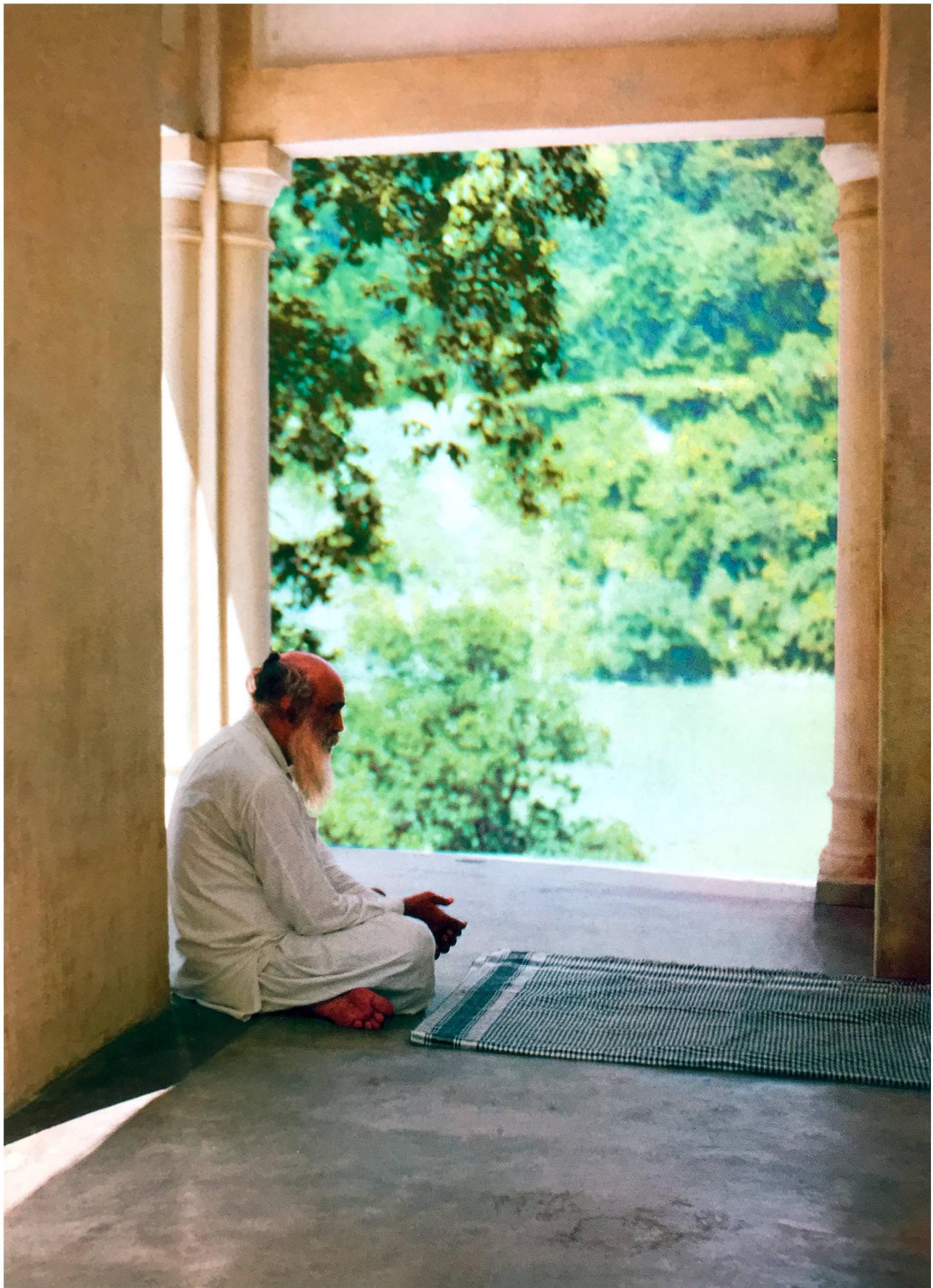


**Love,  
Light  
and  
Life**







# **LOVE, LIGHT and LIFE**

*Events in the Life of a Great Master Soul*

Devinder Bir Narendra

Eileen Florence Wigg



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ALL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY THE AUTHORS

Frontispiece: Master at Rani-ki-Kothi, Rishikesh, 1962

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Dedicated  
to the Perfect Master,  
Satguru Kirpal Singh Ji  
Who was the personification  
and epitome of Love and Light and Life  
and Who continues to radiate the  
Light of that Love in ever-increasing abundance  
and Who, by His merciful grace, connected  
the authors to the Holy Naam and  
gathered them into the heart of  
His spiritual family.

‘Let man’s body be in full blossom,  
and his soul be full of glory,  
Intoxicated with the Ringing Radiance of God;  
Radiating love all around,  
to the whole Creation.’

Kirpal Singh



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## INTRODUCTION

First, it should be stated that the work on the manuscript and through all phases of the project is entirely due to the Master's grace, inspiration and ever-abundant kindness.

The thought of attempting to chronicle the life of someone whose stature soars miles above the imagination must seem a daunting task that only an opinionated person would attempt. It was with trepidation, therefore, that this book - LOVE, LIGHT AND LIFE - was started.

Many years ago, the Master, Satguru Kirpal Singh Ji, told my sister on the Path, Devinder - known to most as Khuku - that He wished her to write about His life. She reacted as anyone would, 'Oh no, Maharaj Ji, I could not possibly do it!' He replied, 'Yes, you will be able to, don't worry.'

In the following days and years, He told her of many incidents from the early years of His life. She made notes. When I went to India in 1962, she told me about this, adding that although she had made a lot of notes, with the Master's and Taiji's (Hardevi's) help, nothing serious had been written.

Time went on and toward the end of the 60's we were able to launch a project that had been on my mind for a long time - through the Master's inspiration, no question! With the Master's direction, the Sat Sandesh Journal, already available in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, gave birth to the English version, the progress of which is a story for another time. That was 1967.

When the Master changed the printing of this journal from India to the United States in 1970, He gave us the work of translating His talks to be included in the monthly issues. Once again, Devinder was reluctant, to say the least, but the Master insisted, saying, 'You can do it and Eileen will help you.'

Well, He gave us a test piece – something from Guru Nanak, if I remember correctly – and that was all. We began translating a talk each month and He, Himself, would read each one through, making adjustments – adding here, removing there, according to His preferences. He would leave His work to do this – to meet each month's deadline. Mistakes were few, but sometimes He changed things. This work continued for a number of years.

I think it gave Devinder a different outlook on the other stupendous undertaking: His Life. Her opinion of her abilities did not change, but the idea of making some kind of effort entered her heart. After all, it was the Master's wish – the Master's order, to be accurate. Surely, she must make some attempt. But with the Sat Sandesh work and other various things in our busy Ashram lives, nothing was started at that time.

It was not until later, when we were living in North America, did she begin. 'Will you help?' she asked. 'Certainly,' I replied. And so it began. There is a saying about the blind leading the blind . . . well, that's how we felt, but we soldiered on – however slowly and somewhat erratically.

When Devinder had to leave to join the Master in May of 2006, the Life Story was yet incomplete, and I continued working on it, hoping to conclude the project before I too had to leave.

The result, as any one of the Master's faithful will readily agree, is not a work that covers every small detail in His life, but it is, we hope, enough to show any interested person what kind of Man this was, and how He led His life. Any errors or shortcomings are due entirely to the authors. All that which is correct, and appealing to the reader, is due entirely to the grace of the Master. If the world's population wrote for eternity, full justice could never be done to the history of the Master's life. His was a life to be lived, not written about.

Part One begins with the Master's birth and follows through His childhood, youth, and into manhood. It tells of

His search for a True Master; how eventually He found His Master, Baba Sawan Singh, and the years of joy sitting at His feet. It tells too of Baba Sawan's last days and His passing from His physical form.

Part Two covers the start of the Master's spiritual mission and the many years of His steadily rounding up His children, in India and other parts of the world. His first extensive tour to Europe and North/South America is also covered.

Part Three shows how the Master's days get busier than ever, the work increasing, involving Him in many important projects and two more tours abroad.

At the Master's direction, an attempt has been made to keep the events in chronological order. In most cases the dates were traceable but where there was doubt in confirmation, the dates were not included – to avoid inaccuracies wherever possible.

The title: love, light and life is a description of the very personification of a Perfect Master. It describes very clearly His make-up. He is a combination of these three. He told us many times: 'God is Love; God is Light; God is Life.' This book is about Love, Light and Life. It is a small glimpse into the life and the world of Perfection in Man. It is an attempt to describe how the True Master is an embodiment of the sea of love which is God. As He termed it: 'An Ocean of All Intoxication.' That same sea of love continues to flow from Him to quench the thirst of His faithful family of children, no matter where they may be.

Eileen Wigg  
British Columbia, Canada

Grateful thanks are extended to anyone who helped in this project, even in a small way, knowingly or unknowingly.



## PART ONE



## CHAPTER ONE

If one digs deeper than the familiar tableau of elephants and snake charmers, majestic mountains and historic palaces, bustling bazaars and crowded highways, one might find traces of the real India. Its great spiritual heritage – where religion and faith in God have, hand in hand, influenced everyday life for centuries – takes a foremost position in the Indian's world as he or she travels through life. It is that depth of India's spiritual treasure that the serious seeker of truth, regardless of background, aspires to probe in attempting to solve the mystery of life.

More than any other single country, India's huge wealth of spiritual and religious knowledge has been recorded, down through known history, for the benefit of mankind at large; this notwithstanding conquerors and occupiers that came and eventually left, as time passed.

Only God knows why India has been the home of such spiritual wealth and why so many great souls have been born there. Suffice it that the huge abundance of knowledge that has been accumulated is available.

We know that Master Souls do come to this world: the advent and lives of some of them have been witnessed, recorded and confirmed in various ways. Perhaps there were others too, who never became widely known.

Our interest lies with just one of those great souls – one who may never be lauded by a fanfare of worldly trumpets. To more than ninety-nine percent of the world's population, the life of that one Great Soul is unknown – His message of truth unlearned.

True Master Souls do not come for the masses but for the few who have a deep and innate desire to find God; and although the world can boast millions of religious worshippers, it is God alone Who knows which of His children have a true desire for Him deep within their souls. Perhaps that is why He made the way to Himself open only to those whose desire for God predominates over all other desires. It is a mystery privy to God and the Great Masters alone. But if the true seeker is prepared to put his or her quest above all other considerations, the great mystery of life and death, we are told, can indeed be solved, through the Perfect Master: the Master, Who comes to the world to enlist that comparatively small percentage. For that small percentage however, life and the future is forever changed.

Just how great was the earthly life of this particular Great Soul is an impossible calculation; as is the impact and influence of His Holy Presence during His sojourn of eighty years. We can only hold a true gratitude within our hearts and endeavor to reap the benefit of His providence.

## CHAPTER TWO

Our story starts in India on the night of February six 1894 when, in the Punjab village of Sayyad Kasran in the District of Rawalpindi, later to become part of Pakistan, a son was born into the home of Gulab Devi and Hukam Singh, the village's most prominent family. In that newly-born child the Light of God glowed in all fullness – a Light descending into the darkness of the world to pierce the gloom of ignorance – one human birth that would bring second birth to thousands.

Hukam Singh and Gulab Devi already had two sons: Prem Singh and Jodh Singh; later, a daughter named Sumitra would be added to the family.

Following the custom, the pandits and astrologers were invited to come with their blessings and to cast the new baby boy's horoscope, using the exact time of birth to calculate the positions of the stars and astrological signs. Pouring over their books and charts, a great deal of excitement was generated as they worked deeper into their figures. Incredulous! They told Hukam Singh that the positioning of the stars at the time of his son's birth were the most unusual they had ever seen and they were certain a great soul had been born in his household, one who would renounce worldly gifts but would himself be a giver of gifts of a higher caliber,

those generally considered to be unattainable by man. The horoscope was drawn, but there was much more, they said, that could not be explained. Rejoicing in their good fortune in being allowed to make the child's horoscope, they offered hearty congratulations to Hukam Singh.

An important part of the pandits' work was the customary choosing of a suitable name for the child, and they selected Kirpal, which means "the merciful". As they left the village, nodding their heads and enthusing over their singular experience, Hukam Singh was left to ponder all this in his heart.

Kirpal was, from birth, a great joy to his mother. He did not cry much, demanded very little of her time, had a cheerful personality, and she naturally came to love him the most. He was very different from all other children. As time went on, his strong individuality became so distinct that on occasions it was a source of concern to his father. From as early as four years of age he would sit for hours, lost in himself. Mysteriously strange, while other children played their games Kirpal sat apart with a faraway expression on his face, deep in some contemplation beyond anyone's reach. He was an enigma to his parents and relatives, who found his remarks filled with a rare wisdom about what people usually termed "the unknown". Yet his bearing and manner exposed an innocence that was sweetly childlike.

Most of the time he withdrew from outer things and lived in his own world within, enjoying visions and soul flights on the spiritual planes. On days when the inner life was not accessible to him he was restless, sad and lost until the inner link was established again and his higher experiences resumed. His absorption in the spiritual life was not totally without effect in the mundane world however, when

he was at times involved in inexplicable happenings, causing people to wonder just what kind of child this was. They began to call him "the young Saint".

Many years later, a little light was shed on this extraordinary childhood by Kirpal himself. He was asked why, as a small child, he was pensive and withdrawn when children of that age normally play and jump around. He revealed, 'It was not written for me to play on this Earth.' The inquirer then asked, 'You must have been seeing something within to keep your attention there?', and Kirpal said, 'In those days I saw the inner Light and many wondrous scenes of one inner stage or another; always such scenes were before me.'

With the exception of Gulab Devi, Kirpal's family were not vegetarians but Hukam Singh could not persuade him to eat meat, eggs or other flesh foods, even though he tried hard with love, sternness and threats in turn. It was all to no avail. Pal, as he was fondly called by the whole family, would put some roti\*, rice, dal\*\* and vegetables on his plate, or if there were no vegetables he would add a sprinkling of salt and, seating himself a little apart from the others on the floor of his mother's kitchen, eat his food with full attention, relishing each bite. Gulab Devi loved him to a point of adoration and with motherly protection tried to allow him to eat in peace. To take meals while sitting on the kitchen floor was common practice in India. Kitchens were for cooking and eating only; shoes were left outside, and the whole place was spotless.

One day, however, Hukam Singh called Kirpal to his side and told him to give good reason for not eating meat. Kirpal's reply was enough to arrest his father's good intentions from that day onward: 'Meat is dead flesh, and I do

\* Flat, unleavened wholewheat bread.

\*\* Cooked lentils.

not want to make a burial ground of my stomach.'

It was apparent to anyone that the small Kirpal had a keen and questioning intelligence. Some years later, the Master, when speaking of speeches and speech-makers, observed: 'When I was a child of 5 or 6 years, I saw a man giving a talk and, looking into his mouth, I wondered from whence all the words were coming!'

The scope of Kirpal's unusual perception continued to grow as the years passed. His parents silently observed small incidents revealing the extent of his knowledge of past, present, and future; other people's thoughts; and events and happenings both near and far.

There was a particular occurrence during those early years that has been well remembered all through Kirpal's life – perhaps because it happened at school in front of his classmates, for children are very able newscasters. That day he was studying in the fourth grade when he astonished his teacher by jumping up from his desk suddenly and requesting leave to go to his maternal grandmother's home where, he declared, she lay dying and was asking to see him. When the astounded teacher finally found his voice, with not a little annoyance he reprimanded Kirpal for using a silly lame excuse in an attempt to escape from the lesson.

'You expect me to believe that sitting here in school you can see what is happening so far away where your grandmother lives? You may have fooled others into believing you are a saint, but I know differently and you had better stick to your lessons and leave this miraculous peering into the beyond to the prophets!' A few minutes later a message was brought to the school that Kirpal's grandmother was dying and requested to see Kirpal at once. As he gave permission for Kirpal to leave the class, the poor teacher began

to realize that he had just witnessed a phenomenon. The incident was memorable, charging him to handle his unusual student differently in future.

Often, an apparently casual remark from the young Kirpal would be food for thought to whoever was listening. He sometimes spoke of all the work he had to do and that there was so little time. Naturally he was asked about the nature of this work, but he would just smile and look away. He did say, however, that for some of this work he would have to go to America and other places abroad.

His reference to America aroused considerable interest among friends and neighbours, for at that time it was a land only heard about but little-known in most Indian villages. For all that, the small boy's voice carried weight among the folk of Sayyad Kasran, who declared that whatever he said would most certainly take place. His fellow students, feeling tall with their studies of geography and worldly distances, were more skeptical and freely voiced their disbelief.

Kirpal was self-introspective from the age of seven. Absorbed with the idea of correcting any faults he considered he had, each night he would carefully review the events of the day and conscientiously record each thought, word or deed he felt was in error, making a firm resolution not to repeat any of them. Ruthless with himself always, he would later come to advise others to be as ruthless in their personal introspection, and would stress this essential aspect of spiritual progress.

He was destined, in future years, to spend hour upon hour exhorting people to see the measureless value of exploring one's own being, of probing deep into the recesses of the mind and discovering what is in there. 'We do not

know who we are or where we are going/ adding that if we only knew the amount of filth we recline on, we would be more than anxious to get out of it; that, unfortunately we have no time to consider our faults and failings but are very busily engaged, however, in criticizing others and wasting our precious time on things we cannot change, instead of concentrating on changing ourselves. 'Wanted: reformers – not of others, but of themselves' would be his constant appeal to everyone.

From early childhood Kirpal had a depth of love and compassion for people; the pain or grief suffered by others affected him profoundly. Always ready to commiserate with the sorrow of another's misfortune, the abundance of love from his heart would reach out to the afflicted, helping them to forget their woes for a while in the comfort of its warmth.

Compassion was not the only medium for his concern. Kirpal's strong sense of humor was in constant evidence throughout his life on earth, the merry twinkle in his eyes betraying the effervescent jocundity within, which could on occasions bubble over into infectious, mirthful, although almost silent, laughter. The pure joy in his humor had the power to uplift, to heal body mind and soul. His spiritual sons and daughters frequently would be advised to go through life with serenity and cheerfulness. His admonishment 'Go jolly!' was to become a popular maxim, repeated and promoted with a great deal of affection among his followers all over the world.

Kirpal's reputation as a boy saint spread among nearby villages and small towns wherever news of his predictions or insight had reached by word of mouth. His father grew

more and more worried about this, and one day, finding himself faced with yet another example of his son's extraordinary abilities, he decided to take action.

Kirpal had come running to him saying, 'Father, I have just heard that some thief has broken into the rich man Amuk's house and stolen all his money and jewelry – but Father, Amuk himself has stolen his own things and I can even take you to where he has hidden them!'

Sardar Hukam Singh picked up his son and seated him on his lap. With kindness and patience he explained the dangers of disclosing events and future happenings to people at large, the majority of whom do not understand the working of the law of karma; that hidden secrets normally should remain hidden until the natural process of the law of cause and effect would induce the reaction to take place and the subject or object be exposed – otherwise, confusion is liable to result.

He told the small Kirpal that outwardly the boy must live an ordinary life while inwardly progressing in secret without revealing the extent of his progress. For the first time he spoke of his own soul's awakening and how he had achieved some spiritual advancement after years of hard effort. 'But for you everything will be easier, for you are a true child of God.'

Sometimes Kirpal was given pocket money or candy by his parents but he was free from the usual greed for sweet things that small boys display and would often give his candy away to a child that had none. Later, as a spiritual preceptor, he would stress the importance of parental example. If parents want their children to be honest, hard working, morally clean and considerate of others, then they themselves must set the example and demonstrate the way

– not by mere preaching but by their own actions, so that the child can actually see the right way of living.

Many times Kirpal used as illustration the actual account of the great man who was approached one day by a follower bringing his small son who, apparently, ate gur\* to such an excess that the father was afraid for his health. He begged the sage\*\* to instruct the boy to stop eating the sugar. The wise man looked at the boy thoughtfully for a few moments and then said, 'Bring the boy back in a week.' A week later, father and son were back and the great man immediately looked sternly at the boy and told him not to eat sugar. The father could not help but express his astonishment that this simple instruction could not have been given the week before. The sage explained that a week before he was himself eating and relishing sugar and was therefore in truth unable to command the boy to refrain from doing that which he was himself doing, for his words would not hold the true strength to penetrate. The intervening seven days had given him time to cure himself of the sugar-eating habit before upbraiding the child.

Kirpal's family's reputation was excellent. They were known throughout the area for honesty, high principles, and their love for and service to other people. Kirpal's grandfather was a perfect example – a principled man, chaste in thought, word and deed. His wife had died when he was twenty-five and although he lived for over one hundred and twenty years he never remarried. He was a perfect gentleman, his manner always dignified and honorable. Regarding all women like mothers or sisters, he could sit among both sexes and enjoy the company purely as God's children. He was seldom sick, even past his hundredth year. If a person

\* Unrefined sugar.

\*\* None other than Mahatma Gandhi (mahatma: great soul).

unjustly wronged him, he would refuse to accept the hurt and readily forgave the individual from the abundance of his loving heart. This loving heart was all-consuming and always directed toward his fellow beings, driving him to walk miles to help someone in need. He rarely wore shoes, so the soles of his feet developed deep fissures and Kirpal remembered the night when a tiny snake crawled out from one of those grooves, as his grandfather's feet were being washed.

Finally, one day when his years were past one hundred and twenty, he walked from village to village, house to house – a total of twenty miles – bidding farewell to everyone. Friends and acquaintances of long standing shook their heads at this and thought perhaps their old friend had gone senile. On reaching home after this long trek, he had his usual meal, bathed and went to sleep. Early next morning he rose and requested new clothes to wear. The family members were curious and asked where he was going that he needed new clothes and he told them he was setting off on a great journey. He added that he also required new bed linen. Indulging what was thought to be an elderly man's whim, the bed linen was changed. After bathing and dressing in his new clothes, he got back into bed between the new sheets and called all the family around him. They came to his bedside cheerfully laughing and joking. Then he thanked them all for everything they had ever done for him and bade them all goodbye.

Happy to humor the dearly loved patriarch, everyone smiled and wished him farewell. However, their expressions turned to amazement as they watched him smile at them once more, lean back on his pillow, close his eyes for the last time and leave the world on his "great journey". He left a deep and lasting impression on all who knew him.

Kirpal's parents were no less righteous in their way of life. Hukam Singh worshipped Shiv, the destroyer-god of the Hindu Trinity: Brahm, Shiv and Vishnu. He was a renouncer of worldly things, spent his life in strict austerity and had gained control of the Ridhi-Sidhi\*. As head of the village his daily routine was a busy one, dealing with various problems; but he did justice to each person's affairs with full concentration, unstinting with his time and energies, ungenerous to himself when it came to rest and relaxation. At midnight, when the whole village was asleep, he would leave the house and go to a nearby river, standing in the water until dawn, performing his sadhnas\*\*regardless of the seasons. Seldom did he miss a night thus engaged in sadhna and abhyas\*\*\*.

The rest of the family also offered devotions to Shiv. Speaking of his mother, Kirpal once said 'My mother would not enter the kitchen until she had first taken a bath and read from her Gita\*\*\*\*.

\* Certain psychic powers.

\*\* Spiritual discipline.

\*\*\* Practice.

\*\*\*\* Hindu scripture.

## CHAPTER THREE

Kirpal studied hard in high school. He attended an English missionary school, the Edwardes Church Mission High School in Peshawar\*, matriculating in the year 1910. The English system of the period combined both junior and senior high school levels in one school, through seventh to thirteenth grades.

He was liked by all the teachers because of his earnestness of purpose, his truthfulness and humility, and the hard work he put into all his studies. His pleasant personality and cheerful willingness made him a joy to have in class.

When the Bishop of Peshawar District was invited to visit the school and bless the children, he addressed the entire assembly and then began questioning the children in turn: what was their purpose for studying and what did they want to do on completing their education? One boy wanted to be a doctor, another a lawyer; yet another aspired to become an engineer, and so on. When Kirpal was asked the same question, he looked serenely at the bishop and replied, 'Sir, I only study for the sake of knowledge itself.' The elderly dignitary was impressed with this unusual answer and told Kirpal that undoubtedly his would be a worthwhile future. Something of Kirpal's sincerity and character must have

\* Now in Pakistan.

registered firmly on the bishop for he proceeded to give an hour's talk on the subject of studying for the sake of knowledge.

This intense yearning for knowledge drove the young Kirpal to study almost ceaselessly. While still a junior, he finished all the books in the school library, reading avidly until late into the night. Hukam Singh ordered that the lamps in the house be extinguished at a reasonable hour to prevent Kirpal from reading too late, but it was impossible for Kirpal to sleep with an unfinished book beside him. Ensuring that the entire household was asleep he would light a small oil lamp, and hiding it under his quilt, would read to the end of the book. Frequently, dawn filtered its thin light into the room before he laid the book aside.

Kirpal's thirst to learn, the extensive reading of both library books and school textbooks, his thorough determination and alacrity with which he tackled each lesson gained him a familiarity with the subjects in excess of the school's requirements and in consequence he stood first in all examinations.

The school principal was particular that each exam be well prepared by the students. One boy was very conscientious, always carefully revising his work before exam time, which earned the principal's commendation. However, on one occasion the boy failed to do his pre-exam studying, and the principal took him to task in no uncertain terms, ordering the unhappy boy to choose all the most difficult words he could find in the dictionary and to write their meanings in his copybook. The boy, feeling there was some injustice in this, complained that this was his first fault and yet Kirpal never prepared for exams and was never reprimanded. The principal then explained that there was no need for Kirpal to prepare, for he had done his daily studies

so thoroughly and already knew more than the textbooks could teach him.

On another occasion, Kirpal's math teacher reminded the class of a geometrical problem that had stumped the boys the previous year. He proceeded to set the same problem for certain students who were advanced in the subject and the group included Kirpal. The teacher gave them the whole weekend to work on it, but by Monday nearly all the chosen students had failed to come up with an answer. All excepting Kirpal who, when his turn came said, 'Yes, I have found two solutions – a short and a longer method', which, on the teacher's amazed direction, Kirpal outlined on the blackboard for the benefit of the class. This demonstrates how Kirpal applied his whole attention and concentration on any task he was given.

Kirpal's mastery in academics became apparent in various ways. In the results of a certain history examination he was awarded a mark of fifty-four out of a possible fifty-five. A fellow student was given thirty-seven and protested the mark to the teacher, saying that he felt sure all his answers were accurate and therefore he could not understand why his mark was only thirty-seven when Kirpal's was fifty-four. The teacher took time to carefully analyze the difference in the results.

'It is true you have given everything your textbook contained and from my lectures too, but Kirpal has included much more than that. Not only did he answer the questions fully but he recounted also the views of several great historians.' He added that he would have liked to have given Kirpal's work one hundred percent, but with regret, in history he could not do that.

So the ardent passion for knowledge, and the ability to absorb it far above the average level, naturally made Kirpal

an unforgettable pupil, earning him the fond affection of his instructors. Until time and death removed them one by one from the worldly sphere of action, they remained in touch with Kirpal long after his school years.

A number of years later, in Lahore\*, Kirpal was sick in bed and one of his teachers heard about it and visited Him. Kirpal was very weak and confined to His bed, but on seeing the teacher approach He struggled from the bed and touched his feet in the respectful custom. Tears of pride and happiness filled the older man's eyes as he said, 'I am so proud of you that today so many are receiving udhar and kalyan\*\* through your hands.'

The Master has spoken many times of the teacher-student relationship. If the instructor teaches with love and sincerity, the student will respond and study with full concentration, not only in the interests of learning but with a desire to please. This in turn draws more attention from the teacher, who will be more inclined to spend extra time on an enthusiastic scholar. It also illustrates the principle of an example being better than a precept.

In the Peshawar mission school, teachers were paid very little and taught as a profession of love; their motivation was directed entirely to educating the children. It was common to see a child going to his teacher's home after school hours for extra coaching. Kirpal, and other pupils, would go to a teacher's house and receive loving and concerned tutorship in the required areas of their studies. He has related how the children, responding with love, would show their appreciation by doing small chores for their instructor. A great deal was achieved this way.

By the time Kirpal was twelve and studying in the seventh grade, he had read almost three hundred biographies

\* Now in Pakistan.

\*\* Spiritual emancipation and bliss.

of great men. When he read about the famous Indian sage, Ramanuj, he was greatly impressed with an account of that holy man's reaction on receiving initiation from his Guru\*. It appears that Ramanuj was so overjoyed with the blessing he had received that immediately on returning home he gathered local people together and began telling them details of his initiation, including the secret words he had been given. One person stood up and warned Ramanuj that he would go to hell for disclosing publicly that which had been given in secrecy for himself alone. Ramanuj's reply was that he would be happy to go to hell in exchange for the salvation of all the souls who were listening.

Kirpal has said, 'When I read that, I knew if I ever received spiritual wealth I also would distribute freely to whomsoever desired it. It might be that Hazur\*\* could not find another spendthrift like me, and that is why He placed me here to give away the treasure, for Hazur said that there is an unlimited amount of spiritual wealth which requires only someone to give it away in abundance. Whatever the world is receiving spiritually today has nothing to do with me, but rather is all His blessing.' Ergo, the outcome was twofold: Kirpal got to distribute the spiritual wealth freely, and did so with Hazur's blessing, not His displeasure.

Around 1908-09 when Kirpal was fourteen years old, he became acquainted with the son of Dev Guru Maharaj, leader of Dev Samaj – a sizeable organization working for the upliftment of mankind. The young man was intrigued by Kirpal and invited him to join their innermost circle. Describing in detail the strict rules the group followed, which included ethical living, etc., he asked Kirpal what he thought

\* Teacher: in this case, his spiritual teacher.

\*\* Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj. (Hazur and Baba: both terms of respect; Maharaj: great king).

of it all. Kirpal praised the maxims they adhered to, saying that he agreed with everything, but added, 'So far you have told me of rules and regulations concerning outer life only. What about the inner life? What do you teach of the Truth? What about the soul and what happens to it after it leaves the body at death?'

The reply he was given shocked young Kirpal. When he was told that at death the soul lives for a while after separating from the physical body, but gradually disintegrates until finally it becomes extinct, he felt bound to try and shed light on what he knew was a drastically wrong conception.

He explained that the soul, being part of the Truth itself, can never disintegrate or die – that after leaving the gross matter of the body it becomes more refined, more rarefied; which can only be verified or truly realized by transcending above the mind and body at will.

Kirpal's companion was astounded – not only by the depth of information, but to hear it come from the mouth of a child with such conviction, he knew they were not empty words but were founded on a huge treasure of knowledge. He once again extended the invitation to join them, but the offer was never taken up.

Such insight in a fourteen-year-old child lends credence to the established belief that Saints are not made in this world, but have come from another world, carrying with them full perception of their earthly mission. Complete Masters hide their divine nature under a cloak of unpretentiousness, living in the world as common men. They do, however, occasionally reveal a glimmer of their innate Presence. This happened a number of times during Kirpal's lifetime on this planet.

He was once sitting under a tree pursuing his studies, in

a garden known as Shahi Bagh\*, when Darbari Lal, a man reputed to be an atheist, approached him and asked where the Shahi Bagh was. Kirpal told him that he was in fact standing in the Shahi Bagh. But Darbari Lal retorted, 'What this? Where there are only trees, plants and bushes!?' Kirpal discerned his meaning and asked him what spiritual practices he did. Darbari Lal pointed to his forehead. 'The real Shahi Bagh is here, behind the eyes, where there is bliss, just bliss.' This proof that even a professed atheist, if he withdraws to the seat of the soul, can experience intoxication of the Beyond, demonstrates how God's grace extends to all His children.

Kirpal once said, 'Little things that happened in my childhood . . . a book I read or an instance that impressed me at the time . . . I remember clearly – even now.' The knowledge from an early age that a flesh diet and the consumption of alcohol dimmed the soul's perception and awareness brought him crystal clarity of inner vision and memory. Impure diet and successful spiritual practice do not commingle.

An instructor at Kirpal's school, by the name of Charles Frankhall, was a short-tempered man, foul of tongue and easily incited to curse a boy and give him a thorough thrashing for very little reason. These unpleasant habits seemed bound to be an interminable part of his nature, but one day a young lady came to the school, a missionary, and subsequent events lead them to consider the possibility of marriage. However, the girl was hesitant to commit herself to living a life in the close vicinity of the young man's temper. Frankhall pleaded for a grace of three months, during which time he would gain control of himself. If he failed, he

\* "King of Gardens".

stood to lose her. But, incredibly, within the specified three months, the monster had turned into a mild and gentle man – to such an extent that the boys began to take advantage of this new personality, defying his orders, and misbehaving. With a smile and great patience he would persevere and win them round.

Kirpal, ever the keen student of human nature, witnessed with increasing interest this metamorphosis in his teacher and asked him outright how he had brought about the change. Charles Frankhall told him that he had succeeded simply by replacing his bad habit with another habit. The visual lesson registered deeply on Kirpal.

Long before adulthood, Kirpal revealed not only his profound insight but his strong sense of duty also. One instance from his youth was to affect his own future life to a considerable degree. Kirpal was about thirteen when his mother arranged for the eldest son's betrothal to a girl from a certain family. According to customs prevalent at the time, families of similar persuasion and other distinctions entered into marriage agreements when their children were still young. Trouble and strife were an integral part of Indian life for a number of centuries, and the early marriage arrangement ensured that the welfare and future of girls in particular were protected, should the parents meet with misfortune or death before the girl-child/children reached a suitable age for the actual marriage ceremony.

Following the custom, Kirpal's brother was not consulted and his mother completed the proceedings entirely on his behalf. She visited the girl's home, met with and approved of the girl and gave her word to the parents that the alliance would take place, in the fullness of time, when the children reached maturity, which was the usual

procedure. Simultaneously, a date was set for the official engagement ceremony to take place, but when the boy heard about the match he became upset and refused to marry that particular girl as she was very short in height and not at all good-looking. Gulab Devi was shocked at this blatant disobedience, and recognized that she was facing a serious difficulty. She did not want to force the boy into something that did not appeal to him, but having given her word that the girl would marry her son, how could she now break her promise? A person's word was like a bond, upholding character and reputation.

