment, 'Go jolly!'

On the last day, August 21, where Master had been moved to a local hospital, Tai Ji asked if Baba Sawan Singh had come; Master replied, 'When has He not been here?'

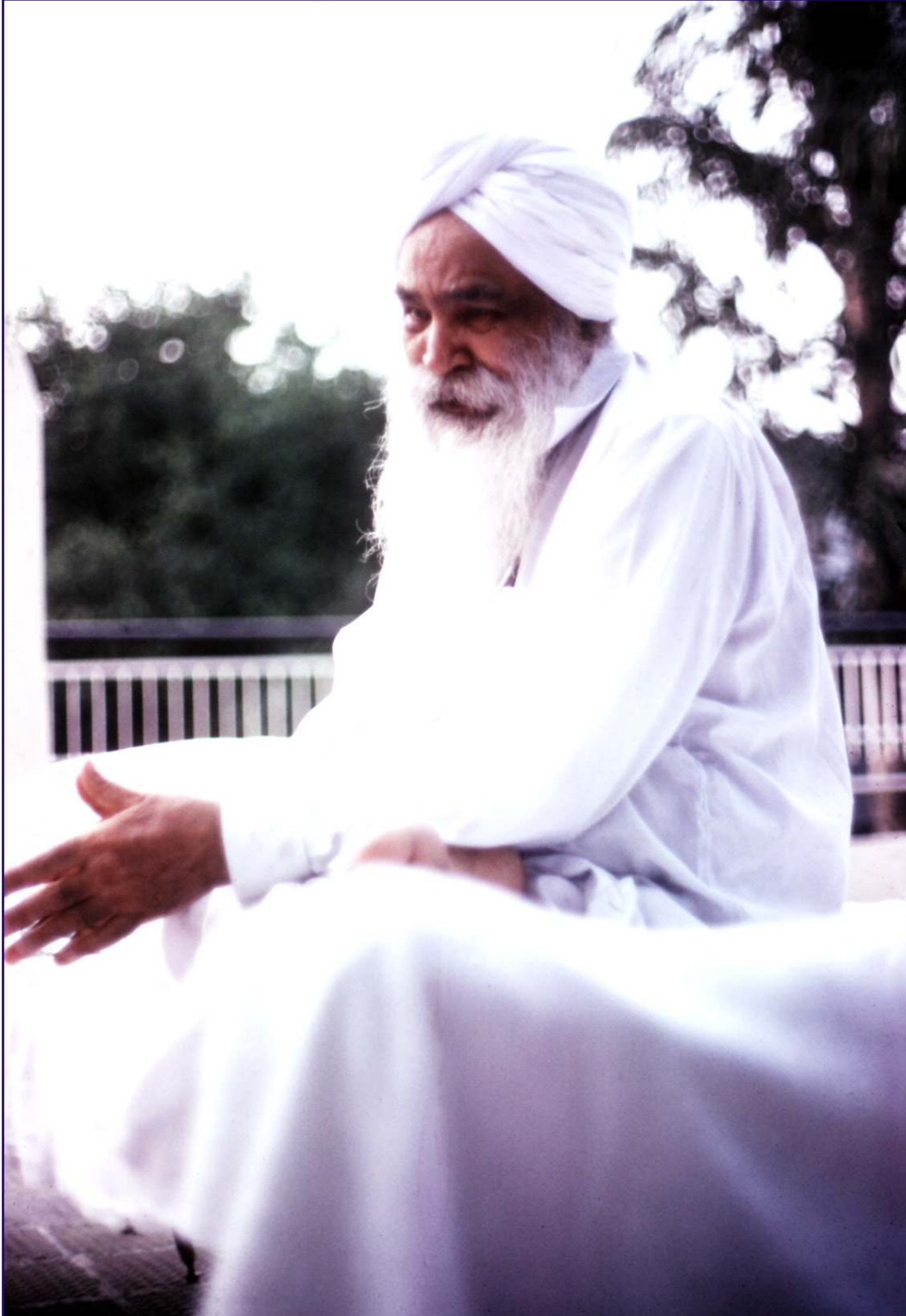
Just before he left, his eyes moved back and forth across the room as though in acknowledgement and greeting. Tai Ji again asked if Hazur had come, and Master replied, 'Everyone has come!'

His last known words, in response to a question about his welfare, were: 'Bahot achaa!' [Very good!]

1. From an informal talk by Kirpal Singh.

2. Department of Records, The Last Darshan, 1974, Sat Sandesh, Delhi, India

Moth & the Flame - The Last Darshan



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
Final Darshan for the Westerners
August 17, 1974, rooftop, Sawan Ashram
(photo by Loi Fager)

Moth & the Flame
51 The Sun Sets

*Harken to the sound of the flute, hear its tale of lamentation;
it cries, "Ever since they cut me from the reed bed,
My plaintive notes have moved men and women to tears.*

*I want a heart torn by separation,
that I may unfold to such a one the pain of love.
Everyone who is separated far from his Source,
wishes back the time when he was one with it.*

*My wailing is heard in every throng,
In concert with them that rejoice and them that weep.
Each interprets my notes in harmony with their feelings,
But not one fathoms the secrets of my heart.*

*Such secrets are not alien from my plaintive notes,
Yet they are not understood to the sensual eye and ear.
Body is not veiled from soul, neither soul from body,
Yet who has seen the soul?*

*This plaint of the flute is fire, not mere air.
Let him who lacks this fire be accounted dead!
The fire of love inspires the flute,
The ferment of love possesses the wine.
My flute is the confidant of all saddened lovers;
Yes, its strains lay bare my inmost secrets.*

*Who has seen a poison and an antidote like the flute?
Who has seen a sympathetic consoler like the flute?
The flute tells the tale of love's bloodstained path,
It recounts the story of Majnu's love toils.*

*None knows these feelings save one afflicted by love,
As ear inclines to the whispers of the tongue.
Through grief my days are as labor and sorrow,
My days move on, hand in hand with anguish.
Yet, though my days vanish thus, it matters little,
Do abide, O Incomparable Pure One!*

— Jalal U'din Rumi

August 21, 1974: I was busy unloading pans of bread from the large oven in our wholesale bakery when the phone call came. A quavering voice in my ear became the harbinger of the unthinkable: 'Master has left the body!' Beloved Mentor, Father, truest friend, and now...he was gone from this world. I sent everyone home, locked the doors and sank to my knees, orphaned; life cut at the root. Minutes passed. Then, a palpable, loving glow of grace began mingling with the pain. Kirpal, humanity's true and irreplaceable friend, was released, free forever from the trammels of his body, that

Moth & the Flame - The Sun Sets

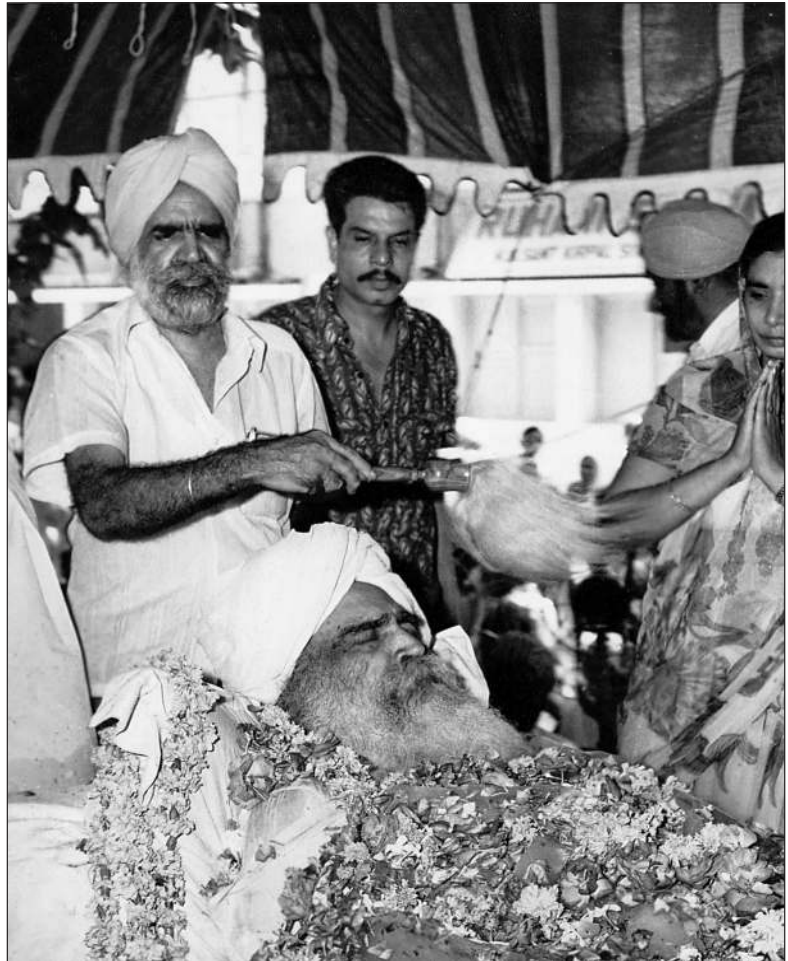
transparent vehicle worn out in decades of constant service of humanity and creation. I was glad for him, yet sorry for myself, for everyone. Life now seemed like a sentence to be served.

*O' Soul of my soul! Who could replace you?
O' none!*

I caught the first available flight to Delhi, a sorrowful journey to a place of unbearable grief and heat and tears. I was with others, yet alone.

August 22: We arrive in Shakti Nagar, propelled through sweltering streets and dusty lanes clogged with thousands of mourners. From Sawan Ashram we are directed to Kirpal Bagh, one mile east, where the cremation

*August 21, 1974:
The Master's blessed body lies
in repose at Sawan Ashram,
draped in flowers. Tens of
thousands of disciples poured
into the ashram from all over
India and many countries to
have a last glimpse of
their beloved Satguru.
Waving the whisk is
Darshan Singh Ji.*



is in progress. The Bagh or garden is a five-acre wooded area surrounded by a perimeter wall. When

we arrive, the searing otherworldly air is filled with wailing as the multitude freely expresses its grief. More arrive continuously from all parts of the world. In a delirium, I am moved through the mob to a brick platform, which serves as the funeral pyre. On the center is a heap of smoldering ashes. Too late! *Oh, how could the Deathless die?*

Sitting on the brick pyre's edge is Darshan Singh. According to ancient custom, it is the eldest son's duty to perform funeral rites for his father. In keeping with Indian traditions, Darshan pours milk and water over the ashes to cool them, as a long lineup moves forward to receive a small portion of ash from his hands. These are transferred to brass urns for later immersion in India's sacred rivers. *'We call the Master's holy ashes flowers. We do not call them ashes,'* someone says in my ear, as we await our turn.

Suddenly, I am before the pyre, tears flowing uncontrollably. Darshan, tears also streaking his cheeks, places our Lord's flower-ashes in my hands. Amongst the moist ash

Moth & the Flame - The Sun Sets

is a slender, hollow piece of bone, stark and white against the gray. It is too much to bear. Falling to my knees, I moan, 'This is not my Master,' hoping the earth will engulf me. Above the din, I hear a responding inchoate cry of grief from Darshan himself.

The passing of the Merciful Lion has wrenched the very heart and soul of the vast throng. It is a gesture of his greatness that has moved humanity to so passionate a response. As he said of the Master-disciple relationship, '**He first loved us; our love is only reciprocal.**'



Leaving the pyre's desolation, I search the Bagh for a place of quiet and solitude, but in vain. Dust and smoke are thick in the air as we walk back to the ashram. Everywhere, devotees are hugging each other and crying. Some poor souls clutch the window gratings of the Master's house, sobbing. A wounded heart asks:

How can your orphans exist, when You, dear Father, have gone?

The Flame has hidden itself behind a veil.

For You, it is only a question of a single glance;

For me, my entire existence.

Kindly reveal yourself to your inconsolate lovers!

Book II

Continuation of the Journey

52 Divine Darshan

What is the meaning of *Darshan*? Darshan means to see, to meet, to be in the company of another. It might also be a person of Indian origin's first name. But, on the mystic path, the word Darshan has a much deeper significance. Like its Persian counterpart, *Deedar*, Darshan means to actually see and experience the Divine as it manifests in the form of one's Murshid, Guru or Master. It may appear within to the beholder in a state of deep meditation, filled with spiritual radiance. It may also appear before one with open eyes, even if the physical form of the Guru is thousands of miles away. It is a wonderful mystery that only the experience can unfold. It cannot be imagined, commanded or produced by one's own efforts or virtue. No one is worthy of it, but it could happen to anyone at any time. One can, however, align one's values to the highest truth to create the fertile conditions for its manifestation.

For a lovelorn disciple, spiritual yearning can take the form of longing for the physical darshan of the Master, or for the inner darshan, both of which grant solace and upliftment in a way that worldly people cannot begin to comprehend.

"A dead Master is not dead to his initiates. The disciples on Earth have lost the benefit of his physical form, no doubt, and for that they must go to his successor. His astral form remains with them and if they have access...they make contact with that form and get guidance from it on the inner planes. In case they have not entered the eye center, and their attention is confined to the physical plane, their efforts should be to reach the eye center, while receiving encouragement from the successor. Dead Masters are not dead for their initiates, but they cannot make new initiates. This is done by the living Master. —From a letter by Sawan Singh to a disciple

More than four years passed since the Beloved's departure for the higher planes in 1974. Four years I was being hollowed out from within, where not a single day or night passed without involuntary shedding of tears that often seized me at unpredictable moments, despite my being in a leadership role, sometimes even when I was in the middle of a business meeting, having to suddenly excuse myself, retreat to a solitary space, even a toilet, and give vent to the secret anguish of the heart. Then, after regaining composure, I would return and carry on as though nothing had happened. This wasn't a dry spell, for my soul was being nourished and supported from within during daily hours given to meditation. Often the radiant glimpses of the deathless Master would be there, along with the inner music, but He would not speak; He would not reveal the identity of his Successor. I was meant to be squeezed by longing. Hollowed out. Yet in the anguish of separation was a kind of intoxication and bliss. I cannot describe it, nor, in retrospect, would I change it. It was part of purification and preparedness for the next step.

Convinced that Master Kirpal's successor would be revealed to me, little did I realize how long and convoluted my path to discovery would be. It would take me four years; for others more, and others less, and some never. In truth, on the divine plan there are no blunders, victims, or villains; whatever transpires, must.

After returning from two meditation retreats in a remote desert area of India and being deeply disappointed with one whom I had earlier hoped might have been the spiritual successor, and one whom I had very respectfully tested and verified for myself that he was not of the same essence, quality and spiritual perfection (I like the word 'impeccability') as was Master Kirpal, nevertheless, I now felt better equipped and more

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open-minded to approach any other plausible spiritual successor, including Darshan Singh, the Master's physical son, whom I had hitherto not seriously considered. So here I am in India, having made a monumental blunder in the area of succession. Who am I to test anyone? However, if one is to buy a clay pot from the marketplace, surely the buyer has the right to verify whether or not it is cracked and can hold water. ***"To believe in a thing or fact without troubling to investigate it does not in any way do credit to an intelligent man. On the contrary, it reflects adversely on his ignorance or credulity."***

In the book, Godman, he further writes:

[Those] who pose and act as Master Souls not only deceive themselves but misguide the masses at large. In this category are included persons who are either greedy and selfish or those who are after name and fame. In innumerable different ways and wiles they practice deception on the unwary and simple-minded seekers after Truth with a view to serve their own ends. It is because of such impositions that Guruship is being looked down upon by most people, and no wonder that the science of Spirituality is being stigmatized as a mirage and a fool's paradise. 1

That there would be a spiritual successor was without question. That I would eventually discover him was also without question. I had the Master's earlier assurance in his letter to me dated August 31, 1966:

Q. This is a dreaded question and I must ask what will become of me—what will I do if you leave the earth plane forever? To whom should I look for guidance? Who will be your successor?

A. Please rest assured that ever since initiation you are under constant protection... and it will continue till eternity. ...Always look within for guidance and all help will be forthcoming from above.... God willing, ***when I leave this plane, that Power will continue to work at some other human pole, who will be notified in due course, whose company will afford you all necessary guidance outside.***

Diary, November 5, 1978: The taxi-walla drops me at the main north gate of Kirpal Ashram in Old Delhi's Vijay Nagar, just a few blocks from Delhi University, and about one kilometer from my old spiritual home, Sawan Ashram. It's the first time for me to venture through these gates.

It is a bright Sunday morning, and the in-lane is filled with crowds heading to a large open area where they sit cross-legged on matting covering about an acre of ground in orderly rows, women on the right, men on the left, as it has always been in India. My heart is pounding, and I recognize many a familiar face from the old Sawan Ashram days amidst the new. The atmosphere is quite exuberant and festival-like, in sharp contrast to the austere desert ashram from where I had just come. *There is joy here!* As I diffidently move along the lane, there is a muffled din, then, sudden silence announces the arrival of the awaited one. I hesitate as Darshan Singh briefly appears in the sunlit opening at the far end of the lane, gliding slowly past with folded hands, blessing the audience. His silver-grey beard is flowing naturally. (I will learn that Darshan Singh had just retired from government service and that this day, November 5, 1978 is the first time he has ever appeared in public with open flowing beard. This is a new Darshan, quite different from my recollections. I confess I'm struck by the timing).

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In my present troubled and expectant state, I'm grateful not to be recognized. After Darshan passes by on his way to the dais, I slip into the crowd and sit on the ground near the back. Perhaps 15,000 are in attendance. I close my eyes, wishing for invisibility. After a few minutes, there is a tapping on my shoulder. Sethi Ji is leaning over, looking into my face. (he was the main personal secretary of Master Kirpal). 'Hello, brother Stee-fun! (many Indians called me Ste-fun). Please come, Master is coming down from the dais to greet you.'

'Oh, no, please!' I say, and continue sitting, not knowing what to do next. At the far end of the large crowd is a white dais and on it, diminished by the perspective of distance, are two tiny figures. One stands and slowly descends the stairs, moving into the crowd, incrementally moving towards me. I wonder if I should try to beat a quick escape! Instead, I close my eyes again and wait anxiously, silently repeating the Simran of charged names. Soon I feel a strong presence and open my eyes. Darshan Singh is standing right before me, beaming from ear to ear. 'Hello, my dear, dear brother!' he says. I stand and am quickly embraced. 'Welcome to your Father's home. This is your home! We have named it Kirpal Ashram after our beloved Master.' His arms are wrapped strongly around me, and he isn't letting go. I didn't expect this! A delicate and heady jasmine fragrance engulfs me. Darshan then quietly takes my hand in his, slowly leads me through the crowd, and up the stairs to the dais. What am I doing? Up front is the last place in the world I want to be. 'My dear brother, we would be most indebted if you could share with us some sweet remembrances of our beloved Master. Please!' His bright eyes are full of sincerity. Helpless, I accept. Twice, while introducing me to the crowd, I inch away and get up to make a run for it. Twice, his arm shoots out, incredibly strong and fast—and pulls me firmly, gently back to his side, while an altogether mischievous smile plays upon his face. I am trapped; there is no escape. How many times over the past four years have I tried to escape, to ignore his invitations from both within and even by letter? I know that I'm a hard nut to crack.

After sharing two bhajans and a personal remembrance of Master Kirpal, I sit about six feet back as Darshan delivers his discourse to an obviously enchanted crowd. His bare right foot rests on his left knee, yogi-like, his body extremely flexible. Naturally curious, I look at the sole and am astounded to see there a very deep and pronounced lotus mark, very similar to Master Kirpal's—and I hearken back to 1967 at Sawan Ashram and the time he had permitted me to see his lotus mark. With other successor claimants that I had visited, not one of them had the Lotus sign on their feet, because believe me I was looking for it. I now begin to experience a heady intoxication and the air is filled with jasmine-lilac fragrance. I cease fretting whether anyone sees me here or not; the heart of my soul is filling with radiant joy.

When satsang finishes, Darshan leads me by the hand back into the clamouring crowd. He is so giving with his chaste touches and pats, patient in his listening to the supplicants that it takes at least forty-five minutes to cross the ashram compound. Here, unlike some other well-known holy men I've met, there are no access restrictions and no armed body-guards. No fear. He gives me a personal tour of Kirpal Ashram's 2.5-acres, which include langar, library, free medical dispensaries, meditation hall, and visitor's quarters. Finally we ascend a narrow worn stairway to his apartment. 'Darshan is very sweet,' I tell him. I haven't seen such spontaneous devotion from any congregation since 1974. He introduces me to his life-companion, Mata Harbhajan Kaur, whom he identifies as 'your Auntie.' He takes me by the hand to a spotless bed and makes me lie on it, saying, 'You must be very tired from your journey. Please make yourself

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comfortable, brother. Remember, this is your own home. There is no difference between you and my family, as we are all part of the greater family of God and the Masters.'

I am overwhelmed, yet on guard, determined not to be subverted from the real purpose in coming. He won't leave until I lie down. Once he is out of the room, I realize that I am lying on his bed, and, in my clothes, sooty and begrimed from the coal-burning train I had been on all night from Rajasthan. I reason, 'I don't know if he is a Master or not, but he is the elder son of my Satguru. I can't sleep on his bed; it's not respectful,' and slip to the floor. How have I now become so respectful?

Later that night, he returns and invites me to eat with him. 'I don't know how to address you,' I say. 'Just call me Darshan. We are brothers...' he replies. It is a delicious dinner, delicately prepared under Auntie's supervision, and I am hungry! After the dishes and guests are cleared, only three remain: Darshan, Chachaji ('Uncle' Gupta), and myself. We move to the bedroom/living room, which has clean white sheets spread over the floor.

As we sit cross legged, I focus cautiously on Darshan's form about six feet away. Compared to Master Kirpal, his physical stature is shorter and smaller. His beard is thick and curly with a lot of gray, and his facial features are decidedly different from his father's. Long moments pass while Darshan slowly plays with his fingers and toes, seemingly absorbed inwardly and slightly bemused. No words pass between us.

The energy level in the room is tangibly rising; the atmosphere begins to dance with a hidden music. Then his head bows over, deep set eyes shadowed by bushy brows. His head rises up to look directly at me, into me, but it is no longer Darshan. And no longer 'i'; the veil is lifted. None other than Kirpal Singh's bodily form is sitting before me! A brilliant golden Light pours out from his body, encircling and engulfing us both, leaving not a trace of Darshan. The eyes are Kirpal's eyes...those eyes which I never thought I'd see again in this world. My soul begins to sing, and heart soars.

The being before me, with the precise form of Kirpal but the voice of Darshan quietly asks, 'You have some questions, brother?'

Over the next five and a half hours, I ask all the questions brought for the task, and more. During this entire time, the physical form of Master Kirpal remains, and out of it Darshan's voice definitively and without the slightest hesitation, answers all fifty-two questions— secret questions that I had discovered in Master Kirpal's lost coded diaries, which were hitherto unknown to the world. These questions were to be put to persons claiming to have realized God, to determine what stage, if any, they had reached on the spiritual journey through the higher regions. Darshan went into considerable detail, but it wasn't meant to be tape-recorded. I managed to take a few notes. One of the more interesting answers he gave was to Question #16, 'How many steps lead into the Mansarovar (pool) located in the Third Region?' Darshan answers, 'There are eighty-four steps.' Each step, he explains, is linked to the purification of karmas accumulated throughout the great cycle of 8,400,000 lives in various forms.

He speaks with the natural authority of experience, dispelling hundreds of my old doubts along the way. While elaborating on features of the inner regions hitherto unrecorded in any books, he obviously knows them as intimately as those of this finite world.

My own four inner meditation questions are answered accurately, without hesitation and in great detail, and many more which spontaneously arise. This is the most esoteric and

fascinating question/answer session of my life, yielding more inner secrets than I had ever gleaned from the writings of Kabir, Tulsi Sahib, and Soami Ji combined.

Darshan also shares mysteries of the *maha sunna*, the region of great darkness that lies between the third and fourth spiritual planes; of the great souls suspended, or captive there and how eventually they are liberated by the living Param Sant of the time, whenever he passes through the remote vastness of this region. By becoming engulfed in the great radiance and magnetism of the Masters the once-captive souls are pulled through the stygian darkness and into the higher radiant realms above and beyond. Darshan also speaks of the *Majdoob*, or God intoxicated, God-mad souls, and more. When he describes minute details of the soul's entry into Sach Khand, and what takes place in that eternal region in the presence of the Supreme Being, I can almost remember what it must be, long before soul separated from its origin.

The golden-white light halo surrounding him continues radiating intensely, without any fluctuation throughout our all night interview.

At one point I ask, 'When did Master first take your soul to Sach Khand in this lifetime?'

He replies: 'It was in 1967 when the Beloved took me up from this earth-earthy plane, through the astral, causal, supra-causal planes, and ultimately brought about my merger with Him in Sach Khand. He then absorbed my soul further, in the *Alakh*, the Ineffable; *Agochar*, the Incomprehensible; and the *Anaami*, the Nameless Absolute. After this experience, I wrote a poem attempting to describe it.'

Darshan reaches towards a stack of bundles, selects one, unties the strings, dons his reading glasses and spends a few minutes looking through sheaves of poems. Finally, he pulls out an old, yellowed piece of paper with neat, careful blocks of verse, hand-written in Persian script.

He first recites the verses in Urdu and then translates for my benefit. I suddenly recall the occasion when he had recited exactly the same poem to me, outside the porch at Sawan Ashram in 1967. The significance of its meaning, lost on me then, now explodes in my consciousness.

After a while, letting the enormity of these sink in, I ask, 'Tai Ji has said "Master's Successor will be able to read and understand the secret coded language he wrote his poems and manuscripts in." What do you have to say about this?'

Darshan responds, 'The beloved Master taught this language to both your Auntie and me, when he called us from Delhi to be with him in Rishikesh in 1948. Actually, there is no great mystery to it. He just substituted certain symbols for the letters of the Punjabi alphabet. If you want, Harbhajan or I can teach you the language.'

Astonished, I ask, 'Really, that's all it is? You mean, even I can learn how to read his coded manuscripts?'

'Yes, of course.' He calls Harbhajan into the room, who looks at some of the characters of the original script, writes out the deciphering characters, and gives it to me. Using this key, a small portion is painstakingly transliterated (see Appendix).

The Forgiving Nature of Saints: It is now 4:30 AM on the sixth of November. After seeing Master Kirpal sitting before me all this time, I repent for my blunders over the past four years, and for all the negative thoughts and words I expressed towards or about this One who had always been kind, loving and true to me. Seven times I had rejected Darshan's benevolence, but he never gave up on me. How could I have been so wrong,

so blind?

With a beauty simultaneously delicate and divine, he folds his hands together, rolls his eyes upwards, and whispers, 'Our Beloved Master is so merciful, so forgiving...' Again, through his eyes, Kirpal is looking at me...no doubt about it. A huge load is lifted from my life. I wonder aloud about the many whom I have led to an imperfect Master. I'm concerned about their fate.

'You know,' he continues, 'our Master initiated approximately one lakh [one hundred thousand] souls into the mysteries of the Beyond, but that doesn't include the millions of souls he benefited just by His gracious, lyrical glances. When Master is carrying the burden of all the universes, then what is it to Him if He takes the burden of a few hundred or a few thousand more souls across the ocean of existence? That's no burden for Him. Please don't worry dear brother, Master is very gracious.'

He then reveals that the commission he has received from Sawan.

'How do you find the burden?' His eyes open wide and he proclaims loudly, like a lion, 'Burden? What burden, dear brother? When one is commissioned by the Perfect Master, authorized by Him, then there is never any burden. He takes all the burden! He does all the work! If He wishes, He can even make the stones dance in ecstasy and carry on His work. But others, they feel the burden. ***This is God's work. No man can do it and no man can stop it!***

Obviously, Darshan has undergone a tremendous transformation spiritually and physically since his days as a disciple. The cub has become the Lion; the duckling, the Swan. Before me sits a most beautiful Being, a Paramhansa. The veil hiding the jewel is rent, and the metamorphosis is awesome. It may seem like his metamorphosis, but in reality, the myopia of the onlooker has finally cleared—to a certain extent at least.

How this Kirpal Ashram Came Into Being: Until early 1978, the Indian sangat had been without a center since 1974, as Sawan Ashram and Manav Kendra had been forcibly usurped by the unscrupulous. I have been out of the loop for more than four years, and Darshan kindly fills in for me the missing pieces: '...What started as a trickle became a flood as more and more came every day...As I have written in one of my verses,

*I started alone on the journey of love,
filled with faith and zeal,
At every step travelers joined me,
And soon we were a caravan.*

Those who controlled Sawan Ashram and the accounts were not content with their worldly gains. When their support from the sangat had virtually disappeared, they tried their utmost to thwart our mission at every step, calling the police to try and stop our peaceful satsangs, launching frivolous lawsuits and the like. But they were not successful despite all the significant resources at their command. I received many death threats by phone and by letter. They even tried to create trouble in my place of work, but my supervisors, peers, and subordinates knew my character and supported me through thick and thin. I never took retaliatory action, nor did I permit anyone else to do so on my behalf. Those who campaigned against the mission were misguided, but there is always the hope that they will have a change of heart.

'For your information, I recently retired as the Deputy Secretary of the Indian government, where more than twelve thousand officers worked under my jurisdiction. I



The morning after my all-night meeting with Sant Darshan Singh in 1978 after returning from Rajasthan.
Photo by Jamie Smith, November 6, 1978

held three portfolios: Supplies, Vigilance and Human Relations.

'By the way, I still have in my possession those letters threatening your Auntie and me. You are welcome to see them. However, I never felt any fear, as the two great Masters are guiding and protecting me.'

The property for Kirpal Ashram had been acquired and dedicated one year earlier, in November of 1977. Indeed, this place feels like home, as Sawan Ashram once did. It had previously belonged to descendants of the great Punjabi Sufi saint, Bulleh Shah, who sold it to the Sangat the previous year. This same family described to Darshan an incident from the 1960's when an elderly saintly gentleman happened into the large compound, admiring the profusion of unusual fruit and berry trees. He discussed with them Bulleh Shah's life and teachings with great knowledge and affection. Their mysterious visitor was none other than Sant Kirpal Singh, for whom they ever after maintained the greatest respect.

In an earlier English heart-to-heart talk with disciples, Darshan Singh revealed the secret of his spiritual merger with the Absolute. Fortunately, it was recorded and reproduced below verbatim:

"He has taken me above body-consciousness...to the higher planes, leaving the stars, the moon and the sun behind, making me one with him in his radiant effulgent form. He has taken me into moments of eternity, beyond the limitations of time and space, and then, giving me a glance of love, a boost...he has taken me...into the highest realms of spirituality. On the way he has introduced me to the various Masters who have blessed

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this earth since time immemorial, and arranged for our conversation. We have conversed in a language which has no tongue...no words...no alphabet...in a language which is eternal. We have conversed in the language which was in the beginning...which was made Word, in the language which [divine] lovers even now speak. This is the language which will continue to the end of all time...

And after taking me to our Eternal Home, Sach Khand, he has taken me on to higher realms known as Agam and Agochar, those regions which are fathomless...beyond human imagination. And after that we reached Anaami, the ultimate vast region which has no shores...no limitation...no name...

Darshan's physical transformation from 1974 to now was nothing less than staggering. There was now a palpable Masterly essence exuding from him, and whenever I became still in his presence, that essence became very clear. Whenever I put my eyes on him, his eyes, face and body would transform into that of Kirpal.

For many of the old initiates who came to him, such experience was the norm, rather than the exception—which I verified time and again in my research. With awe and wonder I also witnessed Darshan change his physical configuration into that of Soami Ji, the 19th century Agra Param Sant. When I related this experience to his wife, Auntie Harbhajan, she replied, 'In August 1974 when this Master, my husband, entered the living room at Sawan Ashram, Master Kirpal said aloud to several present, "Soami Ji has come!"'

Endnotes: Photocopies of sample pages from the coded Diaries, describing glimpses of his meetings and conversations with the great Masters of the Past: here, Guru Nanak, Kabir and Jesus Christ. Other portions describe meetings with Buddha, Zoroaster, Guru Gobind Singh, Baba Jaimal Singh, Rumi, and others. The side notes in English are also in the Master's hand (a complete copy of the manuscript is with the writer):

On page 12, the Master speaks about the inner access of a disciple of Hazur known as Mastana Ji. This particular man who had once enjoyed great spiritual intoxication, began to fritter away the grace he had received by performing miracles—a practice forbidden on the higher spiritual path:

'I (Kirpal) asked Baba Ji (Baba Jaimal Singh) whether Mastana of Baluchistan reaches up to you?'

Baba Ji answered, 'He is entangled in riddhis and siddhis. He does not reach us. In the beginning he was getting the radiant form of the Master and he was intoxicated. Now sometimes the radiant form comes, sometimes it does not. Now he is more scattered outside.'



Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj
Photo by Jamie Smith, November 6, 1978

Talk with
Guru Arjuna 24-8-48

Handwritten musical notation on a staff with a vertical line on the left side.

Talk with Saint
Kabir 26-8-48

Handwritten musical notation on a staff with a vertical line on the left side.

Talk with Christ 27-8-48

Handwritten musical notation on a staff with a vertical line on the left side.

53 Half Confirmation

Sant Darshan kindly arranged to have his driver discretely deliver me to my Delhi in-laws at about 7 AM. Exhausted but exhilarated, I climbed the steep stairs to the third-story roof, lay down on a cot, pulled a sheet over my body and head and instantly went to sleep. Not really sleep—for my consciousness was immediately transferred into the presence of three Masters—Sawan, Kirpal, and Darshan. For the next four hours, each Master took turns talking to me. I was comforted, consoled and taken to different realms in a radiant universe. At the end of this endlessness, Darshan's beaming face came right up in front of me, very close, looked deeply into my eyes and said, 'Brother, this is **half** your confirmation!'

There are no words to describe the intoxication I experienced upon coming back to the physical world, and the inebriation of the Beyond permeated everything for the next twenty-four hours. When Ratana and our three daughters returned from a visit via train to the Taj Mahal in Agra, my profound happiness met with great skepticism, but her torrent of heated words flowed off like water from a duck's back. 'Haven't you jumped from the frying pan into the fire?' she asked. 'You have to see for yourself,' I replied, lovingly, over and over.

After some time she relented: 'You know that I have always respected Darshan Singh Ji very highly. I never spoke against him like you did. All right, I will go and see him, not as a Master,' she said, 'but as his respected son...and we will take Shanti, Gurdeep and Jyoti along with us.' What more was wanted, I exulted, still basking in the grace that had just been bestowed on an extreme Doubting Thomas.

That night when we arrived at Kirpal Ashram, Master Darshan came down the stairs to greet us personally despite his ever-busy schedule. Ratana and the girls touched his feet. They loved him spontaneously and immediately; they were mirrors reflecting the brightness of the overwhelming love-currents emanating from his being.

Like a prayer-mantra, joyous Shanti repeated over and over, 'Master Darshan is the real Master!' As he spoke with us, baby Jyoti curled up and fell asleep with her little head resting on his feet. Some time later, we followed the Master downstairs where several hundred Indians waited. Five-year old Gurdeep clung to his arm wherever he went. 'Master, Gurdeep sings very beautifully,' I said. He gathered her in his arms and plunked her down on the dais, asking, 'Dear daughter, please let us hear your lovely voice.' A big crowd gathered. Smitten by shyness, she replied, 'I can't, Master, I can't!' No amount of coaxing availed. Master then swept her up in his arms, and said movingly, 'Daughter, at least we have heard the beating of your heart!' After some time, we returned to Ratana's extended family.

Sufis poetically compare falling under the spiritual influence of the Pir or Master as 'the bird of the heart becoming ensnared in tresses of the Beloved;' their spreading reach had entangled us too. For several days Shanti was ecstatic. Not wanting to distress our in-laws and others, we requested the girls to keep our discovery quiet and secret. 'But daddy, why?' Shanti asked, with bubbling enthusiasm, 'Master Darshan is the real Master!'

'Yes, we know that, but let's keep it to ourselves.' 'Okay, I guess,' she consented, but didn't seem very convinced.

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At that moment, the big air-conditioned bus pulled into the courtyard, loaded with forty Westerners from their retreat in Rajasthan. First off the bus was her beloved school teacher from Vancouver. Shanti suddenly broke free from my grip and ran to her, happily exclaiming 'Judy, Judy, guess what! Master Darshan is the real Master!'

The proverbial mud hit the fan, and everything was suddenly exposed in the glare of the hot Indian sun. *Karma*. The group seemed to wither and go into shock. Perhaps as a form of defense mechanism, they chose to avoid us, which was understandable. With my good friends Richard and Alan, however, it was a different matter; they wanted to meet Darshan and see for themselves.

These were heady times, times that seemed hugely important and redolent with portents for the future. We were on destiny's unpredictable and accelerating train.

54 Caught in the Honey

Money or honey?

Alan and Richard discretely made the forty minute ride by taxi over to Kirpal Ashram in Vijay Nagar, seeking answers. Joan, another old friend of ours from Vancouver, who had been entrusted with some money owed to Richard by one of the departing visitors to Rajasthan, went to deliver the funds. Joan shares her experience:

It was with some reticence that I made the trip to Kirpal Ashram where Richard was staying. Disillusioned with other successor claimants, I had no inclination to see Darshan Singh. However, soon after my arrival, a message arrived, inviting me to meet with him.

While waiting outside Darshan's room, I experienced one of the best meditations in years, after which Alan and I passed a couple of hours alone with Darshan. I will never forget the sensitivity with which he handled that first meeting. Addressing me as sister, he spoke only of the Beloved Master and his mission, going into detail regarding the planned publication *Portrait of Perfection* devoted to his memory, and of *Sat Sandesh* magazine in English and the publication of the Master's works in many languages. He also questioned me regarding my own experiences.

There was a tangible charging in Darshan's presence and I began to experience effortless withdrawal to the eye-focus. I was overwhelmed to see him transform into my own Master for extensive periods, sitting before me a mere yard away. My heart opened and tears flowed, and I realized then the depth of our suffering since that separation, and how, in order to carry on, we covered that pain and our hearts hardened in the process.

Ratana, Joan, the children and I rented a taxi and pilgrimaged to Dehra Dun—a full day's drive from Delhi, but as we descended the hilly jungle road and entered our destination, we were much saddened by the neglect of the once pristine Manav Kendra—which, like Sawan Ashram, had fallen into questionable hands. Darshan had forewarned us but he also firmly predicted that Manav Kendra would again blossom as originally intended.

Master's old estate at 207 Rajpur Road was, however, still immaculately maintained by one of Darshan's hand-picked caretakers who kindly assisted all who came to pay their respects and meditate there, which is what we did for two days, experiencing a deep spiritual recharging.

We returned to Delhi, where we experienced a joyous reunion with Darshan Singh Ji. After his Sunday public discourse, we dined with him. Richard addressed Darshan explaining that Joan had no specific work to return to in Canada at that time. Darshan turned to her, and transforming into Master Kirpal as he spoke, said, 'This is your Father's home, and you are always welcome here.' Addressing Joan who was unsure whether to stay longer, or return to a job, the Master looked around the table with an impish smile, 'It depends what you want, money or honey!'

Joan later commented, 'Unable to erase the image of my Master saying I was welcome, I vacillated right up to the customs gate at the New Delhi airport. There I froze, and could go no further.'

At the last second, Joan turned around and returned to the honey. Her narrative

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continues:

Darshan was so loving and open, and made each of us feel a part of the Master's international family. In spite of the sublime experiences I was having in his presence, and the poignant remembrance evoked by the anecdotes and stories he shared, my mind troubled me with residual doubts for sometime. Darshan encouraged us to bring up all questions and would often say, 'There are no secrets here.' He drew out all ranklings that were interfering with our ability to concentrate within.

One day, in a small group, I told Darshan that many in my area, including myself, had been deeply affected by a rumor that Sant Kirpal Singh had said at some meeting, that his successor would not be from his family, though I had yet to meet anyone that was there (in fact, there is no writing or tape-recording of or by Sant Kirpal Singh to this effect. There were only rumors.)

He delicately indicated that if the Master had made such a statement, the import may not have been clear, and proceeded to speak of the retreat that Master Kirpal undertook near Rishikesh, after the passing of Hazur. He recalled how during this period, the Beloved Master had invited his family members (including his wife Krishna Vanti, Darshan, Harbhajan Kaur and their one-year old son Rajinder) to join him at the villa he had rented at Rani-Ki-Kothi. Darshan spoke of how intimate and special were these times; how they meditated long hours together, and shared as a family. Master even made chapatis for them [see following photograph which was taken by Harbhajan Kaur].

At the end of this period, the Master called his family to him, and told them that from then on, they were not to consider him as their father, for he was now to take up the role of the Universal Father, explaining that in the future they would not enjoy such times together. In the language of esotericism, Darshan then added, 'the family of a Master are those whom he initiates.' [Darshan was initiated by Hazur. During the time of the ten Sikh Gurus, nine were related by blood, as son, uncle, father, grandfather. Guru Nanak chose Angad as his successor in preference to his two sons, as he was the most worthy and elevated. As Master Kirpal once told me in Rajpur, "Son may be equal to the Father or may not be. The criterion is the ability to grant first-hand experience of the inner way, and protection."]

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55 Answers From A True Disciple

Truth is above all, but higher still is true living.

—Guru Nanak

Centuries of accounts by and about the Adepts are conclusive: A true Disciple is one whose life is a perfect reflection of the ideals enjoined and embodied by a perfect Teacher. And, every Teacher—no matter how great—was once a Disciple who lived by Truth and realized it. By these lofty standards, only a few begin to approach its minimum standards.

In every age and dispensation, the full transmission of spiritual power was bequeathed to that Disciple who had been shorn of any trace of lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. True living, self-surrender, service of the creation and communion with the eternal Light and Sound Principles are concomitants of a God-realized life. It is always the most humble Disciple who feels least worthy to inherit the Mastership, who least covets it.

Only the Writer of Destiny knows why I had to take such a tortuous road to recognition and acceptance. Though none dethroned Kirpal from my heart, I was extremely grateful and relieved that at last I could see what he wanted me to see—the Master working in fullness through Sant Darshan Singh. He, however, was not a mere channel for previous Masters to ‘work through.’ Upon assuming the Mantle, the true Disciple becomes the Master, and as such, is fully invested with spiritual power and wisdom to guide the many.

Having arrived at this point of understanding, Richard Handel and I put the following questions to Sant Darshan Singh. His answers clarified many delicate points of Mastership and succession. If his style differed from his predecessors, the message and authority were the same. And, he could call a spade a spade when appropriate.

Question: *‘Do imperfect masters know they are imperfect?’*

Answer: *‘Generally not. On this Path each step can seem like the end point. Some of the imperfect masters barely see Light, others may go as high as the fourth plane. It is only by the grace of the Master that the disciple can get anything, and this grace can be withdrawn at any time. Sometimes we start to think that we are getting somewhere because of our efforts, then the ego comes in and the grace is cut off. Some think the Master loved them the most. That is a misunderstanding, as the love of the Master is boundless. He has boundless love for all creation. To say, “The Master loved me the most of all his initiates,” or “He showered all His grace on me,” is a sign of egotism.*

‘When the Master sends his grace to a disciple, neither the disciple nor those around him think the grace will ever diminish. Under the influence of ego, the disciple begins to think he is infallible, or that he knows better than the Master, with the result that he becomes an egoist, or one who thinks he is wonderful; and finally an egotist, or one who tells others how wonderful he thinks he is! However, sometimes the Master’s grace does stop flowing to that initiate, although others around him are not always aware of this. Consequently, the disciple often commits many mistakes and blunders.

‘Also, even if the disciple is aware that the Master’s grace has stopped flowing to him, and even if he knows the truth, his ego may not allow him to come to the right path. The disciple doesn’t want to belittle himself before his admirers and colleagues by admitting the folly of his ways, as he is afraid of public opinion and shame. As a result, the errors

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and deceptions go on.'

Question: *'What is the fate of imperfect masters who are initiated by a perfect Master?'*

Answer: *'There was a disciple of Baba Jaimal Singh from Taran Taran named Baba Bagga Singh. He began initiating without authorization. After some time he realized his mistake and invited Baba Sawan Singh to his place. When he met Master Sawan, he bowed down to his feet and repented. In his grace, the Master told him to carry on with his work, and Sawan took over his burden.*

'The grace of the Master is always at work. However, if someone goes against the law of nature and starts initiating without authorization, or, if an initiate of a perfect Master starts associating with an imperfect successor, another birth may be required.'

Question: *'So many people who are much more sincere than ourselves are led to imperfect Masters. Why is that?'*

Answer: *'We should have in our hearts a similar prayer as the Beloved Master: "O God, I'm yearning like anything. I want to meet You. There are so many gurus and masters; the world is full of them. To whom should I go, and to whom should I not go? I am afraid if I go to one who has not reached You, my life's aim will be spoiled. In the olden days it is said that You appeared to those who loved You, then why can't You manifest now?" If we cry from the core of our hearts like the beloved Master did, then we will eventually be led to a perfect Master.'*

Question: *'What is the fate of those who are initiated by a perfect Master, but later become affiliated with an imperfect master?'*

Answer: *'I asked this same question of the beloved Master after Hazur left the body. I asked him if it was their fault. They were only doing what they felt was correct. How could they be blamed? He answered that it is a law of nature that they will have to suffer for their mistake, even though it was committed unknowingly and in good faith. Naturally, since they were initiated by a perfect Master, they will ultimately be taken care of, although they may have to come into the world again [in another rebirth].*

'An imperfect master has not completed the Path, and cannot initiate properly. He may also bind you to himself. This may delay your spiritual progress. If someone binds you to your Master, it's good, but, if they bind you to themselves, then it's a deterrent on the Path...However, the true successor will open the wound of separation for your Master, and help reunite you with him.'

