

PART TWO

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The Dera Baba Jaimal Singh was never the same after Sawan left. Motives changed and reasons for frequenting the Dera were varied. Some people chose to remain for the sake of Sawan's memory; some had been given charge over certain departments and stayed on to keep their positions – their friends keeping them company to reap the benefits of friendship. Money and fame have many colors, speak many languages, and their lovers remain doomed in attachment and greed, unless God takes pity. Then those who saw Sawan's exit from Beas as a grand opportunity promptly proclaimed themselves His successors. There were in existence more than fifty self-styled "successors" to Sawan, in various parts of India, casting their lots to vie for anyone's attention.

The true seekers who had come to Sawan seeking God, unhappy souls that they were, could only withdraw from the public eye, retire into seclusion and seek reunion with their beloved Guru through meditation and prayer. They had no need for a successor, knowing Sawan to be not merely a physical attraction but indeed the very soul of their souls, the power of God that is working in all things.

The majority of Baba Sawan's followers knew that Kirpal was their Guru's true successor, for Sawan had

made it crystal clear in many ways. A number of these began to seek out Kirpal; some waited for a personal sign from Sawan.

Gurbux Singh was a prominent follower of Sawan and was himself admired by a small group of Sawan's initiates who appreciated his honesty and fearlessness. One night, as he sat with his friends, all brother satsangis, he told them that although Hazur had given so many indications that Kirpal would take over His work, yet He had made no public announcement confirming this. So Gurbux Singh suggested that all who could rise above the body consciousness should sit together, then and there, to ask Baba Sawan the name of the true successor. Agreeing, they all sat in meditation and those who were fortunate to converse with Sawan inside came back with the same message from Him: 'Go to Kirpal – He is the spiritual Guru.'

Gurbux Singh lived in Delhi where, obeying Sawan's orders, he had held regular Satsangs. Returning to his house in Old Delhi, he began visiting Kirpal, who was staying with His relatives in New Delhi. On each visit, he urged Kirpal to proclaim Himself the true successor to Sawan, but Kirpal only shook His head and said that He was not fit to be successor to their Beloved Sawan. He was appalled to see how lightly people regarded the meaning of a spiritual Guru. It was a task He would not wish upon His biggest enemy. It was a very grave matter – to bear the responsibility of all the souls; the suffering to be endured through purging the sins of the accepted ones. He, and all the followers, had just lost the physical presence of Hazur and it wounded Him deeply to realize how little value was placed on the precious gift Sawan had given; how little they understood its true meaning.

This and other untoward behavior caused Him to remark, 'Hazur will turn His face away, seeing us betraying His trust.' Bitterly disappointed, Kirpal started thinking about leaving everything and retreating alone into the woods.

In actual fact, Kirpal's stay in Delhi was no more than three weeks, for He could not bear the conditions developing around Him. He longed only for solitude and seclusion and the memory of His Beloved. Inevitably, His whereabouts were discovered and a small group of Sawan's disciples started gathering at the house every day. They clung to Him in their bereavement, and as the days passed the "small group" grew larger. The news they brought with them was not good – news of so many proclaiming themselves "successors" to Sawan and establishing themselves as "gurus"; even brazenly giving "initiation" to anyone who would listen to them. The bewildered followers asked Kirpal how it was possible that a certain man, now calling himself a guru, could have anything to give others when he had himself told Baba Sawan that he could not sit still, even for five minutes, what to speak of sitting in meditation. 'Tell us, what will happen to such a man and to the people who, in their blindness, believe and accept him as a guru?'

Kirpal's distress increased, hearing about the increasing numbers setting themselves up as something they were not; digging pits, not only for themselves to fall into but also for those they were deluding. He grieved over the situation, but even when pressed, He would not comment on it or utter a word against the wrongdoers, or give advice on the subject. In response to insistent demands, He would ask why anyone would want to concern themselves with the good or bad deeds of others, which are seeds they themselves sow and which they themselves will have to harvest on maturity. Those who are fortunate to have Baba Sawan

as their Guru do not need to follow anyone else but should be true to their own Master and just follow His instructions and that was all any initiate was required to do.

By the end of April 1948, each person who came clamoring for His attention was something like the Lord of Death himself, stealing away precious moments from the remembrance of His beloved Sawan. Those stolen minutes and hours were a deathlike experience, during which He was separated from the true reality. All joy had gone and the darkness of misery closed in on Kirpal like a dark curtain. The sun, moon, stars, the colors of the flowers and the entire beauty of nature were as naught and nothing could uplift Him from the heavy weight of despair.

All through His childhood He had been alone in a world thickly populated with people whose attention was firmly rooted in the world and in worldly things. Not one had understood Him, not one could speak His “language”. Then Sawan had come, a Soul above souls, who had been His only true companion and who had, in time, drawn Him to that manifested physical form. Now the glory and joy of that sublime physical presence was gone, leaving a void that could never be filled. Physically, He was alone on earth once again.

His sadness deepened as He saw how more and more of Sawan’s followers cared little for their Guru’s word. Sawan had given His every breathing moment to His children – even given His life for them. Not a month had passed since He left the body and so many of them had turned their backs on Him and were allowing others to usurp their hearts and steal their attention.

Kirpal’s thoughts continued: *In this world, what is the life of a disciple without his Guru? How can one even lift his head and show his face? I just cannot face anyone, but will go to a remote place and spend the rest of my life in His remembrance.*

When His family learned of His decision, they were horrified and begged Him to reconsider, but their pleading was to no avail. His resolution was firm, and helplessly they relented.

However, one person could not stand by, passive and inactive. Hardevi, the brave, the lion-hearted, could not ignore a challenge. Sawan had shown her who was the successor to His spiritual wealth. She knew Kirpal and she knew what little interest He had in food and rest. She was reluctant to see Him take this step alone and when she heard He was heading for Rishikesh, she resolved to follow Him.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

In 1948, Rishikesh was a perfect haven for reclusion. A thinly populated village nestled on the holy river Ganga [Ganges] in the Himalayan foothills, it was reputed to be a secluded retreat for holy men, sadhus, yogis and seekers after God. A few small stores serviced the very bare needs of those who came specifically for meditation and peace, as well as the basic requirements of the sparsely scattered citizens who chose to live there. They also supplied some provisions to the various ashrams* where yoga was taught, but the main shopping center was in Hardwar, a renowned place of pilgrimage, about eighteen miles from Rishikesh.

Hardwar was a very busy town, especially during certain religious festivals when thousands of pilgrims flocked into its confines from all over India. It was a very active place. Only those who desired to spend their days and nights in God's remembrance found their way to Rishikesh, seeking a quiet spot. There, on the southern and lonelier side of the river, the jungles grew dense and dangerous where the handful of buildings on the edge of the village petered out.

In those days, access to that side of the river was by boat or by a swinging rope footbridge which jiggled nervously when challenged by the weight of humans. There was just

* Literally, sanctuary (usually religious sanctuary).

one ashram on that side and two or three houses on the river bank, built for retreat. Behind these dwellings tigers, lions and other wild cats roamed freely in the forest. Poisonous snakes, scorpions and other potentially deadly creatures abounded everywhere. Very few men had the courage to enter those areas, and never alone. As a refuge, it was sanctuary to men and all other living creatures alike and no killing was allowed, regardless how dangerous the beast.

It was this very place that Kirpal had chosen for His seclusion. However, He first bought a ticket to Hardwar and boarded the bus.

When the bus stopped at the first town after leaving Delhi, Kirpal got out for a few minutes to stretch His legs, but on climbing back aboard the bus He was surprised to see Hardevi sitting in one of the seats. He asked her if she was following Him, but she looked blankly at Him and said, 'Why should I follow you?' Kirpal was not so easily satisfied and persisted in knowing the reason for her travel, so she told Him that she had some business in Hardwar. Kirpal kept quiet and sat with His eyes closed until the bus reached Hardwar six hours later. He then told Hardevi that He would escort her to wherever she had to go before doing His own work, and she said that she was going to Lala Mangat Ram's house. Mangat Ram was a brother disciple who was living in Hardwar at the time.

On reaching his house she rushed in and, grabbing the astonished man by the hand, dragged him away beyond Kirpal's hearing. Breathlessly she told him of Kirpal's intentions and then pleaded with him to follow Kirpal wherever He may go. 'Please, I beg of you to do this, otherwise we will lose the only physical contact with our beloved Hazur. Do not fear, I will also go with you!' Mangat Ram's

face beamed with smiles and he said that it was unnecessary for her to beg anything of such nature from him, for Bhapa Ji was his very life and he would be greatly blessed to be allowed to serve Him in any way at all. These sentiments were shared by another devotee named Dwarika Das who, when he heard of their plans, pleaded to be allowed to go along also.

Kirpal of course forbade them all to follow Him but, unable to hold out against their tears and pleas, He finally relented and gave His permission. However, some strict conditions that they must abide by were imposed. Wherever the “camp” was set up, they must stay there and not follow Him or search for Him should He go off into the jungle for meditation or solitude; and they were not to call Him for meals. They had to agree to these stipulations, but Hardevi humbly made a request that He would return to the camp before sundown each day, or the awaiting threesome would be frantic with anxiety, conjuring vivid pictures of the prowling wild beasts in their minds. Kirpal graciously promised that He would return from the deep forests before nightfall.

It was, for Hardevi and Mangat Ram, the beginning of a nightmarish six months in the jungle. For Dwarika Das, however, the adventure was short-lived, as he returned to his home at the end of a month after his wife had pleaded with Kirpal to send her husband back.

Across the river from Hardwar town, in Neeldhara on the south side, was a Kaishev Ashram, also known as the ashram of Moni* Baba. He was an ascetic devoted to God, who had endured severe bodily hardships in order to keep his mind on his goal. In addition, he had not spoken a single

* Moni means to not utter a sound.

word for many years, in fear of hurting someone, and by injuring the mind of one of God's children he would offend God Himself. Occasionally, a dedicated pilgrim would come for the darshan of the unusual holy man but this was rare, owing to the difficulties of reaching the ashram. It was in a remote position, with no roads. The river at that point could be crossed only by boat and from there on foot through the forest, replete with poisonous snakes, to say nothing of the various wild animals. It was enough to daunt even the most enthusiastic seeker.

What is a deterrent to one is a haven of peace and quiet for another. Even the other sadhus who lived there spoke very little, in deference to Moni Baba's vow of silence. The whole night long they sat in meditation around a brightly burning fire that kept the reptiles etc. at a distance. It was this isolated spot that Kirpal chose as His first quarters and they stayed there for three months.

Moni Baba gave them one room to use, built entirely from rock. It had a single small hole in one wall for a window; the door was ill-fitting and bereft of bolt or chain. Some planks of wood raised off the ground by large stones at each end served as beds. Hardevi and Mangat Ram, considering it disrespectful to sleep at the same level as Kirpal, insisted they would sleep on the floor.

When Kirpal heard this He smiled, saying nothing, but after everyone had settled into their beds – Kirpal on a raised platform and the others on the floor – He said, 'Just wait, and I will show you something.' He picked up a flashlight, switched on the beam and placed it on the floor in the middle of the room. A few minutes ticked by, after which they saw some black insects creeping from the holes in the walls and encircling the flashlight. Hardevi

peered closely at them and, with a scream, she jumped onto Kirpal's raised platform.

Kirpal laughed heartily and, turning to Mangat Ram who was also standing on a platform, He said, 'She thought it was disrespectful to sleep at the same level as me and here she has jumped onto my own plank!' Hardevi realized what she had done and asked to be forgiven. 'But Maharaj Ji, the floor is full of black scorpions and I am only sitting at the foot of the bed.' From that night they each slept on a raised plank and no lights were lit. Every night they kept a watch, shared in two-hour shifts, with the person on guard ensuring that those sleeping were not troubled by snakes. Those undesirable creatures were so poisonous in that area that a man could die within minutes of being bitten, as had actually happened to one of the sadhus.

One night, during Kirpal's watch, He heard a noise that sounded like something hard hitting metal and, turning on the flashlight, He saw a huge cobra coiled with its head thrown back, just about to strike at one of the beds. Kirpal had heard its first strike, which had hit a tin box positioned at the foot of the bed. He made a soft noise to distract the snake's attention and then waved the flashlight a little, which made the reptile uneasy and it started circling the room. By this time the occupants of the beds had awakened and were sitting in their blankets, unable to move, as they watched the drama unfold. Kirpal opened the door, and when the cobra came to the opening it slithered out silently into the night.

Early one morning, as dawn began to filter through the trees, Hardevi opened the door of their room to step outside, but a large coil of what appeared to be rope lay just beyond the doorway so she stepped carefully over it to avoid

tripping. A few minutes later she returned to the room, once again avoiding the coil of rope. By the time Kirpal rose from His meditation the light was stronger and He also stepped over the coil but stopped, turned around and took another look at it. He then went across to the room where Moni Baba lived.

From the beginning of their stay at the ashram, Moni Baba had realized that Kirpal was far advanced on the spiritual path and consequently had started talking to Him, the only one in the world with whom he chose to converse. Kirpal said, 'There is a huge snake all coiled up at the door of my room and we have stepped over it but it does not even stir, so what are we to do about it?'

In a casual tone Moni Baba said, 'Oh, it's that old python and if he goes to sleep it is difficult to wake him, he's so old, hundreds of years, but he's a friendly one and I will wake him up.' Saying this, he started a fire and put a pot of water on to heat. After a little while he asked Kirpal to call one of the young sadhus to carry the hot water. They were joined by Hardevi and Mangat Ram – Hardevi horrified to realize that she had not stepped over coiled rope earlier that morning, but a large python. They had to pour quite a lot of hot water onto the snake's head before he stirred and eventually opened his eyes lazily, uncoiled his long length and very slowly moved back into the forest. All could then see clearly that it was indeed a very big python.

Kirpal's daily routine was to take a simple shower, then make His way into the deepest part of the forest where not even a bird could be seen. There He sat for meditation. He wore a plain white dhoti*, white shirt, and wooden sandals on His feet. At sundown He would come out of samadhi and, keeping His word, return to the ashram before

* Large cloth wound around the lower body and legs.

darkness fell. Hardevi would have prepared a very simple meal for Him, and if there had been no food it would have made no difference to Kirpal.

Sometimes He would go down to the Ganga and swim out to a large rock that had the appearance of a tiny island and there He would stay, lost in samadhi, until sunset. His two companions found out about this particular favorite spot of His and they both would go to the bank of the river from where they could see Him. They usually arrived late afternoon and also sat in meditation until sunset, when they would all return to the ashram together.

On one of those occasions, Hardevi had stopped meditating a little earlier than usual and was quietly enjoying the serene beauty of the river, the trees and the view of Kirpal on His rock. It was a calm and tranquil day and the very atmosphere seemed to vibrate with an indescribable peace.

Suddenly, Hardevi jumped to her feet. She could hardly believe what she saw, so she rubbed her eyes and looked again. It was true, there was a woman in the river – not swimming or drowning, but apparently walking or gliding on the water's surface. She was very beautiful, with long flowing black hair, and, was it the sun or was it a strange light that enveloped her? – casting rays upon her jewels and causing them to glisten and sparkle brightly in myriad colors. Or was she wearing jewels? Was it all a dream?

Hardevi turned around and saw that Mangat Ram was still in meditation. Well, right or wrong, Hardevi felt compelled to shake him out, and when he opened his eyes she just pointed to the river and asked him if he saw anything there. 'Yes, a woman who seems to be walking on the river.' So she was not dreaming, thought Hardevi, the woman was truly a fact. As she continued to watch, she suddenly

realized that the strange figure was heading toward Kirpal, who was still deep in meditation. A frantic fear took hold of Hardevi and her fascination with the scene faded.

She thought perhaps this was an evil spirit, out to do Kirpal some harm. She began shouting, louder and louder, calling Kirpal's name; then finally she picked up some stones from the ground and hurled them toward the perceived "menace." As the woman reached Kirpal she turned and looked at Hardevi, then turned back to Kirpal and folded her hands to Him.

Then they saw that Kirpal was smiling and watching the woman. As He stretched out His hands toward her in blessing, the lovely creature, from a standing position on the water, slowly sank into the depths of the Ganga.

Hardevi and Mangat Ram were still in shock – speechless from the spectacle they had just witnessed – when Kirpal swam ashore. His first words were, 'Why did you throw stones at her?' His voice and His question brought them out of their astonishment and they both began to bombard Him with questions. Who was the figure in the water and why was she approaching Kirpal?

Kirpal then revealed the identity of the lady – she was the Goddess Ganga herself, goddess of the holy river that was named after her, a deity worshipped by thousands. Through her, the river had been purified and made holy and she had come to receive Kirpal's blessing. 'You should not have thrown stones at her. If you had not done that, you would have beheld something rare and beautiful, not often seen by man with eyes of the flesh.'

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

After spending nearly three months in Neeldhara, Kirpal and His two companions left Hardwar for Rishikesh.

The books, paper and pens He had brought with Him were as yet unused. Meditation had taken priority during daylight hours and nights had been spent in the dark, due to the abundance of scorpions, so His thought of writing had not materialized.

On reaching Rishikesh, Kirpal again chose a remote and lonely spot for their quarters, on the southern side of the Ganga, but this time it was a plain, clean and newly-built house. It was located in the area of Swarg Ashram, a simple ashram having several rooms available free to anyone wishing to meditate, and those who could afford to, donated to the upkeep. The house had been built by a princess, as a retreat, and was known simply as “Rani-ki-Kothi”, or “the princess’s house”. At one time, Swami Sivananda had resided there – a well known yogic teacher and researcher of Vedic* literature and who, at the time, had been the princess’s personal physician.

Kirpal’s first job was to find a place where He would be undisturbed in His meditations and again He was attracted to a high and wide rock in the Ganga river and once again

* Ancient Hindu scriptures.

He had to swim to reach it. He chose a second special place, with the same purpose in mind. This was a cave at the extreme end of a small branch of the Ganga, which was known as Seth Jaidayal Goinka's Cave*.

Some days after their arrival, an official warning was issued in the area, that the level of the river was rising rapidly and would soon be far above the accepted danger level. The expected increase was five to six feet more than normal and those with small huts near the water's edge were warned to leave and seek safety on higher ground at once, until the excess water had receded.

When Hardevi and Mangat Ram heard about the imminent flood warning, terror filled their hearts, for both knew that Kirpal was out there meditating, sitting on His favorite rock in the middle of the river. They ran to some people who owned boats and begged them to go and get Kirpal, but each one of them refused, saying that it was too dangerous to take a boat into such conditions.

They hurried to the river's edge but the rock was very far out. They were both breathless from running and could not shout, so they tried throwing stones toward the rock but the distance was too far and their efforts futile. Meanwhile, Kirpal was serenely sitting on the rock with His eyes closed. On regaining their breath they shouted to Him as loudly as they could, as they watched the water rapidly rising. It seemed like an eternity before Kirpal finally opened His eyes and with a stern gesture tried to quiet them, but this only caused Hardevi to scream even louder.

The water continued to rise and forced the frantic pair to retreat to higher ground as it was lapping around their knees. From their elevated vantage point they saw clearly

* More detail on page 205.

how high the river had risen, and yet Kirpal still did not move. The rock, normally showing three or four feet above the river surface, now appeared to be disappearing into the water. Hardevi and Mangat Ram stopped screaming and stood rooted to the spot, as if paralyzed, watching as the water reached Kirpal.

As they saw the water touch Him, they were astounded to see it suddenly begin to recede – not slowly, but rapidly. The river's level sank so much that Kirpal, who had swum to the rock in the morning, now waded back in shallow water which gradually diminished, leaving a wide and very muddy shore.

They heard afterwards that the local authorities were as dumbfounded as Hardevi and Mangat Ram had been, and could offer no explanation for the river's strange rapid reversal from raging torrent to a quiet, shallow stream.

After their meal that evening, Kirpal sat for a long time, quiet and pensive. Then He turned to His companions and said, 'Renunciation is just a word for some. It's easy to renounce home, responsibility to family, and go off into the forest, but to rise above attachments is another story. Did you see how the so-called renouncers, who proclaim they have no attachments, were burdened with pots, pans, bedding and bundles, dragging their cows or goats to safety? So much for having no attachments! There was fear on their faces, that they might lose their possessions. Freedom from attachment cannot come by merely leaving places and people, for wherever one goes one becomes attached there – to the life there or just to things. One can sit under a tree for a few days and even become attached to that! Only the Naam can free a person from all karmic ties.'