Kirpal, younger than both his brothers, seeing his mother's distress and burden, told her not to worry – that he would keep her word and marry the girl. He seemed to be unconcerned that the girl was several years older than himself, caring only to relieve his mother's anxiety. And so it was that Kirpal became engaged to Krishna Vanti, to be joined together years later in the matrimonial ceremony of the Sikh religion.

## CHAPTER FOUR

Meanwhile, the student Kirpal continued his academic studies with full attention but simultaneously maintained an assiduous interest in all things of a spiritual nature. He heard about a certain holy man – Baba Kahan by name – who was reputed to have an advanced degree of enlightenment. Baba Kahan, loving soul that he was, preferred a lonely life of contemplation; he had little patience to spare for sight-seers and hypocrites. He was known to curse and strike out at people who tried to waste his time and interrupt his meditations. He had a special regard for Kirpal however and, eyes shining with love, would ask him, 'Why have you come, Sardar\*?' On hearing the reply, 'Just to see you', he would look lovingly at Kirpal for a while and then: 'Alright, now go.'

It is interesting to note that later on, when sitting at the feet of his Master, Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, Kirpal learned that Hazur used to visit with Baba Kahan during this very same period, but by strange chance – or by divine design – they did not meet. That eventful meeting was to take place many years later – physically, that is.

Eyes are the windows of the soul and Kirpal, when he looked into Baba Kahan's eyes, knew him to hold a

\* Sikh title of respect – like Mister.

spiritual power and would observe to his friends, 'Kahan has got something but, like a hard-shelled walnut, he is a hard nut to crack and even harder is it to get the kernel out!'

A certain man who was seeking asked Kirpal what he should do to get spiritual upliftment and Kirpal, realizing that the man was sincere, told him to go to Kahan and sit there without moving until he got something. The man obeyed and sat there the whole day and most of the night, but when Baba Kahan started cursing him, he got up and left.

The next day he recounted this to Kirpal who told him that if he was serious in his desire for a spiritual experience, he should go back to Kahan and not move from his side until he gives him something. The man knew Kirpal's reputation and resolved to take his advice.

Again he sat near Baba Kahan for hours on end and again the cursing began, only much worse than before. Resolutely, the seeker refused to move even when Kahan picked up a glowing branch from the fire he burned day and night, and proceeded to beat the poor fellow. Blood started oozing from his head but, bowing his head, he quietly sat there. Seeing this, and no doubt looking further and finding the man's deep sincerity, Baba Kahan's attitude changed. Love poured from his eyes and he asked, 'What is it that you want?' The man said, 'Give me anything from the wealth that you have got.' Baba Kahan smiled at him and said, 'Listen, what beautiful sound is going on!' The man indeed heard the beautiful inner music, and so received the connection with the sound current.

The depth of Kirpal's spiritual judgment, young as he was, became more and more apparent with each intriguing incident. He was able to see, through his inner eye, the

extent of another's spiritual progression – as Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji would say, 'Just like the contents of a glass jar; one knows whether it contains pickles or jam.'

His family's devotion to Shiv was a natural encouragement to Kirpal to investigate that avenue of worship. With characteristic energetic sincerity he threw all his concentration into his prayers and devotions. After a very short period of such single-pointed attention, Shiv appeared and stood before him. But the replies to his questions convinced Kirpal that Shiv could not give him what he sought, and so he ceased his pursuit along that path.

The desire to serve mankind burned in Kirpal's heart from boyhood and on graduating from high school in 1911 he was keen to further his education in the field of medicine or in agriculture. However, his father was concerned about the family's financial circumstances and preferred that he take up employment and start earning. It was, perhaps, the most critical time of his whole life. What should he do? He walked out to the fields and found a lonely place to sit quietly and calmly – to consider the future. When he looked deep into that future the aspect made him uneasy, to say the least. He saw the world lying at his feet, arms outstretched as it were, calling him to its bosom and tempting him with fascinating things.

Shuddering, he withdrew into himself. This was the colossus of all problems. Up to now he had obeyed his parents and teachers implicitly in everything and at the threshold of adult life he hesitated to take a step that might lead him where he had no wish to go. He knew he desperately desired to help people in need – to relieve their misery – but wisely, he realized that unless he knew the reason behind all the adversity in the world he was powerless to improve

the situation.

The next eight days were hard for Kirpal for they were filled with mental conflict and spiritual distress which tormented him relentlessly. For the entire eight days he neither ate nor drank, did not sleep at all and did not speak to anyone. He searched inside and outside himself, weighing each and every thing in his heart. He was determined not to give up on the problem until he had the solution.

On the ninth day his vigil was rewarded and cognition of the whole situation filled his being with crystal clarity. So clearly defined was the answer, he marvelled that he had not perceived it from the beginning. He knew, suddenly, that his true purpose was God-realization and he knew, therefore, that throughout his life God would always come first in all things and the world second. He almost swooned with joy as this discovery spread through him, wrapping an infinite peace about him like a mantle.

Although from that moment on he was consciously aware that God-realization was his aim in life, his attitude toward his duties, his parents and the worldly affairs became, if anything, more conscientious. His parents' wishes were seldom refuted and only rare occasions of discord were promoted by his strong sense of what is right. He infused razor-sharp intuition into any situation that arose – which penetrated any clouds of prejudice or thin understanding – and was usually successful in conveying his clear thinking, winning others around and opening up new avenues of vision to them.

He became friendly with a person considered to be somewhat of an enemy to his family and his father told him, 'Pal, do not be on friendly terms with that man for he has insulted our family and so we do not socialize with him or

his family. You should go by the rule . . . my friends will be your friends and my enemies your enemies.'

The pain of disagreeing with his father struck Kirpal's heart, but he replied, 'Father, I agree that your friends are also mine, but forgive me for saying that it is not necessarily so that your enemies must become my enemies. It is very possible that the enmity came about through misunderstanding and, respected father, I have not come to Earth to waste time in criticising or making enemies. Added to this, it is impossible for me to hate anyone, having so much love in my heart for the whole of God's creation.'

Apart from the ability to foresee the future, to the observant individual the young Kirpal demonstrated, through the many facets of his daily living, that this was no ordinary human being but someone who was spiritually awakened. Each step of childhood was preparing the way for the more important expressions of life to come.

From the age of four onwards, he transcended into inner planes, enjoying the bliss of spiritual life. As he revealed later on: 'Since the time of my studying in the seventh class, I hardly slept – sleep came very rarely to me.' He also has explained that, to withdraw the attention and rise above the body at will renders the physical form completely inert, totally relaxed, and therefore it receives rest and rejuvenation of a superior kind that sleep alone can never incur. The soul or attention returns from journeying the inner planes to re-enter a fully charged body; hence, new life begins again.

At sixteen years, he had three experiences that served to push him further into his search for Truth. They fanned the embers of eagerness smouldering within into an all-consuming fire, burning out most other thoughts but those of his aspirations for God-realization. When narrating these

happenings some years later, Kirpal told . . .

‘I was in Lahore when I had a close encounter with the soul of a young girl leaving the body at death, after a sickness. I was among the family members seated at her bedside. She was smiling and talking to everyone, and then she said, suddenly, “Well, I am going now” and while the entire group watched, she just left. I stared and wondered. Just minutes before, this young person was like all of us, talking and smiling, but something had gone out of that body lying before us. What is that thing? Is it death? Where has the soul gone? It was there in the body, causing it to radiate with life but now the form lies there, just inert matter. Although I had enjoyed inner bliss since I was a small child and had traveled to the inner planes, yet up to then I had not solved the mystery of life and death. It would be through Hazur’s blessing that I would discover the secret.’

Kirpal accompanied the bier to the cremation ground\*, along with other family members. He was deep in thought all the way. The girl’s body was laid on one of the large, stone slabs. He noticed that adjacent, on another slab, lay the body of a very old man. Side by side, wood was piled and both fires lighted, eventually burning to ashes the two bodies. A young girl and an old man, strangers in life yet together at their final destination, together to be consumed to dust. The difference in age and circumstance drew Kirpal’s attention. It clearly illustrated the fact that death makes no distinction between young and old - each person must leave the moment his or her allotted span of time is finished. And as they left the cremation ground, Kirpal’s eye was arrested by the words of an epitaph inscribed on a stone, erected in memory of a certain Munshi Gulab Singh . . .

“O passer-by, we also  
Used to walk on earth like you;

\* Hindus and Sikhs use cremation.

But today we are  
The dust under your feet."

'Reading those words, another blow struck my heart,' said Kirpal. In a single day, three happenings had made deep impressions which would remain with him through the years to come. 'I normally slept very little, but from that day I could not sleep at all, for life had become an enigma, the true meaning of which I had to fathom.'

The same thoughts revolved constantly in his mind: *What is it that makes the body a live thing? . . . Where does the soul go when it leaves at death? . . . What kind of power is in that soul that can make a physical form radiant with life and then, by withdrawing from it, render it a mass of matter?* He became so consumed with this puzzle that day and night was as one; the force of the burning question focused his attention into a single-pointed intensity which would not leave him.

The great quest to know the Truth has fired the enthusiasm of other great souls. The start of Kirpal's search is not unlike that of Prince Siddhartha – the man who came to be known as Gautam Buddh (The Buddha). Prince Siddhartha, protected and sheltered from all unpleasant aspects of life throughout his childhood and youth, was due to experience a rude awakening on the very same day that his first child was born. In a single day he came face to face with the existence of ageing, sickness and death. Consequently, in a state of bewildered desperation, he left his kingdom that night to seek and find answers to the questions that flooded his mind over the things he had seen.

Kirpal was very familiar with most of the scriptures: the Sikh Guru Granth Sahib, the Bible, and many others, but he began to re-read everything, including all biographies he could find of past Masters and great sages – searching for

direct references to the soul and its nature. He found they related the soul to the essence of the God Power but did not say exactly what it was. He had never studied the Koran – the holy scriptures of Islam. The original Koran had been written in Persian and later translated into numerous other languages. Kirpal felt that translations were not reliable, due to the spiritual knowledge of any translator being at a different level to that of the originator or the dictator of that original, and so frequently the true meaning was lost in translation.

He decided to study Persian – to become proficient enough in that language to read the Koran in its original form and to read also the lives of the Muslim Saints. He was determined to leave no stone unturned and with characteristic thoroughness he put all his spare time and all his available concentration into the study of Persian. With the help of a teacher in the language, Kirpal covered ten years' work in less than two years and then sat the examination for Munsh-Fazal\*, passing with good marks.

Eager to put his new acquisition to use, he began reading the Koran and other Persian works before the very completion of his studies. After graduation, he finished the Koran, closely followed by biographies of Maulana Rum, Shams Tabrez, Khwaja Hafiz and other Muslim Saints – all in the original Persian. The results gained from these not inconsiderable efforts however, were no better than those from his detailed studies of Christian scriptures and Saints.

The answer was just not there, albeit, a common theme ran through most of the Saints' lives, whether Christian, Muslim or other; regardless too of nationality. All who had realized something of the Truth had achieved this through great suffering of an inner or outer nature. Variedly, they

\* Munsh-Fazal is equivalent to graduation.

had been persecuted, ridiculed, skinned alive, torn apart limb by limb, burnt alive, crucified or had suffered other unspeakable tortures. No matter what they endured, they all remained totally devoted to their beliefs; totally devoted to God. Kirpal knew that kind of pain: the pain of threatened separation from one's own higher self – from God – as only one who has experienced can know.

## CHAPTER FIVE

Kirpal intensified the search. He knew that the answer to his quest lay in the hands of some truly holy person – a Perfect Master; one who is filled with true, spiritual wisdom. Some of the great Masters from the past had revealed that such highly advanced souls can be found living in the human form; that the world is never left completely without them. But they also said that those elevated souls of peerless spiritual caliber are very rare and very hard to find.

The paucity of these supreme souls might appear to render their discovery easier, outstanding as they must be among the world's population. Naturally, it would help if they were to publicize their whereabouts and thereby aid the seeker in his search. But God, in His wisdom, does not work that way and neither does the God-in-Man. Truly great souls often live incognito, going about their daily lives doing ordinary worldly tasks like other men – their spiritual wealth undisclosed. They leave the God-power to work in God's own way, to bring the seeking souls into their presence for upliftment.

Conversely, the "would-be" great souls are legion in number rather than rare, who, banging their drums with great gusto, blatantly run advertising campaigns that the poor unsuspecting seeker finds hard to resist. The difference

between a true Master and a so-called master is very marked but not always very obvious and so it calls for discrimination and caution on the part of the supplicant. To arrive at a decision to seek the very best kind of guidance is one thing, but to find it is another. Fortunately, God knows what is deep in the heart of each of His children and has His own methods.

Kirpal's bounding enthusiasm, never far from reach, came to the fore as his intuition told him that the time was right. He knew he needed a true Master and his enthusiasm became flavored with impatience as it drove him from place to place, heedless of any regard to distance. He journeyed from one holy man to another, filled with hope and expectation, but each time returned home sad with disappointment. He saw that even those with hundreds of followers knew little about real spirituality. Kirpal felt it was like the blind leading the blind. Although he was anxious to find a spiritual preceptor, the fear of accepting someone who was not one with God made him pray with heartfelt desperation for God to protect him from false masters.

One day a sadhu\* came to the local area and Kirpal heard that this particular holy man was indeed a great soul. Kirpal went to him at once and asked if he could give realization of the Truth. The sadhu replied, 'Oh yes, but you must give everything you have to me . . . even your head, if demanded!' Kirpal thought . . . *One who himself demands something, even my head, what can he have to give?* So he bowed to the sadhu and left.

On a different occasion he visited another holy man and asked him about the inner stages on the soul's journey through the spiritual planes. The man did not reply at first

\* Religious ascetic.

and Kirpal could see that he was trapped by the question. After an interval he said, 'I cannot disclose that to just anyone and you are not worthy of it!' Kirpal told him, 'Alright, when I become worthy I will come to you.'

He went to see a very well known yogi\* and spent several hours with him. He found that the yogi did meditate for long periods, but drank a blended concoction of coriander, almonds and other ingredients; also, he had to put large slabs of butter on his head to prevent inner torrefaction, caused by controlling the breathing process. With respect, Kirpal told him that he was seeking, but desired to find someone like Guru Arjan Sahib\*\*, who had meditated for months on end while living on just a simple diet of bread and water.

In 1912, Kirpal found a fakir\*\*\* by the name of Abdul Wahed. When they met, they looked keenly at each other and each recognized the spiritual strength in the other. The fakir lived alone in a straw hut, far away from people. Normally, he would allow no one to enter his frugal home, but he welcomed Kirpal as a brother and permitted him to stay for a few days. During that time, Kirpal watched him as he sat cross-legged on the floor. Then he would levitate three or four feet above the ground, remaining suspended there while he meditated for hours.

Kirpal met many holy men in his search, but none satisfied him that he was in the presence of a Master of Spirituality – one whom he could accept, with all confidence, as his own Guru.

Kirpal was seventeen when, on January 4, 1912, he started working and earning his livelihood as a clerk in the military

\* Religious ascetic who practices yoga.

\*\* Fifth Guru of the Sikhs (1563-1606).

\*\*\* Muslim ascetic.

accounts office in Lahore. His salary was very low and after paying his rent in Lahore and covering other necessary expenses, there was very little left for food.

An uncle wrote to him about his sickness and the lack of a good doctor in his village, asking if he might join Kirpal in Lahore. Kirpal, struggling on his income, gave no thought to the difficulties he would face in providing food and medicine for an ailing man and was overjoyed at the thought of being of service to his uncle, looking upon the opportunity as a direct gift from God.

With love he welcomed his uncle to Lahore. When he arrived Kirpal saw how sick he was and realized that the invalid gentleman could not be left alone every day with no one to look after him. Kirpal had to go to work or he would lose his job, and so he admitted his uncle into the hospital. He spent all his free time there with his uncle and a large portion of his own food allowance to buy milk, fruit and other nourishing sustenance for him, cheerfully reducing his own food ration by doing so.

While attending his uncle in the hospital one day, helping him to drink his milk, Kirpal noticed in the next bed an old man with very little flesh on his body and thin clothing covering his protruding bones. He was horrified that a man could be brought to such a condition, with apparently not a single person to care for him or visit him. He left his uncle's bedside and, approaching the old man with a tender loving concern and reverent respect that would have been appropriate for God Himself, he asked how the old man was and if he needed anything. The poor man had barely the strength to speak. Tears began to roll down the sunken cheeks and with a deep sigh he closed his eyes. After a few minutes, he opened them and said, 'I never thought that in this whole world there was a soul alive that would ask me

how I was or if I wanted something.'

From that day, Kirpal took care of both his uncle's and the old man's needs. This further decreased his own food allowance and he regularly went several days on a single decent meal, filling in the gaps by chewing roasted grams\* when he was hungry and drinking plain water. His uncle, seeing this, became a little indignant saying, 'As your uncle I have some claim on you, but what is this old man to you, that you sacrifice your money and time on him? He is a mere skeleton, will never recover and will not be of any use to you; knowing he can never repay you, still you give him the same treatment as you give me.'

Very kindly, Kirpal told him 'Uncle, to me you both are alike and this old man has the same claim on me as you; in fact, all these people have a claim on me, for all mankind is one big family – all are mine and I am theirs – we are not separate from one another, regardless of birth, but are in fact all one. No one, therefore, is a stranger to me but each one a member of my own family.'

It was around 1912-13, and Kirpal was 18-19 years of age, when he began experimenting with Pranayam Yog\*\*. He was in Peshawar and nearby there was a place of pilgrimage known as Panj-Tirath. It had a large lake wherein five sacred rivers met. Throughout the night Kirpal would stand in that lake with water up to his armpits, practicing pranayam. If continued like this for many consecutive nights, it would not be long before his excellent single-pointed concentration would achieve results. Sure enough, an apparition appeared before him, which Kirpal described as a glowing figure with curly hair and huge eyes . . . eyes of such brilliance that he could not look into them for long. He saw

\* A legume, like small chick peas.

\*\* Yoga system involving vital airs.

in the figure's stomach the movement of the whole world\*. The exalted being looked at Kirpal and said, 'I am more and easily pleased with natural Simran\*\*.' So Kirpal stopped practicing strict austerities and kumbhak\*\*\*.

As each year went by, Kirpal's mode of living and the unusual occurrences he experienced continued to show that he was no ordinary person, but rather someone special who had come to earth prepared for a very definite task.

Around 1913-14, his inner or spiritual life developed an even more interesting stage, recounted in his own words: 'One day while sitting in meditation, I saw distinctly all that has happened in the past, whatever was happening in the present and what was due to happen in the future. It was all like an open book to me. Furthermore, after this experience, I began to see right through each individual that came near me. I could see his or her character clearly, good or bad. None of their thoughts was hidden from me.'

With the power to penetrate beyond the natural or physical limits of human faculties, Kirpal could see any person as if he were but a foot from him, when in fact he might actually be a thousand miles distant, by merely exercising his exceptional thought process. By the same token, objects and places were as easily accessible to him. Mystical power at the disposal of a less honorable individual would have been relished, or even misused, but to Kirpal it was a disturbance.

'Because of this, my work began to suffer. I knew the other person's intentions . . . I knew what was going to happen

\* This apparition is mentioned in the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred Sikh scriptures; also in the Bhagwad Gita of the Hindus, when Arjun was shown Lord Krishna's true form.

\*\* Remembrance through repetition.

\*\*\* Practice that achieves a state of peace by breath control.

. . . as clear as can be, and I did not like that at all. I begged God to bless me with two more blessings. I prayed, "Oh God, in all gratitude and humbleness I thank You for this spiritual insight You have given me, but please keep this gift with You for the time being and bestow on me the blessing of living on earth like any other human being; also, if ever I am the cause of someone being helped, then I should be untouched by that knowledge." This happened ten years before Kirpal met his Spiritual Master, Hazur Sawan Singh Ji, physically. Although still searching for a Master, he helped many souls along the spiritual path during that time.

Gulab Devi's love for Kirpal was deep and special. Of her four children, she loved him the most. On his first leave from Peshawar, he came home unannounced. His mother was on the flat roof of their house at the time of his arrival and she heard someone say, 'Isn't that Pal coming?' Quickly she looked up, saw him approaching and with arms outstretched in greeting walked toward him over the edge of the roof, fell to the ground and lay unconscious at his feet. The surge of joy at seeing him again after their short parting had blocked out the awareness of her position on the roof. Fortunately, it was a single-story building and she recovered from the fall without any aftereffects.

Six months before Gulab Devi passed from the world, Kirpal had a serious talk with her. He told her that only six months of her time on earth were left; she should break away from all outer attachments and devote her attention fully to God, in preparation for the great journey. Seventeen days before the event, Kirpal wrote to his mother from Peshawar, telling her again that she should make every effort to be prepared for the change, for the time was drawing very near.

Writing also to his elder brother Jodh Singh, who was

in Nowshera, Kirpal asked him to take leave from his work and go home to Sayyed Kasran. He wrote, 'Our mother's time to leave this world has come and she will be leaving on the seventh day\*. It has been so ordained that I will not be able to be by her side at that time.' He asked his brother to leave at once, to be with her.

Kirpal's entire family, relatives and anyone with a close connection, accepted whatever he said without question: past experiences had proven his reliability. Without hesitation, Jodh Singh requested urgent leave and was with Gulab Devi when she passed away, on the day indicated by her son Kirpal. She left behind a legacy of love, honor and righteousness – remembered with great affection in the hearts of all who had known her.

A certain number of days after cremation, Indian funeral rites require a special ceremony during which particular bones, deferentially referred to as "the flowers", are cast into one of India's sacred rivers. Kirpal attended this last formal gesture of respect to his mother. The observance was completed by all the sons of the deceased taking a customary drink from the waters wherein the flowers had been immersed. As Kirpal took a sip of the water, his face turned pale and a fit of coughing seized him. His companions thought it was just an emotional reaction to the day's events. However, several days passed and the coughing continued, with Kirpal's condition steadily declining. A doctor was called and x-rays taken, which showed that both lungs were affected with pleurisy.

Jodh Singh could not understand this for he knew that Kirpal had been in perfect health up to the time of the riverside ceremonial rites, so he asked Kirpal to be frank and explain how he had contracted the sickness. Kirpal smiled

\* Seven days from the day of writing.

faintly and admitted that he had taken some of the karmic burden from his mother's shoulders upon himself. He assured his brother that within a week he would be in excellent health once more. A week later, all traces of the disease were gone.

In 1914, at the start of the first world war, Jodh Singh was posted to Basra\*, where he suddenly took sick. He did not inform anyone in his letters home to India, but was not very surprised to receive a telegram from Kirpal, wishing him a speedy recovery. Some years later, back in India, while entertaining some strong doubts about his brother's glimpses into the greater knowledge, he received a letter from Kirpal telling him to never lose faith in God for whatever happens is with His will. 'Your wife is going to leave soon,' wrote Kirpal, 'and you must keep your faith.'

Jodh Singh was incredulous. His wife was not even sick. Surely, Kirpal must mean something else! The whole day his mind was stricken with anxious thoughts. Kirpal's words were never taken lightly, but he just could not believe that anything would happen to his wife. Yet, that very day, before even the sun had set, his wife suddenly complained of a peculiar pain in her chest and before he had time to send for the doctor, she had taken her last breath and expired.

Among his fellow workers, Kirpal was trusted and respected by all; his reputation, second to none. His superiors showed their trust by giving him extra work. During the first world war, some of the men went off to fight and it was to Kirpal they appealed for help. They chose to place the welfare of their wives and children in his hands in preference to their parents. Knowing he would handle their affairs

\* Iraq.

with complete integrity, they signed affidavits giving him power of attorney over their pensions and other financial matters.

His love of humanity was expansive and so unadulterated that the very atmosphere around him was potent, having a marked effect on others. On occasions, he was approached by individuals storming like a tempest over some incident, prepared for a raging confrontation. After a few softly-spoken words from Kirpal, they found themselves walking away feeling foolish and wondering why they had been so needlessly upset.

Some years later, Kirpal's employers were to show their appreciation of his extraordinary capabilities by promoting him to the position of Administrator and Co-ordinator of Military Accounts, in Peshawar.

Kirpal could never work merely to the rule or the letter. He tackled his work as vigorously as he had tackled his academic studies, always accomplishing more than was expected of him. His treatment of and relationships with those under his charge were handled with the same inimitable acumen, using extra care and consideration, extra effort and attention. He never made blind judgments. If the work was lacking somewhere, he addressed the matter privately with the person concerned. Kirpal gave advice and every kind of help – even financial, if it went to the root of the problem. It was not unusual for an offender to dissolve into tears of regret. Returning the man to his work, Kirpal would monitor the situation until the worker was able to continue with heart and will in the right place. Kirpal's methods not only gave encouragement but often achieved increased efficiency. Other department heads were happy to get an employee transferred from Kirpal's staff – a guarantee of high standards of work and conduct.

One time, while Kirpal was on a month's leave, his duties were performed by another man. During this brief tenure, the man fired three clerks. On Kirpal's return, the three aggrieved workers came to him with their woeful story. Kirpal heard their account and shared their distress at what appeared to be an injustice. He told them to write separate petitions to the Controller of Defence Accounts. Along with those, Kirpal sent a letter requesting that their cases be reopened, as he felt there must have been some misunderstanding, and if there was indeed any cause for complaint then at least one warning could have been given to the men, for no one is perfect and everyone makes a mistake at some time. As a result, the men were reinstated in their jobs. It gladdened Kirpal's heart to see their joy.

## CHAPTER SIX

Kirpal's dedication to the cause of serving humanity is illustrated all through his life by countless actual occurrences in the field of selfless service, which he always considered as his own work. During his young adult days, one particular instance was to be remembered by all his family members throughout the years that followed.

Early in 1917, Kirpal's father became seriously ill. One of the symptoms was continuous and uncontrollable diarrhea that left him extremely weak and helpless. Kirpal took leave from his employment at once and hurried home. Hospitals today are much improved compared to those days. Considered badly run, understaffed and unhygienic, people were reluctant to trust them. Consequently, the sick were usually nursed at home, unless they had no one to care for them.

Because of the nature of Hukam Singh's sickness, it was difficult to find anyone to nurse him. It was considered very dirty work and even the house servant refused to stay. Kirpal immediately tackled the work of cleaning the house, cooking the meals, getting medicine and supplies and above all, nursing, feeding, washing and caring for his father. The cycle of changing the clothes, washing and drying, went on continuously day and night. Kirpal rarely slept, but lived in a pair of shorts and a towel around his

waist, finding it more convenient for the type of work.

As the days went by and the sickness wore on, Hukam Singh's condition grew weaker, both physically and mentally. When finally the malady left him he was a figure of skin and bone and his mental powers were considerably depleted – something like a newly born child. He seemed to be washed clean of all thoughts – even the powers he had acquired through his worship of Shiv disappeared. So, added to the tender and loving nursing of his father's physical body, Kirpal started to bring his father back to his regular mental capabilities. He taught him the names of things and how to pronounce them: 'This is a spoon, this is a chair,' and so on. It was slow work but after a few months his father could speak a little and understand. Then he taught him how to concentrate by remembering God and praying to God, which hastened the return of his awareness. Thereby, he gradually became stronger, both physically and mentally.

Hukam Singh was well on the road to recovery when he said one day to Kirpal, 'Pal, your selfless service has not gone unnoticed. I am very pleased with you and a parent's blessing has the power to grant a wish, so ask for whatever you want.' Now, Kirpal knew this was more than just a parent's blessing, for his father was a very spiritual man whose prayer would be heard. But he was sad rather than elated as he replied, 'Father, you are already aware that I have no interest or desire for worldly wealth, pleasures, children or mundane gifts. I want only to realize God and all else means nothing to me.'

His father who, with the aid of his walking stick, was pacing the courtyard in gentle exercise, stood very still and very silent, obviously deep in thought. Kirpal watched his

frowning face and waited. After some minutes. Sardar Hukam Singh turned to his son, his eyes filled with a mixture of sternness and tenderness. 'Son, I have not seen God, and others may or may not see Him, but you will get Him without a doubt.'

Kirpal was so moved by his father's words and the depth of his sincerity, he went straight to his room, sat down in meditation and prayed: 'Oh God, I know that to realize You I must first be accepted by a perfect living Master, but I fear I might choose one who has not realized You and therefore waste my entire life in a fruitless search for You, leaving my work unfinished. Protect me from such disaster.'

Kirpal related: 'Perhaps it was through my father's blessing, but from that day in my meditation a beautiful form started appearing before me, as in a vision. I remember the very day so clearly – it was Basant Panchmi\*. When I first saw that glowing radiant form, who was to be my Companion for seven years, until we met face to face on earth, I thought at that time and all through those years, that it was Guru Nanak.\*\*'

He has also explained that a man standing on a high peak can see clearly the smoke and exactly where the fire is burning. 'The Onlooker saw my condition, the inner torment, despair and yearning to meet Him. Through His grace the blessings started to flow, both inwardly and outwardly – so much that can never be repaid.' The inner vision grew stronger each day and developed into a direct contact with the beautiful Companion, Whom Kirpal continued to believe was Guru Nanak.

[Perhaps the reader is inclined to pause here and wonder why Kirpal did not ask the beautiful form who He was, but when we remember how he has told many times that he

\* First day of Indian spring.

\*\* First Guru of the Sikhs, (1469-1539).

asked Hazur Sawan Singh Ji only three questions throughout his discipleship, it is not surprising that he did not question his esteemed Companion but was content to be guided and taught according to His will and pleasure.]

The first day of spring is a festival of celebration in India. Men, women and children wear yellow clothes and offer prayers of thanksgiving to God for the blossoming fields of yellow mustard flowers and other food crops. It is a day filled with awareness of new life, born out of the effort of hard labor. The effervescent mood of the farmers spreads infectiously and happy laughter ripples through the celebrations as the people joyfully express their gratitude to the Lord for the promise of abundance and the respite of rest before harvesting begins.

That Basant day symbolized to Kirpal the blossoming of flowers in his field of spirituality. But if the farmers were rejoicing in their forthcoming vacation, Kirpal saw no rest for himself from then on, until the harvest of spiritual fruit. If God willed, He would draw him unto Himself, but not without the effort of hard work and preparation. He rejoiced in his own personal celebration, elated over his new inner experiences and the appearance of the exalted Being, now his inner Companion, but he knew the search must go on, for he must yet find a True Master living in the physical form, through whom God was working and who held the key to the locked door.

His days were spent at his work in the office, but after hours he visited the hospitals. If he found any patients with no family and no one attending them, with full devotion and care he served them and tended their needs. His salary was modest at the time, but he provided for the sick with

whatever he had.

One day, he suddenly realized that he had but four Indian paise, or pennies, in his pocket\*, with a whole week to go before his next pay-day. Furthermore, he had no food stored at his quarters. He thought about asking a friend for a loan but quickly rejected the idea, knowing it would disturb his peace to have the thought of owing money on his mind. It would be better to go hungry for a week than carry the debt on his head. So he spent the four paise on roasted grams [you could get quite a lot for four paise then], and whenever he was hungry during the week he would chew some of the grams and wash them down with water.

By nature, Kirpal was aloof and self-contained. When it was time to perform the final ceremonies of his marriage to Krishna Vanti, he went through the rituals in his usual detached manner.

At the very beginning, he told her that there was some important work to do ahead of him, of such importance that he would forsake all and everything, if necessary, to continue it. If she would help him in this, as they were now companions and partners in life, then in turn, he would abide by her wishes. It was an unusual bargain, but it would be a marriage based on high thinking. His name and reputation had already spread over a large area, not escaping the notice of this young bride. As she listened to all this, she was somewhat in awe of her new husband, but from those early days on, she loved and respected him.

Deciding to take his new partner into his confidence, Kirpal told Krishna Vanti about his carefully guarded secret that he regularly left his body at will and entered into sam-dhi\*\*; that he had been doing this since early childhood but

\* Equivalent of about four cents – at that time.

\*\* State of absorption in God or Truth.

no one else knew about it. He explained some of the basic principles of spiritual practice and assured her there was no need to worry if he left his body for a number of hours. As a precaution, he showed her how to bring him back to his body in case of an emergency or any exigency. Krishna Vanti was a little bewildered at first but she quickly agreed to everything he said. As their life together progressed, Kirpal's strange ways became part of their daily routine and her love and respect for him grew.

Kirpal was in his room one day, deep in meditation, when his elder brother Jodh Singh arrived with some friends. Krishna Vanti was working in the kitchen at the back of the house and she had forgotten to lock the front door, which was her method of averting any untoward surprises. So when Jodh Singh and party found no one in the living room, they went straight to seek Kirpal in his room, unobserved by Krishna Vanti. To their horror, they found what they thought was Kirpal's dead body, cold as ice and rigid as a post. In that moment, facing what he thought was his brother's death, Jodh Singh realized that his love for Kirpal exceeded all earthly things. Krishna Vanti, hearing the commotion and the sobbing, came running to Kirpal's room and, realizing what had happened, she feared her husband's displeasure on learning that her laxity had exposed his secret and she cried, 'Oh, you should not disturb him!'

Jodh Singh, mad with grief, shouted at her: 'Disturb him! Woman, can you not see that he is dead?' She then had no alternative but to bend down and gently press the nerve in the manner that Kirpal had taught her. To the amazement of the grief-stricken onlookers, life gradually returned to Kirpal's body; he opened his eyes and gazed lovingly at his brother and friends.

As the days passed, Kirpal's desire for knowledge did not diminish. He spent his nights reading the words of the past Masters or lying on his bed gazing at the ceiling thinking, thinking . . . seeking, seeking. The yearning for the Truth was a fierce pain inside him that would build and build until it exploded in a flood of tears like the torrential rains after the summer's heat, leaving him weak and exhausted – his burning face resting on the cool, wet pillow. There were nights when he walked the streets for hours, wrestling with his overpowering problem. Routine in his office was busy and the volume of work steady, but during short breaks, in the few minutes alone, his anguish would return and tears flowed unchecked, drenching the papers on his desk. Later, he related: 'I do not think anyone cried as much as I, to bridge that separation and become whole.'