Question: *'What about initiates of a perfect Master who don't go to anyone after their Master leaves the body?'*

Answer: *'That's alright, as long as they keep their Master's commandments, and especially as long as they have love in their hearts for all. As they progress in their meditations, their Master will tell them who his true successor is. The company of their Master's successor will serve as a consolation, and they will derive benefit from his presence.'*

Question: *'If we reach the Master inside even while associating with an imperfect master, will he tell us our mistake?'*

Answer: *'Definitely, he will tell us everything, if we can talk to him inside. However sometimes through auto-suggestion we may see and hear things inside, but in reality they are just a reflection of our mind. Often when our Master or even an imperfect*

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master appears inside, we are so overjoyed that we forget to do simran. In addition, the experience may be of such a short duration that it hardly allows us to start simran. Occasionally it can happen that the Master and the imperfect master appear to merge back and forth into one another, but that also is only because of imperfect simran...It is very easy for someone who is nearer to you in spiritual development to appear within. If you think of your girlfriend for just a short time, then she can appear within. If you look at an imperfect master for even five to fifteen minutes, that can make an impression on you which can be transferred within very easily. But if you look at a perfect Master for fifteen hours straight, even then he may not appear within. You cannot imagine in meditation someone who is Perfect. He appears only of his own accord, but an imperfect master can easily be imagined within. Our mind can easily manifest that which is imperfect within, but it cannot imagine that which is perfect...'

Question: *'What happens to someone who actively supports an imperfect master and denies the perfect Master before coming around?'*

Answer: *'A father is doubly happy to welcome home his prodigal son. What you did was done in good faith even though it may have been wrong. Once you realize your mistake, it takes much courage and extra grace from the Master to admit it. It is especially difficult to admit it publicly, as frequently your friends, family and society will all be against you. Sometimes people will realize they have been misled, but because of public pressure or their ego, they will be unable to change their ways. No matter what happens, the Master is always compassionate and forgiving.*

'On my American tour earlier this summer, I told a number of people, "Despite whatever he has said against me, Arran-ji will come around, but our dear brother_____ji, has so much invested, and is so far entangled, that even if he knows the truth, he will not come out in this lifetime."

Question: *'Is it possible for a Saint to ever be unaware of another Saint functioning elsewhere on the physical plane at the same time?'*

Answer: *'No. Saints are all-knowing.'*

Question: *'Is it better to stay at home and meditate intensely for two or three months, or is it better to use the same amount of money to come to India to be with our Master's true successor?'*

Answer: *'If you can have remembrance of your Master all the twenty-four hours of the day, then there is no need to go anywhere. But if you keep to yourself, there is the very real possibility of your heart becoming dry and hard like a stone. Also there is the danger of getting a puffed-up ego, because you may start to think that you are accomplishing something because of your great efforts. This is not a path of asceticism. The Master's successor, because he is always suffering the pangs of separation, will create the same state in you, by example. You will be benefited through his thought transference, his radiation and his eyes. This is a path of grace and tears. The successor will bind you to your Master, and not to himself. His company is of great value...'*

Darshan cautioned me not to recommence as an initiating representative until and unless I had full confirmation from my Master within. Folding his hands together, he turned his eyes up and within for several long moments, and commented, 'I pray to the two great Masters that your wish be granted at the earliest possible time. We must have love and respect for everyone. But if someone wishes clarification or direction, we may lovingly share our experience with them.' He then added 'Maintain harmony in the

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home. Don't make any hasty decisions. Master will shower his grace and show you.'

When I asked about his relationship with those who had actively persecuted him, he replied, 'Whenever my wife or I visit _____, we always touch her feet, and respect her. In fact she came here when we opened this Ashram, and when she came I touched her feet. I always touch the feet of my elders. The Saints have no fight with anyone. If anyone wants to fight over property, let them have it.'

Darshan won those who considered themselves his enemies by his consistently loving ways. In time, Sawan Ashram would be laid at his feet, without clamor or dispute.

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56 Destiny's Writ

Master Kirpal once shared with an intimate group a profound object lesson from history. Even now I hear the echoes of his distinctive voice, emphasis on *truth*:

'Socrates was asked, "Whom do you love most? Plato or Truth?" Socrates replied, "I love Plato. But, ***I love Truth more than Plato!***" We are after Truth, you see.'

We loved our close-knit community of friends and family members, but when we chose to follow our truth, radical upheaval followed, and the *I love Truth more than Plato* took on special meaning.

For those who have experienced it, there is no higher love than that which a perfect and selfless Master has for his beloved disciples. It's a heart-to-heart, soul-to-soul communion that gives birth to unimaginable dormant spiritual realities. When the teacher is authentic, Truth is what he represents, and Truth is the eternal verity to which he attaches the disciple. We are also Truth, but Truth asleep. An authentic Master is a living bridge; a door; a boat; an awakened beam back to the Sun. In reality, we are none other.

Everything and everyone can be the mask, veil, or mouthpiece behind which the Divine is trying to reach us, to speak with us. Even so-called misfortunes, which take the form of loss, ignominy and illness, can be our Friend in disguise. If we can see the One behind even the terrible faces, instead of fleeing, we will embrace the test and ultimately pass it.

Taunts, reproaches and vilification also strengthen and reform the followers of the Saints, as without them they too would remain as they are. Derision and public opprobrium are the necessary concomitants of true love...

In Persian it has been said:

Slander is the watchman of the market of love;

It cleans love of all its rust and brightens it.

—Soami Shiv Dayal Singh, *Sar Bachan Prose*

After our transforming visits with Darshan, things would never be the same. Our personal life as we knew it, including the path-entangled, yet highly successful Lifestream business came to an end, despite best efforts to reconcile. A lengthy partnership struggle left no alternative but to sell to outsiders.

As Omar Khyyam reminds:

The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,

Moves on: nor all thy piety nor wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,

Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.

Selling out was not of my choice, but then, the moving finger writes for all. Through each test, beyond the ripples, was a delectable heightened awareness, and the most difficult situations (and there were many) brought the face of the Beloved closer to the surface. Each probation was a cleansing of the mirror. Catharsis can open unprecedented opportunities for growth and change; it caused our little circle to expand, for we, and our spiritual community had unknowingly become too narrow. How could a universal teacher ever wish his pupils to be narrow-minded? What Darshan lived and asked, was in reality a reflection of his constantly forgiving, loving nature:

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*Embrace every man as your very own,
And shower your love freely wherever you go.*

—Darshan

Too many a time I failed to emulate such unconditioned love, yet I hope and think there is some improvement. One must tread carefully through the minefield of tender hearts.

Slandered by some, and ostracised from our former community, we moved from the country back to the city, drawn to a gracious old house in a quiet neighborhood, surrounded by a high-hedged secluded garden. The first time I passed through the heavy front door and into the foyer, joy-bells were resounding, source unseen. Glancing around, one sensed the presence of the smiling Master and disciples here in the hallway, there in the living-room and out back in the gracious garden. It said, *home*, the silence was sounding, and it all came to pass. Forced from the narrow groove and into the mainstream, we found that all was good.

*All glory to the Beloved
For breaking my heart;
The notes of its bursting
Sweetened the silence
Of the night.*

- Darshan

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57 The Night of Waiting

The cloak of my life has been torn from the very dawn...



Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj

Moth & the Flame - The Night of Waiting

In April, 1979, I returned alone to India for three weeks, to fortify and deepen my connection to the Divine working through Darshan, the poet-saint. As the grace flowed, he encouraged me to share certain experiences with others in his presence, and even via my book project—experiences which normally should have remained secret. He did this with several in those days, to illustrate, via personal gnosis, the continuation of the power of the great lineage.

Three or four days after arriving in India, a special grace poured out through the successor's eyes to mine. When I returned from his apartment to my room, glorious radiance was constant company, and it assumed the form of the living Master. Whenever these physical eyes would blink, or close even for a few seconds, Darshan's shining eyes and face would be clearly seen in golden, intense brilliance. Sometimes Master Kirpal would appear, flooding my being with joy, but mostly it was Darshan in his transcendental form, communicating simple and profound truths in words, very clearly explaining why things are the way they are. This state seemed unaffected by simran, whether done with full concentration for hours continuously, or not at all. In that intoxicated state I was sometimes careless as a child, and, not knowing whether it was correct or not, I requested that only Kirpal's form should remain. My own wishes had absolutely no effect and were superseded by the unity of all Masters, contained within Darshan's golden light-form.

After the second day, saturation set in; there was no room for more in my limited cup. Perhaps complacency, perhaps individual ego intervened, or God decided, *bas!* Enough! Whatever the reason, the visions that had engulfed me unabated for 48 hours, abruptly ended. For the next few days meditation was practically barren, dim, and tasteless—similar to some experiences had in the lifetime of Kirpal. Again the lesson drove home how utterly reliant upon grace the devotees are, that special kindness which flows through a living Master.

One may have to work hard for years to catch a significant surge in the divine Ocean of Consciousness, like a surfer who waits long to catch the perfect wave. God, Guru, Soul, Light and the Audible Life-stream are intermeshed and related. It is a living Adept who stirs up the great waves, who makes the difficult Way effortless. Paradoxically, the glimpses and the sippings often suddenly gave way to *bireh*, the intense pain of separation. Darshan's presence often ripped open the wound of love that I felt for Kirpal.

In the middle of one of his Sunday discourses, I was suddenly overcome by such an intense longing. Without showing any signs, I quietly crept through the huge throng, and entered the vacant library toward the back, and shut the door. Wrapping my meditation shawl over my head, I sank to the floor and vented heart's bitter-sweet anguish.

After a few minutes I heard the door move behind me and shut. The sliding of the lock-bolt followed, but my eyes remained closed. Sensing someone close by, I finally parted the folds of the shawl, and found Darshan himself alone in the room with me. We hugged each other, and wept together in silence, his head on my shoulder, and mine on his. Many minutes passed like this, as I moved from agony to ecstasy. Then Darshan pulled out his handkerchief, blew his nose, wiped his eyes, smiled at me and went out the door, back through the multitude, climbed the dais and took up his discourse as though nothing had happened! He understood the secret delicate pain of the heart.

*In this world, each is consumed
with his own afflictions;*

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*Only Darshan shares the sorrows
of his fellow man.¹*

This unique Master rarely takes physical rest or sleep. He passes each night in the assembly of seekers and disciples, a night-owl whose poetry comes to life in the wee hours of the morn. His all night sessions rarely finish before seven AM, when he might take an hour or two of rest, bathe, take breakfast-tea and start the rounds again.

*From dawn to dawn, let us speak of peace
and listen to the message of love,
The shower-laden clouds of Sawan
have enveloped the tavern of time,
O Cupbearer, let the cup of love
go round and round and round.²*

One night/morning—late, late, somewhere in no-time, as five or six of us sit around him, he addresses the omnipresent Beloved in Urdu verse, freely translating into English as he goes along:

*When I am blessed with the intoxication of my Master
What do I care for the rise and fall of material life?
For others, life is full of the vintage and the goblet,
But the very blood of my desires is wine for me.*

*You scuttle my heart, tear it to pieces
And the blood which oozes out
I'll sip with profound gratitude,
And it will be intoxication for me,
As the murder of my desires comes from You.*

'My poetry has served as an outburst,' he says, and then continues his impromptu recitation:

*Please tell the darners of the night of waiting
that the cloak of my life has been torn from the very dawn.
Your life is a chandelier of the sleeping chamber of beauty;
And mine is a candle burning in the middle of the road,
Guiding strangers throughout the night...*

Darshan dubs me 'welfare officer,' and one of my duties is to report to him the condition of the various foreign guests at the busy ashram. One day, a poor, weeping Indian woman leads me to the meditation hall, where I find her husband, reduced to skin and bones, prostrate with high malarial fever. Reassuring her, I proceed to Master's quarters upstairs, where he is engaged with visiting dignitaries. He interrupts the meeting, and immediately comes with me to the dying man.

Despite his filthy, smelly, sweat-soaked rags, Master kneels beside the invalid, holds him in his arms, lovingly inquires of his welfare, strokes his head and pats his cheek. He feeds him water from a cup, calls for a doctor and medicine, and the man is treated. Four days later, we are all happy to see the fully recovered husband and his wife walking about the ashram with beautiful and profound smiles lighting their nut-brown faces.

The Master tells an amusing story about a Russian diplomat who came to India as an atheist, but after one year, he declared himself a believer because, he said, India's

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conditions were so impossible, so chaotic, that it was only by the grace of a Divine Being that anything ever got accomplished!

Darshan observes the Westerner's difficulties coping with India's heat, noise, smells, insects, spicy food, exasperating delays, etc. With a raised eyebrow and a sweet, slightly mischievous smile he comments, *'The Westerner's prayer is, "O God, grant me patience. But grant it right now!", expecting that the Path to the Beloved should be a velvet path, whereas the Path passes through the thorns. They want a velvet path, and what am I to do?'*

His merry laughter, river-like in its intoxicating flow, carries me towards the sea of existence.

*Begin to live your life
according To your aspirations,
And step towards your chosen goal...
You would find that what you take for thorns
are really flowers,
If you but step into my world of faith.
This desolate scene will become a haven,
If you fill the world of your heart with love.³*

1. Darshan Singh, A Tear And A Star, SK Publications, Bowling Green, VA, p. 59.

2. Ibid., page 64.

3. Ibid.

Moth & the Flame
58 Rohtak Tour

'Sometimes I have been the son, and sometimes I have been the father.'

Auntie-ji, Manohar and I sit in the back seat of the little Ambassador car, while Master Darshan and driver sit up front. Our destination is Rohtak, an industrial city two hours from Delhi. For most of the journey, Master is silent and absorbed in meditation, his upturned left foot resting on his right knee. As I fade in and out of my own meditation, I can't help but notice a large, symmetrical seven-pointed star on the sole of his left foot, formed out of his naturally occurring foot-lines. This symmetrical 'star' is quite distinct from the Lotus on the sole of his right foot.

Thousands of Rohtak citizens have been awaiting the Master's arrival in the hot sun for more than four hours, lining the roadside for blocks. Our car slowly proceeds through their columns towards the spacious home of Chachaji Rameshwar Das. Chachaji and his wife have spared no effort or expense to ensure everyone's comfort. In spite of his ninety plus years, Chachaji—formerly an advocate of the supreme court, is extremely lucid and spritely.

After the bus load of twenty-five Westerners and twenty Delhi residents assemble inside, a delicious buffet is served. Master enthuses, 'Here you will be served the purest food... only pure ghee (clarified butter) is used and the vegetables come directly from the fields, grown without any chemicals.' He eats with us.

We drive to the satsang grounds. As soon as the Master emerges from the car, he is almost crushed by the enthusiastic crowd. Many literally dive for his feet, which he discourages. One man grabs his ankles out of devotion, almost causing him to fall, yet the Master remains unperturbed.

With his arrival, the joy of the Rohtak sangat expresses itself in a holy chant from Gurbani:

*Darshan dekh jiva Guru Tera,
Puran karama hovae Prabh mera...
In beholding the vision of the Master,
All karmas are fulfilled, my Lord...*

Thousands repeat this refrain over and over. After a while someone stands in the congregation and shouts:

*'Sawan kay lal ke jayho! (Victory to the son of Sawan!)
Kirpal kay lal ke jayho! (Victory to the son of Kirpal!)*

After settling on the dais, Darshan humbly bows his head to the floor, to the omnipresent Master visible in the congregation. Only then does he begin to weave his message, annihilating time.

Tavern of the Midnight Sun: Long after the satsang finishes, perhaps around midnight, I walk dog-tired with my bags to the dharamshala eight blocks away where I hope to sink into restful slumber. As soon as I spread my bedroll, a messenger arrives, 'Brother, Master wishes to see you right away!'

I groan unreceptively—if not ungratefully, for all I want is sleep. But then, such a request is not to be refused. I gather my things and resignedly stumble back to Chachaji's where a small circle of friends sits on the living-room floor about the Master. Gradually

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it dawns on me that he is in an extremely gracious state. Desperately struggling for wakefulness and clarity of mind, like one swimming up from the bottom of a dark well, I finally breach the surface, and catch the breath of his rarefied atmosphere. He speaks beautifully of God as the Eternal Beloved and of the Beloved's wiles, the intricacies of the Path...its twists, turns, thorns, despair, sorrow...and also its hope, ecstasy and joy.² He speaks of becoming ensnared by the beauty of the Eternal, of becoming undone and remade; of sacrifice, surrender and obedience...of the hopeless and helpless state of the separated lover...a state yet to be understood by the world.

We sit close by his knee, absorbed, awake through the night. His spiritual radiance is tremendous. This night, the Sun takes off its glove. To describe the ineffable beauty of this shadowless being is impossible, but even crows will croak:

*Here sits the ancient One—a glowing center
transmitting life into our dust... no dream or fantasy, this!
Out-flowing, in-flowing Light, unfolds Creation's lyric story,
Separation and Union—the song of Everything.*

*He speaks, and an arching spark leaps from Eye to eye,
to heart, to soul, and back, again & again, one seamless circle;
Timelessness finds its locus. Light coalescing, translucent, blazing yet cool.*

*Tell me Whose eyes peer from beneath your brows?
Kirpal or Sawan, Kabir or Namelessness?
You have revealed your secret, O' Darshan!*

*By comparison, all fortunes are ashes,
for tonight there is no separation!*

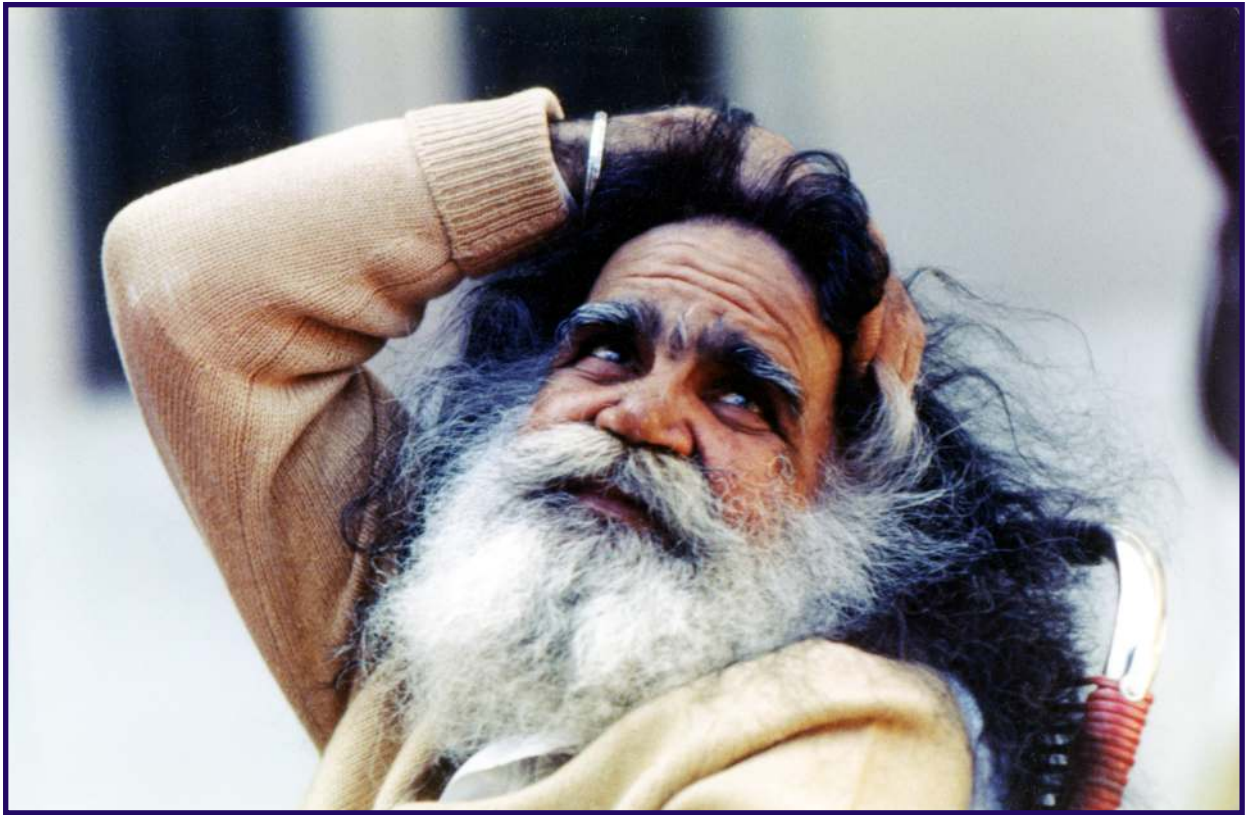
Dawn lightens the skies and birds burst into song, signaling the drawing of a veil over the cup-bearer's secret essence. The wine-cask is unbunged and drained. We can hold no more, and leave to rest. Such sessions in the Tavern of the Midnight Sun sustain the seeker for all times.

Who protects Whom? After the second satsang in Rohtak, Master desires to walk through the jubilant crowds and bless the many who have sacrificed satsang for selfless service in preparing huge amounts of free food for the congregation. Several of us form a wall with our bodies to protect the gentle Master from the undisciplined crowds as he makes his way towards the langar. Halfway, he stops and turns to us, 'I have no need of your protection my brothers, as the grace and protection of the two great Masters are more than sufficient for me!' Our eyes connect.

Over the din I ask, 'Are you sure, Master?' He and I laugh like crazy! We drop our arms. The crowd surges forward, stops within half an inch of his holy body, and parts like the Red Sea. *Our Moses goes directly to those in need, with whom he freely converses without let or hindrance from the likes of us. He leads us from the Egypt of mind, to the Promised Land of the heart.*

Upon returning to the residence, our car is met at the gate by Ramcharan, Chachaji's eldest son. A lively discussion takes place with Ramcharan forcefully entreating, 'Maharaj Ji! Please I beg you, show my brothers and I the Lotus Mark on your foot! This will give us faith if you will only show us.'

The Master isn't eager to make a public show, especially of anything so personal as his foot, but the pleading of these brothers is sincere. He gradually pulls his right foot out of



Darshan - the Mystic Poet

its sandal. A chair and table are brought. With more coaxing in this sweet game, he sits down and places his right foot upon the table. Ramcharan asks me to point out the Lotus mark, while the Master looks on with faint amusement.

After I pointed out the naturally occurring mystic sign, the Master retires to his room, and we to ours for meditation.

On my last day in India, Darshan invites me to accompany him on a visit to his uncle Manohar's house in another part of Delhi. Master sits between the driver and me. At one point he folds his legs into a half-lotus posture, closes his eyes and quickly withdraws from the body, remaining in deep meditation as the car rolls through the rough and twisting streets. I follow suit, mentally repeating the charged names. The moment I close my eyes, the road, the car, and the city disappear, replaced by the effulgent vision of Kirpal, seated upon a radiant throne. **'You are to serve my son Darshan!'** he commands me. What other choice can there be?

Shashi's Complaint: On the eve of my departure, Sevadars enter the Master's room and their leader speaks, 'Maharaj Ji? Shashi Bhenji is lying unconscious out in the courtyard.' Shashi is a school teacher and librarian who performs a great deal of selfless service around the ashram. Master asks if I would like to come along. He holds my hand like a father would a little boy although I'm considerably taller, and descends the stairs to an awaiting crowd. One woman in the crowd has been standing for several hours, yearning for a glance. When he gives it, her soul immediately leaves the body for higher planes. Someone catches her limp form before it falls to the pavement! Her soul will return after an hour or two.

He leads me between the langar and meditation hall, out into the large open area where, four and a half hours earlier, his discourse on 'Spiritual Surrender' had

captivated thousands. Shashi lies flat-out on the ground before the dais, surrounded by several women watching over her. Master rubs her forehead, and trickles water on her face. After some minutes pass, life-currents begin to return and an unearthly wail emits from her mouth. When Sashi's eyes open and recognize the Master by her side, she wastes no time begging him to allow her soul to be returned to the higher regions again. Master demurs, for she has work to do. With a curious smile he comments to me, 'You see, just yesterday, Shashi complained to me that while others are blessed with higher experiences, she doesn't see the Master's radiant form or much else in meditation.' He sweetly laughs, 'Now see her state!' For such an outcome, a complaint may be justified!

Father and Son: Later, back in his living room, I ask, 'What was your relationship with Master Kirpal in the previous life?'

He candidly replies, '*...sometimes I have been the son, and sometimes I have been the father. Actually, the Beloved Master and I have exchanged these roles many a time.*'

If it weren't for my seeing the actual form of Master Kirpal sitting before me in Darshan's place as he divulged this staggering secret, I could never have believed such a thing in a million years.

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1. Manohar was the son of Sant Kirpal Singh's elder brother, Sardar Jodh Singh Duggal.
 2. In the literature of the mystic East, God and/or the God-man are often referred to as the Beloved.

59 Healer of All Wounds

Despite all that I had been fortunate to witness and receive, knowing on a very deep level that Darshan and Kirpal were one, I still awaited full confirmation directly from the mouth of my own Master within who his successor was. Both radiant forms had withstood the inner test of simran, but I just wanted to hear from Kirpal unequivocally that Darshan was his successor. My caution was forged from bitter experience. I did not want to be tricked by my mind. How long I would have to wait I hadn't a clue, and this created intense angst from time to time.

On my last night in India, Darshan and I had an in-depth discussion in the wee hours of the morn. At one point he said, 'It is better to let us wait.' I turned on the tape recorder.

'Wait?'

'Till you have had this boon [of confirmation], one hundred percent.'

'And if it never comes?'

'The question of its not coming does not arise. We should always be on the lookout, always looking for that. It takes its time. You know the situation, brother, and I'll be the last man to advise you to make a second mistake. You must have one hundred percent confirmation, one hundred percent assurance that whatever you are doing is right and in accordance with the commandments of the Master.'

'I want you to know that I am very grateful for the wonderful and ecstatic times we have enjoyed together.'

'Brother, it is my pleasure also. When we sit together, we think of the Beloved, and the caravan of intense memories starts moving.'

'...As I have done in the past, I will work with all love and enthusiasm for Master's work, and if any sincere seeker comes along, I'll send them to you because I know that His power is working through you.'

'It would be best if you pass those seekers onto our two Great Masters. That is all I do.'

'If the confirmation is given to me, then it would be wonderful if it were also given to Ratana.'

'Yes, that's necessary because you have to move as a team. I tell you, throughout life I had never thought I would get entangled like this, but somehow or the other, your Auntie had apprehensions. Whenever the Beloved Master would tell me something or ask when I would retire, she would feel upset about it. He was talking to me alone on so many occasions, but it so happened that the day He told me all about this work, and that I would have to carry on everything, she was by my side. So you know, at least she got the confirmation and this is how the work is going on. I was such a loving husband, and she used to get quite a lot of attention from me, but now...you find our condition. You have seen it, but because she had the confirmation, she is undergoing a lot and is doing her best for the mission, and for that naturally she has to suffer also. If Master also gives Ratana confirmation, then the work can be carried on with great strength. This path is not easy; it is very difficult. If you have conviction and you have grace then you can pull on very nicely...If you did not have that devotion, you couldn't have taken this stand which you have taken so boldly. How many people can take such a stand?'

'There's no virtue in me.'

'Because we can't claim any virtue, we can only call it the Master's grace.'

Someone interrupts: 'Excuse me, Master, but he should be going to catch the plane.'

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'Right, sir! Your commandments shall be obeyed, sir! If you will only give us five minutes... Five minutes extension!' He turns his attention back to me. 'Please convey my love to Ratana, whom I take to be my daughter, or sister—whatever she likes.'

'No, she's your daughter.'

'Because she is of the age of Raji. Raji was born in '46.'

'She was also born in '46.'

'Then she is of Raji's age, who was born on the 20th of September. We were all born in September—myself on the 14th and Harbhajan on the 24th.'

'I can't relate to you as a brother. You're more a father to me.'

'I use the word brother because we are fellow initiates, in that sense. Otherwise you are just like my son Raji, and I have the same love and regard for you. So I treat her as my own daughter. Ask her to devote a little time for meditation. Let us hope for the best.'

In the courtyard as the taxi-walla waited to escort me to the airport, I addressed the living Master, who had come to see me off:

'Coming here has opened the wound of separation.'

Darshan placed his palms together, rolled his eyes upward, and replied, '**He is the healer of all wounds.**' He and Auntie-ji then blessed me and waved me off into the night.

As the months and years rolled by, many peers were fortunate to meet Sant Darshan Singh for themselves. Most received mystic experience in his presence, if not outright confirmation that this humblest of God-men was indeed the repository of the moral integrity and spiritual grace of all Saints who preceded him. Those who remained aloof, lost out. Ever-increasing numbers of new seekers were drawn in novel and mysterious ways.

From the ashes came a spark, a flame, a great Light, a healing.

60 The Mirror, the Laser & Master-Ji

In November of '79, Ratana and quite a few others from Vancouver traveled to India—most of them to meet Darshan Singh for the first time, while I stayed behind with the children. Usually loathe to speak of her own spiritual condition, Ratana wrote me, hinting of something profound which had taken place for her in his presence:

“For the first time in my life, I now know experientially what Master Kirpal meant when he talked of rising above body consciousness.

“There are so many facets to M. Darshan’s personality. Sometimes he is like a child. Sometimes he seems like a giant, all magnificent and beautiful. Last night when he called me in, I began looking into his eyes. They turned golden and bright Light shone from his face. And I was consciousness. Auntie then called from the other room and asked me to request Master to take his food, but he continued talking for half an hour more, mentioning his illness which doctors do not understand. He said, ‘I recently initiated ten people who were physically blind. Who is going to take their karma? Sometimes a man comes asking me to take his child’s fever. The fever goes away, but who takes it?’”

“He said, ‘We are to bring Cosmos out of chaos.’”

One of her companions, Janet Judd, a registered nurse from Vancouver, related her memorable experience:

It was during one of those late nights at the ashram with the Master, around 3 AM. He was assuring me that I was a pure soul, filled with God’s Light. I was shocked and said, ‘Oh no, Master, I’m not. I’m just a sinner and I’m steeped in darkness! You’re the one who is all radiance!’

He again insisted that I was a radiant soul. By this time I was in tears and said, ‘I’m unclean; I’m filled with sins and short-comings. I don’t see Light within, but when I look at you I see you filled with Light.’

He seemed a little impatient with me and said, ‘Dear daughter, you are also filled with the very same radiance! Don’t say that you are unclean and in darkness! Whatever Light you may see in me, is also in you. I see God’s radiance very clearly shining in your face and eyes!’

Again I insisted that I was in darkness. Master became animated and said, ‘If you don’t believe what I am saying, then let me show you! I’ll take you to that big mirror over there and you can see for yourself!’

So, I reluctantly let Master lead me by the hand and we stood before the full-length mirror. When I looked up from the floor, I was amazed to see my self reflected in it, glowing like a fluorescent tube, just like the Master! He said, ‘You see, daughter, the same Light of God is also in you.’

Seekers and spiritual refugees from a variety of countries and organizations arrived in a steady stream through the gates of Kirpal Ashram. Many found it quite incredible that such divine power resided in the diminutive, humble, unassuming poet-saint. Dr. Neil Tessler, a Vancouver initiate of Sant Kirpal Singh was returning from a two week retreat with Baba in another part of India. Neil felt that he must satisfy his curiosity about the reports he had heard, and see Darshan for himself. He writes:

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At the time of our first midnight meeting, there were six people present besides the Master. However it was I who had come to probe and question and so the evening became a conversation primarily between Sant Darshan Singh and myself. After around an hour had passed, I became aware of an energy like a spray coming from the Master's eyes into mine. I felt it washing over my face, head, and gradually my body, like an ethereal shower. I experienced a kind of giddiness which passed into a steadily increasing state of intoxication. In this condition I lost all reservation, all propriety. I asked whatever wild questions and expressed whatever heartfelt emotions came to my mind—primarily my incredible embarrassment for how terribly I had misjudged him. The unconditional, enveloping warmth, the unfailing graciousness from the moment of my introduction to my departure from the gates of Kirpal Ashram, the depth and breadth of his words and his way, affected me very deeply. Combined with a palpable, undeniable transmission of spiritual energy from his eyes into mine, I was left in a state akin to shock and was unable to sleep for the entire flight home.

Darryl Verville, a gifted classical pianist, was present at this session. Just the day before, Darryl himself had received a powerful spiritual experience that convinced him that Darshan was the genuine article. He comments:

Neil, being the intellectual type, asked many involved questions of the Master, and not only were the responses exquisite, but he was pouring a lot of loving grace and attention on Neil. After a couple of hours of this, there was complete silence. Then I saw an amazing laser-like beam of blue light steadily passing from Master's eyes into Neil's. This continued for several intense, heart-stopping minutes.

Much later, Neil continues the saga:

I next saw Darryl about two years later at the home of a mutual friend. He shared with me his experience of seeing rays of blue light passing from the Master's eyes into mine. I then shared with him my own experience of that which he had actually seen but which I had felt physically and emotionally. This was a remarkable affirmation for both of us of the objective reality of the experience.

On reflection, I would also say that to my small cup, it was a sublime affirmation of the importance placed by Sant Kirpal Singh, and all the Saints, on spiritual transmission through the eyes. As he so beautifully expressed, 'The intoxication of that glance is still the life of my soul.'

Many are the experiences that rush forward to be remembered. Eventually, the impress of his love and loving ways was so great on my spirit, that its effect became indelible. Over the years I have come to want with all my heart, to live in the selfless spirit in which he lived, an aspiration born of his unfailing example.

One Who Comes of His own Accord: A final note about Master-Ji, or Music Master (Chapter 14) who had served Master Kirpal as his hymn-chanter from 1951 to 1974, and who had so endeared himself to me during earlier visits to India: I had heard that he had passed away in 1976, but did not know his position on succession. That was important to me, since many regarded him as a highly evolved soul. Sheel, his daughter-in-law was kind enough to share the events of his last days:

The late Shri Partap Singh (Master-Ji) was my father-in-law. After the departure of Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj he was often very sad and despondent. In June 1976 he fell sick and was admitted in the Wellington Hospital, New Delhi. As long as he remained in the

hospital I would visit him regularly.

During his illness, Sant Darshan Singh Ji along with his wife Bibi Harbhajan Kaur came to see him in the hospital. Immediately after Maharaji's visit, when I went to see my father-in-law the next day, I found him extraordinarily happy and cheerful. There was a remarkable change in his condition. As soon as he saw me he congratulated me, and exclaimed in joyous surprise, 'There has been a miracle today! Darshan came yesterday and has blessed me with divine grace. He is Khudha, One Who Comes of His own Accord. Sant Kirpal Singh Ji has not gone anywhere. He has simply changed his coat.'

'Yesterday around quarter to six in the evening, Darshi Ji [Darshan Singh] came. Because the visiting hours in the hospital were over at six p.m., the nurse on duty requested him to leave; the time was up. Then I told the nurse, "Do you know Whom you are telling to go out? He is God Himself sitting before me. By his visit my health has improved." He continued sitting with me for about one hour in the loving remembrance of the Beloved Master Kirpal. He wept himself, and I also wept.'

Normally when I would visit him in the hospital, he would immediately tell me to leave when the visiting hour would come to an end; but on that particular day there was a rare glow of bliss on his forehead. His sadness had changed into joy and jubilation. Shortly thereafter, Master-ji departed this world.

I share these and other unique stories which have meaning for the writer as all are from those who have been part of my journey over decades, but together, they shed affirmative light on the continuation of the ancient lineage and their relevance as individual continuous revelation up to and beyond the present time.

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61 Full Confirmation

When my experiences in 1978 led me to recognize Darshan's spiritual Mastery, some expected me to resume my former role as an initiating representative and group leader. But there was no choice in the matter, as I was honor-bound to wait until receiving full inner confirmation. Twenty months passed, and then...

5 A.M., 7th July 1980: In a vision of remarkable clarity, I was allowed to time-warp back to August 1974, before the physical death of my Master, who now appeared in front of me, clad in pure white raiment, reclining on his side on a white-sheeted bed. I kneeled close beside him. After some time he raised himself up to speak. Darshan Singh stood directly behind him, exactly as he had looked in 1974, younger, dressed in Western clothes and with his then neatly tied-up beard. Simran provided an inner loving-glow as I gazed upon my beautiful, long-departed Kirpal, now very much alive.

I could have passively continued to bathe in the light of this encounter, but an intense need forced the articulation of what I had never before been able to ask: 'Master, who will be your spiritual successor?' He looked at me mercifully and answered very softly, ***'Darshan Singh is my successor.'***

After gazing deeply into his eyes and visage, letting those five words sink in, I felt a great excitement and happiness. I saw that we were in a huge hall filled with people, some of whom I recognized. Shepherding them before the Master, I urged, 'Now you can ask Master himself who his true spiritual successor is and get the answer directly from him.' Darshan continued standing in the background. Then Master sat up and leaned forward, his magnificent face only inches from mine. With great power, he declared, ***'I will tell everyone who my successor is!'***

My head lowered, and heart was full. As a measure of the Godman's merciful nature, the sluice-gates of consciousness were opened; soul and He began to glow, until everything became engulfed in ever-increasing, almost unbearable brilliance and the Song of the Cosmos. The form of the One whom I recognized as Kirpal dissolved in glory and became the portal and catapult to the formless Beyond.

Later, when consciousness reluctantly returned, every cell of my body was suffused with inebriant joy. The long wait of six years from the time of his physical death was over. The last restraint removed, I phoned the living Master in India and offered my unreserved services. He was pleased and said that the timing and measure of confirmation were in accord with the divine plan.

Over the next four-plus decades, I personally met hundreds of old disciples to whom confirmation was mysteriously conveyed in a myriad mystic ways.

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62 Rakhi-Protector

Summer, 1980: Shanti 10, Gurdeep 7, and I visit India for a few weeks during school break. Shanti shares her diary:

August 17: *Gurdeep, my dad and I arrived in India at Kirpal Ashram. Master Darshan greeted us and gave me a big bear hug. Master came down every morning to put his thumb on initiate's foreheads to help them meditate. We folded our hands in greeting whenever he came. He patted my cheeks a lot. He was very loving. Some nights Master would invite us up on the roof of his house where it was cool. One night he invited all of us up. It was Master and Auntie's wedding anniversary. We had ice cream and talked....*

There is a sweet and joyful Indian festival called Rakhi. The ancient customs call for a sister to tie a colored thread on her brother's right wrist, feed him sweets, and pray for his long and healthy life. The brother then gives his sister money and vows to protect her honor as long as he lives, regardless of personal sacrifice. If sister-less, he may 'adopt' a sister, who then becomes known as his Rakhi-sister. In Indian culture, the brother-sister relationship is considered the most chaste.

Diary: August 26, 1980: Our sweetest day yet. The children tie Rakhi threads on the Master's wrist; they also tie one on him for their mummy. He signs and gives both ten-rupee notes and hankies on which



their astrological signs are embroidered. He picks a fragrant blood-red rose from a crystal bowl and gives it to me, with the words, 'In olden times, the disciples used to tie Rakhi on the Guru. This signified that he was always protecting and looking after them.'

The Question of Raji:

Before returning to Canada in early September, I ask, 'Will your son Raji one day carry this burden?'

'Brother, it is still too soon to say,' he replies, and is silent for a minute. 'You know, Raji is very obedient to me. Before he got married, he used to phone me from America to get my permission even to see a particular movie or go out to a party!' Such a deep level of obedience and dedication is rare in this faithless world.

'Raji is very helpful to me in the mission,' he continues, 'and sends me a lot from his earnings. He earns a high salary as an electrical engineer and inventor with AT&T, and if it weren't for his help, how could your Auntie and I possibly afford to feed all those who come to my residence on my modest pension? You have seen how we feed dozens every day from our personal kitchen. The langar which provides thousands of free meals every week is a separate issue, and is maintained by donations from the Sangat; but it is a fundamental principle for the Masters of Sant Mat to live off their own earnings. If retired, they will live modestly off their pensions, and share a portion of it with others.' For the next forty-five minutes, he goes into great detail about Raji's exemplary qualities, but falls tantalizingly short of directly answering my question. He assures me however, that he will make it crystal-clear who his spiritual successor will be.

Master Darshan reveals his chosen investment:

In my government position, I earned a very good salary and had every opportunity to invest in property, the stock market or business, like my colleagues, who made a lot of money. But your Auntie and I decided that we would invest in our children, and we spared no effort nor expense in their education.

There are so many arts: the art of music, the art of poetry, the art of painting, the art of sculpture, and the art of dance. But the greatest art of all is the art of raising children, and making them into masterpieces!

His words made me cringe inside for all the times and ways I had not been fully there for my children.

Science of Spirituality: He freely discusses with me the name of his worldwide organization—Sawan Kirpal Ruhani Mission. The name for this unchanging spiritual science had undergone at least five revisions over the past one hundred years, due to the changing circumstances and the fresh approaches of each new Master. One skirts a fine line between presumption and inspiration, but while the Masters are pure conduits for carrying out the will of the Almighty, they often use imperfect others as instruments of His designs. With this in mind, I suggest that Science of Spirituality or some other, less foreign-sounding name might be more suitable for the West. The Masters had informally used this expression in their satsangs to describe the empirical nature of the spiritual path. In fact, the term "science of spirituality" is written in Kirpal Singh's first major circular and talk sent to the West in the early 1950's, *Man! Know Thyself, and further:*

Stripped of all its outer encrustation's, spirituality emerges as a science, as verifiable as any other. Let the seeker take up the necessary prerequisites in the laboratory of the body, and as sure as day follows night, shall he enter into the kingdom of God.¹

Not long after our interview, the Master announces his decision to adopt Science of Spirituality as the name for his work in the West.

A True Man is like God: A renowned American surgeon and his twelve-year-old son drop by the ashram, invited by well-known artist and illustrator, Valerie Tarrant who was a surgery patient of the doctor, currently staying at the ashram. I turned on the recorder:

Boy: 'How do you meditate?'

Master: 'To answer this, can you first tell me how you study?'

Boy: 'Well, first I read what I'm supposed to study, then I think about it, and then I say it over, and then I look in the book and see if I'm right.'

M: 'Yes, when you study you do not think of anything else...that is what is known as concentration. When we say, "Concentrate on this," it means think of this alone. You forget everything else. It is similar to when you see a beautiful picture and you become lost in it; you forget yourself. In the same way, when you meditate you think of God alone. You do not think of anything else. There is one Supreme Power, which we call God. When you remember God and think only of Him, then you will start seeing Him. First, you will start seeing the Light of God, then gradually you will see the form of God Himself.'

Boy: 'People might picture Him in different ways.'

M: '...when you see Him for yourself you will see Him in his true colors, in His own true form. Ultimately you will see Him in His bright form. What have you heard about God?'

Boy: 'In church we always hear about Him.'

M: 'You hear about Him in what respect? What are the qualities of God? How does God behave?'

Boy: 'Like a human being.'

M: 'And how does a human being behave? A good person always does good. God is all goodness; He does all good things. You have not seen a person like God, but you have seen people with the good qualities of God. And we can meet God just as I am meeting you. We can see God. We can talk to God as I am talking to you. In the same way, when we remember God, He will come to us. Just think only of Him. When you read and remember your lesson, you do not think of anything else. You do not think of playing in your school. You do not think of teasing your mummy at that time. Would you like to remember God?'

Boy: 'Yes.'

M: 'That is what you do in meditation.'

Boy: 'But still can you remember Him in your mind?'

M: 'Yes. When you remember Him in your mind, then He comes to meet you. God has made human beings after His own image. A good human being is a carbon copy of God.'

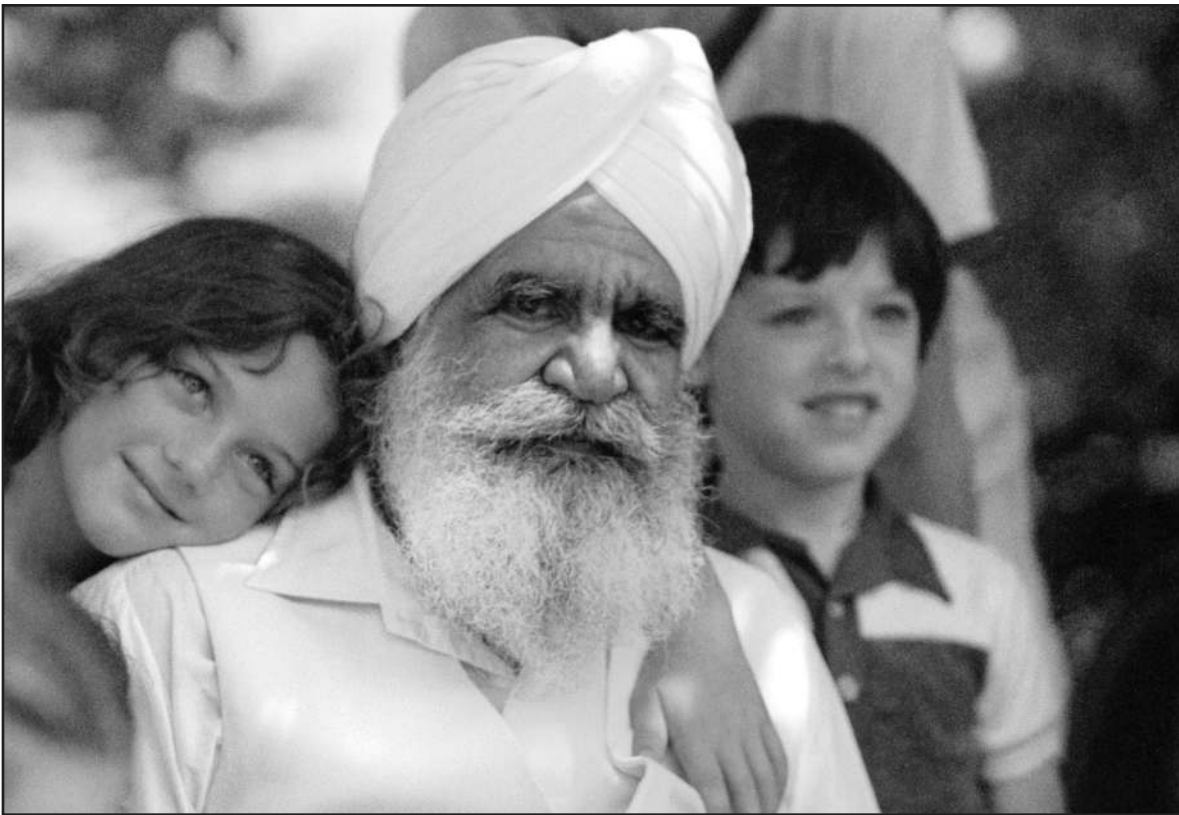
At this point, the young lad looked intently into the Master's eyes for several seconds.