Kirpal chose a new spot for His daily meditations. Taking

two or three hours to climb a high hill, He would spend the day in meditation and then descend in two or three hours. To reach the top He had to pass through a dense part of the forest and the local people warned Him that this was a particularly dangerous area. Ferocious beasts roamed there day and night and humans entered there only in groups, and well armed. Kirpal just smiled and said, 'Whatever is the wish of Data*.'

Although notorious for wild animals, yet it was reputed to be safe ground for sadhus wearing their customary orange or yellow robes of renunciation. For centuries the lions, tigers and other wild beasts there had grown accustomed to the saffron-coated humans who sat for hours in silent meditation – accepting them as part of the wilderness life – and never harmed them. Others however, were not so enchanted. Stories of woodcutters and other wanderers being mauled to death were well known and the reputation of the place grew and kept people away.

Kirpal, in His totally white clothes, made His solitary way into this hazardous jungle daily, and daily returned to the quarters unharmed. The yogis, for years familiar with that part of the jungle, began giving eye-witness accounts of a white-clothed man and a lion walking together in harmony through the forest; or of that king of beasts lying beside the white-clothed man as He sat in meditation. Such stories were numerous during Kirpal's stay there. Naturally, Hardevi and Mangat Ram spent their days somewhat apprehensively, relaxing completely only when Kirpal appeared back at the house in the evenings.

One evening, the sun had long disappeared below the horizon and darkness had fallen, yet Kirpal had not

* The Giver.

returned. Anxiety finally got the better of His two companions and by the light from a lantern they started to walk toward the forest.

On reaching the village of Neelkant, they heard that a one hundred year old hermit, who lived in the deep and perilous part of the jungle, had just brought news of a ferocious man-eater lion roaming around the lower woods, and they were advised to not enter therein. Hardevi insisted that it was essential for them to search for Kirpal. The people, shaking their heads in doubt, could only warn them to be careful.

When they entered the danger zone, the first thing they saw was the half-eaten carcass of a bullock, which did nothing to assuage their fears. Hardevi shivered with fright and clung to Mangat Ram's arm, but he too was shaking like a leaf. Bravely, they continued. A stream lay in their path, and before crossing it Mangat Ram bowed his head and prayed to Baba Sawan for His protection on them both. Bending down to cup a drink from the stream for his parched throat, he almost fell into the water as a loud roar resounded from the bushes nearby.

Hardevi froze on the spot. She stared at the bushes, her imagination working in leaps and bounds, picturing the most huge lion in the world leaping out at her. She closed her eyes and screamed loudly, then even louder when she felt someone take hold of her and shake hard. When she opened her eyes she saw, by the lantern glow, the laughing face of Kirpal! She whispered weakly, 'The lion, it was very near.' Kirpal, still laughing replied, 'Yes, and he has got you now – safe and sound.' He roared loudly, to show her that He had been the "lion" in the bushes.

Hardevi never forgot the experience but she always had a huge sense of humor and told the story of the "lion

who attacked her” again and again, never failing to relive and enjoy the joke Kirpal had played on His faithful companions. At the time however, she was far from happy. ‘Why did you do such a cruel thing?’ she demanded of Kirpal. ‘We were so worried about your safety and you nearly killed us with fright!’

Kirpal also became serious. ‘I do not want anyone to disturb me while I am here. Not only that, it is dangerous for you both to enter the forests in the dark. I frightened you to make you realize the danger. As for me, nothing will harm me.’

Remembering the half-eaten carcass they had seen, they knew that His warning rang true. They both continued to suffer each day from their fears for Kirpal’s safety. In addition, the strain of the primitive lifestyle began to wear thin their mettle of endurance.

Kirpal chose this time to write two Urdu* poems expressing the sorrow in His heart which, in their depth of beauty and sadness, went straight to the hearts of Hardevi and Mangat Ram. They were reminded of the abundant misery, the illusion, the absence of any true happiness in the world and worldly life. As Hardevi sang the words with pathos and feeling, the tears flowed freely down Mangat Ram’s cheeks. The beautiful poem uplifted their spirits and they rejoiced in the lonely hours, offering grateful thanks to Sawan for shielding them from the world’s insidious atmosphere.

Rishikesh, with its auspicious reputation as the home of the most spiritually advanced lovers of God, induced Kirpal to seek out any realized soul there. He spent most of His time in meditation, but allowed a few hours for this quest. However, although many declared themselves to be the “chosen ones,” yet Kirpal could find none who knew the

* Language rooted from Persian.

secret inner way. He became a familiar figure around the village and people referred to Him as the “white-clothed sadhu.”

One day He met the millionaire philanthropist Seth Jaidayal Goinka, unknown in international circles but a celebrated name throughout India. A man of means, he aided the unfortunate and had built a beautiful ashram, naming it Gita Bhavan. It was a haven for those seeking God and desiring to spend some time in His remembrance; an ideal place for solitude, where inmates could contribute to their keep or stay free if they could not afford it. The system worked well and one could feel the peace and tranquility that pervaded there.

Whenever Seth Jaidayal Goinka came to Rishikesh he lived in a simple cave – which explains the name of the cave already mentioned – and it was here that Kirpal first met him. Their meeting lasted a few hours and Goinka told Kirpal he was following Bhakti Marg*.

As they talked, the subject of so-called gurus arose – those who cheated people and wasted their own time in the body by living a lie. Kirpal told Goinka, ‘I would like to see all religious leaders sit together in the name of God – to discuss their religions and tell, in all honesty, exactly what they have achieved in their pursuit of inner knowledge. They should tell people clearly what they have got and what they can give. The landed property and bank accounts in their names, which were bought and hoarded with money from the people, should be made public trusts, to be used for the good of the people.’

Goinka was impressed and expressed his pleasure. ‘Your thoughts are high and I am with you on this, but I fear that

* Path of Devotion.

the heads of the different groups will never agree to it. Only you can make this work; if you agree to take on the task, I will give you all of Gita Bhavan and much more.' Kirpal sweetly expressed His gratitude but declined the generous offer.

At the Sivananda Ashram, He met the founder, Swami Sivananda. The Swami himself conducted Kirpal around the ashram and then led the way to his own room, where they discussed spirituality. Many avenues of the subject were explored and one of Kirpal's questions to the Swami was: 'What is the difference between Surat Shabd Yoga and Vedant*?' Sivananda replied, 'If Vedant is M.A., then Surat Shabd Yoga, compared to that, has only a high school degree.'

Kirpal was quiet for a while, then He said, 'In the holy scriptures there is the story of Savitri who, when her husband Satyawat died, left her body and followed the Lord of Death and bargained with him for her husband's soul. After she got what she wanted, Savitri returned to and entered her body again. Can you tell me what science that was by which she could leave her body at will and then re-enter it?' The Swami avoided a direct answer but said, 'Yogis have that power, I think.'

The very next day, a number of people from the Sivananda Ashram sought out Kirpal at Rani-ki-kothi. They wanted to discuss inner knowledge and said they were searching for Brahm. Eventually, Kirpal asked them, 'You say you believe "Aham Brahm asmi**." If you are Brahm, then to whom do you pray and whom are you seeking?' They had no reply to this, and left.

* Religious concept from ancient Hindu scriptures, the Vedas.

** I am Brahm.

The following day, however, some others came to discuss the same subject. Kirpal asked them, 'When in meditation, one's soul becomes depersonalized; how does it advance to higher regions?' To this they replied, 'The yogi, using his own force of power, goes ahead.' Kirpal explained to them, 'No, that is wrong. No one can use force there. Only through the supporting power, the Sound Principle, can the soul go higher.'

During His time in Rishikesh, Kirpal searched in nearly all the ashrams and religious groups there, but could not find a spiritually advanced soul. Many were learned, and many could recite unendingly from the holy scriptures by memory, but none of them had inner knowledge in the practical sense.

Kirpal's efforts, however, were not totally unrewarded. On a visit to the Swami Ram Tirath Library, the librarian came to help Him find the book He wanted, when he suddenly folded his hands together, bowed down to the floor and put his head on Kirpal's feet. Kirpal stepped back and asked him what he was doing. The librarian stood up; his face was aglow as he said, 'Maharaj, I looked into your eyes and felt I was looking into eyes intoxicated with the love of God, and the thought just came that I should lay myself at your feet.' The soul that is truly seeking God is drawn to the God in the Godman, just like iron filings to a magnet; just as Sawan Himself had vouchsafed: '. . . wherever the wealth of Naam will be, there will the seeker go.'

There was one other soul in Rishikesh who recognized something great in Kirpal. Yogiraj* Raghuvacharya lived to the age of one hundred and fifteen years, and died eventually in 1971. When Kirpal met him, he was living high on

* King of yogis.

one of the mountains with a small following. For years he sat in meditation, greeting no one, speaking to no one, regardless if they were rich or poor, for whatever reason they had come. Everyone was the same to him and he never got up from his seat for anyone.

One day his followers were astonished, for he suddenly jumped up and cried, 'He has come!' They looked at each other, then looked around for anyone arriving, but could see no one. Raghuvacharya quickly stepped outside his hut and when they followed him out they could see a bearded man walking toward them, bareheaded, dressed in white dhoti and shirt, wearing wooden sandals on His feet.

Raghuvacharya welcomed Kirpal warmly, with love and respect. They sat together for many hours, talking of spiritual matters and the inner planes. Raghuvacharya was both amazed and overjoyed as Kirpal disclosed some of His knowledge, most of which was new to the yogi. By the practice of Patanjali Yoga, a very difficult path of austerity, Raghuvacharya had managed to leave his body and reach Sahasdal Kanwal*, and this after many years of perseverance. He was under the impression that he had reached the highest rung on the ladder, so meeting Kirpal and learning all that He had to offer was both exhilarating and revealing.

It is strange that Rishikesh, the renowned center of sadhus, yogis and spiritually enlightened people for centuries, could produce only two men who were aware of the great blessing in meeting face to face with a God-realized soul: one, an unassuming librarian and the other an elderly yogi with a handful of followers.

In that wilderness and jungle, close to the holy Ganges, Kirpal spent five months and seven days isolated from the

* Inner stage of the thousand-petaled lotus.

rest of the world. He knew He was preparing for the tremendous task ahead – the burden of thousands of souls – but His heart was not in it. He remembered Sawan and the way He had given Himself totally to His followers and their needs; how much pain He had endured in His frail physical form, for their sins and for their benefit.

He remembered how, on the day that Sawan left His body, many of those same followers had ungratefully turned their backs on Him, as if He had never existed. It appalled Kirpal to think of those saved souls – saved from payments of debts from the sins of thousands of incarnations. He could not bear their gross ingratitude to Sawan, and He wondered how they would feel if they could truly see what their conditions would have been, but for Sawan's intervention. His heart was definitely disinclined to go back and live among the worldly.

It was the beginning of September 1948, when Sawan told Him to initiate a certain Gopal Das, a man who was, at that time, working nearby. This was the first initiation given by Kirpal after Sawan had left His body; the first soul to be consciously connected to the God Power within, through God's new channel – Kirpal.

A few days later, Sawan told His Gurumukh that He must prepare to return to His duties saying, 'Kirpal Singh, the sangat is being swept away; their attention is wavering and drifting in the wrong directions. You are the one to help and protect them. Go and start the work from where it was left.' But Kirpal pleaded with Sawan: 'Hazur, where kettle-drums are playing, who is going to hear the lisps of a child?' Sawan replied, 'Those who will hear will be saved'.

At this time, a number of Sawan's disciples discovered that Kirpal was in Rishikesh and two separate groups came

there, intending to plead with Him and persuade Him to go back to Delhi. Kirpal was able to assure them that He would return, but only because it was Sawan's wish.

Before returning to Delhi however, Kirpal visited the nearby town of Dehra Dun, which also lies in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains. An old disciple there asked Him through which pole was Baba Sawan now working? Kirpal told him to ask Hazur Himself, but the old man said, in regretful tones, that he was not able to reach Sawan. Kirpal put him in meditation and instructed him to continue sitting until the Guru appeared, and then he could ask Him whatever he wanted to know. After this, Kirpal left for Delhi, but His blessing remained with the man, who did nothing but meditate for several days. His constancy was rewarded with the appearance of Baba Sawan Singh who, with love radiating from His eyes, asked His disciple what he desired. The man requested to know where Baba Sawan was now working.

Sawan replied, 'Kirpal has all my blessings. In Him, five forces of Power are flowing: one mine, the second Baba Jaimal Singh's, the third Swamiji's, the fourth Rai Saligram's, and the fifth Kirpal Singh's own Power.' The delighted disciple sent word to Kirpal, relating his whole experience.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Kirpal returned to Delhi and, knowing that He had chosen not to stay with His family, Gurbux Singh found a two room flat for Him to rent next to his own house in Radio Colony, Kingsway Camp, in Old Delhi. Kirpal laughed when He heard about it. 'I only want a corner of a room to sit in.' However, it very soon became obvious that a free corner would be hard to find, for news of His return spread rapidly and people began to visit Him in ever-increasing numbers. The two modest rooms were constantly full of satsangis expressing their delight to be reunited with Him. But this atmosphere of elation was overshadowed as they related their news.

Kirpal, His heart sinking further and further, listened to accounts of Sawan's followers, many of whom were bewildered and uncertain after Sawan left and Kirpal had retreated to Rishikesh. In confusion, they turned to those who proclaimed themselves to be successors to Sawan, and so many so-called successors were available that the poor people drifted from one to another in turn.

They did this in good faith no doubt, but those who had discernment could see the contrast between their true Sawan and the lie being offered, and they trod a bitter road. As disillusionment took its toll, their faith wore thin and

eventually even the love they had for Baba Sawan declined as they faced disappointment and frustration. Those without that discernment paid an even higher price. Transferring their attention from Sawan to one or more of the usurpers, their precious inner contact gradually faded.

Kirpal's face registered the sadness and anguish in His heart as He learned of the fate of the larger part of Sawan's sangat. 'Hazur has not left any of His children,' He pointed out. 'So why should they go to anyone else?' He told Gurbux Singh that he would be happy to know that his wish to have a regular Satsang for the followers would now be fulfilled, and as Kirpal's two rooms were rather small for the purpose, a suitable place would have to be arranged.

So the first public Satsang was held at number seven Daryaganj in Delhi, the house of Lala Hemchand Bhargev. The first group initiation was given by Kirpal in His own rooms in Radio Colony, on December 2, 1948*.

After receiving the priceless gift of Naam, a woman approached Kirpal and told Him, 'Maharaj, when Hazur Sawan Singh was sick, I had asked for initiation and He told me that I would get it, but after nine months. Today is exactly nine months to the day when Hazur said that and in my meditation at initiation today Hazur came and said to me, "Bibi, you have received the Naam! Are you satisfied?" '

And so God's most special work was resumed, but Kirpal never called Himself a successor to Sawan, saying always, 'I am just doing what Hazur has asked me to do – this is all His work.' Kirpal's humility was the kind that could reach deep down into the most arrogant of men and women, His presence melting away any display of pride and ego.

* The first single initiation had been given to the man in Rishikesh, as previously related.

Kirpal's nature was revealed in His manner, which was unassuming. This was not always evident at Satsangs, however. At that time when microphones and loudspeakers were not so commonly inexpensive in India, the talks were given without any amplification. Kirpal's speaking voice, normally soft and sweet-toned, now resounded across the people like a lion's roar, reaching every corner of the sangat. He was untiring and quite ferocious in this work; His presence arresting and overwhelming.

The impression on the people was deep and effective, and it was not surprising that news of this reached the camps of the pseudo successors, shaking them to the core. Recognizing a very valid danger to their own cause, they hired men and women to upset Kirpal's Satsangs by shouting, fighting with each other, and creating any other disturbing or indecent behavior they could get away with. Women were paid to run after Kirpal and cling to Him, in attempt to defame His name and make Him a laughing stock. But strangely, the greater the efforts to destroy His work, the more people attended the Satsangs; consequently, the numbers of the initiated increased. When the matter was brought up to Kirpal, He smiled and said, 'People pay to have their wares advertised and here the advertisement is free, paid by others, so we can only gain.'

Kirpal started writing an account of Baba Sawan's life in 1949, which was subsequently published in Urdu, Gurumukh!*, and English. Later, He wrote numerous other books, especially for the English-speaking peoples, most of whom lived many miles from India. Those in turn were translated into various other languages. The Western world welcomed with eager enthusiasm the rare opportunity to read Kirpal's lucid and comprehensive exposition of the Path

* Language of the Sikhs.

of the Masters, the secret inner path of the soul to God.

His rooms at Radio Colony were seldom empty in the daytime. At any time a small gathering of devoted souls could be found there, listening to His informal “heart to heart” talks, sharing memories of their beloved Sawan. The newly initiated too attended, anxious to quell their thirst for knowledge.

Hardevi came daily to these gatherings and the followers were fortunate to share the simple meals she prepared for Kirpal in the kitchen. Her help and advice to the needy were invaluable, especially the financial kind. They were troubled times for Indians, many of whom had been rendered homeless and penniless by the partition of the country. Many were suffering the loss of some or all members of their families and were desperately in want of physical and financial help. Hardevi’s huge loving heart was big enough to embrace everyone who had a need and she made every effort to do whatever she could to relieve their suffering.

Inevitably, Hardevi and some of the others approached Kirpal for permission to look for some land on which to hold the Satsangs and finally, when He agreed, they started looking in earnest for a suitable location. It was not an easy task to find the right place at a low price, so it was suggested the search be extended to the outlying areas of Delhi, where land was cheaper.

After viewing many plots, on December 31, 1948, Kirpal and a small group of followers inspected some land near Dhasna Station, a few miles from Delhi. The land turned out to be disappointing, but Dhasna, an ordinary village in itself, had one outstanding feature – a very fast flowing river, extremely cold during the winter months. The governing authorities had taken an understandable advantage of this

natural phenomenon and had built a dam at the place where the river falls about forty feet, to harness the power for electricity. It is a fascinating experience to stand on the bridge that spans the one hundred foot wide river and watch the thousands of gallons of rapidly flowing water fall and form a turbulent, churning mass of foam at the bottom. There is a constant stream of visitors who come from far and wide to behold the sight.

When the satsangis described all this to Kirpal, He expressed a desire to see the spectacle, for His fondness of rivers and natural waterways was as strong as ever. So they all walked to approximately half way across the bridge and leaned over the wall to watch the fall of water.

No one can say how it happened, but suddenly and inexplicably, Kirpal's foot slipped as He was leaning over and they saw Him fall the total height – approximately fifty feet – His body mingling with the folds of the cascade and plunging into the roaring cauldron of foam below.

Hardevi immediately lost her head and wanted to jump over after Him, even though she could not swim! Fortunately the satsangi beside her grabbed hold of her and hung on, though she fought like a tigress, the proof of which he bore for many days in deep scratches on his person.

The whole group left the bridge for the bank and ran frantically alongside the river, scanning the rushing water for some sign of Kirpal and shouting for the villagers to help. As it happened, none of the party could swim! A small crowd gathered around them, mostly farmers who averred it was a hopeless situation for no one who had ever fallen into that swift current had ever been saved and furthermore, the bodies had never been found, not even cattle that had fallen from time to time. They had disappeared and were never seen again.

The disciples offered one farmer whatever he wanted if he would only save Kirpal somehow, but the farmer shook his head. 'You will never see him again. One huge buffalo fell into this river and we never found even the smallest bone.' This did not improve the satsangis' already tragic mien as they stood and gazed out over the waters.

Then suddenly, there was Kirpal and they all saw Him. He appeared to be just floating on top of the water a few yards from them. He looked toward them and lifted His hand in a gesture of reassurance and then He vanished again into the water. They all stood in stunned silence, watching; even the voluble farmers were silently transfixed. Again He appeared, and once again He held up His hand and then disappeared – this time for more than an hour.