The all-important search for a True Master – his Master Who would remove the veil covering the elusive and mysterious Truth – seemed never-ending. He traveled many miles, sometimes following a small clue – a name, whispered among the devout – but always praying fervently with fear and anxiety in his heart, 'Oh God, do not let me give myself up to an incomplete master and waste my entire life!' He would return from his searches tired, disappointed and relieved – relieved and thankful to have discovered in time that the man he met that day was not God-realized and he had been saved from disaster; disappointed because he had once again failed to find his Master.

Years passed, while Kirpal lived like a beautiful flower shut away from the sunlight, suffering in torment all his wakeful hours. There were times when he thought he could bear it no longer, but the gracious ethereal Being would come to him, radiating His peace, joy and light, healing Kirpal's lacerated heart, filling him with hope and the strength to carry on.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

During the existing state of war through 1914-18, occupations were shuffled in the country's work force, hence many clerical workers were placed in other vocations according to the need. When the state of emergency ceased in 1918, displaced workers were given permission to resume their original pursuits. However, some were required to take certain tests to prove their abilities, especially those desiring to re-enter the Civil Service. Rumors circulated that the tests were difficult, covering new subjects and updated methods – many men were not at all optimistic about their chances and were reluctant to sit for the exam. This included a large contingent from the Department of Defence Accounts. They had six, eight or ten years service to their credit, but the war had placed them at a disadvantage and their future looked bleak. The loss of service-continuation would affect their pensions, and to try to find other employment in that post-war era was a formidable task.

As it happened – or it can be said, with God's grace – they had a strong champion in their corner. Kirpal had been appointed examiner and all the test papers were to go through his hands. He was well aware of the situation and the predicament of the demobilized clerks. Approaching the Controller of the Defence Accounts, he pointed out to him that

many of the Department's experienced and faithful workers would likely forfeit their jobs and their futures through no fault of their own. The Controller fully understood, and admitted that it did not seem fair, but said he was helpless: the orders were clear that all personnel must write the test. He asked Kirpal if he had any suggestions to overcome the dilemma. Kirpal replied that with the Controller's permission, he would pass every man who sat the test. The Controller agreed. Once again, Kirpal's love for humanity, his concern for people's welfare and his sense of fair play saved many families from hardship and the threat of poverty.

Kirpal was easily the most respected and the most loved officer in Defence Accounts – respected by officers and subordinates alike. The former were impressed by his humane attitude to everyone – even those on the lowest rung of the office ladder – and his scrupulously fair treatment in all matters. He was always polite and consistent. He never recommended discharging a man without allowing him an opportunity to right the wrong and improve the work. His philosophy was to regard mistakes, transgression, negligence, misconduct, as human error: susceptible to change for the better. He spent extra time with defaulters, teaching and encouraging until they were inclined to change their ways.

Believing in the axiom "Only another habit can change a habit", Kirpal used this to turn people around, combining it with his ever-present love and affection for all life. He was so successful in this that other officers began to send him their negligent workers. Kirpal would keep them in the Administration Department, of which he was in charge, until through his persuasion and guidance they changed their ways. In turn, grateful to him for his interest in them and feeling more like human beings, they grew to love him and

to work hard for him. After a short time they returned to their own departments, happy and efficient workers.

Kirpal's way of doing things was a natural outcome of his way of living life. It was not a carefully thought out design or method but a part of what he was, an expression and extension of his true nature. He influenced the lives of others in so many ways. Whosoever came in contact with him was affected by his very presence as well as his example.

During Kirpal's service as Accounts Officer to the 36th Sikh Regiment stationed at Dera Ismail Khan\*, many incidents took place which underlined this effect on his fellow man.

The Commanding Officer had a tall ferocious-looking personal guard who was, in plain language, an utter bully who managed to perpetrate every form of misdemeanor in the book including, among other things, thrashing his fellow soldiers or beating up on the cooks and stealing the meat they had cooked for the men. He enjoyed his notoriety and the fear he created in the lower ranks. He got away with his evil misdeeds which, when reported to the C.O., were overlooked because of his usefulness when peace with the fierce frontier tribesmen of Dera Ismail Khan Territory was being negotiated. The men held him in terror and the upper ranks dared not question his actions.

But, strange to relate, this unpleasant character developed a strong affection for Kirpal – akin to adoration. He kept his distance, but while Kirpal was working in his office, the guard would go to Kirpal's quarters, clean everything until the place shone and then quietly slip away. One day Kirpal returned to his quarters mid-afternoon and discovered the guard cleaning his room. Aware of his reputation,

\* Near Afghanistan border – now in Pakistan.

Kirpal was amazed to see him humbly doing menial work and for another's benefit, to boot! When he asked the man why he was doing it, the fellow sank to the floor and began to cry like a child. Tears rolled down his face as he said, 'Sir, I respect no man because everyone lives a lie; through this I have committed many crimes – even taken lives too. But whenever I see you I tremble from head to foot. Something about you makes me remember all the bad things I have done – am still doing – and fear clutches my throat and I am very, very afraid. I know you are a God-like man, Sir – I implore you, please tell me if there is any hope for me? I am such a sinner, will God forgive me?'

Kirpal told him, 'Every man is a sinner – there is no one who has not sinned. If this were not so, man would not have been blinded to his basic nature and imprisoned on this earth. However, for the one who has repentance and love for his fellow beings, the gates of heaven will open.' Kirpal then exhorted him to turn over a new leaf: begin a new future, replacing hate with love – God would not only forgive him but would await his arrival with open arms. It was a long dialogue, many things passing between them – the man of truth and the man lost – but somehow Kirpal succeeded in reaching the soul of the tortured man for, from that day, the terror of the regiment became an example of love and goodness, serving people in need and praising God for His mercy. A complete face about.

One day at Dera Ismail Khan, a contractor walked into Kirpal's office and asked him to grant a favor saying, 'I know you have influence with the higher authorities and if you will just get this estimate passed by them I will be very grateful. I know you can do it.' With that, he quickly thrust a bag full of coin currency at Kirpal.

Kirpal was not necessarily surprised. In those days it was accepted as a matter of course that a person bribed his way to achieving whatever he wanted. Salaries were low and most of those in official positions – even the lesser peons – accepted the extra help with little compunction, even though it was illegal. Kirpal knew this and was not offended by the man's suggestion but he gently pushed the money back and said, 'There's no need to give bribes, I am paid by the government for the work I do in this office and you can rest assured that I will do whatever I can to have it passed as soon as possible.'

There was no paper money at that time, only coin, and the contractor, thinking Kirpal wanted a bigger bribe, heaped another pile of coins on the desk. Kirpal, his smile still there, refused again but the man was disinclined to take him seriously and, bowing a little, wished him farewell and turned toward the door. At this, Kirpal scooped up all the cash and threw it at the departing contractor. The noise, as the silver coin scattered across the floor, was clangorous and from behind all the partitions a stunned silence pervaded.

After a few moments everyone resumed working. Two or three of the older officials approached Kirpal and advised him not to be foolish, throwing away extra financial help, the practice of which was an accepted fact. What was the use of Kirpal being different when his income needed supplementing like everyone else's? They were strong in their views. Kirpal listened and apologized for all the embarrassment and commotion but told them he could not be part of any deed that must needs be kept in the dark – the result of which breeds fear and lies. Again, he asked them to forgive the disturbance.

This incident was discussed in all the offices and eventually spread beyond the confines of the Department, reaching

the ears of Kirpal's relatives, some of whom visited him and tried to reason with him. Their opinions were also forceful. How can something that everyone does and acknowledges be a sin? . . . a person wishes to give, then that is not stealing . . . did he not realize that he was in a position to make a lot of money for his family? . . . surely those who wanted to live a strictly pure and pious life should not be living among the worldly affairs, and so on . . .

Kirpal reasoned with his people as if they were children trying to understand. Then in more simple terms he asked them if he had taken the money, could he then explain to his superiors that they should approve the estimate as he was indebted to the contractor for a bribe? They were horrified at this. 'No, no' they cried. 'That must be kept secret, otherwise you might lose your job or go to prison!' Kirpal said that he was glad they understood at last how dishonest it was . . . how could he do such a thing when he had been given a position of trust by his employers, who were providing his livelihood? 'However,' he added, 'if you all are in need of money I will hand over my pay to you – I do not need very much to live on.' He wanted to make it very clear that he would live according to his own conscience, not by the opinions of others.

Kirpal had a very simple lifestyle. Even the basic luxuries had no place in his home, which could be likened to an ascetic's dwelling with just the bare necessities. The very modest homes of that day would boast a ceiling fan or a table fan at least, but Kirpal's house had not even that to bring the relief of a cool breeze during the sweltering days and hot airless nights of the Indian summer. If any cash was left over after paying the usual bills and daily requirements, it went to help any needy person or the sick in hospital. Kirpal

was never interested in improving the home surroundings or his personal comfort. On completing his day's work his whole attention became engrossed in his aim of realizing God, which banished all thought of comfort, environment, heat, cold, hunger or thirst. At the close of his working day the thought of being separated from the Truth was resumed, engulfing him like a cloud, and the pain of torment and the tears would follow.

The rare combination of virtues evident in Kirpal's nature made him very much in demand. The senior officers at work consulted him on numerous matters such as promotions, salary increases and transfer of personnel. His advice was sought often by the Controller, the Accountant General of Military Accounts and various officers in the Finance Ministry.

When internal unrest in Waziristan\* increased, orders were issued for the Accounts Section to move to the Lahore office. The Controller himself was transferred to Lahore. In the reshuffle, many clerks were pensioned out of service and the remaining work force distributed to various branches of the Department. Of the latter group, a large number wished to continue working under the same Controller and applied for positions in the Lahore office. When they were interviewed, the clerks who had worked for Kirpal were immediately accepted in the Lahore office and given the same positions they had held, without further question. When it was suggested to the Controller that this was rather unusual procedure, without hesitation he replied, 'I know what I am doing. Any man who has worked for Kirpal Singh will

\* Waziristan, a tribal area close to the Afghanistan border – known in the past for its constant resistance to British rule – is now divided into North and South Waziristan and is part of the Northwest Frontier Province (N.W.F.P.) of Pakistan.

know his job thoroughly and do it well.'

Kirpal himself was also posted to Lahore. It did not take him long to discover that conditions in the hospital there were appalling, especially for the poor. Again, he began his vigil of caring for the needy and the lonely, many of whom had not a rupee to their name.

Each evening, straight from the office, he went to the hospital and cared for those who had no one else to care for them – making them comfortable, feeding them, washing their dishes and, perhaps more importantly, he talked to them and listened to their problems and tried to cheer them up, making them feel more wanted. The high rate of recovery among those who were considered the hopeless cases baffled the doctors, but those "hopeless" ones were convinced that Kirpal's love and kindness had pulled them through.

As always, the spare cash was quickly used up on food etc. and there seemed never to be enough to cover the cost of medicines the doctors had prescribed. So Kirpal did a little investigative research to seek out some alternative types of therapeutics that were efficacious while yet within the scope of low incomes.

He discovered the system of homeopathy and also Schussler's twelve tissue salts – replacing deficiencies of various body salts – both of which were economical and remedial. The solution was not without a snag, however: the homeopathic doctors' fees were high enough to be beyond the means of a really poor person. Kirpal dealt with this setback by purchasing a stack of books on the subjects, then spent every spare minute studying homeopathic and bio-chemic medicine. Soon, he was able to buy the correct salts and remedies for his sick people and was delighted with the

positive and successful results that ensued.

Kirpal's attitude of consideration and concern for others was hard for the average well-fed, adequately-clothed, status-symbol-minded individual to understand. Kirpal often checked the train station for old, ill or feeble human beings, struggling with their luggage, and he would help them or carry their bags for them. 'Why do you do it?' he was asked by friends and acquaintances. His responses were ever in the same vein: 'If a person loves God, it is natural he will love also God's creation, in which He resides. Love knows only to give.'

Kirpal firmly advocated selfless service all through his life, emphasizing how it purifies and stills the mind, while the self, or soul, expands.

Kirpal received a letter from an uncle, telling him about his son who was stricken with an unknown malady. He explained how the doctors and specialists – physical and mental experts – were mystified and unable to prescribe a cure for the sickness. The letter went on to describe how, during an attack, the young man's body became numb, entirely lifeless; whether sitting, standing or walking he would keel over, helpless to stop himself. On medical examination, the doctors could find nothing wrong but feared that the symptoms may lead to paralysis. Kirpal's uncle asked that his son be allowed to come to Lahore where, in those days, the doctors were highly reputed. Kirpal agreed at once to help him in every way possible and in due course his cousin, Didar Singh, arrived.

However, before they had time to visit a doctor, the young man got an attack, losing all control, even his voice. The fear in his eyes, beseeching help, was enough to awaken the pity in Kirpal's heart and, looking deeply into his

cousin's fright-filled eyes, he began to gently massage the lifeless limbs. Gradually, life returned to his body and then the voice. Didar Singh was full of grateful thanks. Kirpal smiled at him and said, 'You know, you should rejoice for you are greatly blessed.' Didar Singh, poor fellow, could only stare at him in astonishment and disbelief. Kirpal explained that he was not sick at all, but the cause of the "attacks" of numbness and lifelessness was due to his past good karmas\* through which the indriyas\*\* were able to withdraw from the gross matter of the body, toward a purer environment.

Kirpal likened it to a magnet drawing iron filings, and the more rust-free the iron, the more easily it is drawn to the magnet. For the human being, it is easier for the sensory current to withdraw from the world and its attachments and be drawn to the inner worlds if the mind is pure. In Didar Singh's case, good actions from the past had brought on the happy augury of his present "sickness", portending greater things to come.

After giving him adequate information of a spiritual kind, Kirpal asked his cousin if he would like to have his withdrawal abilities suspended until a later date, or would he prefer to start on the inner path and progress further. In all eagerness, Didar Singh chose the inner progress and Kirpal agreed, but warned him that he must be very careful and in full control of himself, withdrawing only when he was alone and sitting or lying down; and in privacy, not in public or going about his usual daily affairs. Didar Singh promised he would abide by this and was put on the inner way. He became a picture of happiness, enjoying the inner bliss which shone through his radiant features. All worry

\* Effects of actions from past lives.

\*\* Sensory currents in the body (which supply feeling).

and anxiety left him, replaced by carefree laughter\*.

However, as time went on, he began to ignore the serious warning Kirpal had given him and he grew careless in controlling his spiritual practices until one day, while in a blissful state above body consciousness, he walked into the corner of a wall, splitting open his forehead which bled profusely. He felt no pain, did not know he was hurt – his consciousness still above the body. When Kirpal saw the condition of his cousin, with blood dripping onto his feet, he realized that he must remove the blessing from Didar Singh's reach and restore him to ordinary life. For his own good, the inner experiences must stop. Henceforth, Didar Singh lived a healthy, happy but ordinary life. Five years later, at the time of his death, he requested Kirpal to open his inner eye, and Kirpal acquiesced, restoring his state of spiritual bliss.

\* [Although Kirpal was himself seeking his True Master during those years, yet his divine nature revealed itself in the spiritual help he extended to others.]

## CHAPTER EIGHT

In 1919, after the first world war had ended, a wave of severe influenza swept through the Punjab, reaching epidemic proportions. Up to then, science had not found a cure for nor an effective inoculation against this disease and people started dying by the hundreds. The malady was highly contagious and fear spread even faster than the disease, clutching at the hearts of the populace. Even kith and kin were reluctant to be near the unfortunate victims, and stricken men, women and children were left abandoned in their homes, by the roadside, or in the fields. Many of the fortunate ones fled the area, anxious to run as far from the dread sickness as possible.

It struck Kirpal's heart to see what was happening. He felt helpless to know how to cope with the terrible tragedy – where to start? Thousands were sick, dying and dead, and apparently no one would go near them but himself. He knew the numbers were too many to handle alone, so he got all his friends together and pleaded for their help – promising to do the very dirty work himself. To his relief, a few of them volunteered. There was cleaning, washing, cooking, giving medicine, feeding, administering comfort and burying or cremating the dead. Kirpal was here, there and everywhere possible. Eventually, gradually, more people

joined in to help with the work, until finally they beat the last case of influenza in Lahore. There was no time for relief or rest however, for adversity was to deal the ravaged town another shattering blow. Plague!

Once again the government was unprepared for such an event, especially following in the wake of the influenza epidemic. Once again people were dying – in larger numbers than before – and the fear of influenza was overshadowed by the unmitigated terror the plague incurred. What would be an even greater exodus began from the stricken city.

Small towns and villages alike, throughout the area, had the appearance of battlefields where, in the aftermath of battle, the ground lay littered with a graveyard of rotting bodies – the unfortunate who had died with no one to tend them and no one to cremate them. It was the influenza epidemic over again, only worse. Thousands left their sick and dying relatives and ran for their lives. The stench of rotting bodies and sickness filled the air and the nostrils night and day, accentuating a scene of unspeakable misery.

Lion-hearted Kirpal once more entered the arena – this time alone, for no one would help him. Tying a cloth over his nose and mouth, he worked incessantly – not stopping to sleep. Slowly, those who had not fled the city began to notice him working alone and unafraid at his cheerless task, and sheepishly drew nearer with feelings of shame filtering into their hearts. Working under Kirpal's instructions they metamorphosed into brave human beings, picking up the bodies, piling them into carts and transporting them outside the city for cremation. Watching Kirpal's ceaseless love and compassion for the sick ones, they too began to serve them and minister to their needs.

These same volunteers, in the years to follow, repeated the story of how, by some miraculous form of endurance,

they worked hour after hour without fatigue. If, after many hours of arduous labour they began to feel a little weary, they just looked at Kirpal for a few minutes and, magically, felt renewed and recharged with vitality. The task was huge and no time could be spared to stop and ponder the enormity of it all. Only at the end of the hideous nightmare, when the whole unwonted experience was over, did the volunteers wonder in amazement how such an impossible venture had been achieved in so little time, with not a single man feeling sick or falling out for rest.

In the words of one stalwart worker: 'We gave no thought to time, we did not rest, we just obeyed the young man and did our best. We felt no strain at all but a great joy rose in our hearts and we had such love and compassion for the sufferers – as if we were suffering with them. It was truly a wonderful experience that we would not have missed.'

Kirpal's name was on everyone's lips – the sick and the healthy – as respect and admiration for him spread in the hearts of the people of Lahore. In usual circumstances he would have been hailed as a hero and awarded public recognition but, true to his nature, he withdrew as the government began to restore order. The incident gradually faded into a memory. If the subject arose in his presence, those who would have discussed it were met with a cool and aloof expression, tinged with a little sadness. They abided by his obvious wish to let the whole thing be forgotten but in thought they felt, *Surely he is a strange man to understand.*

A few months of peace and respite followed these two disasters, during which time Kirpal continued his normal routine – his work at the office, helping the needy after office hours, and tending family affairs at home. Lahore was then the capital of Punjab, one of the larger Indian states. The city was a thriving hub of commerce, industry and provincial

government, but returning to regular operation and pace was not easy for either the authorities or the people. As the storm subsided, Lahore began slowly to regain its equilibrium; people who had left trickled back to their homes and a new confidence was being felt everywhere. However, just as things were getting on an even keel another thunderbolt landed, in the form of a strike by the municipal workers.

It was not just a surprise but a shock to the community, for the municipal employees included the sweepers. The sweepers were part of the underprivileged section of society, cast out from the rest under the term of the "untouchable" caste. They performed the extremely menial tasks of sweeping the streets, cleaning out the washrooms, etc. They were downtrodden, slighted and humiliated by the higher castes, most of whom considered them to be without rights and without feelings. How could such people go on strike? But it was the day and era of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a lawyer who had taken up the cause of freedom, not only of the untouchables, but of the Indian peoples as a whole.

Destined to lead his country to self-rule, Gandhi became their Mahatma\* as he taught the poor and lower classes that their rights as human beings were every bit as important as those of the Brahmin\*\*.

The systems of plumbing as they are known and blithely accepted as a normal part of modern life today were rare in early twentieth century India – even among the rich. The "toilet rooms" contained commodes which had to be cleaned once or twice a day – work done only by the sweepers. Some of the middle class houses had "open toilets" on the flat roofs – also cleaned by the sweepers. The poor could afford neither of these – not even the low sweepers'

\* Great soul.

\*\* Highest category in the caste system.

fees – and went to the woods or the fields.

Mahatma Gandhi said that it was wrong for the sweepers to be doing the filthiest work for others' benefit at the lowest pay on the scale. Consequently, the sweepers began to see the right in their cause and to express their grievances by striking. Their patrons were nonplussed. No higher caste person would remove the excrement and clean the toilets, not for any amount of money – it would bring a stigma on them and on their family for life.

So, as the days of the strike ticked away, the filth accumulated and the stench was unbearable. Under cover of darkness, in the small hours, the occupants of the houses started to remove the feculence and dump it at some distance from their own home, in the alleyways and lanes. As there were not enough of these areas between the streets it was an unsuccessful solution and they ended up depositing the filth outside each others' houses. The piles of waste became fly-infested and disease-ridden. The rich could afford to leave the city, and did, but the poor were imprisoned in the mess that was Lahore. In a very short time, various diseases were being spread among the people by the flies. The city was faced with yet another desperate situation and once again the authorities were helpless to cope.

Kirpal had withdrawn from the public eye, but as he watched the development of this new emergency, he knew he would have to take action again. Calling a meeting of his friends, he was gratified to find that at once they agreed unanimously to follow whatever plan he suggested. They were a mixed group from various castes – high and low, rich and poor – but they had faith in Kirpal and loved him, and were ready to stand together for one cause: to tackle the city's problem with vigor.

They worked quickly, going from street to lane, house to

house. Kirpal was likened to a hurricane as he moved and worked. Some said that he was seen in more than one place at the same time. They cleaned the streets, alleys, and areas around the houses, finishing with a highly strong disinfectant. As they worked through each street, Kirpal called the householders together and entreated them to listen to him if they did not want disease and death to take possession again with a return of the plague. Memory and fear still gripping their hearts, they were ready to listen.

He told them that throwing the waste near their neighbours' houses was tantamount to leaving it on their own doorsteps, as each neighbor would return the gesture, maybe even more generously. He explained how he was arranging for large covered bins to be placed in the streets for their use. Lime and disinfectant would be available to control the smell and arrest the spread of disease. They must keep their houses spotlessly clean, with all members of the household cooperating together to do so. 'It will be our job,' he said, 'to take away the cans and empty them in a suitable place.' This great effort on the part of Kirpal and his tireless team of volunteers continued until the strike was over.

This series of public emergencies finally ran its course and life in Lahore resumed its normal routine.

## CHAPTER NINE

Not even dire emergencies of the extreme kind that had overcome Lahore could prevail upon Kirpal to forget his passion to find his Master. Not even for the short length of those situations. The burning thought was ever in the foreground of his mind, no matter what commission he was engaged in. It was sometime in 1921 when, in conversation with his brother Jodh Singh, Kirpal asked if he had achieved any success in his search for a Saint. Jodh Singh laughed and said that he had been about to ask Kirpal the same question! They agreed that day, as the matter was most imperative to them both, that if one should hear of any Master he would let the other know – by urgent telegram so that no time would be lost.

That same year, one of Kirpal's friends from his home town, Sayyad Kasran, paid him a visit. As they relaxed together, the topic that was constantly uppermost in Kirpal's mind arose in conversation and he asked his friend if he had heard of anyone who could truly be termed a Perfect Master. Beant Singh replied that he himself had a Master whom he knew for sure to be true. Ever cautious, Kirpal queried how his friend could be so certain, but after receiving very pertinent information, he agreed that the criteria mentioned were indeed indicative of a True Master. 'What

is his name?' he asked. 'His name is Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji,' said Beant Singh.

Strangely, the name that would later come to mean so much to Kirpal did not register, or did not seem to register, at that time and a small incident cut short the exchange and, temporarily, put it out of mind. Beant Singh, consequently, did not proffer a photograph of his Master, which would have been usual in the circumstances – among fellow seekers – so there was no recognition of the form that graced Kirpal's meditations. As Hazur was to indicate later, truly auspicious events are pre-ordained for certain times and certain places by the unseen hand and pen of God.

Most of Kirpal's friends and acquaintances knew about his search and tried to help whenever they could. One man came to him, obviously very excited: 'I feel certain I have found someone who knows all about the hidden truth,' he exclaimed. Naturally, Kirpal wanted to know why he was so sure of this. 'I know from his knowledge of spiritual things – he gives the true meaning of what is written in the Guru Granth Sahib\*.' But Kirpal asked him what standard of comparison he had used to divine that they were true meanings. He replied, 'Oh, there can be no mistaking, for he takes a verse from the holy book and interprets it in five or six different ways – each one of them is so satisfying!' Kirpal stared at him in astonishment. 'Gives more than one interpretation? Why, by this single fact I am sure that the man knows nothing, for Truth is one and can have but one meaning.' It was another blind alley that led nowhere; just one of so many to cross Kirpal's path as he continued his quest.

It was not until 1924 that Kirpal's search was to reach fulfillment. In January of that year, the coldest month when,

\* Sacred scriptures of the Sikhs.

even in India, the air often has an icy nip to it and the rivers run with chilled water, Kirpal had an urge to sit beside a river and just watch the water flow by. He wanted to calm his mind of the uncertain turmoil that forever churned over the same burning question: *when will he meet that all-important person Who would remove the intolerable state he was in and set him upon the straight path to his goal?*

From early childhood, he had been fond of all bodies of water. Streams, rivers, lakes, the sea – all held a fascination and he loved to sit on the banks and gaze at the ripples twinkling in perpetuity. The purity of the water and the serenity of its flow calmed his restlessness. A stillness would descend upon him as if he were communing with the pulse of life itself. He loved nature in all its forms, animate and inanimate. The trees were mute companions that befriended him with their living presence. The true nature of any one or any thing gave him great delight, contrasting with a world of pretense and imposturous superficiality.

He discovered that the River Beas flowed not far from Lahore, easily accessible by train. It was a river he had never seen, so on the very next holiday he bought a ticket and boarded the train for Beas. When he stepped down from the train, he saw that it was a small quiet station. Seeking out the stationmaster, he was about to ask for directions to the riverside, when that gentleman smiled at him and said, 'Oh, you have come to have the darshan\* of the Mahatma?' Surprised, Kirpal asked, 'Does a Mahatma live here?' 'Oh yes indeed,' replied the stationmaster, 'beside the river lives a great Saint.' 'That is really fortunate for me,' said Kirpal, 'for in one day I will have two pleasures – I will see the river and also have a glimpse of a Saint.'

Walking alongside the river he realized it was truly a

\* Respectful term for a glimpse of someone. A glance from a Saint has high spiritual value.

beautiful spot and he sat for a while, simply enjoying his surroundings. His joy was short-lived however and the peace that usually filled his being when he communed with nature eluded him. There was something inexplicable tugging at his heart.

Suddenly he remembered the Mahatma! What if at last he had come to the end? Was this to be the great day? He had a strange feeling. Unable to sit there any longer, he jumped up and hurried along the bank. After walking some distance, he came to a group of small houses with people quietly working or just sitting around. Were they in meditation? He asked one man if there was any Mahatma living there, and he pointed to a two-storied building nearby. His heart beating uncomfortably, Kirpal paced the distance with impatient but somewhat unsteady steps. Was this to be the True One? He hardly dared to believe it was possible. A man was sitting at the entrance, as if on guard. Kirpal inquired if the Master was in, and could he see Him? The man told him, 'Hazur is taking His meal, so if you want His darshan you will have to wait.'

Wait? Had he not waited an eternity already? What were a few more minutes compared to the agony of his long search? He stood a little apart, glancing now and then at the door. As he waited, a physical exhaustion spread through his body and a strange calmness overtook him. He had no idea how long he had been standing there when the door opened and out came . . . Kirpal looked and looked . . . He stood, almost stunned, for there before him was the physical form of the very One who had been appearing within him for seven years!

Kirpal gazed at Sawan – his vision, his companion of seven long years. He had always thought that this gracious Protector was Guru Nanak, the great Master Whom the Sikh

followers considered to be the Father of their religion. Kirpal's pen had flowed with eloquent verses of His beauty, His grace, the enchanted glory that surrounded Him and His wondrous eyes so full of love. Now, here was no figure from the past, but a living form on earth. Now, as he looked upon that earthly form of Sawan, his eyes beheld beauty and glory many times greater than his inner visions; gazing into Sawan's eyes, he found the depth of a love that knew no bounds. There was no denying that love swelled in his own heart for the physical expression of his Master – exceeding all he had ever known before. No other emotion stirred his being.

Finally he said, 'Why did You take so long to bring me to Your feet?' Baba Sawan replied, 'This was the most opportune time for the physical meeting.' The sage with the flowing white beard smiled at Kirpal and looked into his eyes. Time stood still for Kirpal as they gazed at each other, bonded in a love that was of God alone.

When his consciousness returned to earthly awareness, Kirpal knew without a shadow of a doubt that the quest for his True Master was ended. There was no question of testing competency. The personage standing before him was the living proof, and the answer to all his prayers. The Master's words, 'This was the most opportune time for the physical meeting,' reverberated through his whole being, cooling the years of burning desire and separation, intoxicating him with a delicious, uplifting joy. The day was Basant Panchmi, the first day of spring, that same festive day that Kirpal had met Sawan within, in 1917.

He became aware of a bustling of activity around him. As a loving father receiving the long-awaited son, Sawan was instructing people to care for Kirpal's comfort; to prepare a room for him and to take care of his needs. Embarrassed,

he protested, saying that he was a man of very simple habits who needed no special treatment. But Sawan simply smiled and turned his love-filled eyes upon Kirpal's, and Kirpal knew this was all merely an outer extension of the deep inner love that Hazur had for him.

As Kirpal explained later: 'Hazur took so much trouble for my comfort during those two days I stayed at the Dera\*, it really humbled me. So many sevadars\*\* were sent to attend to all my needs and He Himself went to see the room they had prepared, to ensure everything had been done according to His wishes. Then He Himself took me around the Dera, showing me all that had been accomplished and describing plans for the future.'

Kirpal had come to Beas to see the river and in one magnificent day he had found his Master, had been welcomed as a loved and long-awaited son for whom not enough could be done. Kirpal's happiness was immeasurable and indescribable. Surely, his cup of joy was running over. The year was 1924.

Kirpal remembered his pact with Jodh Singh and sent his brother a telegram: 'Have seen a personality walking in all humility of Guru Nanak but wait until you hear from me again.' During his stay at Beas his whole attention was for Hazur, but a few days later he sent another telegram: 'Guru has been found. You also should come.'

The following Sunday had been allocated for initiation, and those desiring to be connected to the Holy Naam\*\*\* - the Light and the Sound Principle, the God-into-expression Power - were gathered in the huge hall of the Dera at Beas. However, before starting the initiation procedure, Hazur

\* Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, Beas. (Dera means dwelling – usually religious)

\*\* Literally, those who serve. In the Master's cause, they were selected volunteers.

\*\*\* The word Naam translates to Name. It is termed in the Bible as "the Word".

called Kirpal into His own room, told him to sit there until He returned and went on to the hall to attend to the large number of aspirants assembled there. Kirpal meanwhile, waited in the room and wondered if indeed he was to be one of the fortunate that day to receive initiation.

When Hazur had completed the first segment of initiation and settled the seekers in meditation, He returned to His room. Kirpal rose and approached Him: 'Master, may I receive initiation?' Hazur smiled, 'Oh yes, surely!' So Kirpal did get the precious boon that day from his beloved Guru, right there in Hazur's bedroom, and the sorrow and the pangs of separation fell away into nothing.

As Baba Sawan gave the final instructions and words of advice to the new initiates, He told them they must devote a minimum of two and one half hours daily to meditation – it was essential to their progress. But later, to Kirpal He said, 'Your minimum time for meditation must be six hours; plus whatever extra time you can give.' This clearly indicated Sawan's wish for Kirpal to complete the course with all expediency.

Kirpal said, 'After getting that which I had desired all my life, I went back to work in Lahore. The next Sunday, when I arrived at the Dera for darshan, Sawan's love again enfolded me, like a cocoon, and once again all preparations for my comfort began. Deeply embarrassed, as I bowed to Hazur I prayed to Him silently that all the trouble for my well-being was not necessary – for merely a poor servant of the Lord. In immediate response to my prayerful thoughts, Hazur smiled at me and said "Alright, in future you will have to look after everyone's needs." From that day on, Kirpal was given special work at the Dera and his true life's work began to unfold.

At that time, two or three separate Satsang\* meetings were held in Lahore, each organized by a different person. The meetings should have been conducted with love and humility but were increasingly being undermined with feelings of jealousy, criticism and ego which were spreading a negative atmosphere like a huge "black blanket" over the sangat\*\*, creating disorder and dissatisfaction.

Within a few years, this situation reached deplorable proportions, with dissension and bitterness rife among the followers. They consequently grew farther and farther apart, and this was the very antithesis of all Baba Sawan's hopes for the Satsang. He called Kirpal and gave him the task of resolving the sad state of affairs. He told Kirpal that a few had been given the privilege of working for the Satsang but pride had entered their hearts and this was cutting the very roots of the sangat. His eyes were full of sorrow as they gazed into Kirpal's and He told him to go start a Satsang wherein the love of God would enfold and bind every soul as one.

Throughout the history of Sant Mat\*\*\* or Surat Shabd Yoga\*\*\*\*, the Great Masters have extolled the value of service and sacrifice: to serve someone or some cause without motive or presumption of reward. To serve the Satsang in any way is considered to be a rare privilege, second only to serving the person of the Master, and those who are given such a privilege by the Master Himself are the envy of the not so fortunate. While such service must be selfless and without thought of reward, yet the rewards are great indeed. To be given a valuable opportunity and then waste it with ego and animosity is undoubtedly the highest degree of folly

\* Literally, company of the Truth.

\*\* The people attending the Satsang.

\*\*\* Path or teachings of the Masters.

\*\*\*\* Union of self, or soul, with the Sound Principle.

and incurs a different kind of recompense, under the law of action and reaction.