Boy: 'So I will think of you like God.'

M: 'You can think of me only as a good man. God is the source of all goodness; He does all good acts. He is very kind. A doctor may do good only for those who come to him as patients, but God is good to all the people on the face of the earth, whether they are black, white, Indians, Americans, English people, Germans, or any other people.

'When we remember God, and remember God alone, we can meet and talk to Him.

Remembering God means we are not thinking of anything else. And that is meditation.'



Normally, the Masters do not raise the dead, but here is an example of why, in this case, Master Darshan made an exception.

The Master and My Son, by G.S. Chopra:

'My son Surinder Kumar Chopra, B.A., aged 23 years, while going on a motorcycle on Ring Road, Punjabi Bagh on June 3, 1975 at 1 p.m., was hit by a petrol tanker and died instantaneously on the spot. The body was kept in ice slabs for about twelve hours in the dead room before post-mortem which was conducted on the 4th of June at 10 a.m. and the dead body was handed over to me. My wife informed Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj of the accident from the Punjabi Bagh Police station at 5:30 p.m. on June 3rd. Maharaj Ji arrived at my house in New Delhi at 1:30 p.m. on June 6th at the appointed time, before the dead body was to be taken for cremation.

'Maharaj Ji kept the head of my son on his knees for half an hour while sitting with us all in one of the rooms of my house. In this duration the boy's life was revived, his heart palpitated, lips moved, eyes twinkled and he sobbed. Parshad was administered by Maharaj Ji in his mouth which the boy swallowed. My elder son was going to announce that the boy has become alive, but Maharaj Ji hushed him to keep quiet. Then Maharaj Ji said, 'Now the soul has come to the fold of the Guru and is no more drifting astray.' We were asked to sit in Bhajan (meditation) and all see in our inner selves, which we did. The boy was seen along with Guru Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj and was in peace there. We now have patience and peace.'²

1. Kirpal Singh, Man, Know Thyself! Naperville, IL: SK Publications, 1980, p. 22.

2. Ruhani Newsletter, Unity of Man Publications, Bowling Green, VA, Nov.-Dec. 1975, p. 26 (Unity of Man Publications subsequently became SK Publications).

63 One Heartbeat

September 6, 1980: Kapoor Sahib, a disciple and captain of industry, invites Master Darshan, Bibi Harbhajan, and a handful of Westerners to his spacious home for a dinner party. Two blocks from the ashram, the Master calls an abrupt halt, returns to the ashram, and invites the remaining thirty or so foreigners. His tender heart can't bear the thought of leaving even one behind. The Kapoor's don't yet know that another thirty will be coming!

As we settle into their living room, the Master is relaxed and charming. With some encouragement, Kapoor begins to share some of his experiences with Satguru Kirpal:

'Once we traveled with Master to Haridwar and spent quite a long time trying to arrange for a suitable building for him to stay in and hold satsang. I was very tired and suffered a severe heart attack. I lay on the bed and Maharaj Ji held my hands for two hours, during which time my heart had completely stopped beating. I revived with his grace. Then he told someone to massage my body that night. In the morning Master came, took my pulse and declared, "Now no one can say that there is any difference between your heartbeat and mine!"'

I ask Kapoor, 'Tell us how you came to Master Darshan.' He replies, 'Because this is the right place. In November of 1978, when you first came to Kirpal Ashram, you sang Mira's shabd:

*Gullay toh chaaroh Band'a huu-ee
Guru sae milloo kessay jaaey
All the four ways [directions] are blocked;
O how will I meet my Guru?*

'I told you then, "The way has now been opened."'

Death makes no distinction: September 8: Master calls me to him at high noon. The car is ready and he motions for me to be seated beside him and says, 'Kapoor's eldest son died of a heart attack this morning.' We proceed to his home, and are met by the grieved wailing of his wife, brothers, sisters, sons, daughter and other relatives. Master sadly comments, 'This physical life is so uncertain. We never know when we have to leave. *Who knows? The world may end tonight.*'

We sit around the body, with Master near the head. A distinct smile is on the lips of the deceased, like one in triumph or in blissful meditation. Jyoti, his teenage daughter, poignantly begs the Master for the return of the soul of her father, but Maharaj Ji keeps quiet, comforting everyone all the while. For a long time he holds the bereaved daughter against his chest and strokes her head, easing her beyond the shock. His kind path is one of acceptance, and, *Sweet is Thy Will*, although there was an example when the Master had brought back the soul of a boy who had been dead two days from a bus accident in 1975, but that was only for a few minutes—enough time for him to receive parshad from the Master's hand, for the deceased's soul had temporarily gone astray.

By constant example, Darshan teaches love and sympathy for the sufferings and afflictions of others. He is the epitome of the dictum Love knows service and sacrifice. For ten hours he remains with this devoted family, until the body is washed, swathed, removed to the burial ghats, and finally cremated in the evening.

When she becomes calm, Mrs. Kapoor shares with us: 'Last night, my husband was

Moth & the Flame - One Heartbeat

telling me, "Master is showering so much grace on me internally, I don't know if I can contain my ecstasy." But I didn't understand what he was saying. He appeared in perfect physical health and complained of no ailment. After he sent our son Manu to school, he had a massive heart attack. Before his soul left the body, he reassured me that this was the pre-ordained time of his departure, and that he had no say in the matter. I then requested him, "If you are to die, then please do so with a smile on your lips." This he did, as you could see by his face, and he exited this world without any pain. Now he is with the Masters...but I am still here,' as tears fill her eyes.

One day is filled with mirth and merriment at Kapoor's luxurious home, while the next is filled with mourning. More than 250 relatives and satsangi well-wishers have come to the burning ghats. Once the funeral fire is ablaze, we move back to sit under a large cupola supported by pillars. No one has taken any food or drink all day. I feel tired and lean against a pillar about fifteen feet from the Master and enter meditation. After some time, I open my eyes and behold Master Darshan in the dark, though the atmosphere is scintillating. His face turns into that of Master Kirpal. After a long silence, he beckons me to his side and asks, 'Brother, please sing some shabd.' I sing in Hindi this Kabir Ji bhajan, each line softly repeated by the large throng. All weeping ceases.

*Jag mai, Guru samana nehi Datta
In this wide world, there is no benefactor equal to the Guru;
He gives that priceless gem which can be found nowhere else;
His words speak only of the good and the noble.
Lust and anger has he imprisoned; greed is also under his control.
Do today, what you would otherwise do tomorrow;
Otherwise, none shall be your true companion
As again you'll enter the wheel of chaurasi lakh
And suffer day and night.
Hearken to the heavenly Sound as it proclaims:
'Have the company of the Saints!'
When you have surrendered fully to the Supreme Lord,
Kal must bow his head to the ground in subservience.
Kabir says, 'O' disciple Dharam [Das], Part the veil [of ignorance],
Meet the True Master and enter the realm of the Merciful.'*

In the car on the way back to the ashram, Master asks me, 'Were you able to distinguish the satsangis from the non-initiates at the funeral?'

'Yes, Master,' I reply, 'the satsangis were composed and resigned, whereas the others were out of control in their grief.'

'Yes,' he comments, 'that is because they have some inner contact. You saw the father, Kapoor Sahib; how composed he was. This death was a great tragedy for his family; the son was a gem of a man. He ran the entire family business [a large factory manufacturing tractor parts]. Of course, the younger son¹ has been groomed for the position but this man was a master of his profession. In India it is very difficult for the wife if her husband dies. Fortunately they are well off and she will be taken care of. All is in the hands of the Masters overhead.'

1. The younger Rajinder Kapoor is the same person described in Chapter 28 "The Vale of Kashmir," who fell down the mountain, but was miraculously spared any injury.

64 Soami Ji & Agra

The high-speed Taj Express plying the rails from Delhi to Agra, stops for five minutes at Mathura, the birthplace of Krishna. Forewarned of the Master's arrival, a large crowd waits on the platform encircling an empty chair on a white sheet sprinkled with rose petals, marigolds and jasmine. The Master spritely hops off the train (in his youth Darshan Singh was a champion long-distance runner), meets each person individually and sits for a few moments dispensing parshad and words of guidance. Only when the steam whistle blows and the train slowly begins to pull away does the Master reluctantly part and hops back on the train.

At the Agra station, we're warmly greeted by Nagpal-ji, the local satsang leader and his helpers. While satsang is given to thousands of local citizens, Nagpal separately arranged for the foreign visitors to tour the Taj Mahal, but I was interested only in visiting the places associated with the life of Soami Shiv Dayal Singh, the great 19th century Saint of Agra.

Soami Bagh—originally a large simple garden planted in fruit trees and flowering shrubs reserved for the use of Soami Ji's renunciant disciples—a huge marble mausoleum now rises up three stories; elaborate marble carvings adorn the building, and another four levels await completion. Although this work has been in progress for many decades, it likely won't be finished for at least another fifty years. The ambition of the Soami Bagh management is to rival the Taj Mahal. Hmmm, how things change! Before he died, the powerful but humble Param Sant specifically stated that no memorials or tombs were to be constructed after he passed from the material world, considering such to be snares for the gullible and the spiritually naive. In his sayings, Sar Bachan [Prose], Soami Ji declares:

A wise man is one, who, having closely examined the nature of existence in this world, has realized that it is all transitory and illusory; wise is he who has consecrated his human form by devoting himself to Bhajan and Simran. He is wise who, taking the fullest advantage of the various spiritual faculties which the Supreme Father has graciously endowed him with, has realized the invaluable jewel within him, which is Surat [spirit], the essence of his being....

On the ground floor of the mausoleum, Soami Ji's wooden sandals are enshrined on a low white marble altar, the two toe posts aligned in such a way that when one bows (as thousands of pilgrims do daily), they touch one's eyes. The priests claim that this ritual is tantamount to darshan of Soami Ji. A large lock-box with a slot on top is placed next to the Guru's sandals, which receives an endless flow of donations.

After paying respects to the memory of Soami Ji, I find a quiet corner of the huge building and sit in meditation. A few minutes later, hearing much shouting and commotion directly in front of me, I reluctantly open my eyes to find a pujari (priest) shouting and pointing in my direction. I look behind me and, finding no one there, realize that I am the recipient of his outpourings. He is upset because I'm not engaged in rituals like the masses, but sitting in meditation!

At peace, I smile at him, and depart without a fuss. What Soami Ji taught by example and precept, i.e. 'enter within and meditate on Shabd,' had devolved into taboo. How soon we mortals forget, and how quickly the guardians and promoters of non-essentials come to the fore. Again, in Sar Bachan [Prose], Soami Ji warned:

Religious deeds, austerity, worship and charity ever intensify your vanity. Give your love now to the Saints, firmly and with heart and soul. Leave your religious rituals and delusion; and merge your soul in the melody of the Shabd.

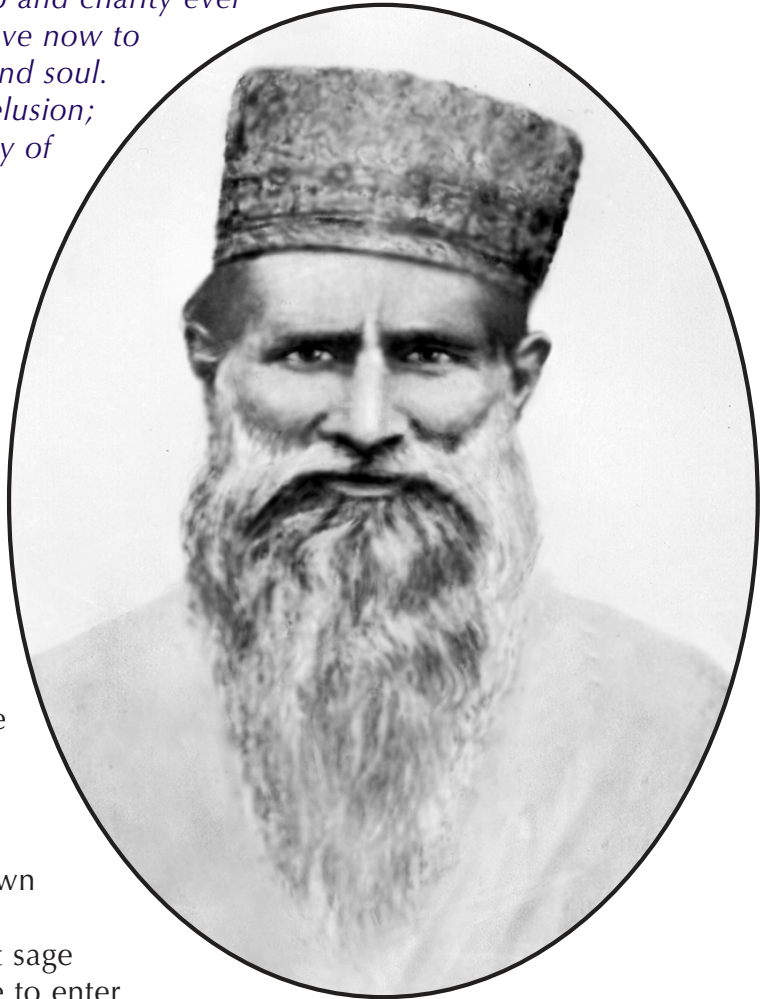
Soami Ji's house: Punni Gali is a narrow, winding lane with four and five-storied houses and shops crowding either side, passing through the oldest section of Agra. We pass Gurdwara Mai Than, where Soami Ji gave his first public satsangs in the early 1800s. A few blocks further down the lane is Soami Ji's house. It is said that on the street was a house of ill-repute, and its inhabitants and clients hid in fear or shame whenever the powerful saint passed by.

Ever since reading about Soami Ji in Baba Jaimal Singh's biography, a deep reverence for him had grown within me. Baba Jaimal Singh was the spiritual successor of the great sage of Agra. It is a thrilling experience to enter Soami Ji's home, which has thankfully been kept undisturbed and undeveloped. A resident guide takes me to the tiny room where the Saint had meditated on a small wooden platform almost continuously for seventeen years. I inwardly pray for the possibility of meditating in this realization-soaked room, but the guide informs me, 'Not permitted!' Before I have time to be disappointed, someone calls from outside and the guide disappears, leaving me undisturbed for about fifteen minutes, prayer answered! The atmosphere is profoundly charged, and ingress practically instantaneous.

Later in the day we join the Master for lunch, and at 4 P.M. we're off to the Shish Mahal or Palace of Mirrors. Darshan Ji personally escorts us through the palace, its walls decorated with millions of tiny glass mirrors. Lighting a match, he holds it near the glittering walls so we can marvel in its myriad reflections. He then recited a few of his verses:

*Every grain of sand in the desert is a mirror;
Amidst your infinite reflections, Your mad lovers are lost.*

*O very life of our dreams,
Whoever left your myriad-mirrored bed chamber,
Did so with eyes that forever lost their sleep.¹*



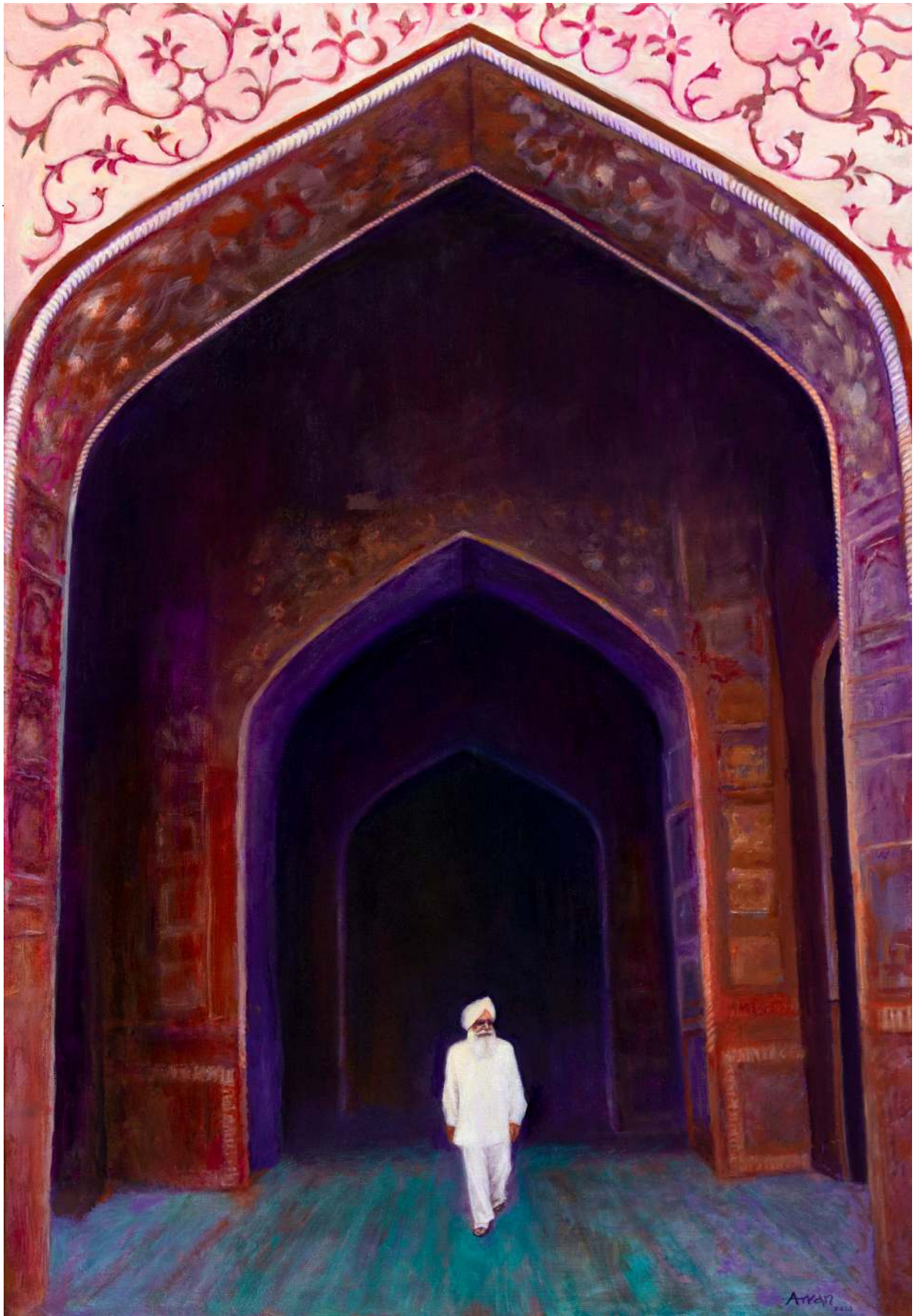
Taj Mahal—a Dream in Marble: Under the arched portals of the ethereal Taj, Master reveals more than its romantic tourist history—the deification of Shah Jahan’s love of his wife Mumtaz, who died giving birth to their fourteenth child. Master pays tribute to the unsung blood and tears shed by the thousands of slaves who died in its construction, and to its brilliant but unfortunate architect, whose hands were cut off by order of the Shah so that he couldn’t design another building to rival the Taj. Someone in our group adds that the architect, forewarned of the king’s plan, sought revenge of great subtlety, building the main dome in such a way that a tiny drop of water would regularly fall tear-like onto the jewel-encrusted marble tomb. To this day, no one has been able to stop the drip, nor unravel its engineering mystery. Darshan Ji adds that when the emperor’s son Aurangzeb seized power, he put his siblings to death and imprisoned the aged Shah Jahan in a distant tower on the other side of the river, from where the Taj was but a tragic vision.

By 2 PM, the heat of Agra reaches exquisite proportions and young Shanti questions me why Master doesn’t do something about it! Over and over, she complains. I keep telling her that I can’t do that. In answer to Shanti’s prayers, a stiff wind begins blowing, and the clear blue sky becomes full of dark clouds. Soon, great fat drops of rain begin to splat around us, yet none seem to touch anyone. The temperature drops at least 10 degrees! The kids realize this is really wow and cool.

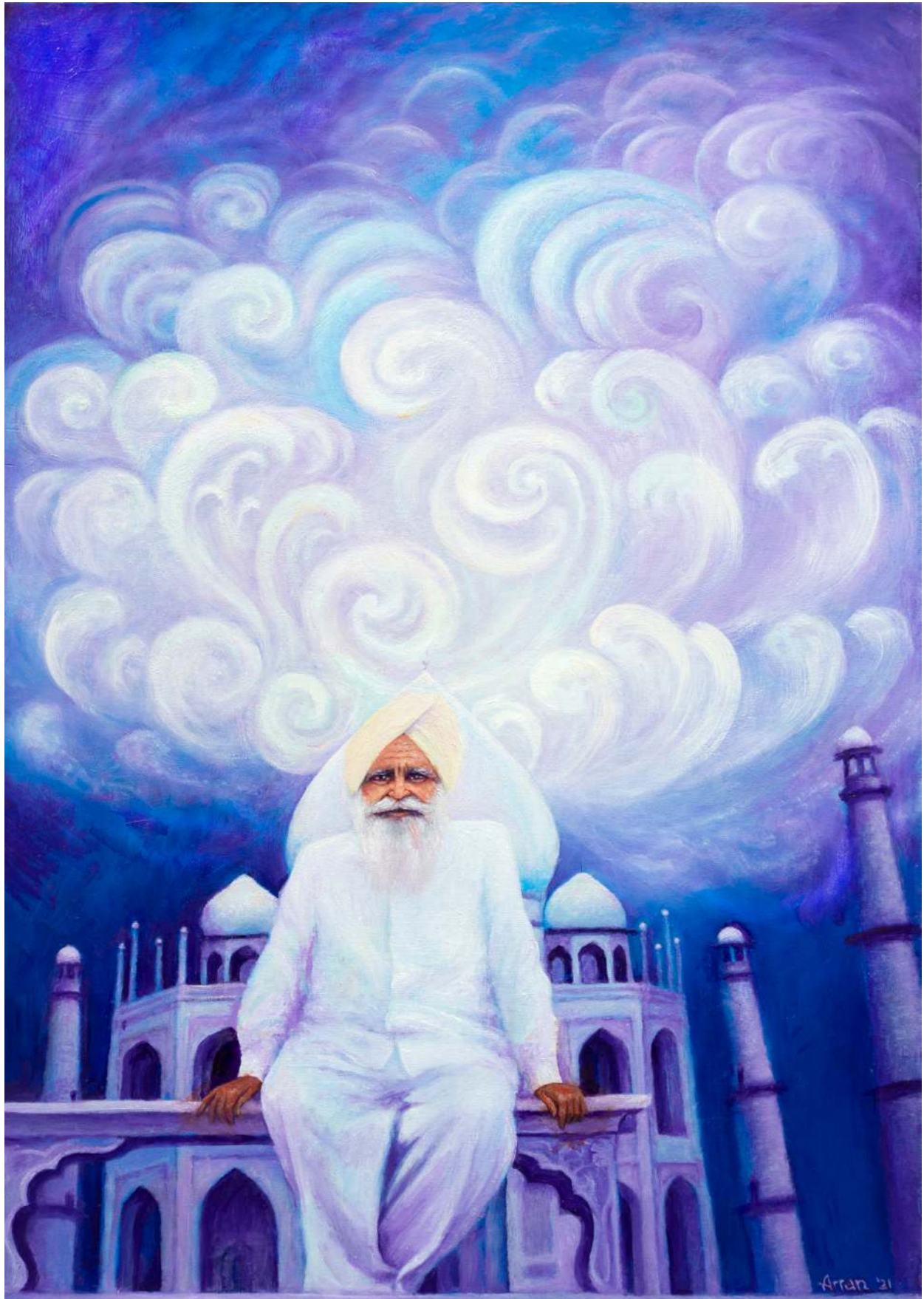
The symmetrical reflecting ponds before the Taj had been emptied the day before for cleaning, so I jumped down inside and took advantage of this opportunity take a couple of photos with the gathering Sawan rain clouds in the background.

In the evening, as our train flies over the rails back to Delhi, Master personally visits with each of us, spread as we are over several compartments. Basking in the glow of this beautiful day, we rename our iron steed, The Sach Khand Express.

(On the following pages are two oil paintings from the photos I took on this most memorable day, #1: *Darshan Beneath The Marble Arches, 1980*; and #2: *And Even the Clouds Paid Homage*)



Moth & the Flame - Soami Ji & Agra



65 Kirpal's Will

After coming to Darshan in '78 and having had my heart and mind re-opened, I began to dispassionately evaluate the body of evidence supporting his succession, which until then I had deliberately avoided and ignored. When Maharaj Kirpal Singh Ji fell seriously ill in 1971 and underwent surgery, he mentioned before a gathering of thousands that he had written a Will, but did not indicate publicly who was his spiritual beneficiary.

The following is a verbatim transcription from the Master's tape-recorded discourse after he returned from Mahajan Nursing Home in August 1971.

I am asked why I fell ill. What a question! Please listen carefully; the law of nature governs us all. One who breaks the law has to suffer the consequences. The way I have used my body is known to all. I have been working, writing continuously in one sitting at a stretch, from six to twelve hours daily. Because of this trouble [illness], I had to postpone my foreign tour. Man proposes and God disposes. Renowned doctors, including the personal physician of the President of India, were consulted. They unanimously decided that I should undergo an operation and, accordingly, the operation was performed. Dr. Mahajan, in whose nursing home I was hospitalized, is a renowned surgeon. After my leaving the nursing home, Dr. Mahajan came to visit me in the ashram and said, 'Now I have come to you not as a doctor but as a devotee...' [The Master laughs.]

Some persons thought that I was leaving this physical vesture and started false propaganda even before my going to the nursing home. I kept on listening. Let such persons know how and when the gaddi [Guruship or spiritual successorship] was bequeathed. This was actually done after my return from the nursing home. If I were to leave the physical body, I would have written the will before admission into the hospital. If I had to leave, I would have done so...' [Again the Master laughs, and continues,] 'The Will was executed on my return.'

Malik Radha Krishna Khanna and Sant Kirpal Singh Ji were fellow-disciples and friends, about whom the Master used to say, 'Perhaps Malik is the only person who has spent more personal time with Hazur than me.' Malik was a brilliant lawyer and served as personal attorney to both Masters; moreover, he was a friend and confidante. Malik also authored Truth Eternal, a book on Sant Mat. The following is a copy of his Sworn Affidavit:

I, Malik Radha Krishna Khanna, Advocate, resident of 6/27 West Patel Nagar, New Delhi, hereby declare on solemn affirmation:

That about four years ago Maharaj Sant Kirpal Singh Ji, in the course of his visit to my house, expressed his desire to nominate his son Darshan Singh as his Spiritual Successor after his demise, and I drafted his Will according to his wishes to the effect that his son Darshan Singh shall be his Spiritual Successor after his demise and carry on his work as he had himself been doing in his lifetime.

Gyani Bhagwan Singh, personal Secretary of Maharaj Sant Kirpal Singh Ji, having been sent to me by him a couple of days later for the purpose, took away the drafted Will from me for being made over to Maharaj Sant Kirpal Singh Ji.¹

I also declare on solemn affirmation that about a month later Maharaj Sant Kirpal Singh

Moth & the Flame - Kirpal's Will

Ji paid a visit at my house and told me that he had approved the draft of the contents of the Will drafted by me and had signed it and got attested by the witnesses.

The above is correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection and nothing material has been concealed or withheld.

Deposed to before the Notary Public at Delhi on 25-9-75.¹

Master Kirpal also informed his friend Jain Muni Shushil Kumar, the sponsor of the World Fellowship of Religions and a prominent religious leader, that he would make Darshan Singh his successor. Although Darshan was easily able to prove his spiritual endowment without the benefit of a legal document, the original hand-written will surfaced which had been long lost, when I was in India in 1980, but ironically, it was no longer needed! The will merely corroborated what was already known by the experience of countless recipients of the living Master's largesse.

Because the first will was 'lost' by others, on August 3, 1974, just eighteen days before Master Kirpal passed away, he got blank papers from Mela Ram and wrote out the will again, in the absence of ____.

As Darshan Singh was not there, Mela Ram entrusted the written papers to Murari Lal for safekeeping. Murari Lal was a trusted business associate of _____. After the death of the Beloved Master, Murari Lal left Sawan Ashram and returned to his home in Jaipur. There he had a photocopy made of the will. After two months, he sent a man with that copy to Sant Darshan Singh, demanding 100,000 rupees for the original. This copy was shown, not given. Master Darshan Singh said he could not and would not pay such a sum. That man then went to Malik Radha Krishna Khanna, who also declined to pay the sum. The man went away.

Murari Lal had little faith in his own sons and placed all his legal papers with a friend who was an illiterate ironsmith. Mela Ram, who was faithful to the wishes of the Master, tried to regain the will so it could be with its rightful designee. Murari Lal died in January 1975. After a several years, Mela Ram discovered that the will was with the ironsmith in Jaipur. Mela Ram obtained a photocopy from the ironsmith and gave it to Master Darshan Singh on April 24, 1980, thinking that it was the original.

The Master handed it over to Rameshwar Das,² advocate, for necessary action. Rameshwar Das related the following instructive and humorous account to me:

I took Mela Ram with me and went to Jaipur. I stayed at Shikar Hotel, which was about four kilometers from the ironsmith's house and shop. Then Mela Ram and I proceeded toward the shop of the ironsmith. On the way, I purchased two containers of burfee sweets, and Mela Ram bought a new pair of sandals. When we reached his shop, I presented the sweets to the ironsmith and said, 'I am the Secretary of Sant Darshan Singh Ji and have come here to give thanks to you. And whenever you want anything or any service, you should inform me.'

Mela Ram presented a pair of sandals for the wife of the ironsmith's son. After some time, sitting there, Mela Ram requested that the papers should be shown to me. We then went to his house along with him and his son. That package was lying in a trunk on an upper shelf. His son brought that trunk over and opened it. I took those two papers written in the hand of Master Kirpal and told them that they were not of much use, and put them in my pocket. The ironsmith wanted some money for it, but with Master's grace he couldn't open his mouth. Mela Ram stayed the night with his son's family, and I went back to the hotel. The next day we returned to Delhi and showed the will to Maharaj Ji. Maharaj Ji

Moth & the Flame - Kirpal's Will

asked me, 'How much money have you paid for it?'

I said, 'Not a single penny, Maharaj Ji, except for two packages of burfee and a pair of sandals!'

The following is a verbatim translation of the will.³

I, Kirpal Singh residing in Delhi, have been doing satsang work for the last 25 to 30 years. Human life is uncertain. It is possible that my life's flame may become extinct during this very month. Therefore, I wish to write my Will for the future so that it may be acted upon after my body is no more.

I have two sons: elder Darshan Singh and younger Jaswant Singh. Darshan Singh is fully conversant with all aspects of satsang. He is also internally advanced together with me. He is also devoted to bhajan and simran [meditation]. Therefore, I make this Will authorizing Darshan Singh to satisfactorily and competently carry out all the duties of satsang as I have done in the past.

Darshan Singh and Jaswant Singh shall equally divide my personal property at 207 Rajpur Road and plots as well as my personal accounts in the banks.⁴ Other than my personal property, all other properties belong to the satsangis [initiates], and there will be no right of anyone else in that satsang property. Donations received will be spent for the purpose of satsang and Manav Kendra. Satsang money shall be duly entered as such in the account books under the supervision of Darshan Singh. Just as I do not use satsang funds for my personal use, in the same way Darshan Singh shall not use them for his personal use. All donations belong entirely for the use of the sangat [congregation]. Darshan Singh shall treat my dear sangat with love and affection and he will not do anything which may be objected to or considered wrong by it.

My dear ones in the sangat shall not protest this Will in any way. I had an earlier Will drafted by Radha Krishna Sahib, but, in spite of all efforts, it is not traceable. Therefore, I am writing this second and last Will in favor of Darshan Singh of my own free will when I am in full possession of all my senses and faculties, without any pressure or coercion by anyone, so that it may be on record and acted upon when the necessity arises.

*(Signed KIRPAL SINGH)
3rd August, 1974.*

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1. In several personal interviews, Gyani Bhagwan Singh who was a witness to the Will confirmed to Dr. Neil Tessler and myself everything that Malik Radha Krishna Khanna had sworn before a notary.
 2. Also known as Chacha Ji.
 3. Sant Kirpal Singh's handwriting has been verified by handwriting analysts.
 4. The personal bank accounts, and private plots referred to were never traced. Consistent with his non-confrontational manner and incredible patience, Darshan Singh never pressed charges.

In the company of Sant Darshan Singh and others, I had the good fortune of visiting the elderly Radha Krishna Khanna at his home in Delhi. Khanna Ji reminisced about his associations with the Masters:

Tape recorders were not in vogue in Hazur's days, but I did try to get permission to make a recording of the Master's satsangs. He said, 'No, this is not necessary. When I am gone my successor will look after you; you should listen to his satsang.'

I always used to sit at the front to listen to Hazur's satsangs at Beas because I felt as I had come such a long distance (from Multan) I should make the most of Hazur's presence. If I didn't sit at the front, the Master would call me and indicate, 'Come, sit here.' I knew that Kirpal Singh always sat at the back, so one day I said to him, 'Bhapa Ji, I will sit with you today.' Well, I saw more, and heard better than ever, and from then on I tried to copy Kirpal Singh. He never blinked his eyes while looking at Hazur. He did not want to lose sight of him for even a split second.

When the great Hazur came to Multan in 1940 and was my guest, before he delivered his first satsang I stood up to introduce him: 'The greatest saint that the world has ever seen has come to us and we are most fortunate.' Hazur said, 'Stop! Who is the greatest saint?' I replied, 'You are!' He said, 'No, no, no! Look here, I am not even the gurumukh of Baba Jaimal Singh Ji. The task he has entrusted to me is to untie the bootlaces of the sangat. Although I am still not fit to do this, if my Master ever makes me fit to do that I will consider my life well spent.' This is the humility with which he would try to dampen our over-zealousness.

Later he said to me, 'You should never praise me like that. It is not good. A real saint will never say he is a saint. If someone tells you he can take you to Sach Khand, that is the surest proof that he knows nothing about it.' Whenever anyone was initiated by Hazur and they asked if he would take them to Sach Khand, he would say, 'Who am I to take you there? It is the Shabd that will take you to your true Home.' Just see the humility! Maharaj Kirpal Singh Ji also said that it was the Shabd that would take you over, that would carry you across. And now I find that Sant Darshan Singh Ji is saying the same thing. He too is humility personified. That is the way the saints work.

Kirpal Singh's hand-written Will.
[Urdu script]

مکتوبہ کیرپال سنگھ کے دست لکھ -
 جو کہ دست لکھ کا نام لکھ کر ہے اس نے ۲۵ - ۳۰ سال پر ہے - رنگ
 تاکو کہ عہدہ نہیں - مکتوبہ پر چرانے جات اس " یہ مکتوبہ
 اس کے ہیں جانتا ہوں کہ آئندہ کیلئے وصیت " ہر قرآن کریم کے بعد
 اس پر عمل ہوتا ہے -
 اور درختوں میں ہے " اس کے بڑا درخت سنگھ اور چوٹا
 جس کو سنگھ ہے - درختوں سنگھ سنگھ کے تاج کا نام ہے
 کپڑوں سے بڑا ہفت ہے - اس کے ساتھ ساتھ اس کے
 حاصل ہے - ہر ایک طرح کے سونے کی کتاب ہے - اس کے ہر درخت سنگھ
 کا حق یہ وصیت کرتا ہوں کہ ہر سے ہر درخت سنگھ ہر طرح سے
 تمام شے سنگھ کے ہوتے ہیں اس کے لئے اس کے انجمن دیکھ - نیز
 ہر ایک پر اس کے جائداد پر خود کوئی ہر ایک اور ۲۰۰ اور پلاٹ وغیرہ
 پر ہے ہر سنگھ کا نام ہے کہ ہر ایک میں ہے درختوں سنگھ اور
 جس کو سنگھ کے نام سے قسیم کریں گے - ہر ایک ذاتی جائداد کے ساتھ
 بغیر ہے ہر دست سنگھ کے ہے - اس میں کوئی ذیل نہیں ہر سنگھ
 جاوے دست سنگھ اور ہر ایک کو آجی وہ ہر دست سنگھ اور ہر ایک
 میں ہر ایک ہوتا ہے ہر سنگھ کا نام ہے ہر درختوں سنگھ کا
 مگر ان میں سب کو ہر ایک میں ہے ہر ایک ہر ایک - ہر ایک سنگھ کا نام
 میں اپنے ذاتی نام ہر ایک میں ہوں - اس کے لئے درختوں سنگھ کی ہر ایک

دست سنگھوں کی مالیت ہے ان کے نام آسکتے ہیں - درختوں سنگھ
 ہر ایک ہر ایک سنگھ کے ساتھ ہر ایک سے پیش آئے گی - ہر ایک
 میں ہر ایک ہر ایک کے ساتھ ہر ایک کے ساتھ ہر ایک کے ساتھ
 ہر ایک ہر ایک سنگھ اس وصیت پر ہر ایک ہر ایک - ہر ایک کے پاس
 ہر ایک ہر ایک نام درختوں سنگھ کے ساتھ ہر ایک کے ساتھ ہر ایک کے ساتھ
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The signature enlarged

66 It is God Who Chooses

The Masters were once followers, but when they absorbed themselves wholly and solely into their Master, they too became Masters. The trouble is that we want to become Masters, not followers. If you become a true follower and absorb your whole self into Him, mind, body and soul, then? ...Be wholly absorbed into the Master and you will become the Master. You need not ask for it. God will choose you, the Master will choose you...It is a great good fortune to have a Living Master, a true Master. There are many masters, a hundred and one, a thousand and one, but they are only acting and posing, or on the way. Anybody who follows them is led away and those who help them are also led away...¹

As a lifelong seeker of life's mysteries and truths, I have met and interviewed several highly evolved and noble individuals, along with a number of self-styled "masters", some from the East and some from the West, who were obviously after pelf and power; some were outright charlatans and fibbers. The bible asks the reader to beware of "ravening wolves in the clothing of sheep," and "when the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch." It's "seeker beware!" Trust, but verify as best you can. And the Divine will guide you to whom you are meant to be with, to further your growth along the Path. But if you find yourself a victim of the unscrupulous or dishonest, leave at once and continue the search.

In the three worlds—physical, astral, and causal—over which Kal, or the Negative Power has dominion, the law of karma or justice rules: *an eye for an eye, a nail for a nail, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life*. There are many snares along the way. The misled innocents are bound to exact their due someday upon the false masters in whom they placed their trust and devotion. It wasn't necessarily their fault, but the law of karma is rather exact. I often pondered this story from the life of Guru Nanak, which I had once heard quoted by Master Kirpal in satsang:

On one of his journeys, Guru Nanak, accompanied by his companions Bala and Mardana, met with a strange sight on their path. A large worm was writhing on the ground as hundreds of ferocious ants were biting it to death. Being tender hearted, Bala asked the great Guru what terrible deeds this poor worm had committed to warrant such suffering. Nanak replied that in a former life that worm had been a false master and the ants were his disciples. They had to be reborn in this form—cruel though it seemed—to balance the scales of karmic justice.

While the story of the worm and the ants may be real or allegorical, once the seed of Naam is sown by a perfect Master via authentic initiation (which cannot be bought or sold), rebirth in a lower form is practically unheard of and salvation is achieved in this or within four lifetimes. No matter how vile the life or the extent of disobedience, the initiate still gets another human birth and the opportunity to repent, make restitution and progress. The Masters have great powers, but their greatest power is the power to forgive. Granted, that next life could be difficult, for certain debts must be paid—even the heavy sin of pretending to be a Master. It is said to be one of the heaviest karmas, to mislead souls under false pretense. The complex web of life, the seeming cruelty of nature, and our juxtaposition within the elaborate maze, may appear pointless and inescapable. We begin awakening from the cosmic dream through Satsang, the contact with a spiritual

Master and by individual practice, but to reach and remain in a state of grace, there is a noble code of ethics* that a disciple needs to strive for and abide by. Otherwise, one's connection to the Divine is tenuous at best.

Each seeker's relationship with the Divine is unique and precious. And, there's hope for everyone. We can change. We have a birthright to know God in this lifetime.

Love is like a surging river. It cannot be dammed up for long. It must find its way to the sea.

** "An ethical life is a stepping stone to spirituality.
Become a true human being first,
then it is not so difficult to realize God.
What one man has done, another can do also.
There is hope for everyone."
—Kirpal Singh.*

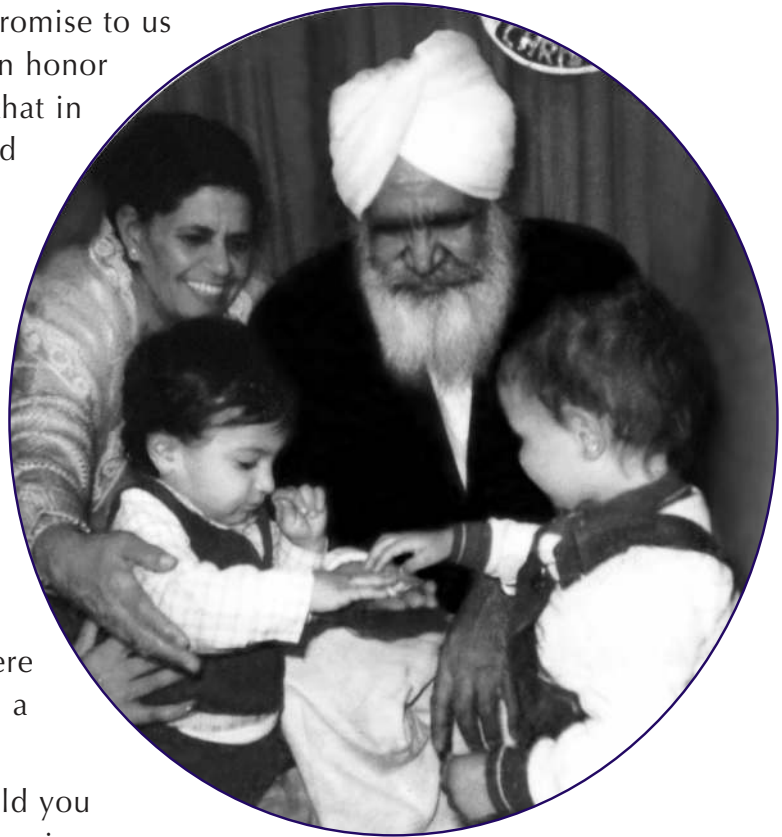
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1. Kirpal Singh, *Morning Talks*, 4th edition (Bowling Green, VA: Sawan Kirpal Publications, 1981) pp. 257-258.

2. For deeper clarification, please refer to BOOK II, chapter 52, *Answers From a True Disciple*.

67 Intimations of Succession

On Thanksgiving Day in 1981, our son was born, fulfilling Master Kirpal's veiled promise to us in 1974. We named him Arjan, in honor of the Fifth Sikh Master, hoping that in his future life, this little embodied soul might find inspiration in Guru Arjan Dev's great learning, wisdom and sacrifice. In the winter of 1982, we brought him to India to be blessed by the Master. Our stay coincided with one by Raji, Rita, Rimjhim (their daughter), and one year-old son Kenny (Kunwarjit) from Illinois. A grand celebration was held in honor of Kenny's first visit to the ashram. Both boys were about the same age and received a lot of affection from the Master.



Christmas Day, 1981. Mata Ji, Kenny, Master Darshan & Arjan

One day the Master asked, 'Would you like to know the etymological meaning of the name Arjan?' He pulled out an old thick book written in Sanskrit, and finding the right page, read out: *Arjan: safedi rang* (fair complexion), *kalota beta* (the only son), and *aakh ka tara* ('star of the eye'), meaning some thing like 'apple of the eye.' It fit!

Christmas Eve: On the top floor of Master's house, a joyous Christmas celebration unfolded, with carols sung in English, German, Spanish, Russian, French, and African languages by a large number of visiting disciples from around the world. A decorated pine tree contributed to the Yule spirit. Jewish disciples sang wonderful Hebrew songs of Peace in the Hanukkah tradition.

When I poked my head through the door and saw the wall-to-wall crowd, it didn't seem possible that even one more soul could fit in. Coming to my rescue, Master beckoned me over to sit at his immediate left. Within moments, a barefoot Raji entered and at the Master's bidding, he sat cross-legged on the floor between the two of us. I couldn't help but notice as Raji slipped his bare right foot up on his left knee in *sidh aasan*. Looking down, I saw on his sole, a perfect *Padam Rekha*, identical to the one I first saw on Master Kirpal in 1967, then Darshan in 1978. Behind this play, by

Moth & the Flame - Intimations

consciously shifting the seat of attention, one begins detecting the inscrutable hand of the Divine—if not the action of Light.

When...the light of God Almighty comes into view without the veil of soul or heart, it becomes perfectly clear. There is no color, quality, limit, comparison, or contrast to it. It itself is the stability and firm support of all existing beings. Here there remains neither rising nor setting; right nor left; height nor depth; space nor time; near nor far; day nor night; neither earth nor world nor heaven itself. Here the pen breaks; the tongue is tied; the intellect sinks into the pit of nothingness, while understanding and knowledge are lost in the wilderness of amazement. —Ibn Yahya Maneri, 1263-1381.