Their spirits bolstered by Kirpal's hand signal, everyone believed that He was alright and would return to them unharmed. However, after an hour had ticked by, little fingers of anxiety began to creep into their hearts. They looked for a spark of hope and confidence in each other's eyes, but it was a long interval of waiting.

Just as their minds were threatening to overtake their faith, Kirpal appeared without warning but this time His body was floating stiff and rigid on the icy water. Knowing that the human form floats when it is lifeless, the fear once again began to clutch at their hearts. While they stared and wondered, Kirpal's form floated some considerable distance down the river, so they ran along the bank. By the time they caught up, Kirpal had waded out of the water and was quietly sitting on the grassy bank.

The shock of the entire miraculous event began to register on the satsangis and they stood a short distance away from Him, a little in awe and a little in fear. Hardevi took one look at Him, sitting there calmly smiling at her, and fell

down in a faint. A different group of villagers approached and looked at Kirpal who was still dripping wet, but Kirpal shook His head and pointed to Hardevi lying on the ground. At this, they fell to pumping her up and down in an attempt to clear her lungs of water, thinking it was she who had fallen into the river.

Seeing this, Kirpal – unable to contain His mirth – went over to where Hardevi lay and stood there laughing and telling the villagers to pump harder. The spell was broken and the followers came to Him and fell at His feet, expressing their relief, joy and gratitude at having Him in their midst again.

Only then did they notice that Kirpal's color had turned blue from being under the icy water for eighty minutes and they requested Him to remove His wet clothes, giving Him one of their turbans* to wrap around His body. Hardevi came around and they all sat beside the river, laughing at Hardevi's expense and generally having a wonderful time in Kirpal's company. Oh, how sweet it is to enjoy the company of one who was thought to be lost; especially one so very precious!

Eventually, the satsangis' curiosity to know how a human being could remain under water for so long and survive, got the better of them and they pleaded gently with Kirpal to tell them what had happened. Seeing the desperate questions in their eyes, Kirpal relented and in a quiet voice told them a little of His adventure: 'When I slipped and fell into the river, I went deep down but the concern of all of you made me come up twice to calm you. Then I went down again and I saw a light, a brilliant light. I went toward it and there joined a conference with Hazur and Baba Jaimal Singh. After all had been said, I came back and here I am.'

* A turban is anything from 2 to 4 meters long by 1 meter wide, and normally wound around the head.

They naturally wished to know what the conference was about and what had been discussed, but Kirpal would say no more on the subject, at that time.

A few days later, however, Kirpal mentioned that in His son's horoscope it is written that his father will die on a certain date, and that date was December 31, 1948. 'That day,' He said, 'I finished my worldly work and connections. God has given me this new life for His work alone, so that the spiritual work that was assigned to me can be completed.' He also explained how His physical family and relatives would have no part in His future life dedicated to His spiritual mission, other than a spiritual relationship. When Kirpal's astrological chart was made, early in His life, the astrologer had written at the end: 'My prayer to this great spiritual being is that in His perfection, He should remember me.'

The attendance at Kirpal's talks was increasing considerably and the large room at number seven Daryaganj was now too small, so it was arranged for the Satsangs to be held at 35 Rajpur Road, Old Delhi, where the grounds were spacious and could accommodate thousands of people. Most of the initiations were held there too.

Before each initiation procedure, Kirpal would walk through the aspiring applicants, examining them with a keen and serious eye. He knew which ones were not yet ready for initiation and would indicate them to the sevadars in attendance to ensure they were removed from the group, usually advising them to prepare themselves and return at a later date.

At one such selection, a man and a woman were denied. They cried and pleaded but Kirpal was firm in His refusal. At the following month's initiation selection, again the same

man and woman were there, but again they were removed and told to leave.

The selection over, Kirpal entered the house to wait until the sevadars had seated the hundred or so aspirants: the men on one side, the women on the other, just as they sat for Satsang. When everything was ready, Kirpal came out and began the theory, followed by the first part of initiation. He then quickly walked away and into the house again, an unusual action which caused the sevadars to wonder. The people inside the house were shocked. They had seen Kirpal just a short time before, a perfect picture of health, but now He was deathly pale and almost unable to walk.

They rushed to His assistance and helped Him to a sofa. A doctor was summoned but he could find no cause for the sudden malady that had struck Kirpal, who was now in a semi-conscious condition. After two hours, with the doctor present constantly, Kirpal opened His eyes and appeared to be somewhat better. Against all protests, He got up and returned to where the people were waiting. Sitting in the chair, He looked thoughtfully at the people before Him and, calling to a sevadar, He told him to get 'that woman and that man' out of the group and bring them to the front, pointing them out with His finger.

As they stood before Him, He asked them why they were present in the group when He had rejected them. They both were silent and Kirpal called the sevadar in charge and asked him why the two were allowed to return to the group. The sevadar saw the serious expression on Kirpal's face and, very frightened, began to plead for forgiveness adding, 'Maharaj, they were crying so piteously that I could not throw them out.' He received a very stern look from Kirpal who said, 'By this, it means that you have more pity for them than me? How little you know, my friend.'

He turned to the woman and asked her, 'Tell the truth, how many children have you murdered?!'

The woman dissolved into tears and cried, 'O merciful one, forgive me my sins, otherwise I am doomed. I have killed many children for I could not bear to see them starving.' Then Kirpal looked at the man and said, 'Now it is your turn to confess.' Everyone felt the impact of Kirpal's stern glance and eyes blazing with anger as they watched in silence. The stillness was broken as the man crumpled to his knees before Kirpal and cried, 'I had to kill them, they were Muslims; it was at the time of partition and many did I kill. Now my days and nights are a torment – I pray you Maharaj, help me!'

Kirpal's countenance changed visibly from anger to sorrow and He sat silent for some moments. Then, turning to the sevadar He said, 'In future, abide by my wishes. You see, they have sinned but it is not the sin alone, for who is here who has not sinned? Although by accepting them I took their load on my physical form, I do not mind that for that is what I am here for, but these two will never do meditation or abide by my word, so even though their sins are washed away they will not do anything with the precious gift that is given them and that is why I did not want to waste it on them.'

Kirpal's reluctance to give the priceless gift of Naam in this instance was far from the usual state of things. The spiritual waters of life began to flow in such abundance, unprecedented in known history of spirituality, flooding the hearts of the astounded seekers and confounding the doubters and the reluctant. Confirmed atheists were silent in the face of such numbers which, in one accord, were witness to the revelation of inner light they had experienced. No aspirant walked away empty-handed and, for many, the

gift was beyond their expectations.

No spiritual Master had been known to open the flood-gates of the holy spirit with such power and bounty. The true seeker who sincerely desired the precious gift had but to ask and it was given. Even those who did not take the serious step of initiation were allowed to sit in on group meditations and were also blessed with wonderful inner experiences. It was such a time, the fullness of which could only be shared by those who were there – those who witnessed the phenomenon. And Kirpal, the Merciful that He truly was, just gave and gave, distributing the spiritual largesse with both hands.

Obviously such a flood tide could not be kept a secret. When they heard about it, the would-be masters, the pretenders, began to respond in various ways that, to the discriminating eye, served to reveal their lack of knowledge. One wrote to Kirpal complaining and upbraiding Him for bestowing the treasure on unworthy souls: 'Are you not being foolhardy in giving out the wealth of power so recklessly? You will become bankrupt soon.' Kirpal's answer to this was: 'If it were my limited wealth I am giving I could become bankrupt, but this is the unlimited wealth from God's own coffers and I am not the Giver, He is; so whatever comes I just hand it over.'

Some attacks were subtle, others direct. The owners of 35 Rajpur Road were harassed in different ways, in an attempt to stop the Satsangs being held there. When Kirpal heard about it, He halted the Satsangs there and asked the organizers to find another suitable place for both Satsang and initiation; without delay they rented a house in Malkaganj, called Anar-ki-kothi*.

* House of the pomegranate tree.

The talks and initiations continued at the new address but not without disturbance. Nearby, loud speakers, directed toward Anar-ki-kothi, blared out at top volume with speeches and noisy music, in an effort to drown Kirpal's talks and render it impossible for the gathering to hear or concentrate. The supporters of the would-be gurus did their best to disrupt the meetings but Kirpal's sangat did not care, for what they received from His glances fed them with a spiritual food that banished all thought of the world and even the body. Everything became as naught and only He remained. The effect of the intoxication of God's pure love stayed with them for days as they went about their daily lives in a state of blissful joy.

The harassment did not cease and sometimes reached the point of violence; insulting and obscene letters arrived in the mail. As the hate mail piled up, Kirpal's cool attitude puzzled the initiates. One person asked, 'Maharaj, doesn't all this harassment and insult bother you?' Kirpal quietly replied, 'No, I just feel for them, they are losing all their peace of mind.'

The lengths to which a man can go often reveal his state of mind. Apparently, the perpetrators of all the plaguing and propaganda were getting worried – a definite fear was creeping into their hearts. One of the groups made a very generous offer of purchase to the owner of Anar-ki-kothi, so generous that he accepted and informed the Satsang organizers that regrettably, he must give notice to the Satsang to vacate the property.

Kirpal's name was assaulted from every angle as the malevolent parties tried to persuade the people that He was the agent of everything negative. The so-called gurus were of both the minor variety with very little real influence, and those with established organization behind them, who were

supported with power and money. All had the same aim in view: to convince the public at large of their successorship to Baba Sawan Singh and their bona fides as the only spiritual master of the current era. They warned people against attending Kirpal's Satsangs at every opportunity, but truth cannot be hidden and most of the sangat laughed away the warnings and went anyway.

Meanwhile the Satsang attendance continued to increase and the ongoing problem of space arose constantly. At one meeting it was agreed that a location away from the city noise and bustle would be ideal, so the hunt for land concentrated on a suitable location free from outside hindrance and disturbance. Still it was hard to find. Whenever a prospective plot of land was found, some obstacle arose, usually a financial one, for a preset budget already had been established and the combination of cost and suitability was restricting. It was so difficult that months went by and still no solution was found.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

The Great Ones themselves say that only a Master can truly understand a Master. To most people, a Master is an enigma. Sometimes they appear to be so human and simple – as in uncomplicated, not as in lacking intelligence – but at times they seem so complex, totally impossible for the ordinary mind to comprehend.

One day, Kirpal got up quickly from His chair and announced that He had to go and see a doctor. Those who were in the room at the time were immediately concerned and asked if He was feeling ill.

‘No, no,’ He replied, ‘It’s not that,’ and without another word of explanation, He walked out of the house, picked up His bicycle and began to pedal down the street. Four or five of the men jumped on their bicycles and pedaled after Him. Accompanied by the satsangis, Kirpal rode toward Old Delhi town center, crossed over Chandni Chowk and continued on to the end of the market, arriving finally at Hamdard Dawa Khana*. He went into the clinic and asked to see the owner, who was a well-known doctor, famous for his accurate diagnosis of any ailment and for effective cures with his own type of medicine. The followers sat down on the wooden benches, prepared to wait.

* An Ayurvedic clinic.

Eventually Kirpal came out, went across the waiting room to the dispensing window, gave a prescription to the dispenser, asked how much it would be and paid the bill. Then He quickly walked outside and started to get on His bicycle. One of the men hurried forward and reminded Him that He had forgotten to take the medicine He had just paid for. Kirpal said, 'Oh no, that is immaterial,' and they all rode back to Radio Colony. On the way back, the followers pondered in their minds: *why would Kirpal cycle such a long distance to see a doctor, get a prescription and pay for the medicine, when He was not interested in taking the medicine?*

They thought about it and discussed it together at some length, but it remained a mystery – one of the mysterious things about Masters that cannot be understood at the ordinary human level, for Masters have their own reasons for what they do. It is appropriate to remember Kirpal's advice on this subject: 'If one sits quietly in a Master's presence, sometimes He tells us things.' If He so wishes, He might let us in on some of those mysterious secrets.

It is not surprising that man becomes nonplussed when trying to understand a realized soul, for man is subject to the mind's dictates; he is blown around like a reed in the wind unless his heart is securely anchored in the true love of a Perfect Master.

Gurbux Singh was reputed to be a devoted follower of Kirpal and if he had been asked in those days how strong was his faithfulness, he no doubt would have reasserted his own belief in his devotion. However, he approached Kirpal one day and told Him that the people at Beas had offered him a large sum of money as a bribe, to work against Kirpal. Kirpal asked him, 'Are you going to leave me?' Gurbux replied, 'No, no of course not. How could I

when I know who you are?’ But money is a strange and powerful enemy of man and, good or bad, anyone can fall prey to its temptation if they are not very careful. It was not long before Gurbux Singh began to avoid meeting Kirpal, hiding away with a shamed face whenever he saw Him. It was an example of the Master’s words of warning about selling Joseph for a petty gratuity. It is also reminiscent of the Judas that sold his Master for a few silver coins. How powerful is the mind!

Kirpal approached an elderly disciple of Baba Sawan and said to him, ‘Hazur has asked me to give a message to Sardar Jagat Singh, but that message must be given verbally by me to him, so you go and ask him to meet me somewhere, where I could give him Hazur’s message.’ The reply came back that Jagat Singh did not want any message from Sawan through Kirpal. But this did not satisfy Kirpal who felt He must deliver the message, simply because Sawan had asked Him to.

So when Jagat Singh arranged a program of talks in Amritsar, Kirpal went to that city in advance and from there sent a letter to Jagat Singh at Beas, telling him that He was in Amritsar and on Jagat Singh’s arrival there, would he give Kirpal a few minutes of his time to enable Him to deliver Sawan’s message? On receiving this letter, Jagat Singh cancelled his Amritsar program, postponing and delaying his visit there for more than a month.

When he eventually visited Amritsar, he was in the middle of his first talk when his eyes met Kirpal’s at the back of the crowd. He began to stumble over his words, forgot what he had been saying, then quickly cut the talk short and got up to leave the gathering. But Kirpal was quicker and before Jagat Singh could enter his room, Kirpal strode

forward and held out His hand to shake hands with him. Jagat Singh put both his hands behind his back. Kirpal, undaunted, asked for two minutes of his time but received only the reply, 'I have not got a minute even to breathe. I have no time to give.' Saying this, he rushed toward the kitchen to follow the custom of blessing the food, but when he returned Kirpal was still there, patiently waiting. Jagat Singh walked past Kirpal straight into the room but Kirpal quickly followed on his heels and when he turned around there was Kirpal facing him.

He got extremely upset and in frustration shouted for his helpers, who at once came running in. He charged them not to leave him alone with Kirpal. Kirpal told him, 'I have come for no other purpose than to give you an urgent message from Hazur. He has asked me to give you that message when you are alone.' Jagat Singh said, 'Why did Hazur give a message for me through you? Why not to me direct?' Kirpal replied, 'Hazur said that you are not receptive to Him so He could not reach you. At this, I prayed to Him to give the message through Bibi Rali*, but Hazur said that she also has lost what she had and cannot reach Him.'

Jagat Singh then said, 'If there is a message, give it to me in front of these people – I am not going to be alone with you.' Kirpal reiterated, 'Hazur's instructions are that this message is for your ears alone; afterwards you can tell them about it if you want to.'

But the man just refused and so Kirpal had to return to Delhi without delivering the message. He had no regrets for He had done His best to give Sawan's message and it was Jagat Singh's misfortune that he could not hear what Sawan wanted him to hear. Kirpal explained, 'It would have saved him from what was awaiting him. I wish he had listened

* A sevadar at the Dera in Beas.

to the message, for Hazur had pointed out, "If he abides by my advice he might awaken to the truth," but he would not hear what that advice from Hazur was.'

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

After many months of searching for a Satsang site, it was discovered that a nice sizeable plot of land was for sale, adjacent to the railway line. It was, at the time, owned by a certain member of parliament named Atma Singh Namdhari. When Kirpal and some of the followers went to view the land they found it very uneven, full of bushes and trees, somewhat like a small forest grove. The railway tracks ran along one side and a very wide, dirty open drain along another side. This open drain, although flowing with water, served also as an open sewer, giving off a strong unpleasant odor. Most of those viewing the land felt that the combination of noisy trains and the smell of the drain rendered the site most unsuitable for the holy purpose intended. But Kirpal pointed out there was no harm in inquiring the asking price.

Sardar Atma Singh admitted to a strong desire for getting rid of the land and quoted a very reasonable price. The price was within the sangat's budget, so again Kirpal visited the site to examine it very carefully once more and decide finally if this was indeed the right place for the Satsangs. A wooden chair was placed in the center of the plot and Kirpal sat down with about forty or fifty of the disciples gathered around Him, seated on the ground.

Kirpal was silent for some considerable time. There were, among those present, a number of followers who were strongly against buying that particular piece of land, but when those same people saw clearly the form of Baba Sawan standing beside Kirpal, it was enough to silence their protests forever.

So, on June 9, 1951, that very plot of land was registered at the proper government office in the name of the Sawan Ashram Trust, which meant that Kirpal had formed a public trust, naming the Ashram in the memory of Baba Sawan. The land was within the boundaries of Shakti Nagar, a suburb of Old Delhi.

At a meeting on the site on June 21, the contractor's estimate was produced, which stated that clearing and preparing the land alone would cost a large sum of money, apart from the cost of buildings to follow, plus other requirements. In this regard, an open meeting was held at the next Satsang, attended by most of the sangat.

Kirpal told the people that He had wished to have the forthcoming celebration of Hazur's birthday, on July twenty-seven, on their own Ashram land but this was not possible due to the cost of clearing and leveling the ground and the lack of time to complete the work. He then asked if anyone had any suggestions for another venue where the celebrations could be held.

A man in the crowd stood up and said, 'Maharaj Ji, if you wish to celebrate July twenty-seven here, then it will be done as you wish. I feel all of us can do the clearing and leveling and even the building work ourselves; do you not all agree with me?' He turned to the large gathering, which responded to him in one voice, 'Yes, we will do it.'

It was a big job, almost an impossible task considering the deadline, but work began the very next day. Incredibly,

the followers arrived at the site in the hundreds and they worked as if inspired. They cut unwanted trees down, cleared away the bushes, dug and leveled the ground, cooked meals and made tea for everyone; and all this accompanied by the singing of hymns and holy songs.

Many strange happenings during the building of Sawan Ashram have been recorded and many stories told, but perhaps the most remarkable are of Baba Sawan, seen from the very beginning of the work, walking around with Kirpal; for years after the Ashram was built, He still could be seen, walking through the grounds in the silent hours of the night.

The area of the site measured two acres. The existing structures consisted of a few huts and a well. The surrounding land was undeveloped, except for a few scattered houses, so it appeared that the Ashram plot was alone in its own private wilderness. That wilderness was divided into lots of varying sizes, the loneliness of which had discouraged the owners from settling down there. The abundance of heavily wooded sections infested with liberal quantities of snakes deterred the general public from frequenting the place. Hence, it became a refuge and haunt of thieves and robbers, who themselves had built the huts and sunk the well for water. It was a convenient spot for the purpose of splitting up their loot and planning their next move.

The first space to be cleared was a wide, central expanse for Satsangs and this was speedily accomplished in a few hours by the enthusiastic satsangis. On that initially cleared location, Kirpal held a Satsang that very day around 3 or 4 p.m. The weather was typical of Indian summer, hot with the sun blazing down from a clear blue and cloudless sky. As Kirpal began the first words of His talk, large drops of

rain fell on the land and on the people, cooling them like a refreshing drink. Everyone looked up into the sky in surprise and Kirpal said, 'This is Hazur's sign of grace and benevolence. Now all work will definitely be successful*.'

The work went on, and what a strange sight! Lawyers, government officials, office workers – wives and children too – many of whom had servants working in their own homes and who themselves had never done any hard physical work in their lives. Here they were, toiling like laborers alongside those who were used to it, digging and carrying mud or sitting around the hot fires in the extreme heat, making the food – all discomfort forgotten and their faces shining with a special joy that no worldly enjoyment can give.