So Kirpal formed a central Satsang in Lahore and people were encouraged to attend. The first meeting, however, had but a single man as audience, but Kirpal's two-hour talk vibrated with such force and power that the recipient of his full attention went home satiated to overflowing with an abundance of love and truth. As weeks went by, the attendance gradually increased into large numbers. To hear just one of Kirpal's talks and enjoy the pulses of love that filled the atmosphere was enough to banish all inclination to attend the other meetings, which offered nothing but dis-harmony. Very soon, Kirpal's Satsang was the only one with good attendance. People came from miles around, many of them covering the distance on foot. As a result, the leaders of the old meetings befriended each other, joining together with a common grievance – their feelings toward Kirpal. Whereas before they had been at loggerheads, they were now bonded together by jealousy and resentment.

Bolstering each other's anger, they engineered a propaganda campaign against Kirpal, attempting to smear his name and blacken his reputation. This slander actually continued for a number of years, but it succeeded only in branding the perpetrators liars. The propagandists revealed themselves in strong contrast to Kirpal's graciousness, thereby reinforcing people's faith in his sincere dedication to the work entrusted him by his Master.

The commands of Hazur were supreme – above all else – to Kirpal. Sawan's order of six hours minimum meditation daily, or more whenever possible, compared to one tenth of a day minimum for others, led Kirpal to plan his time carefully. His day began at three a.m. with meditation until nine

a.m. He asked his wife not to disturb him for early morning breakfast, requesting her to leave a "brunch" tray outside the door of his meditation room. At nine a.m. he would take a bath, eat his food and then cycle to work, arriving at the office at ten a.m. With work completed at six p.m. he would leave the office and, following his usual habit, he would take up his "extracurricular" activities that had become part of his ever-broadening daily life. On Satsang days he proceeded straight to the place of Satsang, but other evenings would find him at the hospitals, helping the poor and needy in whatever capacity he could serve them.

On returning home he would spend time with Krishna Vanti, discussing household and family affairs, after which he would retire to his quiet room for three or four hours of meditation. Once again his wife, acquiescing to his preferred routine, would leave his supper tray outside the door. After meditation and food, what was left of the night was for sleeping – frequently but an hour or two. If any particular occurrence delayed his normal program, Kirpal would forgo sleep altogether, in order to complete maximum meditation time.

The words, 'I do not sleep, my body sleeps', spoken by Kirpal on many occasions, clearly reveal how Masters can constantly maintain such tightly-filled daily routines. Their meditation is true meditation, wherein the physical form is inert and at rest, while the soul is away and about its own affairs.

At times when he felt the need to meditate out of doors in the open air, as the town slept Kirpal would ride his bicycle down to the banks of the River Ravi and meditate by its flowing waters until sunrise. Regardless of the busy daily schedule, the generous allotment of his time with the sick, and any personal physical weariness he may have

felt sometimes, his daily input of meditation was from nine to twelve hours, regularly. It almost seemed as if Kirpal's day was longer than twenty-four hours – so much did he achieve and so much spiritual ground did he cover. If such a thing as a "crash course" in spirituality were ever possible, Kirpal's routine presented an ideal scenario.

As concentrated as this routine may seem, Kirpal's work at the office never suffered. He maintained a splendid record of conscientiousness and never missed a day's attendance. Many times he refrained from taking his vacation, due to some urgent work requiring completion or some additional work from another officer who had pleaded for time to attend an urgent personal matter. Throughout his life he always gave more than one hundred percent in any of his undertakings.

Dedication to daily duties – vocational, familial and philanthropic – precluded, therefore, any opportunity for day-time meditation. Of necessity, his long and fruitful periods of meditation were achieved during the nights when, duties temporarily suspended, he was free to enjoy his devotions while the world slept.

Kirpal always urged the seekers to nourish the soul before the body. He did not advocate leaving hearth and home to retreat to lonely places, except for short periods. Instead he said: 'Thieves work at night; an intellectual can become a genius by utilizing the peaceful night hours for study; and a wrestler develops his physical strength during the nights.' So: 'Make a jungle\* of the night; forget all worldly woes and connect your attention to the Lord, spending the nights in His remembrance.' And: 'Those who make something of their nights will achieve their goal, but those who waste their nights will lose the precious hours in the human form.'

\* In other words, a lonely place cut off from the world.

The example of the successful wrestler concentrating his attention to develop physical strength was prompted by Kirpal's own experience in observing a wrestler in training. When meditating at night beside the River Ravi, he would regularly see a man doing his physical training nearby. This same man eventually made a big name for himself in the wrestling world. It was strange that two people who achieved success in two very different fields of expression spent many nights together, sharing the peace and coolness of the riverside. One was to be a spiritual giant and the other became a champion wrestler of the Punjab by the name of Gunga – unbeatable throughout India.

Winter or summer, Gunga spent eight nightly hours in continuous exercise. Kirpal recounted many times that when Gunga wrestled, beating all his opponents, the onlookers became enraptured by his strength; they would not, however, have given a thought to the number of hours he had worked and trained in building up that strength that would make him a champion. When relating the story, Kirpal would tell: 'Gunga's panting while exercising could be heard from a considerable distance, all through the night.'

The police patrol included the riverside in their nightly rounds of the city, and one keen policeman became suspicious of Kirpal sitting motionless as a statue in the middle of the cold, dark night. Perhaps he thought him a thief up to some mischief, and asked Kirpal very sternly who he was and what he was doing. With the loving attitude that always reposed in Kirpal's heart, he told the policeman, 'I am sitting in remembrance of the Lord, awaiting His arrival. Come brother, you also join me.' The man felt his zealousness melt away and, drawn by love, he sat down beside Kirpal to enjoy the celestial song of the silence. Kirpal told this story along with the moral: 'If you want someone

to understand you and to win his sympathy, be truthful and sincere in all your dealings. If you put your love in too, then there is no question of your victory over the negative thoughts of others. I not only won the policeman's understanding but induced him to meditate too. Furthermore, I was able to meditate without disturbance.'

A disciple once asked what should be done when visitors drop in at meditation time. This is a difficult situation, for the visitor would indeed be hurt if told, on arrival, that they could not visit at that time. The advice was: 'Be humble and loving to the visitors; do your best to welcome any who come to your door and welcome them in God's name, for God Himself may have sent those souls to your door. After making them feel welcome, ask them to sit in meditation with you and not only will you benefit by enjoying your meditation, but you will help others on the Path. Also, you will see just how many sincere spiritual friends you have got.'

There are many instances to show how Kirpal completely won over people with love, or used his humane attitude to life to save or solve a situation.

## CHAPTER TEN

In a comparatively short time Kirpal was reaching the highest spiritual achievements. Some initiates of Baba Sawan began to see in their meditations not only their own Guru but Kirpal also, standing beside Sawan. Those who had never met Kirpal wondered who he was. Meanwhile, the spiritual “fragrance” that surrounded him became known far and wide. From home to home there was talk of his greatness. True light cannot be hidden – sooner or later its brilliance will be seen. People began to travel miles for a glimpse of him and those living locally often waited by the roadside for his darshan as he rode to the office on his bicycle. The Indian learns the value of a spiritual person's darshan very early, a lesson that remains with them all through life.

Kirpal's service to the Satsang steadily increased. Baba Sawan placed him in charge of other Satsang groups – not just in Lahore but in the nearby cities of Amritsar, Gujranwala\*, Wazirabad\*, Sialkot\*, Jhelum\*, Rawalpindi\*, Nowshera\* and some others. Hazur gave him other duties at the Dera, including drafts of certain correspondence – files that had been put aside by the secretaries for Sawan Himself to reply to – but Hazur would pass Kirpal's drafts without a glance,

\* Now in Pakistan.

knowing that when He read the final typewritten fair-copies, there would be nothing to change or correct. Kirpal was called regularly to Sawan's presence when serious problems occurred at the Dera, requiring resolution. If certain disciples were sick, in pain, in fear of the known or unknown, Baba Sawan sent them to Kirpal, telling them that his radiation would help them. This did not mean that Sawan could not or would not help them Himself. It was His way of showing the followers what kind of a being Kirpal was and, furthermore, it gave clear indication to whom Sawan would finally trust His spiritual work.

People began to see the God Power working in not one but two human poles and to realize that Sawan and Kirpal were one in spirit. As the disciples saw the reflection of Sawan in Kirpal and their love for him increased, the older ones in turn became his dearly loved elder brothers and sisters on the Path. The younger ones liked to call him "Bhapaji"\*. When he met any of the followers there was real pleasure in his greeting. He had an amazing perception in knowing who was absent from the Satsang and would go to the homes of the absentees to learn what had befallen them. If they were sick, he would himself bring the doctor and then go to buy the medicine. Those without anyone to help them received his attentive loving care. Whatever misfortune had befallen them, he was there, doing everything he could to relieve the problem.

The welfare of others always came first with Kirpal, having no regard for his own physical comfort and convenience, which he would sacrifice readily and unstintingly. He wore his clothes until they were threadbare. He ate very simple food in moderate quantity, just enough to sustain his body. The family budget was kept to a modest standard

\* Respectful term for an elder brother.

and whatever income was saved by being frugal went to provide for the needy and the unfortunate.

In all this, Kirpal tried to maintain a low profile, requesting those he helped not to mention his name to others. Human nature what it is, this was not altogether successful and to some degree the word filtered through. However, the full extent of his personal sacrifice and generosity, both physical and financial, was known only to a few.

In Rawalpindi at that time, there lived a very wealthy goldsmith by the name of Raja Ram, who was also a disciple of Baba Sawan. Both Raja Ram and his wife, Hardevi, were known for the love and devotion they held for their Guru. They could afford, and gave, very large donations amounting to thousands of rupees toward the cause of the Master. They financed and constructed a large Satsang hall in Rawalpindi, with a suite of beautifully furnished rooms above, for Hazur's use whenever He visited the town to hold a Satsang. They did everything possible for the comfort of the followers who came from a distance to attend the Satsang and have the darshan of the Master. Every action demonstrated devotion to their beloved Sawan Who was their whole world, indeed life itself. As a result, they enjoyed Sawan's love and earned the respect of other disciples.

Hardevi had a strong, lively, outgoing nature. In contrast, Raja Ram was quiet, mild and retiring. He was personally well-known throughout the city, as was his reputation for honesty in business. Traditionally, Indian gold jewelry has been an investment as well as a luxury and, naturally, careful prudence should be exercised when buying ornaments of gold and precious gems. Wise consumers have always been aware that some goldsmiths are not averse to mixing copper with the gold and selling it as twenty-two or

twenty-four carat quality.

However, Raja Ram stood by his merchandise. His name and his word were assurance of unadulterated quality – to be trusted alike by his wealthy and not-so-wealthy customers. Under such management his business prospered, and as his fortune grew so his donations to the Dera at Beas increased. He would laughingly say to his family, 'If I give one thousand rupees to the Satsang, the very next day I find the profits have yielded two thousand.' A convincing example of God returning the true devotee's gift in double measure.

Hardevi's devotion to Baba Sawan was so strong that the yearning in her heart for the Master would cause her to drop whatever she was doing and inform her husband that she was at once going to the Dera for Sawan's darshan. A loving and understanding husband, Raja Ram would often order the car for her and sometimes himself accompany her on the seven or eight-hour journey to Beas, the time depending on weather and traffic\*. On arrival, they were sometimes fortunate to see the Master in His personal quarters or in one of the reception rooms. If this was not possible, they would be happy and grateful to see Him from far, from the outer edge of a crowd of people; then start their long journey back to Rawalpindi.

Her love for Baba Sawan was more important than anything else in Hardevi's life. This love was reflected in everything she did – from housekeeping, to service in the sangat, to her meditation, done as often and as long as possible with all the depth of her devotion. It is not surprising she felt that her Guru loved her – maybe even a little more than other initiates; an honest mistake, and not the first to be made by an enthusiastic and sincere devotee of a True Master, so overwhelming is that special kind of love that Masters emanate

\* Travel by road was tedious, due to overcrowded highways.

to their children. Only by rising to a level of consciousness beyond the limits of the mind can the soul see through the illusion and perceive Reality as it truly is. Only then does realization dawn that the perfect Master's love is as universal as God's – that in fact there is no difference.

So it was a great shock to Hardevi to hear the name of a person being spoken in the same breath as that of her beloved Guru: spoken in such context furthermore, to suggest that the person was indeed spiritually advanced and a possible successor to Sawan. How could that be? But, she was told, the facts could not be ignored: the young man meditated the whole night, worked all day, distributed happiness and joy wherever he went, sacrificed his time and effort for the sick and the poor. In addition to all this, she was assured, it had been witnessed that disease disappeared at his touch.

Hardevi resolved to discover the truth for herself, but a whisper of a challenge stole into her heart and she was determined to first ensure that she could do more meditation than he. When Kirpal remembered this in later years He would say, 'Competition is good, when the goal to be reached is positive, not negative.'

It was a serious contest to Hardevi, who began increasing her meditation time whenever possible. A housewife's duties are interminable and include the needs of husband, children and many household-related tasks, the demands of which can command the entire day. However, Hardevi had the kind of determination that will win through.

She asked permission from her husband to use the attic of their house for meditation. He had no idea what was in her mind and readily agreed. With nothing more than a blanket she locked herself in the attic room. Hardevi had given instructions to a servant to place her meals outside the door and whenever she needed food she would open the

door and bring the food inside, replacing the used dishes outside the door when she had finished eating.

About a month of this routine had passed when the servant began to find the food lying at the attic door, untouched. Ten days went by and still no food had been eaten. Raja Ram became so worried that in desperation he broke down the door, and there was Hardevi sitting peacefully in deep meditation. On returning to her body she was heard to comment, 'Now I will meet this rare paragon, for now I can meditate as much as he.'

A few days after this had happened, Kirpal's six-year-old son fell seriously ill and the doctor gave no hope for his recovery. One evening, as the boy lay sick, Kirpal started to put on his coat and his wife asked him where he was going. He smiled at her and reminded her that it was the night for Satsang. 'But', said Krishna Vanti, 'the boy is sinking fast; is there no one else that can hold the Satsang?' Kirpal, with a kindly look, reminded her that it was a duty entrusted him by Hazur, that she should not be afraid, for the boy was being cared for by the only One who could help him. Kirpal then left to conduct the Satsang in a place ten miles away.

When, several days later, the boy died, Kirpal carried the small body on his bicycle to the cremation ground and performed the appropriate rites and customs with the same calm and detached manner he had for his other worldly duties. Death and other events that are called tragedies are common in human lives, but the effects of such occurrences upon an individual can be the means of distinguishing the extraordinary person from the ordinary. Many people knew how much Kirpal had loved his son and, with awe and respect, they observed his quiet acceptance of his loss.

Word of the child's death spread around. It is customary

for relatives and acquaintances to call and commiserate with the family, so when Raja Ram heard the news he decided that they should visit Kirpal and offer their condolences and help. It was an opportunity – not only to follow traditional observances, but a chance to meet this remarkable personality whose growing reputation was sparking an intrigued curiosity in their deeply religious hearts. Raja Ram was as keen to meet Kirpal as was his wife. After all, to have been initiated but one year and already to have gained the respect of the entire sangat! At that moment in time, Raja Ram and Hardevi had no knowledge of Kirpal's spiritual background, which was considerably more than one year! And so, filled with an eager sense of anticipation, the retiring, somewhat shy Raja Ram who was usually reluctant to meet people, set out with his wife Hardevi for that first meeting with Kirpal.

Approaching the house, they saw a large crowd of people filtering in and out of the house in twos and threes. Raja Ram stopped in his tracks, hesitating to move forward, but suddenly he was aware of two piercing eyes gazing into his own, and a spontaneous urge to bow to this white-clad figure overtook him. As he started to bend, strong hands took hold of his in a warm clasp and Kirpal, smiling with real pleasure, welcomed both him and Hardevi and took them inside.

With some amazement, they glanced around the interior of Kirpal's home, which was not only unluxurious but simple to the point of being austere. There was no furniture except a wooden dais and a few cane stools; no carpets and no drapes at the windows. It was a different ambiance for the affluent Raja Rams, and the absence of material things seemed to enhance the magnitude yet the humbleness of Kirpal's presence. He asked them to have a cup of tea and,

as she looked up, Hardevi saw his eyes twinkling at her as if amused by some inner thought. Recalling her words and actions of the recent past, she felt abashed and embarrassed and it was left to Raja Ram to express their feelings of sympathy. He spoke with sincerity as he remembered the suffering he had endured at the loss of his own son. 'It must be very hard for you to bear this loss,' he said.

Kirpal looked at him thoughtfully. 'Sadness? The spirit of my son had come to the world to pay and receive payment of karmic actions and he left when all were cleared. This world is such that whoever comes has to go, so tell me, for whom should I weep and for whom should I rejoice?'

Raja Ram never forgot this first meeting, or Kirpal's profound words. For the rest of his life he regarded Kirpal as a great spiritual being and became his ardent admirer. As for Hardevi, she promptly forgot all her competitive intentions. As years went by, Raja Ram's love for Kirpal grew until it was second only to his love for Baba Sawan and, between the three, there developed a beautiful bond of friendship.

Hardevi was as impressed with Kirpal as was her husband but, possessing a very critical eye, she keenly observed the effect Kirpal had on people and their reaction when they heard him speak. Unsure of what to make of this, she worried about it and finally decided to consult a close friend, a lawyer who was also a devoted brother on the Path, by the name of Narmat Rai. After seriously discussing the subject at some length, they agreed to the only solution – to take their concerns to Baba Sawan Singh.

At Beas they related to Sawan everything they had witnessed in the Satsangs held by Kirpal. 'Hazur, we felt a strong surge of power whenever and wherever Kirpal spoke, strong enough to sway crowds of people, whom we fear

have begun worshipping him as they do You. There seems to be a danger of their attention being drawn away from You and transferred to Kirpal Singh.'

With a thoughtful expression, Baba Sawan leaned back and looked into space. A glow of joy spread over His face and after some moments He said, 'What kind of Satsang is that in which there is no attraction, no pulling of the souls together, blending them all into one? In regard to their attention, one who is united in a oneness with his Guru will only unite you more, rather than break you from the Guru.'

Hardevi then spoke of two or three initiates who had left the Satsang and had promptly proclaimed themselves gurus, in particular one Pritam Das who, by propaganda alone, had already lured away a number of followers, cheating them of the blessing of sitting at Baba Sawan's feet and advancing their true spiritual progress.

Baba Sawan was serious as He replied to this. 'There is a vast difference between the lectures of these people and Kirpal Singh's Satsang. They are trying to collect followers for themselves whereas Kirpal is joining, and will join, all true seekers after truth to God.' It was an answer to reassure and silence the worried minds of Hardevi and her friend.

It was now Raja Ram's turn to approach Baba Sawan with something on his mind. 'Hazur, what is the meaning of this sudden and powerful attraction I have developed for Kirpal? He has become very dear to me.'

There was a kind expression in Hazur's eyes as He looked at Raja Ram and said, 'Define this attraction for me; how dear is he to you?'

Raja Ram bowed low before his Guru and with all his love tried to explain his feelings as truthfully as he could. 'You, my beloved Hazur, are the all-pervading Power that we call God, I know this. And I believe in Kirpal as being

next to You.'

Sawan smiled and said, 'In the days of Baba Jaimal Singh Ji, many of my brother disciples had that same sentiment for me, and started having love for me like that.'

Raja Ram's eyes opened wide with awe at hearing from his Master's own lips the confirmation of that which he had himself felt in his own heart. 'But that means that Kirpal is one of the rare souls of the highest order.'

Baba Sawan Singh sat up very straight in His chair and with strong emphasis said in Persian, '*DERI CHE SHUK?*' – which means in English, 'Is there any doubt about it?'

So that was the good fortune of Raja Ram and his wife, Hardevi, who were told personally and without a shade of doubt just what kind of human being was Kirpal. Their complete faith in Sawan stood them in good stead and the faith they had in Kirpal never wavered through all the years to come.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

Even the most junior student on the spiritual path knows that wherever the Positive Power\* is working in full force, the Negative Power casts a strong net of illusion in an attempt to trap the struggling souls and impede their spiritual growth.

Kirpal was swiftly becoming the centre of love and devotion for the young and old alike, especially in the areas of the regular Satsangs that he conducted. As Baba Sawan had explained, the more they loved Kirpal, the more they became devoted to Sawan and greater was the change working in their lives. However, as long as the soul has not progressed beyond the dictates of the mind, it is still subject to negative influences.

As Kirpal's innate divine nature became more apparent, to the benefit and joy of those attending his Satsangs, this very fact struck an insidious envy in the hearts of a few certain individuals who were nurturing wild dreams of themselves as successors to Sawan. This dangerous spark of jealousy set off a fire that not only consumed the instigators but many

\* In the teachings of Sant Mat, the Positive Power controls and enlivens all Creation, and is pure love; whereas the Negative Power has been given the responsibility of maintaining the laws working in Creation below the purely spiritual planes – meting out rewards and punishments and restricting souls to that domain.

others who fell prey to the flames by following blindly.

True Masters always warn their children of the dangers lurking to trap the mind and ego, and advise them to develop humility on the spiritual path, having gratitude in their hearts for whatever God in the Master gives. To be wholly and solely devoted to one Guru, no matter what happens, is a great blessing from God Himself and protects the soul from all pitfalls.

From the moment of that eventful physical meeting with Sawan, the next twenty-four years were years of fulfillment for Kirpal. They were also years of unspeakable joy and poignant sorrow. With the hidden veil torn asunder, the Truth was revealed to him and he knew his destiny. The more he dipped into that treasure of Truth, the more realization he gained and the more humble he became.

He had always lived life by the precept of love; always sharing his abundance of that pure virtue with others. Now, he steadily and surely grew into an embodiment of that: a perfect example of purity, honesty and goodness – a pillar of strength that the weak and unfortunate could lean on, learn to banish their fears and gain the will to turn their lives around. His selfless service to others was a pattern for thousands of Sawan's initiates to follow.

From initiation onward, it was clear that Kirpal's light was not to be hidden "under a bushel"; it would not lose its brilliance in the sloth of the world. The destiny of that light was to shine forth – to dispel the darkness that was swallowing up the seeking souls.

His background was already there in place, slowly revealing its effects on his surrounding environment from childhood onward. The approach of manhood gave opportunity to shape his lifestyle and choose which priorities would engage the greater part of his time. When the day

came for initiation on the Holy Path, a foundation had already been laid in preparation for the magnificent edifice to be constructed.

Kirpal's inner progress therefore was rapid – so rapid that he soon gained full control of all his faculties: physical, mental and spiritual. The doors in the inner realms were open to him and he could rise above at will to any plane of existence, including the highest. This complete control over himself gave him transcendence over the blissful deep samadhi of his childhood and youth that had brought him profound contentment and occasional visions of the higher souls. His happiness overflowed in the blessing of inner companionship and the outer presence of his beloved Hazur. It was not surprising that people considered him very special.

However, Kirpal's family and a few close friends, including people from his home town who had known him from childhood, were curious about his devotion to Sawan. How could he, a born mahatma who for years could find no guru to satisfy his critical pursuit, surrender his entire spiritual future to one individual, of whom they knew very little?

He was questioned frequently on this subject. To the recurring question, 'How great is your Guru?' the same reply was given: 'His greatness can never be described in words, but I can tell you that He is all and more than I want. He has satisfied me beyond my expectation. How can a student at the bottom of the class know the extent of his teacher's knowledge? So I cannot tell you how great He is, but this I will say – do not delay, but go to Him at once!' One by one, they took his advice and went to Baba Sawan for initiation.

It is written and spoken of by all great Masters that not only the followers of a True Master gain His protection and

grace, but even relatives and friends who have love for the follower, or vice versa, receive a measure of that same grace.

That very concession was extended to a cousin of Kirpal, named Ram Labhai, who lived in a village in the District of Rawalpindi. She fell seriously ill and, convinced she was not to live through the sickness, she begged her family to send for Kirpal. Receiving their telegram, Kirpal caught the next train. His thoughts were on his cousin throughout the journey as he closed his eyes and meditated. Meanwhile, in the village, Ram Labhai was sinking fast and the family feared the worst.

Suddenly she opened her eyes and exclaimed, 'Bhapaji has come!' The younger relatives of Kirpal always addressed him as Bhapaji or brother. 'But' she added, 'Who is the older gentleman with him?'

Those around her were unable to see the two figures and presumed she was delirious. They tried to pacify her but she was adamant that Bhapaji was there, with an elderly man. After a short time she said that they both were leaving. From that moment, she started to recover.

When Kirpal arrived the next morning, she could not wait to ask him, 'Tell me Bhapaji, did you not come to see me yesterday?' He replied, 'Yes, I did.' 'Then why did you leave so soon and who was the beautiful gentleman with you?' she asked.

Kirpal told her that one day he would take her to see the beautiful person, but would she be able to recognize Him? 'Why not?' she promptly replied, 'I saw Him just as I am seeing you now.'

Two months later, Baba Sawan visited Rawalpindi and Kirpal took Ram Labhai to have His darshan. As soon as she saw Sawan she said, 'Why, He is the same man who came

with you when I was ill!'

Kirpal explained to her that she had seen neither Baba Sawan nor himself physically but, that Power working throughout creation had come in those forms. Furthermore, that as Baba Sawan was one with God, then so it was really God who had come to her.

Confused, Ram Labhai entreated Kirpal, 'Please Bhapaji, make it easier for me because I do want to understand, but it seems you are contradicting yourself when you say, "It was not Him" then, "It was actually Him." Please, I beg of you, explain so that I can understand.'

'Alright, Ram Labhai, listen to what I am about to say, and listen carefully,' said Kirpal.

'A man is not merely what is seen by the naked eye – that is just a perishable abode for the real life. You think that you are seeing me? No! That is an illusion. What is truly me is not this body made of matter. I am the Life; I am the Truth; I am that which is known as God. Forgive me, I do not mean me by saying I. That is just speaking figuratively. You see we are the Truth, but unfortunately we have forgotten it. How? Through habit. We do know who we are but when we came to this world we were given the human form to live in, so that with the help of it we could have the realization of our true selves. However, through the constant nearness of the body we became, or so we thought, the body itself. Once that happened, even the illusionary world appeared to be very real to us.'

'Now,' Kirpal smiled at Ram Labhai and continued, 'the only way out of the illusion is to step out of the human form and see all this play in its true perspective. Only then will you really understand what I meant when I said that it was not Hazur, but yet it was Him. The body is not He. Sowhat you saw today was not that which you saw before. Both in

a way are illusion – the grosser body being the greater illusion, while the form which visited you was also an illusion for in truth He is something quite different from either. He is something which cannot be seen and cannot be described. Even a soul which has learned something about illusion and reality, and has developed to a certain extent, has gained tremendous powers and can even create and destroy anything he likes. But a soul that has become one with the Truth is beyond, and greater than, any power you can imagine. And this great God Power is today working on this planet through the physical form named Sawan Singh. This Power came to you to bless you, in the reflection of Sawan's physical form; otherwise you would not have been able to comprehend what was happening. We have become so bereft of awareness that God must come to our level before we can understand His message fully. So do you now understand all this?'

Ram Labhai's heart overflowed with joy and gratitude. She asked Kirpal if she also could have the knowledge that would open her eyes to the Truth. Later, she got her wish when Baba Sawan initiated her on the Holy Path.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

The Dera Baba Jaimal Singh had a gurudwara\* within its confines in which daily prayers and readings were offered. Kirpal had been a zealous reader of all scriptures from childhood, and the Guru Granth Sahib was certainly one of his main sources of study.

He was reading the words of the past Masters in this great book one day when he paused, thoughtfully, and reflected on his reading. Shortly, he rose, went over to Hazur's residence and requested an audience with his Master. Baba Sawan graciously granted his wish and he was soon sitting at Hazur's feet. He placed his idea before Sawan: to collect all the fundamental phrases and references which clearly expressed the principle of Naam from the various holy scriptures available and make them into a single book. Baba Sawan was extremely pleased with the concept. He gave Kirpal permission to start and told him to enlist any help he needed in the form of volunteers, to search out the desired excerpts. From this collection Kirpal could then select those he chose to use. Kirpal gratefully thanked Hazur for this offer and lost no time in organizing the work. A few people came forward to help and this was the beginning of Kirpal's magnum opus - the "Gurmat Sidhant"\*\*

\* Sikh temple.

\*\* Wisdom of the Masters.

– comprising a comprehensive collection of quotes from the scriptures of the past great Masters from every religion, who had spoken of – and instructed their followers in – the Holy Path of Naam, with detailed commentary and elucidation by Kirpal.

It was no small feat. The Masters of the past had lived and spoken in a wide range of locations and languages. They frequently used, verbally or literarily, the local idiom, often with added personal idiosyncrasies. Laymen are ill-equipped for understanding or correctly interpreting much of the type of material Kirpal was collecting, but Kirpal was no layman. The work required a Master of Spirituality, or a disciple of one, who was adept in all aspects of the Holy Path – in a word, a Gurumukh\*. Who better than Kirpal? In years to come, in His Satsangs, Kirpal would stress the fact that only a Master can interpret and explain another Master's words.

The pressing question was how to squeeze the stupendous task into Kirpal's already bulging schedule? Most of his meditation time – the hours he had promised Sawan – had been allotted to the nights, when everyone else was sleeping and there were none of the daytime exigencies. Kirpal's new literary endeavor, now wholeheartedly approved by Sawan, could only be allocated to the night also, for his days were already overflowing with activity.

A large portion of his time was spent attending to people who flocked to him for various reasons: help, advice, spiritual guidance, to name a few. Some even approached him at his office, pleading for their sick ones; begging him to come and bless their homes; tearfully bewailing their lack of progress on the Path; seeking help in finding a job, to keep starvation from the door; or just wanting his darshan.

\* Mouthpiece of the Guru.

He did his best to keep up with attending the sick, going to their homes, ministering with the deep compassion that was ever ready in his heart. Many remarkable recoveries occurred, some of which were inexplicable and were termed miraculous. As the news of such cases spread around, the numbers of suppliants pleading for the sick tended to increase. When Kirpal reached home at night, usually another group was waiting to petition his help. He rigidly followed Sawan's advice to feed the soul before the body, and therefore was sometimes left with no time to eat, facing his night schedule on an empty stomach.

Krishna Vanti was a bewildered and unhappy woman. She rarely knew when to expect her husband to reach home, so what time was mealtime? The more Kirpal's inner Light shone, the more he became detached from worldly things, attending to necessities only when it came to the home and family. In the hot Indian summertime, Krishna Vanti pleaded for an electric fan and for a heater in winter when the cool air of evening and early morning can penetrate to the bone. 'Why can we not have just one fan and one heater' she begged, 'when your subordinates, who draw much less salary, can afford fans and heaters in every room of their homes?' Kirpal's reply was always the same – that she should think of those who have no food to eat. 'Men who have no dependents, no obligations, can afford to have fires and fans but I have many to look after and can afford no such luxuries.' In Kirpal's priorities, the sick and needy came before material comforts. His own clothes were used until they became worn and patchy-looking.

It was the Indian practice that a devoted wife would take no food, not even a tiny taste, until her husband had been served. Krishna Vanti took pleasure in this small token of her respect for Kirpal. She was one day observing Kirpal

eating his food with apparent relish, content in the knowledge that he was enjoying the meal she had cooked. She was unprepared as she took the first bite from her own plate and the realization hit her that Kirpal's attention was not on the food when he ate, but was somewhere else. It was obvious he was not conscious of what he was eating, for she had forgotten to add salt to the food. This would make a difference to any cuisine, but Indian food without salt is a total disaster! After this, Krishna Vanti always remembered to taste the dishes before serving them to Kirpal. The incident reaffirmed her conviction that living with a Saint was not easy!

Krishna Vanti watched with anxiety as Kirpal's nightly rest steadily diminished. Finally, she could stand the situation no longer and confided in Hardevi, who knew immediately that something must be done and made a special trip to Beas. She told Sawan that Kirpal was being overworked and overwhelmed by admirers and appellants, to whom he was generously giving all his time with rarely an opportunity to have his meals in peace.

The outcome was that Sawan ordered him to refrain from visiting any home, regardless of any plea whatsoever. This relief alone enabled Kirpal to maintain his meditation routine and also devote some time to the work on Gurmat Sidhant. Obeying Sawan's order, he refused requests to visit homes, including those who begged and pleaded on behalf of a sick or dying loved one. The latter were the most distressing for him, as the tears and piteous cries went straight to his heart.

One case gave him great pain – a friend on a death-bed, who sent a message to say that he did not want to take his last breath without seeing Kirpal. Sadly, Kirpal knew that

there could be no exceptions to Hazur's orders.

The heart of a true Saint can suffer over the misery of others to an extent that is beyond understanding or even the imagination. It has already been shown that from a very young age, Kirpal had a capacity for true compassion for all forms of life – the kind of compassion of which only an enlightened soul is capable. This period was one of great suffering for him and he endured more than the very people he had to deny, as he humbly asked their forgiveness and explained that he was bound by Hazur's orders.

When they realized they could not deflect Kirpal from his resolution, the people began to plead with Sawan to at least allow him to visit the dying. It is said that after many such appeals, Sawan became silent, as if in deep thought. Then very seriously He said, 'Alright, I will give my permission for Kirpal to visit those on their death-bed, if they desire to see him, but you must call him only on the last wish of a dying person.'

Of course, very few of the sick were at the dying stage and a number of them, more anxious to have Kirpal's darshan than they were to follow their Guru's orders, sent for him to come to their "death-bed". Ironically, all those that Kirpal was called to did die, with great shock to their relatives who were well aware of the extent of their sickness. In this regard, people's attitude changed from one of mischief to one of caution; some were even fearful of mentioning their sick loved ones in Kirpal's presence, lest something untoward should befall them.

Around this same time frame, Sawan had ordered Kirpal to initiate, in Sawan's own presence, about two hundred and fifty people at a "monthly" Satsang\*. The significance

\* Once a month, Sawan gave initiation at a weekend Satsang in the Dera.

of this was very clear to everyone, for why would Sawan do that when He Himself was present?\* The whole sangat was shocked, for Sawan's decision was significant. Those who loved Kirpal were happy – for that which they suspected in their hearts was being openly and publicly confirmed by Baba Sawan Himself. But the group of individuals who were dissatisfied with their own lot – always envious of Kirpal and hankering after the Mastership themselves – they were not at all happy . . . they saw clearly that the prize they had been so jealously coveting would be given to someone else: i.e. Kirpal.