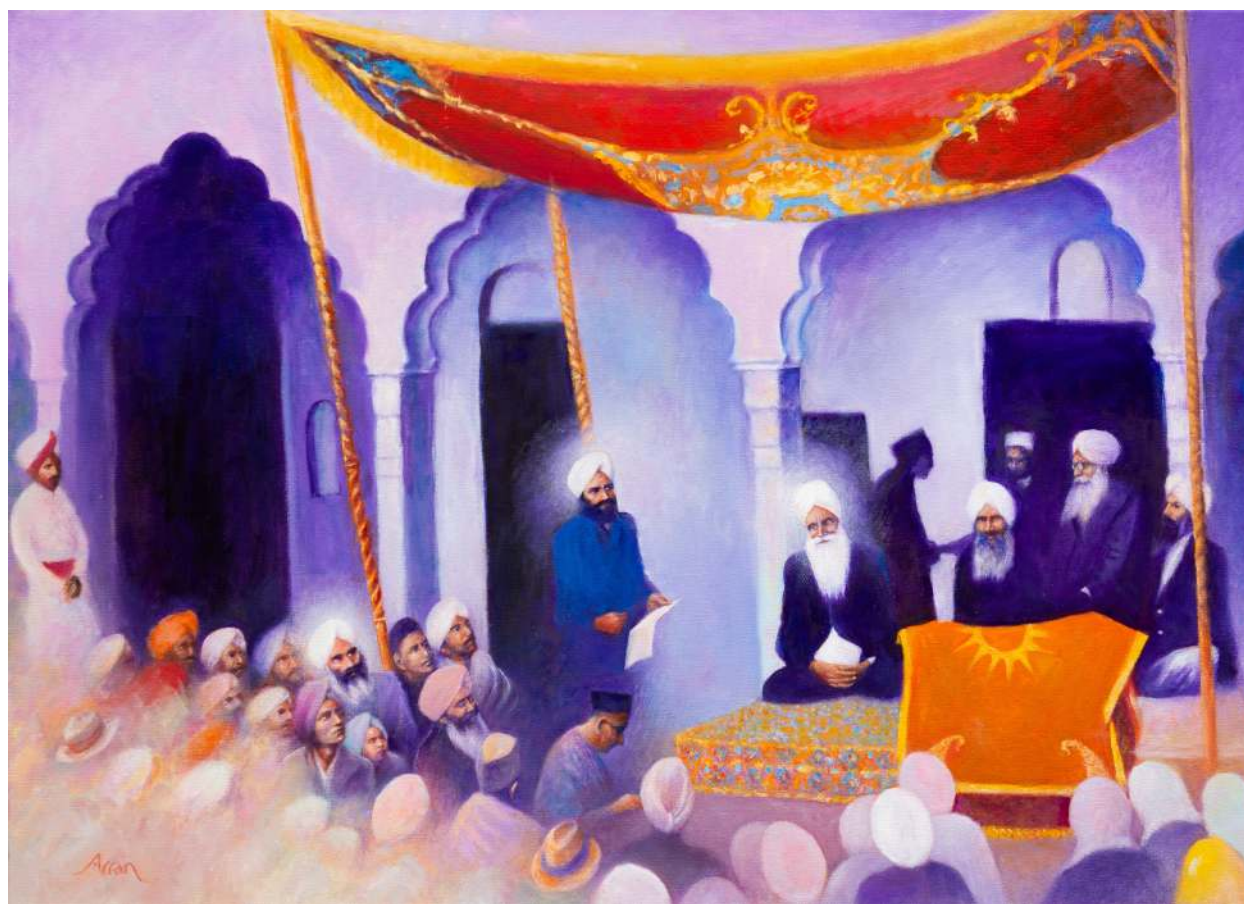
Jamie Smith took this remarkable photograph of Master Darshan's hand. I wrote down a detailed analysis of his palm, observing his incredibly deep and long intellect line, the unusual lotus-like constellation on the Fate line, under the middle finger and other remarkable signs. This lotus-like mark indicated that the crown of life would be achieved, and in perfect balance, amongst other observations of marks, ring of solomon, mystic cross, etc. I added that he would live into his eighties, and by the close of his life of service and sacrifice, his fame would spread throughout the world.

At the end of our long session, Master Darshan commented, *'Whatever you have stated is quite correct, dear brother, but on one thing I must correct you; you have given me too many years. **My life is destined to be short.***'

His all-knowing comment pierced my heart, as I was hoping for his long life amongst us. He poured his life breath and love into the constant service of humanity round the clock, until the last breath, when, at last, in 1989, he left in full knowledge and in perfect peace—as I have attempted to describe further on in *Moth & the Flame*.



Moth & the Flame - Intimations



Sant Darshan Singh reciting his poem before Hazur
(painting by the author)

69 Darshan In Vancouver

*That one night spent in Your assembly
was the fulfillment of a lifetime of yearning.¹*

Sant Darshan Singh accepted a long-standing invitation in August of 1983 to visit Vancouver. For five wonder-filled days and nights (especially the nights), our home was his home, and the Mecca for hundreds of seekers, during which he gave discourses, meditation sittings, question-and-answer sessions at Unity Church, the Vishwa Hindu Temple, in our old victorian house and out in the back walled garden. More than one thousand people met him face to face. By some cosmic interplay, his arrival at the airport coincided with that of his old friend, Sri Jagjit Singh Ji, the pious leader of India's Namdhari sect.² When Jagjit Singh succeeded his guru decades earlier, Sant Kirpal Singh Ji tied his guru's turban on him. Likewise, when Jagjit Singh's predecessor became guru in the early thirties, Baba Sawan Singh tied his turban on him—an act of great significance for the Namdhari followers. Jagjit Singh Ji visited our home where the two holy men met for two hours. Between them was a bond of brotherhood, love and respect.

Prior to Darshan Singh's arrival, I notified neighbors and police that a renowned spiritual leader—the president of the World Fellowship of Religions—would be our house guest, explaining that none should be alarmed at seeing a large number of people coming and going. Sixty out-of-town guests slept on our floors, in hallways, closets, garage, and in the basement. The kitchen became a langar, where copious amounts of food and chai were served around the clock to both friends and strangers. It was a fantastic, joyous, intoxicating, unforgettable time for all.

After a public meditation at Unity Church for over three hundred and fifty people, the Master fielded a wide range of questions. Many new seekers and skeptics who had followed his detailed instruction, were amazed and uplifted upon experiencing powerful inner Light along with the living Master's radiant form within. At one point, Paul Hurst—an old Kirpal initiate—called out from the back of the packed church, 'Darshan Singh!' I wondered what would come next, for as far as I knew this man had no interest in succession. 'When I was a child,' he proceeded in a clear voice; 'I often had visions of Kirpal Singh—who subsequently became my Master. He would appear with a younger man at his side, whom I now recognize as you. All this occurred many years before I had even heard of your names. Then I saw you in the form of a young man. Today I see you as the Living Master.' Darshan lowered his head, gracefully lifted his hand and turned it, finger pointing up to the unseen Facilitator.

Wherever he went, Master Darshan was in a state of gracious surrender, like an innocent child. His manner was kind, patient, and compassionate with all. A distinct jasmine-lilac fragrance emanated from his body at all times, for I had the privilege to be constantly close by his side, and I'd just direct and introduce him to the many whom had either been bereft of such physical presence since Master Kirpal left the body nine years earlier, or those whom had never met a Master in the flesh. His attention was like a ray beam, and as I guided his elbow to this or that person in the crowd, love and light flowed out from his eyes and countenance. He was ever bowing slightly, hands prayerfully joined, while ecstatic recipients would bow back, never taking their eyes from his. In the process, he passed kind and insightful comments to those in his path. In his unitive state, all were brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons. No purer love could be found in the world.

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'Master, our daughter is very intelligent, but she does not study,' we said of one of our girls. Looking deep into her eyes, with kind but firm love, he gently asked, 'Daughter, what is the use of such profound intelligence without diligence?' Thereafter, she consistently graduated with highest honors.

When you come across a magic place, listen: While driving the Master to various disciple's homes, he specifically asked to see Woodlands, our vegetarian restaurant. When he walked into the eatery unannounced, more than forty customers were dining; amongst them happened to be five or six initiates. Someone exclaimed, 'Look! Master's here!' He glided through the place slowly, glancing at the sumptuous buffet, radiantly smiling at both servers and customers with guileless affection. Every single person in the restaurant silently and spontaneously stood, respectfully acknowledging his remarkable presence. Not a word exchanged as his hands joined together in greeting; every eye met his, and returned his smile. Without further ado, he bowed to all, turned and departed. Not surprisingly, many of these customers showed up for the evening discourse and several were initiated into the inner science the following day.

*Woodlands that the winter's sadden
The leaves of spring again shall gladden;
So toils an undiscouraged God
And covers the barren fields with sod,
And I know nothing that the good, the true,
The gentle, cannot do. —Anonymous*

The Sleepless Saint takes rest: Prior to Vancouver, Master Darshan literally hadn't rested in weeks. For four days and nights at our home we were witness to the fact that he took no sleep at all. As the *Saqi* or Cup-bearer, his awakening attention was distributed without let-up. If the kind reader is incredulous it is understandable, but we who were there witnessed his non-stop service. Those who assisted in his work were likewise imbued with great energy and required little rest—maybe one or two hours per night at the most. On the last night, at around 2 AM it seemed that even he had pushed his physical carriage beyond all limits; seeing his great fatigue, I intervened and announced to the living room gathering: 'Master has a physical body, and even though he is super-human, his physical frame also requires some rest now and then. Please forgive me, Master, but I'm going to insist you take rest now. I'm also going to insist that everyone allows Master to take leave, so that he can be refreshed for his next tour stop in Mexico and South America.'

'Whatever you say, dear brother. I am at your service,' he said, as he allowed me to shepherd him through the crowd and up the stairs. This took another twenty minutes as he insisted on blessing each person individually. Halfway up, he turned around to again infuse the atmosphere and the congregation. When at last he was alone, the soft bed was ignored for a simple cotton futon on the floor. In moments he was gone, and there he lay for eight hours, body resting, yes, but where his soul did go only the Highest of the High would know.

After blessing many, including strangers at the Vancouver airport (one of the airport officials was moved to tears after she received a special glance, and a gentle touch of his hand to hers), Sant Darshan Singh left for Latin America where he was swarmed, and the number of new initiates there grew by more than two thousand. Sant Darshan Singh was awarded with the Medal of Congress of Colombia and given the keys to several major cities where huge audiences flocked to his talks. Carlos Sardi, President

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of Congress of the Republic of Colombia told the Master, 'Your tour will impress the necessity of looking inside, for the world within is so rich that in reality it is the only one that can make man a true man.' For the next ten days the Master took little rest, if any. Certainly he would get none back in India. He was truly the Sleepless Saint.

The Friend of God: After his departure, we held a special gathering at the Unity Church where all were invited to share something of their experiences of the past few magical days. Towards the end of the program, a middle-aged woman stood. 'Hello, my name is Mary,' she said. 'I was wondering if it would be all right if I could add something. I'm the Unity Sunday school teacher and I'm not an initiate.' I invited her to the microphone where she spoke guilelessly about her wonderful experiences. The following is a verbatim transcription from tape of her sharing:

'I don't really know how to start this because I've been sitting in on these things, and I think they are fantastic. I like being with you, although I'm not belonging of you. I was upstairs [in the church] getting some stuff for the children's church school downstairs and there were people pouring in, pouring in, and I didn't know what was going on. I thought maybe there was some new religion going on or something. I found out that the beloved Master was here—Darshan Singh, am I right? So of course, we all came down from upstairs and sat in with you. I was astounded, absolutely astounded at the vibrations that our church suddenly took on. I can't explain it. You people know about it, you people are part of it; you are this, I know. It was just like the whole church was velvet. The air was velvet, you were velvet, and I was velvet. I sat in on that and I listened to him and began to think, "My gosh, I've never meditated in my life before."

'I didn't know what to do properly. I sat there, and I had done this 'quiet stuff' before, but never meditated. So when he was sort of guiding us through this I began to think, "Oh, that's right, I do see a sun, and it's right here, and it's in me!" And then I felt this incredible warmth. Then there was a moon; I saw a moon, and I thought, "Well, this is nuts! I'm absolutely bonkers. I'm just imagining this, because he said this." And this went on and on.

'I came back that evening [for the satsang], and the same thing started up again, during the meditation, and then at the final time on Friday, he had a very intense meditation. As you know, he was sitting here on a little raised dais. I saw him there and closed my eyes. I was getting these incredible vibrations from this dear little man. I don't know if I should call him that to you people, but he was the dearest little man I ever saw in my life. And I could feel all this vibration between us. I was meditating and meditating and then I saw this same thing, and then finally, I just seemed to...I don't know, but I didn't take any kind of an astral trip or any of that sort of thing, but I just was absent, and I was right up in the universe. It was a big experience! I was right in this universe, and I could see stars, I could look around, and all this sort of thing. And the next thing I knew, I could see a Master, and I thought, "This is ridiculous," because I had looked at those pictures, and I knew that my mind was doing something to me. However, in came this picture...the Master...' [She points to a picture of Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj.]

'Then, after a while, Darshan Singh appeared, right there. He was just there, in me, somehow. And that was absolutely incredible, because he is such an intense human being...then I was in this state of total meditation, total feeling, and the whole place was just absolutely alive with something. And then I heard sort of a noise, and a bit of rustle, and here was Arran and several other people, and the Master was walking down here. And I looked up here [to the dais] and he was gone. He had left so much energy,

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right there where he'd been sitting, and I was meditating to his energy that he left. I nearly fell out of the seat, because here he was walking down the aisle, and he'd gone downstairs.

'I'm not able to be initiated, it would be very wrong of me to be initiated, I do eat meat. I hope I haven't offended you people, but I do eat meat.'

I interjected, 'We all ate meat at one time.'

Mary continued,

'So, I couldn't go through with the initiation. Friday evening, when I was at home... it must have been ten or eleven at night, I was sitting on the chesterfield, and I was sort of thinking over the experiences I had had. I was in that frame of mind. I wasn't meditating, but I was thinking. And all of a sudden I had the most incredible prickly—like little electric shocks—right here [she points between her eyebrows], it came right in here to my eyebrows, like pins and needles. And then next thing I knew, Darshan Singh totally appeared right before me, and he sort of talked to me about things pertaining to me and my life.

'And then, on the Saturday when he left, I was standing out there, and Arran introduced me to him. And he was so darling, and Arran said, "This is one of the ladies who is involved with the church..." And the Master did this [placed his palms together in salute] and said, "Thank you very much for having me here. This is a lovely building, and all the facilities were excellent..." He was absolutely great in saying thank you about us having him here. Our church and our meditations and everything have just grown intensely, because Darshan Singh was here.'

Barbara Roberts, who was devotedly following another successor-claimant, explains how she was drawn to Darshan, against the strenuous objections of her mind:

'My first and only meeting with Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj was in the summer of 1983 in Vancouver. I was already initiated by another Master at the time, but, curious to meet Sant Darshan, mostly because he was Master Kirpal's son. Sant Kirpal was my husband David's Master as well as my grandmother's.

'My first impression on the first day of his visit was how sweet he was—diminutive yet such big energy! I remember him walking down the aisle in the Unity church, greeting everyone with such love and humility. On the second day, I went to his introductory meditation talk. Shortly after I closed my eyes, I saw Master Darshan inside. For the next day and a half, every time I closed my eyes I saw the Master inside. I was surprised, a little shocked, even somewhat annoyed, as I didn't consider him as my teacher at the time. I also noticed that my meditations were better than they had ever been.

'I continued to attend all of the Master's talks. He was so beautiful, so giving, so lovingly attentive in some way to everyone. What was really impressive was how he just gave around the clock.

'The night before initiation, I tossed and turned—all the while seeing the Master inside. What a gift! But I wasn't able to totally appreciate it at the time. I felt tormented with the decision—whether or not to take initiation, feeling terribly torn about leaving my previous teacher and sangat (community), or to follow what was a very spiritually profound experience. Well, I finally decided on the latter. During my initiation I was disappointed to have no experience, little realizing then just how blessed I had been with my experience of the inner Master that had lasted a day and a half before initiation.

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'David and I went to the airport to say goodbye. As I was looking at him through the glass, the Master gave me such a glance that my heart opened and I could do nothing but stand there and sob.'

I'll conclude this endless tale with the young American Sufi, Jaami Travis, a student of Reshad Field, who spoke so eloquently of his meeting with Darshan:

'The time spent with the Sufis served me well. On the eve of initiation I beheld the Beloved in the love-drenched eyes of the living Master, Darshan Singh. As I gazed into his eyes, he became transfigured and radiant with light. He possessed such a beauty that I can never forget that evening, for truly I beheld the glory of God...

*'My eyes will not turn from your face and I ask nothing of you but your beauty. Your perfume intoxicates me and I swoon from it.
Truly you are Hu Dost, Friend of God.'*

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1. Darshan Singh, A Tear and A Star, Bowling Green, VA: SK Publications, 1988, pp.12.
 2. The Namdharis have been historically referred to as Kukha Sikhs. They follow a vegetarian diet and are pacifists. The mostly hereditary followers of this movement number several hundred thousand, and may be identified by their all-white cotton garb and turbans worn flat across the forehead.

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The Friend giving 'Darshan' in our garden, August, 1983

*From now on I call you not servants;
for the servant knows not what his lord does:
but I have called you friends;
for all things that I have heard of my Father
I have made known to you. John 15:15*

69 Paradise - Lost & Regained

Via Sant Kirpal Singh's writings, discourses, example and transmission, disciples and students throughout the world received a deep appreciation of the underlying unity of mankind's great spiritual traditions. Direct personal revelation of the inner Light and audible Life-stream unlocks many a conundrum found in the Bible, Q'uran, Vedas, Sutras, Adi Granth and other scriptural texts. Through Kirpal, many in the West first learned of Kabir, Guru Nanak, his nine successors, and their mystic verses born of divine experience. For me, a warm affection developed for the histories and traditions of the past Masters—and a particular attraction to Guru Gobind Singh—an intuition strengthened by an unforgettable vivid dream of being a warrior and captain in his defensive army—that ended in my beheading by Mughal forces somewhere in the 17th century. While traveling with Master Kirpal in rural India almost four decades ago, I clearly saw in him Gobind Singh and all the former Gurus. Spontaneously, I adopted the distinctive Sikh form and maintained it in a free-spirited way for more than fifteen years, while studying every available related text, translation and history.

In the fall of 1983, after months of deliberation, a personal decision was taken to cease wearing the turban that had long been a part of my external appearance. Since no binding oath or baptism had been taken, I was free to blend into the society of my birth, although such would inevitably be misunderstood—either way, a Westerner in a turban was misunderstood. After cutting my hair (which had grown to over three feet in length—would also be misunderstood), I felt some inexplicable loss; heart-wise, however, nothing changed—spiritual practice and disciplines of the Formless Path continued. Soul and God—independent of outer religious labels—seek each other's union; one is the spiritual Ocean, the other, endless droplets or waves of consciousness. A thousand ways of worship are reconciled in the Nameless One.¹

Three years passed. An excessive workload, family obligations and intense financial pressure diminished some of my inspiration and zeal. Fortunately, daily contemplation upon the mystic Word saved me from being altogether drowned by the world. Gripped by duty, fueled by expansive ambition, and stung by business setbacks, I felt torn between the outer and the inner. Snagged on the thorns of karma, unable to still the mind enough to contact the Radiant Guide within, I was in great need of a spiritual recharge, but feeling somewhat uncertain. And, Sant Darshan Singh was in the midst of his third visit to North America, although his itinerary did not include the West Coast.

Emotions were a jumble as I checked into Montreal's Hotel Dorval on June 12, 1986. Not more than twenty feet from the front desk, Sant Darshan Singh passed by, surrounded by a cluster of happy and laughing devotees. They seemed to float across the lobby, buoyed up with the lightness of joy radiating from the source in their midst. Conflicting emotions kept me at a distance, and my head was lowered. Later that night when the Master passed only a few feet away, he looked near me, but alas, our eyes and hearts did not connect. He embraced or patted others, but for me, *nothing*. (I recalled a similar incident with Master Kirpal while meeting him in a crowd in New Hampshire on his 1972 Tour, when apparently he too did not give

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any sign of recognition—until much later that night.) Ego is an unruly tree in need of regular pruning, and an expert gardener knows what branch must be cut that the tree might bear the fruit of humility. I returned, a stranger to my strange room, to toss, turn and burn through the long night, pining for a vision of, and nearness to God's Saints again. The presence of the Masters often summoned the caravan of such intense, all-consuming memories and longings.

Why are profound transformations often prefaced by periods of turmoil? What is this enigma? Nanak has said:

*Live in sweet remembrance of the Lord;
In pain we remember, in pleasure we forget;*

*If in pleasure we'd not forget,
Then pain would never arise.*

At 7 AM, Dr. Roger Foisy, the Quebec representative and friend of twenty-one years, came to my room and found me disconsolate. He very kindly insisted that right then and there I should go and meet the Master in his hotel room. When I entered, Darshan, who had been up all night with seekers, appeared dreadfully tired, but roused himself from the couch where he was lying, turban and beard askew. Feeling guilty for disturbing his rest, I nevertheless complained of my lack of inner contact with the coveted One.

'Brother, you have read Milton's *Paradise Lost*?' he asked. 'Paradise lost and Paradise regained are sometimes regular features of the Path. Not to worry, dear brother, our Masters are very gracious.' With infinite patience, he poured tea and moved a plate of Indian Parle biscuits towards me. His hands were trembling and he seemed desperately weary, his face heavy with the burden of humanity's need. As we drank and munched together, I felt my burdens lifting. Within forty-five minutes, my heart was singing! Amazingly, Darshan's countenance completely changed. All indication of grey weariness disappeared, his cheeks were rosy, and he bubbled with joyous energy and humor. 'Oh! It's after 10!' he said. 'I must go for the meditation sitting. Would you like to accompany me?' What a question!

After tying a new turban and combing his beard, he led me down the corridors, holding my hand all the way to the auditorium where about six hundred were waiting. There he let go, greeting and blessing the crowd that enveloped him. I found a seat halfway back, watching as he gave instructions. After everyone closed their eyes, I continued gazing at him, and he looked long and deeply back. My eyelids then closed of themselves, and what came made up for the long, barren spell. His power drew me within very quickly. In brightest Light, Darshan's form appeared; simran was repeating itself; then his full face moved up close. With immense spiritual force, he commanded, more strongly than Winston Churchill's famous command to an embattled and war-weary England, '**Never give up!**'

A remarkable vision: When he inquired if the inner Gurudev had spoken to anyone, about eight or nine raised their hands. With a nod from the Master, Sethi Ji scribbled down their interior audiovisual experiences. Ellen Nardiello, a local writer, reported a remarkable vision, stating that Hazur specifically directed her to share it with the sangat. Sethi Ji then requested the Master for permission, which he gave. Ellen, who had to walk with canes, came slowly to the podium and shared the

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following:

'Master Darshan showed me each of the Masters from Nanak and Kabir to the present...manifesting God's power and love. Then Master Darshan's form changed into that of his son, Raji, and he said that Raji was his successor; that when he would leave, Raji would be the Master and administer existence with the same love that he himself has shown. Master Darshan added that his departure was not imminent, saying, "I have much love still to give my children, but when I am gone, Raji will distribute this same love. You should not fear that time."'

Sitting before us was the living Master, and as no one apparently thought of Raji as the next Master, this public revelation generated a mixed response. Some were jubilant, some were incredulous, some questioned its appropriateness. The Master himself pretended not to hear!

In the winter of 1986, Sant Darshan Singh made another, yet unannounced trip to the United States, ostensibly for medical treatment. Eminent specialists were consulted, and it was found that his physical heart was only operating at fractional capacity. The asthma of his early years had also returned. Both these medical conditions were undoubtedly vicarious, and his earthly spiritual mission appeared to be coming to a close. He hardly ever rested or slept, for his habit was to unceasingly minister to the endless human stream at his door. Yet no one ever heard even a murmur of complaint from his lips.

Although it was attempted to keep Darshan's winter visit and its purpose secret, word eventually leaked out. Over a month went by with no news, and anxiety amongst the world-wide sangat was rising. I had to pass through Chicago on some pretext of business with a burning desire to hear directly of his welfare. From my hotel at O'Hare Airport I phoned Raji, who lived in the suburb of Wheaton. Raji answered my concerns very kindly, but was justifiably protective of the Master... who was also his father. He explained that due to his weakened physical condition, Master was resting and hadn't seen anyone, not even the local initiates for the past several weeks. I mentioned that if by any chance he wanted to see me even for a minute, I was in town—if not, that was fine also, and left my number. An hour later, I received a call from Raji, saying, 'Arran, this is your lucky day. Master is feeling better and he would like to see you.'

The taxi dropped me off at the door of an ordinary well-kept house in the suburbs. It was very cold outside and the streets were icy. Before knocking, the door opened, and there stood Maharaj Ji surrounded by his family. After a warm embrace, he led me into the living-room where we sat together on the couch for over an hour, the Master holding my hands the entire time. I had never seen him more radiant and beautiful, but his hands were trembling. 'You are the first person I have seen so far, outside of immediate family and the doctors,' he said. Our conversation touched on his health and treatment, the mission, family, business and such. He then homed in on the progress of my manuscript which I began in 1967. 'At the present rate of progress,' I facetiously replied, 'it will probably be published posthumously.'

'Brother,' he exhorted most seriously, 'I humbly implore you in the name of the two great Masters that you complete your manuscript in the shortest possible time. This book will be of benefit to many, based as it is on your first-hand experiences...As such it will not merely be the parroting of others.'²

1. To this day, in our home, we often preface or end daily meditation with a brief recitation from the Adi Granth—especially the Jap Ji of Guru Nanak, or listen to a brief excerpt from one of the Masters recorded satsangs. I often read a few lines from the copy of Gurmat Siddhant in Punjabi which the Master gifted us on our wedding day

.2. In June 1989, I asked the new Master, Sant Rajinder Singh, ‘When did the Master take you up to Sach Khand, and when and where was the mantle of successorship passed?’ He replied, ‘This took place when Master Darshan was at our home in the winter of 1986. The gracious Master took my soul with him to Sach Khand. Afterwards he informed me that I was to carry on the spiritual work after him.’ The eternal flame of Mastership was transferred in the suburbs of Middle America, two and a half years before Sant Darshan Singh left the world.

Perfect Sants are the conscious co-workers of the divine plan, fully qualified and prepared by their Masters well in advance of taking on such an onerous role.

70 When was I less by Dying?

*When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
I shall become what no mind e'er conceived.*

Several weeks before Dad passed in 1976, he shared the following dream: 'A long black limousine entered our driveway and drove right up to the kitchen window where I was sitting. I couldn't see the chauffeur's face under his cap, but then he turned and looked me directly in the eyes. The driver was Kirpal Singh! I can't erase the image of his face nor his penetrating glance.'

Although his yearnings for fame and fortune went unfulfilled, Dad confided, 'You know I'm not religious, but I do have three prayers. First, I don't want to die in a hospital or an old-age home; let me pass away in my own space. Secondly, when I go, it should be sudden, and not by some horrible, drawn-out disease. And thirdly, I don't want anybody around to see me die. These are my only prayers.'

On the day of his actual death, Mum was away in Arizona with her sister. Hale and hearty in his eightieth year, Dad had just returned from his daily five-mile walk. While alone and crossing the living room, his heart stopped and he collapsed, striking his head on a shelf as he fell. My brother discovered him that evening. As no blood flowed from the resulting cut, the coroner deduced that his heart had ceased beating instantaneously. Thus his three prayers were answered!

Mum had developed emphysema in 1976, caused by a forty-year smoking habit, despite having quit in the early seventies. Her suffering over the next fifteen years steadily progressed, as did her dependence on debilitating steroid medication and breath-inhalers. In November of '87, Mum asked if she could meditate with the group which was then meeting at our home. I was amazed, for she had rejected all my previous invitations in that regard for twenty years.

She elected to sit on the stairs outside the room where thirty-five people gathered for silent meditation. After forty minutes, a loud commotion erupted from the hallway. I found her on the stairs, surrounded by our four children, all crying. 'Mum, are you alright? What's wrong?' I asked.

Trembling and barely coherent, she said, 'They'll think I'm crazy!' With eyes wide open, and tears flowing, she pointed a trembling finger towards an empty space in the hallway. She stammered, 'K, Ki, Kir, Kirpal, Kirpal Singh just walked through the front door! He passed through the solid wood, and stood right there, in the hallway. He stared at me with his blazing eyes. But who will believe me? They'll think I'm crazy!' After assurances that we would not, she continued, 'The Master stood there in the hallway for about ten minutes gazing into my eyes! There were no audible words, but a language passed from him to me, from his eyes to mine, and entered my soul. It was incredible! Power was blazing from him. I don't know what to say. I'm afraid whatever I could say will be understood as the ravings of a lunatic... Oh, damn, who cares! Please now do as I say; promise me that you will be the first person to stand right there where the Master stood a few minutes ago. Now go out the back-door and come around through the front, and stand right there.'

I indulged her wish and stood where she indicated. I closed my eyes for a few minutes and felt a powerful, spine-tingling presence. It was not difficult to intuit that her soul would soon gain permanent release. When I returned to the gathering of friends, I

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related her strange experience in the electrified atmosphere. Strangely, almost everyone began to shed tears.

In December, Mum gathered her grandchildren around her wheelchair and broke the news that this would be her last Christmas and we had best take advantage of the little time left. For the next week, thirteen-year old Gurdeep faithfully served her night and day, administering oxygen and massage whenever her beloved granny was unable to breathe.

More than once Mum confided to me that immediately after Christmas she would discontinue all medication, and consciously die. Her emphysema was now complicated by pleurisy and shingles. Loathe to live artificially by drugs and machines, she expressed a clear wish to die with dignity, in full control of her faculties. She sought my moral support. Repeatedly she begged the Master Power to take her from this world of suffering. Repeating 'Kirpal, Kirpal,' she would gain some relief. Her prayers focused on God and the Master, whose identity she realized as indistinguishable.

Via telephone from India, Sant Darshan Singh Ji advised me to encourage Mum to surrender completely to the Master Power, but if she were 100% set on dying, I should respect her wishes. He conveyed his love and blessings in the name of all the great Masters, strongly assuring that she would receive full protection.

A wonderfully warm and loving Christmas gathered the extended family clan around the Yule tree—Ratana's mother, grandmother, sisters, husbands and children, her brother Rakesh, our kids, and my brother Godfrey were all present. This unlikely collection represented several generations of family life, and contributed a richness and diversity which had been sadly missing from my culturally narrow waspy background.

When I accompanied Mum on the ferry to her home on Vancouver Island on New Year's day, all medication had been discontinued, yet strangely, all physical discomfort had ceased. Body and mind were at peace. She again saw the Master with her open eyes—this time walking towards her in the hallway. 'Whenever his turban brushed the ceiling, sparks of light showered,' she exulted.

Many were her questions concerning life after death, and the experiences awaiting. She was happy to talk of these things, and displayed a remarkable absence of fear. As she was hungry for the truth, I inwardly sought guidance from the Masters and shared highlights of the stages of the inner journey, and the fate of those lucky ones who come under the protection of a perfect Master. I then related the story of the Landlord and the Saint, which Hazur and his successors have been fond of telling in their satsangs:

Once a miserly moneylender went to the home of a poor tenant farmer in a village, and demanded immediate payment of a loan, plus a huge amount of usurious interest. The farmer was able to pay the principal, but asked for leniency on the interest, which was beyond his meager means. The moneylender turned a deaf ear, for his heart was hardened with greed.

'I see you will not pay me,' he told the farmer. The money lender evicted the farmer and took all his land, cattle and grain. The farmer and his family were ruined.

There was no one about to carry the moneylender's luggage back to his own village. He looked around wondering what to do, as he was too proud to carry it himself.

A Saint was sitting nearby and witnessed all that had gone on. He approached the moneylender and offered to carry the luggage, on one condition. When the moneylender

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asked what the condition was, the Saint humbly replied, 'Either you talk to me in praise of the Lord, or you listen as I speak His praises.'

The moneylender agreed to listen to the Saint, but in his heart he didn't think much about it. The Saint shouldered the luggage, and as they walked to the train station, he spoke of nothing but the Lord and His greatness.

When they reached their destination, the Saint looked into the moneylender's eyes and spoke with great seriousness: 'I have seen that you are destined to die in a few days. In your life you haven't done a single good deed, with the exception of this past hour which you spent in the company of a Saint, listening to his spiritual discourse.

'Listen carefully,' he continued.

'When you die, the angels of death (Yamdoots) will appear and ask if you wish to enjoy the fruit of this one satsang now, or later on. You must tell the Yamdoots that you wish to enjoy it immediately. Ask them to take you into the presence of the Saint. You must then sit in meditation with him, and you will be safe.

As the Saint predicted, the moneylender died shortly thereafter and death's angels took his soul to the Lord of Judgment (Dharam Rai) where the record of his good and bad deeds was examined. The one and only good deed in his entire life was the brief time which he had spent in the company of the Saint, listening to his words of wisdom. When the Yamdoots asked if he wanted to enjoy the fruit of this good deed later on, the moneylender remembered the Saint's advice, and replied: 'Let me enjoy the fruit of satsang at once. Take me to the Master now.'

He was brought to the Saint, who was absorbed in meditation on the holy Naam. Overcome with gratitude, the former moneylender addressed the Saint:

'O Master, thank you for your mercy and grace. But I fear that this time with you will soon come to an end, and the angels of death are waiting for me outside.'

The Saint told the moneylender to continue sitting with him in meditation on the Lord. So long as he continued doing this, the angels of death could not come near nor claim him. And the longer he stayed with the Saint, the more his account of merit increased.

Defeated, the angels of death returned to the Lord of Death, and explained why they



Arjan, Shanti, Granny, Gurdeep & Jyoti, 1987

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were empty handed. Death replied, 'Forget the moneylender, as he is lost to us forever. We have no dominion over the true Saints nor any who take refuge in Them. We have many others to catch.'

I assured Mum she was far better off than the miserly landlord, for she had not only lived to bring joy to strangers throughout her life, but she also had the protection of the Master-power. Nevertheless, it was vitally important that she keep her attention on the Master's radiant form when she departed. My only regret was that she did not have the five holy Names.

On January 2nd, her spirits were exceptionally high. She phoned her old friends, her sisters Margaret and Everal, and wound up loose ends. She made peace with everyone. She stipulated that she wanted neither funeral nor fanfare. 'I'm not coming back to this world, she stated cheerfully but firmly. 'I'm going to be one with the Master forever.'

When I commented, 'Maybe you'll meet Dad on the other side,' she surprised me by saying, 'He might not be there. He has probably reincarnated; he was very attached to what he hadn't completed in his life.' We had never discussed reincarnation, and as far as I knew, she had no interest nor belief in the subject. She again reiterated her Home-going with Master; her desires for this world were finished. Her vision was clear. What son could not feel joy in the face of such surrender and wisdom?

I asked if she would like a satsang held in her honor. 'I would like that very much,' she answered. In the afternoon my brother and I sat around her bed, and we again spoke of the real purpose of life. Godfrey, who had been resisting the Master and his influence since I introduced him in India in 1967, said, 'Somehow, we are all inextricably bound up in Kirpal Singh and his Power. Mum, if he is a Godman, then you don't have to worry. He will take care of you.'

Around 5:30 p.m. her serene face was traced by a faint smile. While holding her hand, I asked if she would like to meditate. She nodded, and together we entered the golden brightness. After some time we opened our physical eyes. Her face was aglow. I asked, 'Did you see the Light?' She replied, 'Yessss...!' I asked her to look again within the Light and seek the Master's radiant form. Her eyelids closed. Moments passed. Then her lips moved and she asked, 'What is the meaning of '___ ___'. Startled, I replied, '___ ___' means the Absolute Truth...which is within you. It is the highest name of God, given by the Master at initiation.' This was a supreme gift from the inner Master. Her last sound in this world was an effort to repeat the holy Names, 'Saaa...Saaa...Saa...' and she became unconscious. Around 1:50 a.m. on January 3rd, 1988, she breathed her last. Her appearance was delicate and pure, like a fragrant, wilted lily.

I phoned the Master in India. With profound surety he declared 'Your dear mother is in the radiant realms of pure consciousness, enjoying the full bliss and protection of the Masters.' He added sympathetically, 'Dear brother, she is my mother too.'

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*I died as mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was a man.*

Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?

*Yet, once more, I shall die as man,
To soar—with angels blessed,*

*But even from angelhood I must pass on;
All except God doth perish.*

*When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
I shall become what no mind e'er conceived.*

*Oh! let me not exist, for non-existence
Proclaims in organ-tones,
'To Him we shall return.'*

— Maulana Rumi ¹

1. *Mystery of Death* by Kirpal Singh. Delhi, SK Publications, Bowling Green VA, p. 22.

71 The Soul of Love

*Love is a Candle, O Darshan, that consumes life itself!*¹

After Mum's transition from the 'vale of tears,' this earthly plane, Ratana and I are irresistibly drawn to India again. The Master's health is reported as fragile, and we are mindful of the poet Browning's saying, 'Who knows, the world may end tonight.'

During our first two days at the ashram, I experience a rare bout with depression. Jet-lagged, breathing Delhi's increasingly polluted diesel air, bombarded by the cacophony of noisome squalor, Bollywood music, firecrackers and marriage parties beyond the gates—for this is the wedding season—I attempt rest in our freshly constructed room—the plaster yet damp on the walls. Am I getting too old for this, too pampered by Western convenience? Worst of all is the sense of disconnection. 'This is the last time I come to India,' I confide to my spouse, with an edge of desperation.

Two more days pass. Such is the effect of Darshan's company, my negativity is replaced by a delirious joy, which accepts all and embraces all. Even the walls and trees, the cows and crows, have become dear. The imperfections transpire into perfection; the squalor beyond the gates and the milling humanity ebbing and flowing through assumes a divinity all its' own. How did we stay away for three long years? In the presence of love complaints and negativity are silenced; grumbling and ingratitude arise only in love's absence. We rise to a new octave. It is at this time during a meditation that Mum appears, free from the ravages of age and illness. Her smiling countenance is full of radiance; she smiles, waves to me and rises up, disappearing and becoming one with the Light forever.

The Saint's perspective: Ten of us sit around the Master, with whom we share the common floor. I relate the following parable, seeking to draw upon his wisdom:

A disciple walks down the street. He's beset with temptation and revulsion at every step. A little later, his Master takes a walk down the same street. What does he see? What does he know? 'O God, I see You here in all—in the sinner and in the virtuous. Everywhere is Your beauty. Thanks, for I see You, and only You!'

Sant Darshan comments:

The Masters see everything bathed in the Light of God. In their eyes nothing is inherently evil; everything is inherently good. There are two schools of thought—one, which states that the nature of man is basically evil, and the other which believes in the basic goodness of man. The Saints always take the latter course, as they see the Light of the Lord who is all goodness radiating from every living being. Looking at man from such an elevated angle, it is no wonder that the Saints of the higher order always overlook our faults, our sins, and our shortcomings. We should always try to look at things from this angle and ask the Master for the grace to be able to do so ourselves.

He continues:

Despite the prophecies of doom and gloom, our Master Kirpal foresaw the dawning of the Golden Age, when there would be peace between man and man; when love would reign supreme... Usually when one Age or Yuga ends, the new age is preceded by cataclysms, Dissolutions or Pralaya, and Grand Dissolution or Maha Pralaya. The difference with the dawning of the coming Golden Age is that it will come about by a change in the human heart. So, my brother, it all depends on our angle of vision.

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We should always try to see the basic goodness in our fellow man, and thus, with a transformation in our own heart, help bring about the Golden Age.

Over the following weeks, we participate in another intimate slice of the divine. In the normal world, we are bound by patterns of habit and desire. In the fluid, sleepless, spiritualized sphere of Darshan's world, these are transubstantiated, altered and subsumed. As he approaches the sunset of life, the filament of his essence and beauty constantly emerge through the surface, magnetic and incandescent—as it was in Kirpal's last months on earth.

On many a random midnight, comes a greatly coveted knock on our door and the summons, 'Brother Steefun! Sister Ratana! Maharaj Ji calling! Come quickly!' Knowing that at any time we might be called, we go to bed fully clothed and at the ready. The Gracious Master—as he is affectionately known—shares sumptuous vegetarian dinners with guests, relatives, and a few locals at the craziest hours—2, 3 or 4 AM—his normal supper-time. While passing multiple servings of delicious food about the table, he jokes and makes witty repartee, himself eating sparingly of kicherdee (unspiced rice and dal), plain chapati and spinach or okra subje without chilies. He delights in mystic poetry and reminiscences which flow through the nights and the dawns. Rather than tiring, we are imbued with passion for more and more, released for rest only after the chirping of awakening birds and the rousing neighborhood.

Sleep? Around the Sleepless Saint, who sleeps? Who wants rest? Regularity? Hah! Meditation? Wherever one is, whether with him or waiting, one can close the eyes and ears and attune. With Darshan, grace flows freely and discipline is never imposed, but arises from within. If lax in spiritual practice, however, one misses the best of what he has to give. At daily sittings in the meditation hall, he often places his hand on the foreheads of meditators, pressing thumb gently over their third eye, firmly moving it upward once or twice, before moving on to the next in line. Sometimes he will only touch three or four out of many. Wordless sessions, these, and after his departure, one can sit for hours absorbing the surges like heavenly streams cascading down from higher planes.

Time, in his presence, is suspended, and in that boundless chaos one discovers rare order, perfection, and enchantment. We witness how much he accomplishes each day; how many people he sees, what burdens and pains of others he shoulders, the scores of urgent phone calls he answers, all at the price of his own failing health. Darshan, the tenderhearted, refuses none so long as he has breath. What pretensions can a would-be disciple have when the Guru has none? He bows to the feet of the elderly while dissuading others from touching his. He possesses a child's innocence. Tears of compassion and tears of remembrance spring readily to his eyes.

*This quivering, glistening tear on your eyelashes
is a star falling from the azure sky;
A drop of mercury, sparkling and full of warmth,
or a lustrous pearl emerging from its shell...*

Humor and laughter are also his instruments. Though extremely knowledgeable on practically any topic, he often asks our opinions and listens closely. He might start off on a mundane theme, but never fails to end upon a profound mystic note. One must take care not to be lulled by the relaxed familiar, nor take his friendship for granted, for behind the human is an awesome spiritual power.

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This afternoon, while sharing tea, he becomes absorbed in a newspaper, underlining and circling certain articles. Like a professor, he lowers the paper, raises his ample eyebrows, peers over reading glasses and says, *'I keep up to date on the latest developments locally, nationally and globally by reading the newspaper for fifteen minutes every day. Articles which interest me, or which I want to know more about, I mark for later reference when I have time. If I don't have time personally, I'll ask one of my friends to check up on them, and research the facts, which I will review later. In this way I can be up to date with current events, trends and developments. It is important to be well informed.'*

'Mysticism is not escapism. I coined the term Positive Mysticism which teaches us to lead balanced lives. That path which teaches us to abandon our worldly and social responsibilities is what I call Negative Mysticism. That is not our path. We need to develop all-round in every sphere of life—mundane and spiritual, as integrated men and women. We are to shoulder our family responsibilities. Our level of consciousness should expand from the individual level to the family, from the family to the national level, from the national to the international, and from the international to the cosmos.'

As a scholar and a stickler for details, every quote has to be accurate, never exaggerated. And while kind, he sometimes corrects the misinformed or misguided with humorous wit and indirect irony. On the tendency of devotees to capitalize in print anything to do with the Masters, he ironically asks, 'Is it not capital punishment?'

Darshan Singh carried out the onerous responsibilities of Mastership conferred upon him in 1974 while concurrently working full-time in a high post within the Indian government until officially retiring in 1978. On his way to and from work each morning and evening while riding on the back of his cousin Manohar's scooter, hundreds would wait to have his darshan-glance. During those four years where his duties as Master and civil servant overlapped, he discharged his worldly duties by day and ministered to the ever-increasing sangat by night and on weekends, usually from his small government-appointed apartment—which soon became outgrown. The awe of his co-workers and neighbors grew and many became ardent devotees.

'On my final day of service I stood with eyes closed and hands folded,' he told us one night. 'Your Auntie asked me, "What are you doing?" I replied, "I am praying to the two great Masters and offering to Them my profound gratitude, because today I am leavin.., and I am all gratitude to Them for protecting my honor.'"

Professor Janak Raj Puri: One of the frequent nightly visitors is the erudite Professor Puri, author of many fine books on mysticism, and an old disciple of Baba Sawan Singh. Puri Sahib, although aged, has found elixir in Darshan's presence, where years and weariness simply fall away. One night, the professor arrives with Sohan Singh Bhandari and Jaswant Singh Chhabra, two venerable Sawan disciple-friends.³ Bhandari was in charge of the huge langar at Beas. What a foursome: Bhandari, Puri, Chhabra and Master Darshan—as they pass the entire night singing and sharing the glories of their Hazur! I sit in a corner, observing, delighting.

During the month-long preparations for Master Kirpal's 94th birth celebration on February 6, 1988, more than 2,000 sevadars—selfless, unpaid volunteers—are organized into committees to accommodate and feed more than 60,000 people for three days, and about 15,000 for ten days. When the celebration arrives, every nook and corner of Kirpal Ashram, Kirpal Bagh, and Sawan Ashram are used to provide free shelter, bedding, food and medical assistance for out-of-town visitors. Imagine the huge

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quantities of food, blankets, and medicine! During the 5th and 6th, the crowd overflows into the street outside, where television monitors are set up so all can see the program. I say to the Master, 'This place is too small.' And he replies, 'The Beloved has room for his lovers...and he will also make accommodation for them.'