Kirpal was everywhere, directing the work, helping some with their unfamiliar burdens, even carrying baskets of soil on His own head. The sight of Him and His very presence there banished all their tiredness; one word from Kirpal and their weary bodies felt rejuvenated. Day and night, the work continued constantly. There was no electricity on the land so they worked by kerosene lamps. With bricks and mud and tin sheets for a roof, they built a very small room. Inside, a stringed cot was placed and Kirpal remained on the land at all times, using the cot to rest every now and then.

Numerous difficulties arose but were tackled and solved, each in its turn. A big problem was the masses of snakes everywhere, most of which were the poisonous kind. Some of the people were bitten, of whom a few went to the hospital or took medicine from a doctor, but most of the victims refused aid and laughed it off saying, 'We are doing

* Over the years, many auspicious events were visited by a sprinkle of rain, which was accepted as Sawan's blessing. Sawan is the fifth month of the Hindu (Bikarmi) calendar and is synonymous with the rain season.

our Guru's work and to die that way would be a blessing.' They wrapped the bite up in a mud paste, using any rag they could find. No one died of the snake bites. Kirpal would not allow the snakes to be killed, so they had to be "shoo-ed" away with long sticks. 'After all,' said Kirpal, friend to all life, 'we have invaded their territory, at least let them live.'

In the midst of all the joyful and strenuous activity for the new Ashram, tragedy suddenly struck. After many hours of unflagging supervision, coping with a thousand and one things, Kirpal had just stretched out to rest in the small room when a man came running up to the door. 'Maharaj,' he said breathlessly, 'a boy has fallen from a tree and we fear he is dead.'

Kirpal ran with the man to the scene of the accident, where a small circle of satsangis surrounded a boy lying on the ground. In stunned silence, the crowd parted and made way for Kirpal and then stood and watched as He bent over the child. The only sound to be heard was the helpless crying of the boy's parents. Kirpal saw that his head had been crushed by the fallen tree, so badly crushed that although he was faintly breathing in his unconscious state, the onlookers feared the worst for it appeared that no human being could survive such bodily damage, especially to the head.

As they all watched, Kirpal put His hands around the boy's mangled head and seemed to be moulding it back into shape! Then He took off His own turban and, unwinding the cotton muslin, He wrapped this around the head, calling to the surrounding people to bring a car and take the boy to the hospital.

After a few weeks the child, whose name was Ramesh, came home from the hospital. His head was still curiously

out of shape, in fact still in the shape that Kirpal had moulded from the mash of blood, bones and brain. It remained the same strange shape through all the years of Ramesh's life.

The doctors at the hospital said that they just could not understand how the boy could sustain such an injury and live; could understand even less how the crushed mass which was his head had remained in one piece; and the total, remarkable recovery of the child. Their amazement caused the happy parents to smile for they knew, and the other satsangis who had witnessed the whole incident knew how it had happened and who had saved Ramesh. Kirpal explained that it was not a time to use the word that was on everyone's mind – the word "miracle" – but it was God's own laws at work. However, none who had shared the experience had a doubt that it was Kirpal's merciful grace that made the difference, and they were grateful for the opportunity to have their faith cemented.

If anything, the work went on at an increased rate. Those who attended offices from 10 to 5 came on bicycles and buses, arriving at sunrise and leaving at 9 a.m. to go to their regular work. In the evening they were back on the land to continue working, joining their wives and children who had stayed all day, breaking up bricks or large stones into shingle. Happily, they all worked until midnight. When they finally went to their homes they were fatigued, but feeling a wonderful sense of achievement.

It is impossible to describe the love and devotion of the initiates as they worked, or the enthusiasm they put into each and every task. It was something to behold rather than to remark upon, and frequent crowds of onlookers did just that. They had heard about the industrious volunteers working on the project in the wilds, and wanted to

see for themselves. They saw a human beehive of activity and they saw happy faces aglow with the light of something that was new to them. They came out of curiosity, but the selfless service they saw aroused their interest in the Guru for whom all the loving service was being given; the Guru whose own love was so intoxicating that it kept people going and glowing for many hours. No one appeared to be tired, or even said they were tired, and the work ran non-stop, hour after hour.

Morning and evening, Kirpal distributed grams and gur to everyone. At lunchtime, in the afternoon, the work stopped for forty minutes and the followers sat in long lines under a tree near the railway tracks. The old custom of removing shoes before entering the kitchen, where the family seated themselves on the floor to be served by the mother, is still of considerable consequence in India, except in modern or wealthy homes that have western style dining rooms.

Kirpal removed His shoes to go down the lines serving roti followed by Hardevi with the dal. After the simple meal, which had the blessing of being prasad, the people quenched their thirst by the cool, sweet refreshing water from the well. Reinforced by this plain but nourishing food, so graciously served to them by Kirpal, they returned to work with light hearts and light feet, laughter and songs of praise on their lips and happiness bubbling over inside them. The beauty of their joy shone forth; they resembled a huge garland of flowers, different in their variety, hues and fragrances but all strung on the one silken string of Kirpal's love.

They were one, and they had a single purpose. It was a time they were never to forget – an experience that lived with them for the rest of their lives; and the very essence of that experience was Kirpal and His love for them. Photographs

were taken of the project, but pictures and words cannot record or show the life and the wonder of those days.

Any money donated to the cause was spent swiftly in the ever-increasing need for supplies. It was welcome news therefore, when a certain military barracks was slated for demolition and all the salvage material was to be auctioned off. The Ashram Trust was able to buy most of the used items: cement sheeting for roofs, wood, bricks, windows, doors and other building materials. As the Ashram's bid was the only one they received, everything was purchased for two thousand rupees – a real bargain, for it all was in quite good condition. When someone expressed their amazement at such a good buy, Kirpal said it was 'Hazur's grace'.

They were able to build a shelter for the rain season from this one source and on July 26, 1951 the work was completed. In just forty days an unbelievable amount of work had been done. The land had been cleared and leveled. A row of rooms had been built with bricks and mortar including Kirpal's residence in the center, consisting of one large room, one small room, a bathroom, an outdoor washroom, a small kitchen and a small courtyard. The shelter* for Satsangs and meditation sittings and for initiations consisted of three walls with an open front and measured 120' x 40'. A tank had been made near the well to hold the water which was brought up. The satsangis rotated a wheel which caused a chain of small canisters to go down into the water, get filled and come up to be tipped into a channel that led to the storage tank. It was a manual substitute for a pump. Beside the well they had built a kitchen and in the center of the ground was the big open space for Satsangs, large enough to seat many thousands of people. At the beginning of the row of

* Always known simply and affectionately as "the shed".

rooms an office was established and Sardar Dalip Singh was placed in charge, as treasurer.

July twenty-seven, 1951, was Baba Sawan's birth anniversary. On that day a Satsang was held – the first since completing the work. Commencing the Satsang, Kirpal said, 'Hazur had told me to make a place, a common ground where all would sit together in remembrance of God, without giving up their religion or sect but sitting together to gain the knowledge of spirituality in the practical way, which of course is already mentioned in their own holy scriptures; and where no outer symbols should be erected to represent any one religion. That is why no temple, mosque or church is built here, therefore making it a real temple of God with the sky above and the ground beneath – for the whole world is God's abode. There will be no "walls" built to imprison any religion. It will be called the college of spirituality – Ruhani Satsang*.'

* Simply, a spiritual gathering.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

When Kirpal commenced His spiritual mission – publicly, that is – the general conditions in India were precarious, in the least. The country had been split in two – India and Pakistan; people who had found themselves on the wrong side of the border had moved and were endeavoring to make a new life for themselves. The trauma of this resettlement had caused a good deal of unsettlement and the very thin film of serenity on the surface of Indian daily life was like a paper roof over a hot arsenal that threatened to explode with the least spark. In fact, this was imminent on both sides of the border.

More than four years had passed since those terrible days of slaughter, but somehow it was impossible for the people to forget; time had not healed the hatred they had for each other. The killing of a million human beings in the name of religion, counting both sides, would take many years to overcome. They had to recover from the shock, the pain of realization, the loss of those they had loved. They had lost their homes too. Some of those homes had been comfortable and roomy – now replaced by a single two-roomed tin hut. It was a devastating burden for their emotions and it ate into the core of their hearts. The elderly were in a perpetual state of shock. The whole thing was too big, had

much too much impact to now disappear as if it had never happened.

Places of worship were serving as meeting places for the politically-minded. The Government of India had, in an attempt to control the brewing unrest, banned any type of meeting in private homes or open grounds, so the temples, gurudwaras and mosques turned into meeting houses in which the professed “lovers of God” got together to plan the safeguard and defense of their religion from its enemy. The 1947 massacres had implanted a fear in their hearts which would not leave.

Pakistan was a little better off in this respect, as the numbers of non-Muslims in the country were too few to create any realistic apprehension of attack, uprising or reprisal. But India had been the home of the Hindu and the Muslim for centuries and even after partition, although very much a minority, the numbers of Islam devotees were still considerable. Consequently, small confrontations in the streets and other public places were common. A Sikh, passing a Muslim, would push his chest out and glare fiercely at the other fellow, who in turn would glare back, just as fiercely; the hatred on both sides was obvious.

Into this atmosphere of unrest, Kirpal’s message of love and peace, in the name of the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, came and seeped into the souls of a few at first and then more and more. The sworn enemies – Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and Christians – started to sit side by side to listen to the words of a spiritual man whose intention was to heal the lacerated hearts and bring a better understanding, a love and sympathy for each other. They sat together under the sky in the Ashram and they ate together as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the same God. Many

people heard about this and would not believe it – until they came to see for themselves.

The Great Personalities come to the world to take the wandering souls back to their true home; back to God. They do not regard the outer coverings of individuals, only the radiant light of the soul within. They gather as many children as they can and take them back to the Father of all.

For Kirpal, Love was the only true religion. He said, 'Show me one place where God is not! Where there is life, there is God and all is holy where devotion kneels. The true temple of God is not that which is made by the hand of man with stone and mortar, but this man-body where the life impulse is working and where love is. Only in a human body can God be realized. This Ashram will be a common ground on which all sects, all representatives of different religions, all colors of people of different ideas and different language, can sit together to realize that which will bring them together as one, in the name of the one God who is called by many names in many languages. In the world at this time, I do not think there is another place where all can sit together with love to realize the common goal of all seekers – that is God. How can anyone say that he loves God and yet insult Him by hurting and hating His children?'

Kirpal then made a statement in very clear words, saying that Ruhani Satsang, Sawan Ashram, was a public trust and that He, His family or any other individual had no claim on any monies or anything else from this trust for his or her personal use or gain. He said, 'If, after me, there is no one whom God has chosen to keep this work going, due to not being capable of giving the inner connection and protection to the souls, then that which the trust represents: i.e. buildings, land, money etc., should go to any group or organization where work for humanity is being done in a universal way.'

Thousands of people, heavy-hearted, weary in mind and body, came to the Satsangs and found peace. They gained a renewal of strength and an incentive to live again. The sorrows of their losses and the guilt of killing others seemed to fade away, washed, as it were, in the holy presence of Kirpal. His voice washed their minds and the nectar from His love-filled eyes sank deep into their souls. Peace descended on them and as they sat at His feet they became whole for a while. Their memories and their loneliness vanished in the sea of love that poured from Kirpal, engulfing them in a warm mantle. They took this love home with them like a gift and it lived in their hearts through the days until the next Satsang came around to replenish them.

They came again and again and gradually, the hatred began to fade from their beings and in its place realization took root, that their actions against their brothers had been wrong. The oneness and love they felt increased, and they shed tears for each other's loss of their loved ones.

Sawan Ashram was a true and living tribute to Sawan and was fulfilling Sawan's wish of a platform where differing thoughts could become single, made evident by Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, sitting together and embracing each other as brothers. Sawan Ashram was the first institute in India where racial discrimination was discarded and leaders and followers of any religion joined in their mutual search for the same God. Kirpal's simple, but pellucid discourses on spiritual subjects blew the cobwebs from the minds of His listeners. He cut through the trappings and exposed basic teachings in their pristine purity. He worked to make people realize that the human being was not merely a creature with a label tied on him but a dearly loved child of the same God. Those who listened, and heard His words, saw the truth in

them and were changed. All this presented an illuminated living example of that about which He had written in His Gurmat Sidhant – the collective wisdom from the Masters of the past.

Naturally, at first there was some hesitation among the leaders of various religions, who were reluctant to discuss the intricacies of their particular schools of thought with a turbaned Sikh. Kirpal discerned this and formed the Spiritual Friends' Society which gathered, not at Sawan Ashram, but at 35 Rajpur Road and at the home of some very sincere and spiritual people from the Society of Friends, known also as the Quakers. These meetings were a definite success and they continued for a number of years until it was no longer necessary; the harder Kirpal worked, the more universally accepted and respected He became.

After that, whosoever held a real interest in things of God came directly and openly to Sawan Ashram with head held high, to be received and honored by Kirpal. Kirpal's innate humility won friendship and trust. His softly spoken words, coming direct from the heart, reassured everyone that He had no ulterior motive and was indeed what He said He was, a dedicated person striving to bring humanity out of the misunderstandings that had arisen in the name of religion. He constantly stressed how essential it was for religious leaders to sit down together, to understand each other's points of view.

'That can only happen,' said Kirpal, 'when we take this first step of sitting together; by that we will get nearer each other and will understand where we go wrong and where others' views hold some value. Thus, the misconception of one's own religion being the only true religion can be cleared. All these misunderstandings are the issues of ignorance. All religions have two parts. First is that man

should become a real human being, his morals should be high and he should be of some help to all living creatures so that this should become a heaven on earth. The second part of religion is to know thyself, who you are, that you are not the body which is merely an abode through which the true “you” can achieve the greatness that is your heritage. You are the soul, not the body. The soul is that which enlivens the body and when the soul leaves it, the body becomes a mound of dust. The soul is the life; the child of God – the God which is the Power controlling this world and many other worlds. So the second part of religion is to know oneself and to know God.’

His clear, simple explanations had the honest ring of truth, unfolding a deep knowledge of spiritual things in such clarity they could not deny and they respected and loved Him for it.

However, there was a downside. As the name of Kirpal became increasingly known, so the troublemakers became increasingly troublesome in their attempts to blacken it. Most of the agitation was instigated from a certain group who wanted claim to the successorship of spirituality after Sawan’s departure. Anonymous letters were sent to high-ranking government officials, the Criminal Investigation Department of the Police, and even the Prime Minister’s office.

They began by offering “inside” information that drugs were being used in the Ashram, which they said was a center of drug distribution. Without proof, the police could not just raid the Ashram, so they decided to send a few selected men, with an inspector, in the guise of taking an interest in Kirpal’s teachings. They attended a Satsang talk and then asked permission to spend a few days in the Ashram, claiming

to have come a long distance. Being interested in the science of spirituality, they would appreciate an opportunity to be thoroughly convinced before requesting initiation.

Kirpal graciously allowed them to stay and invited them to visit Him in His room. There, they listened to the numerous questions and general conversation Kirpal had with whoever came to Him. He told some of the sevadars to look after them and said, 'This place where I live will be open to you day and night, so please come and go as if it belongs to you, as it does, being a public property.'

During their stay, the special detectives made friends with the residents, visiting their quarters, searching with their eyes and listening to each word spoken. With suspicion they carefully watched everything that was going on and with their extensive training in observation, did not miss anything. After about two weeks they realized how wrong they had been to suspect such a great saint as Kirpal of any nefarious deed. As one man they approached Kirpal and confessed that they were not seekers and explained why they had come. They meekly asked forgiveness, feeling ashamed with Kirpal's loving and smiling eyes upon them. They told Him, 'Because we had to make a thorough investigation of what was going on here, we listened to your talks intently to seek the real meaning behind them and through this we have come to understand what spirituality truly is and the importance of initiation from a Guru like you.' Humbly they asked for forgiveness and would He give them initiation?

Kirpal smiled at them, saying, 'Why should you be ashamed? You were doing your duty. What about the unpaid "secret service" workers who do their dirty work just for the joy of bringing humiliation and disgrace to other human beings? They are the ones who should ask forgiveness

from God and be ashamed for their deeds, not you people.'

They all received initiation and became devoted followers. Over the course of time, many members of the Police Force, from the high ranks to the lowest, became disciples of Kirpal, bringing their wives, children, relatives and friends. Kirpal frequently gave talks at the Police Lines, which were always well attended.

Kirpal continued to work hard on the relationships of religious leaders. Two or three years ahead, the Pacific Conference would be held, which was another opportunity for Kirpal to reach different religious leaders, to inspire and encourage their getting together in harmony to establish an understanding between them, leading to peace among them and eradicating the hatred of fanatics and extremists. Kirpal instigated the commencement of the World Fellowship of Religions a few years later, with this same purpose as His goal.

Meanwhile, branches of Ruhani Satsang were opened, not only in other parts of India but in a number of Western countries, and would multiply rapidly in a few years.

No matter how much men strive to express their lower nature, incredible as it sometimes seems, God's work triumphs over all negative activities. Although subtle and gross forms of vandalism continued to attack Kirpal's good name, that very name was becoming known and praised all over India and various parts of the world. There were no propaganda specialists or paid workers to promote it, but His word was reaching thousands of hearts and dragging them toward Him. Satsang halls sprang up in the towns and cities of India, or if the followers were few they shared the cost of ensuring there was a piece of ground somewhere for Satsangs and a place for their beloved Guru

to stay when He came to visit.

In just three years so much had happened. In 1948 Kirpal took up residence in Delhi and in 1951 Sawan Ashram was begun and built, without much capital but completed largely by a huge labor of love among the followers. The result was a sizeable Ashram with a delightful atmosphere of beauty and serenity. In its own way, it reflected Kirpal's nature, with shrubs and flowers distributing fragrance to everyone.

The disciple gardeners worked regularly in the gardens, beautifying the grounds, giving two or three hours of their time after their daily work. It was their contribution, their expression of love and devotion to Kirpal. They tended the flowers and plants with pleasure and hoped He would notice the transformation of bare surroundings into a creation of charm and appeal, and bless the workers with a special glance of love.

Disciples of Baba Sawan had never imagined there could be another spiritual Master to give the inner contact – the Naam – and were astounded to witness hundreds receiving the priceless experience at initiations. Not one person left without being satisfied that he or she had indeed received connection to the inner Light and Sound. Witnessing this, they came to plead with Kirpal to get answers from Sawan to their questions. Kirpal knew that it would enhance their own progression to go within themselves and ask their Guru personally, and He tried to encourage them to do this. When they pleaded their helplessness, He would read from a notebook in which He had recorded questions from disciples, with Sawan's answers. This book also contained His own inner experiences, written in His personal code. His aim was always to direct their attention toward Sawan

and not to Himself.

If the person persisted in desiring an individual answer to his question, Kirpal would call any child who was fortunate to be present and tell the child to sit down with closed eyes in front of Him. After a while the child would open his or her eyes and give the very answers from Sawan that the person was requesting. One youth, on his return from meditation, gave the answer to the question and then said, 'Maharaj Ji, Hazur also asked me if I wanted to see the followers of my Guru [Kirpal] and when I said "yes" I saw the whole world from one end to the other and I saw so many people that it seemed there was no empty place. Some had hats on, some topis*, some turbans and there were so many different kinds of clothes in so many colors. There were millions of people, Maharaj Ji, there were so many people!'

Another disciple, a woman this time, described a similar inner experience when she saw thousands of people honoring Kirpal; there were easterners, westerners, Africans and so on, all with faces turned to Kirpal and moving toward Him. These are but two of the numerous accounts of the followers' experiences – experiences on this particular subject, in the early days when Sawan Ashram was hardly more than a piece of land and a few simple rooms. There was very little money in the treasury and Kirpal's name was not yet known among the world's hungry seekers for God. Ten short years later, these inner experiences were fulfilled – materializing for physical eyes to see.

Kirpal's opponents tried every means they could in attempts to discredit Him. Once, He was accused of inciting people to witness falsely at initiations: in other words, to

* Hindi word for hat. Also, the lightweight sunhat or helmet made from the pith of the sholah plant.

profess to have had some inner experience when they had not. The accusers said that it was impossible for every single person of the hundreds initiated at one time to get an experience; that even in Sawan's time it had not happened. Kirpal calmly suggested that they bring one of their own people to see for himself and then everyone would hear what he had to say. When they agreed to this, the man they brought forth testified afterwards that what Kirpal had promised was indeed true. What better proof for the seekers at large, to assure them that Kirpal's initiation was a true connection of the soul with the God Power within? When the man gave his testimony that he had received the experience in full consciousness, Kirpal's accusers, who were initiates of Baba Sawan, were shamefaced and admitted they were wrong.