The Negative Power, in its ever-consuming efforts to thwart the Positive Power, as was its wont, would never allow the advent of so positively powerful a being as Kirpal to become such a threat to its own sovereignty, without attempting to block his path of progress.

Realization of the lost successorship, together with knowledge of the enormous popularity of Kirpal and people's demand for his attention, served to inflame the mounting unrest in the jealous few, burning away any sense of probity they might have had. This was access enough for the Negative Power to work its influence. They started a vicious smear campaign against Kirpal in an attempt to discredit him in the eyes of Hazur and the people at large.

First, they disseminated rumors about him, using hired help to ensure the poison spread as far and as fast as possible. All over the country, this propaganda was efficiently organized. Letters addressed to Sawan flooded into the

\* Years later, Kirpal deputized group leaders in other countries to read initiation instructions to accepted applicants, but not in India, and never in His own presence. He always carefully explained that it was not the group leaders who were initiating, but the Master Power.

Dera from all points of the compass containing malevolent, erroneous statements about Kirpal.

This was followed up by the second part of their plan. They told Baba Sawan that Kirpal, the one praised and admired above all others, was disgracing the name of the Master with his actions. Naturally, Sawan demanded to know how Kirpal had misbehaved. They then produced their pre-devised witnesses who swore they had seen Kirpal alone with women.

In His wisdom, Sawan did not dispute this or say a single word in Kirpal's defence, knowing that whatever He said would not subdue their minds or their intent.

Place a barrier against a fast-flowing stream and the water will beat against it with force, causing more froth, noise and disturbance. Masters sometimes allow human controversies to continue on their course, often assuming an apparent indifference and yet controlling the situation in their own way, to correct any undesirable cause or effect.

Sawan looked at them, His eyes filled with sorrow, and told them that as they were responsible people (some were holding positions of worldly esteem), He would do what they desired in their hearts.

But when Krishna Vanti, having been enticed and goaded, also stood before Sawan and witnessed against her husband, He showed such anger that the poor lady began to tremble. When He spoke, it was in no uncertain tones. 'If I actually saw with my own eyes, Kirpal with women, naked and doing deeds not worth mentioning, I would even then say, as I do now, that there is no purer being in this whole world than Kirpal Singh.' He then gave Krishna Vanti an order: from that day on she was not to look upon Kirpal as a man or as her husband, for he was far above either of those roles, but that she should serve him as she would

serve Sawan Himself.

History shows us that very few relatives of a True Saint really accept Him as what He is, but rather regard Him in the worldly relationship alone as father, uncle, husband, etc.

Kirpal did not know what was wrong. No one had told him all that had happened in front of Hazur. At the Dera Satsang, Sawan had been inclined, on occasions, to tell Kirpal to sit beside Him and give a talk. Such moments were a joy for the gathering to behold, with Kirpal appearing to speak only to Sawan and Sawan gazing back at Kirpal, nodding agreement at his words. Many significant things were said and many unusual things revealed as the power emanating from the dais built up, all to the delight of the sangat.

Now, Sawan stopped this practice, and the zealots who were striving to bring about Kirpal's downfall prevented him from getting anywhere near Hazur. Only from far could he get a glimpse of his Beloved. And Hazur Himself remained silent on the matter.

Kirpal knew that something was very wrong and he put himself through a very rigorous introspection. Examining his every thought, word and deed over the recent past, weighing everything in his heart and mind to find some error there, he did not spare himself any leeway or excuse.

For all his soul-searching, he could find nothing he had done, consciously or unconsciously, to find such disfavor in his beloved Master's eyes. For eight or nine months this dreadful black cloud hung over his head, and the very thought of Hazur's disapprobation weighed down his heart with misery.

News of the slander being spread against him came to his ears in various ways, but he knew it was all lies and his conscience was clear. One might wonder, why did he not

use his ample powers to discover the reason for Hazur's distant attitude – which he could easily have done. Clearly, the situation was within that sphere of mystery that surrounds true Masters!

Many times in the future, Kirpal would describe to his followers how Masters do not use their powers for personal satisfaction, allowing any occurring situation to take its natural course. The Master's supereminent intelligence is used consciously only when necessary, notwithstanding that in the human pole, that Godhead is constantly at work. Then, and throughout his lifetime, Kirpal lived all aspects of life at the level of mankind.

While maintaining total faith in Hazur, he suffered the problem through. When he could bear the suspense no longer, he approached his brother, Jodh Singh. Sawan was in Dalhousie at the time, so he asked his brother that when he goes there, if the opportunity arises, would he ask Baba Sawan what Kirpal had done wrong, either knowingly or in ignorance, to incur the Master's displeasure.

When Jodh Singh returned, he related to Kirpal that Baba Sawan, surprisingly, had seemed pleased and had asked, 'Why did not Kirpal come himself? He has done nothing wrong, either knowingly or unknowingly. He is like an unshakeable pillar – so much water has flowed over his head to drown him, yet not a word from him himself to say that it is all untrue. Tell him to come and see me.' Jodh Singh ended the account by smiling at Kirpal and adding, 'You had better go and see Him.'

Those words from Sawan were like a sweet song in Kirpal's ears. With joy in his heart, light of step and free from the heavy burden, he went to the Dera, as Baba Sawan had returned to Beas. It was late when he arrived and all the doors were closed, but on his request for a private audience

with Sawan – from Kirpal a very rare request – it was immediately granted.

When he explained to Sawan why he had not come to Him with any complaint, knowing that Hazur was within him and knew everything that was going on, Baba Sawan became angry and would have at once disciplined the persons concerned, but Kirpal did not want that. To know that he had his Master's approval and pleasure was enough for him.

During the next day's Satsang talk, looking straight into Kirpal's eyes, Baba Sawan said, 'Those who are true to themselves have nothing to fear.'

In the evening gathering, Sawan called upon Kirpal to give a talk. Some of the trouble-makers were close by and protested at this, saying that they wanted to hear only Sawan, but Sawan refused them and insisted that Kirpal would speak.

So the whole situation was changed and all the efforts that had been made on such a grand scale to destroy Kirpal's immaculate character had failed. In Kirpal's words, 'The tables were turned!'

Although this was a very disturbing period for Kirpal, his new schedule gave him a rare luxury of more time to devote to his great work, the Gurmat Sidhant. This was a lengthy project and took many many hours to accomplish, but was eventually completed and published in two volumes.

At that time, Kirpal presented the first copy to Baba Sawan and Hazur showed it to the eighty thousand people gathered in the Dera for Satsang, lifting it high so that all could see. He told the people that this was the one book that mattered for all lovers of spirituality – that true seekers would

need to read no other book. He placed the two volumes reverently on His head saying, 'This is where it belongs.' It was an ancient Indian custom, and the highest tribute.

Kirpal had included in his masterpiece the essence of much of the holy scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib. He took the complicated, difficult phraseology of other eras and presented the comprehensive wisdom of past Masters in clear and straightforward language that even the simplest mind could understand. The two volumes comprised one thousand pages each.

Kirpal had put Sawan's name as author, instead of his own, but Sawan asked him to put something there, if only a nom-de-plume. Kirpal obeyed Hazur's request and used the name "Jamal"\*.

\* A Persian name, meaning Light.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Kirpal's life was filled with strange happenings and phenomena. Quite frequently he was at the same time seen to be in two places, miles from each other: e.g., Kirpal would be talking to people and eating food in one place, while officially known and seen to be present somewhere else. Raja Ram and Hardevi, who had become close friends of Kirpal, experienced one quite delightful occurrence.

It was Kirpal's routine to spend the weekend at the Dera in Beas, going on the Friday night train and returning to Lahore on Sunday night. On this particular trip, he decided to stay over in the Dera on Sunday night and return to Lahore on the Monday morning train.

When Raja Ram heard about this change in plan, considerate and loving friend that he was, he voiced concern to know where and how Kirpal would have his breakfast, for the morning train left very early and he knew that Kirpal would not go home first but would go straight to his office when he arrived in Lahore.

Kirpal laughed and brushed the question aside, in his usual way of dealing with anything concerning his own comfort. But Hardevi was not about to abandon the matter and cheerfully suggested, 'Well, we will bring the breakfast by car from our home [two stops before Lahore], get into

Kirpal's train and have breakfast with him. Then we will get out at the next stop and go home by the car, which will be brought by the driver.'

This arrangement was heartily approved by Raja Ram and as he and Hardevi left Beas by car on the Sunday, he reminded Kirpal, 'Remember, we will be seeing you on the train tomorrow morning for breakfast.'

Kirpal arrived very early at Beas train station on the Monday morning, only to discover that his train was running one hour late. Considering it a pity to just waste an hour, he sat down on a wooden bench at the end of the platform, closed his eyes and went into the blissful remembrance of his Guru. An hour passed, the train came and left, and Kirpal was still sitting on the bench, oblivious of everything but Sawan.

He continued his meditation until noon and then suddenly realized that not only had he missed the train but he had failed to report for duty at his office; and what was more, he had let down Raja Ram and his wife who had gone to a great deal of trouble to provide breakfast for him and he had not been on the train to meet them. He resolved to catch the next train to Rawalpindi, go straight to Raja Ram's house and apologize to them. From there, he would also telephone his office.

Raja Ram and Hardevi had risen very early that morning and Hardevi herself had prepared a delicious breakfast, packing it carefully for the journey. When the train arrived they sent their servant to find Kirpal's compartment and instructed the driver to take the car and meet them at the next station.

The servant ran through the compartments until he found Kirpal sitting quite relaxed and at ease. As Raja Ram approached, Kirpal quickly rose with a smile and protested

all the trouble they had taken on his behalf. A group of Sawan's disciples was also boarding the train and when they saw Kirpal they delightedly folded their hands to him, eager for his darshan.

As the train continued on its journey, Hardevi opened the basket and spread out the breakfast. Kirpal accepted the food she gave him, complimented her on the tasteful meal and thanked them both again for their kindness. Raja Ram's car was awaiting them at the next station and the friends bade a happy farewell, got in their car and drove home.

That afternoon, there was a knock at the door and Raja Ram himself went to open it. He was surprised to see Kirpal standing there. Kirpal at once began apologizing for missing the train and not meeting them for breakfast, explaining that he had caught the very next train to see them and hoped that he had not inconvenienced them to an unforgivable extent.

Dumbfounded, Raja Ram listened with a mystified expression on his face. When Kirpal paused eventually, he could only voice his puzzlement – was this some kind of joke being played? At this, it was Kirpal's turn to be mystified as he heard how Raja Ram, Hardevi and himself all had enjoyed breakfast together on the train, which could be confirmed by the disciples who had spoken to them. It was indeed mystifying, but at the end of Raja Ram's account, Kirpal smiled and remarked that He Who knows all, knows exactly what happened.

Quite at home among his friends, Kirpal asked if there was a room in which he could rest for a while and Raja Ram, perceptive as always, looked closely at Kirpal and said, 'That means you have not had any food since last night!' It was an enigma: *was this Kirpal, or was he the one on the train?*

After enjoying an excellent meal from Hardevi's kitchen,

Kirpal asked Raja Ram if he would kindly telephone his office and explain how he had been delayed by missing the train. Assured that his request would be met, Kirpal went to lie down in another room.

It is conceivable that poor Raja Ram's confusion increased when he talked with Kirpal's office and was told that they could not understand what he was talking about, for Kirpal Singh had come to the office as usual, had finished his work early and had left for home just five minutes before. Raja Ram hung up the phone and rushed to the room where Kirpal had been resting. Kirpal was there, resting peacefully with his eyes closed.

This was just one of the wonderful experiences Raja Ram and Hardevi enjoyed throughout their long association with Kirpal. All through the years they never lost faith in the knowledge that he was indeed a great soul.

There were innumerable incidents of a mystifying nature that served to increase the love and reverence people had in their hearts for Kirpal; a love touched also at times with a shiver of awe.

It is God's power that overawes the human mind, but that same power can be forgiving too. If a wrongdoer approached Kirpal with an honest confession, the rigid discipline that ruled Kirpal's life and the lives of those connected to him would melt and disappear. In place of that strictness, such a love would issue forth that the individual could not forget all through his life. Moments like this clearly showed that there was a rightness in his name, "The Merciful", for love and mercy were the very foundation of his character.

Stories about his mercy are legion. One favorite account is connected with Kirpal's wife, Krishna Vanti, who had her purse snatched by a thief one day. Unfortunately for

the thief, this was witnessed by an alert policeman, who promptly gave chase and caught the man red-handed, still clutching the purse. The policeman was delighted. The thief was known to him, for he had been trying to catch him in the act for some months. With the policeman as a direct witness, the arrest was completed and the man put in jail to await his trial. It was an unfortunate position for the thief, yet fortunate that the purse had belonged to Kirpal's wife.

The unenviable atmosphere of prison life must have encouraged him to give some thought to his actions, for the pilferer appeared to be sorry for himself and perhaps even remorseful as he faced the court some days later. Kirpal, attending the hearing on behalf of Krishna Vanti, looked into the eyes of the accused man and saw a piteous expression there. When the judge called on Kirpal to give evidence, Kirpal said, 'Yes, it was my wife's purse that this man stole but we forgive him and I do not want any proceedings taken against him.'

The prisoner was released. The man could hardly speak to express his gratitude, so overjoyed was he and unable to believe that anyone who had been wronged could be so kind. Later, Kirpal went to the man's home and met his family. After a frank talk from Kirpal, he promised to desist from using dishonest means to provide his family's sustenance. At that time, he was able to thank Kirpal for changing his way of life and helping his family financially while he was in jail.

Kirpal's austere lifestyle included the clothes he wore. His daily attire for the office was simple white cotton salwar and knee-length kurta\* with a loose, long coat of some darker inexpensive fabric.

\* Loose pants and long shirt.

Although the length of the salwar was traditionally down to the heel, Kirpal's were always well above the ankle, somewhat like those the maulvis\* wore. Regardless of this different style, Kirpal always made a carefree, stately figure.

The actual value of fashion in this case could be judged by the high regard and respect in which Kirpal was held by the senior officers and those in high authority, who showed no interest in his clothes.

However, a small group of officers was envious of his prowess and jealous of the privilege and favor he had acquired – to enter any of the higher officials' offices at will, or the free license he held to handle almost any circumstance that arose, etc. The resentful workers gave vent to their feelings by making fun of Kirpal, calling him the "Maulvi Sahib" (referring to his clothes), and so on.

One day a senior British officer called Kirpal to his office and with the words of Kirpal's jealous colleagues fresh in his mind and influencing his judgment, he rudely reprimanded Kirpal over a minor matter in the work. Kirpal said nothing but: 'You are under a misimpression, Sir,' and withdrew.

The official went home in the evening to find his wife suffering from severe stomach pain. The doctor was called but before he arrived, the lady suddenly smiled at her husband and said that Kirpal had just appeared and comforted her, with the result that the pain was almost gone.

The husband was taken aback, remembering the boorish treatment he had handed Kirpal, and now Kirpal had responded to this with concern and pity toward his wife, appearing in a spiritual form and relieving her suffering.

Angry and ashamed of foolishly listening to others' uncalled-for ridicule, the next day he accompanied his wife

\* Islamic priests.

to Kirpal's house and humbly begged forgiveness, thanking him for the help his wife had received. Kirpal just smiled, saying that he had done nothing, but the Higher Power had come to his wife's aid.

The official remained perplexed over what had happened, relating the experience to his colleagues. The account spread throughout the offices and became yet another example of Kirpal's omnipotent grace, showing how quickly that loving mercy could be incurred. His spiritual reputation continued to grow.

One day, in the year 1927, a man came to Kirpal with a message from Raja Ram. In the note, he apologized for not coming personally, saying that he could not leave Hardevi who was ill and had gone blind. He could bear the suffering no longer, and would Kirpal please come to the house.

Kirpal at once left everything and went straight to his friend's home. On arrival, he was told that Hardevi had contracted a rare disease that had caused the loss of her sight. The best specialists had been consulted but to no avail, for as the optic nerves had shriveled it was impossible to bring them back to a healthy condition.

Kirpal did not leave Hardevi's bedside for two days and nights, sitting deeply absorbed in meditation. On the third day, Hardevi's eyesight returned and everyone called it a miracle. Kirpal said, in a few words, that it was Sawan's blessing. It had been a time of suffering for all who loved Hardevi, but Hardevi herself described her sickness as a period of bliss in the company of her Guru. She told how Sawan was constantly by her side, with Kirpal on the other side, both in Radiant Form\*. She related how they conversed with each other, Kirpal asking Sawan to bless her

\* The spirit forms of elevated souls have a brilliant radiance.

with her sight and Sawan replying, 'Alright' and once again, 'Alright.'

Hardevi danced around the room with joy at beholding her loved ones again, using that precious faculty that is all too often taken for granted. When asked to express how she felt, Hardevi said that it was like getting reprieve from a sentence in hell itself. She pondered on her own words for a few moments, then turned to Kirpal and asked him if there really was such a place as hell. He told her yes, there was. This gave her food for thought for some days and on their next visit to Beas she tried to get a few minutes alone with Baba Sawan.

As she sat at the great Saint's feet, Hardevi asked Him if it was possible to have a glimpse of hell. Sawan must have been somewhat surprised at this request, but He did not laugh. He told her that it was not a happy place and to remember that she was connected to the Positive Power and therefore could not go there. Hardevi's purposeful nature came to the fore and once again she pleaded for her desire. What was in Baba Sawan's mind is not known but He closed the interview saying, 'We will see what can be done.'

Several days passed and Hardevi began to think that Sawan was not going to grant her wish; gradually she forgot about it. One day, however, she was sitting in meditation when she felt a strong pull within, almost as if someone had taken control of her, and she felt herself rising out of her body with considerable force. She then looked down and saw a huge hall with many people sitting in rows. Floating down toward them, she found herself standing near a man with a two-colored face, half yellow and half blue, sitting on a golden throne. He looked keenly at Hardevi and with his hand gestured that she should sit down. Hardevi turned

to where he indicated and there was a chair which had not been there before. It was also gold and she sat down, gazing around with interest at the strange scene. If this is hell, she thought, then it is not such a bad place. As if he read her thoughts, the two-colored man said, 'I have been told to show you hell.' He called a man to the front and instructed him to guide her. The intrepid Hardevi rose and followed him.

Her guide first showed her a place where countless souls, once human beings, were chained up. 'They await their punishment,' he told her. Then they came to pits of filth, emitting a malodorous stench of a strength she could not have born but for her attention being captured by the pitiful, whimpering sounds arising out of the black holes.

Hardevi's guide spoke again, 'This is one kind of punishment; do you want to see further examples of payments being extorted from the sinners?' She put her hands over her eyes and shook her head. The guide then took her to a courtyard, square in shape but appearing to be almost limitless in size, stretching for miles in all four directions. As they moved on into the courtyard, Hardevi became aware that it was bounded by a perimeter of high walls. Approaching one of these walls, Hardevi saw that it was not just plain but sculptured into many different forms. Some were highly detailed and prominently carved – very lifelike to behold; others were indistinct and not very clearly discernible.

The guide seemed to read her thoughts, for he said, 'The forms you see that are clearly defined are of those souls who are nearing the end of their life-span on earth. Those that are not very clear are in the making and as the soul continues to sin, the clearer the image becomes.'

Hardevi was fascinated as she gazed at the images, one by one. But a spasm of terror shook her being when she

found she was standing before a likeness of her own father! She turned to her guide, her mind desperately seeking some reassuring explanation. 'But he is not dead,' she cried. 'None of them is,' replied the man; 'all are still in their earthly forms. These are places they are reserving for themselves as they go on with their sinful actions.'

Hardevi continued along the wall. There were other faces she knew: she even recognized the likeness of a dear friend, a lady doctor whom she had always regarded as a very nice person. As she sorrowfully pondered on this, the guide turned to her and said, 'We must now return, your allotted time for this visit is used up.'

Once again she found herself beside the man with the blue and yellow face, whom she now knew to be the Lord of Death. Rising from his throne, he bowed to her. She found herself floating away, away, and suddenly returning to her physical body.

As she opened her eyes, the full meaning of what she had seen was present in crystal clarity. Hardevi lay down on the floor and wept helplessly, until Raja Ram found her, helped her up and took her into the comfort of their living room.

She told him all about her experience in hell and begged him to take her to Baba Sawan at once. 'I must plead with Hazur to give my father initiation and save his soul,' she said. She was convinced that this was the only solution, for she knew that once a soul is accepted by the Positive Power, the Negative Power has no jurisdiction whatever over that soul's fate.

When, however, Hardevi sat before Sawan and pleaded for her father with tearful urgency, He told her that He could not give her father Naam. Watching Sawan rise from His chair and walk away, Hardevi knew from His manner that it was pointless to plead further.

With a heavy heart she left and returned to Rawalpindi, going straight to her father's house. She told him that he must go at once to Baba Sawan and ask for initiation. Her heart sank when she heard his reply: 'Why should I? I do not want to give up the pleasures of the world just to sit with closed eyes!' A cold finger of fear crept down Hardevi's back as she heard his derisive laughter. Whatever his outlook on life, she loved him very much and knew that of all his four children, she was loved the most. She clung to him and begged him to think of her peace and happiness, using all her powers of persuasion.

It took a long time, but at last he agreed to accompany her to Beas. They went straight to Sawan and knelt at His feet with bowed heads and folded hands; but Baba Sawan refused all their entreaties. Crestfallen, Hardevi returned home to Raja Ram.

He could not bear to see the suffering on her face and said, 'Look, there is one hope left, and that is Kirpal. Why not ask him to plead your father's cause with Hazur. He would surely not refuse Kirpal.' A flicker of hope was discernible in Hardevi's expression as they ordered the car to drive to Kirpal's house in Lahore.

Kirpal was pleased to see them, but when he learned the reason for their visit he became very thoughtful. 'You know, I do not like asking Hazur for anything because whatever He chooses to give is the best for us, but to put your mind at peace I will go,' he said. It was a great concession that he made for Hardevi.

When Kirpal asked Sawan to bless Hardevi's father with initiation, Sawan looked into his eyes and told him, 'I cannot, but he will get initiation and be saved, not by me but by my successor.' Hardevi, on learning this, was satisfied and very grateful to Baba Sawan for relieving her mind and

assuring her father's future.

Kirpal's son Darshan was seven years old when his father asked him if he wanted Naam. Darshan replied that he would like that, and so when Kirpal went to Beas he took the boy with him and told him to go up to Hazur and ask Him for it. Baba Sawan was always attracted to the innocence of the children and they usually found special favour in His eyes, so when Darshan asked for Naam, His eyes twinkled as He smiled and said, 'Yes, I will give you a very sweet Naam,' and picked up some delicious Indian sweetmeats and gave them to the boy. He ran to his father and said, 'Look, I have been given a very sweet Naam.'

Kirpal laughed and told him that it was not what was given to others – 'I had a different Naam. So go once more to Hazur and ask Him for the real Naam, which he gives to others and which He gave to me.'

The boy went back to Baba Sawan and asked again for Naam, and once again Hazur tried to give him sweetmeats, but this time the small boy refused them and said, 'Babuji told me that the real Naam is different to this; give me that Naam.'

Sawan laughed and told him to come in the evening. So when he joined the special initiation gathering for the children and received his initiation along with all the others, he got very happy and ran to his father saying, 'I have got the Naam, up to the stars, tell me up to what did you get?'

The innocence of a child would often trigger Kirpal's memory of this scene and he mentioned it a number of times during his Satsangs saying, 'Why can we not be like children?'

As their minds are not cluttered with worldly thoughts, children frequently were blessed with higher experiences

within, compared to adults whose minds are constantly active with mundane affairs.

Darshan was a timid child and because of this nature he was always in awe of his father. He developed the habit of secretly doing things that were forbidden him, like most children do. But Kirpal, who from childhood was always obedient, honest and fearless, looked askance at his son's ways. An example of this was a day when Kirpal came home from the office a little earlier than usual and found his son flying a kite from the roof of the house. He called him down and forbade him to fly a kite from the roof as it was dangerous and also a waste of time playing around when he could be doing his studies.

The boy promised that he would not do it again, but was caught breaking this promise another day. Fortunately for him, Hardevi was there visiting that day and saved him from a beating.

Kirpal had been newly promoted to a higher position at his office when he received a request from a teacher from his old school to come for a visit. His fellow workers had been congratulating him on his good fortune, smiling and laughing with him. Kirpal was overjoyed just to see the happiness and love for him on their faces.

Now he was highly delighted that his teacher had remembered him and wished to see him. He went himself to the bus station to receive the elderly educator, greeting him with respect and carrying the luggage on his head all the way home. On the way, they passed a number of Kirpal's acquaintances who were surprised to see the high official carrying another's luggage like a servant.

But Kirpal was very happy to serve one who had given so many years of his life to teaching and made him welcome

in his home, carrying water for his bath, serving the meals and generally endeavoring to provide every comfort for the length of his stay.

His love and tender concern touched the old teacher's heart – tears ran down his cheeks. He was grateful, and humbled by Kirpal's own humility. Although a little surprised by the extreme simplicity of the whole family's way of life, he later told of the wonderful atmosphere in Kirpal's home, the blessing of love and purity that pervaded it.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

In the early days, after meeting Sawan, Kirpal had asked Him about the continuance of his Guru's work after the close of Hazur's earthly sojourn. Baba Sawan had told him that He was responsible only for the one whom He Himself would acknowledge to take over the spiritual work.

Further to this, about five years after that first joyful physical meeting with his Beloved, Kirpal saw within, in exact detail, the final departure of Hazur from His physical form. From that day on, Kirpal's complete joy changed into a bitter sweetness. The inner revelation brought him such suffering, he felt his heart had shattered.

At times the pain was unbearable and his only solace was to transcend into the Beyond, away from the illusion of the perishable world. But throughout his daily existence and his earthly life, each minute, every breath he took, reminded him of that dreaded moment that drew ever closer when he would lose the physical presence of his beloved Hazur.

Remembering this in later years, Kirpal would explain that union with one's Guru on the inner planes is an indescribable joy, but to physically sit at the feet of the Guru enhances that joy multifold. Conversely, to lose the physical presence of one's Guru brings nothing but insuperable

agony of separation, even though there is no separation inside. He would add: 'Only one who has gone through such suffering can understand what that suffering is.'

Not a word of this inner knowledge did he speak to anyone. Through the pen alone was the unendurable heartache expressed, transforming into beautiful poems of overflowing love and anguish. Many were written in Persian, but the thought that others might read and see into his heart prompted him to design a written script that only he could read. When Hardevi promised to sing the poems to Sawan, he taught her the script and all through Kirpal's life she was the only one to hold its key.

Singing his poems to Sawan, a new insight into Kirpal's inner being unfolded to Hardevi, which made her more than willing to be an instrument in helping him any way she could.

Whenever Kirpal wrote a new poem, Hardevi would leave her work, travel to Beas and sing the poem to Sawan. Sometimes her arrival was late at night, after the Master had retired and all the doors to His residence closed. Hardevi would then climb onto the roof of the room she had been given and sing the poem-cum-message into the night. She had a beautiful and powerful voice that carried across the still night air.

In the morning, Sawan would receive her for darshan and He would smile and confirm that He had heard the poem and the message. Returning to Lahore with a happy heart to give Kirpal a report of her visit to Beas, she delighted in teasing him, delaying for as long as possible the account of her meeting with Sawan and His reply to Kirpal.

Kirpal could, with very little effort, have used his own powers and saved himself the suspense but, with reiteration, spiritual giants, not easily understood by ordinary men, do

not circumvent God's rules to serve their own interests.

From the very beginning of his spiritual quest, it was Kirpal's wish to be unaware of the God Power working through him in any way. Even after Baba Sawan Singh left the worldly field of action, Kirpal continued working, whenever possible, within the laws that govern the earthly level of existence. If he chose to overrule those laws on occasion, the discerning observer had a rare opportunity to witness more clearly God working through the Master.

To anyone endeavoring to understand spirituality through the intellect, Baba Sawan was often heard to say, 'Go to Kirpal Singh, he is not only a spiritual giant but an intellectual one too. He can make spirituality unfold before you, just like a mechanical engineer who dismantles an intricate piece of machinery, part by part, and then reassembles it in front of you.'

Kirpal's way of helping people to understand the Truth and how it can be realized was beautiful; always presented with humility. It was not uncommon to find a leader from one of the various religious groups in India visiting the Dera to discuss or argue the facets of Sawan's teachings. Many of these prominent men went away enlightened on the greatness of Sawan, due to Kirpal's knowledge and personality. Some of them returned to ask for initiation.

A certain group named Arya Samaj\*, a sect that preached against idol-worship, sent a number of their most learned members to Baba Sawan. Seething with rage and indignation, they arrived prepared to confront Sawan in no uncertain manner. It appeared that one of the sect's principle tenets avers that nothing exists beyond Brahm\*\*. As Sawan

\* (Sanskrit) : Doctrine of noble and high-minded principles – springing out of Hinduism.

\*\* High spiritual plane. Also, a name for God.

was teaching seekers that the soul must go beyond Brahm to know the Overself, they felt justified in being outraged.

Baba Sawan welcomed them and sent them to talk to Kirpal, on meeting whom they launched into complaints of Sawan's 'wrong conception of the truth.' As there was definitely nothing beyond Brahm, how could He say there is a Power beyond Brahm?

First, Kirpal had to calm down their anger with soft words, filled with love and sincerity. He saw that he must assuage their inflamed spirits before approaching the differences from a level of reason and equanimity.

With their anger subdued, he was able to take a purely common sense position, telling them: 'You do believe there is a Brahm, but have you seen it? Belief, in all sincerity, is a great thing by itself, but seeing is above everything. I feel there can be no harm done if both parties, the one who believes there is no life beyond Brahm and the one who knows there is, sit together in a mutual attitude of love to try and understand the other's point of view. Even in your Shastras\*, certain references are made to a Par Brahm\*\*. However, these things should not concern us for even if you are not prepared to believe anything exists beyond Brahm, yet, would it not be beneficial to go up to Brahm yourselves and find out personally if there is or is not anything beyond? From there you could go to higher regions, but if they do not exist then at least you would be fortunate to have reached your goal. What would you lose by that? Let us start with love and devotion, up to Brahm, and decide what to do next when we get there.'

It was a simple but effective and acceptable premise, showing how futile it is to argue over something one has

\* Old Hindu Scriptures.

\*\* Beyond Brahm.

never seen or experienced for oneself and how much more practical to walk life and the spiritual path in brotherly love and harmony, with an attitude of tolerance along the way.

Kirpal never forced his views on anyone and never asked anyone to become a follower of either Sawan or himself, or of the science of Surat Shabd Yoga. If the seeker was hungry for knowledge, he placed it before him or her: an offering, as it were. If the seeker's interest increased and showed a desire for more, he would unfold the truths of spirituality, as a flower unfolds and blossoms in the warmth of the sun, opening its beautiful petals one by one. He had a faculty to uncover the truth with a fragrance that lingered in the heart and mind of the seeker.

His colleagues in Service, whether junior or senior to Kirpal, came to him to discuss spiritual subjects – some to learn and some to argue their own beliefs against his.

Among them was a staunch Christian who tenaciously believed that Jesus Christ, the Christian Church and the Bible were the only means of reaching God. Like many others who feel their own beliefs and knowledge to be the only way, he considered his learning extensive and exact, and promptly proceeded to discuss God on an intellectual level.

Kirpal quickly realized that to prolong the discussion would only irritate the man and would be of little benefit to him, for the accumulation of learning that already existed in his mind would continue to dominate his thinking. So he tried asking the fellow a question, which put him into a more receptive frame of mind. 'Could you enlighten me on something that is important to your church and to me also?'

The colleague said that he was delighted to be of help. So Kirpal's question was: 'Why are bells rung in churches?'

It was a simple question but he had no reply to give Kirpal, who then asked if he would be kind enough to approach the Bishop of Lahore, a very learned ecclesiastic, and get the answer from him.

A few days later, the man returned to Kirpal and related the bishop's explanation: 'The only reason the bells are rung is to call all the people into the church at the same time, so that they can worship together.'

At this, Kirpal pointed out that there must be more to it than that. 'For instance, why in all holy places where God is worshipped are there always two things – symbols of both light and sound? In Hindu temples they have bells and they burn lamps with oil and cotton wicks. In Sikh gurudwaras they also have bells and lamps and furthermore they beat drums also. In Muslim mosques they burn lamps and also beat drums. So why are these symbols so similar in all these different religions? You say that ringing of bells in a church is for calling people to worship. In a Hindu temple, the worshipper himself rings the bell as he enters, just to hear the sound of it!'

It was food for thought and this must have occurred to the Christian for he said, 'Alright, now tell me what the meaning is behind all of this.' So Kirpal was able to give him a few precious new thoughts to take home for his serious consideration:

'Listen, dear friend, with full attention and I will tell you the truth. Many are seeking and are in fact wasting their valuable time trying to find God via the outer faculties: through reading books, repeating His name with the tongue of the body, ringing bells, lighting candles and lamps, going on pilgrimage, fasting and making sacrifices. In their ignorance they do not realize that as God is not made of matter, He cannot be reached by any method involving the

physical senses. God is spirit, and can only be realized through the spirit. However, the spirit must first free itself from all forms of matter. Then, and only then, can it experience a little of the Truth. How?

It starts by becoming conscious of God's expression in creation, which is Light, and Sound Principle; through this link of His expression one can finally reach one's true home. All Masters have given out the same truth but when they left the worldly scene, only books recording references of this connection with the inner light and sound were available. The passage of time only served to increase the lack of real understanding, and the true meaning of the Light and Sound disappeared and was replaced by mere symbols.'