On the night of the 5th the ashram resounds with beautifully rendered Gurbani by Professor Satnam Singh Sethi, one of India's greatest singers [His tapes and records can be found in Indian music stores not only throughout India, but also in London, Vancouver, Toronto, Los Angeles and New York]. An initiate of Sant Kirpal Singh, Professor Sethi was blessed with good inner experience, but after 1974, he lost contact with the inner Light. Several years later he came to visit Sant Darshan Singh, seeking grace. Master Darshan humbly offered his services in the name of his Predecessors. Escorting the famed singer to his private office, he sat him down, touched the point between the eyes, and left the room. Whatever had been lost was quickly restored; thereafter the Ragi became a regular visitor to the ashram. His superb performance tonight is followed by a troupe of singers, wearing gold brocade caps in Muslim fashion. Mukesh and Handa Sahib lead the ensemble with a Qawwali rendition of one of Master Darshan's ghazals. The cadence begins slowly, but as the tempo picks up, the talking drums, the ching-ching of cymbals, rhythmic clapping and the harmonium's rippled flight punctuate the night. Synchronous clapping is taken up by the sangat. And as the ensemble sings, our Murshid often raises his arm, hand gracefully turning, forefinger up, eyes partly closed, glowing, joyful, swaying. Qawwali goes on and on, releasing us, lofting us:

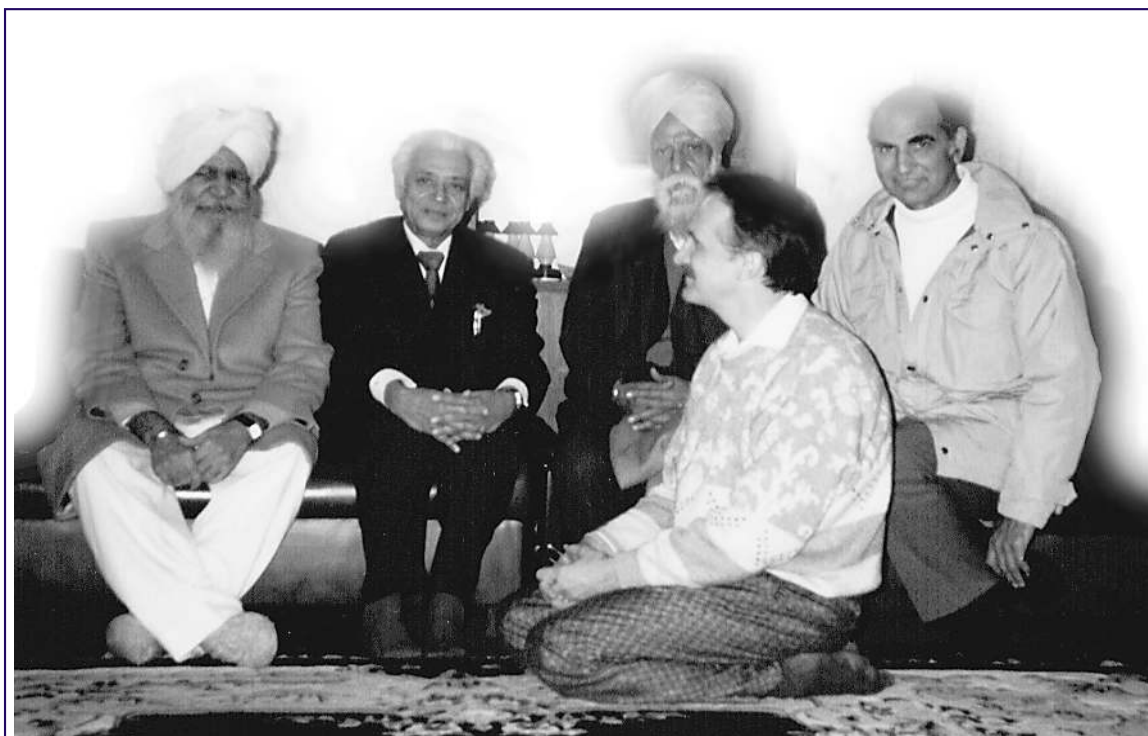
O' Saqqi-ah, jaam challey, jaam challey, jaam challey!

O' Cupbearer, let the goblet of divine intoxication
go round, and round and round!

The meaning of Qawwali⁴: Around 2 AM after the program winds down, we retreat to the Master's house. At one point he turns and addresses me, 'Qawwali is part of the tradition of Sant Mat, or the Path of the Masters. It is when the disciples sing the mystical verses of Sants like Maulana Rumi, Maulana Dard, Khwaja Hafiz, Bulleh Shah, Chisti, Khusro, and others to their Master, their Murshid. Actually, Qawwali is a reflection from the inner realms when the lovers gather around their Beloved in the inner planes in a circle and sing paeans to him... Hazur was very fond of Qawwali and often held Qawwali Darbar [the Court of Qawwali] on the roof of his residence at Beas. Sometimes fifty to two-hundred would gather there on his roof, and Qawwali would go on into the night.'

'Did Hazur ever employ Qawwali in his satsang,' I ask. 'No,' he replies, 'but the Beloved Master did so on several occasions.'

Servant of the servants: Each night after a long day's service, most of the two thousand sevadars collect outside the Master's residence. When he appears, he listens to their difficulties, dispenses advice, and distributes parshad. Also met are individuals and groups from all parts of India, as well as visitors from more than thirty foreign countries. When the function winds down, Master spends hours personally handing out bundles of clothing, books and parshad to each volunteer. His zeal and love are inexhaustible, growing in the giving.



Left to right: Sant Darshan Singh, Professor Janak Raj Puri, Jaswant Singh Chhabra, the writer and Amar Nath Sharma

Typically, over a hundred people per day are fed from the Master's personal kitchen. His house is not his own; all have staked their claim. In his kitchen service is a young woman from a very poor family. Since her teens, she has quietly and efficiently served under Auntie's supervision. As she blossomed into womanhood, Master arranged for her wedding to a suitable young Indian man and himself bore more than ninety percent of the marriage expenses. The river of giving and receiving is never static; the Masters are what kings were meant to be. And that is why they are called Maharaj, although their kingdom is not of this world.

Disciples in Pakistan: I have the good fortune to meet a small band of Muslim disciples from Pakistan. Abdullah of Peshawar introduces me to his brother. Among them is Bibi Khan, a young woman who shares her remarkable story:

Two years ago, my father and I were on pilgrimage to Mecca. We stayed near the shrine of the Kaaba that houses the black stone of Abraham. One night I had a vision of the holy Master. I wondered why I would see someone in the Sikh form when I, a Muslim, looked only to Prophet Muhammad, blessed be his name, and to the saints of the Sufi path. He directed me to return with my father to Pakistan, and look up one M. Shaukat at such and such address. I knew of no such person. Father shared faith in my vision, and when we returned to Lahore, we went to the street mentioned in my vision, and found Shaukat Sahib waiting for us. He inwardly knew of our coming. He explained the inner way and directed us to the Master.

More than five hundred initiated families reside in Pakistan. They address the Masters in their own beautiful way: Hazur as 'Sawan Shah,' Kirpal as 'Shah Jamal,' and Darshan as 'Shah Deedar.'⁶ Since few Pakistanis are permitted to travel to India due to the precarious relations between the two countries, the Masters, unbound by time and space, come to them, each in their own way.

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Tennyson: A few nights later while about twenty Westerners wait in his living room, Master Darshan enters and spontaneously begins his favorite subject—poetry and poets. ‘Some,’ he says, ‘enter this life with highly developed backgrounds and are just natural at what they do—natural poets, natural sculptors, natural musicians, and natural saints, merely picking up in this life where they left off in their last.’ He used the example of the great Tennyson, who, at the tender age of nine or ten began writing exceptional poetry. His brutish father, who didn’t want such a promising son to be an impractical poet, beat him whenever he caught him writing. Under such duress, Tennyson promised, ‘Alright father, I’ll never write again!’ A few days later the boy was again caught writing verses, and as his father began to beat him, Tennyson cried out, ‘Papa! Papa! Pity take; verses I shall never make!’

Master speaks on relationships and chastity:

The main reason husbands and wives cannot pull on together is the eccentric ego. If one partner wants to be chaste, and the other wants to indulge in sex, then sometimes the strict partner should give a little; there should be adjustment. If it comes down to the difference of saving a marriage, I always advise the partners not to be too rigid. It is always better to support and save the marriage. It is the ego that causes disunity, fighting, and separation...I always try to patch them up, whenever my brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, are having their marital difficulties. This problem is particularly acute in the West. It is not so bad in India. We have to learn the art of adjustment, and to prune our egos, our eccentricities. Life is not a solo play. We have to be part of the orchestra!

Keeping context: One night while joking at the back of the Master’s living room with Sohinder Malhotra and Dr. Singh from Ontario, I quoted fragment of a verse from Farid: ‘Bhagrey, bhag, Faqir bal ke, kanch aur kamini bhaga laga.’ [O meditator, flee from woman and gold; run, run away fast!] The Master notices three of us chuckling like truants. He raises his eyebrows and asks for an explanation, which I lamely give.

‘You know, people often tear things out of context,’ Master ironically comments. ‘For example, there’s a famous saying among the Sikhs, “Satguru sikh ke bandhan kaatey,” which translates as “Satguru cuts off all bondage of the disciple.” It means the Master cuts off all your bonds, but they don’t bother with the next line: “Gur ka sikh vikhar sae hatte,” or “Provided the disciple of the Guru remains away from all failings or evils.” They only want to quote the first line, but not the next. I have heard the first part of this verse from hundreds of disciples, “O Master, you will take care of me,” but they did not take the next line, the next step— “When we refrain from evil.” We only quote what suits us.’

One evening Darshan discusses with Dr. Neil Tessler and me the process and varieties of Guru-succession. Some Gurus have only apparent legality but no real power to elevate the souls of others, and while Master Kirpal, Baba Jaimal Singh, and other Param Sants had full spiritual authority and power, they had neither legal wills nor the benefit of their predecessor’s property. When both exist side by side, as in the case of Baba Sawan Singh and a few other past Saints, their work faces little impediment. Master Darshan also has both but the Predecessor’s will disappeared for six years. At this point, I express hope that the next succession will be crystal clear. He assures me that he will indeed make his succession unequivocal, and the mission of the one to follow him will flourish on an unprecedented scale.

Tonight he reminisces:

Hazur was regal and an elegant dresser. Everything about him was of the finest quality.

Moth & the Flame - The Soul of Love

Normally people could not get within six feet of Hazur, and I only know of one instance when the great Hazur embraced anyone. This lucky fellow happened to a former friend and colleague from his earlier years when they were military engineers. This old friend hadn't seen Hazur since their earlier days, but when he came up the stairs of Hazur's house, he shouted out at the top of his lungs, 'O Guru! O Guru! O Guru!' And when he reached the top of the stairs, Hazur warmly embraced him!

Hazur always carried a walking stick with him, and if the devotees tried to touch his lotus feet, he would threaten to give them a whack. Several were the lucky souls who actually got a tap from his cane. His court was full of splendor—despite all that, Hazur's beauty, humility, and magnetism were incomparable.

Early devotees are unanimous in saying that Master Kirpal lived very simply and was totally accessible. He did not copy Hazur's regal style, clothing or mannerisms; rather he manifested his essence, and spent every breath in service. M. Kirpal was not so meticulous about his clothes and didn't care if his turban was sometimes askew. When someone once advised him to change his shirt because of a small turmeric stain, he retorted, 'are the people coming to see my shirt or are they coming to see me?' It has been said that if a pickpocket comes to a Saint, he sees only his pockets. However, there have been instances when thieves came to satsang, and found their hearts picked by the Master, and thus began their irrevocable transformation towards a noble life.

While Darshan's language is poetic and ornate, Kirpal's was brief and simple. Kirpal's magnificent physique and commanding personality made him appear awesome and austere. The transmission of awakening from him was often sudden, while with Darshan, grace seeps slowly into one's every cell, every atom, imbuing the spirit with intense intoxication—the end-result is the same. Personalities, body-types, complexions, status, education, styles and habits of the Saints vary greatly, but the fundamentals of ethical character, stages of realization, integrity and the competence to grant experience on the Path of Light and Sound remain constant throughout the millennia.

In Darshan we have seen an Adept who is naturally a most caring husband to his wife-companion and loving father to his two sons—dimensions which the more austere Master Kirpal rarely revealed. All these years, Darshan's apparent meekness has been his cloaking device behind which God mischievously plays hide-and-seek with devotees. Master Kirpal sometimes patted the arriving and departing disciples on their backs or on the tops of their heads. On the other hand, Master Darshan has been most liberal with his chaste affection. This verse of his is no exaggeration of a constant example:

***Embrace every man as your very own,
And shower your love freely wherever you go.***

Of himself, he deprecatingly says: *'I am only a collared dog of the two great Masters, and I go wherever they send me... Beside the towering personality of the Beloved Master, I am just a clark...'*

I try in vain to conceive of anyone alive whose qualities match the pristine purity of this kind, totally accessible, magical, and unpretentious being.



*Sant Darshan in Twilight.
(I took this photo of the Master in the Ashram's garden
as he sat beneath the pomegranate tree*

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1. Darshan Singh, A Tear and a Star, SK Publications, Bowling Green, VA.
 2. Darshan Singh, Love at Every Step - My Concept of Poetry, 1989, S.K. Publications, Bowling Green, VA, p. 60.
 3. Jaswant Singh Chhabra is mentioned in Chapter 28, The Vale of Kashmir.
 4. 'Qawwali literally means 'utterance' This art form is the devotional music of the Sufis...intended to elevate the spirit and bring both performer and listener closer to God.
 6. Sant Rajinder Singh is also known as Rajan Shah to his Muslim followers.

72 Mirror of the Heart

*What does it matter if I am called a man?
In truth I am the very soul of love;
The entire earth is my home
And the universe my country*

—Darshan Singh

Valentine's Day, February 14, 1988: After a long drought, heavy downpours drench the Delhi region. Many assume the Sunday satsang will be canceled due to the chill and rain, but at 1 PM the ashram is suddenly bathed in hot sunshine. Steam literally rises from the earth, puddles disappear before our eyes and the air sparkles with clarity.

The crowd is rather small due to the rains—less than five thousand. The Master often arrives late and today is no exception. Lateness is one of the 'dogs' he keeps at his door to test our patience and maturity, if not to prime our yearning. Just the other day I had the temerity to say, 'I have only been able to find one fault with you, Master.' He looked at me, raised his eyebrows and asked, 'Yes, my brother, and what is that?' 'You have no concept of time!' We both dissolved into laughter.

The gracious one sits on the dais, reflective for long minutes. Inspired by his Muse, he extemporaneously composes a new Urdu poem on the seasons. As my attention focuses on his eyes and forehead, his physical stature seems to grow; a humble form metamorphoses into glowing royalty. Many, self included, are rewarded with ravishing glimpses of past Masters emerging from his form, while a golden-white nimbus dances around him. To gain this blessing, it is essential to sit completely still with unwavering attention (as in meditation).

Harish Chaddha sits to my right. At the satsang's conclusion I ask, 'Did you see Master Kirpal sitting on the dais today?', for that's who I saw. He answers, 'Actually, I saw only my Master Sawan sitting there!'

In the evening Darshan invites Ratana and me to his office, as we are to leave for Canada later in the night, and unbidden, he translates highlights of his Hindi discourse into English while I furiously scribble in my notebook:

Keats has said, 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever, its loveliness increases, it fades never.' Our so-called physical love fades—it is not real love. External beauty reaches its zenith in youth, but intoxicated by it, we do not realize how temporary it is. A poet has said, 'Youthful beauty is a shining dewdrop on the rose at dawn; come the day, it evaporates and is gone.'

As a child, I would build fine castles from wet sand on the banks of our river. When the moisture evaporated in the sun, my sand castles would crumble and become just a pile of sand again. Is this not the fate of all physical beauty? Rumi in a poem asks us to observe the artist's painting. Don't just look at the picture; look within to know its beauty. If you wish to find eternal beauty, you have to seek within.

Only that love which exists between the lover and the divine Beloved lasts forever. It alone is real love. When the poet Yeats said, 'A desire which can be fulfilled is not a great desire,' he was speaking of all world-worldly loves and desires. A thing of worldly beauty is in reality not a joy forever, cannot be a joy forever, as everything of this world—even the magnificent Taj Mahal—will sooner or later wither or crumble and fall to the ground. Only a thing of spiritual beauty can be a joy forever, and that eternal

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beauty is the Beloved.

When a true Sufi or lover looks into the mirror, he will not see his own face, he will see only the reflection of his Beloved—the Master. The test of a true lover is when he looks into the mirror, he will behold therein none other than his Master, and he will behold that form in every atom, in every flower, every bud, every tree, in all animals, in every man, and in all creation.

When the love in our heart for the Master is ripe, then his form must appear. It is said that our love should be so intense, so one-pointed that our heart will be like a shining mirror. And in that mirror our Beloved should always be shining. The moment we wish to have a glimpse of the Master, we just bow our head, look into the mirror of our heart, and find him there before us.

Every wrinkle of a lover radiates divine love. A Sufi Divine has said that if you cut the veins of a lover, instead of blood, you will find only love pouring from his veins. A lover will always think, 'I will not mind if my physical beauty dwindles, so long as the beauty of the love of my Beloved is within me.' The love of the eternal Beloved beautifies the lovers even as they progress in years. Such a love keeps their heart and soul evergreen, ever-blossoming. As I have written in one of my ghazals:

*Your love is the very rise and fall of my life;
Love is the name of a continuous restlessness of the heart.*

As Darshan shares remembrance after remembrance of Hazur, his countenance become suffused with an inner beatification:

Once Hazur made what appeared to be a very revolutionary statement in one of his satsangs: 'It is the Master who gives birth to God.' Several eyebrows were raised. Since I was a student of Persian language and literature, Hazur asked me to explain his revolutionary statement. I said, 'The word paeda used by Hazur is a Persian word, which commonly means "birth," but its real meaning is "manifestation." Hazur's utterance meant that the Masters are beyond birth and death, and they bring the manifestation of God down on earth.' Hazur was pleased and accepted this interpretation as correct.

I remember that when the great Hazur went to our village (Sayyed Kasran), the local ministers of religion gathered together and invited the beloved Hazur. They asked him many questions, which he answered to their entire satisfaction. At last when there were no more questions their chairman got up and said, 'It is alright if you distribute your gift of divinity and immortality, but kindly give it only to the deserving ones. You bestow that divine gift on every Tom, Dick and Harry!' And the great Hazur came to his own... sometimes these Saints just give us a glimpse of their greatness. He said, 'If a rich man is prepared to distribute his wealth to whomsoever he likes, why should anyone bother about it?' And he added, in all humility, 'If it was a question of only the deserving ones, then even I didn't deserve this divine gift. It was just the grace of Baba Ji that He blessed me.'

So, none of us is deserving of the lyrical glances of our Masters which give a boost to our soul. When we get that boost our soul flies from this human launching pad into the inner space, where the Master pilots us into regions of higher and higher consciousness. Just as dangers exist in outer space where the pilot makes sure his ship won't fall into the gravitational pull of any other planet, there are also many temptations and dangers on the inner path as well. When the Master-Pilot keeps us under his protective wings we are saved from all dangers. Throughout successive stages of the journey, he escorts us ever

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onwards and upwards towards our final goal—communion of our soul with the Creator. And for this grace we pay our obeisance trillions and trillions of times, expressing immeasurable gratitude to Him.

Around 10 PM Master calls all 119 of the visiting Westerners to his spacious living room to meditate and later to participate in a joyful party. An earlier Valentine talk is read aloud, followed by poems and songs written and sung by Germans, French nationals, Austrians, Africans, Canadians and Americans. Someone presents a big garish balloon in the shape of a heart, arms protruding from the sides with the words across its front: ***I love you this much!*** For a moment I consider how hokey this is but I admonish my mind, *flow with it*. Fortunately the Master's child-like innocence and joy in sharing with his disciples permeates us all; *when flash-floods run down the mountain into the desert of barren hearts, all roads and all irreverencies are washed away.*

Before leaving that same night, Ratana and I are again called to his inner office. He had written to our daughter, who was missing the Master intensely. 'Tell Shanti,' he says, 'that I will take the responsibility for my daughter!'

'Thank you, Master, your message will be conveyed. On another subject, someone has been advising everyone here that we should not give advice to others.' He smiles, yet serious, 'We should give our advice whenever it can be of use to others. A doctor will give advice, an engineer will give advice, a teacher will give advice; however, we should not give unauthorized advice for inner spiritual progress or experience. That is in the hands of the Master because he has traversed all the stages of the inner journey; he is the only one who can give correct guidance within. Others can only give advice to the extent of their experience and training, and even then it may not always be correct... Sometimes Master may give a piece of advice to a particular individual. That may be for them; it may not be for all people.'

Business Advice: Weary of our ups and downs in business, Ratana urges me to ask Master for his advice. He laces his fingers together, plays with them a little, and says:

Brother, you know that I have never entered into the business line, but when my son Bawa wanted to go into business, this is the advice I gave him, and as you are also like a son to me, the same I give to you:

First, keep to quality. Quality should never be sacrificed either for quantity or money. Be honest.

Second, we should expand our business to the extent that we can control it personally. Most of the problems in business come about because we expand beyond our control.

Third, we should be progressive, do our best, and make the most of our business but not be too ambitious. Be very cautious—expansion is very easy; retreating is very difficult. We should be contented with whatever the Master blesses us.

He elaborates further about the difficulties that even great generals and leaders faced when they had to retreat, using the example of Britain's evacuation of India in 1948. While I have attended many seminars and read numerous books on business and personal motivation, the Master's extemporaneous and free advice captured the quintessence of what is taught in sophisticated and costly seminars. Henceforth, our efforts began bearing consistent fruit.

If this pilgrimage to India, my tenth, could be compared to previous ones, I can only say that it has been one of the best. Not because of any great spiritual visions, for such was not my lot this time. Rewards came in the form of a much-needed course in man-

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making, and the continuing and ever-deepening realization of the Master's competency and humanist wisdom. Something was righted deep inside. His constant example of how to *live love* in a practical way pointed towards the means to not only improve our lives, but also to help bring peace to a troubled world.

And, this is the very first time I don't feel sad upon leaving. As we cross his threshold for the waiting taxi, sweet Darshan hugs me to his bosom. He is wearing the oversized coat Master Kirpal had given him fourteen years earlier. His arms wrap around me, and my head buries in his shoulder. There we remain for what seems like many minutes; I feel his long silky beard on my face. I continue standing, transfixed, enveloped in darkness, then light, bodiless and infinite. **'Master will be always with you,'** he says, gently returning me.

When he blesses Ratana with both hands on top of her head, friend Richard Handel snaps a Polaroid of the event. We watch as the Polaroid develops itself, and a mysterious bright light appears in the photo above the Master's hands on her head (unretouched, see below).



The best meditation of this pilgrimage comes while sitting with closed eyes in Amsterdam's bustling airport. The stilled heart is the mirror; in the mirror is the Beloved; in the Beloved is everything.

*He is hidden in every instrument,
in every song and melody.
All creation reflects His glory.
There exists not a sparkling wave nor a fiery star
that does not owe its radiance to His Light —Darshan*

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Two nights after we returned from India, ten-year-old Jyoti came to our bed crying, 'Daddy, I just had a bad dream about monsters chasing me. I'm so scared.' I groggily advised, 'Pray to Master and He will help you. There's nothing to be afraid of; his protecting hand is over your head. Now go back to sleep.' About half an hour later, Jyoti came back and woke me up a second time. 'Daddy, Daddy! Again the monsters came. Then I remembered what you said. Master Darshan came and told me to repeat Sat Naam if I ever have any bad dream, and all bad things will go away, and they did!'

Two days later while leaving for work, my car nudging into traffic, I saw a crowd huddled over a limp figure on the busy intersection across from our house. I thought, 'Oh no, some child has been hit!' Lying on the ice-cold pavement was little Jyoti, looking up with tears in her wide-open eyes, spasms working the corners of her mouth. She had been struck by a car, which tossed her seventeen feet to where she now lay on the pavement. Ratana was frantic. Soon an ambulance whisked her off to Grace Hospital. After an examination, she was released. No broken bones, not a scratch, no pain. Her only injury was a light bruise; otherwise she was perfectly fine.

Dr. Masterson approached me and said, 'Amazing that your daughter wasn't badly injured. By the way, we're related. My mother is the daughter of your father's sister.' We had never met before!

When we called India to express our gratitude for Jyoti's safety and all other blessings in our lives, Master said how much he missed and loved all the dear ones abroad, wishing them to be regular in their practice. I asked for the strength to live up to what we had received, adding, 'Your love is a fragrance all around us and we don't want to lose it.'

He replied, 'I'll pass on your prayer to the two great Masters and I'll certainly add to it my own prayers. Master is always with you. Your Auntie and I send you our love and best wishes.'

'I think of her as Mother, not as Auntie.'

'In India when we say Auntie, we mean like a Mother.'



'Auntie' Mata
Harbhajan Kaur with
her husband, Sant
Darshan Singh Ji

73 Everywhere the same eyes

*A sublime heart receives more light from love
than from the beauty which the eyes behold...*



July 31, 1988, New York: Against doctor's advice, Sant Darshan Singh Ji undertook another world tour. Thousands came to meet him in New York City; some to renew their covenant with freedom, others to begin it. His inspired discourses were followed by initiation into the mysteries of the beyond. During the inner sound portion, an elderly woman interrupted her meditation and laid a hand on his arm. He led her outside, inviting me along too.

'Dear Master,' she said, 'I have been seeing the radiant form of Kirpal Singh within, off and on for several years. During your meditation sitting two days ago, I passed through the veil and beheld his resplendent form again. He took me up through plane after spiritual plane, until the brilliance and glory of the Light were beyond my capacity to endure! He then directed me to you for initiation.' Suddenly she hugged the Master, and

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wept on his compassionate shoulder.

He turned to me, and said, 'One of my daughters told me last night that she was seeing me in her dreams before she had ever heard of me. I told her, "We are not new friends; we are not strangers. We are old friends and we are already bound in the divine silken threads. We are not strangers here; we are members of the great universal family of God! You are welcome to come back to your True Home."'

The woman spoke, 'I have known you before. Perhaps we are old friends, perhaps from another life.'

Master answered, 'I have seen many, many eyes, but they are all His eyes. Everywhere I look I see the eyes of the one divine Beloved.'

After the initiation finished, James Nicholson, an elderly Greek-American asked, 'Master, when Jesus was on the cross, why did he say My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

Master replied, 'I'm not sure, but I have always believed that he was quoting the Twenty-second Psalm. And when I put that to the Beloved Master he agreed with me.'

He then called for a King James Version of the Bible to be brought forth and had it read aloud before the packed New York theatre:

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

My God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded...

For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of wicked has enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet...They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me. O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me...

Next he had the Twenty-third Psalm read out:

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pasture:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:*

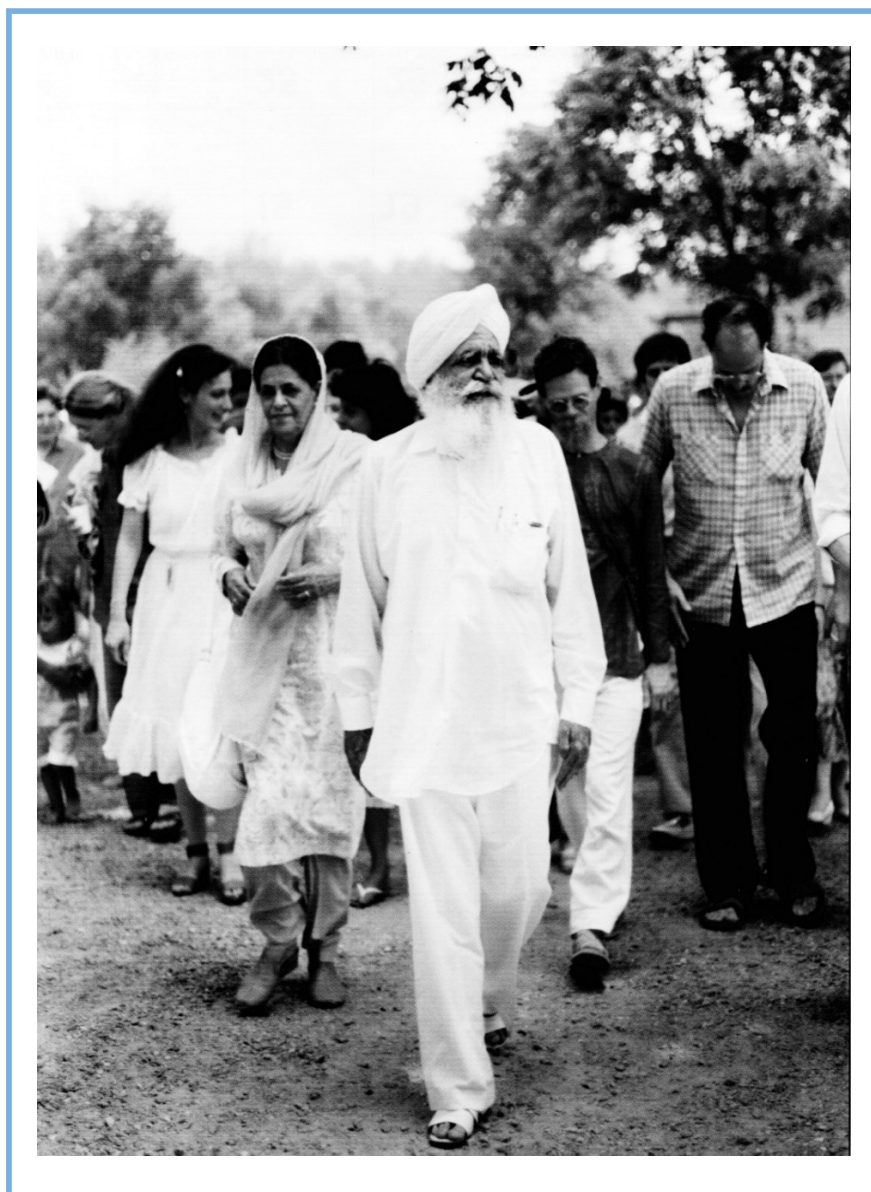
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

Thou anointest my head with oil; My cup runneth over.

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*



1. Darshan Singh, *Love At Every Step*, SK Publications, Bowling Green, VA, pp. 89

74 The Poet-Saint Departs

*Travelers who come after me
will have no cause to complain
That they found no light nor footsteps
on the path of love.*

On May 30, 1989, I received a call from Raji, the Master's son in Chicago. With a voice heavily laden with poignant emotion, he said, 'Arran, our gracious Master has just left his body for the Eternal Home...'

We had already endured much for Kirpal, and now...our beloved Darshan was gone. Thankfully, this transition would be peaceful, for he had taken great care to ensure a crystal clear succession.

Serendipitously, Ratana and I arrived in Delhi at the same time as Raji and his family. Great respect was paid to him from all sides as we moved through the airport. Cars whisked us over to Kirpal Ashram, where the Master's body was resting on a white bed strewn with fragrant rose-petals, jasmine and marigolds. His still form was the essence of serenity and dignity. Later in the afternoon, his holy body was placed on a platform and, accompanied by his two sons and hundreds of thousands of well-wishers, transported to the burning ghats by the Yamuna River, several miles away.

The funeral procession wended through the capital of India peacefully and without mishap. With the family and several close disciples, we stood atop the sandstone cremation platform, which was about twelve feet high and twenty feet across. As far as the eye could see in all directions was a sea of weeping humanity.

The heat in the midday sun was extreme. Along with family members, the few foreigners present were given the honor of placing fragrant sandalwood logs upon the pyre. Raji, dignified in his sorrow, lit the pyre, and as the flames leaped up, a great cry arose from the multitude. The searing heat soon forced our retreat from the platform.

Back at the ashram, sacred hymns filled the air. Sorrow comingled with divine peace. Most affected was Auntie-ji, but she somehow managed to maintain supreme dignity. When I asked if she were seeing Master inside, she sweetly replied, 'Arran-ji, if



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I weren't seeing the Gracious Master within, how could I carry on?' To many with the good fortune of knowing her, Auntie-ji was one of the most treasured human beings on the planet. Her saintly qualities of kindness, love, strength and selfless service were incomparable.

The following morning we returned to the pyre. Milk mixed with water was poured on the Master's ashes to cool them, then collected in brass urns, as it was with Master Kirpal, fourteen years earlier. Raji found a circular bone from the Master's skull and showed it to us. 'Master Kirpal said that from this piece of bone, one who knows can read many things about the past and future of that person,' he commented. None loved the gracious Master more than Raji, but he was the essence of equipoise and clarity—an example to all.

For thirteen days, scriptures were sung in the Ashram, offering peace and inspiration to the bereaved. On the thirteenth day, Sant Darshan Singh's will—sealed in an envelope with his own handwritten initials across every flap—was opened and read, and as expected, Rajinder Singh was declared the new living Master. He was no longer to be referred to as Raji, but by the name Hazur had given him, Rajinder—which means King of kings, and with the epithet of Sant, Master of fifth-plane, or Sach Khand status.

There was great rejoicing from the multitude gathered and waiting, as turbans from Hazur, Master Kirpal and Darshan were wrapped on Sant Rajinder's head. During the ceremony, hundreds of old disciples, eminent holy personages and religious leaders came up on the huge dais to garland and bless the new Master for his great work ahead. As he sat, his quick, large luminous eyes searched out the eyes of everyone in the vast assembly, bearing a powerful similarity to the great Masters who preceded him.

We accompanied the new Master in a long cavalcade of cars and buses up the long lurching drive to Rishikesh for immersion of the sacred ashes, and then on to Niranjana Akhara, an ancient Hindu religious order where he was honored by hundreds of India's



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eminent sadhus. Here by the banks of the Ganges River, Sant Rajinder Singh Ji gave and received the tilak or sacred forehead mark to a seemingly endless procession of orange-robed holy men in the age and incense darkened walls of the monastery. It was an exceedingly rare spectacle. Swami Prakashananda, head of this ancient monastic order and old associate of Sant Kirpal Singh Ji, applied tilak to the forehead of the new spiritual Master.

Upon returning to Vancouver, I drafted the following article, based on facts I had gathered in India, which was published in The Link newspaper, and the Common Ground magazine.

At 8:00 AM, on May 30, 1989 Sant Darshan Singh left for his Eternal Home. 200,000 people of all religions and creeds from India and 14 other countries, attended his funeral on June 1. More than a million witnessed his funeral procession wending its way through the streets of New Delhi—one of the largest gatherings since the death of Mahatma Gandhi. Yet, this was no politician, social reformer, priest or king; it was the great poet-saint Darshan Singh, loved by millions throughout the world...

For several weeks, Sant Darshan Singh had been hinting to those around him that he would not be with them much longer, but most thought he referred to his leaving on world tour. Dr. Bill Scotti said, 'Master, we'll meet in four weeks time in Germany.' 55 Master replied, 'That will be in eternity.' To his assistants, he asked, 'If the Bridegroom does not proceed forth, where will the Baratt (marriage party) go?' To Allan Jacobs, who phoned from Alberta, he confided, 'We will not meet again. Raji will take care of you.' To another, he said, 'Instead of repeating the Names, catch hold of the Named One.' Sometimes the persons of God appear to speak in riddles, but behind their remarks are many a profound truth.

At 2:00 AM on that fateful morning, Raksha, one of his attendants asked if she could take away his tea cup. He replied, 'Yes daughter, take away the cup. From now on, you will have my shuksham darshan (inner radiant vision)' She said the Master looked healthy and radiant and at the time she couldn't fathom the depth of his remark.

At 3:00 AM he telephoned Dr. Jay and Ricki Linksman in Florida, both of whom had worked diligently for many years on the publications, thanking them for their contribution. He added that he wanted to make one last change in the manuscript of his forthcoming book, *Love At Every Step*. The original version stated: 'I have always written as inspired, and will continue to do so in the future.' He said to delete this line, and the change to be inserted would be arriving by mail shortly.



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The change was:

***'The Ocean of Light is limitless;
It is life that is so short.'***

And then he added the following from his book of verses, *A Tear & A Star*:

*So far I have only drawn a few lines,
and am preparing a blueprint...*

Shortly before 8:00 am on May 30th, Sant Darshan Singh lay peacefully on his side. His wife, Bibi Harbhajan Kaur was asleep on the couch nearby. An attendant in the room stood watching the Master and noted nothing unusual. The Master then sat up, composed himself, and lay straight on his back, took one deep breath and exited consciously from the body with absolutely no sign of travail.

Always a perfectionist, Darshan Singh took precautions to ensure a smooth continuation after him. The following is an extract from his will dated November 17, 1987:

I...hereby nominate Shri Rajinder Singh...as my sole spiritual successor, in view of his strong spiritual attainments and manifold qualities of head and heart, who will become the next Living Master and will take over the spiritual tasks of Naam-Initiation and of conducting satsang after I leave the physical body...

The blueprint which Sant Darshan Singh prepared will continue to manifest in the coming years, and no doubt, his spiritual successor will play a key role in helping to manifest the Golden Age as foretold by many great seers and saints.

The lyric verses of Darshan, the gentle poet-Saint, reveal his mystic vision and shall inspire humankind always.

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Sant Darshan Singh, Twilight, Garden
[A]

75 With the New Master

*Prayer is when we talk to God, and
Meditation is when we listen to God.*

—Sant Rajinder Singh



Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj
(born September 20, 1946)

After the peaceful spiritual coronation of Sant Rajinder Singh in early June, 1989, Ratana and I met briefly with him alone in Master Darshan's private chambers. I then took the liberty of asking, 'When did the Master take you up to Sach Khand, and when and where was the mantle of successorship passed?' He replied, 'This took place when Master Darshan was at our home in the winter of 1986 [November 5th]. The gracious Master took my soul with him to Sach Khand. Afterwards he informed me that I was to carry on the spiritual work after him.'

I accepted Raji's words as the guileless truth; after all, his saintly father had already indicated to me and others Raji's extraordinary qualities, and I saw the lotus lines on the sole of his right foot back in 1981 (I even have a photo of it). I also witnessed his

extraordinary equanimity in dealing with all sorts of difficult people. It was of great interest to me that the eternal flame of Mastership was transferred, not in ancient India where it might have been expected, but in the suburbs of Middle America, two and a half years before Sant Darshan Singh left the world. That this transmission had taken place around the time of my visit to Raji's home (described in Chapter 69), imparted a gripping sense of destiny. The young Master then gave me one of his father's personal, laundered handkerchiefs as a parting gift, and blessed us both with pats on our heads and backs.

Up to this point, while very comfortable in the new Master's presence, I had had no extraordinary or confirmatory inner spiritual experiences—as some others obviously were having, but I chalked it up to my own lack of receptivity. In the taxi to the Delhi airport, however, Sant Rajinder's subtle smiling face began to appear clearly in front of me. His visage, transparent like a glaze, did not interfere with the ability to see and function normally in the world. Although we passed through customs and many worldly environments on the long return journey, his large yet luminous eyes and face never left me alone for the next twenty-four hours. Over the next year, I was blessed to have several dreams of him and was certain that Rajinder Singh was the true spiritual successor, but I still lacked inner receptivity. It would take me time.

The financial, technical and physical struggle to get the new breakfast cereal factory open and off the ground in 1988-89, prevented me from seeing Master Darshan in India despite the fact that six months before his death, he had lovingly implored me on the phone to come in February, 1989, but sadly I was unable to do so. It was in 1990, still preoccupied with getting the new factory running smoothly, that after consulting with the new Master, I requested a leave of absence from leadership in the Canadian organization. He agreed, '...on the condition that it will only be temporary,' speaking on the telephone from Chicago. Thus, for the next 6 months, I enjoyed passively sitting in the group meetings observing others doing what I had done for more than twenty-five years. Harking back to an intimate setting with a handful of group leaders in 1986, Sant Darshan Singh Ji wisely spoke of the need for the old guard to avoid becoming fossilized and rigidified, and that there was only one way to avoid this: "and that is to be ever-green at heart; we should retire with laurels and pass along whatever we have learned to the coming younger generation." I thought that this would be my role in future, solely as a mentor, and otherwise, I'd focus on getting the new business off the ground, while of course, carrying on meditation practice as usual.

The new Master visited Seattle, Birch Bay and Vancouver for the first time in November of 1990, to the joy of many. After the Seattle discourse, I said to my family that I knew in my heart that he was the genuine spiritual successor, but I still felt little connection in the seven times that I had seen him. Daughter Gurdeep then said something extraordinary, 'Dad, even if you have to go seventy times before you get it, you should not give up hope.' Daughters can be very wise!

I arrived a little late at the new Meditation Center in Birch Bay, Washington (more about that later). A large and jolly crowd had already gathered around Sant Rajinder as he planted a fruit tree, while I looked in from the impersonal edge. A light rain had begun. Then, everyone was invited into a large tent for the talk. Dieter and Barbara Schugt, the center caregivers requested me to speak of the remarkable

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series of events that led to the genesis of this beautiful place, surrounded by nature, as it had been my privilege to have played a key role in its acquisition and development.

Outside, rain and violent gusts of wind began shaking the big tent, threatening to blow it down around us, or sweep it away. I went ahead regardless, relating the center's history, glancing a few times towards Sant Rajinder, who was all peace and calm, smiling at me and at the audience, despite the wind and the flapping of the tent. When finished, I found a place to sit on a bale of hay towards the rear of the tent. And then, It happened... *Wham!* While he spoke of life's real purpose, the wild storm lashing the tent, I became engulfed in a palpable radiation emanating from his person, which had the effect of suffusing my inner being with intoxicating joy. The Master-power was extending unusual presence, and for the next five days and nights, I was joyously subsumed into his radiant circle, partially withdrawn from senses, yet, to my delight, still able to function efficiently as far as the world was concerned. A divine power became evident throughout Sant Rajinder Singh's inspired talks, impromptu meetings, meditation sittings and initiation. Fluently bi-lingual, his words invited us to go within:

Our entire focus of being should be only silently waiting for the candle of the inner Light to appear before us, whether in the form of colored lights, inner stars, moon, or sun, or the radiant glow of the Master within. Then we should rush headlong into it as a moth attracted by that burning light. By doing so, we will become one with that Light and ultimately one with God.

The inner experiences had by old and new were on par with what I had often witnessed in the presence of the past Masters. Of 42 adults and 15 children initiated, 19 experienced the radiant visions of one or more of the Adepts of our century. Two saw Jesus along with the living Master—the very confirmation they had been praying for. Practically all experienced at least strong inner Light. The inner Sounds heard covered the spectrum. Ratana's wizened granny, having internally witnessed that day the unity of past Masters—and up to the present, exclaimed forcefully, 'Rajinder Singh Budda Sant! Mahan Sant! Very great Saint!'

My own periodic inner droughts, followed by rains, and deep conviction, have led me to have greater empathy and understanding for others in



Sant Rajinder Singh, his wife Mata Rita Ji, younger brother Manmohan Singh, Dr. Bill Scotti (right), and others at the Sawan Kirpal Meditation Center in Birch Bay

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struggle, along with a healthy respect for the mysterious process of each person's unique evolution.

Awakening is not a cookie-cutter process.

Recognizing one's own helplessness before the Divine ratchets down the separating ego.

Humble prayer bears fruit, but in good time.

Secret, anguished cries and fierce longing have, however, been known to draw down heaven's mercy ahead of time. Ahead of time? *It's all God's time!*



On the last day, Sant Rajinder Singh said he'd like to visit our newly opened organic breakfast cereal plant and bakery in nearby Delta. The word spread quickly and soon a large caravan followed the Master on this spontaneous and fun-filled outing. Someone half seriously commented, "Master just blessed 60,000 cases of parshad!"

On his last night in Vancouver, all tour sevadars got together with the Master in a large room at the hotel. After some spontaneous singing and sharing of stories, a woman arrived around midnight asking for initiation, but when told that it was already given twelve hours earlier, she became very dejected. Maharaj Ji took her outside for a few minutes and returned alone without comment. Over the next hour, he left twice more. Curious, I went to see and found the Master down the hall in a small room giving secrets of the five holy names and the higher regions to the fortunate latecomer. After instructing her in the art of Shabad meditation, he left the room. When we returned an hour later, the woman's sensory currents had withdrawn from her body and only descended very reluctantly to her eye-focus. After about ten minutes, she recovered her normal senses; she had not only witnessed the inner Guru-saroop, but described in great detail her ascent up to and into Trikuti—the second region, also known as the Causal realm. She was quite intoxicated by her experience and had to be helped to her feet.

In the closing hours of his visit, good-byes were shared and tears shed—not only from those in the audience, but from the Master's eyes as well. We were given a glimpse of his tender empathy and how already he was missing his expanding spiritual family.

A new initiate next to me in the parshad lineup informed the Master that he was a palmist, and asked permission to read his palm, which the Master extended. Fortunately, while scrutinizing the Master's right palm I was present. I was struck by the similarity of the clear, deeply etched lines of Sant Rajinder's right palm with those of Master Kirpal's. The same extraordinary spiritual, intellectual and ethical qualities were reflected there—including the lotus mark below the middle finger and a very strong lifeline. This Master would be around for a long time.

While driving the Master and his wife, Rita Ji to the airport later that morning, I

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confided my former difficulty relating to him in the same way I had to the past two Masters, but that everything had changed in the past few days, adding, 'When I took a leave of absence 6 months ago,' he interrupted and said, 'That is why I never had your name removed, because it was a temporary leave of absence.'

'Of course, you knew,' I said.

'You have to continue in the Master's mission,' he chuckled.

Too soon, we arrived at the airport, and the gathering sangat was introduced to the poignant paradox of parting.