Again some disciples of doom felt it was their duty to warn Kirpal of ' . . . squandering the priceless treasure by giving it to all who ask for it, when most of them are worthless people. If you go on like this,' they wailed, 'your coffers will soon become empty.' With infinite patience Kirpal replied, 'No one is worthless, all are children of God and are priceless. They may have sinned, but who has not? As for my coffers getting empty, how is that possible? The treasure house is not mine but God's and it is limitless. I am just handing out whatever He sends.'

God, working through the human pole of Kirpal was certainly giving in abundance to overflowing. Everyone had an experience – some more, others less; the difference being, as explained by Kirpal, that each man's background is different. Even those who came, not for initiation but merely as interested observers, got an inner experience as they sat with the group.

Not everyone saw exactly the same. Some saw the Light in various stages, others heard the Sound, also in different

phases. Some saw the radiant form of the Master inside, and many saw Sawan or Sawan and Kirpal together. Those who had never seen Baba Sawan described the form they had seen and then identified it by a photograph shown to them. Some saw other Masters from the past and some had other types of experiences. Whatever it was their good fortune to see, they left with satisfaction and joy in their hearts that they now had a truly spiritual Guru in Kirpal.

When some of the new disciples expressed their puzzlement at seeing the spiritual form of Baba Sawan within, when they had never seen Him physically or even thought of Him, Kirpal gave a talk on love and explained, 'God is Love and our souls are the drops of the ocean of all love. If you sit by somebody who is overflowing with the love of God and who is love personified, then naturally you will have the same love by radiation. If your soul is full of love for your Guru, the result will be that wherever He is, you will be there.'

Here, Kirpal's eyes overflowed with tears and in a halting tone He spoke of Sawan and gave some indication of His own love for His Guru. The atmosphere became vibrant and so strongly moving that everyone was touched by Kirpal's love for Sawan. Many of the listeners wept too and some were so deeply moved that they left their bodies while sitting there wedged between other people. A few of these fell flat on their backs, causing a scuffle as people moved to give them room.

Many just sat with their eyes on Kirpal, listening to His every word, totally withdrawn from the world around them. Kirpal continued, 'So if your Guru's love is His Guru, then where will you go and what will you see? You'll go where He goes and see what He sees.'

In this way, encouraged and inspired by Kirpal, those

followers of Sawan who had forgotten much of their old love for their Guru and had become entangled in the worldly affairs and enjoyments, began to taste again the sweet nectar of love for their own Master. In Kirpal's company, they relearned what love for one's own Guru, who gives one rebirth into the inner life, really means. Their starved souls once again were fed with the food of life and the strength began to flow once again in their shriveled spirits.

It was during those early days when some Satsangs were held in the newly-built shelter – the shed – that an unusual occurrence happened at Satsang. Kirpal had just sat down on the dais and the shed was filled to capacity with eager listeners. Suddenly the people at the front saw a cobra snake come out from under the dais and, moving to a place in front of the first row of people, directly facing Kirpal, it coiled its long form around and, lifting its fanged head high, it stood there looking at Kirpal. Of course a scream went up, 'A snake, a snake!' The front row of the audience began to shunt back on those behind them, causing a great commotion.

By then, Kirpal had already begun His talk but seeing the disorder and the frightened faces He asked, 'What is happening?' No one replied, for all had eyes for the snake alone. 'What is the matter?' Kirpal repeated. They still could not speak, but pointed instead to the snake, which was quite calmly sitting upright looking without a blink at Kirpal. Leaning forward, Kirpal looked down at the cobra and then looked at the people and said, 'There is nothing to fear, he is not frightened of you all, why should you fear him? Let him also listen to the Satsang.'

Quite unconcerned, Kirpal continued His talk for one and a quarter hours while the snake sat quite still, apparently

listening to all that Kirpal said, and at the end of the Satsang he just uncoiled himself and went back under the dais. At this, someone shouted to fetch a stick to kill the snake, but Kirpal forbade this saying, 'When he has not harmed you in any way, why are you wanting to kill him?' And so the snake was allowed to go in peace. The story of "the snake that came to Satsang" is well known and told often among satsangis.

In those days, Sawan Ashram was cut off from the road coming from the center of Shakti Nagar by the wide, open drain so the only approach was by a long detour through muddy and narrow lanes. Therefore, it was not possible for cars to enter the Ashram. So the disciples built a wooden bridge over the drain which made an easy and direct access to the Ashram. Now, those with cars could at least drive up as far as the bridge, park in the street and cross the bridge on foot, to enter the gate of Sawan Ashram. It was also more convenient for pedestrians coming from that direction.

Unfortunately, this same open drain was an ideal breeding home for millions of mosquitoes, all of whom delighted in their nightly food hunt after sundown, zeroing in on any and all helpless human beings they could find.

Imperturbably, Kirpal continued holding Satsangs every evening and slept out in the open at night without using a mosquito net. Others in the Ashram and also those who lived in houses near the drain could not sleep without a net. Added to this, snakes could be seen in the Ashram every day for many years. But the followers were happy. They had their True Guru and they had a place to meet Him.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

In December 1951, the committee members of the Ruhani Satsang Trust held a secret meeting – secret from Kirpal, that is, but surely they must have realized that it was impossible to hide anything from Kirpal? Anyway, their intentions were to discuss ways and means of celebrating Kirpal's forthcoming birthday on February six, 1952.

They could not discuss this subject in Kirpal's physical presence for He had already stated that nothing should be organized for His birthday and only Baba Sawan's birthday was to be celebrated. Understandably, Kirpal's initiates wanted to celebrate their own Guru's birth.

It can be debated which is the higher devotion: to appreciate the advent of the Guru or to obey His wishes. Nevertheless, they did get together to decide a course of action and Hardevi was chosen to preside over the meeting and direct all arrangements. Wisely, no one else wanted to take on this responsibility and have to face Kirpal with it later on, but they had selected a stalwart and fearless director in Hardevi whose role, it became more and more apparent, was to shoulder the blame and support the followers when they wittingly or unwittingly displeased the Master; among her countless other duties.

Following their plans, they prepared for the big day. For

all the concentration, time and effort, they had not considered that perhaps their Guru had plans of His own. On the morning of February 4, Kirpal arose very early, called Hardevi and told her to pack a few necessary things. 'We are going somewhere for a few days and no one should know about this.'

Poor Hardevi, what a shock! What could she now do, with all the secret arrangements lined up to begin that very night? Certain disciples were ready to erect the shamianas* in the darkness of the small hours. Even Kirpal's appointments were lined up and He was scheduled that day to visit a certain satsangi's home near Delhi.

Hardevi reminded Him, 'What about your scheduled visit today?' Kirpal just repeated, 'No one should know where I am going, I want to be absolutely alone for these days.' He had chosen for the trip a village some sixty miles from Delhi, which had no proper roads, no water or electricity and no telephones!

Hardevi kept quiet, for she saw that Kirpal was determined, so off they went, accompanied by just two or three disciples. The car was driven up to a certain point and from there the journey continued by a cart drawn by bullocks. It was a rough and dusty ride.

When they reached the village it was like stepping back in time, before the advance of civilization. There were a few very small mud houses and a single well – the water provided for every need in the village. One very small store sold only grain, salt and oil – the very basic necessities. The villagers themselves made their own clothes and soap. All were poor, no one had much money, but their faces shone with a different wealth – an abundance of love, peace, and

* Awnings for shade.

a happiness that can only be known when the mind is free from worldly desires.

With their love and simplicity they engulfed Kirpal and His companions, making them forget everything but the love they were sharing. They gave them a small mud house to sleep in and with a long sigh of peace, Kirpal settled down to rest on the small string bed.

The song of the great silence sang all that night, accompanied by the orchestrations of mother nature's night creatures. The following day was equally serene in this haven of peace and joy, but on the second night, in the early hours, the whole village was awakened by the sounds of song and laughter – not from nature this time but from a great number of human throats! Yes, the disciples had discovered Kirpal's hideaway and had walked for miles to find Him and be with Him.

Kirpal arose from His bed and stood outside the hut, ready to admonish them for disturbing Him. When the huge crowd reached the hut and, as one man, surged forward to get near Him, each man falling over the next, Kirpal's face suddenly lit up and broke into a radiant smile and He welcomed them with His love and they were happy to be in His presence once again.

The first arrival of followers was just the advance guard in a sequence of arrivals that continued all day, until there were thousands of people to greet Kirpal on His birthday. Two Satsangs were held and the rest of the day taken up with interviews and organizing, to ensure that all the people were fed and had a place to sleep. From early morning onwards, Kirpal did not get a moment's rest.

The nights were very cold, as the month of February is winter in India too; the days are pleasantly warm but the temperature drops considerably at night. Big fires were

lit in the open and most of the people sat around the fires, singing the hymns of the Masters. Whoever felt too tired to sing just lay down wherever he was and slept.

Hardevi was busy day and night, getting open-air kitchens started, arranging for food supplies and generally coping with all the needs of the multitude. At first, the whole venture weighed like a very big problem occurring in a very small community, but with Kirpal's grace the difficulties disappeared, all the needs were met and the event turned out to be a joyful reunion of a huge family of brothers and sisters.

Only a few knew each other, for they had come from so many different towns and villages, but their single purpose united them in a wonderful bond of togetherness. They rejoiced in each other's company. Problems were solved with love and difficulties were encountered with laughter. The very atmosphere of the whole place intoxicated them and gave them a blissful forgetfulness of everything. Everything but Kirpal.

It was a very special time, a very special experience that no one present would ever forget. How could they forget the love that just poured out from Kirpal, lost as they were in His very presence? They would remember always the bliss of their meditations – the experiences they had.

Kirpal waived the usual rules and prerequisites for initiation and just gave to whomsoever asked for it. When the aspiring seekers presented themselves for the initiation process, they were all settled comfortably and then Kirpal began. But half way through the initiation, there had accumulated another large group wanting the precious Naam. So He instructed that they be seated in a nearby spot and began a separate process for them from the beginning. The same thing was repeated again when another group gathered and

had to be settled in yet another place. The latecomers were simple village folk who put little importance or attention on specific times or attending punctual appointments. Kirpal understood them and was very patient and loving.

The whole procedure was extensive and prolonged. Initiation normally takes from four to six hours, but with three different groups, all at different stages of instruction, Kirpal spent the whole day going from one group to another without taking rest or food. His countenance was indescribably radiant as He graciously connected all the souls on the path back to their Father.

When He was able to return, finally, to the little hut for rest and a meal, Hardevi gave Him a mischievous glance as she said, 'Maharaj Ji, you cannot run away from your work. It would have been easier on you and the people if you had agreed to the celebration arrangements in the Ashram.'

In such a short space of time, Kirpal's name had spread so far and wide throughout India that invitations came pouring in, entreating Him to visit and bless this town or that village. The mail increased to such a volume that the one-man office in the Ashram could no longer cope, so a system of volunteers was introduced to assist with handling the mail and answering the letters. The first draft of a reply was drawn up and taken to Kirpal for approval. Kirpal would go through the draft, deleting or adding as He saw fit, and even rejecting in total if He did not like the draft. The approved drafts were initialed by Him and typed on the Ashram letterhead. Again they were taken to Kirpal for signature, when He would once more read through the final result, even adding a few words by hand sometimes. Each letter received His detailed attention.

However, the letters that dealt specifically with

questions about the inner regions and meditation experiences were answered totally by Kirpal Himself, either by hand or by dictating to one of the volunteer (sevadar) secretaries; these volunteers gave their time willingly, out of devotion to Kirpal.

From all the Indian states, it is not surprising that the Punjab was a strong leader in the competition for Kirpal's attention and affection. Amritsar, situated just a few miles from the Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, is considered to be the spiritual home of the Sikhs. Now, it had a sizeable group of satsangis who continually requested Kirpal to come to their city, bless them and bless their homes, and hold an initiation there for the hundreds who, they said, were anxiously waiting to receive the gift of Naam, with the Master's grace. Kirpal at last agreed and allotted dates for His visit.

The first day of Kirpal's program in Amritsar included a Satsang, to be held at a certain hakim's* house. The Satsang had just begun when five fierce-looking men with swords strapped to their waists arrived and pushed their way to the front. Some of the sevadars, who were acting as ushers, stepped in front of them and told them they must sit at the back. Kirpal, sitting on the dais, held up His hand and told the sevadars to allow them to come forward. With love He told them to sit in the first row, right in front of Him; the other people readily made room for them.

Folding His hands to them in greeting Kirpal said, 'My dear brothers, it is a pleasure to see you, we meet after such a long time.' The five men sat through the talk and at the close of the Satsang Kirpal spoke to them again, calling each by his name. He took them to His room, along with another group of people who had come very far to see Him. Sitting

* A doctor practising certain ancient Persian therapeutics.

before Kirpal, the five suddenly broke down and dissolved into tears, their manly ferocity melting away.

They asked Kirpal to forgive them and disclosed that those in charge at the Dera had convinced them that Kirpal was a danger to Baba Sawan's teachings and they had come, therefore, with intent to kill Kirpal. When they heard Kirpal's talk and were received with so much love, they saw how wrong they were to believe such things without first verifying any truth in the accusations. Now that they had seen and heard for themselves, they were assured, they said, that Sawan's teachings were not in danger but were in fact being enlivened by Kirpal.

They then confessed to Kirpal that since Baba Sawan had left His physical body they had completely lost the Light within, and was there any hope for help? There and then, in front of the other people present, Kirpal told them to sit in the position of meditation and just close their eyes for fifteen minutes. During this short time, Kirpal continued conversing with others in the ordinary way. After about fifteen minutes, the five opened their eyes and fell on Kirpal's feet in gratitude, saying that not only did they get the Light back, but much more besides.

'We are from the village of Chativind,' they told Kirpal, 'and we will not rest until this propaganda against you is stopped and everyone is told who you really are – at least in our village.' And they became Kirpal's strong champions.

The efficacy of Kirpal's talks was overwhelming; His word spreading like a wildfire across the Indian subcontinent. Inevitably, this profusion of truth would expand beyond India's shores and ripple through other nations of the world. What better means to channel that truth than the printed word?

When Kirpal gave a concise but comprehensive talk on

the teachings of the Masters, in English, it was published and printed under the title “Man, Know Thyself”. This small book was to become a leading light on Sant Mat for the English-speaking peoples of the world.

The editor of a prominent Urdu newspaper entitled “Milap” one day attended Satsang at the Ashram. He was enthralled by Kirpal’s enlightening discourse; the overall impression was so strong that for days he could not put his mind to his work, so convinced was he that at last he had found the real meaning of life. For a number of years following this introduction to the Path, he published one complete discourse in every Sunday edition of Milap.

Letters from the public poured into the Milap offices by the hundreds; most of them letters of thanks and congratulations. However, there also were warnings – threats to destroy the newspaper if it carried on publishing Kirpal’s talks. The editor chose to ignore these portentous overtures and the readers continued to enjoy reading Kirpal’s words. Sales increased and the paper prospered.

Another daily – “The Tej” – also printed the discourses and, as the two publications were the only ones to cover a complete talk, they became popular with satsangis and non-satsangis alike. Tape recorders were scarce and expensive so everything was taken down in shorthand. It was a commendable effort; a service that reached also the seekers from afar who could not easily attend a Satsang in person.

In December 1954, the first issue of Ruhani Satsang’s own journal came out. It was called “Sat Sandesh”*, with a discourse by Kirpal and a short newsletter giving details of Kirpal’s activities and Ashram events. Sat Sandesh was at first published in both Hindi and Urdu, but later on came

* Message of the Masters.

out in other languages.

A "Pacific Conference" was held at Sapru House in New Delhi and was attended by a satisfactory number of religious leaders from India and from other countries. The surprising success of this modest effort promoted an eagerness to repeat the project on a somewhat grander scale. Sapru House was again chosen as the venue, being one of the more sophisticated buildings existing in India at that time, and it afforded up-to-date sound systems for language translation, enabling a complete understanding of each individual's speech.

Invitations to this event were dispatched to many different nations, inviting them to send representatives of their religions. The project was launched under the auspices of the Society for the Upliftment of Mankind. Members from the previous Pacific Conference took on the task of mailing out invitations to appropriate people. The various governments they contacted responded positively to the venture and showed an eagerness to participate. This was encouraging to everyone concerned.

Among those attending the Conference was an honored friend of India, Mr. Reginald Reynolds, and Kirpal was pleased to see that he had come. Mr. Reynolds had been an intermediary between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy of India and had been instrumental in solving some of the problems of that era. Deeply impressed by the talk Kirpal gave at the Conference, he visited the Ashram afterwards for private interviews with Kirpal.

Delegates were sent from almost all Asian countries as well as from U.S.A., Britain, Germany, France and a number of others. The outstanding success of the Conference was due largely to this generous representation of so many

countries, and to the sincere cooperation that was shown by both east and west.

Several of the delegates asked Kirpal for initiation after hearing His talk. From these, one man in particular was very well remembered. He was a South Korean, an official in the Korean Government. He looked at Kirpal and, before he had even heard His talk, he was deeply touched by Kirpal's presence, convinced he was in the company of a very rare human being. He asked Kirpal for a private interview after the public talk and when he sat with Kirpal in the Ashram he asked so many questions about the inner planes, the answers to which Kirpal gave freely, satisfying the South Korean so much that he at once asked for initiation. The inner experience he received was beyond his expectations and made him dance with joy. The satsangis around the Ashram were astonished to see this gentleman embracing the trees in the compound, kissing the dusty ground of the Ashram and smearing his forehead with its mud. He clung to the walls and cried, 'I adore all and everything and all the life which is here; everything is so beautiful.'

He asked Kirpal if he might speak to the congregation after Kirpal's talk at the Satsang which was about to begin. Of course Kirpal agreed and, as he sat beside Kirpal on the dais, he told the people, 'When my government asked me to come to this Conference, I hesitated for there are so many bogus organizations in the world and I did not want to waste my time attending such a thing, but God was kind to me for, through His grace, my government told me they could not find anyone more suitable to come here, so I had to agree to come. From my early childhood, I have been seeking enlightenment and inner knowledge but my search met such failures that I had given up hope of ever meeting a true spiritual Master. God must have heard my prayers

however, for now I have been accepted by a Guru incomparable to any other. I say this because He has shown me a little of His greatness.'

At this point the man could not speak and sat with bowed head, the tears flowing down his cheeks. Recovering a little, he continued by saying that he received not only the precious spiritual rebirth but he had for years suffered a grave illness that no doctor had been able to cure and, miraculously, he was now totally cured of that – overnight as it were. He returned to his country a happy and a very different man.

Meanwhile, tours in numerous parts of India were scheduled into Kirpal's busy program. He went to the smallest village or the largest city, wherever the seekers needed Him. In some cases, a single initiate alone would go round stirring the hearts of non-initiates until the truly hungry ones were filled with an overpowering desire to meet the Guru they had heard so much about and in whom the God power was working so magnificently.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Malkeet Singh had a desire to find God from his early childhood. As he grew up, in the city of Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh State, he realized that his desire would never be fulfilled unless he could find a true Guru to help him achieve his goal. Every available minute therefore, was spent in this search.

On reaching the age of thirty, success in the quest for God still eluded him and disappointment weighed so heavily on his heart and mind that, in turnabout fashion, his outlook took on an atheistic trend. His attitude toward religion and religious people became rancorous, his feelings expressed in scathing remarks and bitter laughter. His friends now were of like thought, with whom he spent most of his time exchanging tales of his futile existence – searching for a non-existent God.

In the enthusiasm of his search he had forgone the ordinary comforts of life, starved himself of food at times, in the cause of his all-important goal. He had approached each prospective guru with hope and expectation but each and every one had failed even the simplest tests. He would turn to his friends and say, 'They make so much money in the name of God. What God? There is no God – it is all a futility!'