The Christian gentleman was not the first to discover that talking with Kirpal on the subject of spirituality could be truly absorbing.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Baba Sawan's Satsangs were attended by thousands. There was a special place reserved for high officials and people of some standing in the community, but the remainder of the huge Satsang area was open, on a first come, first served basis. Kirpal preferred to sit far at the back of the enormous congregation where, absorbed in Sawan, he was oblivious of everything surrounding him, even of his physical body; only his Master filled his awareness. His attention, always at eye-focus, would center on the attention pouring from Sawan's eyes, two pairs of eyes meeting and becoming locked in love, as it were – two identities fused in the overwhelming love of the Lord – to be broken only by the sangat rising and walking away at the close of the Satsang.

Masters tell us that the True Master's attention is always centered at the seat of the soul, between and behind the two physical eyes, and that His glance is of priceless value. Baba Sawan Himself often said that those who wanted to see Him should, . . . 'look UP HERE'. . . , pointing to His eyes. Indian children learn about the benefit of "darshan" at a very early age. The followers of Sawan were no exception and constantly sought the great Saint's glance. Astutely, many of them noticed that Sawan would gaze to the rear of the gathering many times during His talk, so they began to sit at the

back, attempting to search out exactly where Hazur's darshan was focused and who was receiving all the attention. It did not take them long to discover that the Master's precious glances were falling upon Kirpal, who in turn had eyes only for Hazur. In the hopes of getting a share of Hazur's favor, they began to sit as close to Kirpal as they could get. They could not will Baba Sawan to glance at them but they did appreciate the powerful force of upliftment they enjoyed by their close proximity to Kirpal.

In the course of time, Kirpal realized what was happening and felt deeply concerned over it. He wrote a letter to Sawan, which brought tears to his Master's eyes, attested by those who were present when Hazur read it. He raised the letter to His lips and kissed it, then turned to the people around Him and said, 'Kirpal writes.' A portion of the letter He read aloud: 'Please Hazur, bless me with your love, and in that love have mercy over me, so that I shall never, in the ecstasy of your love, forget my esteem for you.' He put that letter on His breast and said, 'Kirpal is loved as few were ever loved, he need never fear for anything, but I am deeply touched and appreciate very much him writing as he has done. Kirpal is the only true one in millions.'

For Kirpal, Sawan's words were commands; Sawan's work was his life; Sawan's pleasure was his pleasure and Sawan's displeasure was life's most mortal wound to him.

One night in India's midwinter, Baba Sawan was reclining on His bed, with Dr. Julian Johnson\* and Kirpal close by. Dr. Johnson asked Sawan a question, 'Master, is it right for a disciple to ask favors of his Master?' Baba Sawan smiled at him and replied, 'A seeker is always seeking; whom else to ask but his Master?' He then became silent for some time.

In later years, Kirpal's followers were given excellent

\* One of Sawan's western disciples, who spent some time in India.

advice as He told them: 'If you sit very quiet and let Them [the Masters] speak of Their own accord. They quite often say something very interesting.'

So after a few minutes, Sawan looked straight at Kirpal and uttered the words that subsequently have been quoted, requoted and remembered by thousands, down through the years. Looking keenly into Kirpal's eyes He said, 'It is not an easy task that a Master takes on when He comes to Earth to help the souls. When we come into being we come as saviors and we bring our own staff with us. When we have accomplished what we came for, we go back to our True Home.' It was an exceptionally rare admission from Baba Sawan, that He was anything other than an ordinary person.

In 1935 some land on Ravi Road, Lahore was acquired for a large Satsang hall. The foundation stone of the building was laid by Baba Sawan, but the supervision of construction of the hall and some accommodation structures was entrusted to Kirpal, along with the project's financial management. This meant that Kirpal would need to change his meditation times, for he now had to leave his house at seven a.m., proceed to the building site, ensure that the labor and the supervisor had arrived and the day's work started, then continue on to his office. At the close of the office day he returned to the site, checked the work accomplished that day, then following the list he had drawn up, he visited the homes of satsangis to persuade them to pledge some service toward the building of the hall, taking time to explain the work allotted to them. Very soon he had all the satsangis enthusiastically joining in the work at the site. Every morning and evening Kirpal worked with them and once a week Baba Sawan would arrive and spend some time there, which always boosted everyone's eagerness and energy.

Hazur gave many responsibilities to Kirpal – tasks that were too difficult, complicated or too sizeable to be entrusted to anyone else. Kirpal had a capacity for devotion and service that outmatched everyone and Hazur knew that whatever He gave Kirpal to do, He could depend on it being accurately completed without delay. Kirpal was the epitome of discretion and had excellent management abilities.

Whenever Kirpal was at the Dera in Beas, he spent the nights in meditation and the days in selfless service of various kinds. When building was in progress he worked with the laborers. Most people knew he was Sawan's chosen disciple and objected to him doing the rough work, carrying baskets of earth on his head, etc. They begged him not to treat his body so harshly – 'Please, we beg of you, this does not befit you, you have your own important assignments to attend to.' Kirpal's reply reflected his whole attitude to life: 'We should serve God spiritually, intellectually and physically. It is a great blessing if we can do any kind of service in His name; to me, all work is worship and a labor of love.'

When special Satsangs were held, crowds numbering between one hundred and one hundred and fifty thousand people flocked to the Dera from many parts of India. Under such conditions, sanitation would get out of control and turn into a health hazard. Kirpal would quickly collect a band of volunteers and have trenches dug as temporary toilets. As the trenches became filled they would cover them in with lime, replace the earth and dig new trenches. Many of the people came from remote villages, where they were used to going to the woods in the mornings, and so they were disinclined to use the trenches. Consequently, the grounds of the Dera became soiled in places, making it difficult for the crowds walking around all day. Kirpal would again organize his volunteers and, with the aid of buckets and

shovels, they transported the filth to the trenches.

During a particular bhandara\*, Baba Sawan saw Kirpal hard at this work and spoke sternly, forbidding him to continue: 'This is good work no doubt and others can benefit from the service, but you are wasting your time, for work of greater importance awaits your attention elsewhere.'

Later that day, in the Satsang, Sawan told the huge gathering, 'To be a Gurumukh is the greatest achievement on the path of spirituality. What is a Gurumukh? A disciple who becomes the mouthpiece of his Master. Do you want an example? I will give you a living example – Kirpal Singh. Study him and you will learn something about the embodied Truth.'

Sawan once wrote to Kirpal: 'Beloved Kirpal, we Saints have a life full of hardships; unrest is our inheritance. I have this in abundance and in due course of time you will be its inheritor.' He then wrote a quotation:

"Sighs constitute our ready cash;  
Headache our landed estate."

It should not be misconstrued however, that Kirpal's disposition was always serious – far from it.

Unified as he was with the great God Power within, awareness of the world and its suffering humanity was never far from Kirpal, yet control over his emotions and faculties was supernormal. He had been grounded from childhood in a deep detachment from the perpetual, ever-present play of illusion. His supreme knowledge of this grand delusion and the one great Truth lying hidden within this transitory world – pervading all creation – gave Kirpal optimism, cheerfulness and joy, apparent through all the vicissitudes of life; and immunity from all illusory conditions and their

\* Special religious celebration or anniversary.

effects. His spontaneous laughter and the reservoir of good cheer that saturated his being were like water from a pure mountain spring, ever ready to overflow, refresh, enliven and rejuvenate all who came into his presence.

That deep well of love in his eyes had the power to engulf the spirit of a human being in a warm, invigorating mantle. Totally complete in himself, he could adapt to whatever the circumstance required: e.g. to reach the heart of a child by becoming like a child. His simple humor on the absurdities of man was clean and refreshing, easily prompting laughter and delight; encouraging one to laugh at oneself and forget the woes of life for a while.

On a certain visit to Raja Ram's home, Kirpal found the place bustling with activity. Everyone was busy doing something. No one greeted him – it seemed that no one had noticed his arrival, which was most unusual, for Kirpal was always more welcome than any other visitor to Raja Ram's house, always received with great joy by every member of the household. A few minutes passed, then Raja Ram hurried toward him, full of apologies.

He confessed that they were preparing to entertain some important business associates and the whole establishment was engaged in preparing for their reception, arranging choice refreshments, fruits and sweets for the honored guests. Ushering Kirpal into the large reception room, which sported a huge table filled with food, he apologized once more and hustled away.

As Kirpal sat there in the room by himself, taking stock of everyone rushing about, the humor of the situation struck him and he began to enjoy the play unfolding in the scene around him.

In a short while Raja Ram was back, this time carrying a large dish of mangoes. Turning to Kirpal he said, 'Babu,

these are some very special sucking mangoes that I arranged to be sent from the South [of India]. They have never been seen in our markets.' Putting the mangoes on the already overloaded table, he again rushed out of the room.

Kirpal stepped forward and looked at the special fruit. He was indeed amazed at the tiny size of each mango, just one and a half to two inches in length. Then his eyes began to twinkle with mischief. Without hesitation, he picked up a mango, bit a very small hole in one end and sucked out all the juice. Blowing air into the deflated skin, he replaced the mango back on the dish with the hole hidden underneath. In a very short space of time, most of the fruits on the platter were minus their inner contents but were, however, giving forth a very convincing impression of a delicious bowl of mangoes!

On Raja Ram's return, once again to apologize profusely for his negligence, he found a smiling Kirpal sitting quietly relaxed. Then the guests began to arrive and were duly honored and entertained. Eventually, Raja Ram took up the dish of mangoes saying, 'You must taste these rare mangoes, which I ordered specially for you.'

The looks of surprise and astonishment on the faces of the honored guests were beyond description as they each chose a mango and found that it deflated under the mere pressure of lifting it. They looked at each other with puzzled expressions, the empty fruit skins limp and lifeless in their hands.

Raja Ram had received the biggest shock of all and the poor man turned to Kirpal with a bewildered look of appeal for help. But there was no sympathy in Kirpal's eyes, which instead were alive with humor and a radiance of suppressed laughter. For a moment, he forgot everything in the glow of

Kirpal's countenance – in the joy he found reflected there. Then the realization registered that this was all a joke – not on his guests but on himself!

Kirpal had begun to shake with laughter and Raja Ram found himself caught up in Kirpal's bubbling, overflowing, infectious joy. He too laughed, and laughed until tears rolled down his cheeks. 'Oh Babuji\*', Babuji,' he murmured weakly. He never called him Kirpal, which showed the measure of respect he had for him throughout the years of their friendship.

Raja Ram told this story of the mangoes many, many times, always collapsing into laughter with the memory of that day.

As Kirpal advanced spiritually, he developed a quiet serenity. Keeping his own set of principles – his yardstick all through life – constant in all things, he now placed everything in his Master's hands: his life, his actions, his whole future. Playing life's game of Illusion conscientiously, yet perpetually aware of the dream that mankind accepted for reality. Like the lotus flower, beautiful in all its tranquil splendor, held above the murky water, he was unattached, unadulterated, and free from roots to bind him in the soil of the world.

In one of Sawan's talks at a large gathering He said, 'The living Guru and the Guru-to-be are the living embodiments of the Truth in two physical forms. The Guru and the Chosen One are charged with the same intense power of God; the two are embedded into each other as one, and in full consciousness are working out the same divine plan.' Sawan then looked directly at Kirpal and smiled into his eyes – giving, for all to see, yet another clear indication of who would be

\* Term of respect.

wearing Sawan's spiritual mantle in the coming future.

Sawan was visiting Lahore to hold a Satsang, in the year 1940, and a group of local satsangis approached Him at the end of His talk, with a plea: 'Hazur, what have the satsangis in Lahore done, that you very seldom bless us with your Satsang, whereas the people of Amritsar enjoy your Satsangs frequently?' Sawan's reply was revealing: 'Have I not given you Kirpal Singh? Wherever he is, it is I who am there; there is no difference between him and myself.'

In the Dera Baba Jaimal Singh at Beas, Kirpal's elder brother Jodh Singh had built a modest house to accommodate his family during short stays at the Dera. In this very house, yet another clear indication was given by Baba Sawan of the direction spiritual leadership was to take, for those with eyes to see.

There is an ancient Indian belief that every man's abode should have God's blessing. Baba Sawan's followers were no exception regarding this custom and Jodh Singh, keen to have the benefit, respectfully requested Hazur to come and bless his new home.

It was summertime and they prepared the flat roof for the special reception. A pile of boxes filled with best quality Malta oranges\* was placed ready at one side. Raja Ram and many other well-known disciples were already there when Baba Sawan arrived. He sat down on the chair placed for Him and Jodh Singh stepped forward, bowed down and touched the Master's feet. Sawan placed His hand on Jodh Singh's head in blessing. Other satsangis followed, touching Hazur's feet one by one. Some He blessed by placing a hand on their heads; for others He smiled or inclined His head. Not surprisingly, Kirpal was the last to come

for a blessing.

As Kirpal bowed at his Guru's feet, Sawan caught his head in both hands and gave him a loving embrace. Then the Malta oranges were put into baskets and placed beside Baba Sawan. He gave them out as prasad\* into handkerchiefs spread out or shirt fronts held out or into two hands cupped together, to receive the four or five oranges that each were given. Kirpal, last again, came forward holding out his shirt front.

He looked up at Sawan and Sawan gazed deeply into his eyes. Kirpal forgot everything – the prasad, the people around, even himself. Only Sawan remained – Hazur in all His glory. Sawan also seemed oblivious of everything, even the fruit He was distributing, for as He looked intently into Kirpal's eyes, He went on filling Kirpal's shirt with oranges. The moments ticked away and the shirt became full, but Sawan continued to give. Oranges rolled out of the shirt and onto the floor. The onlookers were astounded and delighted as they picked up the oranges – a unique and precious bonus. It was a sight they never forgot and the account of the incident spread far and wide, recorded as a rare phenomenon in the life of Hazur.

During a week's leave from his office that Kirpal was spending at the Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, Sawan became indisposed with a sore throat and loss of His voice. A disciple from Bulandshahr arrived at the Dera with ten people, on whose behalf he asked for the blessing of holy Naam. The man put forward a sincere plea: 'Hazur, they are truly anxious to have the connection as soon as possible.'

The very next morning, Sawan told Kirpal to give initiation to the group from Bulandshahr and Kirpal carried out

\* Blessed food.

those orders at his brother's house, where he was staying for the week. Each person received a wonderful experience and they were still enjoying the ecstasy of that when they left Beas to return home. Kirpal's destiny was becoming more and more apparent to anyone wishing to read the signs.

Baba Sawan was staying in Lahore at one time, to hold Satsangs and to give initiation. After the initiation proceedings were completed, Sawan turned to Kirpal who was standing close by and said, 'Kirpal Singh, the seed of Naam has been sown in these souls today and they, along with thousands of others whom I have rejoined with the inner Power, are just tender saplings. It will fall on you to look after them, so do it with tenderness and love. It will be your duty to nourish their parched souls with the sacred waters of Naam and to lead them to the higher regions within.' It was a direct reference to forthcoming history.

Kirpal bowed down before Sawan, saying in all humility, 'Hazur, who am I to water your saplings? If it be your command, I can become a channel through which the water can flow in whatever amount you may send.'

Sawan related many times how He felt when His Guru, Baba Jaimal Singh, left the physical form and Sawan found Himself in the position of successor to His great Master. Unconsolable at the physical parting, He went to see Chacha Pratap Singh\* and Baba Garib Das\*\*, who were His close and revered friends and were also gurus on the same path. He confided to them that His heart was not in the great and arduous task His Guru had given Him, but they were strong to impress upon Him the importance of the work.

\* Youngest brother of Swami Shiv Dayal Singh (Swami Ji).

\*\* Close disciple of Swami Ji, along with Pratap Singh, Rai Saligram, and of course Baba Jaimal Singh.

Sawan related that, 'They assured me of their help and guidance, and they also told me that their own initiates might not get salvation, but ". . . yours most definitely will." In the face of such emphatic argument, only then did I take up this duty.'

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

It was a sad day for Hardevi when Raja Ram died in 1945. Kirpal accepted his friend's departure with his usual equanimity regarding death, but Hardevi could not forget her dear companion and continually remembered so many remarkable things about him; years later she was still telling stories about Raja Ram's life. She felt that his most memorable virtue was his simple and sincere love for Sawan and Kirpal.

In particular, at the time of her loss she remembered something that happened on their way home from the Beas Dera one day. It was very hot and they were delighted to encounter a large pile of watermelons for sale at the roadside. They bought a huge melon and, cutting it open, Hardevi gave a slice to Raja Ram. Her smiling expression changed to puzzlement as she watched him take just one bite and then sit very still and quiet as if deep in thought, but with a sweet faraway look on his face.

Concerned, Hardevi feared he was not well, but he suddenly shouted to the driver to turn the car around and drive back to Beas as quickly as possible. Hardevi was astonished. 'If you feel ill, why not continue toward home, for we are nearer to Rawalpindi than to Beas, which is more than one hundred miles?'

'No, no,' said Raja Ram, 'this watermelon is so sweet, I have never tasted one as delicious before; this is meant only for an Emperor, not for us poor ones, so I want to take it to Hazur!'

Hardevi reminded him that it would be past ten p.m. on reaching Beas and that Baba Sawan never ate anything after His dinner, which He took every evening at nine p.m. Furthermore, by the following day, a cut-open melon would be stale and not good to eat. Raja Ram just laughed this off saying, 'Oh no, He will wait for me!'

Meanwhile, at the Dera, the house servants were getting worried. They had taken Sawan's dinner tray to His room a number of times, but each time He became busy again with another disciple's problems. This continued until Hardevi and Raja Ram reached the Dera. As they entered His residence with the watermelon, He showed surprise at seeing them again and laughed when Raja Ram told his reason for returning, but He did thoroughly enjoy the watermelon with His dinner.

On another occasion, Hardevi made a certain parantha\* and kheer\*\* dish. It was something she had never made before and when Raja Ram tasted it he could not praise it enough, saying that it was the tastiest dessert she had ever made - 'I cannot take another bite without sharing this with Babuji.'

So a parcel was made up immediately and a generous portion of the tasty treat mailed off to Kirpal in Lahore, a hundred and fifty miles away. Only then could Raja Ram sit down to finish his serving. These examples give a little insight into the personality and character of this simple-living man who had a big love for his Guru and for the Gurumukh

\* Fried roti.

\*\* Dessert of rice, cooked with milk and sugar.

who was so much at one with his Guru.

It had always been Raja Ram's fervent wish that his beloved Guru should be near him at the time of his death. And so did it happen. When Sawan heard of Raja Ram's sickness, He hurried to Rawalpindi. Raja Ram, lying on his bed, had been waiting for Him. Hardevi sat beside him, weeping silent tears of helplessness. Raja Ram again and again opened his eyes to show his love for her, to console her, and also to rebuke her saying, 'Be brave and strong in your inner wisdom; haven't you got Hazur as a Guru, what else do you want?'

A man ran into the room with the news that Baba Sawan had arrived. Raja Ram immediately struggled to rise and go forward to greet his Guru, but Sawan had already entered the room and, striding up to the bedside, He placed both hands on Raja Ram's chest, gently pushing him back onto the pillows. Hazur smiled and said, 'Here I am Raja Ram, I have come.' He looked deeply into the sick man's eyes and stroked his forehead. Then for two hours He sat quietly on a chair, not moving His eyes from Raja Ram's face, frequently smiling at him with a great deal of tenderness.

After two hours of silence, Sawan asked him, 'Tell me, do you not see the Master within you?' Raja Ram tried to fold his hands together in respect to Baba Sawan, but Sawan just placed His hands over them as Raja Ram replied, 'Yes Hazur, You are there in radiant form, bidding me to go with you.' Kindly, Sawan asked him, 'Then what is the delay, why do you not go?'

Raja Ram looked into the face of his Beloved and said, 'Hazur, I am in bliss, being with you within, but I am reluctant to go and leave your physical form. I close my eyes and see you in all your glory, then I open my eyes and see you as God-in-man, in even greater glory.'

Sawan became a little serious as He asked, 'Tell me, is there anything bothering you?' Raja Ram's worried eyes met Sawan's as he replied, 'Yes, my Beloved Savior; what is going to happen to my wife when I leave? She has no one of her own to take care of her. Will You look after her and not let her be alone and lonely?'

Tears glistened in Sawan's eyes as He bent forward close to His disciple. With emphasis, He gave His word that as long as Hardevi lived He would look after her. 'Go in peace Raja Ram, for your wife will never be in want and never be alone, spiritually or physically. I will always take care of her.'

Raja Ram's eyes filled with gratitude and happiness. He thanked his Guru with all sincerity and then begged Sawan to take some rest saying, 'Hazur, your physical body must be tired after traveling and although you have so graciously relieved me of all my worries, yet I cannot withdraw because your outer form is such a strong attraction.'

So Sawan retired to the room that had been prepared for Him, and so it was that Raja Ram's soul left the world to be with his Hazur in reality, leaving the physical manifestation of the Master on the earth plane.

Hardevi had always been dearly loved by her husband and reigned in his household as a true queen, never lacking his full support. With Raja Ram gone, the situation was not quite the same, for his two sons from a previous marriage took over control of his business, a common procedure, but although carrying Raja Ram's name the similarity ended there. Hardevi was left at their mercy and as Raja Ram had controlled the finances, she had no bank account or ready cash of her own. It was a difficult situation, to say the least, and after considerable suffering, her proud spirit prompted

her to leave, accompanied by her daughter.

What a sad day for them! Leaving behind so many memories of happy days with Raja Ram; stepping forward into an unknown and uncertain future. They traveled to Hardwar on the shores of the Ganges river, place of Hindu pilgrimage, a holy sanctuary for lovers of God. Hardevi felt she must meditate and consider what to do, wondering how she would be guided for the days to come. They had told no one of their intentions, so it was not known where they had gone. Speculation and rumor circled about what had happened to them; some people believed they were dead.

In a short time, it came to Sawan's notice and He ordered a search for them to be made in all the likely places. The search was carried out diligently, but all efforts failed to find Hardevi. When all the reports had come back unsuccessful, Baba Sawan called Kirpal to Him and told him that Hardevi and her daughter must be found.

Kirpal thought for some moments and said, 'Hazur, they might have gone to Hardwar, to be away from everyone and meditate.' Sawan told him to hasten off to Hardwar at once to find them.

It was the very day Kirpal arrived in Hardwar that Hardevi and her daughter made a mutual decision to end their lives by jumping into the holy but fast-flowing Ganga and drowning themselves. With this intention in mind they made their way early in the morning to the riverside. They decided that before jumping into the water they would sit down beside the river and think of their Guru, Baba Sawan, for a while. Their spirits were still very low when they began this last quiet communion, but after some minutes had passed, suddenly they heard someone calling their names.

Opening their eyes, they saw Kirpal striding toward

them. Well, their spirits soared just to see him and, for the first time since leaving home, Hardevi broke down and sobbed while her daughter ran to Kirpal and clung to him with joy.

Kirpal took them to the Dera, and when Baba Sawan showed them such love and tenderness they forgot their woes. Sawan told Kirpal that he must watch over Hardevi and ensure that she was never in want, for worldly necessities or for loving kindness. He also told Hardevi that she was not penniless, as she had believed herself to be. Raja Ram had left a small fortune for her in safekeeping with Baba Sawan and that inheritance had been placed in her name. But Sawan warned that she must never spend any of the money without consulting Kirpal first, and this she did always.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Kirpal came home from Satsang one day and asked Krishna Vanti to give him whatever money was in the house. She had about two hundred rupees, which she gave him and he hurried out of the house. He rushed to the home of a certain satsangi whom he had not met for some time, and knocked on the door. The disciple himself opened the door and was astounded to see Kirpal standing there. He would have fallen backwards, but Kirpal quickly supported him. After helping him into the house, Kirpal stood quietly, allowing him to regain his composure. Then Kirpal smiled warmly at him and the poor man broke down and wept. Slowly, he told Kirpal the whole story.

It appeared that the man, whose name was Maher, had bought poison and was about to administer it to his wife, his children and himself. He had started attending Kirpal's Satsang, had become a great admirer of his and in time had taken initiation from Baba Sawan. Soon after that, he found himself in a position where he could not work and he lost his business. This led him to lose faith in Sawan and he began to wander from place to place, seeking a guru who could help him to regain his business and his inner peace.

Hearing of a Muslim saint, he went to him with his woe-  
ful tale of all that had befallen him since receiving initiation

from Baba Sawan. The Muslim sage felt a strong pity for Maher but told him that he was unable to help him without first consulting *his* master, and that he should come again the next day.

The following day, the Muslim told him, 'I am very sorry but I cannot help you. I contacted my master, who is no longer in his physical body, so I had to reach him through meditation. He told me that a disciple of a Guru such as Sawan Singh cannot be helped by mystics like us, for Sawan is an Emperor of all mystics.'

Maher looked at Kirpal with agony written on his face. 'I now know that Sawan is God Himself and you are as great as He, but in my shame I could not face Him or you, and as I am penniless and my family is starving I had made up my mind to kill them and die with them.'

Kirpal gave Maher the two hundred rupees and made him promise to never think of killing anyone else or himself, even out of despair. In words filled with love he told him, 'Poverty and riches come from our past actions and we must live them out. You and your family are very fortunate to have Sawan as your Guru; you are saved and are meant for higher things. Destroying the physical form, which is the temple of God, is the greatest sin. Had you committed suicide you would have been born again into this world, to pay the debt of that, and who knows in what circumstances? Everyone must pay their debts and you are so greatly blessed in having Hazur.'

Kirpal continued to watch over them and help them, physically and financially, until they finally got back on their feet.

In the summer of 1946, Sawan called Kirpal to His room and asked him about his plans after retirement

from his work in the civil service, which was coming up in March 1947. Kirpal replied that he would follow the wishes of Hazur.

Sawan became sad and thoughtful. 'Kirpal Singh, the Lahore sangat will need you in the near future, so stay in Lahore for as long as you are needed there. Obedient to his Master's every wish, Kirpal agreed, and on retirement the following year, he fulfilled his promise to Sawan, going to Beas just once a week to see his Guru.

Meanwhile, Kirpal was promoted to Deputy Comptroller of Military Accounts and everyone rejoiced for him, those senior and junior alike. The Indian Civil Service had a very strict code of echelon in those days. Senior officers were senior and juniors were junior, but Kirpal's perfect example of a true human being elevated everyone around him to a level above all worldly distinction. Proof of this was apparent when officers senior to him approached him in his office for personal advice, disregarding pride, ignoring the protocol of summoning those junior to themselves. And those to whom he was senior never hesitated to speak to him, anywhere, any time – confident of being treated as a fellow member of the human race. Kirpal's rare combination of true humility and strict probity facilitated easy approach for the esteemed and the lowly alike, breaking down all barriers.

Kirpal had proven his unswerving dependability in the workplace and undauntedness in the face of adversity many times. Another emergency occurred, again in the form of a deadly influenza epidemic that spread rapidly throughout Lahore. Many of the military accounts staff fell victim to the noxious disease and the office was seriously understaffed.

To exacerbate the problem, the annual statement of accounts fell due during this period – extra work that normally required more than a dozen men to complete.

The Comptroller was at his wits' end and hurried to consult Kirpal. 'What shall we do?' Kirpal reassured him and told him not to worry, 'All will be done in time.'

With very little assistance, Kirpal worked for forty-eight hours, stopping neither to eat nor sleep. The deadline arrived and the statement was completed in time.

Kirpal had joined the civil service in January of 1912 and in March 1947 he retired with thirty-five years of service to his credit. A few weeks prior to his retirement date, he was called to a meeting and was requested to stay on and work a few more years. It was pointed out to him that continuation of service would bring further promotion and yield a larger pension at the end, improving his financial position considerably. He responded to this with gratitude and spoke of how much he had enjoyed working in the department and how much he regretted losing the company of all the dear friends he had made there, but due to greater responsibilities already laid out for him, he would have to refuse their kind offer.

After the meeting, the Comptroller himself came to Kirpal and asked him to think over his decision. Kirpal explained to him, 'I have done all that was necessary for my worldly duties and now I have my own work, which is also God's work and includes a service to mankind.'

The Comptroller was not taking 'no' for an answer without making an effort to persuade Kirpal. 'How will you live on such a small pension?' he asked. Kirpal replied, 'I will mold myself to fit my financial situation.'

The Comptroller saw the meaningful purpose in Kirpal's eyes and felt strongly moved. 'I know you will' he said. 'Not only are you a great worker but a great philosopher too and I am sure many will benefit from your service to them.'

My best wishes are with you.'

When the news of Kirpal's forthcoming retirement circulated among the offices, the whole staff wanted a farewell party. Kirpal however, declined. He told them that a farewell party is for everyone to get together and say farewell to an individual, but that way he would not be able to talk heart-to-heart with each person separately so, 'I will come and visit each one of you alone and that will give me pleasure.' This plan appealed to them and they were satisfied.

But the cleaners, chaprasis\* and others who had no office knew that it would be impossible for Kirpal to seek them out individually, so they pleaded with him to join them all together one evening in the gardens, and Kirpal was happy to agree. Meanwhile, he estimated how much a party would have cost him and distributed that much among all the needy workers.

When he entered the gardens on the appointed evening, he found not only the manual workers there, but the whole staff, from the junior to the most senior person. Each one had brought a garland of flowers and, failing to succeed in placing these around the neck of their honored guest, they piled them up in a hill of garland upon garland that rose more than six feet high. There was not a man without a tear in his eye. Kirpal's eyes were also moist to see their love.

As moved as he was, yet his powers of observation were as keen as ever. He turned to one very tearful chaprasi and said to him, very kindly, 'Brother, these people have been with me for years so the wrench of parting is very painful, which anyone would understand, but you are crying more than any one of them and you have worked with me for only two days. What then is wrong?'

The man, his tears continuing to flow, bent down and

\* Messengers.

caught hold of Kirpal's feet, which is a gesture of respect in India, even in non-religious circles. 'You are the first officer who has treated us as human beings and made us feel proud to be so,' he cried. 'The others look down on us, being just chapsasis.'

So Kirpal retired from his worldly service, and when he returned to the office a few days later to collect certain papers, the Accountant General was there, working. Seeing Kirpal, he rose from his seat and courteously asked Kirpal to sit beside him. After discussing numerous office affairs, the Accountant General thanked him for his excellent service, adding, 'You are an exceptionally rare person and the most remarkable man I have ever known.'

A little while after Kirpal's retirement day, he went to Dehra Dun, in the province of Uttar Pradesh\*, near the foot-hills of the Himalayan range of mountains. He was accompanied by Bachiter Singh, who had been devoted to Kirpal for many years. Their purpose was to look for some suitable land to buy.

When they returned to Beas, Baba Sawan asked them where they had been and Bachiter Singh said, 'I accompanied Bhapaji to look for some land on which to build a house, in Dehra Dun.'

Sawan said, 'No need for that. I will give him my own house to live in.' Sawan then pointed to the chair He was sitting on and added, 'I will give him this seat of mine too, and his family will come and see him as does my family.'

He was intimating that Kirpal would, in time to come, live as Sawan lived – in a spiritual "house" or an ashram, where thousands of seekers would come to find God. Even his family members would visit him there.

\* Dehra Dun is now in Uttarakhand State.

Sawan was holding Satsang in the Dera one day and, once again, He asked Kirpal to give the talk. Into the microphone for all to hear, Sawan said, 'This is the work you will have to do in the future.' This was another reference to His choice of successor, when the time came.

No person of average intelligence could have failed to understand what Baba Sawan was plainly telling everyone. It could not be misunderstood. Known throughout India to be kind, considerate and compassionate, He was ensuring that people would know where to find the true Satsang when He was no longer there for them physically, to give darshan, love and spiritual salvation.

One sweltering afternoon when the Indian summer was at its most intense and the heat almost unbearable, those around Sawan begged Him to retreat to the Dalhousie hill station\*. Hill stations, developed by the British when they were in India, were retreats or resorts for those who were affluent enough to escape the violent heat waves of the plains during the hot season. Many of them were situated along the Himalayan foothills and were considerably cooler than the plains, due to altitude and their proximity to the higher, majestic snow-covered peaks.

Sawan listened to the pleas of His disciples and agreed to go to Dalhousie. He turned to Kirpal and quietly told him, 'People think that when I go to the hills, I go to enjoy the cool air. I go there at that time because the rich and well-to-do people are also there to escape the heat. Among them are some who yearn for God and in answer to their prayers I go to serve them.'

\* About 150 km or 95 mi from Amritsar.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

On the political front, India had been pressing for independence from British rule for years and the country was full of unrest; unrest toward the British occupation and also unrest among Hindus and Muslims. The relationship between the two religions was steadily being undermined and suspicion insinuating into every level of life. The Indian leaders had agreed on splitting India into two countries, by forming a new Muslim nation – Pakistan. The people wondered where the severance line would be drawn, especially those who lived in Northern India. The state of Punjab was said to be the area that would be affected the most and it was a state where Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus lived side by side.

Lahore was a city typical of this mixture of race and belief – effervescent, loved by its carefree population of merrymakers, both rich and poor, modern and fashion-conscious. When the new border lines were finally decided by the British and Indian leaders, and those decisions were announced, the people of Lahore learned that their city would be part of the Pakistan of the future. The Muslims who were inclined to favor living in Pakistan must have been relieved that they would not have to move from their homes and from the city they loved. The Sikhs, proud

of their race and heritage, found it hard to believe that things would be any different than they had always been. Surely they could remain in their homes and on their own land – why not?

This attitude was running strong throughout Punjab State, which was destined to be sliced right down the middle. But national and local leaders were fearful. The suspicious feeling between the two races started at the top and rippled through the population until it reached even the children. Warnings were given, therefore, that there would be resentment and animosity which would develop into dangerous situations. This was not surprising, for splitting the Indian nation in two obviously demanded sacrifices on both sides. And it was the people who paid the price.

The Muslims who found themselves to be living in the part of the country that would remain India, were afraid of being mistreated by Hindus and Sikhs. The Sikhs and Hindus who were living in the part that would become Pakistan had similar fears at the hands of the Muslims. But what were any of them to do? Leave their homes and their lands behind?

When the insidious suspicion and mistrust reached the ordinary man, it began to eat its way through a peaceful co-existence that had slowly developed over the years following the fall of the Mughal empire. Long-standing friendships of mixed faiths cooled into distant reservation. Amicable acquaintances ceased to pass the time of day with each other. Fewer people were seen on the streets as, increasingly, fear entered the hearts of both Hindu and Muslim.