*In such a place, time may stretch
and open a doorway.*

*The arcing circle of darshan may end,
but even so, its blessing lingers long
after the object of the eye departs.*



76 Full Circle

Millenniums pass; civilizations come and go; stars and planets move along predestined paths leaving faint and vanishing traces in their wake. Sometimes, a comet flashes across the sky, not to be seen again in our lifetime. We puny creatures who occupy a tiny portion in the universe unjustly consider our importance in the vastness of everything. Long after our mortal lives have winked out, our immortal souls will have either returned to the Source or continued on in the merry-go-round of births and deaths.

Life-Path: Dedicated work is worship, and this world is the crucible in which our transformation happens. When the Lifestream business was reluctantly sold in 1981 due to a partnership impasse, I went from executive to waiter at our vegetarian eatery, but this soon became an under-challenge.

In 1989-90, despite overwhelming odds, and with Ratana's unfailing support, I began North America's first certified organic ready-to-eat cereal factory. We decided to have a grand opening on April 6, 1990—my late father's birthday. Huge and costly processing machines, ovens, extruders, gleaming stainless steel mixers, piping, automated packaging systems and other paraphernalia made quite an impression upon the attending bankers, politicians, press and well-wishers who assembled in the cavernous building. The new production line was sold as a "turn-key" operation, but the reality was far different. Little did anyone realize that we hadn't been able to produce a single flake or shape of cereal. Nothing worked! Just before our distinguished guests arrived, I sent John Anthony, our Sales Manager to a local supermarket to buy up all the boxes of corn flakes he could find (produced by the world's largest brand!) and sprinkle them on the conveyor belts to make it look like we were in production! When the doors opened and the ribbon cut, the crowd was impressed. Then someone asked, "Can you turn on the machinery so we can see how cereal is made?" John thought fast, saying "If we turned on the machines, we won't be able to hear anyone speak" It was a classic case of "fake it 'til you make it!"

Ratana—my partner in all things—and her profitable restaurant provided great support as I toiled night and day for a year with no salary, to bring the new plant into reality, sometimes working so late that I would sleep for a couple of hours on the floor of my office. For several trying months the shiny new machinery refused to cooperate. The sharks were circling and it appeared that the enterprise was about to be engulfed in a sea of red ink. The last straw was when I was unable to make payroll, and on that dark day, feeling ashamed, I briefly locked myself in the toilet. All possible human efforts had been made, mortgaging the home, working day and night, but obviously these alone weren't enough. I was reluctant to approach the Master for worldly help—knowing that the Divine is everywhere and fully aware of our needs, but...one could rationalize only so far. Not just reputation was at stake—so many livelihoods were also dependent upon a breakthrough. I headed off to Birch Bay to meditate for two hours in silence to gain clarity and strength. I laid my burdens down at the feet of the Lord and asked for succor; there was nothing else I or anyone could do. And at that very moment, unbeknownst to me, the machinery began cooperating. 'Prayer succeeds where all human efforts fail.' Because we didn't know how to make cereal, we made it differently and more nutritiously, with twentyfive percent less sugar, and without any pesticides or chemicals. We were the first to use ancient grains and novel ingredients. And because Nature's Path cereals were different, consumers searched for, and loved it. Over the next weeks,

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delicious cereal flakes and shapes were developed and cascaded off assembly lines into bags and boxes, into stores and homes, minds, and hearts. Debts were paid, and the company moved forward, garnering many accolades for quality, taste, packaging, exports, and ethics along the way. We innovated many new products that became trend-setters in the marketplace, often copied by others. Thanks to excellent and dedicated staff, my life-companion and children's unfailing support, the company survived and thrived. By 1996, independent research confirmed Nature's Path as the number-one organic breakfast brand in North America—a position it has maintained ever since.²

Robert Frost wrote, *"Two paths converge in the woods, and I took the one less traveled by, and that made all the difference."* Blaze a trail where no one has gone before, and others will follow.

Other factories followed to serve the expanding global market. The relative success enabled a great deal of giving back to society over the following years in the form of donations of money and food for disasters, to hospitals, learning institutions, food banks, endangered species and environments.

Dad's advice on the farm: ***'Always leave the earth better than you found it,'*** and the Master's advice on ***Quality, Expansion and Acceptance*** given on our 1988 visit, inspired and underpinned the enterprise. From there, evolved the company's vision: *nurturing people, nature and spirit*, and goal: *to become a trusted name for quality organic foods in every home; socially responsible, environmentally sustainable and financially viable.*

In the cycle of growing an enterprise, then and now, my wife and I have surrounded ourselves with talented, self-motivated team members far more capable in their particular fields than we, who believe in and practice the principal of excellence and working for a noble cause. From difficult experiences with the early Lifestream partnership, we learned that building a company with individuals who espouse a shared spiritual orientation is not particularly advantageous. Spiritual and business associations are kept separate, but without compromising ethics or losing sight of the goal. Each team-player holds diverse beliefs, like a mini-United Nations. Maturity embraces diversity, tolerance, and mutual respect. Success in any enterprise is an outcome of higher principles, diligence and hard work. The business is not the trunk, but a branch, albeit a far-reaching branch, under which many may find shelter and sustenance. More than 700 families are directly supported by the company, and indirectly, many more.

In our fast-paced society and aggressive business environment, does the practice of meditation and spiritual living have relevance? Is it practical? Is it possible to balance inner progress with professional ambition? Can meditation enhance performance and efficiency? Does a wholesome diet lead to better health and energy? Is such a worldly pursuit compatible with spiritual growth? Can one succeed in the dog-eat-dog environment without the usual offerings of alcohol, meat and perks bordering on bribery? Personal experience leads me to respond very positively. We should never judge those whose diets and ideas are different to ours. Live and let live. While our particular code may have caused others to joke about it, most people respect it when you stand for something. Otherwise, you stand for nothing.

When God puts you into a position of authority, you have to surround yourself with good people who are capable of actualizing the leader's vision. Hire people who are smarter than you (which is not that difficult in my case!). It then becomes a shared vision. What is actualized then takes on a life of its own, adapting and growing. A good

leader helps make others into leaders and not just managers of minutia.

When we followed Sant Darshan's advice that he gave in 1988, "Never sacrifice quality for money or for any other consideration," even though it meant giving away to food banks or farm animals, a fortune of less than top quality products many a time, it established a reputation for uncompromising quality and consistency. You rise or fall by reputation. Reputation is built over decades and can be lost overnight.

Meditation enhances concentration, clears the mind of dross and trifles, where concentration is the key to success. Stress reduction, better focus, improved memory, increased work efficiency, inner peace, better health, personal fulfillment, endurance and a modicum of success are not meditation's goals—but they are often its natural by-products. A whole-foods vegetarian diet, fresh air, regular exercise, avoidance of drugs, and a positive attitude are definite assets for improving health and for longevity. The company holds a voluntary, eclectic Meditation Circle each week, for those exploring consciousness and the desire to be more at peace.

In 1992, Eliot Rosen and I co-authored the original *Compassionate Diet* book, published by Rodale Press, exploring a myriad benefits of practicing a vegan diet and natural living. What makes this diet book different is the abundance of compassionate wisdom from the founders of all the world's major spiritual traditions. This book, which sold out, is about to be republished in English and Hindi, substantially revised and added to with the latest medical supports, along with a helpful *Compassionate Diet* cookbook. Stay tuned.

I cannot imagine starting any day without first making a positive inner contact which sets the tone for everything that follows on the surface. Meditation requires focus and the weeding out of non-essentials—reducing everything to the simplest common denominator—from the many to the One. By steady practice and diligent work, worldly and spiritual growth can find balance. Karma cannot be used as excuse for not making effort.

A Haven in the Pacific Northwest: As the spiritual community in India expanded with hundreds of Ashrams under the auspices of Sant Rajinder Singh, in North America, the need for tangible retreat centers evolved. In the final moments of his 1986 world tour when there were no such centers in the West in our mission, I broached the subject with Master Darshan. We were in the Los Angeles Airport, and more than a hundred and fifty had gathered to see him off to Mexico and South America, where he would meet and initiate thousands of hungry souls. I further shared with him that in 1974 Sant Kirpal Singh told me privately that a major center would take shape in our region, and encouraged me to work for it. Master Darshan exclaimed: 'Retreats are the order of the day! I support your wishes to have a meditation center, which will be so helpful for all the dear ones in your area... Establish your center and I'll rush headlong to it! I'll be with you there.' The wine of God was dancing in his eyes as he again exhorted, 'Go ahead, my dear brother, and the two great Masters overhead will be extending all help and protection.' He added, "This project is not to be the work of only one or two; it is to be carried out in the name of the mission and requires the whole-hearted support of the community."

Upon returning home, an awaiting letter described an intriguing ten-acre property one hour south of Vancouver, located in Birch Bay, Washington. Orchard, gardens, meadows, several well-kept buildings, and a park-like setting, overlooked the ocean. And, the price was reasonable. When my wife apprehensively sought clarification from

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the Master by phone, he said, 'Daughter, we should have our own place,' she was satisfied. With the help of many, the Sawan Kirpal Meditation Center of the Northwest came into being, providing a peaceful nature-haven for visitors from various parts of the world and especially from those north of the US border. The vision, which arose with Kirpal, was given new life and form by Darshan and Rajinder. While the Birch Bay center served retreatants for many years, its relative isolation after the tragic events of the 9/11 terrorist attack instigated racial profiling and inordinate delays at the USA border, meant that it could not be the necessary urban center that would have to come in future. This peaceful center remains the locus for many uplifting retreats.

1. According to SPINS Information Systems, Inc.

77 Gathering of the Ways

What now of the work for unity and peace begun by and so dear to the brave heart of Sant Kirpal Singh before his passing in 1974? “Don’t behave like a frog in a well,” he often said with a smile, exhorting a broad-minded and inclusive outlook—outside the narrow well. Interfaith and peace networking which he so tirelessly pioneered all his eighty years, is now quite active across the globe, not as a monopoly of any organization or person, but as the expression of an evolving universal wish.

Ever since the first astronauts journeyed beyond Earth’s gravitational pull, gazing with great awe upon our beautiful blue marble, the jewel-like borderless planet from outer space, it could be argued that the general awareness of humanity began another fundamental shift. The idea of planetary citizenry with global responsibility for environmental protection, the ending of war and a new non-sectarian spiritual consciousness began to bloom. Some see the workings of a higher plan behind this shifting paradigm; some see organic evolution, and yet others their Master’s hand. Need one exclude the other?

February, 1994: The Seventh World Religions Conference coincided with the birth centenary of Sant Kirpal Singh Ji and began with a peace walk through the ancient capital of Delhi. From my diary: My family and I are here, engulfed in a sea of a hundred thousand marchers. Reminiscent of the Unity of Man march of 1974, respects are paid to places sacred to several traditions along the route: Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Jain, and Sikh. Diverse spiritual leaders have come together to work for the common good of humanity and planetary ecology. Before the towering ramparts of the old Red Fort, and at various venues over the next three days, delegates shared prayers, truths and visions with the multitude:

Rabbi Abraham Soetendrop, Global Forum, Netherlands:

Today, we have prayed with our feet! God give us the strength, the humility, and the energy to make this world a round table of sharing and receiving. Make it a compassionate world and let us as religious leaders become compassionate, transcend barriers, and walk humbly in Your Eyes and Your Heart.

Dr. Mohammed Shalaan, Al Azhar University, Egypt:

How can we be different and yet live together in harmony? How can we be separate and yet strive for union? Not in any museum of modern art can I see such a beautiful picture with so many colors that complement each other as I see here.

Sant Rajinder Singh, president of the conference:

Along this historic peace march today...we passed places of worship of different religions. Was it not beautiful to see how many different ways people worship the One Lord? Is not a garden more beautiful when it is decorated with flowers of different colors and fragrances? Similarly, we are all flowers in the garden of the Lord...

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He then quoted this beloved verse by Sant Darshan Singh:

*When the flowers of the church,
mosque and temple gather together,
peace will blossom in Your garden, O Lord.*

Dr. Karan Singh, India's former Ambassador to the USA:

I am a worshipper of Siva, who is called the Compassionate One, while Muslims worship one who is referred to as the Merciful, and other traditions all call the Divine by names of peace and love. Yet in the name of these compassionate Deities, we commit atrocities. The religion we need is the one of love and compassion. These know no boundaries. It is the height of hubris to imprison the Light of God in one form...

Jonathan Granoff, United Nations Disarmament Committee:

Separate from yourself that which separates you from other human beings, for that which separates you from others also separates you from God. And those qualities which bring us closer to each other, also bring us closer to God.

Father Maximillian Mizzi, Delegate General for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue, Franciscan Order of Assisi:

We all came to this conference after receiving a letter or a fax, or somebody told us about it. But I say that something else has brought us here. Behind the letter or fax, or whoever asked us to come here, was God. God brought us here. He wants to tell us something. He wants us to do something. 'Be an instrument of My peace and reconciliation.'



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{Later, the Master invited Father Mizzi to conduct mass in Kirpal Ashram's Meditation Hall. Pir Vilayat and Lex Hizon were also invited to lead the congregation in Sufi Zikr, which I and many others attended.

Sant Rajinder Singh:

If our planet with its interdependent ecological systems is to survive, we have to learn to live in harmony with all creation.... If we realize that the soul in us is the same soul that inhabits every being, whether plant or animal, and comes from the same Source...then we would care about and love every being...Unless we find peace within, we will destroy this Earth. We have taken too much and need to give back. Plant trees and flowers and charge the Earth with their fragrance! The path of ahimsa [non-violence] needs to be followed in order to live peacefully. We live in an interdependent world. If we use resources meant for all only for ourselves, we shatter the lives of future generations...

The Centenary: On the 6th February, 1994, a hundred years of Kirpal are celebrated at Kirpal Bagh, before the largest crowd I have ever seen. The event is honored by The Dalai Lama and other luminaries who share their wisdom.

His Holiness, the Dalai Lama of Tibet:

I am very impressed to see people of different colors, nationalities and customs coming from different parts of the world, expressing such enthusiasm. I am very happy! It is important to promote harmony in the religious traditions, where the leaders and the people come together to exchange their deep spiritual understanding. This allows development of a deep respect for the underlying truths of each...

We cannot separate our own good future from that of humanity. Each must adopt a sense of responsibility and make an effort. Even if we fail, it doesn't matter. Failure with effort is much better than doing nothing.¹

Pir Vilayat Khan, International Sufi Order:

I am sharing with you in the emotion of participating in one of the most important historic events of our time. I do not know whether you realize the very importance for the world of what we are doing here, as we celebrate the hundredth anniversary of Sant Kirpal Singh, whom so many of us have loved so dearly and whom so many of us have revered... Each one of us is responsible to find in his or her religion that element which unites rather than divides us. Let us not allow our religions to divide us. Let us not allow the religious leaders to divide us. If you look in the heart of your religion, whatever that religion is, you will find peace. Find the essence of your religion in your contact with God directly. And there you will find inner peace as you turn within. Your spiritual experience is the most important part of your religion. It is the perfume. And then spread that perfume to all those around you.



Fra Mizzi & Sant Rajinder Singh

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Sant Rajinder Singh:

Sant Kirpal Singh Ji came to this Earth with a godly mission and was the personification of all that was divine. Yet he lived among us as a human being to show us how we too could exemplify the highest virtues while withstanding the storms and tempests of earthly life... If we look at each aspect of his life, we will find the model, the teaching, and the practice by which each of us can do what he has done. When he told us, 'I am a man like you,' he was providing positive hope that we too can attain self-knowledge and God-realization as he had.

Door-Darshan, India's leading television corporation, produced an excellent documentary of the Centenary, beaming it to millions across Asia and the Middle East.



L. to R.: Jain Muni Shushil Kumar, Sant Rajinder Singh,
The Dalai Lama, General SS Uban

1. When the Dalai Lama made his way from the dais, he and I silently connected, eye to eye. He reached into the crowd and grasped my folded hands. Little was I to know that we would meet again, one-to-one at a special gathering of civic and business leaders in Vancouver in September, 2006. When I reminded His Holiness of our brief connection in Delhi, he was delighted. His face further lit up when I mentioned his friend, Sant Rajinder Singh. The day before, the Canadian government had honored the Dalai Lama with honorary citizenship.

78 A Wedding & a Funeral

Sant Rajinder Singh encouraged interfaith dialogues as part of his 1994 European and North American tour, thus expanding the groundwork begun by his grandfather in bringing different spiritual leaders and followers together in a spirit of love, unity and peace. He helped us all to expand our horizons to better understand those who did not share our own particular path.

Late one evening, Angele Castonguay, one of our local volunteers confided to me, ‘... as you know I am a mother, a wife and a business-person. I am a follower of Jesus, and Jesus always appeared in my meditations. I was so surprised one day, when Jesus told me to go to and get initiated by Rajinder Singh! It is on the strength of my beautiful experience inside and because of his gentle, loving spirit that I am doing all this. And that is why I have given my heart.’

Prior to the Master’s arrival by sea-plane at Semiahmoo Bay, Washington, I had been busy coordinating a team of interfaith workers as well as helping Ratana with preparations for our oldest daughter’s wedding.

As the float-plane carrying the Master and Mata Rita Ji veered across the blue sky towards the pier where many waited, I watched through the glass window of a phone booth, returning an urgent call from Vancouver. ‘Baeji has passed away.’ Ratana’s voice in the receiver was choked with emotion. Earlier, I was the last person to be at Baiji’s bedside and although she was unconscious, I placed a tiny piece of sugar parshad in her mouth, repeated the five names in her ear and returned to our home to hang a framed picture in our hallway. As I held it, for no apparent reason, the glass spontaneously cracked quite loudly. Later we discovered that it was at that exact time that Bae Ji breathed her last. When my dad passed away, my Mum’s wedding ring wore right through and broke. When my beloved Master passed away, my heart broke—*the price of love*. It was Master Darshan that helped piece it together again.

From the floatplane pier, the Master proceeded to the Meditation Center in Birch Bay where he was received with great joy. He and Rita Ji called me over and expressed sympathy for the bereaved family, sending me right back to Vancouver with parshad for grieving Ratana.

The next morning, after signing company payroll, I rushed back to the Meditation Center, reaching there just as the Master emerged while the throng circled around him. A sun-dappled orchard and forest was to his back and a gentle warm breeze rippled the leaves. He expressed appreciation for this special place, and for the love of all who had served with no thought of self. I sat cross-legged on the grass for the first time on this hectic day that I was able to slow down. The moment I looked up towards him, there was nothing but brilliant radiance everywhere; his luminous face its center. *Mysterious, the ways of the Saints!*

Joseph Roberts, the publisher of Common Ground, a new-age magazine based in Vancouver, had been waiting at the center since morning for an interview with the Master who had been constantly assisting seekers with questions. Joseph prefaced the interview, ‘I am an open-minded skeptic.’ His honesty was heartily welcomed by the Master.

After the remarkable hour-long Q&A was over, Joseph turned to me and asked, ‘Why do I get light-headed in the presence of Rajinder Singh? When I was interviewing him, not only did I feel light-headed, but I kept seeing others coming through—his father Darshan,

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grandfather Master Kirpal, and Baba Sawan!' (The intriguing article was published in the next issue of Common Ground.)

It wasn't until 4:30 before we left the center. With the border to cross, always fraught with potential delays, we considered canceling a planned detour. Masters, however, have their own immaculate schedule, and seem to possess the ability to stretch time. We breezed through border customs, made a detour to a devotee's home and still managed to make the 6 PM Interfaith Dialogue in downtown Vancouver.

As the Master proceeded to meet the leaders, I was warned that an Anglican minister was planning to disrupt the event, suspicious that it was only a 'front' for an 'Eastern cult-agenda'. Unperturbed, Maharaj Ji went directly to the minister and gave him a loving hug and a warm welcome. Rev. Appavoo immediately reciprocated, and thereafter was with the program.

Religious leaders entered the ballroom full of 800 attendees; a Cree First Nations medicine man opened with traditional welcomes, followed by Rabbi Marmorstein blowing the shofar (a ram's horn trumpet used in Jewish ritual) who then led all in prayer and a Shalom Peace chant. Baha'i representatives shared the inspired universal



vision of their creed, along with a poem by Abdul'ba'ha. Rukmini Prameya of Mahalakshmi Temple eloquently described her vision of Hinduism that embraced both feminine and masculine aspects of divinity. Rev. Appavoo held high a large cross, and began with a moving apology for his doubts about the intentions of the Conference. He proceeded to delight the audience with his lively and bright sharing of Christ's love.

Red-robed Dhongtok Rimpoche, one of Tibet's most eminent Sakya Buddhist scholars and translators shared the teachings of Lord Buddha. Dr. Abdul Hassam represented the Ismaili religious tradition of Islam, ending with a verse from Rumi.

As emcee, I reminded all of the recent historic Israeli peace accord and asked the learned Islamic doctor if he would take the hand of the distinguished Rabbi. When both warmly embraced, the entire hall burst into applause.

To crown the evening, Sant Rajinder Singh gave an eloquent yet simple discourse on the way to attain inner peace through deep mystical prayer and meditation. He invited the audience to experience a taste of the inner Light and Bliss inherent within every human being and which underpins every spiritual tradition. Although the allotted minutes were brief, many experienced in the silence a great outpouring of spirit. And at the finale, even strangers embraced.

*Embrace every man as your very own,
And shower your love freely wherever you go. —Darshan.*

August 13, 1994: Shanti, our firstborn wed Markus Schramm in our garden in the presence of the Master, his mother, wife, daughter Rimjhim and Kenny, Rev. Marsha Stewart of Unity plus 250 relatives and friends. After blessing the food and the occasion, the Master expressed his love and solicitude for the happiness of the couple. Fulfilling

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Master Darshan's promise to Shanti in 1988 that he would find a suitable husband of her choice, Maharaj Ji said, 'Master Darshan gives you His blessing. And this poem of his I now share with you:

*May the orchard of Markus and Shanti
Be blooming and fruitful forever,
And may God bless the flowers of that orchard
With a thousand springs.*

My feisty 87-year-old aunt Margaret approached Maharaj Ji that morning and boldly asked, 'I want your promise that Kirpal Singh will come for me when I die! He came for my sister Gwen. Will he come to take me over the Great Divide?' Maharaj Ji briefly closed his eyes in concentration, opened them and replied to her with a smile, 'Yes, Master Kirpal will definitely come for you.' She was satisfied, and lived for another nine years.

After leading meditation at St. James Community Center, Master and party returned for a break and Shanti & Markus's second wedding of the day in the magnificent Guru Nanak Sikh Temple on #5 road, Richmond, this time following her mother's Indian heritage.

After the concluding round of the wedding ritual, Sant Rajinder Singh Ji delivered a beautiful marriage discourse—a message of the soul's mystic journey back to its Eternal Home, first in Punjabi, then English—for the benefit of more than 600 present. As he stood against the white wall of the modern temple, many commented on a golden radiance playing around his physical form. At first, some of the older orthodox Sikhs—some allergic to the idea of a *living* Sant Satguru—began to murmur whether it was appropriate for him to be there at all. I watched with great fascination as many of these old conservatives averted their gaze at the beginning of his discourse, but soon all eyes were glued on the Master. At the end, even the most staunch orthodox Sikhs as well as followers of other saints came before Sant Rajinder Singh, bowing reverently, asking to be blessed and photographed at his side.

At the evening discourse downtown, it was a delight to see Rev. Appavoo in the audience, raptly listening to every word. Questions and answers followed and went on late into the night, and the next morning, initiation was given to many new seekers. In the evening, the Master and family were the guests of honor at the wedding reception, and he advised the young couple, 'We should cover up each other's faults and shortcomings,' and added, 'True marriages are indeed made in heaven!'

My artist-bohemian skeptic brother Godfrey arrived and asked to be introduced. He grabbed the Master's hand, looked into his eyes for several long moments and exclaimed, 'Wow! You have the same bright shining eyes as your grandfather. You have Kirpal Singh's eyes!'

After a very long day, I had the good fortune to meditate on a small couch directly below the Master's bedroom in our home. As a light sleeper, I noticed that by the time he retired upstairs, it was 3 AM. For the next hour or more, he was on the phone to India, giving others much needed guidance. Then, after an hour of silence he stirred again. We may think otherwise, but the Saints are conscious co-workers of the Divine Plan.

In the space of three days in Vancouver, Sant Rajinder Singh met over 2,000 people from all walks of life, religions, colors and creeds, freely scattering seeds for the future. And wherever the soil of character is well prepared, watered and weeded, a rich harvest is assured. While driving the Master and family to the airport, I reflected aloud on the

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calm-centered whirlwind of recent events. I asked, 'Does the Master's power increase with the passage of time?'

He replied, 'Yes. You see, when a father dies, his oldest son assumes responsibility to look after the family [according to Indian tradition]. At first, he may not be fully comfortable with this position, and his younger brothers or sisters may not accept his authority right away. But with the passage of time, he demonstrates his competency, and everyone begins to accept him. Time is a great healer.' Master and Rita Ji consoled Ratana and added, 'Baeji is with the Masters. As we speak, Hazur is taking her up through the higher spiritual planes back to Sach Khand.'

The Story of Baeji (Mela Devi Bagga): Soon after Sant Kirpal Singh passed away in 1974, Baeji experienced a tumble down a stone stairway at Haridwar on the banks of the Ganges River. She survived unharmed and adamantly maintained that her beloved Baba Sawan, in the company of Kirpal and 'Darshi' (Darshan Singh) appeared in bright light and pulled her to safety. Thereafter she was always full of praise for 'Darshi,' as she affectionately called him. After 1978, I often took her to see her 'Darshi,' who always touched her feet out of respect, treating her with great deference like a mother. Baeji, in turn, became ecstatic in his presence.

At the funeral, Ratana said of Baeji:

She cared for people so much that my uncles used to say 'even if the dog of Shalimar dies, Baeji will go to its funeral.' If any child was sick, she would go to give it folk medicine. If anyone had a wedding, she was there; if there was a funeral or a birth, she was there.

At the age of eighteen she became a widow with two little boys. Her youngest was born five months after her husband's death. She brought up three sons and never married again. One day, her brother-in-law came to her when she was making chapatis over a wood fire. He asked, 'Mela Devi, a certain woman from the village is saying that you and I...' He was in the middle of his sentence, when Baeji cut him off by saying, 'Brother, if you say another word, I will put this burning stick in your mouth! I was married once and that's it!' Whatever strength of character and upbringing I had was mainly due to Baeji, and I'm all gratitude to her.

Baeji claimed her eldest son's first-born (Ratana) as her own. When she took the infant to her breast, milk began to flow. She nursed her granddaughter for the first year of her life and looked after her until the day of her marriage to me in 1969.

Baeji was initiated by Hazur Baba Sawan Singh in the 1930's and had unshakable faith in him. During the terrible days of the partition of India more than a million lives were lost. Their kind Muslim neighbor came to her, saying, "Sister, you must leave right now. There is no time. The mob is coming!" They barely managed to escape Lahore with their lives. Fortunately, Baeji had the farsight to sew sixteen tolas of gold (one tola equals slightly less than an ounce) into her undergarments the day before. Ratana was one year old.

Managing to escape the wholesale murder and destruction in and around Lahore, she and her family fell into an exhausted sleep by the wide Ravi River. Hundreds of others slept there also, exhausted. Hazur Baba Sawan Singh appeared to Baeji in a vivid dream and commanded her, 'Child, wake up! Danger is coming!' She then woke up her family and convinced them to cross the river in the dark. When they were halfway across the Ravi, an armed mob descended the very spot where they had been sleeping, hacking everyone to death, men, women and children. Terrible times.

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Her family, along with thousands of others, found temporary refuge at their Master's Dera at Beas, then moving to Delhi and elsewhere.

During the partition of India while all the slaughter in the name of religion and nationalism was going on, Hazur suffered bleeding from the bladder. He took upon himself the suffering of others. It is said that none of his many thousands of disciples lost their lives in the partition—nothing short of miraculous.

With the gold she had hidden in her clothes, not unlike what Jewish refugees did to survive during the Nazi Holocaust, her family established a new life in Moradabad, where their confectionery business flourished. Because she led such a pure life, which is termed in the scriptures as *pavitter jeevan*, Baeji's blessings had power behind them. She was always wishing family and friends long life and children. After four children, I requested that we had had enough such blessings!

On May 30, 1989 the day Master Darshan breathed his last, he appeared to Baeji in Vancouver in a vision, touched her feet, and bade her farewell. (incidentally, whenever they met, Master Darshan always touched her feet, being elder, and an initiate of Hazur. Such was his consistent humility).

Baeji's favorite verse that we'd often sing together [she spoke no English]:

*Meri Sataguru pukkerdi ba,
Te hun dar ka da, kuttera ka da,
Ooch upaar beyant Soami...
My True Guru, take hold of my hand;
Lead me from fear & danger;
Take me to Your High Abode, my Lord...*

79 A Vision for the Future



Naam Initiation

Diary, 20 September, 1996: Today is Sant Rajinder Singh Ji's 50th birthday celebration, with a vast gathering on the Polo Grounds of New Delhi. Thanks to heavy traffic, I arrived late from Dehra Dun, in the midst of an inspiring, passionate address by the renowned educator Dada Vaswani, who calls for a vision that recognizes *'the moral inviolability of all living creatures.'* He requests those gathered to go inside in silence, to work in God's loving presence, and to serve His suffering children—humanity, the birds, and animals. When the elderly Dada takes leave of the dais, I intercept him, 'Dada Ji, I first met you in 1968 at the Mira School for Girls. I remember Master Kirpal trying to touch your feet, and simultaneously, you were trying to touch his!' He turns to me, smiling and we also try to touch each other's feet! He holds my hands and whispers, 'I see the Beloved Master in your eyes!' And the crowd sweeps us apart.

September 22: Three thousand, five hundred receive initiation and a first-hand spiritual experience of mystic Light and Sound. About half report seeing the radiant light form of the living Master within. I fondly remember traveling with Master Kirpal in 1967, when the numbers coming for initiation were anywhere from 60 to 300. Not that quantity matters, but since more souls are being drawn to the Masters and given the boon of initiation, *this* is good for the world.

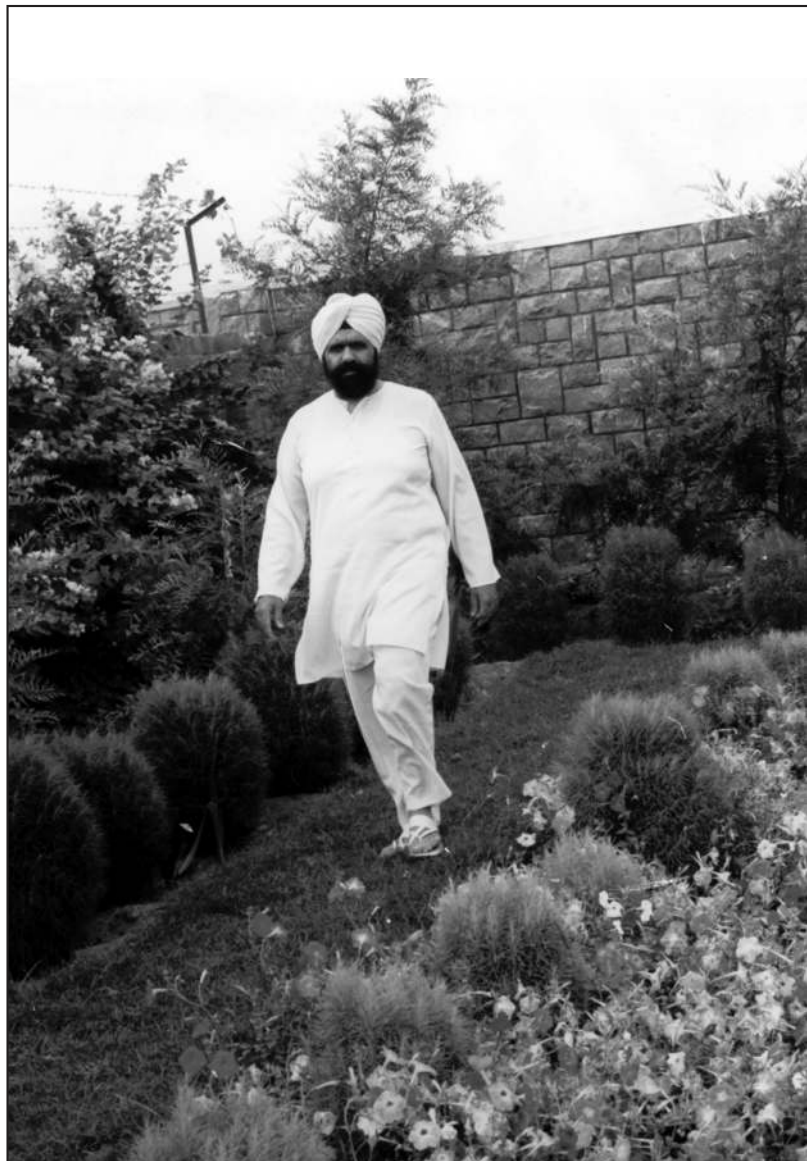
Sant Darshan Dham: On September 23, eight hundred visitors from fifty countries join the Indian sangat at a new, verdant ashram site on one hundred acres of recently acquired farmland half an hour from Kirpal Ashram. 'This large center will accommodate

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the ones coming in the future,' the Master tells us, hinting at a continuous legacy.

Tall eucalyptus and indigenous shade trees crown the hill which crosses through the property. Much of the fertile flatland is planted in grains, vegetables and orchards to supply the Master's community langar. Healing hues of green and sparkling artesian water running along grass-lined irrigation canals is a sight for eyes sore from the congestion of the city and the foul air from the gunda nal (open sewer river). Many of us who have just traveled from the ashram in Old Delhi, already feel better breathing the fresh oxygen-rich air.

The living Master predicts a time when vast numbers will come here seeking inner peace and spiritual realization. Architects and engineers have constructed scale models of the future community. In its scope are lakes, open spaces, a huge covered area for Satsangs, living quarters, a library of comparative religions and mysticism, a wellness center, retirement homes, and gardens. This is the most current evolution of the vision of spiritual community expressed by Guru Nanak at Kartarpur, Guru Ram Das at Amritsar, Hazur at Beas, Aurobindo at Auroville, Sant Kirpal Singh at Manav Kendra, and others. This sacred place will be known as Sant Darshan Dham.



Alu Raja: I had heard rumor of a huge initiation that had taken place in the farmland of Gujarat, of more than thirty thousand souls in one day, the largest in the entire history of Sant Mat. Being skeptical of rumors, when I had an opportunity, I asked the Master about it, which he confirmed, in what turned out to be a very humorous and spirited conversation.

It is the wonderful story of a simple, penniless farm-laborer who, in the 1960's, walked barefoot 826 kilometers from Indore in central India to Delhi with the sole purpose of receiving Naam-initiation from Master Kirpal—a journey that took him several months. Having finally met the Master in person, he gratefully received initiation and a good experience.

Guru-centered, the sturdy farm-lad walked all the way back to Indore, working on farms along the way to support himself. In Indore, he found work again, and was paid not in money, but in potatoes! He took his potato-wages to market, spread them on a burlap sack on the ground, which he then sold for modest profit. With that money, he purchased more potatoes, and informed all his customers what he paid for them and what his profit was.

Continuing in this fashion, gradually, bit by bit, he built a solid business based on honesty and hard work. Eventually, over the decades, he became the trusted agent for hundreds of farmers over a vast area, earning the moniker, "Alu Raja" (Potato King). He was so highly esteemed and helpful to others in the region that when the new Master held a spiritual program in his village, a vast multitude turned up, and by the end of the long day, as seekers kept coming, over 30,000 people were initiated in three separate sittings!

"Bicycles, scooters, tractors and bullock carts were lined for as far as one could see," said Maharaj Ji with a broad smile. He concluded, "When I asked how our host was able to organize such a huge event, he replied, 'Alu.' "When I asked, 'How did you earn your wealth?' he said, "Alu!" "And, how did you build such a beautiful house?," He replied, 'Alu! With Master's grace!"

80 Heart-strings in Unison

According to an ancient Indian proverb it is said, 'If children are to be given birth, let them become saints, benefactors, or valiant ones to protect the innocent and helpless.' Masters have been born in both saintly and worldly families, and vice-versa, but at the very least, spiritually inclined parents must do their best to nurture their children with love and lead by example.

As parents everywhere can testify, raising children to become responsible, caring and sometimes visionary adults is probably one of life's greatest tests. Ratana and I have certainly had our share with four very different, spirited and intelligent offspring. The love we share was often strained during turbulent teens. There comes a time when darling and innocent chicks become awkward fledglings, challenging and questioning everything, pushing every limit in an effort to discover their own wings, eager to flutter from the nest—often to great anxiety. As did we before them, all have flown far and wide, but often return to the values and the nest which nurtured them.

Our son, the youngest, was last to emerge from what I jokingly referred to as 'alien abduction'. This spontaneously coincided with his deep interest in the teachings and history of the Masters, while studying for his undergrad in far-off England, Kenya and Ontario. His thirst for knowledge was intense, and he devoured all books in his path in whatever subject caught his interest. He and I would often simultaneously read the same biographies on Lincoln, Napoleon, Tecumseh, Caesar, Gandhi, the Sikh Gurus, Tolkein, Lincoln, Jobs, CS Lewis, Van Gogh, Michelangelo, etc., then share perspectives. We became friends; it was no longer father-and-son as usual.

Master Rajinder, his wife Rita Ji, and mother Mata Harbhajan Kaur were very fond of Arjan; he and his son Kenny (Kunwarjit) were around the same age and had known each other since their first year. Both boys had leadership qualities.

'There is a purpose behind the life of everyone; no one has been created for nothing...this is the mystery of humility.'

—Kirpal Singh

While attending a spiritual program in Chicago, coinciding with his 21st birthday and with no prompting from anyone, Arjan sought and received the boon of initiation. In fact, whenever I tried to encourage Arjan to seek initiation, he would be adamant, "Dad, don't push me. When I'm ready, I will seek it myself." Later that evening, there was a surprise birthday party for him given by the Master and family. Arjan returned to Queens University in Ontario to finish his BA, later going to Chicago for his MBA, while Kenny went on to earn his medical doctorate. One morning, after sitting for meditation for a couple of hours, I fell asleep at around 5. At around 7, in dream, the living Master's face appeared directly in front of me and began singing one of Master Darshan's mystic ghazals in Urdu, his voice liltingly beautiful and piercing, and eyes...well, there are no words. It went on and on, verse upon verse; an eternity in itself. After coming back to senses, many phrases

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remained in memory. My knowledge of Urdu is minimal, yet there was an intuitive understanding. The Master's voice continued to resonate for a long time throughout the whole body. Then came a phone call from Arjan; he also had dreamed of the Master singing in Urdu to him at exactly the same time. *When the strings of the cosmic lute are plucked, though the listeners may be worlds apart, they resonate in ways our minds cannot even begin to comprehend.*

How were we to know that this jiva (embodied soul) whom Master Kirpal hinted at in our last interview with him in 1974, would be born seven years later and, in 2010, would receive the Master's blessing to marry his great granddaughter Rimjhim? Imagine the trepidation Arjan must have felt when he went to his future father-in-law to ask for permission to marry his daughter! And it was given with love and blessings. Our family has been so fortunate to have Dr. Rimjhim as our fourth daughter. She, a natural leader, whose name means "gentle rain," is consistently kind, loving and wise—a reflection of her loving parents and lineage. It's interesting to note that when Arjan and Rimjhim were around eleven years of age, they acted in a play at one of the spiritual programs at the Science of Spirituality headquarters in Illinois, along with about ten other children of their age. Arjan and Rimjhim played the role of grandparents. *"Coming events cast their shadows before."* —T. Campbell. Forty-three years and a day after Ratana and I were married in the simple meditation hall at Sawan Ashram before our Master and a few hundred souls, Arjan and Rimjhim were wedded on March 5, 2010 before the Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj at Darshan Dham in India while we and *many thousands* from the subcontinent and around the world, were present to celebrate their union. Being there with extended families, friends and wellwishers on both sides seated around the Master and his wife, was like an enchantment from another world.

Famed scriptural singer, professor Satnam Singh Sethi led the melodic recitation of wedding hymns by Guru Ram Das, as bride and groom circled the scriptures four times. Rimjhim has always had a very close relationship to her parents and especially with her beloved father.

Earlier that day, against doctor's orders, the famed Ragi got up from his sick bed to sing and perform the wedding rituals, telling the doctors, "This is the wedding of my Master's daughter; how can I not perform this Seva?" It was the last and perhaps finest performance of his life.

How all this came to pass, we have no idea; we can only bow to the Creator of all and offer our humble thanks.

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Heart-strings in Unison



Rimjhim & Arjan's Wedding,
final round, as wellwishers from many lands throw rose petals
March 5, 2010

81 Divine Intercessions

Countless are the grace and miracle events in the lives of initiates, especially for those who meditate regularly, since practice begins to rewire the brain in a positive way, activating a hidden law that attracts beneficial forces. Such manifestations cover the spectrum of unexpected appearances of the Masters in times of trouble, spontaneous healings and visions which strengthen faith while one struggles along the way. Several volumes of such unsolicited and marvelous accounts of disciples in modern times have been published in Hindi, English, Spanish, French, German and Hungarian by SOS.org. Such accounts are difficult for the rational mind to comprehend. That is, until one experiences it for one's self! There are no hard and fast rules as to how or when or why grace descends. That's when blind or experimental faith turns into real conviction.

How Sant Darshan Singh was healed:

In his own words, Master Rajinder reminisced about his saintly father and grandfather, and how the latter cured Sant Darshan Singh from crippling asthma in 1973—an intervention that gave years and great stamina to his life, enabling him to carry out the immense spiritual task ahead—when he became the next Sant Satguru in 1974:

My last physical moments with Master [Sant Kirpal Singh]...took place in 1972, in Miami, Florida, near the end of his third world tour. The sangat had gone to Miami International Airport to see Master off. He would be leaving America for the last time and traveling to South America. After sitting with him in one of the lounges, the Master went up to the departure area. He had passed through the passenger check and was waiting to board the plane. I along with the rest of the sangat was on the other side of the glass window receiving last glimpses of him. Suddenly, I began to think of my father and began to worry about his health. It pained my heart so deeply that his health was so poor, and I was in America, so far away, unable to help him physically. This thought of helplessness in not being there to aid my father brought copious tears to my eyes. I tried to control them, but they flowed out spontaneously. Master Kirpal...saw them, and motioned for me to come to where he stood.

At that time I expressed my deep concern about my father's health and how I wished I, as his son, could be of assistance to him. The Beloved Master then told me, 'Do not worry. Your father's health will be all right. Why do you have to worry when I am here? He is twelve anna (seventy-five percent) better than before and will be perfectly well very shortly.' This was six months before Master Kirpal Singh took my father to Kashmir and healed him of his asthma. I am so grateful to the Beloved Master that the request I made in my last physical moments with him was answered. I am even more grateful that not only did Master Kirpal Singh heal my father, but also gave him the spiritual power to heal others—not only physically, but to heal their hearts broken by eons of separation from the Lord.

—excerpt from Sat Sandesh magazine.

Mukesh Murria:

In January 2001, my friend Dr. Ravi phoned me to ask if we wanted to go to attend satsang in London on Sunday 21st as Sant Rajinder Ji was coming to England.

On Saturday, the 20th January it started snowing very heavily, and by nightfall there were blizzards and deep snow on the ground. I said to my wife Trishla that there was no way I was going to take a chance to go to London as I had a very important case, which

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as a lawyer I was dealing with on the coming Monday. I could not take the risk of being stuck in London due to the weather.

Trishla was not very happy about this. However without thinking, I said to her, 'Saints come and go, we will have another opportunity.' Then she reluctantly agreed that we should phone Dr. Ravi in the morning to say that we could not go and give our apologies.

That night as we went to sleep, as soon as I put my head on the pillow I was transported to a different world. In it, I was seeing Master Rajinder walking up the stairs in our house with a big smile dressed in white and stood near the little temple upstairs.

He then placed his thumb on my forehead and the entire currents in my body began rising with rapid speed, led by a black spot-like object. It was as if a rocket was being launched! My whole body became very light and I turned upside down. I started seeing wondrous sights within, which I had never witnessed before. The people who were sitting there started saying, 'Maharaj Ji, bring the boy down, he is very young.'

Maharaj Ji replied, 'Let him enjoy.' Then suddenly, I woke up. I could not sleep. My mind was saying it was a pure dream and could have happened because we were talking about it during the evening and before going to bed. On the other hand, I remembered every minute detail about the Master, such as the way he climbed upstairs, his looks, his manner of talking, his dress style and the amazing spiritual experiences of such a unique kind. There was a war taking place between my mind and my soul. Mind was saying that it was an illusion, but something inside was saying it was real. I could not decide.

In the morning I got up, my vision of the world totally changed. Everything seemed so clear, and I felt as if I had been blessed with something very precious. However, my mind kept on dragging me in the opposite direction, creating doubts.

I went downstairs to make tea quite early, then the telephone rang and it was my eldest sister who lived about ten miles away. She is a very spiritual person who had meditated for years and had many spiritual experiences. She knew that we were going to London, to meet a Saint and she stated, 'The Saint you are going to meet today in London, he came to your home last night and I was there as well.' I asked her three times and she gave me the same answer. My sister never met Maharaj Ji either, like me. After listening to her, I started believing that my dream might not have been an illusion, but a real spiritual experience.

I knew that now no matter what, I had to go to London to see who this Master was; even if I had to hire a helicopter. Trishla and I quickly got ready and went to Dr. Ravi's house to go on the coach.