This disappointment tormented him to distraction. The bitterness in his heart grew and grew until it spawned the thought of revenge. He asked his friends, 'Why can we not also make some money?' They devised a plan of retaliation and their efforts paid off. Choosing one of the professed so-called gurus, they would spy on him and learn of his secret vices and habits and blackmail him into paying money for their silence. Or they would "help" a "holy man" by collecting followers for him and charging a fee for their services.

One day they got the news of a certain Sikh holy man's forthcoming visit to Kanpur. Reputed to be a devotee of the Guru Granth Sahib, he claimed to have the power of giving salvation through the holy book. This scenario drew Malkeet Singh and company like a magnet. When they reached the site of the meeting they noticed that very few people had arrived to hear the talk. Seeking out the "holy man", Malkeet Singh told him that he knew what a fake and a cheat he was, making money from a lie.

Before the fellow could call for assistance, Malkeet Singh continued, saying that he had a plan for making a lot of money if he was interested, but the profits would be shared, each getting fifty percent. When the false guru heard the plan he quickly agreed and within a few days leaflets were printed and distributed among the townspeople. They incited a lot of curiosity and excitement, telling the people that this great holy man would show the light of God through the Guru Granth Sahib. Curiosity, never the best of motives for anything, encouraged hundreds of people to flock to the meeting and the customary offering of money to the holy book was given by each one.

On a raised platform, the scriptures took the place of honor in the center with the "holy man" seated behind. It was a high platform, covered with a cloth to the ground and

decorated with flowers. After reading from the holy book, the “guru” instructed the people to close their eyes, bow down and pray to God to show them the light. After two minutes praying, they must open their eyes and concentrate on the book with full devotion. If it be God’s will, He would show the light to everyone.

With eager anticipation, the people obeyed the instructions and suddenly, miraculously, the book was bathed in light, just for a few seconds. Those who saw it marveled at the phenomenon. Some wept openly, folding their hands and bowing to the ground. Just a few wondered if there was some trick in this “miracle”. The “wonder man” stood up and told the people that although God had heard the prayers and responded, yet their concentration was not strong enough and the next day they should come with more piety in their hearts.

The crowds dispersed and Malkeet Singh and his friends crawled out from under the platform, laughing at the success of their scheme. They shared out the money which had not amounted to much, but they had hopes for a greater profit the next day. Dismantling the electrical equipment, they removed the yellow bulb from the hollowed-out place in the holy book and went their various ways.

Malkeet Singh arrived home and gave his share of the ill-gotten gains to his young wife, telling her the whole story. She wept with shame to hear how they had cheated the people out of their hard-earned money and prayed to God to forgive Malkeet Singh and save his soul.

The same hocus-pocus was repeated for a number of days, each time attracting a bigger crowd and subsequently gaining a larger distribution of loot afterwards. But when they heard that the police intended to visit the next meeting to check out exactly what was causing such a sensation,

Malkeet Singh advised the Sikh to leave at once and go somewhere else, before they all got arrested.

This story gives an indication of the rebellion brewing inside the man Malkeet Singh, which exploded in full force against God and everything connected with religion.

Some months later, Malkeet Singh was informed that a great spiritual Master would be holding meetings in Kanpur, including initiations for those desiring to follow the practices he taught. This appeared to be yet one more opportunity for Malkeet Singh and company to hatch another plot. The local public gardens had been selected for the gatherings and they roughly pushed their way through at the first meeting and sat down in the front row. There was a white clad, bearded and turbaned figure on the dais, at whom they glared in an insinuating manner.

At the end of the talk, Malkeet Singh staggered to his feet in a daze, with a bewildered look on his face. He asked a friend if he had heard the talk. 'Of course I heard it' was the reply, 'didn't you?' Malkeet Singh shook his head saying, 'Something happened when He looked into my eyes – after that I cannot remember where I was or anything. I must have suffered a sunstroke or something. I don't feel well, but we will come again tomorrow.'

They attended all three consecutive Satsangs and registered their names for initiation. 'If this Guru gives me initiation, I will know he is no good and that will be a test for him,' said Malkeet Singh, who was well aware of his own shortcomings and bad deeds. However, something of the old search for God stirred in him – some small spark of hope still glimmered in his heart.

The following day, he and his friends arrived at the meeting place very early and found that the canopies and

dhurries* were being removed. On asking the workers if the initiation was being given in some other location, they learned that the initiation had been cancelled because the Guru Ji had to leave suddenly for another city.

Malkeet Singh went home in a troubled state; he did not know what to think. Was it possible he had, at last, found a true Master? The next few days found him brooding over the subject – he could not leave it alone. Finally he got up and went again to the grounds where the Satsangs had been held. He asked people working in the grounds where he could find the Guru who had given the talks. The grounds were used by many different speakers, so the workers wanted to know to whom he was referring. Malkeet Singh realized that he didn't know the name of the Guru he sought.

He went home but he could not sleep; he could not work. The eyes that had looked deep into his were always there in front of him. He lay on his bed with closed eyes, refusing his food; his wife worried and wondered what was wrong. His days and nights passed in agony of indecision. Was he true or was he not? His heart said *yes, this was the very first time he had been face to face with a truly spiritual being*. His mind said *be careful, he may be another trickster*.

One night as he lay awake, he felt a sudden urge to sit up and pray to God: if there was a God, would He please help him? As he prayed, he felt he was losing contact with his body. And then, very clearly, he saw the same Guru he had been seeking. The Guru asked him what he wanted and Malkeet Singh replied, 'The initiation that you had promised.' The Guru smiled at him, gave him the sacred words and connected him to the Source of Life. When he returned to body consciousness, he wondered if he had dreamed it all

* Woven mats.

but he remembered the sacred words the Master had given him. Sitting down quietly, he closed his eyes and followed the instructions of the Guru. Lo and behold, he enjoyed a further inner experience. Then he knew for certain that at last he had found the True One. But he still did not know His name or where He came from.

Malkeet Singh knew he would never rest until he had met his Guru again, physically. Some days later he rolled a few clothes in a blanket and told his wife he had to go away on some business. At the train station he hesitated. Where to go? He decided to buy a ticket for the next train that was leaving and put everything else in the Guru's hands. At the ticket office he asked where the next train was going. The clerk said, 'Delhi'. 'Give me a ticket to Delhi,' said Malkeet Singh. He just had enough time to run and jump on the train as it was leaving the station.

The journey was long and he sat through the hours silently meditating. When they reached Delhi, there was a great rush of people – some disembarking, some boarding the train, which now had another destination. He found himself swept out and onto the platform. Drifting along with the mainstream, this led him through the busy station and out via the main exit. He looked around. Everyone seemed sure of their purpose, climbing into tongas*, cars or taxicabs, while he stood there feeling lost.

A nearby tonga was being loaded with luggage. The owners of the luggage were urging the driver to make haste but the driver was not cooperating. Pointing out that they were only three persons, he insisted they pay for all four seats or allow him to find another passenger. His eye fell on Malkeet Singh standing there, watching the dispute. 'Do you want to come in this tonga?' he asked. 'Yes' said Malkeet Singh.

* One-horse carriage.

A few seconds later, they were off.

As the horse did its best to make progress through the busy traffic, Malkeet Singh asked his fellow passengers, 'Would you kindly tell me where you are going?' 'We are going to Sawan Ashram,' they replied. 'Who lives there?' queried Malkeet Singh. They told him, 'Our Guru lives there and we are going to have His darshan.' Malkeet Singh digested this information. He thought, *Right – let us see this Guru and continue the search from there!*

The tonga eventually drew up inside Sawan Ashram and the passengers paid off the driver. Malkeet Singh watched as the others just left their luggage in a heap on the ground and rushed off to join a small crowd that had gathered, so he did the same. Small in stature, he could not see over the heads until he found a space with a view. The sight staggered his senses, for there in the center of the crowd was his own Guru – the one who had given him the inner experience. As he stood there in shock, the Guru turned and looked straight into Malkeet Singh's eyes and smiled at him. Then He looked away and spoke to someone else.

Like a man in a dream, Malkeet Singh walked away and sat down on the grass to recover his equilibrium and to ruminate over the events of the past few hours. When his head had stopped spinning and his voice returned, he wandered into the office. He learned there that his Guru's name was Kirpal Singh and if he wanted initiation he should register his name. All those who registered were to assemble the following morning and Maharaj Ji would approve the applicants; any person not yet ready for initiation would have to leave.

Malkeet Singh could feel his heart beating as he joined the hopeful applicants the next day – about 600 persons in all.

As they sat in rows, women on one side, men on the other, he watched for the Master. When Kirpal came, He walked slowly between the rows, looking intently at each man and woman. He sometimes indicated that a person must leave, but very few were sent away, about one percent. He stopped in front of Malkeet Singh and studied him for a few moments; then He said, 'What are you doing here? You have already been given initiation. Go and sit on the side with the other initiates*.'

Malkeet Singh's heart was bursting with joy. He knew he had found his true Guru, or rather the Guru had found him! He was now fully assured that Kirpal was the human form in which the Supreme Power was working.

In the years that followed, Kirpal received a regular flow of letters signed by one "kumli", which means "mad woman". Sometimes Kirpal would read one aloud to a few devotees gathered in His room. They were full of desperation – words of love and devotion from someone crying out for Kirpal's love.

Hardevi was intrigued and wanted to know who this "kumli" was. Kirpal told her, 'This writer is like a mad woman; some day I will introduce you.' One day, Kirpal brought a small, bearded man into His room. His clothes were worn and his turban casually tied, but the eyes were bright and were for Kirpal alone. Kirpal gestured to the slight figure and said to Hardevi, 'This is kumli.'

Hardevi looked at the man and said, 'But he looks like a mad man.' Malkeet Singh, for it was he, bent to touch her feet in respect and said, 'No, a mad woman.' It was his way of showing respect to the God in his Guru, knowing that all souls are brides of the Lord. His inner progress was rapid and his soul found the peace he had desperately sought.

* Usually, a few initiates were allowed to observe the initiation.

CHAPTER THIRTY

It was in the year 1954 that Hardevi's father asked Kirpal for initiation. To Hardevi's delight, Kirpal agreed at once, thereby fulfilling Baba Sawan's promise that His successor would give the priceless boon.

Just a few months after his initiation, Hardevi's father fell seriously ill. Her elderly mother asked for help in taking care of him and when Hardevi told Kirpal, He gave permission for him to stay in the Ashram during his sickness.

The sick gentleman was moved to the Ashram but his condition took a strange turn. He lay on his bed with closed eyes – insensible to all appearances. It was baffling to the doctors, who could find no cause.

Then abruptly, this inertia changed to continuous motion. His right leg and hand twitched and jumped up and down in a constant but rhythmical movement. It continued for several days and the doctor asked the patient if he was in pain, but Hardevi's father shook his head. 'Why then is your leg and arm moving up and down?' queried the doctor.

The patient opened his eyes, looked straight at his questioner and said in very clear tones, 'I am not in pain. Sawan and Kirpal are both standing before me and I am dancing with joy. Do not disturb me.' Closing his eyes, he continued

his joyful movements.

This enlightening exchange delighted the visitors who had gathered around his bed, which had been placed in front of Kirpal's residence in the open summer air.

Everyone was very careful to not disturb him after this, but he was a great attraction. People could not resist a careful and quiet peek at the unique example of a man making a gradual but happy transcursion from this world to the next. At a safe distance from the bedside, people marveled at the rare phenomenon. 'How fortunate he is!' 'I pray I might also enjoy the same grace when my time comes.'

The Sunday after Hardevi's father shared his inner joy, Hardevi was serving breakfast to Kirpal, prior to the regular Sunday morning Satsang. 'At eleven we will take him away,' Kirpal remarked quietly.

Hardevi looked up with a puzzled and inquiring expression. Kirpal, with such kindness in His voice, started to explain, 'Your father. . .' He paused, then: ' . . . but I have just remembered, we will be in the middle of Satsang at that time and it would mean a disturbance, so it's better to finish the Satsang a little earlier and I will change the time of your father's departure by two hours.' Having said this, Kirpal left for the shed to hold the Satsang.

After the Satsang, Kirpal came into the kitchen and told Hardevi to serve lunch. When the dishes had been placed, He took a plate and, piling it generously with food, handed it to Hardevi saying, 'Eat, for there will be quite a bit of work, making the arrangements for your father's body.' Kirpal looked at His watch.

Hardevi lifted a small piece of chapati* to her mouth but could not eat. Instead, she burst into tears. Kirpal looked at

* Like roti, but smaller.

her in surprise. 'Why are you crying? Don't you want your father to go? He is fortunate to go like this, but if you do not want him to go now, I will change the time. Then he will not have to go until you say so – but he will live the life of an invalid and you will have to look after him until his death. If you are prepared for this, I will not take him today.'

Hearing Kirpal's words, Hardevi's sobs were heartrending. Still sobbing, she bent and touched Kirpal's feet and said, 'I know what you are doing for him and I am happy knowing that. I do not want him to suffer any more, but I just cannot help crying.' She continued to cry as Kirpal ate His food. Then, getting up, He told Hardevi to follow Him.

Her father was lying in his small room with satsangis doing silent Simran around him. Outside, a small crowd of satsangis had gathered. They knew that at 1 p.m. he was due to leave his body and, naturally, there was a great deal of interest and concern. The soul's transition from this world to the next is a very special event.

The subject of all this interest lay serenely on his bed, as in meditation – not at death's door! If a question was put to him, he answered clearly, in full consciousness. It was hard to believe that in a few minutes he would die.

When Kirpal entered the room, He asked him kindly, 'Are you ready to go?' Then, placing His hand on the old man's forehead, He looked deeply into his eyes. With that, the soul left his body. It was exactly 1 p.m. – the time appointed by Kirpal.

There are numerous eye witness accounts of satsangis going through the change called death in Kirpal's presence. Each one tells a story of His gracious mercy.

One such account starts with a letter to Kirpal. It was from an elderly satsangi and told a pathetic story. The man

wrote about his son, Balbir Singh, who was married quite young but his child-wife did not come to live with her husband until several years later. It was then they discovered that she suffered from frequent seizures, falling into unconsciousness if anything disturbed her. Unable to stand the distress this caused, her husband ran away from home. The father, who was presently staying in Sawan Ashram, begged Kirpal to speak to his son and discover what intentions he had regarding his wife.

The boy was sent for and Kirpal talked to him kindly but firmly, reminding him of his marriage vows and his duties as a husband. In marriage, each partner is responsible for the other. If one suffers, the other must take on the burden of that suffering and share the distress. Marriage is a union in which everything is shared – sickness, health; joy and sorrow; comfort and discomfort: it is a partnership until death.

Kirpal asked the boy if he thought he was pleasing God, living as a renunciate, when in fact he was breaking his promise to God to care for his wife until death? In tears, Balbir Singh told Kirpal that if he lived with his wife he would go insane. Kirpal said, 'If I give permission for your wife to come here and stay with you in the Ashram, will you then be able to look after her? I am here, to take much of your burden from your shoulders.'

The boy's tears turned to smiles at this. 'Maharaj Ji, if I can stay near you, I can go through anything – and with joy!' He then left for his home and, some days later, returned to the Ashram accompanied by his wife.

Like a very frightened doe, her big eyes looked fitfully and fearfully at everything. However, in just a few days she was a changed person, happily laughing and dancing around the Ashram. Not everyone was pleased about this

and complaints were circulated that dancing in the Ashram was not fitting conduct and was a source of distraction for those who wanted to meditate.

When Kirpal heard of the complaints, He reminded everyone, 'If you have no love for God's children, especially if they are suffering from an uncontrollable malady, then how can you meditate? God is love, and without love no one can meditate on His name, no matter where they are.'

The young girl continued to live under the power of her strange sickness. Sometimes she ran all over the Ashram, totally naked, and the women would run after her and cover her with their shawls. The residents of the Ashram began to learn a new kind of love in protectiveness, a compassion that freed them from selfishness and criticism. Kirpal, watching this growth, was pleased and like a radiant sun exuded His love and His light, permeating the recipients with pure joy.

But Balbir Singh was not one of the recipients. He could not see his situation as a blessing in disguise, but could only suffer in the misery of shame – shame to see his wife's illness and shame to see pity in the eyes of his fellow satsangis. He continued to care for his wife devotedly, but shrank more and more into the shame that filled his heart.

Kirpal was more than generous. The young wife was allowed to enter His quarters at any time of the day and Kirpal would leave His work and listen to whatever she wanted to say. She talked to Him like a small child speaks to her father and obviously loved Him.

One day, Kirpal had just finished His lunch when Balbir Singh ran into the kitchen, burst out crying and said, 'Maharaj Ji, I said that if I was near you I could bear anything with joy, but I cannot do it. Please, my God I want to die, so please, please kill me!' Laying himself at Kirpal's

feet, he sobbed his heart out.

Kirpal raised him up and told him, 'You know she is just suffering from a serious case of epilepsy – that is all that is wrong with her. When she does things that are not presentable she is innocent of the acts for she does not know what she is doing, but she has to go through it to pay her karmic debts.' Balbir Singh was in no condition to understand. 'You are God; you can take the debts away. Either kill me or cure her!' he cried.

Kirpal looked sorrowfully at this distraught young man, caught up in a wild kind of distraction over his own incapacities. He spoke to Balbir, 'You have to choose. Do you want to die or do you want your wife to die, because once her karmic debts are paid, she will go.' Balbir Singh just hung his head and wept. 'I see you have chosen,' said Kirpal, looking at the sad figure.

The minutes ticked on in the potent silence. It was shattered suddenly by shouts and the sound of running feet. Then the news was brought that Balbir Singh's young wife, who had been sitting talking to another satsangi, had just fallen onto her side and died.

The Masters say that only a Master can truly understand a Master. Only a Master can see into the depths of life; can perceive the total panorama of past, present and future. Only a Master can divine a true course and boldly take steps to chart that course. And only a Master is motivated in all He does by compassion, understanding, a will that is sublime and a love that is pure and holy.

On the edge of the city of Brindaban, near Mathura in Uttar Pradesh State, a yogi lived in a small hut atop a hill. Through severe austerities he had succeeded in controlling his physical senses. He was able to live without food or water

for months on end, while continually remembering God. The only break in this constant devotional routine were his occasional visits to a nearby temple in which was kept the image of his god. He was held in high esteem by the villagers in the district who believed him to be a great yogi and who came from miles around to get his blessing.

He was once giving his blessing to a small group of people when a man stood up and asked the sadhu what he gained from torturing his body, going without water, food and sleep, etc. The yogi explained that some day God would accept his efforts, have pity on him and show him His light. The man looked surprised and said, 'But I did not do any of those things and yet my Guru gave me not only God's Light but also the Sound of God.'

Thinking he had misheard, the yogi asked the man to repeat what he had said, slowly. The man did so, and the yogi was perplexed. *How could anyone be connected to the Light and Sound without first controlling the mind? Only through austerities can one control the mind!*

Uncertain whether to believe the man or not, but excited over the thought of it, the yogi begged to be taken to the Guru who could give this unattainable gift. When he came to Sawan Ashram he was initiated by Kirpal and had the wonderful experience of leaving his body; of seeing and talking to his Guru – Kirpal – within.

This experience effected a change in him. It was a much humbler person that returned to the little hut on the hill and that change was very much in evidence. He asked the people to leave him alone and undisturbed. When they sought his blessings he told them that he had nothing to offer of himself – he was just a beggar. It didn't achieve the desired solitude, for the people loved his new humility and worshipped him more because of it.

Very soon, questions were asked about the cessation of the yogi's attendance at the temple. He explained: 'I have found out the truth from my Guru – that the real temple of God is this human body and only through the body can one realize God, not in man-made temples that house idols made of stone.' His words shocked the orthodox peasantry to the core. Regarding him a heathen, they proceeded to boycott his further association with the residents of the district by spreading the warning around that anyone having anything to do with the yogi would be meted out the same treatment; they would be shunned.

Among the yogi's erstwhile champions and followers was a widow who lived in a small hut at the foot of the yogi's hill. She had just one son: a young boy who was the sole bread-earner. She too attended the temple with devoted regularity, but when she heard the judgment the villagers had pronounced on the yogi, she felt hurt and confused. What should she do? She went to the yogi himself, begging him to tell her what to do.