The warnings reached the Sikh population of Lahore, but so many of them would not acknowledge the forthcoming danger and refused to leave. It was only after the slaughter started that they woke up to their plight. By then it was too

late for some and they paid with their lives.

Not surprisingly, Kirpal, in his own quiet way, had started moving the satsangis and families out of Lahore well in advance of the threatened danger. He stayed on in Lahore until he had moved all, or nearly all, of Sawan's children across the new border – before the wrath of the Muslim people built up, turning many of them into crazed beings; as indeed happened with some of the Sikhs and Hindus, on the other side of the coin. The fierce animosity on both sides resulted in creating a vortex of horror. Then, and only then, did Kirpal take his family out of Lahore.

When the time came for them to leave the house together, his wife began to close the doors and lock them. Kirpal looked at her kindly, but with a twinkle in his eyes. 'Why are you locking the doors? Is it to make the future dwellers of our home unwelcome? Leave all the doors open and let the house welcome whoever comes.' So they left their home open for anyone to enter and take possession. They were never to return.

Leaving Lahore, they went straight to the Dera at Beas, where preparations were under way for the soon forthcoming celebration of Sawan's birthday on July twenty-seven. The preparations were for the usual Satsangs and meditation periods, but in addition they had to prepare for the thousands of homeless people who had already started arriving from across the newly charted border. They came with tears in their eyes, bewilderment on their faces and fear in their hearts. They were all received with love, welcomed and taken care of.

Kirpal could be seen everywhere around the Dera. Wherever the work was going on, he was in the thick of it. As he consoled each and every one that he met, inspiring new strength in them and resolution to face life with a will, he

counseled them to tackle the difficulties of the future with love and faith, and to guard themselves against feelings of hatred. 'Begin your new life on a foundation of forgiveness, love, and mercy for all God's life, not on hatred and fear.' These were his heartfelt words of advice.

Some history books record that India won her independence in August 1947 without bloodshed – through Mahatma Gandhi's principles of ahimsa\* and his influential leadership. Those who directly experienced the traumatic effects of partition's process, and the men, women and children who lost their lives in the unnecessary slaughter, could hardly agree with that. History estimates that nearly one million people died in this horrendous holocaust. In fact, there are no ways and means to know the exact number of deaths. The blood of the unfortunate was sprinkled across the north of India and the whole country echoed with their cries. The very worst in man rose up and struck out, spurred on by fear and revenge.

Lahore, Rawalpindi and other cities and villages forming the area wherein Kirpal, Raja Ram and Hardevi frequented, were all positioned within the new boundaries of Pakistan, including Saayed Kasran, where Kirpal was born and grew up. That area, like many others, became an arena of atrocities. The Muslims were wild and after blood, determined to wreak their vengeance on the Sikhs and Hindus, whom they proceeded to torture and kill.

Unbelievable acts were inflicted on women and children. From a small girl of three years to an old woman of seventy, none were left free from assault and indignity if they were caught. A village would be entirely surrounded, the men killed out of hand, and then all manner of inhuman acts committed on the women and children, who were then

\* Non-violence.

slaughtered like the men. When this pattern of attack became known and the word spread around the villages, those in the danger line organized the only defence that was left to them.

As the village became besieged with the bloodthirsty hordes, the villagers would crowd together and select the strongest man among them and then tell the women and children to come forward to be beheaded, if they preferred that to being attacked by the Muslims. It was a terrible thing to resort to and a formidable decision for any woman to make, but most of them came forward with their children, preferring to die honorably than face the only alternative. When the invaders entered the village they found only the men, who fought to the death.

No matter where the poison starts, it has an insidious habit of spreading. The Sikhs and Hindus, crazed with grief and outrage, began retaliating wherever they could, and the Muslims were attacked and killed in thousands. Even those who were being given safe escort from India to Pakistan were accosted on the way and slaughtered indiscriminately.

This great human tragedy was yet another catastrophe, even greater than those Kirpal handled previously, and he could not ignore it. Eye-witness accounts reported him in many different places, escorting the Sikhs across the border into India; escorting the Muslims over the border into Pakistan; saving lives wherever he could. Sometimes he guided groups of hundreds. He moved like a beacon of hope amid the hopeless. It was a dangerous mission, to say the least, and his family, relatives and friends begged him to take fewer risks and greater precautions. The depth of sorrow in his eyes was their only answer – enough to silence the protests in shame.

To consider how much he suffered with the suffering

victims is like describing the world by saying it is round. For Kirpal, there was no distinction between Muslim, Hindu or Sikh, only brother killing brother in the name of one God – be He called by many different names.

In September of 1947, Baba Sawan relented to strong persuasion and agreed to be hospitalized in Amritsar, which had remained in India. He had been ailing for some time with various symptoms, as Great Masters do, from time to time, in their mysterious ways. However, He now formed three different committees before going to Amritsar, each one covering certain specific work.

Bahadur Jagat Singh was given control of the physical requirements at the Dera; another man was given control of agriculture and land; Sawan put Kirpal in charge of all spiritual matters, and gave as his assistant Gulab Singh.

On the morning concerned, Baba Sawan said to the huge Satsang audience gathered to hear Him speak, 'I have not used any Satsang money for my personal use, except for petrol for the car and accommodation, for which I ask forgiveness. I have made all arrangements for the Satsang work.'

His two sons, Bachint Singh and Harbans Singh, then stepped forward and publicly took a vow not to claim anything from the Satsang, financially or otherwise. Apparently, Baba Sawan had told them long ago, never to expect any material gain from the Satsang.

Then Sawan spoke again saying, 'Anyone who needs help and clarification on inner progress or inner experience should go to Kirpal Singh, who is going to work according to my wishes.'

Someone asked a question: 'Isn't Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh going to do all the work?' Sawan replied to this with: 'No, only the physical work pertaining to all the material

welfare of the Dera. He will not be in charge of giving initiation or holding Satsangs.'

Immediately after the Satsang, Baba Sawan went to His room and in front of a large group there, which included Kirpal, said, 'Kirpal, you are in charge of the spiritual matters. You are not under anyone but me; directly connected to me.' Then after a pause He continued, 'You have witnessed to what is my will; see to it that it is carried out according to my wishes.'

These words went through Kirpal like a bolt of lightning, so filled were they with portentous significance. He broke down as the tears came to his eyes and kneeling at his Master's feet he said, 'Hazur, my whole life I have spent in Your will, never asking anything for myself. Today I, a beggar, ask for alms. Do not smear me with the blemish of separation.'

Sawan did not reply for some moments. Finally He said, 'Alright my brother, we will see what can be done.' That evening, when Kirpal went to Sawan's room for darshan, Sawan said, 'For a little while it will be as you wish, Kirpal Singh.' And so it was. That was September 1947 and Baba Sawan was to grace the earth with His physical presence until April second of the following year.

Baba Sawan was on His way to Amritsar Hospital when His car had to pass a long line of Muslim people being escorted to the new border by an Indian military guard. About half way past the line, Baba Sawan told the driver to stop the car and go and ask the officer in charge of the escort to come to the car. Subedar\* Shivdev Singh, who had been detailed from the army to escort Baba Sawan to Amritsar, became concerned when he heard this and requested

\* A non-commissioned officer.

Baba Sawan not to stop the car, fearing the danger of an incident occurring from the very large number of Muslims. But Sawan was firm, and the officer was brought to the car. Sawan told him, 'I have about two hundred Muslims hiding at the Dera. Could you please make some safe arrangements for them too?'

Meanwhile, back at the Dera, Kirpal was preparing the arrangements for the two hundred to join the same main line of Muslims that Baba Sawan had encountered. Sawan had told Kirpal before leaving, 'See to it they get transportation and that they get to safety.' Trucks and buses had been brought for them, also guards. Kirpal sent them off and told someone to await the return of the escorts. After a short space of time, the vehicles returned to the Dera, still loaded with people.

The guards told Kirpal, who was just about to go and hold a Satsang, that approximately one thousand Akalis\* were not far from the Dera, armed with swords and rifles. They had not entered the Dera boundaries but were lined up nearby, vowing to kill every single Muslim in the convoy as it left the sanctuary. They added that anyone escorting them would suffer the same fate. Even as this was being explained to Kirpal, another report arrived telling him that the vengeful group of Akalis had advanced on the Dera and were now just outside the gate. Everyone in the Dera at the time realized the tense and volcanic predicament. No one knew what would happen at any moment.

Kirpal considered the situation for a few minutes and then said that he would go and speak to the Akali leader. Everyone protested, pleading that he should not go just to be killed, but Kirpal walked to the gates as calm and serene as he would be on a mundane errand. A few satsangs

\* Warrior sect of the Sikhs.

went with him, and he gave orders that the trucks and buses should be loaded up, ready to go.

When the Akalis saw his white clothed and turbanned figure come through the gates followed by the others, they drew their swords and stepped forward. But Kirpal's calm and fearless attitude, his softly spoken words of greeting, full of love, caused them to hesitate. They demanded to know his purpose in leaving the Dera, declaring that they were just about to enter it, to kill every person inside, ensuring they got all the Muslims hiding there, even if they were disguised as Hindus or Sikhs.

Kirpal, ignoring this direct threat, continued in his soft and sweet manner, asking them to enlighten him on a couple of points of the Sikh religion. His humble and noble presence had a somewhat cooling affect on their fiery anger and they agreed to answer his questions. The "sweet words imbued with humility" that Kirpal always advocated were indeed quelling some of the wrath in their hearts.

Kirpal asked a single question: 'Is it not correct that a true Sikh is one who safeguards those in distress, even sacrificing his own life for those who come under his protection?' They had to agree that this was true and that according to their religion it was a moral obligation.

Speaking straight to their hearts, Kirpal implored them to not destroy their religion in the name of religion. 'At this time,' he said, 'when man has become blind with ignorance to his own religion and is destroying those in whom God's Light resides, it is a time for the true Sikhs to show the world how great is the Sikh religion and how great you are in your faith. Today, a handful of Muslims are standing in need of your protection and are begging for your mercy. Now is the time to prove to the world how a Sikh acts who follows the True Gurus – the Gurus who taught that all mankind is one.'

It is in your hands to bring their teachings to life. Come forward brothers and embrace these Muslim brothers as your own. You have been for generations living together, sharing with them your joys and sorrows. As children you played together; now what has come over you that in the name of religion you are killing God's children? Do you think that He will ever forgive you for such unholy acts?' Kirpal continued talking in this vein and for as long as he spoke not a sound was heard, all was still and silent and no one spoke. His words reached down into their hearts as can only the words of a True Saint. Young and old alike were reduced to tears, bowing their heads in shame before him and his words of truth.

They looked at the Muslims, many of whom had come to the gate and had heard Kirpal's words. They too were in tears. They looked back at the Akalis, and suddenly the two groups were running forward and weeping in each others' arms. Those same men who had come to the Dera filled with deadly intent, now showered love on their Muslim brothers. Furthermore, they themselves escorted the convoy to the border and bade them farewell as if they were parting from family members. Only a very great power of love could have achieved such a complete volte-face.

The Dera was yet to be at peace. The possibility of a Muslim attack was always present but, to compound the problem, a gang of narrow-minded, fanatical Sikhs had turned against Baba Sawan for giving protection to Muslims at the Dera, and were vowing to kill Him and anyone who might guard Him.

Kirpal apprehended a serious danger in the threat and banded together a small party of volunteers to defend the sanctity and safety of the Dera. For ten nights and days, Kirpal paced up and down and around Sawan's residence.

After a couple of days, some women joined the volunteer group and among them was a daring figure, tall and imposing, with a fearless look and a naked sword in hand. Hardevi! Kirpal did not cease his vigil at Sawan's residence until he was certain that conditions had calmed down and the mood of the people had changed.

The whole nightmare lasted for just a short period, but to those concerned it felt as if an age had passed. People had grown older than their years and it was hard to summon the strength to face the devastation that was left. Thousands were homeless and it was a daunting task to build, from the ruins of their lives, a new beginning.

Later, among the various accounts was one story that came from the village of Sayyad Kasran, Kirpal's birthplace, which had fallen within the boundaries of the newly formed Pakistan. Its population had always been a mixture of Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, living side by side in peace and harmony. Overnight almost, everything changed and the tranquility was shattered by violence. Before the Sikhs and Hindus had time to realize what was happening they were being butchered, with no time, means or place to escape the horrible fate facing them. They tried to lock themselves in their houses but the Muslims brought torches and set them afire. Agonizing screams of people being burned alive were heard amid the roaring flames.

Sardar Hukam Singh and his family had lived in the strongest built house in the village – the building that was blessed with the birth of Kirpal, True Master of Spirituality. When pushed to desperation, a large group of Sikhs and Hindus with wives and children ran into this very house and locked all the doors and windows. There were more than one hundred and fifty people in there, hoping against

hope, or perhaps hoping for a miracle to save them.

The attackers soon realized that many people were hiding there and in a wild fury they attempted to break down the doors. Somehow the doors held. Quickly, they brought kerosene, gasoline and every flammable thing they could find – wood, paper etc. Whatever they tried, the house would not ignite. The gasoline and kerosene acted like water, simply making the wood, paper and the house wet instead of bursting into flames.

The very strange phenomenon struck the hearts of the assailants and they began repeating the name of Allah\*. In fear, they ran from what they thought was a bewitched house but in fact was a house protected by the Positive Power. The people who were saved that night never forgot their good fortune and the grace that was bestowed on them. They arrived in India safe and sound and told their story; for years to come they would tell of the miracle that had saved their lives.

That same grace was God's gift to Ajit Singh Mehra, his wife and family, when they rushed to Lahore train station to flee the area by boarding a train to Beas. While awaiting the arrival of the train, huddled together with a small group of others who were also hoping to cross the new border, their youngest daughter told her mother of an urgent need to visit the washroom. The mother was fearful of going too far from the group, but discovered within close proximity a wall bordering the side of the platform and thankfully led the child to this private and secluded spot. It was an unfortunate choice, for two misguided Muslim youths were hiding there, on the lookout for just such an opportunity. They rushed at the mother and child with flashing daggers. The

\* Islamic name for God.

mother held her daughter close and closed her eyes, calling aloud, 'Maharaj Ji, Maharaj Ji\*', in desperation. At once she heard one of the youths shout, 'Who are these two Sikhs - where did they come from?' Opening her eyes, she saw the youths running away as if death itself was after them.

Highly excited, Mrs. Mehra told this to her husband and they both thanked their Guru for saving them. This incident occurred after Baba Sawan had returned to Beas, and on arriving at the Dera they at once related all this to Sawan, punctuating the account with tears and sobs, thanking Him for saving them. Baba Sawan confirmed that they had received help from the Higher Power, which is in control.

The numerous miracles that God provided during this period of horror were the positive side of otherwise appalling, deplorable and tragic circumstances; circumstances said to have made an indelible mark on the whole society of the sub-continent. Many instances of grace experienced by satsangis were recorded. They told of Sawan or Kirpal, or both Masters together, appearing before the disciples physically, saving them from death or a worse kind of fate. Sometimes the Masters would be seen driving the Muslims away with drawn swords. On one occasion, the daylight disappeared in that particular spot and, under cover of the remaining darkness, the satsangis were whisked away to safety. When these appearances were subsequently compared to wherever Sawan or Kirpal was at that precise time, it was found that the great souls were far from the scene of the strange materializations, busy helping more of God's children in a different location. It was not a time to marvel at such things - rather they inspired a serious and overwhelming sense of gratitude deep within the recipients of the blessings.

\* Respectful term used in India. Literal meaning: Great King.

Kirpal went to many a dangerous place where others feared to go – deathtraps that afforded no means of escape. But he was determined to rescue Muslim disciples from angry Hindus and Sikhs, and Hindu/Sikh disciples from angry Muslims. When he was not there in person, his radiant form would appear and lead them to safety. So many instances were told, when all were safely behind the Indian border, of how he would appear at the crucial moment – 'It was as if his appearance made us invisible and we were able to walk out from under the blades that were about to kill us, then follow his form until we reached safe ground.'

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

At the hospital in Amritsar, on October 4, 1947, the doctors announced that Baba Sawan's condition had deteriorated so much, there was not a lot of hope. One chance was possible, if a certain medicine could be found. After a search, they discovered that this medicine was not available in Amritsar, so it was arranged that a doctor should go by road to Jullundur\* and get the medicine.

When Sawan heard about this He called Hardevi, who had been keeping close, night and day. He told her to accompany the doctor in the car, but to get dropped off at the Dera in Beas on the way. There, she must tell Kirpal to accompany her back to Amritsar on the car's return journey from Jullundur. Sawan emphasized how important it was for Kirpal to come. Finally, it was October 11 when Hardevi and the doctor started out from Amritsar.

Early on the morning of October 12, Sawan wanted to know if Kirpal had arrived and, on being told in the affirmative, He immediately sent for him. As soon as Kirpal entered the room, Sawan said, 'I have very important work for you. I have arranged for all the other work but have not given the spiritual duties and the giving of Naam, as yet, to anyone on an outer level. Today I give this to you so that

\* About 50 miles from Amritsar; (now Jalandhar).

the precious work will flourish beyond limits.'

Tears were running down Kirpal's face as he begged Sawan not to go. 'Hazur, the happiness we get by sitting at your feet cannot be derived anywhere in Khand, Brahmand\*.' Sawan was serious as He replied, 'The work has to be done. When Baba Jaimal Singh\*\* gave me the orders, I had to obey them too.'

Baba Sawan then sent a telegram to His eldest son, Bachint Singh, to come over to Amritsar. Kirpal spent all his time there doing whatever he could to serve Sawan, using only one and a half hours to tend his own needs – eating, bathing, etc.

One day he met the pharmacist, Hazara Singh, who told him that Sawan was to be operated on that afternoon at 4 p.m. Kirpal was appalled at this, for he had consulted with the highest qualified doctors in New Delhi, all of whom had agreed unanimously that that particular operation would be fatal to Sawan. Stupefied, he wondered why the decision had been kept so secret, even from himself. When he approached Sawan's room, he found Bachint Singh guarding the door. He asked him if he knew about the operation at 4 p.m. and Sawan's son confirmed it. Kirpal then asked him if he knew that the operation was very dangerous and the man replied that he did know, but it was Sawan's own wish to have the operation and had Himself given the orders.

Kirpal said, 'You are the physical son of Hazur, so I beg of you to go and plead with Him not to go through this operation.' But Bachint Singh just shook his head saying, 'We cannot disobey Hazur; we go by His wishes.' Kirpal replied, 'If you, His physical son cannot do it, then I, His spiritual son will do it.' So saying this, Kirpal walked into

\* Inner planes.

\*\* Baba Sawan's Guru (1838-1903).

the room and drew close to where Sawan was resting and said to Him, 'Hazur, forgive me, but did you tell them to operate on you?' Sawan's reply was: 'They had made all the arrangements sometime back.'

His heart breaking, Kirpal entreated Sawan, 'Hazur, it makes no difference to you if you stay here or if you are somewhere else, but for us it would be unbearable without you.' His hopes were lifted a little as Sawan smiled at him and said, 'Go without any worry, I will see what can be done.'

That evening when the surgeon, Dr. Nutt, came Sawan told him that He was feeling much better and so did not feel that the operation was necessary. The doctor himself was greatly relieved and said that he had not liked the idea of the operation but felt compelled because of the helplessness of the situation. And so it was due to Kirpal's intervention, driven by true love for his Master, that Sawan did recover and return to Beas.

On the very evening of His return, He called the clerk who kept the register of initiates and told him to total up the number of people who had received initiation. When the total was brought, He saw that the figure was one hundred and fifty thousand. He sent for Kirpal and told him, 'Kirpal Singh, I have done half your work – now you have to do the other half.' In reply, Kirpal folded his hands and said, 'Hazur, whatever is your command; but there is one request – that you should do the other half too. If you want me to dance, I will dance, but remain forever before my eyes.'

Another day, Kirpal again pleaded with Sawan. 'Hazur, do not leave me like this. I know you had to carry on this work after Baba Ji\* left, but you yourself have many times

\* Baba Jaimal Singh.

related how you went to Chacha Pratap Singh and Baba Garib Das and got their help. Tell me Hazur, to whom would I turn for help if you left me?’

Sawan’s look for Kirpal at this moment was so full of love that His eyes overflowed with tears and He said, ‘Kirpal Singh, what you say, in a way is true, but not for you. I assure you, you have no need for anyone’s help.’

On yet another occasion, Kirpal pleaded again: ‘Do not be cruel Hazur; how will I be able to bear this physical separation? Let me go before you, I beg of you.’ When Sawan shook His head at this request, Kirpal tried once more with, ‘Hazur, you are only ninety years; Kabir\* and Amar Das\*\* graced the physical much longer. You need do no physical labor, just be here and I will do everything – whatever you order.’

But it was all to no avail. For the first time, his request had been refused. Kirpal’s head bowed in dejection as he said, ‘Thy will be done, Hazur.’ Then after a few moments of silence he added, ‘But Yours alone will be the guiding hand; You will be the Light and I Thy Lamp; You will be the Sound and I Thy bell; I will give Your message to one and all in the form of Satsang, and I will implant Your seed in each soul which is ready for it; I will turn the nights into days and work ceaselessly, because it is Your work; but the protection of the souls will be Your protection.’ These words from Kirpal, expressed with the humility that is found only in a great soul, reveal the extent of his love for Sawan. His heart was broken but his heart was true. This dedication to Sawan’s will was kept faithfully throughout his earthly years.

\* A Perfect Master; contemporary of Guru Nanak. (1398-1518).

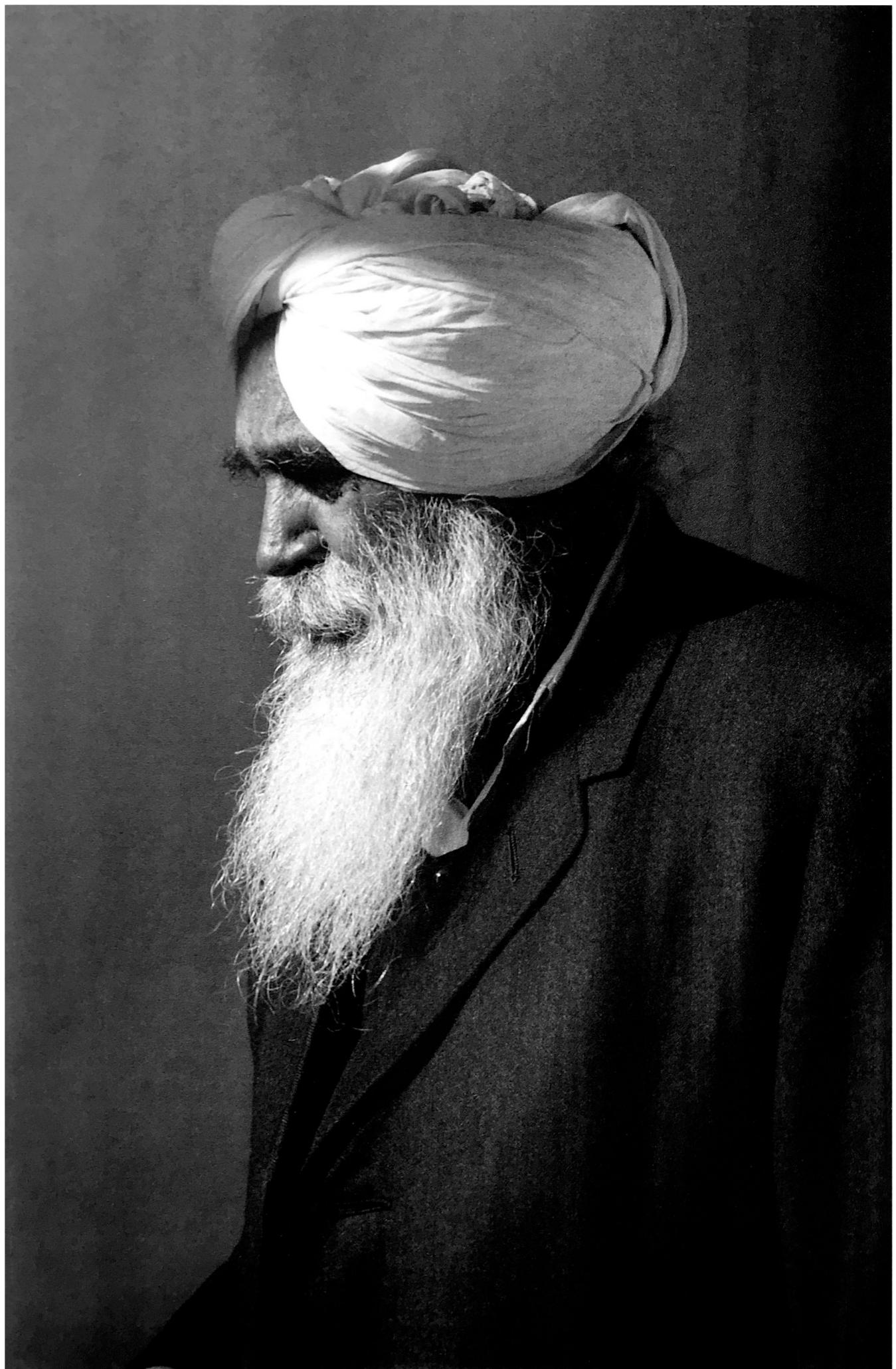
\*\* Third Sikh Guru. (1479-1574).

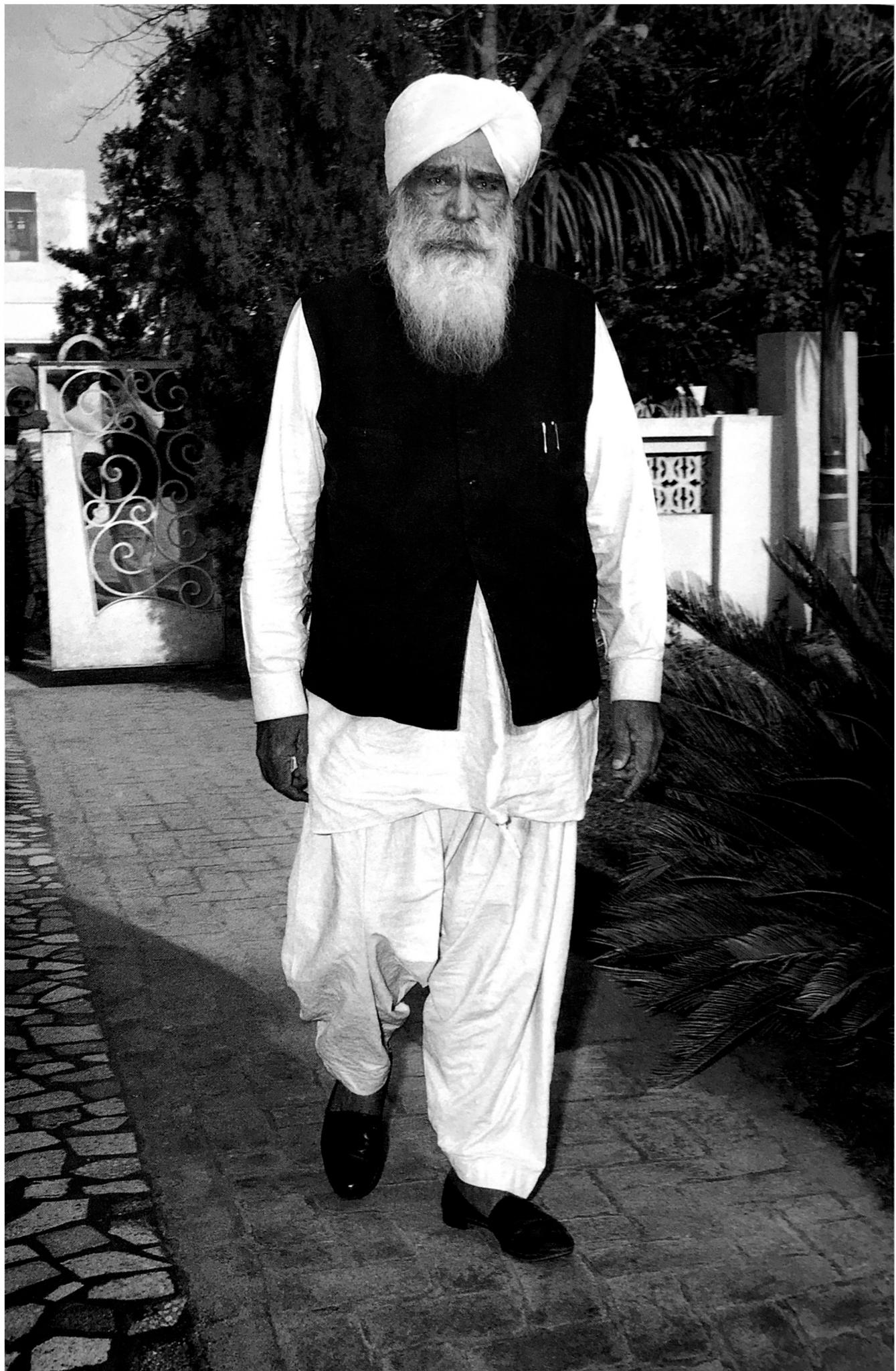
One night when Kirpal was with Him, Sawan said, 'Kirpal Singh, wherever the wealth of Naam will be, there will the seeker go. What could you get from this Dera? When the time comes, leave this place and go somewhere else. Baba Jaimal left Agra. Did He bring any money or followers with Him? No, He came with His Guru\* in His heart. But the seekers came here, and look at it today – His grace is working in all corners. With the help of a lettered man one can get degrees of M.A., B.A., and others, but though a person might spend all his life at the feet of an illiterate, he will never get a learned degree.'

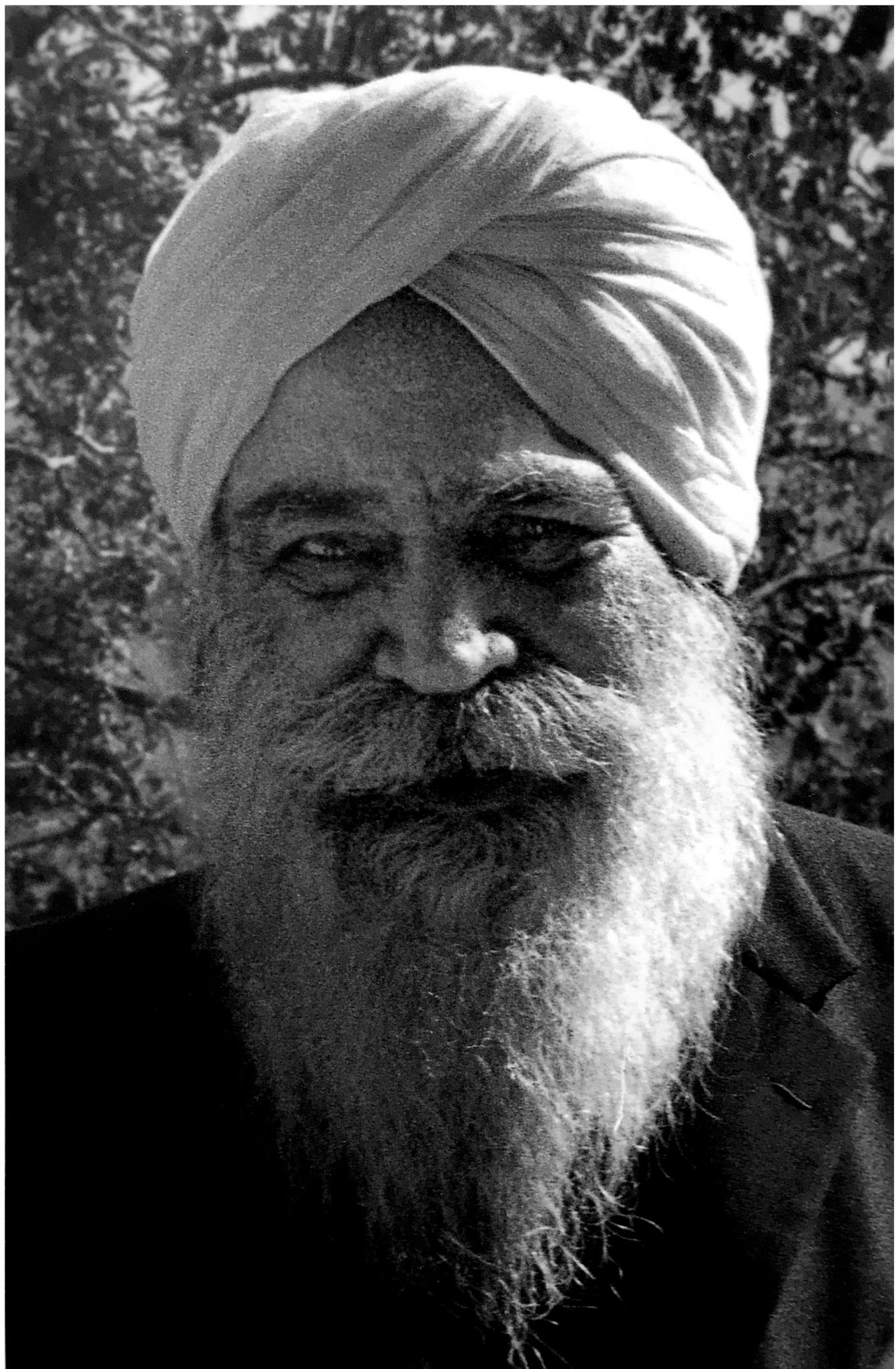
Sawan continued to explain that His desire was for a place where leaders of every religion would sit together for a greater understanding of each others' faiths. It would be a "spiritual gathering"\*\* where people of all religions could attend, to learn about pure spirituality, as a science of the soul; a school free from rites, ritual, dogma and bigotry. Kirpal listened to Sawan's words with rapt attention, and in the future would act upon them.