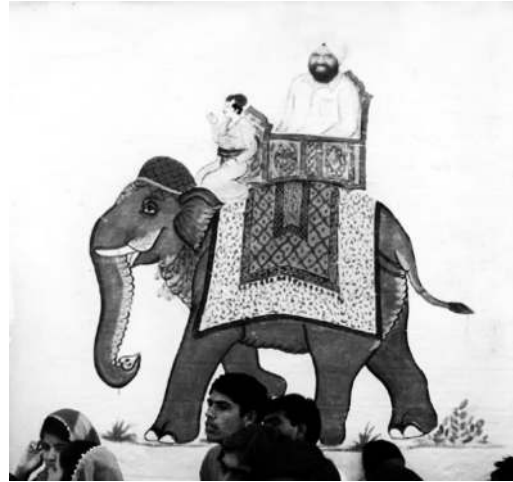
Maharaj Ji was half an hour late, however my eyes were on the doors waiting for the arrival and sight of the Master. I was restless to see him as soon as possible. Finally, when Master entered the hall, he appeared exactly the same way as he was in my vision the night before. When Master delivered his talk about the creation, the details of inner realms, how were they created, how one can travel there, and as to why it is essential to complete this journey during one's lifetime, I felt that Master's talk was delivered only for me. The minute he finished his talk, I knew that I had found a spiritual Master who had dispelled all my doubts and I told Trishla that no matter how long it takes, I would take initiation from him. Both Trishla and I, with Master's grace, took initiation during

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which Maharaj Ji further explained the methodology of how to go within to attain self-realization and God-realization during one's lifetime. I am very grateful to the Master who had to come and take me under his protection forever. —Mukesh Murria heads a large law firm in the UK which he started from nothing.

Rain for the drought of doubt: In a letter from Rajasthan in 2004, Arjan, who was traveling at the time with the Master in Rajasthan, shared this moving account with me:

In hope of catching the Master before catching our train, we went to a small Rajasthani village where a program was to be held. The people there were very loving and had even painted a picture of Master riding an elephant on the wall of the satsang building.



There are sevadars who travel on converted buses to villages, setting up projectors to play Master's videos in these often-remote areas. This had created a real hunger in many of the villagers to meet the Master. As was related to me, when he came here four years ago the entire village turned out and was initiated. Before arrival there were several bars and a drinking problem amongst the men. Master told them that would have to quit this habit. Their women also put their feet down and now there are no more bars!

Satsang was held regularly in the village, and then a severe drought occurred two years ago. Some people were getting despondent and angry. When satsang occurred, they would honk their horns and try to disrupt it. When the group leader asked them to stop, these people would ask that if 'his' Master had so much love, then why was he allowing them to suffer? They demanded, 'Why is there no rain?' The group leader was trembling and then said that his Master has so much love and he will send rain. He then began to question himself greatly and was filled with anxiety. He thought how could he make such a statement? Who was he, he asked himself. He stayed up the whole night lost in worry. Towards the morning Master came to him in a vision and told him not to worry, that rain will come.

Twenty-four hours after the confrontation, it started raining heavily for three whole days. The shaken faith of the villagers was greatly strengthened.

Maharaj Ji with two very happy Rajasthani farmers



A new lease on life: In May, 2008, Ratana visited Gurdeep, Pascal and our two little granddaughters in Italy. I didn't accompany her as I was recovering from pneumonia.

In the early eve of her last day in Florence, Ratana was alone shopping in the San Lorenzo square and about to return to Gurdeep's home in Fiesole. At about 8 PM she was trampled by a gang of illegal street vendors fleeing the local police. Ratana was found unconscious, lying in a pool of blood, then taken by the police to a small local hospital where no one spoke English. Fortunately, Gurdeep's phone was in Ratana's purse and were able to contact her. Gurdeep sped to the hospital and spent the next 48 hours by her mother's side. As soon as I received her call in the morning, Arjan and I were on the next plane bound for Florence, while Jyoti and Shanti were coming from other parts of the continent.

When we arrived at Florence's Correggi Hospital, what we saw made our hearts sink. Ratana's face was damaged beyond recognition, swollen incredibly, all black and purple. She had a hairline fracture from the base to the top of her skull, and a large hematoma or blood clot on the brain. She was in and out of consciousness for the next five to six days remembering nothing about being knocked down.

During this time, she was having an extraordinary out-of-body experience, and the afterglow of it stayed with her for many weeks. As shared with us, she traveled across a vast landscape and was brought to a precipice. In front of her in the distance was a huge Light, like the sun, red at the perimeter with gold and extreme whiteness at the center, far brighter than the outer sun, yet cool and soothing. Within it was the Master Kirpal's radiant form, extending to her love and healing rays. She felt this was her final transition, and told the inner Master, 'I have no regrets.' The Light was so bright that she could not see any facial features, but at the perimeter of the brightness, she could see the Master's feet and distinctive white sylvan pants.

Some days later, Ratana received a loving phone call from Auntie Ji in India and then a direct call from the Master in Illinois, who strongly assured her that she would have 100% recovery and would soon be back to normal. It didn't seem possible.

Not surprisingly, Ratana made a remarkable recovery, with no loss of memory or bodily function and her face is as lovely as it was before the accident and without any plastic surgery.

Ratana is all gratitude to the Masters. marvelling aloud how such could have been given to someone who is so worldly as *she thinks* she is. Although blessed with such a profound spiritual experience, she wagged her finger in a way that made us all laugh, 'But I haven't lost my ambition!'

De-Liver Me:

In 2010, I became progressively weaker, then deathly ill due to liver failure, despite having not using any drugs, alcohol or cigarettes since 1964. I had observed a healthy vegetarian lifestyle and exercised regularly all these years, nor had either of us been unfaithful to each other. I had enjoyed extraordinary good health until fairly recently, and normally I could work circles around those half my age. Some old unknown and unavoidable karma caught up with me. Genetics played its part, thanks to Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency inherited from northern European ancestry that predisposes one to lung and liver issues. Fortunately, I was able to attend our son's wedding in Delhi to Rimjhim in 2010, and danced at their celebration, but my health collapsed immediately thereafter. By January, 2011, I was so ill that I could barely walk, stomach, swollen

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out with acites, looking like a nine month's pregnant belly, which required frequent debilitating draining. The docs said I might last only another month or two unless I received a liver transplant. This was around the same time that Steve Jobs, founder of Apple was having a similar struggle, but he didn't make it, despite having a transplant. The family became very despondent, particularly Ratana who was sick with worry. Hundreds of younger patients were ahead of me, waiting for a matching cadaver liver, and rightly so, the young should be given preference. At 67 years, chances were very slim. Several family members and my friend, Ajay in India, all offered to donate part of their livers to me, but I adamantly refused. The liver is the only organ that can regenerate, so a live liver donor was a possibility. Unbeknownst to me, daughter Gurdeep got tested and it turned out that her liver was a perfect match with mine. She offered many times, but I flat-out refused, saying, "No father would want to put his daughter through such an ordeal." I accepted my fate. In February 2011, Gurdeep came to me with tears in her eyes, and said most seriously and angrily, "Dad, if you don't accept my liver, ***I'll never forgive you!***" We had always been very close and I didn't want to die unforgiven by her! With tears streaming down both our faces I capitulated then and there, and accepted her incredibly generous offer.

Liver transplantation technology began by Dr. Tom Starzl in the 1950's but all the transplants failed shortly thereafter, since the body will reject a foreign organ, that is until the late 1970's when it was discovered that an extract from a tiny mushroom by the name Cordyceps Sinensus that grows out of the head of a Tibetan underground caterpillar-like insect showed great promise in preventing organ rejection. Later, from this, a method of cultivating cordyceps from grain was developed, which led to the development of cyclosporine. It was a great breakthrough which saved and prolonged tens of thousands of lives. Other medicines have since been developed that also prevent organ rejection. That being said, transplanting a liver is a massive 12-16 hour procedure and there are always risks for both donor and donee.

On the very early morning of March 7th, 2011, we were both scheduled to be operated. I was feeling very calm and accepting and so was Gurdeep. As my gurney, following hers, was being rolled down to surgery with Ratana and Rimjhim walking by my side, a mobile phone rang. It was Master Rajinder calling for me from India! "Arran," he said, "you're going to be all right! Don't worry! Master is with you." I replied, "Thank you Master. I'm not worried. I know Master Kirpal is with me." He repeated his message a couple more times. It was such a blessing to speak with Him before the operation. I also recalled Master Kirpal's words to me in 1967, "Dear friend, you're going to live a long life!" Either way, I was resigned.

In one room, Gurdeep's liver was being cut, with the larger right lobe removed, while in the other, my cirrhotic liver and gall bladder were removed and her right lobe was then inserted into my opened abdomen and attached with hundreds of stitches, after which our massive cuts, about 20" (51 cm) in length each, running from the sternum down to the navel and over to the right side, were closed with large titanium staples. Surgery took thirteen hours non-stop. We both came out of intensive care feeling quite jolly, however, later that night there was throbbing in my left shoulder with unbearable pain. The bile duct constricted and the chest cavity became filled with toxic bile which is fatal, and this body was again rushed down to surgery. All the titanium staples were removed, the wound opened up and the bile duct opened with a stent. As fate would have it, the top surgeon had left Vancouver to attend a convention 3,500 miles away.

Over the phone he differed with other surgeons as to what to do with me, so I had to wait two days with my abdomen left with a large open wound. It was packed with a material that looked like moss, and then covered with a clear plastic patch, to which a vacuum pump was attached to prevent the blood and material from escaping. After a few hours, the pump malfunctioned. I called the late-night head nurse who then ran out to look for a replacement pump. Nowhere to be found! There was some panic in the department. I asked her, "how is it possible that your hospital doesn't know where its spare pumps are stored? In my business, we have dozens of pumps and thousands of spare parts, and we know where each one is in our computerized inventory system. How can you not know?" The night nurse snapped back, "are you trying to tell us how to run the hospital?" I said, "Yes, if you don't solve this problem." She left in a huff, saying, "We are looking for another pump and I'm not going to answer any more of your bell calls." After about forty-five minutes, I watched helplessly as blood etc started to well up from the wound under the clear plastic patch. I called the nurse many times, but no one answered. Finally, the nurse poked her head in and I told her to call a doctor. She refused saying that she didn't want to disturb him at 3 in the morning. I thought, what are doctors for? *This is it, my time to meet the Creator*, I thought. I tried to call Ratana but morphine had so clouded my mind that I couldn't remember her number. After many attempts, I finally got through and asked her to call the doctor...any doctor. Finally, hospital staff were able to find another pump at the last possible moment! Two days later came another big operation. I awoke in the ICU feeling very strange. Before awakening from sedation, I was quite conscious, and seemingly was given the option to either pass over into the Beyond, or return to the body. I saw Ratana there also, very distraught and crying. There were many things unfinished, so a decision was made to return to the body. Besides, the Master hadn't yet appeared inside. A puny man thinks he decides, but that's God's joke, for truly speaking, life and death are His hands.

Back in the hospital room, I became quite jolly and was often joking with the nurses, doctors and family, but it wasn't easy. Another call came from Master Rajinder in India, and he was very jolly. After all, Master Kirpal often told us to "**Go Jolly!**" Especially when people came to him filled with their own sadness and problems. Going jolly is a wonderful Commandment! M. Rajinder started off our conversation by saying lightheartedly, "Arran, it looks like you have a lot of karma to work off!" I joked, "Yes, Maharaj ji, I'm trying to corner the market!" We both laughed, but I had to stop because laughing hurt too much!

The liver is an amazing piece of organic machinery. It's our largest organ, being about the size of a football. Gurdeep's liver grew back to its original size in six weeks, but she had infections and blockage issues. She struggled for three months until regaining her former health. Thank you, my dear and loving daughter for the gift of your girly liver! Thanks to my wife who struggled and suffered with me; my son and nephew Kavi who slept in my room after the pump episode. Ratana made sure I was never alone in the hospital after that harrowing time. Since the hospital food wasn't fit for a vegetarian, the family brought me lots of good healing food and fresh squeezed juices, and my Rakhi-sister Pinky Duggal came every single afternoon after finishing her 9-5 job in a nearby bank to read Master Kirpal's translation of the sublime Jap Ji, the Message of Guru Nanak (that's the only thing I wanted to hear), helping me focus and meditate. Every day I was forced to walk, despite the pain. Soon I was taking longer and longer refreshing walks through the neighborhood in my hospital robes. I forgave the night nurse, who was very nice thereafter. Thanks to the extremely kind and knowledgeable doctors and

nurses, and thanks for the incredible technology of organ transplantation. Thanks to my loving family, and last but not least, thanks to the Master-Power which has looked after me since the time I was born.

It took at least twelve trips to emergency and eight months to recover fully from the liver transplant. With all the medications I had to take daily during this period, including large amounts of steroids which induced diabetes. requiring insulin injections, it was very difficult to eat, sleep or meditate properly. During that marathon struggle, the body went from 187 to 137 pounds and became extremely emaciated, with skin hanging off arms and legs, looking much like a victim from Dachau. Gradually, the medications decreased and I began to feel better. After discontinuing steroid medication, the diabetes disappeared. Despite doctors telling me to stay away from the sun and the outdoors, afraid I might catch some bacterial infection or develop skin cancer, I was irresistibly drawn to the large garden daily, to dig the fertile earth, prune the fruit trees, weed and plant. I could feel the sun, rain, air and earth healing the body. I swam in the pool daily, drank fresh juices and ate the purest organic vegan diet. As a result, the body regained a healthy glow, muscle mass, strength and vitality. The doctors were amazed at the recovery. Little did they know the physician of my soul nor the benefits of meditation and pure diet!

The Master encouraged me to take up painting again, so that I wouldn't work too hard in the business. It had been almost a fifty-year hiatus since abandoning art to build the enterprise, a family, a community, write this memoir as well as *The Compassionate Diet* book. With the new liver-lease on life, the grace of daughter Gurdeep and the Most High, came both opportunity and responsibility to be of further service, to make the most of the allotted breaths given, to leave the earth better than I found it.

82 Shalimar Visit

August 29, 2003: Volumes could be and have been written about Sant Rajinder Singh's tours to the many cities and countries he visits—Africa, Australia, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Hungary, Spain, Latin America, UK, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Czech Republic, and more. Tonight, the magic happens in Shalimar Gardens, Vancouver on a disciple's estate near the University of British Columbia overlooking Pacific Spirit Park and the ocean. More than four hundred have arrived by invitation to a magical evening on a grassy plateau surrounded by giant sequoias, weeping birches, maples, organic vegetable gardens and orchard. We wait under a big tent and stars. Around 8 PM Sant Rajinder Singh Ji enters and greets each individual with folded hands and a warm smile. He begins with a verse by Guru Arjan Dev sung by Mata Ji and Rita Ji:

Dear Brothers and Sisters, It is a great joy for me to be in Vancouver, and especially today, as we gather here. When we find true harmony within, then life becomes worth living... But how do you spend your time? Was it fruitful? Did it bring any true gain? Are you drawing closer to God? Are you in harmony with the Divine? These are the questions we need to answer with a big, resounding 'Yes!' Since we are not taking steps Godward, we often find ourselves in difficulty and pain.

Saints tell us that the human body is the Hari Mandir, or the temple of God, and the two—soul and God—need to be harmonized. Mind is telling the soul: 'What are you doing? Where are you going? Look at all the enjoyments and happiness of this world. See what I've set up for you: amusements, places to visit, all good things you can do here. Why take steps towards God? You can do that when you are old and have nothing else to do. When your hands, feet and eyes don't work properly and you are unable to enjoy anymore, then you can think about God.' And we get caught. We think, 'Yes, this makes sense,' so we spend the best time of our life in pursuits of the world. When we are in youth—the body fit and fine—this is the age when we can progress the most, but we while away this precious opportunity. Time is just ticking away; it doesn't stop for anyone. The time which goes is never going to come back. The reason we are suffering is because we have become separated from our True Home. The best place is within us. But what do we do? We rarely sit in meditation where we can experience all joy, all sanctuary, all bounty and the love of God. We go outside to find love; to find beautiful scenery; to enjoy the sunset or the sunrise. Little do we realize that the Rising Sun is always there within...The shabd or verse we just heard sung was composed by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj, who wrote much about the human condition, what we should be doing to find God, and how to develop spiritually. He says:

Thy Name dispels all pain and sorrow. The remedy for all our problems is in connection with the Naam or Shabd.

What is Naam or Shabd? It is the Creative Force that brought all creation into being. A common thread flows through all the scriptures of the world, and they sing praises of that Creative Power. In the Holy Bible it is said: In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God and the Word was God. Similar statements are made in other religious scriptures. In the beginning there was God, and from God came what we call the Holy Word, or the Naam or Shabd. These various names denote that which is one and the same. Via the Creative Force many regions of existence came into being. Myriads of souls, which were parts of God's essence, were sent to inhabit the various regions of

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creation, but with time, they forgot their true connection.

The first generation of immigrants knew much about their faith and their country and went back and forth, whereas the second generation had less contact as they established friendships and connections with their new country. The third generation have little contact, if at all with their original country. After four, five, six, seven, or eight generations they might have forgotten where they came from altogether, because they have no more connection to the source. They became identified with and entangled in a land far from their origin. Similarly, our soul, which came for a one-time trip away from God, became so enamored by the lower regions where it found itself that it came under the jurisdiction of Kal, or the Negative Power—who has dominion over the three lower regions—the Causal, Astral and physical, and all the snares therein that Kal had laid out for us. And the soul got caught.

As embodied souls, we are cycling through what is known as the Chaurasi Lak Jia Jiun—the wheel of 8.4 million species of life, based on our past karma, or actions. Karma is based on what we think, say and do. We are the result of our past, for which we are held accountable.

That's what karma is. It is very similar to Newton's third law of physics: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The law of karma is very clear: For every thought, word and deed we are going to be held accountable. So, have good thoughts! Because, if you don't, you're in a lot of trouble! (laughter) When you get angry, whether it is with the kids, the stock market, or whatever, you bring more pain to others or to your own self. And the same is true with actions. If our actions bring difficulty to others, we are going to be paying at sometime or another. Repayment could happen in this lifetime; it could happen in another lifetime or many lifetimes afterward. It's very difficult for us to judge. But God is watching everything. In the next verse, he says:

*Every moment of the day and night,
Repeat God's Name and engage in the Simran
Given us by a perfect Master.*

What is Simran? It is the repetition of the five sacred names given at the time of initiation. What are these names? They may be found in the writings of the past Masters. Anyone can open the books and read them and yet they have no real effect. But when given by a living Master, they are charged with his attention. If the Master has something then only he can give it to us. This is why, time and time again, in the writings of the Saints, we are told to get divine knowledge from a perfect Master, from a Puran Satguru, because then only will you be able to reach your goal. If you go to a teacher who has started teaching only nursery class, that's all you can learn from him. If he has a bachelor's degree, you can get to that level; if a Ph.D. you can get to that level.

The divine knowledge—which in the East is called Para Vidya, or esoteric teachings dealing with the flight of the soul, the journey into the inner spiritual regions—only commences when we get the spiritual attention of the Master. His attention is important in two ways. Firstly, his attention helps us open the single or the Third Eye—the Daswan Dwar, Shiv Netra, or seat of the soul, which is otherwise closed like an iron curtain. The attention of the Master at the time of initiation enables us to experience the inner Light and Sound. Secondly, the charging behind the names he gives, helps as we repeat them mentally, even when we are thousands of miles away from the Master.

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There are three forms or aspects of the Guru: one whom we call the Guru, who is like a teacher—the one we find in the human form. When we rise above physical consciousness, traversing the inner skies, the stars, the moon and the sun, we behold the radiant or ethereal form of the Master, which is called Guru Dev. That radiant form then becomes our inner guide and escorts our soul up from the astral region to the causal, from the causal to the supra-causal, and from the supra-causal to Sach Khand—the Eternal Abode. In Sach Khand, he brings about our communion and merger with what is called the Sat Guru, the power of God, or God itself. The power of God working through the human frame is what we call the Guru. The Guru is our true helper and friend. Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj has said very beautifully:

*I have no friend except my Beloved;
I have no work except His love.*

God is our eternal Beloved. He is closer to us than anyone else. Our real work is to love Him because God is love. Our soul being of the same essence as God is love, and the way back to God is also through love.

As we gather here together, it is my prayer to God Almighty, and to the three great Masters of this past century, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, Param Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, and to the Gracious Master Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj, to help each and everyone of us truly realize the importance of being connected to the Naam or the Shabd. Then we'll surely find the time to make that connection stronger and deeper. By doing so, we'll definitely reach our Goal in this very lifetime. And the goal of our soul is to merge back in God.

Thank you.

The inspiring discourse was followed by a delicious vegetarian feast, including fresh baked tandoori rotis. Maharaj Ji spent another two hours meeting individually with everyone, personally handing out bags of parshad. The night had been beautiful, perfect, uplifting. And after gently bidding all a good night, the Master made his way back up the hill to the house. As one blissed-out attendee said so aptly: 'Thank you for an evening of heaven on earth.'

Garden of delights:

In the morning, the Master, his family and about 40 who had come hoping for a few more moments in his presence, took an unscheduled tour of the organic gardens, sampling apples, carrots tomatoes, peas, peppers and corn. This had been an ideal hot summer and the flowers, vegetables, figs, berries and apples were of extraordinary size and quality. Nature was in perfect cooperation.

After a light lunch, Master and party left for the airport, just in time for programs in Frankfurt, Manchester, then India, where over 70,000 awaited. During the month in India, he traveled to cities and villages, and initiated another 25,000 souls before returning to America.

Remembrances from the night at Shalimar:

Traveling home from the wonderful dinner with the Master, it was about midnight. I had a four-block walk from the bus stop. A dog approached with an unsteady gait. When it was about ten feet away I noticed it was a Pit Bull foaming at the mouth. It growled at me, opened its jaws and charged towards my leg. All I had with me was a copy of Master Kirpal's book 'Heart to Heart Talks.' Without thinking I lowered the book to place a barrier between my leg and the dog. It backed up about four feet and charged

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again. This time it stopped about an inch from the book then lunged again. It stopped again about an inch from the book, then ran away. Once again, the Master's words protected me from the tribulations of the physical plane. —Izrael Brown, Vancouver

The moments passed in the physical presence of the Master were specially charged with his energy. It was so powerful that many times I had to struggle to hold back my tears because of the gratitude of having been there. I received so many things that I don't deserve at all. As an example in the very beginning, when at his arrival he gave me such a special embrace that I will not forget, forever. Another important point was to see the sangat working side by side as one solid group. The result was a very well managed event.

—Luis Alfonso Infante, Bogotá, Colombia

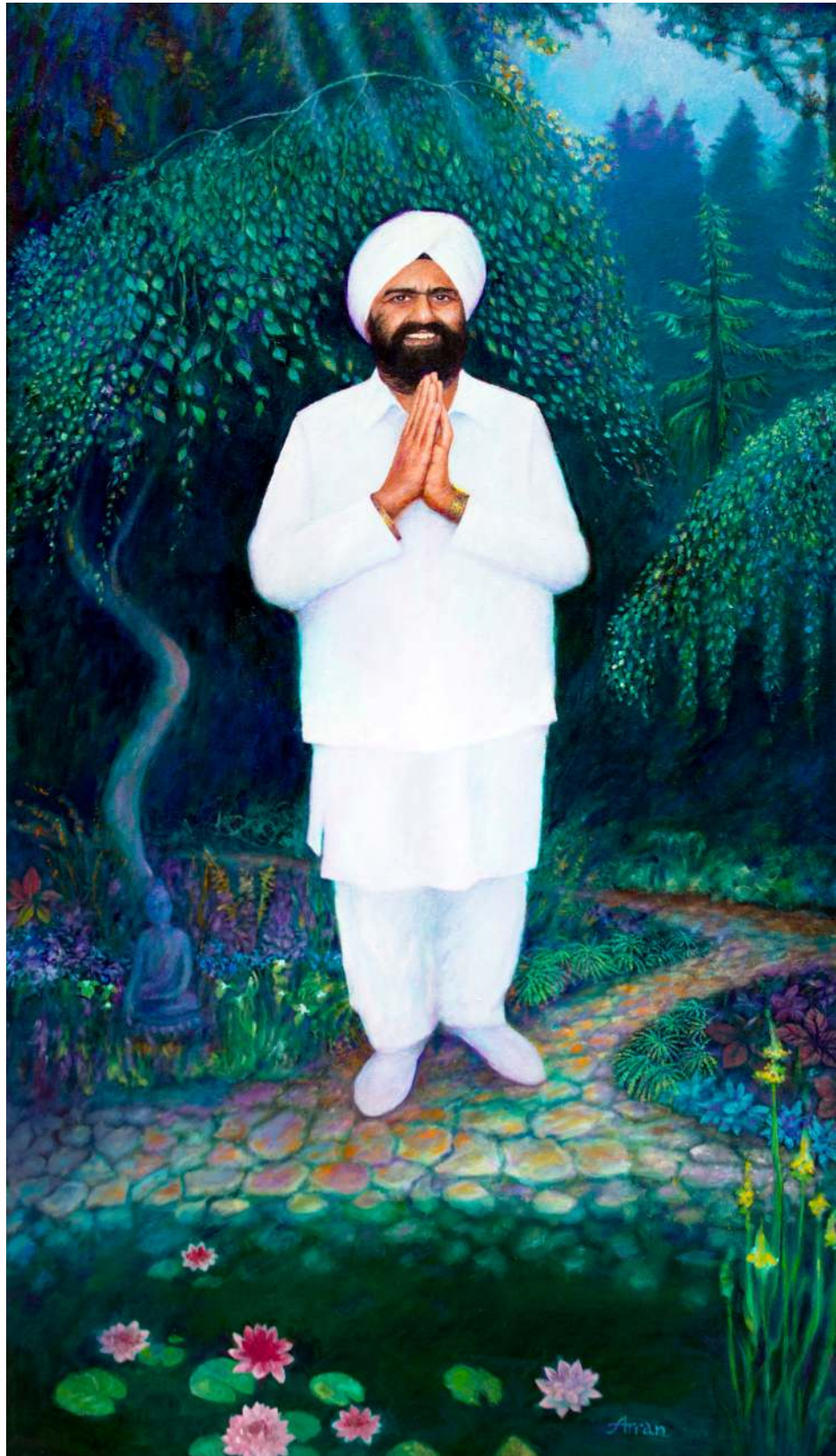
I cannot begin to say how 'enlightened' we both feel about everything! The whole wonder of Master, the family, and the Love, and true camaraderie... Master...whatta guy! He is Something to behold ! I can see why people are so devoted to him and his power.

—my normally irreverent brother Godfrey and his wife, Megan, Victoria

I have been aware of Sant Kirpal Ji for years and have read most of his books. I was thoroughly enthralled by him and often wished he were alive so I could meet him. So, when we heard of his grandson coming we wanted to see him. I attended all his lectures and found he was as fascinating as his grandfather. During initiation, I wasn't aware he was nearby when he firmly touched my forehead. I was meditating at the time—nothing happening, and then I recall a rustling sound and then Master's touch, and immediately it was just like my forehead exploded in a deep purple color. And then a small white light appeared in the center and gradually got bigger. As advised, I locked into it as long as I could—but it was instant—the minute he touched me. Is that not fantastic? —I. Bissonette

To bathe in that enlivening, sparkling deep peace that pervades Maharaji's presence and environs was healing, transforming, blissgiving, and veil-thinning. Experiencing the Master in a variety of charming settings made the tour special; witnessing his love reflected in new and old brothers and sisters was unifying. Am filled with gratitude for the gracious renewal of that most personal foremost relationship, while experiencing 'being part of the orchestra.' The tour was a magical time of reconnecting with my true family and calling. In the presence of the Living Master, the Oneness of the Master Power is revealed. —Joan Morgan

When Maharaji walked into the Vancouver Public Library I was filled with joy. My soul realized that I was back in the presence of Consciousness and all was well in my world. His happiness filled the room. Each word was like a flower petal being gently blown into the atmosphere of the room, which began to fill with divine fragrance, melting my thinking mind. Following the talk we had the opportunity to greet him while he signed a copy of his book 'Inner and Outer Peace through Meditation'. His eyes sparkled with Love for us and he expressed real happiness in seeing us again. I asked him to help my daughter in meditation and he lovingly placed his hand on her head and closed his eyes. His blessing touched me deeply. —William Combi, San Anselmo, CA



In the Garden of Shalimar, 2003

83 Ecology & the Soul

While driving Sant Rajinder Singh and family to the Vancouver airport in 2003, I asked when he would be returning. He replied, “When you establish your Centre here.” He wanted us to have our own permanent center near the large urban community.

In late 2005 an old, shuttered School in Richmond—a large suburb of Vancouver—was acquired at a bargain through voluntary donations. On 1.3 acres, bounded by farmland on two sides and fronting onto busy Steveston highway. The windows were boarded up and broken, feral rabbits by the dozens ruled the land, undermining the foundation, and much work was needed, but it had much promise!

What is a ‘vision’ but something unseen by mortal eyes, yet glimpsed within the soul? Visualise a little caterpillar on the ground with a thought bubble overhead containing a beautiful butterfly in it. Caption: “Now that’s what I call a vision!”

Classroom walls were demolished by a small team of volunteers to make space for a large hall for meditation and satsang, other rooms were demised for kitchen and dining, a free lending library, meeting rooms and children’s classes. Thousands of volunteer hours went into cleaning, carpentry, patching, sanding, painting, wiring, lighting, brick-laying, food prep and serving. Hands, hearts and souls turned trash into a treasure. Every inch was renovated and restored.

This blessed place became a meditation center with ecology as one of its pillars. It dovetailed with Sant Kirpal Singh’s vision of what he called ‘Land Service,’ and, “To grow a blade of grass is more than a patriot’s work,” as he told me in 1972.



Moth & the Flame - SOS Eco-Centre

Master Rajinder was certainly in favor of our goals for the new Center. He himself had earlier written about ecology of the soul:

If we look into the etymology of the word 'ecology' we find that it comes from the Greek... 'Oikos' means 'house' or 'dwelling place.' The word 'ology' means 'the study of.' So the word originally meant 'the study of our house or dwelling place.' Today when we think of the study of our dwelling place our thoughts turn to the earth and Mother Nature. We may divide this study into four areas: understanding the cycles of nature, becoming aware of the effects of pollution, learning how to restore nature to its pristine beauty, and putting into practice methods to preserve the purity of nature. We may think of these four areas as: natural cycles, pollution, restoration, and preservation. —Ecology of the Soul,

—Rajinder Singh

Over the next two years, the property was beautifully landscaped, hedged with tall cedars, while within its perimeter, many fruit trees were planted, along with rows of blueberries and raspberries which soon bore fruit. Vegetable beds were constructed and planted, providing an abundance of food for the Sunday free meals. Organic gardening classes were offered to the public by Arjan.

While we live in this world, we are social beings, part of a greater fabric of mankind. We cannot act in isolation, for within us is a basic urge to connect and be of service to the local and greater community. As Sant Darshan said, we emerge **'from chaos to cosmos.'**

The SOS Eco Centre is the first of many such centers across the globe to develop specific programs to incorporate sustainability, ecology and organic regenerative gardening, along with a central focus on meditation, service and spirituality.



Moth & the Flame - SOS Eco-Centre

Inauguration, April, 2010: It was a great blessing to have the Master come and inaugurate the new Centre in 2010 during a largely attended festive program followed by initiation for many new seekers. The SOS Eco Centre is a beacon of peace and love in the Pacific Northwest, as are other such centers across the globe, where all are welcomed lovingly and respectfully to study, meditate, watch videos of the Masters, hear inspired talks, share stories, enjoy fellowship or do Seva. More than 3,000 SOS centers across the globe meet every week for meditation and Satsang.

On April 10, 2010, the SOS Meditation & Eco Centre was officially inaugurated in person, by Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj. It's impossible to describe the joy of the Sangat that day.



84 Finale

Humanity's Threat & Hope

The threat: Our new millennium has tremendous promise, but the truth is, the quality of life on our fragile planet is diminishing rapidly before our eyes. I've debated with myself whether or not to speak about the precipice that humanity currently faces, not wanting to add a brief sour note towards the finale of my lengthy tale, but I am compelled to speak of both the threat and eco-redemption with a sense of urgency and compassion in these first three paragraphs. Vast ecosystems are collapsing under the onslaught of human-caused CO2 emissions, raising global temperatures, polar icecaps to melt, oceans to rise and countries to flood. Already, climate chaos in the form of drought, fires, tornadoes, torrential rains and flooding, wreak unprecedented suffering, even in the most developed countries. Populations soar out of control, stressing every environment. Food and water security are in short supply. Bees, responsible for pollinating 40-50% of our food supply are in sharp decline, as are our feathered friends. Annually, millions of tons of pesticides and herbicides are dumped on the planet, creating epidemics of cancers and respiratory illnesses; fossil-fuel agri-chemicals diminish long-term soil fertility for future generations; nitrogen fertilizers choke rivers, lakes and streams; fracking for fossil fuels contaminates aquifers and creates instability in the earth's crust; human pollution, factory farms and plastics wreak havoc on the natural world on an unprecedented scale. Our precious oceans have become cesspools of plastic waste, toxic garbage and filth. The list goes on and on.

Those in power, business and political leaders act as though ends justify the means, driven by short-term gains and wilful ignorance. Religious fanaticism, racism, gender inequality and marginalization, suppression of civil rights, abhorrent human trafficking, slavery of women, pornography and child abuse continues unabated; brutal wars, ethnic killings and competing dictatorships still exist; economies and nations rise and fall, democracies are under threat by strongman dictators; materialism and lack of ethics steadily erode human decency, saturating social media. Addiction to drugs, alcohol and internet divorces people from reality. Cynicism, obscenity and rudeness have taken the place of respect and civility in society at large. Mass shootings are common in America on a daily basis. Politics is nasty to the extreme, and truth has fled. Atheism and football have become as religions, and if religious, religion often takes the form of bigotry, exclusion and prejudice against those of differing opinions, colors, countries, genders and beliefs. Would Jesus, Mohammad, Buddha, Nanak and other religious founders recognize today's religions in their name? Would they accept us as their followers?

Animal cruelty, slaughter, meat and junk food consumption escalates in developing countries, aping the wealthy and powerful West, resulting in unprecedented obesity and degenerative diseases. "The first time that parents are outliving their children." Economic power is shifting and the common person is bewildered. Such trends are unsustainable for quality of life on Earth. If everyone ate and consumed like North Americans, scientists have estimated that it would require two and a half planets! The new millennium has by no means miraculously transformed human nature. It is not God who is its' cruel mastermind; it is perverted man who has lost all sense of ethics, compassion, and connection to the Divine. Having compassion for all, including animals, is none other than compassion upon one's own self! The world is full of woe. Will we, as a species, use our resilience and ingenuity to remedy the looming catastrophic collapse?

The Hope: One of the most hopeful signs for humanity and our home-planet is the rise of youthful activism demanding change from the old establishment and its destructive ways of the past. Greater recognition and acceptance of gender equality, human rights and democracy are the needs of the time. Renewable energy in the form of solar, wind, geothermal, hydrogen and tidal is beginning to supplant the old polluting, temperature-raising carbon-based fossil-fuel paradigm. Good science is helping to remediate the bad science of the past. Along with it is the rise of Regenerative Organic agriculture and plant-powered eating by many millions. World leaders are being forced to respond to the evidence of these facts and movements. If there is a collective will from world leaders and the masses, we can reverse the eminent destruction of our precious planet. We can make a habitable, regenerative world for our children, grandchildren, and for all future generations.

Dictatorships, whether fascist or communist, are destined to fall. A capitalism based on selfish greed is not sustainable. New business leaders have emerged and are emerging who realize that there must be an economy based on service of the greater good, employing the model of the Triple-Bottom Line of Social Responsibility, Sustainability and Profitability, sometimes re-ferred to as the Triple-P: **People, Planet and Profit**—*in that order*.

Servant Leadership means that those at the top are there to lead by example, and when profits are earned, a portion is to be returned to society to support humane causes, as well as to immediate stakeholders, be it profit-sharing or bonus structures. ***“The purpose of power is to protect.”***

The tide of growing awareness in humankind—often led by those who are condemned to bear the brunt of the previous generation’s failures and abuses—our Youth, reminds us all: if we do not change our ways as a species, we spell our own extinction.

More Hope: On the bright side there is growing global spiritual awakening that is not the exclusive domain of organized religion, race, ethnicity, or gender; it blossoms wherever a hunger arises for peace, love, and personal enlightenment. Political might cannot stamp it out. Religious authority cannot control it, and material toys cannot satisfy it.

Does it really matter if the nameless Divine is called God, Ram, Allah, Waheguru, Buddha, Mother, Father, or by any other of a thousand beautiful names? Such are like the sun’s uncountable rays, reflections, and emanations, but they are not the Sun itself. When we express universal values of goodness, mercy, kindness, truth, and tolerance, we are expressing God; when we feed the hungry, we are feeding the “hungry Gods.”

Is a Golden Age possible? The remarkable global rise in the practice of meditation, regardless of labels, rudimentary or advanced, for the cultivation of inner peace and progress; interfaith understanding, compassion for animals and the rise of plant-powered eating; the switch from petroleum to renewable energy, are all glimmerings, or at least, pre-glimmerings of the Golden Age as foretold by Master Kirpal to me and Frank Ford in 1972, and again at the World Conference of the Unity of Man in 1974. Indeed, these are hopeful signs in our times, helping to dispel dark clouds of biblical doom-sayers and Kali Yuga prophecies of the Pralaya, or total dissolution and destruction of the physical plane. Thus, say the Great Ones, despite the ranting, despite negative news and ridiculous conspiracy theories, stick to the truth. *Never give up the good. Do not lose hope. And, learn to love all!*

Moth & the Flame - Moth in Orbit

We've all been created in God's image; men and women created religions, temples, mosques, churches, shrines, tombs of past saints, deras and ashrams. We were human before we became a member of a religion. Religions, which arose to protect and preserve the teachings of past Saints and Masters, should be respected, no matter if the followers have forgotten their original inclusive and peaceful message.

*"All places of worship are symbols of the One Beloved.
Bow your head when you see a temple,
and salute when you see a mosque."*

—Darshan Singh

As a seeker, I've paid humble respects at many places of pilgrimage—Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Baha'i—places considered most holy by the vast majority of seven plus billion humans on the planet. When my wife and I travelled to Israel in 2022, we offered our handwritten prayers of peace at the Kotel or Western Wall, inserting them in cracks of the ancient stone blocks of what remains of the ancient temple of Jews, destroyed in 70 AD. We bowed at the places where Jesus gave the Last Supper, the crucifixion, and in his burial tomb. We walked through synagogues with prayers, paid respects to the Dome of the Rock and walked through the peaceful Baha'i gardens where Baha'ullah taught and died. I touched the waters of the Jordan where Moses first entered the land of Israel and where Jesus was baptized by John. I prayed in the mosque in Dubai, and sang with sufis at Nizamuddin. Previously, I'd been to Haridwar, Rishikesh, Amritsar, Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, Ashrams and temples belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Baha'i and the Sufi schools of Chisti. We humans often ascribe or project special powers to external places, idols or persons, but in reality, the truth is found within; only by entering therein can we find and experience truth firsthand. For the mystics and seekers, the Spirit is everywhere whenever we attune with it—as a living force. The Ear of God is everywhere.

*"God is a circle whose centre is everywhere,
whose circumference is nowhere."*

—Empedoklis.

"God hears the cry of an ant before he hears the trumpeting of an elephant." —Nanak. As the Christ said so long ago, "God does not dwell in temples made by the hand of man," and "...**behold, the kingdom of God is within you.**" "Be still, and know that I am God." (Bible). Humanity has forgotten, fallen into the deep sleep of materiality.

The places of worship and pilgrimage have become tourist attractions. While billions and trillions are spent on building and maintaining manmade temples, cathedrals, synagogues and mosques, outside there is poverty, beggary and hunger—the hungry gods, forgotten. Rites, rituals and formulaic prayers have taken the place of ecstatic inner communion.

Why did places become sacred and venerated in the first place? Because at some point in history a Self- and God-realized human being visited there, meditated there in silence, was born there, performed a miracle, gave a sermon or died there, attained enlightenment there. Master Kirpal often said, "If someone insults or breaks even one brick of a manmade temple or mosque, people are ready to kill the temples God made in the womb of the mother. Is it not ridiculous?" He asked. Masters come from time to time, to wake up the sleepers.

Moth & the Flame - Moth in Orbit

Is there not as much holiness in the empty desert or in a quiet spot by a gentle stream in the forest, or in the quiet of the night in a room—even a hotel room, or in a quiet chapel if traveling? Wherever there are fewer distractions, we can connect. Even in the midst of chaos, we can find inner stillness and connect to our portable heaven. Lao Tsu said in his Tao Te King, “...without going out my door, I know all the points of heaven and earth, for the farther one travels [outside] the less one knows.”

When challenged, “Why did you go to Israel?” I replied from the heart, “To seek understanding and make friends.” As one raised in a predominately christian society, and with some study of the Bible, I avoided politics and made friends with Jews and Arab Muslims and found common understanding. Having read and studied many of the scriptures of the major spiritual traditions, as well as many lesser known, I have found a thread of unity in all. There is good in all, provided we don’t focus on outer differences, otherwise, trouble arises. In the name of religions, millions have been killed and even today, many are also being oppressed and killed in the name of God, Ram or Allah. Women, who represent half of humanity, are equal to men in all respects, yet are still not treated equally. These and other injustices need to be corrected in society.

“Wherever a Saint treads his foot, that becomes a place of pilgrimage,” and “All is holy where devotion kneels,” said Kirpal the Worthy. We can live in a noisy city or in the country. We can be of any religion. color or faith, rich or poor, believer or agnostic, learned or unlearned—it makes no difference to the soul, and makes no difference to me. The Divine is everywhere and anywhere—it’s up to us to tap inside and realize it, and thus, solve the riddle of our own existence—as to why we were born, who we are in truth, where we go when we die and how we can find God in the midst of the ever-changing phenomena of the material universe. For that, finding a true Guide along this amazing journey is indispensable, and then to practice the lessons that are given. Without individual practice and ethics, there is no substantial gain. Is this not what all the great Masters and all the great scriptures of the world have been telling us for hundreds and thousands of years?

Wanted! Reformers, not of others but of themselves.
—Swami Ram Tirath

Master Kirpal Singh summed it up at the close of his remarkable life in six simple, powerful words: “**Be Good, Do Good. Be One.**” I think we all intrinsically know what *Being Good* and *Doing Good* means, such as living by a high ethical standard where we do no harm to others, including animals or to ourselves; living by the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Doing good is being kind and helping others selflessly.

Being One is the inner practice leading to the Union of soul with the Ocean of all-consciousness.

Human compassion and a desire to serve the expanded Self in all begins surging in our veins as the seeker develops his or her spiritual practice. In a society that in general flows towards selfishness and gratification, the truth seeker swims against the current of status quo. The sheeple awakens.

*O holy Knowledge, by Thee am I illumined,
and through Thee do I sing praise to the incorporeal Light.*
—Hermetica of Hermes Trismegistus of ancient Egypt

On discovering the hidden “incorporeal Light,” the heart begins to overflow, and bows in adoration of its own accord.

The true artist, disciple, or spiritual wayfarer can *choose* to become a conduit, a flute through whom the music of the Creator is playing. As Kabir Ji says, “*The flute of the infinite plays without ceasing, and its sound is Love.*”

Unimaginable beauty of our Creator’s Song hides in each of us, playing and frolicking; within its power, universes unfold and refold. Upon hearing even its lower melodies, our bee-like soul begins to find her purpose; the deeper she goes into the flower, more joy, nectar and bliss she finds. Alas, few care to listen beyond the surface and go deep. Thus, like the delicate perfume of a blossom in desert emptiness, only driven ones are fortunate to find it. Be driven, be hungry, thirst for the truth! Consciousness, like slumbering embers, waits for God’s breath to sweep away the ashes, to return the fire.

I’m an old dog now, who, in youth, happened to stray into the lane of the Beloved; the Beloved took pity, patted and gave him some morsels, and the pup, having found his place, never left. In so doing, the Beloved proved the redemptive love of God as divine Parent, not only to him but countless others as well. And as this body approaches its eighth decade, he looks forward to his final union with the Beloved. The Sun which sets on this side of the veil, rises on the other.

*“If I die, don’t say that he died. Say he was dead,
became alive, and was taken by the Beloved.” ~Rumi~*

More than once, the Master directly expressed to me and to others, “I wish you to become ambassadors,” ambassadors to share universal Light to the world, with gratitude, humility and joy.

My soul has been laid bare. Whatever crumbs gleaned from the Master’s table or plucked from the floor, have been shared. Forgive the imperfect messenger for his rust. The moth just touched the Flame, embraced it, singed its wings, but is not yet consumed. The best is yet to come.

Salaam, Shalom, Peace, Shanti, Love

*The salt of life is selfless service;
The water of life is universal love;
The sweetness of life is loving devotion;
The fragrance of life is generosity;
The Pivot of Life is Meditation;
The Goal of Life is Self-Realization.*

Kierpal Singh

85 Appendix - The Inner Journey

In my Father's House are many mansions. —John 14.2

*Please note: all descriptions and illustrations herein are but meager approximation and invitation; the stages of the Homeward Journey are experienced through practice and grace alone for which there is no material substitute, written, uttered, played or read.

According to many great and enduring spiritual traditions—and validated to some extent by modern quantum physics—the Creation consists of vastly more than the physical universe with which we are somewhat familiar. Mystics, via practice and direct experience, have gone much further than what is possible through empirical scientific method. Within mystic literature and poetry are innumerable references to subtle universes and varying planes of consciousness within, beyond, or interpenetrating our physical universe. This macrocosm can be accessed through the microcosm of the human form—which the Adepts have termed as the true temple of God. Our body-temple contains within it subtle and spiritual essence-envelopes corresponding to similar dimensions of the cosmos. While the corporeal world is experienced through the five physical senses, additional planes or dimensions of being can only be accessed when the attention is withdrawn from outside stimuli and focused within at the center of awareness that lies between and behind the two eyebrows. This locus, or doorway is called the single eye in esoteric Christianity, *nuqta-i-saveda* by the Sufis, and the *ajna chakra*, *divya chaksu*, or *tisra til* by the sages of India, and as the third or spiritual eye in the West.