The yogi told her about the teachings of Surat Shabd Yoga, as he had learned them from Kirpal; those same teachings that past Masters had been exhorting for centuries. Listening carefully, she learned the true meaning of worship and the more she heard, the more clear the truth became – a crystal clarity which can inspire any true seeker. She declared that she also would cease to worship at the stone images.

Instead, she chose to visit the yogi's hut daily, sweeping away the dust, filling the water pitcher and generally tidying up the place. The chores finished, she would sit in the remembrance of God for a while. As she quietly went around the hut, the yogi continued with his meditation.

The villagers were infuriated by her stubborn refusal to

ignore the yogi. With impassioned threats they warned her that God would be displeased and would punish her severely for her actions. A little while later, her beloved son fell sick and died at the age of eighteen years.

Rejoicing at what they considered to be just retribution from the gods they worshipped, people came to her hut in hordes to shout taunts about her misdeeds and the penalty she had paid.

The poor woman said nothing but sat cradling her son's head in her lap, washing his face with her tears. One man suggested they take the woman and the body of her son to the yogi to show him the unhappiness he had caused for his devoted worshipper, the widowed mother. So, in a long procession they carried the body up the hill chanting hymns, while in their hearts they were relishing the forthcoming downfall of the yogi.

The yogi was deep in meditation. They began to shout and rave, banging on the walls of the hut and hurling insults at the tops of their voices. Suddenly, the noise faded away into silence. The yogi had opened his eyes and was gazing at them with a calm aloofness. They felt uneasy as he silently regarded them. Those who were carrying the boy's body came forward and, placing the corpse in front of him, accused him of bringing misery upon the widow. The yogi remained silent while they poured insult upon insult on his head. In a final furor, they accused his Guru of being responsible for the death of the boy.

At this, the yogi stood up and told them not to speak against his Master, the Godman; that it had nothing to do with Him, it was the boy's time to die and had been written so. But the anger of the crowd had gained momentum, and ceaselessly they shouted insults against the yogi's Guru, filled with accusation, and denunciation.

Pleading with them to cease slandering his Master, the yogi cried, 'You do not know what you are saying. He is a Godman, for the power of God is working in Him. You have no idea what you are saying.' This had no effect on the people, who just laughed and spat at him.

Someone shouted, 'If He is God, as you say, then prove it by bringing this boy, who has been dead for six hours, back to life. If your Guru cannot do that, he is no Guru but just a fake. So prove it if you can, and we will also accept him as a Guru.'

The perplexed yogi did not know what to say and sat thinking for a few minutes. Finally, he told the people to wait and went into his hut. Sitting down in the position for meditation, he closed his eyes and within minutes left his body and contacted the Master Power within. The Master asked him what he desired and the yogi, bowing low, asked for the boy to come back to life. The Master looked keenly at the yogi, then told him to take some water, repeat the holy charged words and sprinkle the water on the body.

The yogi opened his eyes, stood up, poured out a tumbler full of water from his pitcher and took it outside. The crowd, the widow and the boy's body were still there but without speaking a word, without looking right or left, he went straight to the body of the boy. Closing his eyes, he silently repeated the holy words as he sprinkled water on the still form. The crowd, in fascinated awe, slowly came closer, gathering around the yogi and the corpse.

After a few seconds, someone remarked, 'I can see his eyelids moving!' Then the whole miracle was presented before their eyes – the boy came to life as they stood watching.

The consequence of this astounding occurrence was the whole village begging the yogi to take them to his Guru,

to get the blessing of the initiation that he had received. So with triumph, joy and praise for the greatness of his Guru, the yogi lead them to Delhi the very next day and the large group of people came to Sawan Ashram.

Kirpal was sitting outside His residence, giving one of the many audiences of the day to a small group of people, when the band of villagers, led by the yogi, came marching into the Ashram grounds singing holy songs.

Approaching Kirpal, the yogi prostrated himself flat on the ground at Kirpal's feet. Kirpal asked him to sit up and tell Him why he had come and who were all the people. The yogi bowed again, related everything that had happened and gave thanks to Kirpal.

As his narrative approached the end of the story, the disciples sitting near Kirpal began to edge backwards a little, for they had seen Kirpal's expression change as the story progressed and now, as the yogi concluded his account, it was frightening to behold.

Kirpal put His hands on the arms of the chair and, leaning forward, glared at the yogi with such fierce power in His eyes – such a mixture of anger and pity – that those who were witness to the scene froze and shivered. The yogi, looking straight into Kirpal's angry eyes, sat in dumb bewilderment. Then with a roar like a lion Kirpal spoke: 'Get out! Get out of my sight and never come back here!'

Hardevi was working inside. Hearing Kirpal's voice and more particularly the tone of it, she came running out to discover what was happening. One glance at Kirpal was enough to tell her that something was very wrong. She saw the yogi; knew him for a loved and respected person; but he now sat as in shock, dazed, with his eyes wide open – full of confusion.

Again Kirpal thundered, 'I told you to leave the Ashram – go!' But Hardevi, true friend of those who fall from grace, at once folded her hands together and begged Kirpal to show mercy, even though she knew nothing about the situation. 'Whatever he has done' she pleaded, 'I feel he did not know that he was doing any wrong.' With her hands still folded she asked if she might know what had happened.

Kirpal did not speak but He nodded to the yogi to tell Hardevi what had transpired. In a voice that matched his dazed look, the yogi repeated the story, not with joy this time but hesitatingly, with sadness in his words.

When the yogi had finished, Hardevi looked at Kirpal who was sitting very still with His eyes closed. She asked, 'But Maharaj Ji, what did he do that was wrong?'

Kirpal opened His eyes and regarded the yogi. Then, all displeasure vanished, he spoke in a calm voice, 'Have you any questions to ask?'

The yogi folded his hands and bent his head to the ground. 'Please forgive me for being so dense, but I do not know what I have done.'

Kirpal said, 'I had great hopes of you but you have behaved like an ignorant child.' Sitting beside the yogi was the subject of his dilemma. Pointing to him, Kirpal continued: 'When this boy died, according to the law of give and take, who were you to bring him back to life?'

The yogi replied, 'My Lord, I am no one and have no power to give or take life; I asked you within and by your Power this boy got his life back.'

Kirpal said, 'You, an advanced student, do not know that when you contact that Power – the Master Power within you – that Power will grant you whatever you desire? That is why a Guru withholds the student's progress until the student is ready and understands the value of what he

is receiving. You ought to have known better. By your action you belittled God's way of working, thinking He was doing wrong by taking this boy's soul away from his body; so, working against His Plan, you made Him give back the life to the boy.'

The realization of what he had done flooded into the yogi's mind and he was appalled. Breaking into sobs, his words were difficult to hear as he said, 'I forgot . . . forgive me. . . I was so pained at seeing the boy's mother suffering that I forgot . . . and when the people started insulting and abusing your precious name I could not help myself but do what I did. Forgive me, my Lord . . . I have sinned greatly and only your forgiveness can cleanse me now.'

There was a kind look in Kirpal's eye as He spoke softly to the yogi. 'You could not control your pain at her suffering? You, who only had one person's suffering to cope with? What about me? I suffer with each breath; you and each one who lives with the Lord's breath in him are precious to me. I suffer with the misery of the world. I cannot see anyone suffer, so I suffer with them. If I wanted to I could stop all suffering but I have to bow down to His Law. Whatever He wishes, so that has to be. As for not being able to hear my name abused, is not your Guru's power great enough to take care of himself?'

Saying this, Kirpal stood up and turning to Hardevi said, 'Make arrangements for accommodation for all these people, and for their food.' Before they returned to their village, everyone with the yogi received the holy initiation.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Many things can be learned at the Master's feet by imbibing the proximity of His holy presence and by simply listening to what He has to say. The aspiring student should, therefore, seek His company as often as possible.

Kirpal proved many times over that He was the knower of every corner of a man's heart, though He never declared openly what He knew – usually not even to the person concerned. He preferred using a particular incident to everyone's benefit, or to the benefit of whoever was present at the time.

An excellent example of this happened one morning at the regular gathering for meditation and darshan. After the meditation, a man stood up and handed Kirpal his diary. Kirpal had introduced this spiritual regimen to His followers, to record their inner progress and ethical failures; to help them “weed out” unwanted traits and tendencies from their everyday lives, clearing the way for further advancement.

Kirpal indicated that the man should sit close to Him and with full attention perused the diary. ‘By this, it seems you have reached a high stage,’ He said. For a while He discussed the man's inner progress with him, then sat looking at him very thoughtfully as the minutes ticked by. Finally,

He looked up, gazing in turn at each of the initiates gathered around Him: fresh from their meditation, all eyes and attention on Kirpal.

Breaking into a beautiful smile, He rose from His chair, put His hand on the man's shoulder and patted him saying, 'Good, very good. Keep up your hours of meditation, which will bring more progress.' Turning to the gathering He said, 'This man was initiated only a few months back and he writes in his diary that he has reached a very high stage within. What about all of you? What have you done? From now on, put in more hours and meet your Guru within.'

With this, Kirpal left the gathering and returned to His residence. Walking straight into His room He sat on the bed and with a deep sigh leaned forward, supporting His head with His hands. He sighed again.

A sevadar on duty had followed the Master into His room and had watched Kirpal's actions. Leaving the room, she quickly went to the kitchen where Hardevi was preparing the Master's food. 'Taiji*,' she said, 'please come, I feel something very bad has happened; I have never seen Maharaj Ji look so sorrowful!'

Hardevi at once was all concern and hurried to Kirpal's room. When she saw Him she cried, 'Maharaj Ji, what is it? Has something happened?'

Kirpal looked up and she could indeed see the sorrow in His eyes. When He spoke, there was such weariness in His voice. 'This world is an illusory place but why do people who want to realize the truth make it hard for themselves by lies and deceit?' Hardevi pleaded to know what had happened and Kirpal told her, 'A man brought his diary filled

* Tai is an affectionate, respectful term used by the followers, meaning "aunt". In addressing or referring to another, "ji" is always added in polite respect.

with lies. He accepted me as his teacher but does not even have the grace to respect that I have the knowledge of what I give. It showed in his diary and he told me verbally that he reaches the highest inner stages, when I know that he does not even see the Light.'

The sevadar was both surprised and puzzled. 'But Maharaj Ji, you praised him and patted him and told everyone that they should be ashamed for not achieving the same as he had in just a few months.'

Kirpal smiled at both of them and with a slight twinkle in His eye He said, 'You see, I want to make use of each incident which can help the seekers on the path. If I had exposed the man's lies, what would it have achieved just to show that I knew? That is not my way. For another thing, it would probably have broken him away from whatever chance he has of realizing the Truth. He told the lies to impress everyone. To be belittled in the eyes of the other sat-sangis . . . he could not have stood that. With love and understanding, however, he will one day become strong and rise above the effects of false praise and insults alike.' Here Kirpal laughed and added, 'After all, he helped everyone who was there – they will give more time to meditation in an effort to achieve what they think he has achieved, and every little thing helps, you know.'

Those who had discernment, patience, the good fortune to sit at the Master's feet and enjoy some time in His presence, had the opportunity to listen carefully to His words and absorb the wisdom hidden there – to observe in so many ways the greatness of the Master.

Even a casual remark, at first appearing to have no significant implication, can sink into a true seeker's consciousness to return at some future moment pregnant with

meaning to shake one's very soul. Each grain of truth adds startling revelation and gives a tiny glimpse into the true nature of the Satguru.

The occurrence related above illustrates the concern and compassionate consideration of Kirpal for His children. Always endeavoring to shield them from hurt and exposure, He combined wisdom and humility to spare the individual and encourage the majority.

True humility is hard to define in words, but Kirpal has said that the more fruit a tree bears, the more it will bow down with the weight.

Kirpal's personality was all-encompassing. With children or the childlike, He was as a child; with the educated He exchanged knowledge; before the proud, the rich or famous, He was humble. His humility and "common touch" could be misread by the unfortunate undiscerning, who saw only a man living a man's life. The true seeker, however, saw His power and majesty. Everyone who came in contact with Him received more than one could ever know.

Kirpal once observed, 'A person addicted to alcohol can only relax and feel at ease with another wine lover – one need only look into the bars and other drinking places to see this. Why is it then, that those who profess to be intoxicated with the love of God cannot sit together and enjoy that spiritual intoxication in each other's company? The reason is they have not tasted the spiritual nectar but are rather like a man who has merely brushed his mustache with spirit and pretends to be drunk and cannot possibly know, therefore, what it is to be intoxicated.'

Kirpal's name echoed all over India and people were coming from near and far. Sawan Ashram continually received visitors from Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Bombay

and many other areas, seeking the priceless gift that Kirpal was offering.

He gave that precious gift with boundless liberality and the happy recipients, overjoyed with their inner experience, passed on the good news to other seekers by word of mouth. Many of those who in ignorance had accepted discipleship from the various “successors” to Sawan, realized how much the seekers were receiving from Kirpal and they also came to sit at His feet.

Proof of His generosity was recorded in the initiation figures when Kirpal traveled to the rural areas. When He opened the inner eye and ear of the seekers and gave them a spiritual experience within their own beings, according to each one’s background, the average estimated numbers who saw the Radiant Form of the Master inside were eighty and ninety percent of the group receiving initiation. In towns and cities, the higher experiences were thirty and forty percent, due to the fact that the attention of those who live in highly-populated areas is more outwardly drawn, but everyone was connected to the Light and the Sound Principle within, in all consciousness.

The functional side of Sawan Ashram grew with the steady increase of followers. To cope with the cost of keeping the facilities working for the seekers, donations from the followers were accepted. These donations were also used to help the needy.

Dalip Singh, a satsangi of many years’ standing and a disciple of Baba Sawan, was appointed treasurer of the Ashram. When donations were given they were entered in a book kept specially for that purpose, and the donor had to declare his income figure also, which was entered beside the name. There was a special reason for that.

Dalip Singh could be seen on his nightly trip to the Master's house with his red accounts book in his hand, which he presented to Kirpal for inspection. The familiar, slightly stooped figure of Dalip Singh could then be seen returning with the red book to his small quarters. (In the early days, Dalip Singh's home had to double as an office.) It was something like a ritual and only extenuating circumstances could cause this duty to be delayed until the following day, or until Kirpal's return if He was on tour.

It was Kirpal's way of keeping a careful watch on monetary events. He never approved of large accumulations of voluntary donations and the account at the bank was always kept to a modest figure. Kirpal could see at a glance the donated amount and the donor's income, and would ensure that no man gave more than he could afford.

On one occasion He noticed that an entry in the book for one hundred and fifty rupees donation had, beside it, a monthly earning figure of two hundred rupees; there was no name to identify the donor. Looking back through the book, Kirpal found similar entries for past donations, also without a name.

Satsangs were held every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and at the next Satsang Kirpal sat on the dais quietly looking over the assembled sangat. Then He said, 'Would the person who has been giving donations of one hundred and fifty rupees and earns two hundred rupees stand up and come to me.' There was a long quiet pause, then a man very slowly stood up. Kirpal told him to come very close to the dais, then asked him how it was possible to pay rent and look after his family on only fifty rupees a month? The man replied, 'I can very easily do it, Maharaj Ji, for I live with my parents and they look after me; I just want to earn

for the Satsang.'

Kirpal looked very stern as He told him to give all his earnings to his parents and after marriage to his wife. 'Earn an honest living, live on your own earnings, look after your mother, father and your family. That is what I want and that is my pleasure. The Satsang needs donations, but only a small portion; and that only after you have paid for your worldly duties and there is enough to spare a little to help others, through the Satsang.'

Kirpal then called Dalip Singh and told him to give back to the man all the money he had donated. After this incident, the treasurer was told to accept only thirty or forty rupees in future, and any satsangi wishing to give more than that must give the donation to the treasurer in Kirpal's presence.

This method revealed many things and often, after inquiring into the donor's circumstances, donations were refused or returned. There were the enthusiastic ones who would go to considerable lengths to give to the Satsang, especially if it had been announced that contributions were needed for a particular cause. They would sell their jewelry, mortgage their homes, or do whatever they could to help.

It is a strange enigma, but an established one, that generally only people with modest incomes will readily help others, especially the very poor who know what it is like to be in need. The rich and overfed, many of whom accumulate wealth by using various means to deprive others, find it very hard to give. They are the unfortunate ones; having formed a habit of gaining wealth this way, they cannot part with it unless there is some prospect of profit in view. On occasion they do give but usually with reluctance in the heart and an outer show of pride.

But human beings are not all made from the same mold and those with a sincere yearning for the Truth were the fortunate ones who loved Kirpal for what He was and had a desire to meditate and live the way He taught. Humble in spirit, they gave with open hearts from their limited means and were blessed when their contributions, no matter how small, were accepted for God's own cause.

Kirpal has recommended a very beautiful remedy for the problem of being overloaded with a surfeit of wealth. He likens the condition to a boat in midstream that springs a leak. The occupant will frantically bale out the water with both hands, otherwise the boat will sink. So people who have more wealth than necessary are wise to bale out the excess before their very humanity drowns in it.

Kirpal's civil service pension provided for His worldly needs. He lived simply in His quarters in Sawan Ashram, having a tube well sunk in the same compound so that even water for His household was provided from His own income. Sometimes the pension money would start to run out before the month's end and He would strictly forbid any small extras, rationing the food down to very simple basics. While satsangis visiting the Ashram were enjoying fruit and other delicacies, the Master would be faring on plain dal and roti, until the next pension payment was due.

As Masters have exhaustive knowledge of the karmic laws, and themselves being totally above them, why should He bother to be so exact? 'Ethical life is a stepping stone to spirituality' was His frequent advice and His own life was an accurate demonstration of that. As any discerning observer could see, His actions, attention, time, every facet of His life, was directed to the benefit of His spiritual children. Kirpal believed in setting an example and said many times,

‘No one can teach by words alone – one has to become an example for others to see and follow.’ He also repeated frequently, ‘Example is always better than precept’, and advised parents to be aware always of the kind of example they were setting for their children. People are judged by their actions. What would one think of a man coming out of a tavern with a Bible under his arm?

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

During the year 1954, a disciple of Baba Sawan, whose name was T. Singh, and who was also devoted to Kirpal, came to the Ashram for a visit. He was warmly received and Kirpal gave him a generous share of His time. As he was about to leave, T. Singh said, 'Maharaj, it would give me such happiness if you would come and bless my home.' Kirpal assured him that He would come soon, and in due course a date was appointed for the visit.

T. Singh's farm was very far from Delhi, approximately 300 km due east, at the foot of the Himalayas near Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh, close to the Nepalese border. The farm was situated in the interior of a dense forest accessible only by a roughly cut road. The Indian Government had encouraged displaced persons from the territory that became Pakistan to cultivate and farm the jungle areas, helping them to get started by providing farming equipment, seed, manure, etc. at very low interest rates.

It was a good scheme and a fair offer, but most were reluctant to try and live in the forests. Apart from being prone to wild animals, the jungles were the haunt and habitat of dacoits* whose sole occupation was to plunder and often murder innocent people passing through. Consequently, only

* Bandits.

people who could afford to employ guards with weapons would dare to travel through that area. To actually attempt to live and farm in such wild places was most prohibitive. But the Singh family had courage.

It would not be Kirpal's first visit. When T. Singh first got the land, he asked the Master to come and bless it before the work began. There was no stream or running water of any kind and they had hopes of sinking a tube well somewhere – but where? When Kirpal heard this, He started walking slowly over the unkempt wilderness. After some minutes, He stopped and pointed to the ground with His walking stick. 'Sink the well here,' He said. They did so and a plentiful supply of water was established in that spot.

When preparations for Kirpal's forthcoming tour in that area got under way, a group of satsangis came to Him and begged that the tour be cancelled. Kirpal asked for a reason and was told that an authentic report had been received of a plot to ambush the Master's party as they traveled through the Pilibhit jungles. Armed men would be positioned at hidden points, to attack and kill the Master and those accompanying Him. The dacoits would then be blamed for the dastardly act.