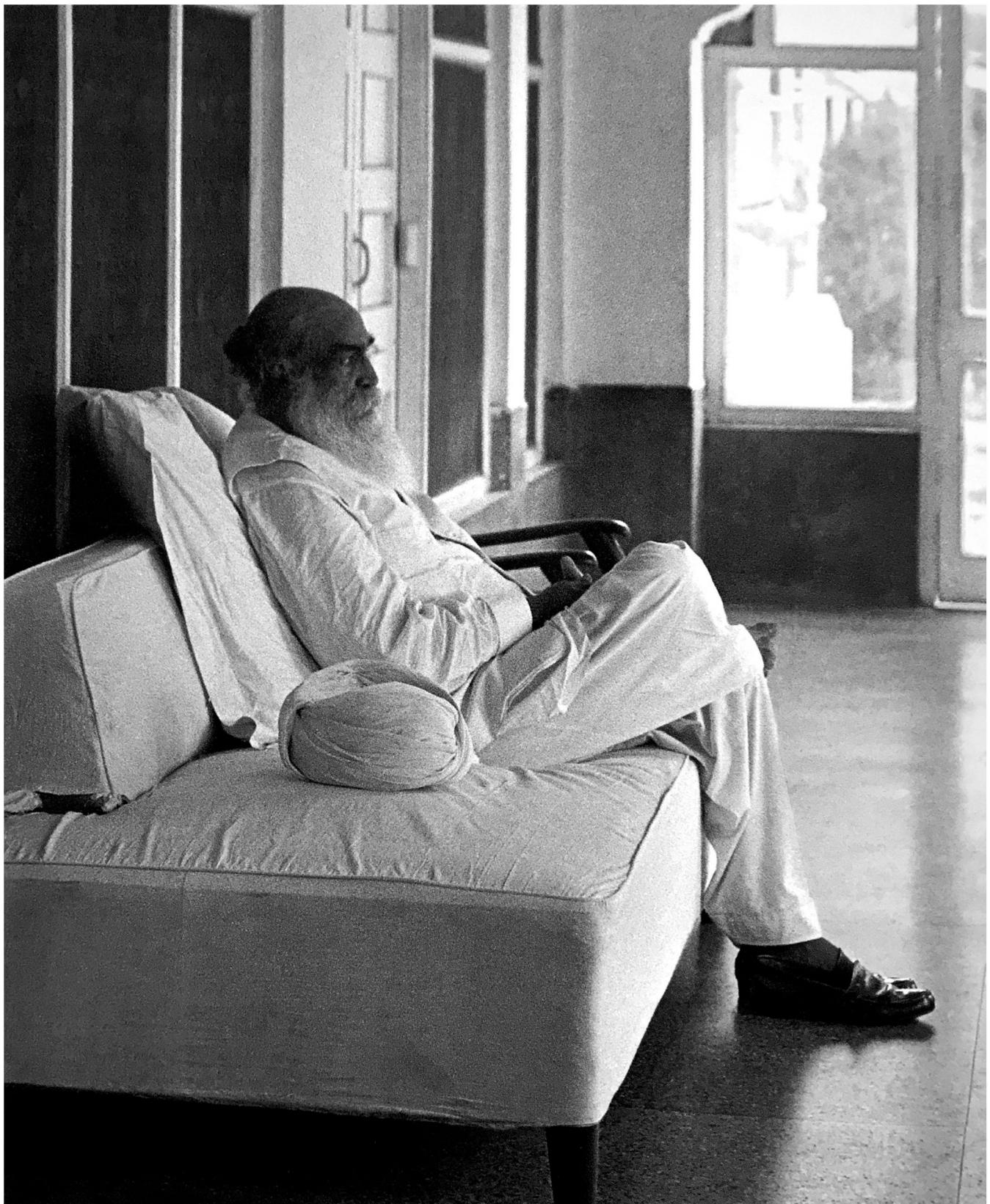
During this time, Baba Sawan's relatives were continually and persistently asking Him to make one of His sons or His grandson, Charan Singh, the successor. When Sawan did not agree to this, they put forward Bahadur Jagat Singh as their next choice. At this, Sawan said to them, 'The work of spirituality can only be done by a spiritual person, chosen for that work.'

In response to Sawan's reply, Bibi Lajo\*\*\* asked Him to place His hand on Jagat Singh's head and bless him, which suggested that Sawan might thereby elevate his spiritual status. To this Sawan replied, 'He is a sick man, and also



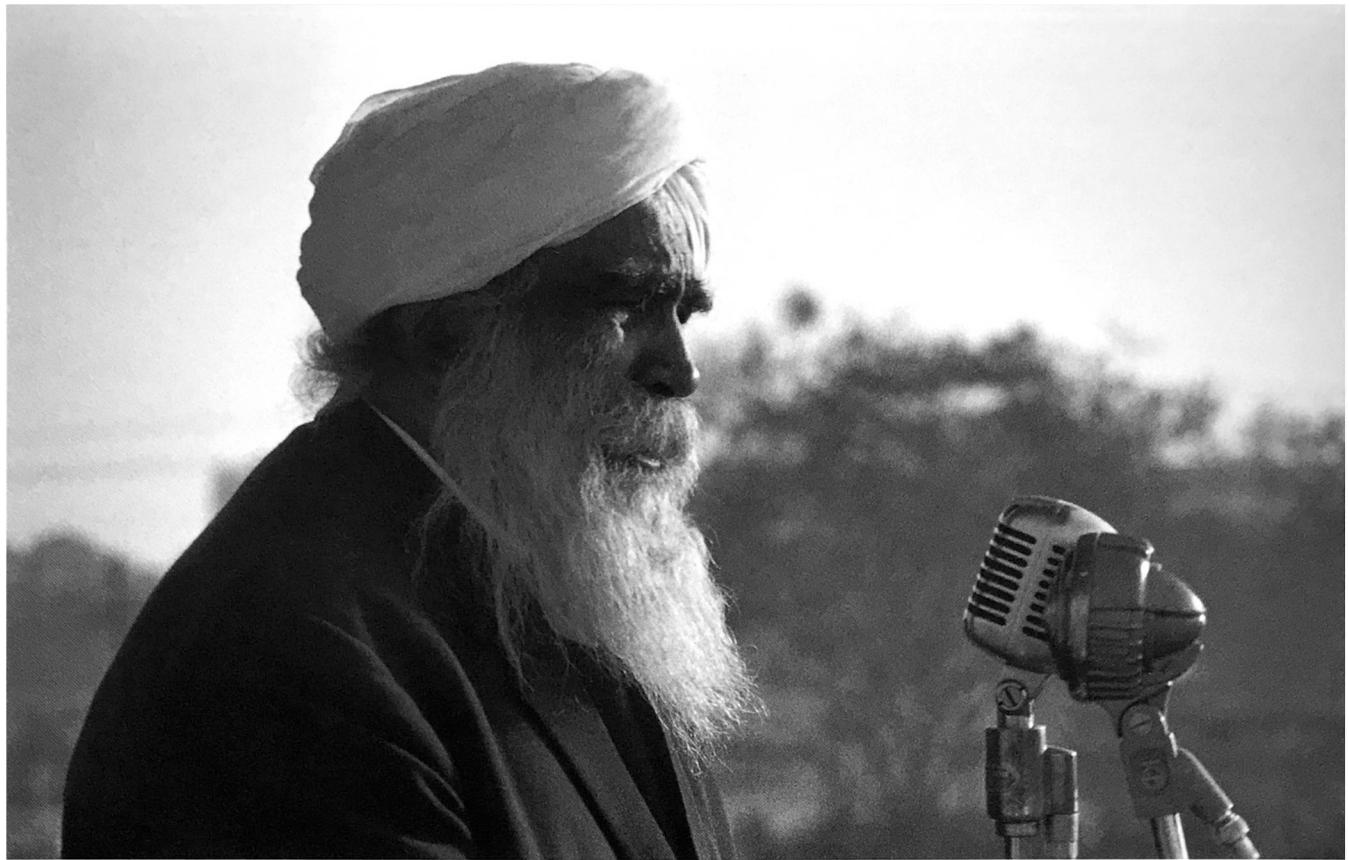






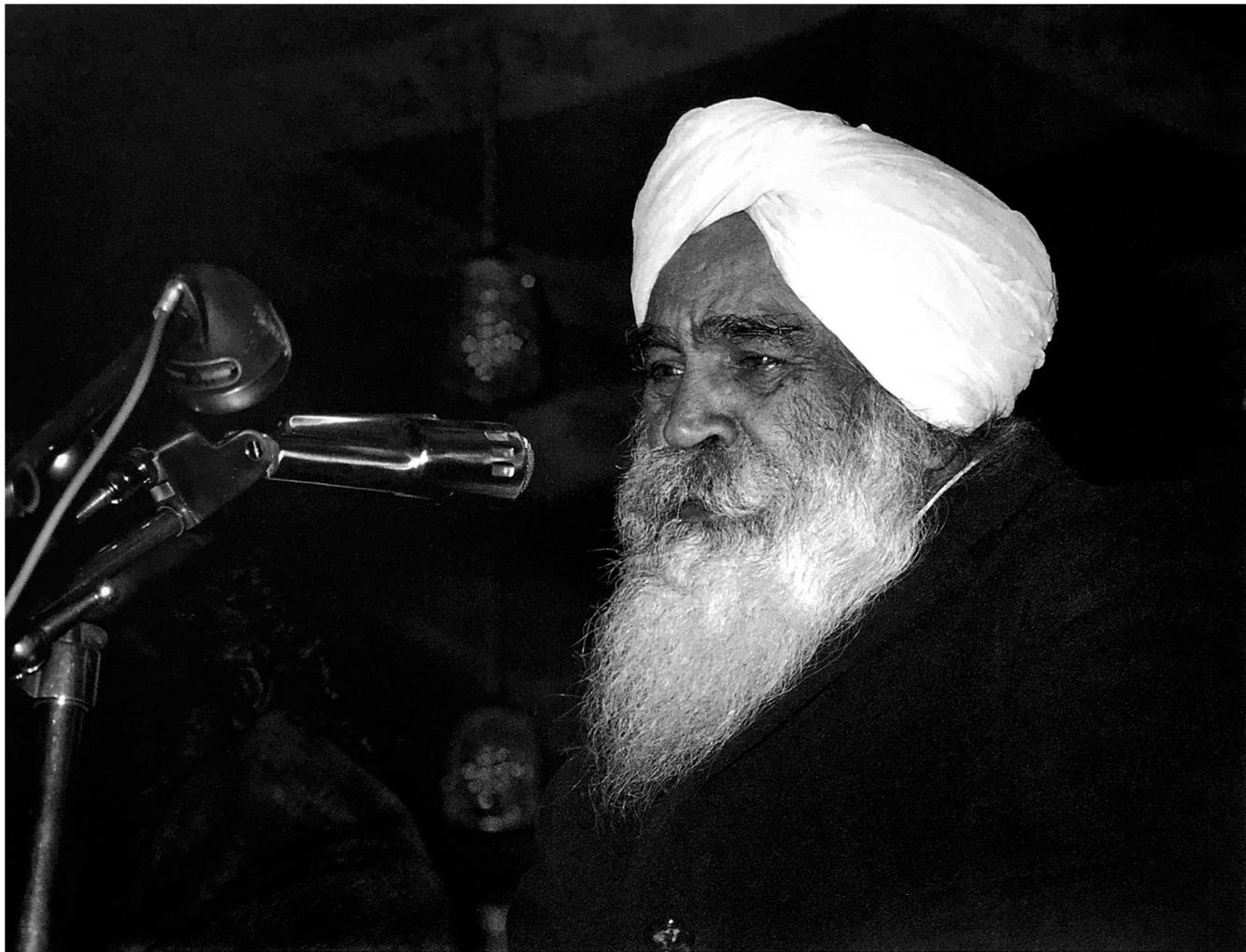
Above: Resting in the verandah of the Master's house, Sawan Ashram, July 1971.  
Right: In the Master's office at Sawan Ashram, 1962





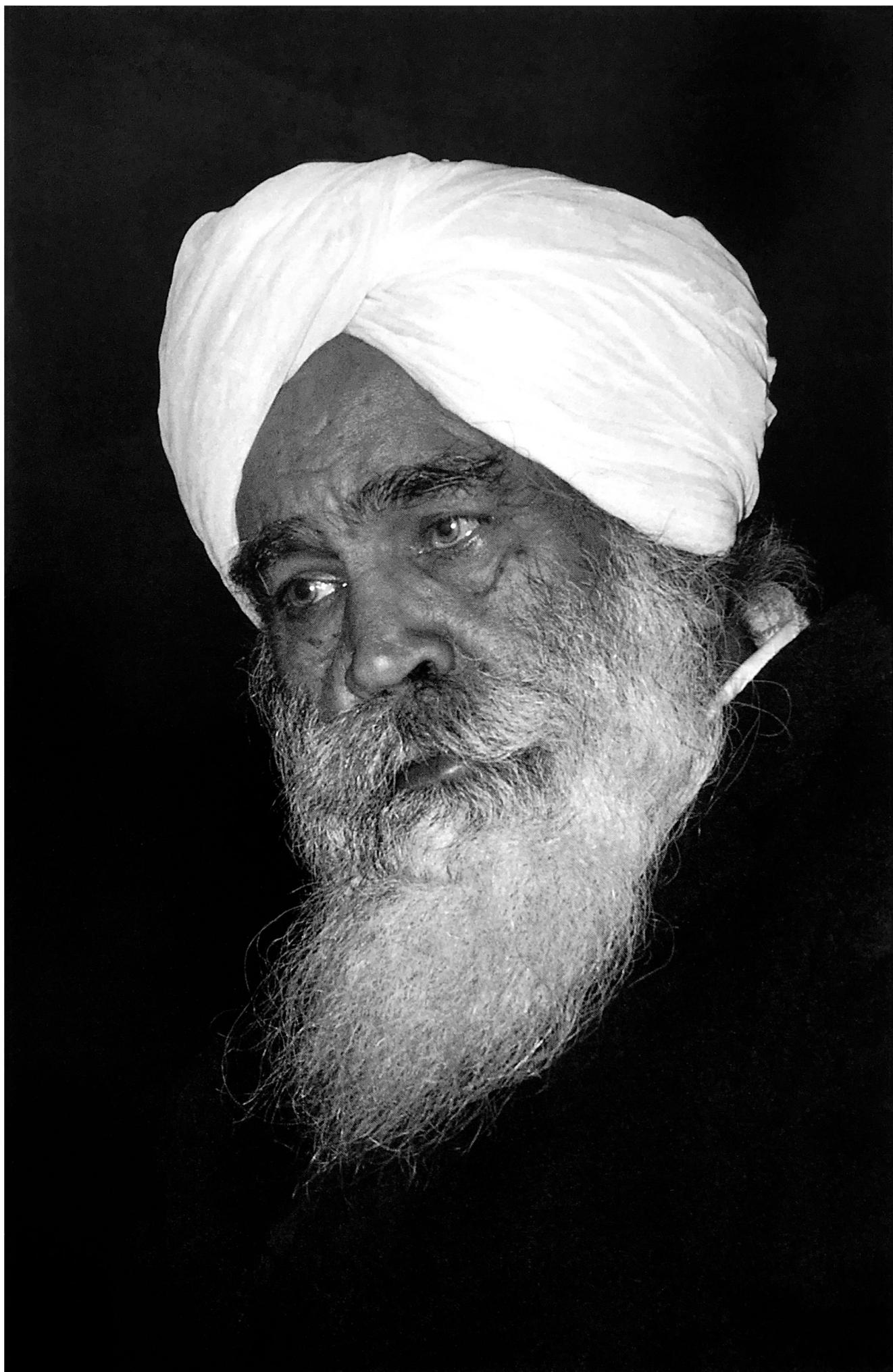
Top: Master at Ramlila Grounds, Delhi, February 1970.

Below: Master's verandah, Sawan Ashram, September 1969.



Top: Master at Sawan Ashram, February 1965.

Below: Master's Birthday, 1972. First Bhandara, Manav Kendra.



he will not last out even four years.' It was a very frank remark, but it proved to be prophetically true, for Jagat Singh died three years and seven months hence from that day.

Baba Sawan gave veiled hints as well as open statements on numerous occasions – about the future of the Dera and the future of spirituality too. Gulab Singh\* once asked Sawan what would become of the Dera if Hazur was not going to announce a successor? Baba Sawan told him, 'Who knows what would happen then? It might come to pass that the spiritual seat would not be here any longer but two or three hundred miles from here.'

This was another remark pregnant with meaning, for Kirpal's headquarters were eventually established in Delhi, which is about two hundred and fifty miles from Beas.

Another statement of Sawan's was just as revealing: 'I am not tied to any single place and neither is the wealth of spirituality. Wherever the lamp is alight, the fireflies will be dragged there effortlessly – but those who are worshippers of outward signs will be left with those empty signs, blind to the lighted lamp.'

During Kirpal's life and His work through all the years, He explained many times how the successor to a Perfect Master is chosen. God Himself chooses His workers in the field of spirituality, and the soul who is chosen to continue the work after the Master leaves His physical form is given the task by the Master gazing into the successor's eyes and thereby transferring the Master Power over to the new Master.

The successorship is never bestowed by paper (in a will, etc.), nor through family or other hereditary relationships, nor by voting in any form, nor by worldly appointment. Kirpal was always very clear on this subject.

\* A disciple of Baba Jaimal Singh. Passed on, 1959.

As Sawan became physically weaker, his relatives became stronger in their assertion at the Dera. This bred a miscellany of would-be successors to Sawan, each with a following of supporters, forming a tight barrier around Him through which only a few could pass.

During the small hours one night, Baba Sawan looked around the room at His sons and their friends and said, 'The sun has arisen, can the people in Jullundur\* see it?' They looked at each other and began to murmur among themselves, saying that Baba Sawan was beginning to lose His senses. Dr. Schmidt, a Swiss disciple who also was present, said that as Hazur was suffering from uremia, He had become delirious.

The very next evening, certain followers were allowed to visit Baba Sawan, and Kirpal was among them. Sawan again brought up the question, but this time He spoke directly to Kirpal: 'Kirpal Singh, I asked a question but no one was able to give me a satisfactory reply to it. Now will you reply? This sun which has arisen, can the people in Jullundur see it?' While asking the question, Sawan was laughing softly. Kirpal smiled at Sawan and said, 'What of Jullundur, Hazur, but all the world over, from one corner to another – even England and America – all can see it, but only if it is your wish to show it to them.'

Sawan smiled back at him and said, 'You have given the correct answer, Kirpal Singh.' The Guru and the Gurumukh continued gazing into each other's eyes, lost in a higher consciousness, and those who were present became aware of a power so strongly charged that the very atmosphere vibrated, and a sense of utter tranquility and peace descended on them. There was a long lapse of silence until finally, as if He was wrenching Himself away, Sawan gave a happy sigh and said

\* About 25 miles from Beas.

quietly, 'You, Kirpal Singh, know me as no other could ever be able to know me.'

At that very perturbing time, on the days when Kirpal was able to see Sawan, many questions about the inner regions were asked and Kirpal answered them; but to others there, it was as if Sawan and Kirpal were speaking in a strange tongue, for no one could understand their sublimated conversation.

But Sawan was very clear and very sad when He said, 'With great sorrow I see that even those who were put on the path have become victims of misunderstanding.' Another day, He looked around at those who were sitting in front of Him and said, 'The last days of my sojourn here will be very painful, but if he who is to succeed me comes and sits beside me, my pain will go.'

Sawan sometimes asked Kirpal to read aloud the prayer section of Swami Ji's book, and the tears would flow down Sawan's cheeks as Kirpal read the words.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

One morning at 5 a.m., during the third week in March 1948, Baba Sawan sent for Kirpal and Hardevi and when they approached His bedside He said, 'Kirpal Singh, you asked me not to leave just yet and it is not in my hands to grant your request, so I have called you to attend a conference of the Gurus on the inner planes. You will come with me, for the final decision must be made this morning and I give you permission to plead for whatever you want.'

Sawan and Kirpal both closed their eyes and went into deep samadhi, while Hardevi sat quietly in the same room, waiting. After some time they both returned to their bodies and Kirpal bowed down to Sawan, his eyes revealing the deep despair inside him. Sawan said, 'Relate to Hardevi what happened.'

Kirpal spoke in low tones as he told of what went on during the inner conference: 'All the Saints were there: Kabir, Nanak, Tulsi Sahib\*, Swami Ji and Jaimal Singh. They all were discussing Hazur's stay on Earth and then I prayed before them, not to call Hazur back. I said that the condition was bad at present - there is an upheaval among the sangat and without Hazur there is no supporting hand to save them. Swami Ji seemed to agree with this, but Jaimal

\* Swami Ji's Guru (1763-1843).

Singh said, "I will not leave Babu Sawan Singh in this mental condition of the followers."

Sawan looked at Kirpal with love pouring from His eyes and told him that he had now seen for himself that Baba Ji did not want Him to stay on in the world any longer.

It was very clear to Kirpal. Baba Jaimal's decision overruled everything. It is also clear verification to any student walking the spiritual path: that God's immutable laws remain steadfast and true, perpetually upheld by the God-in-man, to the benefit of the disciple who is anchored in the Master. Baba Jaimal's decision showed the extent of His care and concern for Baba Sawan – even though Sawan Himself was a Perfect Master. It also demonstrates that the obedience rule works for everyone – even Perfect Masters. Sawan had to obey, and so did Kirpal.

Each day, each hour, every minute and every breath Kirpal took as the days went by brought the dreaded parting nearer to the appointed time. He had seen the departure of his Beloved twenty-one years before, but he now felt it descending upon him like a huge avalanche, to crush every spark of happiness and joy he had in his heart.

On March 27, one day before the people gathered for the monthly Satsang, the management committee of the Beas Dera called the members to attend a meeting. Kirpal was there, and he was told by some of the members to make the "special announcement". Naturally he wanted to know what that announcement was and they told him that in His will, Baba Sawan had made Bahadur Jagat Singh head of the Dera and, as Kirpal was in charge of the Satsangs, then it was up to him to make the announcement at the Satsang the next day.

Kirpal stared at them – first in amazement, and then with

pity, but his voice shook with emotion as he spoke: 'Hazur's will? But He is still in His physical form and can Himself announce whatever He wants to say to the public. He has certainly not told me to make any such announcements.' Certain other committee members also felt very bad at this transgression of respect, and they saw through the scheme as quickly as Kirpal. Everyone knew that Kirpal's word was just like Sawan's to the large multitude of followers and the plan to try and install Jagat Singh as the next Guru could only succeed if Kirpal introduced it to the people.

All those against the proposal stood up, and one man – Harnam Singh – said that they were deeply shocked that such indecency to their Guru's name could be countenanced – in His name and while He was still in the physical body. 'If Hazur is unable to come out and make an announcement at the Satsang, then a microphone can easily be set up at His bedside, through which He can speak, if He so desires.' With this ultimatum, as one man they walked out of the meeting in disgust.

Later that same day Kirpal, accompanied by a few others, entered the room next to Baba Sawan's, which was used as a reception room for His family or visiting satsangis, and members of His personal staff. When Kirpal walked into the room, Dr. Schmidt, Jagat Singh, Sawan's son, some relatives and a few others were gathered there. With no loss of time, pressure was again applied to Kirpal to make the desired announcement – and this time Dr. Schmidt was doing his utmost to get Kirpal to agree. Finally, Kirpal looked at the doctor and asked him, 'You must have seen this will. Do you know what is written in it?' At this question, Dr. Schmidt turned very evasive and the reply he gave eventually was strange: 'I have taken an oath, so cannot divulge the secret.'

Before the day was over, a rumor had been circulated that Baba Sawan was about to clarify the matter of Kirpal being put in charge of giving Satsang and initiation.

Kirpal was sleeping at his brother's house in the Dera, as were a number of his relatives and other satsangis, including Hardevi – a total of seven. That night they would experience something to remember all their lives – an experience that would show just how strong was God's hand of protection upon their heads.

They were all either sleeping or meditating when they were disturbed by an unusual sound which, as it grew louder, they recognized as the sound of bells ringing. The volume continued to increase until it reached a deafening height. One or two were fearful and clung to each other. Kirpal was meditating at the time, but he stood up suddenly and shouted that they should all get out of the house. No one questioned him – they all ran out in a matter of seconds. Their sudden appearance outside the house was perfectly timed to surprise and stop a small group of men who had piled wood and straw around the base of the building, poured gallons of gasoline on it, and were about to set fire to the whole thing. Another minute's delay would have resulted in either an explosion or a raging inferno, or both.

The arsonists ran off as fast as they could, but one man stumbled and was caught. Kirpal and the others recognized him as Gopal Singh Latha, a satsangi, who confessed that he and the others had been paid to do the dirty deed. He also told Kirpal the names of the planners of the night's work, who were the real villains; but Kirpal would not then, nor ever did, reveal their names.

On March 29, when Kirpal and some others went to Sawan's residence, they were not allowed to enter the

premises. Baba Sawan's relatives and their close friends were strictly guarding the whole house and would allow only those in their favor to enter.

Kirpal went straight to Dr. Schmidt's quarters and asked him what Sawan's condition was like. Dr. Schmidt replied that he had just come from Sawan's room and Sawan was feeling better. That same night, it was obvious that Sawan was in great pain, for His groans could be heard even outside the house. Yet, no one with Him sent for Dr. Schmidt.

The next morning, at 5 a.m., Kirpal brought Dr. Schmidt to see Sawan. When the doctor saw Sawan's condition, he was horrified. His tongue was extremely swollen and had deep splits. Dr. Schmidt turned to those who were present and, half angry, half bewildered, he shouted out, 'What have you given Him, that overnight His condition has worsened to this state? I had stopped all medicine for the last three days!'

The doctor did not know what had been administered to Sawan and could not think of what kind of remedy to give Him. He tried various medicines to relieve the pain but none of them worked. The pain increased each minute throughout the night of March 30 and the whole of the following day. It became a living hell for those in attendance on Sawan for they had never before seen suffering like it.

Kirpal was not allowed to enter the house where Sawan lay in agony. God's will is strange and often difficult for most of the human race to understand, and this was certainly an enigma. Here was the chosen one, Sawan's most precious disciple – made abundantly clear by Sawan Himself – the one who could bring the light of joy and happiness into Sawan's eyes, but he was the very one whose presence was denied during those agonizing hours. Was it an ironic stroke of fate, or was it a carefully laid plan of

Baba Sawan's? The unenlightened never knew. One thing was a certainty, however: that Sawan allowed His body to suffer such excruciating torment that the very souls of those surrounding Him shook in fear.

Bibi Lajo, the lady who looked after Sawan's meals and clothes at the Dera, who had served Him for many years, could no longer bear the sight and sound of Sawan's non-stop suffering. Sobbing loudly, she fell down on her knees to beg Sawan, 'Hazur, you are God, you are the supreme controller of everything, please I beg of you, do not let your sacred physical form suffer like this. Have mercy on us, the poor sinners, for we cannot bear it any longer.'

She continued weeping, until she heard Sawan's voice saying clearly, 'My suffering will be over, if and when my spiritual successor comes and sits beside me.' Astonished, she ceased crying and looked up, hardly believing she had heard so many words, knowing that Sawan could not speak because of His swollen and raw tongue. But she knew she had heard them. Rushing into the next room, she told Sawan's relatives what Hazur had said.

The rest of the night, one by one they went to sit beside Sawan. They took Jagat Singh there, but it was no use – none of them made any difference to Sawan's pain; His groans, if anything, appeared to be increasing. At 6 a.m. on April 1, her head splitting in two, unable to bear watching Sawan's agony any longer, Bibi Lajo slipped quietly out of the house, unseen by anyone. She ran without stopping until she reached the house where she knew Kirpal was staying, but he was not there. She rushed out again like a mad woman, and then she saw Kirpal hurrying toward her. 'Tell me, tell me Bibiji, how is Hazur?' he pleaded, but she just grabbed him by the hand and ran to Sawan's residence, panting as if her heart would burst and shouting, 'Come Kirpal Bhapa,

run; do not ask questions but hurry, hurry.'

Hardevi, catching sight of them from afar, ran to join them saying, 'Let me come also, Bibi Ji – please let me!' Thus they entered the gate of Sawan's residence but were stopped at the door by the guard, for Kirpal was not allowed to enter the house. Bibi Lajo promptly pushed the guard aside and entered with Kirpal. Hardevi had greater difficulty, for the guard seemed determined to stop someone and grabbed at her clothes, tearing them in the struggle; but she slipped out of his hands and, wrapping her shawl around her torn garments, she followed Kirpal and Bibi Lajo into Sawan's room.

They saw Baba Sawan lying on His bed, moaning with pain. In a public Satsang on April 1, 1958, Kirpal remembered this agonizing time in His life, and said, 'I was astonished and distressed to see that those who were always physically close to Hazur did not even know who Hazur was and were praying in loud voices to Baba Jaimal Singh to relieve Hazur of the pain He was going through.' Kirpal bowed down to Hazur and, sitting on the floor near His feet, started praying, 'Hazur, You are the True Emperor [Sache Bathsha]; You are in control of everything and are above the body consciousness, so it makes no difference to you what happens to your body, but we cannot bear this sight; have mercy on us. You yourself have to take away this torture to your body.'

When he opened his eyes, Kirpal saw that the beautiful serenity and radiance had returned to his Beloved's countenance. In Kirpal's own words, 'Hazur, the True Emperor, had accepted my prayer and was physically completely relaxed and without pain of any kind. A radiance of unbelievable beauty lit up His face and forehead. Opening the eyes that were intoxicated with the love of God, He gazed into

this nonentity's eyes, and the brilliance in His eyes overshadowed the brightness which can be seen in a young lion's eyes.

'Overwhelmed and humbled, I could only say, "This is all your grace." Hazur continued looking into my eyes for three or four minutes and the servitor's eyes went on absorbing the awareness in the eyes of the Supreme Father until out of the oneness came such intoxication that was incomparable to any experience of my whole life. Then, those mercy-filled eyes closed and never opened again.'

Kirpal continued gazing at that adored face which was now transparent with a radiant light that everyone in the room could see. All the suffering had gone, as if it never had been there. Eventually, he bowed down low to the physical pole at which the Great Light had worked for so many years and from which it was now separating.

Then Kirpal called Bibi Rali, who also looked after Baba Sawan, telling her to look at Hazur and see that all pain and exhaustion had vanished, that His face was aglow, emitting rays of power and peace. Everyone felt it, and their troubled spirits calmed down by just gazing at His glorious countenance.

Jagat Singh and Baba Sawan's relatives also admitted that His pain and discomfort had gone. Gandhi, His personal servant, ran out and shouted to the people gathered outside, 'Bhapa Ji has come and Hazur's pain and suffering has gone!'

Dr. Schmidt said that Baba Sawan would be gone by that night, but Kirpal told Bibi Rali that Hazur would not leave in the night but the next morning, the morning of April second. At 2:50 a.m., Kirpal went to Sawan's room with Dr. Schmidt and Hardevi, joining some followers who were there already. Hardevi massaged Sawan's feet.

At 8:30 a.m. on April second, just as Kirpal had told, Sawan left His physical abode. Kirpal laid His head on Sawan's breast and said, 'The sun of spirituality has set.'

Kirpal requested Jagat Singh to leave Hazur's body lying in state for at least four days to allow time for the thousands of devotees who would come from afar, yearning to have a last glimpse of their Guru; but His advice was not taken and, together with the relatives and their group of followers, they started preparing for cremation that very day.

The grief-stricken disciples heard about this and, gathering together in one accord, avowed that they would not allow them to do such a thing, especially as a terrible rumor was circulating regarding Baba Sawan's illness. It was felt that something was not quite right – His suffering in the manner that He had – and therefore an autopsy should be performed. It was an outrage to the whole sangat to learn that an early cremation was about to take place. In their shock and grief the mass of followers went somewhat wild, turning into a seething distraught multitude, an angry throng much too large for the Dera to contain with safety. Jagat Singh and his immediate supporters froze helplessly in fear as the angry followers of Sawan brushed them aside, ignoring their desperate efforts to explain their reasons.

Just as the incident threatened to get completely out of hand, Kirpal appeared – as if from nowhere. When the people saw Him they began to shout loudly, 'We know something is wrong. We want an autopsy on Hazur's body.' Kirpal asked them to be quiet, and in a matter of moments everyone was silent. Perhaps it was something they saw in His deathly pale face and in His eyes reflecting a ferocity mingled with pain and misery.

He asked the huge crowd if Sawan was their Guru, and

did they believe that He was God, in control of all things? They responded in a loud affirmative, 'Yes, yes.' Kirpal then went on: 'If Hazur suffered, through whatever cause He suffered, it was His own wish to do so. He was the Controller and could see what was going to happen, so whatever has come to pass was His wish, and so be it. Why do you want to bring an insult upon His holy body?' He consoled them, reminding them that Sawan was and is God. Could that Power ever leave them? He reminded them that they were initiated into the beyond. He begged them not to forget their Guru's greatness, that they should do good and great deeds in His name. He comforted them with His own love and brought back life into their harrowed souls. Just like orphan children they clung to the very sight of Him, so strong was the radiation that surrounded Him, and they prayed, entreating Him to not leave them. That they accepted Him as Sawan's successor in spirituality was evident.

The cremation of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji's physical body was performed hurriedly at the Dera Baba Jaimal Singh. Those in charge of the arrangements chose to not wait for Sawan's followers to arrive from various parts of India and overseas.

On the fourth day after Baba Sawan's departure, Kirpal knelt down and touched the earth of the Dera with His forehead and left Beas. He had settled His family in Delhi on leaving Lahore at the time of partition, and now He made His way there to join them. Before He left the Dera, Jagat Singh asked Him if He was coming back, particularly for the thirteenth day ceremony of Baba Sawan's funeral rites. Kirpal replied, with deep sorrow in His eyes, 'I will come only if Hazur so desires.'

But Kirpal never set foot in the Dera again. In the years

that followed, He would see the Dera only from a distance when traveling the highway from Delhi to Amritsar, from which, on a clear day, the towers of the Dera can be seen, like a picture postcard. Asking the driver to stop the car, He would point out the tops of the Dera buildings to those fortunate to be traveling with Him. Even those who had never met Sawan would feel the sorrow in their own hearts, transmitted from the deep loneliness in Kirpal's. To be near Him at such a time was to witness that extraordinary mystery of being at one with the Master spiritually, yet simultaneously experiencing separation from His physical form.