Our attention is the outer expression of the soul. Concentration of attention is required for participation in physical, emotional, and mental activities, but when focused within, through techniques learned from a spiritual Adept or Master, one can enter and traverse the subtle and spiritual regions.

According to the teachings of the Satgurus, here are six centers or chakras (literally wheels, or lotuses) within the subtle or astral body—which are parallel and concurrent with the physical body, located at the rectum, genitals, navel, heart, throat, and forehead. The Adepts do not advocate esoteric practices involving the centers below the spiritual eye as they are limited and do not help much in the attainment of Self-knowledge and God-realization. The journey to divine knowledge and freedom commences only after physical consciousness is transcended through the doorway of the Single Eye. Most yoga systems and yogic adepts are unaware of the higher spiritual regions beyond the Astral Plane. The yogic system is good as far as it goes, but its ultimate goal is the attainment of the Thousand Petaled Lotus—the headquarters of the Astral plane, which yogic literature refers to as the seventh chakra, or the Crown Chakra. The Sant Masters speak of the Thousand Petaled Lotus as the head-quarters of the Astral Plane, or the first significant step on the inner journey, and they do not refer to it as the seventh chakra. Different applications of terminology can create some initial confusion, but it is irrelevant as to whether this stage is called a chakra or a headquarter. The supreme goal is far, far higher.

With the assistance of a competent Adept who has realized the full potential of humanhood and traversed all the stages of the inner journey, the student learns to gradually progress within. Guided by the helping hand of his or her Master, the aspirant

Moth & the Flame - The Inner Journey

lays the groundwork for spiritual evolution by cultivating ethical virtues and developing regular and accurate meditations. While patiently explaining the way, a competent Adept provides an indispensable series of spiritual boosts to those whom he initiates into the mysteries of the beyond, through the transfer of his attention or consciousness. A sacred mantra of five holy names (appellations of the deities of each spiritual region) are imbued with the Adept's powerful charging, and serve as passwords and a passport to the subtle and spiritual planes. The repetition of these names clears away inner obstacles and protects the individual from inner and outer negative influences.

Like the layers of an onion, the various coverings (physical, astral, causal, and supra causal) which enshroud the soul are gradually peeled away. Through regular practice, the initiate begins to experience in meditation the various lights of the first inner stage in the form of myriad stars, big star, heavenly skies, moon, sun, tunnel, mountains, gardens, rainbows, eye, vortices of light, lightning, radiant reflections of the living Adept and other perfected sages. This gradual process of withdrawal from outer to inner awareness requires practice, patience and perseverance. As concentration and devotion increase, mysterious inner sounds and melodies become audible from the right side or center of the forehead, such as the buzzing of bees, surf, bells, conch, whistle, waterfalls, birdsong, drumbeats, violin, flute, etc. Concomitant with the auditory and visionary experiences, the practitioner undergoes spontaneous ever-deepening states of mystical bliss and peace. The Sound-current purifies the mind of its dross.

When complete withdrawal of the sensory current (the sense of feeling) from the body is attained, the disciple is joyously met by the radiant form of the spiritual Guide (in the mystical vernacular of the East, this manifestation is called Gurudev). As receptivity develops, the inner guide may converse with and escort the initiate to the headquarters of the astral plane. This center is known as the sahasrar, or sahandsal kanwal, the thousand petaled lotus (a pyramidal cluster with one thousand glowing lights, when viewed from the side, or, like a lotus with a thousand luminous petals, when viewed head-on). While the attainment of sahasrar is considered to be the be-all and end-all by several yoga systems and religions, on the path of Sant Mat, it is regarded as the first stage of a much longer journey.

In the astral plane, one travels with the speed of thought and may encounter many peculiar phenomenon and unusual dream-like experiences. The initiated are urged to ignore this region's myriad illusions and snares, and hold fast to the inner Guide, who leads the soul onward to more rarified planes.

Connecting the astral and causal region is a curved tunnel, termed as bunk naal. This passage is experienced not only by adepts and their disciples, but also by those who have near-death, or out of body encounters. At the end of the tunnel appears the archetypal guide, often accompanied by a life-review and intense sensations of bliss and love. The uninitiated however, do not have the password of the Five Names from a Living Master, and hence cannot proceed to higher spiritual planes.

The Masters of Sant Mat speak of five great regions or planes. References to these are found in several religious scriptures, mystical accounts and the writings of numerous sages, saints, and their advanced disciples.

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*Only as a handful of straw
do you know your body,
But beneath it flows the ocean of Life;
Outwardly you are a particle,
but inwardly
You are more than a hundred suns!
—Shams-i-Tabriz*

Maulana Rumi, the 12th century Persian mystic and poet (the beloved disciple and successor of Shams-i-Tabriz), makes reference to five muqams or spiritual stations in his magnum opus, Masnavi. Jacob Boehme of 15th Century Germany speaks of five spiritual planes as do Kabir, Nanak, Paltu, Chisti, and other Sant Satgurus (perfected Saints) of northern India. Sometimes they speak of four grand spiritual divisions: astral, causal, supra causal, and the purely spiritual realm (where the fourth and the fifth plane are combined). All refer to the Overself or Lord dwelling within, Who yearns for the separated souls to return Home. It expresses as the five-fold melody of Naam or Word, the power that brought creation into manifestation and simultaneously draws it back to its Source.

The five regions or planes are characterized by five primal sound currents, which are different frequencies of the One creative Word or Logos. Each higher region is successively more subtle, powerful and enchanting than those it precedes. According to the Adepts of Sant Mat, in the astral plane the predominant sound is the Big Bell, and the predominant vision is the thousand petaled lotus and the Master's radiant form. This region is far greater in size and power than the physical universe. Above and beyond the Astral plane lies the Causal (Brahm, or Brahmand). Here, soul beholds a vast continuous Red Rising Sun which colors this entire region in golden-crimson hues. The sound-current of the Causal Plane assumes the form of pealing Thunder, exciting Drumbeats, and the sound of the cosmic OM—the motor-current of the three worlds. This realm is also called Trikuti (three mountains), because the soul beholds three golden promontories (Mer, Sumer, and Kailash).

Trikuti is the headquarters of Kal—the Universal Mind, or Time—but the source of the soul is far beyond in the higher, purely spiritual and imperishable realms (for a more complete understanding of Kal's role, refer to Chapter 19 - Western Rajasthan Tour).

Leaving the mind behind in Trikuti, soul journeys up into the third region, known variously as Daswan Dwar, Par Brahm, or the Supra-causal. Here, the sound current is more melodic and enrapturing, resembling the form of stringed instruments like the Sarangi (Indian violin) or the Sitar. The Light here is like a Full Moon that exceeds the light of countless full moons of the physical world. The fabled pool of Amritsar (also known as Mansarovar) is at the center of the Supra-causal, in which the sins and karmas of countless lifetimes are washed away, leaving the soul increasingly purified and powerful.

Separating the third plane from the fourth, is a kind of barrier, meant to keep back lesser souls. It is called Maha Sunna—the region of stygian darkness and silence which only the perfected spiritual Adepts can cross, or whomsoever they wish to take along with them (The Maha Sunna can, however, be by-passed altogether, if the Master so wishes to take the disciple directly to the Fourth plane).

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In the fourth region, the sound assumes the form of a sweet and plaintive Flute. The Light now takes the form of a grand Sun that exceeds thousands of outer midday suns, yet remains cool and enlivening. In this fourth cosmos is a vast, immense slowly rotating cave through which the soul proceeds. Here, one works without hands, walks without feet, sees without eyes, and hears without ears. The soul is stripped of all coverings and shines in its native luminosity greater than twelve suns combined. Soul now realizes that her existence is none other than God, and cries out as did Christ: I and my Father are One! And as did Mansur: Anna'l Haq! [I am the Truth!]

The fifth stage, the Eternal Realm known as Sach Khand or Muqqam-i-Haq, is reached after the purified and realized soul enters through a great portal. Here soul delights in the sound-current which assumes the song of continuously playing Bagpipes, but infinitely more melodious and enchanting than anything known on earth. Proceeding a little farther, soul comes face to face with the Supreme Being [Sat Purusha], shining with a brightness greater than millions of suns and moons combined. Often to its surprise, soul beholds one's Satguru on the throne of Sat Purusha. Of this revelation, Kabir Sahib says:

*Guru and God are sitting side by side; to Whom should I bow?
I will bow first to my Guru, for it is he who took me to God.*

In this Light-saturated, unalloyed region there is no death, no rebirth, only eternal bliss and joy. Here, pure swan-like souls feed on and swim in rivers and pools of divine nectar. Their existence is perpetual, inconceivable bliss-consciousness. The drop merges.

"Finally, the pilgrim soul reaches Sach Khand or the Abode of Truth. Here complete Oneness is realized and it sees all universes functioning according to His Will in devout awe and adoration. Even remembrance of such a vision is blissful, but the vision itself is such that no eye has ever seen, the heart cannot conceive and the tongue cannot describe." —Kirpal Singh

*Sach Khand or the Realm of Truth is the seat of the Formless One.
Here He creates all creations, rejoicing in creating.*

*Here are many regions, heavenly systems and universes,
To count which were to count the countless,
Here out of the Formless,
The heavenly plateaus and all else come into form,
All destined to move according to His Will.*

*He who is blessed with this vision, rejoices in its contemplation.
But, O Nanak, such is its beauty that to try to describe it
Is to attempt the impossible.*

—Jap Ji, Guru Nanak.

Moth & the Flame - Inner Regions Chart

Kabir, Nanak, Kirpal, Darshan and other Masters have spoken of three higher divisions of Sach Khand (the True Home). Some Saints have called these stages Alakh (the Incomprehensible), Agam [The Ineffable], and Anaami [the Nameless, Formless, Attributeless]. Others have called them Agochar, Radha Soami, Nirala, Nirankar and Akaal. All written, spoken or chanted names are attributive and descriptive, and carry no power per se, unless charged by a living Master.

Sant is the term given for one who reaches Sach Khand. Param Sant is used for one who has reached the Anaami realm [although both terms are often misused. Some who may be pious and religious, but blank as far as inner access is concerned, might be improperly called a Sant]. All who attain Sach Khand, along with their direct disciples are free forever. There is no material difference between a Sant or a Param Sant. If they come into incarnation again, it is not as prisoners of existence like the rest of humanity, but as spiritual Adepts and Saviors, sent to bring lost souls back to their Source.

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The following chart was generated by the writer, based upon written sacred texts and oral teachings of the great Masters in the Sant Mat/Science of Spirituality tradition, and corroborated to a certain extent by personal experience. Again, this is only an imperfect approximation of dimensions which are beyond human description, beyond the senses and beyond the mind and imagination. This chart is only to provide the reader an iota of the immensity and grandeur of the journey and the Source of all sources.

This cosmological chart attempts to portray the inner regions as steps in a ladder, whereas others have tried to portray them as concentric rings.

The spiritual regions are not 'up there', but within. They are not seen as 'back there' within the head, either. One enters them by looking within, i.e. forward into the middle of the initial darkness in front of the eyes, after piercing the first of many veils with concentrated attention. It is generally a long journey and requires great patience and persistence, but there are great rewards at every step.

*Says Kabir, 'Listen here, Dharman [his disciple, Dharam Das],
let my advice dwell in your innermost mind,
The veil is removed only when the True Master is met,
And the realm of Dayal, the All-Merciful is attained'*

The high points of the journey and its ultimate consumation are the result of a combination of sustained individual effort, of surrender and sacrifice coupled with competency and grace of one's spiritual Master. Individually, there is the need to mold one's life according to the higher precepts of spirituality and ethical living, but that alone will not suffice. Transformation and liberation in the truest sense is always a gift.

THE INNER PLANES OF CREATION

Various aspects of Divine Light & Sound-Current

(an approximation only)

Purely Spiritual Regions

8.

ANAAMI

The Nameless, Wonder Region

7.

AGAM

The Ineffable Region

6.

ALAKH

The Inconceivable Region

5. THE FIFTH PLANE

SACH KHAND

The True Home.

Sat Purusha—the Supreme Being, dwells in Sach Khand. Here, Soul merges in God as a drop merges into the ocean.

Predominant Sound Current:
Bagpipes

Trillions of suns and moons cannot vie with even one hair of the Supreme Being; It is All Light

4. THE FOURTH PLANE

The Sun of the 4th Plane exceeds 100,000 physical suns



BHANWAR GUPHA

The Rotating Cave

Soul realizes here that it is none other than God

Predominant Sound Current:
Plaintive melody of Flute

MAHA SUNNA — The barrier region of darkness & silence

3. PAR BRAHM
THE SUPER-CAUSAL—
BEYOND THE MIND

Full Moon- exceeds 1,000 outer moons



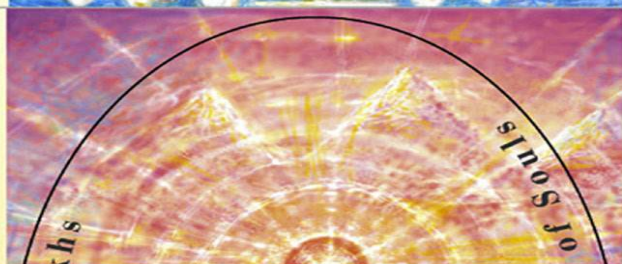
DASWAN DWAR

*The Pool of Nectar—
Amritsar / Mansarovar*

Predominant Sound Current:
**Sarangi (violin) and Sitar
(harp-like stringed music)**

2. BRAHMANDA
THE CAUSAL PLANE
HOME OF THE MIND

Red Rising Sun



TRIKUTI

*The Golden Mountains:
Mer, Sumer & Kailash*

Predominant Sound Current:
Thunder and Drum

1. ANDA
THE ASTRAL PLANE

The Thousand
Petaled Lotus



SAHASRAR

Heavens and Purgatories

Stars, suns & moons

Predominant Sound Current:
Bells & Conch

PINDA
THE PHYSICAL PLANE



THE SIX CHAKRAS OF PINDA

Chakra	Divinity	Color of Light
Behind Eyes	Paramatma	radiance
Throat	Shanti	white
Heart	Shiva	bluish white
Navel	Vishnu	red
Reproductive	Brahm	blue
Rectum	Ganesh	yellow

Glossary

Sant Mat / Science of Spirituality terminology:

Adept—Highly skilled expert; spiritual Master, or Satguru (Master of Truth).

Adi Granth—or Guru Granth Sahib—the sacred scriptures of the Sikhs.

Agam—the Ineffable; one stage below Anaami—the Nameless and Formless Region

Agochar—The Incomprehensible region; synonymous with Agam.

Ahimsa—the doctrine of Nonviolence, or non-injury to any living creature, as expounded by Buddha and Mahavira of the Jains.

Ajna Chakra—the sixth ganglionic center, chakra or psychic lotus located at the point between and behind the eyebrows. Also known as Third Eye, Single Eye, Divya Chaksu, or Shiv Netra. See Chakras.

Akaal—The Eternal, Timeless; synonymous with Anaami, Radha Soami, or Nirala.

Akali—An ultra-orthodox Sikh sect.

Akbar (1542-1605)—Considered by historians as the greatest of India's Mughal emperors. Akbar demonstrated remarkable religious tolerance, wisdom and understanding, and also encouraged and patronized the arts. Akbar was an admirer of Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Sufi Saints, and visited Mira Bai, Guru Arjan, Sarmad, and saints of the Chisti order.

Alakh—The Indescribable, the region immediately beyond Sach Khand.

Amrit—Nectar, ambrosia, water of immortality. In Sufism, Amrit is termed Aab-i-Hayat or Water of Life.

Amritsar—In mysticism, Amritsar is a name for the pool of nectar encountered in Daswan

Dwar—the third spiritual Region. Here, soul is purified of all traces of mind, karma, sin and matter. Amritsar is also the name of a large city in Punjab which contains the Golden Temple and pool, originally founded by Guru Ram Das.

Amir Khusro (1253-1352)—poet of northern India, chief disciple of Nizamuddin.

Anaami—The Nameless and Formless region. Perfected Saints describe this stage as the be-all and end-all, utterly beyond human description or mental comprehension.

Anna'l Haq—'I am the Truth,' exclaimed Mansur of Persia in a state of divine union, for which he was put to death by orthodox authorities.

Arjan Dev (1563-1606)—5th Sikh Guru; compiler of the Adi Granth and martyr. He was the son of the 4th Guru, Ram Das.

Arjuna—The princely warrior-disciple of Lord Krishna, who, hesitant on the battlefield, with Krishna as his charioteer, received revelatory teachings from his master, immortalized in the Bhagavad Gita (Celestial Song).

Asana, or aasan—Any yogic posture used for meditation or exercise.

Ashram—Hermitage, refuge in nature, esoteric school, a center of spiritual teaching.

Ashtanga Yoga—the eight-fold path of yoga as developed by Patanjali.

Avatar—an Incarnation. In Hinduism, Ram, Krishna, and Narsingh were avatars of Vishnu—the Preserver aspect of God, born to bring about the balance between good and evil in the physical world. The role of the Avatar is different from that of the Sant Satguru, who comes to take souls back to their Source.

Baba—Reverential prefix for an old man, a father, or a Saint.

Moth & the Flame - Glossary

Baba Jaimal Singh—(1838-1903), the Satguru of Baba Sawan Singh.

Babar (1483-1530)—A distant descendant of Genghis Khan. Babar conquered Afghanistan and northern India and is considered to be the founder of the Mughal dynastic empire. On one of his campaigns, he imprisoned the inhabitants of a village. Amongst them was Guru Nanak, who was ordered to grind corn between two large stones. Nanak began grinding, but in the process, entered into Samadhi. The stones continued turning, but no human hand was evident. This miracle was reported to Babar, and after an epic discourse, Babar set Nanak and all other prisoners free.

Baha'ullah—A 19th century mystic saint and poet of Persia, founder of the Baha'i faith.

Baha'ullah and his followers were greatly mistreated, tortured and imprisoned by the then rulers and religious establishment of Persia (later, Iran).

Baraka—Persian word for Grace.

Beas—One of the major rivers in the Punjab; the name of the town which sprang up on its banks, around the simple hut where Baba Jaimal Singh meditated and taught.

Bhagavad Gita—The immortal discourse given to Arjuna by Lord Krishna. The Gita is the most popular scripture of Hindus.

Bhajan—Devotional song. In mysticism, bhajan is the meditative practice of listening to and absorbing in the internal Sound-current as heard from the right side or center of the forehead. Bhajan is the third fundamental spiritual practice, and it leads the practitioner to higher states of consciousness. Ultimately, by following the internal melodies of the Word (Naam), union of soul with God is attained.

Bhakti—Devotion to God or to a God-realized Master.

Bhandara—Death anniversary of a Master, followed by a free meal.

Bhanwar Gupha—The fourth inner spiritual region preceding Sach Khand. Bhanwar Gupha means 'whirling cave of light.'

Bharat—Another name for India, named after King Bharat, who renounced the world and became a hermit-yogi of the forest. Despite his renunciation of society and family, Bharat developed a deep attachment for a deer. Bharat was reincarnated as a deer, illustrating the importance of inner detachment from the temporary objects of this world, especially at the time of death, whether one is a king or a yogi.

Bibi—wife, polite term of addressing an Indian woman.

Brahm—Lord of the causal plane who controls the astral and physical as well.

Brahma—One of the three deities of the sacred Hindu Trinity, entrusted with the work of creating the causal, astral and physical worlds. Brahma, the Creator, Vishnu, the Preserver, Mahesh (or Shiva), the Destroyer.

Brahmanda—Egg of Brahm, so-called due to its egg-like, elliptical shape. Brahmand, the causal plane, is also known as Trikuti

Brahmcharya—Chastity, purity of conduct; control of the five senses. According to Manu, the ancient Vedic law-giver, an ideal existence is divided up into four quarters of twenty-five each: Brahmcharya—student life and chastity, Grehasth, or married house-holder life; Vanprasth, detaching from worldly activity and devoting energies to spiritual study and meditation; Sanyass, renunciation and dispensing the truth one has realized through inner practice.

Bulleh Shah—(1680-1758) The great Muslim Sufi poet of Punjab and foremost disciple of Inayat Shah, the gardener Saint.

Bunk Naal—Curved tunnel connecting the astral and causal regions.

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Causal Region—Brahmanda, or the second spiritual region. Here, soul sheds the astral body and works through the causal body. It is the region from which the mind originates, and its ruler is Brahm. Om, thunder and drums resound throughout this region which is illuminated with the light of a continuous red rising sun.

Chakras—Wheels or lotuses; centers in the body through which various energies function. Six chakras of the body are: guda—rectum; indri —genital; nabhi —navel; hrıdey —heart; kantha —throat; and ajna —third eye. The chakras are connected to the Ida, Pingala, and Shushumna nadis, subtle pathways through the length of the spinal column. The six chakras lead to the Thousand Petaled Lotus—headquarters of the astral plane. The shushumna continues on up into the higher regions.

Chaurasi Lakh—Wheel of Transmigration through 8.4 million species. According to the Masters, the immortal soul passes through the various species until it attains human birth, the highest rung in creation. Via contact with a perfect Master and initiation, the embodied soul can get off the Wheel of transmigration.

Chela—disciple of a guru.

Dacoit—Thief, or robber. In mysticism, mankind is beset by Five Dacoits: Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Ego. These inner thieves are conquered only after the disciple perfects his or her spiritual practice. When the Sound-current purifies the mind, the dacoits depart in the form of snakes or little boys.

Dadu Sahib (1544-1603)—Poet-saint, composer of Bhakti Sagar (Ocean of Devotion).

Darshan—Seeing, vision, meeting the Master without, or within.

Darshan Singh, Sant (1921-1989)—Eldest son of Sant Kirpal Singh Ji, who brought him to the feet of his Master, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh. Darshan received initiation from Hazur at the age of six, and served the mission of both Masters with full devotion. Sant Kirpal chose Darshan Singh as his spiritual successor in August, 1974.

Darvesh—Sufi term for mystic or Godman.

Daswan Dwar—Third inner spiritual plane. Literally, the Tenth Door.

Dera—Residence, ashram, or hermitage. Dera Baba Jaimal Singh was established by Baba Sawan Singh. The Dera evolved into a modern city from the simple mud hut his Master, Baba Jaimal Singh used for meditation. The author visited the Dera in 1981.

Dharma—Duty, faith, religion.

Dharam Rai—God of death and justice, also called Yam Raj.

Dhun—Tune, inner sound.

Dhyan—The holding, or fastening of attention in meditation on the inner vistas of Light. Dhyan progresses to contemplation on the inner radiant form of the Master, so much so that the self is subsumed. Dhyan is the second phase of meditation, and leads to the next phase: Bhajan, or listening to the inner Music of the Spheres.

Eye Focus—the point between and behind the two eyebrows. Also known as the Third Eye, Tisra Til, Shiv Netra.

Fina-fil-Shaykh—Sufi term for merger in the Master.

Fina-fillah—Sufi term for Death in God, Sufi term for the merger with God. This follows Fina-fil-Shaykh.

Farid, Baba (1175-1265)—Sufi poet and saint of Punjab. Some of his verses are included in the Adi Granth.

Faqir—Mendicant, saintly ascetic living on alms.

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Ghalib (1797-1869)—Urdu poet.

Ghazal—a Persian or Urdu poetic form intended to be sung. Each verse represents a complete unit of meaning with well-defined metrical forms. Ghazal is derived from the nimble gazelle, because the artistic form is able to leap from one peak of meaning to another gracefully. The Urdu ghazal condenses subtle and grand concepts, romantic, philosophical, allegorical and mystical, into a few words or phrases with rhyming couplets. Ghazals are immensely popular in India and Pakistan.

Gita—see Bhagavad Gita.

Gobind Singh, Guru—Tenth and last Sikh Guru (1646-1708). Author of Dasam Granth, Bachittar Natak, and Gobind Geet. He is considered the founder of the Sikh religion when he gave his followers a distinct form at Anandpur Sahib in order to stand up to and defend the defenceless against the tyranny of his era.

Granth Sahib—Guru Granth Sahib, or Adi Granth—the sacred scriptures of the Sikhs compiled by Guru Arjan Dev. Besides the writings of several of the ten Sikh Gurus, the Granth Sahib includes compositions by well-known Hindu and Muslim Saints. The largest number of verses in the Granth is by Kabir Sahib.

Gurbani—the sayings of the Gurus, in the form of the Adi Granth.

Gurbhai—a brother in Guru; a fellow-initiate.

Gurbhen—a sister in Guru.

Gurmat Siddhant—A comprehensive treatise on spirituality in Punjabi in two volumes. The work uses illustrations from most religious traditions and was written under Baba Sawan Singh's direction by Sant Kirpal Singh. Like the nine successors of Guru Nanak, Kirpal Singh signed the book in his Master's name, as he considered it was Hazur's doing, not his.

Guru—Spiritual teacher. Literally, 'dispeller of darkness'.

Guru Saroop—Inner radiant form of the Guru. The Word-made-flesh.

Guru Granth Sahib—See Granth Sahib.

Guru Dev—The radiant light-filled form of the Master, as it appears in the Astral and Causal regions.

Gurdwara—Threshold, or 'Door' of the guru; Sikh temple.

Gurmukh—(pronounced Gurmookh) One who has become a mouthpiece of his Master; one who lives in obedience and surrender to the will of God.

Gurmukhi—Punjabi script used by the Sikh Gurus to record their verses. Gurmukhi bears some similarity to the Hindi-devanagri script.

Guru Nanak (see Nanak)

Hafiz (1325-1388)—Mystic poet-saint of Persia.

Haj—pilgrimage to Mecca, considered sacred and obligatory to Muslims.

Haq—Persian and Arabic for Truth, or God in Supreme State.

Haridwar—Sacred city for Hindus, located where the mighty Ganges emerges from the Himalayan foothills onto the plains of northern India.

Hatha Yoga—Yoga which involves mastering various bodily postures to build up a healthy physique. It is considered the more elementary of the various yoga systems.

Hazur—Lord. A term of great respect for someone in a position of authority. Sawan Singh was addressed by his disciples as Hazur. See Sawan Singh. He was also called 'Vaddey Maharaj,' or Great Master.

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HU—Arabic term for the third spiritual region (pronounced 'Hoo').

Hindi—the most commonly spoken and written language of northern India. Originally based on Sanskrit or Devanagiri, modern Hindi is an interesting mix of north Indian dialects, including Urdu, Farsi, Punjabi and English!

Ida (Ira)—One of three subtle channels which pass from the head down to the base of the spine, connected to the breath, and which yogis attempt to master. The three subtle channels, sometimes called nerves, are the Ida, Pingala, and Shushumna (or Sukhmana). Ida or lunar current flows on the left side and Pingala or solar current flows on the right, Sukhmana is the central channel in which the Sound current is heard by the serious meditator, when focused in the third-eye center.

Initiation—In Sant Mat, initiation is the process of connecting the disciple's attention with the inner Light and Sound-current, through the medium of a living Adept. Basic requirements involve honest livelihood, adopting a strict vegetarian diet (no meat, fish, fowl, or eggs), and avoiding all intoxicants such as illicit drugs (hallucinogenic or otherwise) and alcoholic drinks.

Jaimal Singh, Baba (1838-1903)—also known as Baba Ji. Spiritual successor of Soamiji of Agra. Baba Ji was the Satguru of Baba Sawan Singh.

Jainism—A religion founded in the 6th century BC by Mahavira—a spiritually realized ascetic who roamed the forests of India in a naked state. He taught the inner way, along with non-violence and respect for creation.

Jain—A follower of the Jain religion.

Janak, or Raja Janak—King of ancient India who aspired to spiritual knowledge. Through the grace of his Guru, Ashtavakra, Janak attained enlightenment. Afterwards, Janak successfully combined kingship with sainthood.

Jap Ji—Mystic epic poem of Guru Nanak, which begins the Adi Granth.

Ji—suffix of respect commonly used in India.

Jiva—Embodied soul; soul plus mind.

Jyoti—Inner Light.

Kaaba—The black stone of Abraham enshrined at Mecca, Arabia.

Kabir (1398-1518)—Poet and mystic Adept of Banares. Kabir is considered to be the 'grandfather of Sant Mat' in the present millennium. Many Hindus and Muslims were amongst his initiates. Kabir's bold and original compositions are found in the Adi Granth and in other literature and songs attributed to him.

Kal—Time, Satan, Shaitan, Negative Power. While a creation of the Supreme Being, Kal's function is to keep order and justice in the lower, perishable regions—the physical, astral and causal planes. In contrast to Kal, God, the Almighty and Merciful works through the Masters to bring seekers into contact with the Word, Logos or Naam. The Logos permits escape from Kal's domains, and ultimate Emancipation.

Kali Yuga—See Yuga.

Kalma—In Islam, Kalma means an affirmation of faith in God and in his Prophet Mohammed. In Sufism and in Sant Mat it refers to the Holy Word or Sound-current.

Kam—(pronounced 'kaam') Desire, sexual lust. Of all the weaknesses of man, Kam is probably the most difficult to master. Ego, or Ahankar is the vice last to go.

Karma—Action and reaction, the law of action and reaction; the fruit or result of past thoughts, words and deeds.

Karma Yoga—The Yoga of right action, performed in a spirit of detachment as a means of

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spiritual unfoldment.

Khusro, Amir—Scholar, mystic Sufi poet, disciple of Nizam-ud-Din Chishti.

Kirpal—Merciful, compassionate.

Kirpal Singh—(1894-1974) full title: Param Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, a perfect Adept, author, transmitter of ancient truths; spiritual successor to Hazur Baba Sawan Singh (1858-1948); first Sant Mat Master to visit the Americas, Greece and Europe; known to his approximately 100,000 disciples as the Beloved Master.

Koran, or Q'uran—Allah's message as revealed to Mohammed, the Prophet of Islam.

Krishna—Avatar of Vishnu, yogi-sage-hero of the Bhagavad Gita and Mahabharata; friend and mentor of prince Arjuna.

Khuda—Persian for One who comes of His own accord. God or Allah.

Kriyaman—See karma.

Kundalini—dormant serpentine energy coiled at the base of the spine. When the kundalini is awakened and rises up to the forehead, the practitioner may acquire miraculous powers, and/or go insane. Kundalini is not advocated by the Masters.

Lakh—One hundred thousand.

Lakshmi—Hindu goddess of wealth, good fortune and beauty.

Langar, or Guru-ki-langar—The Guru's Kitchen. In India, all who come to the Master's satsang, are fed a free vegetarian meal afterwards, where all are treated equally, regardless of caste, creed, color or wealth.

Lao Tsu—Father of Chinese mysticism or Taoism. Author of the Tao Te Ching.

Mahabharata—Indian epic by sage Vyas. It centers round a catastrophic war between the Kauravas and Pandavas, in which it is said that all civilization was destroyed in thirteen days. Flying machines and incredible atomic-like weapons are described.

Mahavira—Jain Ascetic and saint who lived in the 5th century B.C. in India.

Mansarovar—A lake, high up in the mountains of Tibet. In Sant Mat, the Mansarovar (Chashma-e-Kausar in Sufism, or Amritsar) is a sacred pool in the third inner region, whose waters purify the soul of all traces of mind and matter.

Maha Sunna—The barrier-region of great silence and stygian darkness which lies between the third and fourth spiritual planes. Only the perfect Adepts and those whom they take with them can cross this barrier.

Mathnawi (Turkish), or Masnavi (Persian)—A collection of the mystical verses of Rumi. His incomparable verse combines mystical allegory, music and sublime language with deep revelation born of God-realization.

Maya—Illusion, the principle of unreality which makes us see the outer universe as real. This mayaic illusion (dream) divides us from God or the Real. Only when we awaken do we understand that we were living in a dream.

Mira Bai (1503-1563)—Princess saint of Rajasthan, famous for her poignant devotional songs.

Moghal, Mughal or Mongol; one of several emperors of India, believed to have descended from Genghis Khan (Janghez Khan).

Mohammed, Prophet (C. 570-632)—'The Praised One,' Founder and Prophet of Islam.

Muni—Silent one, wise or holy sage. Epithet commonly used to describe Jain ascetics.

Muqqam-i-Haq—Arabic and Persian: Realm of Truth, fifth inner region among Sufis, synonymous with Sach Khand in Sant Mat terminology.

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- Murshid—Persian: spiritual teacher. Murshid-i-Kamil = the Perfect Man, or God-man.
- Naam—Name, Word, Logos, Kalma, Amrit, Shabd, Bani, etc. The celestial Light and Sound of Creation, Music of the Spheres.
- Nad—Sound, in mysticism it refers to the inner Sound. Ref: Nad Bind Upanishad.
- Namaste—‘I bow to the Lord in you’; traditional Hindu greeting/parting.
- Namdev (1270-1350)—Poet saint of Maharashtra and Punjab.
- Namaz—Prayer of faithful Muslims, performed five times daily.
- Nanak, Guru (1469-1539)—First Guru in the Sikh lineage, Nanak was born of Khatri lineage in Talwandi, near Lahore in the Punjab. Guru Nanak realized God and spread the fragrance of the True Name to countless seekers. He traveled on foot from the Himalayas in the north, to Sri Lanka in the south, China to the East, and to Mecca in the West. Author of Jap Ji and many important verses found in the Adi Granth. Nanak was revered by both Hindus and Muslims as a perfect Saint.
- Negative Mysticism—Term coined by Sant Darshan Singh to describe forms of mysticism based on asceticism and the renunciation of a householder’s life, see also Positive Mysticism.
- Negative Power—Kal, Shaitan, time, death.
- Nine Doors—two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, generative organ and rectum.
- Nirgun—Without attributes, Formless, opposite to sagun, or ‘with form’.
- Ojas—spiritual power accruing from celibacy when all energies are directed away from the sense organs to higher centers within.
- Om (Aum, Onkar)—The Sound-Lord of the second spiritual region.
- Papiha—India’s rain-bird. According to tradition, the Papiha will drink only pure rainwater, and will die of thirst before drinking ordinary water. The papiha is a metaphor of a pure soul in longing and accepting nothing less than her Beloved.
- Paramatma—The Oversoul; Supreme Soul; God.
- Parampara—Spiritual lineage.
- Param Sant—Supreme Saint, one who has reached Anaami—the supreme region beyond name and form.
- Par Brahm—Third or supra-causal region.
- Parshad (Prashad)—Anything blessed or sanctified by a Saint; commonly used for blessed food from vegetarian sources.
- Patanjali—Author of the Yoga Sutras and Ashtanga Yoga which outline the philosophy and practice of traditional Yoga.
- Pind—can mean either the human body or the physical universe.
- Pir Inayat Khan—Twentieth century Sufi mystic, author of Mysticism of Sound etc.
- Positive Mysticism—term coined by Sant Darshan Singh for that form of practice in which the seeker, while meeting normal family and social responsibilities pursues the highest spiritual goals, typical of Sant Mat or Science of Spirituality teachings.
- Prana—Vital energy of the body, intimately linked to the breath process.
- Pranayama—Breath control, yogic-breathing.
- Pundit—Learned priest or scholar. A member of the Brahmanical caste. Pythagoras—Sixth century B.C. Greek philosopher. Defined God as Truth clothed in Light; also as Supreme Music, the nature of which is harmony.

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Rabia Basri (717-801)—Woman saint of Basra, Iraq, famed for a life of intense spiritual practice, devotion and lofty sayings.

Radha Soami—Lord of the Soul, term used by Shiv Dayal Singh for God in the Absolute state, also known as Anaami. Rai Saligram, a prominent follower, founded the Radha Soami Faith. Today, there are many offshoots of the Radha Soami faith.

Raja—King

Ramakrishna (1836-1886)—of Dakshineswar. Ramakrishna was a simple man of direct realization, and possessed great spiritual powers.

Ramanand—A Saint of mystic devotion, born near Madras. He came to northern India early in his life. He initiated Kabir and Guru Ravi Das

Rajinder Singh, Sant—b. 1946. Eldest son of Sant Darshan Singh and Harbhajan Kaur. The Living Master in the Sant Mat tradition, and head of Science of Spirituality.

Ravi Das (1376-1527)—A cobbler by profession, Ravi Das became a great saint of Surat Shabd Yoga. His poetic compositions can be found in the Adi Granth. He was the Guru of the celebrated princess Mira Bai.

Riddhis—psychic powers such as the ability to read minds, see events at a distance, read the past or future, manifest objects, etc. The Adepts warn against the cultivation and practice of occult powers, as they retard the upward progress of the soul.

Rishi—Forest sage.

Ruhani Satsang—Spiritual satsang, term used for the organization set up by Sant Kirpal Singh for disseminating truth.

Rumi, Jalal-u'-din (1207-1277)—Arguably one of the greatest Sufi mystics of all times; author of the Mathnawi. Rumi became the devoted disciple of the wild Master, Shams-i-Tabriz, after the latter revealed to him his divine, all-knowing condition.

Sach Khand—The Realm of truth, the True Home of God and soul, from whence all originated. When soul ultimately returns Home and comes face to face with the Supreme Being, it then dissolves its separate existence in the Eternal Being.

Sadhana—Spiritual exercises, inner discipline.

Sadhu—Ascetic or holy person.

Sagar, Sansar—Ocean of existence, the physical, astral and causal worlds which have to be crossed.

Sahansdal Kanwal—Thousand petaled lotus; headquarters of the Astral plane.

Sahasrar—City of a thousand lights, center of the first inner region. Same as above.

Sehjo Bai—15th century poet, woman mystic and disciple of Charan Das.

Samadhi—State of superconsciousness attained when soul transcends the limits of body, self and mind, and becomes one with the Godhead. To pass from the Astral to the Causal, or from the Causal to the Supra-Causal, the initiate becomes one with the residing Power at each plane, then passes beyond.

Sangat—Congregation, community of disciples of a Master.

Sant—One who has reached Sach Khand and who is commissioned to give Naam (The frequent misuse of this term has resulted in much spiritual confusion).

Sant Mat—Path, or Way of the Masters, another term for Surat Shabd Yoga, or Science of Spirituality.

Sanyassi—One who has renounced the world, wandering ascetic.

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Sar Bachan—the prose and poetical writings by Soami Shiv Dayal Singh of Agra.

Satguru—True Master, or a perfected spiritual being. This also refers to the transcendental form of the Master the disciple beholds and merges into when Sach Khand is reached.

Sat Naam—The True Name—an appellation of the immortal Supreme Being.

Sat Purush—Lord of Sach Khand, the Supreme Being.

Satsang—Company of truth, a spiritual discourse.

Satsangi—an initiate of a realized Master; lit. ‘One who is in contact with Truth.’

Sat Sri Akal—Truth Eternal. Traditional Sikh greeting and parting.

Satvik—One of the three gunas or qualities of mind: tamsik—lazy, negative, rajsik—energetic, forceful, active, hard-working; satvik—pure, highest, noble, truthful.

Sawan—First month of the monsoon season.

Sawan Singh—Full title: Hazur Baba Sawan Singh (1858-1948), the first perfect Adept to spread the teachings of Sant Mat to the Western world. Hazur initiated approximately 120,000 seekers.

Sensory Current—Surat, or the sense of feeling. When the sensory currents are withdrawn to the eye-focus, Light and Sound automatically appear.

Seva—Selfless service. Seva may be physical, intellectual, monetary, or spiritual.

Sevadar—One who performs selfless service with no thought of reward.

Shabd—The Sound Current or Word which brought everything into being; the vehicle for taking souls back to the Source of its emanation.

Shakti—Spiritual power.

Shams-i-Tabriz (Shamas Tabriz)—Spiritual Master of Maulana Rumi.

Shastras—Ancient Hindu scriptures.

Shaykh—In Sufism, Shaykh is synonymous for Master, but is also used for those who preach in a mosque, a head of a religious order, or a learned one.

Shiv Netra—Lit. Eye of Shiva. Represented as a flaming eye in the middle of Shiva’s forehead. In Sant Mat, third or single eye. See tenth door.

Siddhis—See Riddhis.

Sikh—lit. ‘one who learns.’ A disciple of a true Master. Conventionally, a follower of the Sikh religion. According to the Adepts, one only becomes a ‘disciple’ after seeing the Master’s radiant form within.

Sikh Gurus—Guru Nanak (1469-1539), Guru Angad (1504-1552), Guru Amar Das (1479-1574), Guru Ram Das (1534-1581), Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606), Guru Har Gobind (1595-1644), Guru Har Rai (1630-1661), Guru Har Krishan (1656-1664), Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675), and Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708?).

Simran—Sweet remembrance of the Lord. Simran is the inner practice of focused mental repetition of the five charged names received at initiation from a perfect Master. Simran is the first phase of meditation practice, and helps withdraw the sensory current to the third eye. The five Words have validity or power only when conveyed by a realized Adept.

Singh—Lion.

Soami Shiv Dayal Singh, or, Soami Ji (1818-1878) Great spiritual Adept of Agra, author of Sar Bachan and Satguru of Baba Jaimal Singh.

Sohang—‘I am as Thou art’. The Lord of the fourth spiritual region. Anna’l’ Haq, as uttered by the Sufi Mansur Al-hallaj, and ‘I and my Father are One’ as proclaimed by Jesus in the higher planes, mean the same.

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Sufi—the Mystics of Islam. Soof comes from the Persian ‘wool,’ as the early Sufis wore a simple woolen cloak. Sufis have represented the highest form of mysticism within the Islamic tradition, often suffering for their beliefs at the hands of orthodox fanatics. There are several gradations of Sufis—just as in all other spiritual traditions.

Sunna—(see Maha Sunna)

Supra Causal—Region where pure spirit predominates. Same as Par Brahm.

Surat—the Attention, or more specifically, the inner faculty of hearing. Attention is the prime attribute of the soul.

Surat Shabd Yoga—the science of uniting soul with the Celestial Sound-current. Considered the highest of all yogas, Surat Shabd leads practitioners to realms far beyond the reach of more commonly known yoga systems. Surat Shabd Yoga is synonymous with Sant Mat, Path of the Masters, or Science of Spirituality.

Swami (or ‘Soami’)—Lord. Can also mean any one who dons an orange robe and who has been initiated into one of India’s four monastic Hindu orders.

Swarath—Worldly life.

Tao (or Dao)- the Way of Heaven, as taught by Lao Tsu of China. Synonymous with Naam or Word.

Tenth Door—the body has nine apertures through which the attention spreads into the world—two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, generative organ, and rectum. The hidden tenth door is between and behind the eyebrows, doorway to the regions within. There is another Tenth Door or Daswan Dwar in the Third Spiritual Region.

Third Eye—See tenth door.

Trikuti—Brahm, second spiritual stage, home of mind. Trikuti refers to three golden mountains of this region, which the sages have called Mer, Sumer, and Kailash.

Tulsi Das—15th century Hindi poet and mystic, author of Ram Charitar Manas which retells the ancient Sanskrit Ramayana epic.

Tulsi Sahib (1763-1843)—Sham Rao Peshwa was the crown prince of the Peshwas (Poona). He renounced kingship for the spiritual life and settled in Hathras, near Agra. Tulsi Sahib initiated Soami Ji of Agra when the latter was seven years of age. Soami Ji’s parents were disciples of Tulsi Sahib.

Udgit—Upanishadic term for Song from the Beyond, the Holy Word.

Upanishads—Teachings of the ancient Rishis or sages, containing commentaries on the Vedas (India’s oldest scripture), often in dialogue form.

Urdu—A language which developed in Mughal times using Hindi structures and Persian script and vocabulary. Spoken in some regions of India and currently the national language of Pakistan.

Valmiki—author of original Ramayana in Sanskrit. Valmiki was a robber and illiterate, but, through association with a Saint, he became proficient in meditation and ultimately attained Self-knowledge, and God realization.

Vedanta—(Ved: Vedas; Aant: end—the ‘end of the Vedas’), a school of Indian philosophy based on the Upanishads (commentaries on the Vedas).

Vedas—knowledge, the four basic sacred books of ancient Hinduism: Rig Veda, Samar Veda, Yajur Veda, Athar Veda.

Vishnu—member of the Triad responsible for sustaining the creation. Vishnu and is said to reincarnate as an avatar whenever the balance of good and evil is seriously disturbed in the

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world.

Vivek—discrimination; ability to discriminate between right and wrong; truth and untruth.

Vivekananda, Swami (1863-1902)—Devoted disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, eventually succeeding him. Founder of the Ramakrishna Order, Vivekananda brought India's spiritual philosophy to the West in 1894, when he addressed the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago.

Vyas—ancient sage and poet, author of the great epic Mahabharata.

Wahi Guru—Wondrous Lord. Another appellation of the Supreme Being

Yama—God of death and justice, Lord of the nether regions.

Yoga—to yoke together, to discipline, a system which leads to or aims at the union of the soul with the Oversoul.

Yugas—Age or cycle, ancient Indian thought sees time in terms of a recurring cycle of 4 Yugas: Sat Yuga—Golden Age; Treta Yuga—Silver Age; Dwapar Yuga—Bronze Age; Kali Yuga—Iron Age. According to Sant Kirpal Singh, we are leaving behind Kali Yuga and approaching the Golden Age again. Kabir said that he incarnated in all four ages to reveal the inner Light and Sound-current and liberate jivas.

Zoroaster (660-583 B.C.)—founder of the Persian religion. He taught the path of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, and the worship of the Creator—Ahura Mazda whose creative power he called Sarosha. Zoroastrians keep a flame burning in their homes at all times, a long-forgotten symbol of the inner light.

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