It appeared that a certain religious leader had plotted the shameful plan for jealous reasons, knowing that Kirpal showed the true way to God and gave freely, without obligation, the precious connection of the soul to the God Power within the human form.

The yoga of the Light and Sound Current was proving to be extremely efficacious and Kirpal's teachings were universal, pristine and pure, without the fetters of dogma, creed, rite or ritual, without strict austerities; a simple, straightforward and common sense way of living that spoke directly

to the heart, appealed to the intellect, and went deep into the soul of the true seeker.

There was no smoke without fire: Kirpal's reputation had not spread without foundation and to the so-called gurus He was a dangerous attraction for seekers, who would go where the Truth was available – and that meant a serious reduction in income for those who begged payment for their preaching.

The satsangis pleaded with Kirpal to exclude the Pilibhit segment of the tour. Kirpal turned serious and then quoted from the Holy Ramayan, 'RAGHUKOOL RITI SADA CHALI AEE, PRAN JAI PER VACHAN NA JAI' : 'THE RULE OF RAGHU DYNASTY HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT ONE'S WORD SHOULD NEVER BE BROKEN EVEN IF IT MEANS SACRIFICING ONE'S LIFE.' He looked around at everyone, then said, 'But I do not want anyone to accompany me on this venture – I will go alone. I have to go because I have given my word to T. Singh.'

So Kirpal's car left for the tour, with only four satsangis accompanying Him, including the driver. When they reached the forests approaching Pilibhit, people warned them to go no further as it was dacoit territory. Kirpal told them 'If anyone can steal the treasure I have, it will only benefit him and he will be my helper in this work.'

They carried on through the forests without mishap and, late in the evening, reached Pilibhit where Kirpal was to stay at the house of a satsangi for three days before continuing on to the Singh farm.

That night a Satsang was held, attended by many people in the community. Just as the proceedings began, there was a commotion at the back and a group of men entered, led by a tall, slim, confident-looking fellow who arrogantly pushed his way through the people assembled, sat down at

the very front and looked up at Kirpal with a lordly indifference. Kirpal said nothing and the Satsang was resumed, but at one point during the discourse, Kirpal looked directly into the eyes of the proud face before Him and said, 'Every action of a man is accountable, even if that man is doing it for someone else; he himself will have to pay and not the beneficiary.'

He then went on to tell about the great sage Balmik, who at one time used to rob and murder in order to keep his family, whom he loved very much, supplied with plentiful comfort. Balmik one day was in the act of accosting a man, but the man, who was wise and spiritual, said that he had nothing of any worldly value to relinquish. He then asked why Balmik was engaged in taking that which did not belong to him and Balmik replied, 'Why, for the support and joy of my wife and children of course.'

The wise man asked him, 'Who will pay the karmic debts incurred by your actions?' Balmik smiled confidently, 'It will not be much to pay, for my family will share the debt with me.'

The guru slowly shook his head. 'No, you are wrong. It is easy to share pleasure and luxury, but who would agree to take a share of the pain? Why do you not go and ask your family if they will agree to share the punishment awaiting you for all your misdeeds when the time comes for payment?'

Balmik laughed. 'Oh yes, I know what you are up to: you would like to escape me while I go to ask my family!' At this, the wise man offered to be tied to a tree to prevent him from running away and the surprised Balmik agreed.

Tying up the sage, he hurried away to his house to ask his wife and children if they were willing to share in the punishment for all the deeds he was committing on their behalf.

They were amazed at such a question, but frankly told Balmik without any hesitation that as they had not robbed or murdered anyone, why should they be punished for his deeds? With a heavy heart and confusion of mind, Balmik walked back to where he had tied the man. He untied him and related the answer his family had given. Bowing his head in sorrow he added, 'How am I going to save my soul now?'

The sage placed his hand on Balmik's head, saying with love, 'Son, only God's word can save you now. If you turn to Him He will take you unto Himself, for you too are His child.' At this, Balmik repented his actions and the holy man put him on the pathway to God. From being Balmik the dacoit, he became Balmik the saint.

At the Satsang's conclusion, Kirpal went to a private room to give audience to various people. Who should enter with the others but the tall proud man who had pushed his way to the front. There was a lively question period and Kirpal extended His usual grace and patience with everyone. At a pause in the conversation, the tall man spoke up. 'Is it possible for a dacoit to get salvation?' Kirpal turned to him and said, 'His door of forgiveness is open to all.' The man bowed his head low, but spoke clearly as he told his story.

My name is Rajender Singh and I am the leader of a band of dacoits here in these forests. I was once in the army but I saw so much poverty and death from starvation everywhere, while the rich ate their fill and made money, that I could not understand this play of God. I ran away and started looting, even murdering, the rich people, taking their wealth and giving it to the poor. I have greatly sinned. That, at least, I have come to realize from your Satsang, but

now what am I to do to save myself?’

He told how he had contemplated robbing Kirpal and those with Him, but had wanted to hear the Satsang first, to see if this holy man was genuine. Lifting his head, he looked at Kirpal as he added, ‘But I will tell you also that even when my own family had nothing to eat, I did not give them a single rupee from the loot I had stolen. I worked hard at my farm and supported them from only that which I earned by honest means.’

The next day, Rajender Singh was initiated along with others who requested the precious Gift. When the Master asked each one what they had experienced during the meditation sitting, people were amazed to hear Rajender Singh tell of his beautiful experience and wondered how a man with such a past could be so fortunate. Those who had accompanied Kirpal from Delhi could see that a great blessing had been bestowed on a man who, with his whole heart, had repented what he had done.

Not very long after this, Rajender Singh left his village and moved to Delhi, to be near and to serve Kirpal in whatever capacity he was able. He was told to take care of a herd of cows and water buffaloes, for which his past experience in farming was expedient. With this work and selling the milk, he earned enough to send a modest living to his family back at the village. As for his own mode of life, he lived in a hut near the herd and spent his free time in meditation, becoming a truly devoted follower of Kirpal and earning the respect of the sangat.

After the initiation in Pilibhit, Kirpal continued on His journey to the Singh farm. The satsangis at Pilibhit had entreated Kirpal to avoid going through the forest and to take the long way round, for they also had heard about

the boasts of 'killing Kirpal Singh if He enters the forests.' Kirpal reassured them by saying, 'Do not worry, all is in God's hands – whatever He wishes will be done.'

They left the town of Pilibhit, entering the forest in the late afternoon, but in the dense jungle it seemed as dark as night. They traveled uneventfully for some time, but then suddenly the driver slowed the car and silently pointed ahead with a trembling hand.

Kirpal could see a number of men with guns standing in the center of the highway, blocking their path. He told the driver to stop the car and then calmly opened the door, stepped out and began walking steadily toward the group of gunmen. One of them started walking to meet Kirpal but as they met, Kirpal smiled at him lovingly and asked if they needed help in any way.

The man was silent as he stared at Kirpal for a few moments. Then he lowered his eyes and shook his head. Turning to his companions, he told them to allow the car to pass and began to walk back. But Kirpal asked him if he would walk ahead and direct the way to satsangi T. Singh's farm. For the next few miles, the group of men ran ahead of Kirpal's car, leading them straight to the farm.

Meanwhile, at the farm poor T. Singh, who had heard rumors of the threats, was sitting before Baba Sawan's picture with tears flowing down his face, praying fervently: 'Oh Hazur, if You are really working in Kirpal, then He will reach here safe and sound!' When Kirpal did arrive, he and his family danced around the house with joy. They sang holy songs and called Him the true Son of Sawan.

The Satsang started late that night, lit by lights from tractors. Kirpal's voice, vibrating in the jungle stillness, was filled with a magical resonance that seemed to awaken the

sleeping trees. And there, among the listeners, were Kirpal's erstwhile intended killers, now enjoying His words with rapt attention. Who should be there also but Rajender Singh and his band, gazing at the Master with love and expectation.

When the Satsang concluded, Rajender Singh was called into the house where a smiling Kirpal told him He was happy to see him and his friends again so soon. Rajender Singh said, 'Maharaj, we heard about the danger that awaited You in the forest, so we followed behind You to ensure no harm would come to You. However, I realize that nothing can happen unless You allow it, and we are the ones in need of protection.'

Kirpal laughed and asked him how they had been able to keep up with the speed of the car. Rajender Singh replied, 'Maharaj, up to now these forests have been our domain and from one place to another our daily beat!'

Kirpal's love was irresistible. One powerful glance into the eyes of even those intending malice could melt and reverse hostile hearts and motives, drawing instead a warmth of responsive affection.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Throughout Kirpal's life on earth, many wondrous, beautiful things happened which helped reveal to the ordinary person the Supreme Power working in Him. Many instances were never recorded or have been forgotten and sadly are beyond reach of worldly accessibility. But those which were recorded are still remembered and enjoyed today.

In the northern Uttar Pradesh district of Bulandshahr there lived, with his two sons in the village of Sadampur, a disciple of Kirpal's named Nahar Singh. They had a small farm and at the time concerned a large crop of watermelons was ready for harvesting.

Nahar Singh himself was in bed, sick with fever for some days, where he had spent most of his time meditating. His two sons, however, continued the hard work in the field, gathering the melons into large heaps.

Evening had fallen when they started to load the bullock cart. The market was in the town and as they had to reach there before sunrise to find a good buyer for the melons, it was essential they travel all night. Before they left, the elder son approached his father's bedside. 'Father, we are concerned. Nearly all the melons are cut and we have fully loaded the cart, but there are many melons left, piled up in the field with no one to guard them. Anyone could come

in the night and steal them and we shall lose a large part of our labor and livelihood. We will not return until tomorrow and you are ill – so what should we do?’

Nahar Singh’s eyes were full of love as he looked at his son, but he spoke sternly. ‘Are you not disciples of Maharaj Kirpal? Where is your faith? Go with confidence that He will take care of the fields.’ Happily reassured, the brothers went off to market.

The next day, Nahar Singh struggled out of bed and made his way slowly to the melon field. He gazed around, bewildered at what he saw. The separate piles of melons scattered about had been moved – now all the melons were lined up on one side of the field. Several pairs of shoes were lying around. He picked them up and counted five pairs. Returning to his house, he sat contemplating the shoes, but no solution to the riddle suggested itself. Why had five men left their shoes in the melon field, and why were all the melons gathered together in one place?

Later that afternoon his sons returned and he showed them the shoes and told them what he had seen. They too had no solution to offer but to presume the owners of the shoes had collected the melons together with intent to steal them. But why leave behind not only the melons, but their shoes also? It was certainly a strange mystery.

That evening, as the boys loaded the cart for another trip to market, they could not help feeling grateful to the unknown visitors for collecting all the melons together.

An uneventful week passed. Then as Nahar Singh lay resting on a cot outside the house one day, two strangers approached, walking slowly and with obvious difficulty. Seeing their distress, Nahar Singh hurried forward to meet them, to offer his bed to rest on and to ask if he could help

them in any way.

Hearing his concern for their welfare, they hung their heads and one spoke: 'We have come to ask your forgiveness! You see, a week ago we came to steal your melon crop, but your guards chased us away. Now we are all very ill – the fever is not leaving us, so we thought that if you would forgive us, perhaps God too will forgive and we could recover our health.'

At first, Nahar Singh was too astonished to speak. Then he brought the five pairs of shoes and put them in front of the visitors. 'Are these your shoes?' Before they could reply he added, 'I am not angry, I don't even know you, and we have no guards here.'

The spokesman of the two said, 'Yes, they are our shoes. We all took them off to be able to run faster from the onslaught of the men brandishing huge poles at us. There were five of them; all looked alike, dressed in white clothes with beards and turbans. Each of us was chased by one of them, it was very frightening. Even now we don't know if they were men or some kind of apparition, or perhaps they were spirits controlled by you, but whatever it was we have come on behalf of all of us, to beg your forgiveness.'

Nahar Singh was quiet. He sat for some moments, pondering over the strange events related to him. Then he went into the house and returned with a framed photograph. He held it out: 'Is this the person who chased you?' When they saw the picture they both jumped up with excitement. 'Yes, yes, that is the one, but there were five of him.'

Nahar Singh was overwhelmed. The tears began to roll down his cheeks and a deep gratitude filled his heart to overflowing. He was so humbled, even in front of the confessed thieves, and he told them that the photograph was of his Guru and if they wanted forgiveness they would have to

go to Him for it.

The story of the Guru defending the melon field quickly spread around. When Nahar Singh took the five men to Sawan Ashram some days later, they were joined by many people from the nearby villages – everyone eager to have the darshan of this remarkable Guru.

For several days they stayed at the Ashram, attended the Satsangs and heard the words of wisdom that Kirpal gave out, which penetrated their hearts and caused tears to run down their cheeks.

The five thieves were filled with repentance, realizing they had wasted many years of their lives with misconceived ideas and transgressions. As one of the Satsangs drew to a close, they made their way through the crowds and threw themselves at Kirpal's feet. They begged His forgiveness and vowed they would earn honest livings from that day. Kirpal's mercy, always there for the open-hearted, showered upon them through His purifying glances of love. When initiation day came, they received the holy connection of Naam.

Assembled in front of the Master before starting their journey back to their villages, the group requested Kirpal to come and bless Sadampur by holding Satsang there. Kirpal smiled at Nahar Singh and said, 'You and your sons were the only initiates there, but now you have dragged all these people over to your side, making a group of satsangis. I will come as you have asked.'

Kirpal kept His promise, and as His car turned off the highway onto the unpaved road to Sadampur village, a huge crowd welcomed Him with music and joy. For one and a half miles to the village, their happiness rang out with holy songs as they marched alongside, in front of and behind Kirpal's car; some pushed the car and others just

sang, but they stirred the dust until the driver could hardly see. He contented himself with blowing the horn to warn them away from the wheels and joining in with the singing.

That evening, the attendance at the Sadampur Satsang was surprisingly large for a small village. Kirpal remarked on this afterwards to Nahar Singh, who explained, 'Maharaj, those five men who were thieves went from village to village, telling how they were saved and singing your praises to everyone, so people have come from neighboring villages for miles around.' On the third day of Kirpal's visit, a large number of men, women and children from these villages were initiated. It can be seen how the Master Power worked through a single family to make hundreds of souls part of Kirpal's ever-growing spiritual family.

In another small village in U.P., a number of satsangi families had requested a visit from Kirpal many times and at last they got their wish and were given two nights on Kirpal's tour program. At an enthusiastic village council meeting, the distribution of work to prepare for the coming event was planned.

One group undertook the project of making a new road approaching the village, as the existing one was not wide enough for Kirpal's car.

Another group volunteered to arrange enough accommodations for the large section of the public that would surely come from miles around to attend the Satsangs.

Yet another work party took on the catering arrangements, to provide enough food and refreshments for the expected crowds.

And so it went on. During the long hours of preparation, all the food to feed the workers was to be collected at the village headman's house, under the care and control

of his wife, who would keep it safely in her storeroom. It would also be a central place to store food for the continuous stream of people that would begin arriving two or three days before Kirpal.

Early in the evening, milk began to arrive by the bucketful at the headman's house, from various parts of the village. The headman's wife boiled it in huge pots and put it aside to cool, for the workers to drink with their dinner.

When they began to return to the village later, exhausted from their work of road making etc. and hungry for food, she went to get the milk from the storeroom. Seeing the thick cream that had formed on the milk, a selfish thought entered her heart: *Who will know if I take some of this cream for my sons, who also are working hard on the road?* With a mother's overzealous enthusiasm for her sons, she forgot that all were Kirpal's children and none more deserving than another.

Late that night, when her two sons arrived to have their food, she told them in a whisper that she had left some very creamy milk on the shelf for them. By the time the sons went to the storeroom, the rest of the household had retired. They filled their glasses with milk and drank it off, replacing what was left on the shelf. Content with their satisfying dinner and tired after a long, strenuous day, the boys sank onto their beds and at once were asleep.

The next day they were to relate just what happened during that night: suddenly, they were being roughly shaken. They were in a drowsy, stuporous state and desired only to sleep. In their drugged condition they could not sit up properly but were conscious of someone dragging them upright and urging them to stand. That seemed impossible, but strong hands lifted them up and supported them and held them.

As they turned to see who it was, they looked straight into the eyes of their beloved Guru, Kirpal. He told them to drink the water from a nearby pitcher and they took a few lethargic sips. Even lifting their eyes to look at Kirpal was a tremendous effort.

Kirpal was relentless however, and forced them to drink several tumblerfuls. When they were about fit to burst, He told them to thrust two fingers down their throats, to induce vomiting. Again they were forced to drink and again forced to vomit. It seemed like they spent the whole night performing this procedure.

Exhausted, they sank down on their beds. The last thing they remembered was another figure bending over them, whom they recognized as Baba Sawan.

Early next morning, the mother was shocked at the condition of their room, with water and vomit all over the floor. The boys were lying on their beds, pale, sickly and lifeless. She shook them both, shrieking out their names in hysterical fear. They opened their eyes and she almost collapsed with relief.

Some of the neighbors nearby heard her cries and arrived, just in time to hear the boys' story of their night's adventures. Someone made the remark that it all must have been a dream, for 'Maharaj Ji has not come as yet!' This was emphatically denied by the boys, who insisted that both Kirpal and Sawan had come and had forced them to void all the contents of their stomachs.

Their father was puzzled. 'But we also ate what you ate, so how could the food poison you and not us?' As the father said this, the mother remembered her actions of the previous day. 'May our Guru forgive me, for I skimmed the top cream from the milk and added it to the jug I had put aside for the boys' meal. Maharaj Ji has punished me for

that, but has saved our boys.'

Her husband was still puzzled and did not follow her reasoning. He told his wife to bring the jug from which the boys had taken their milk. When the jug was brought and examined, it showed a dead lizard in the remains of the milk. Everyone could see that it was one of the poisonous kind. They stared at each other in horrified silence, each pondering the obvious threat to life and the grace of a True Master making a miraculous effort to save His children from harm.

News of this amazing escape from death speedily traveled around and soon people from various villages came to hear the story from the principle characters and view the poisonous lizard floating in the milk, which had turned an interesting shade of green.

When Kirpal's car arrived and drove along the newly completed road, now strewn with fragrant flowers, the villagers were decked in their finest clothes, wearing whatever ornaments they owned.

The people raised their voices in welcome, singing holy songs accompanied by instruments resounding with jubilant melody. Responding to their wishes, the driver switched off the engine and the Master's car was pushed along the road lined with happy villagers, singing and showering the car with flower petals.

As they pushed the car into the village, it became surrounded with the total population, dancing, laughing and weeping for joy as their hearts overflowed with gratitude – for God was indeed lavishing His blessings upon them that day.

When it was time for initiation, not just the whole village but many more people from miles around received the precious gift of Naam. They came to Kirpal and begged to

be enfolded into His special family. He greeted each one with His unbounded love – whether rich or poor, high or low caste – radiating His sheer presence and effervescence to all, filling their hearts and souls with that very essence of Himself. Truly a spiritual feast that would last each one's lifetime; through the years to come they would cherish the memories of that very special time.

On the subject of miracles, Kirpal advised His followers to avoid being caught up in the attractions of miracles, as they are called, which involve the mind in the labyrinth of lower yogic powers, and which are dangerous hindrances on the True Path. He explained that Masters do not display such powers, but “miracles” are governed by natural laws and in exceptional circumstances can be experienced by the Master's children, who may even find them happening in their everyday lives.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

A certain Sikh follower of Baba Sawan Singh named Trilochan Singh Khanna was able to emigrate, with his family, to the United States of America through a clerical position with the Indian diplomatic service. Before leaving India, he visited Sawan Ashram to ask for Kirpal's blessing.

Hardevi, remembering him from their days at Beas, suggested he should try to help any true seekers to take interest in Kirpal's teachings and introduce them to the Path. He agreed, asking for and receiving Kirpal's permission to do that.

Settling down in the United States, he sometime later was given a position in the Indian Embassy in Washington D.C. Willing to mix with people, he was introduced to a number of religious groups and was surprised to discover a definite spiritual awakening taking place among the North American people.

He wrote to Kirpal, telling Him of the hunger for truth he had found, which was unlike anything in his experience. Requesting written information and books on the theory of Surat Shabd Yoga be sent out to him from India to distribute to those interested, he also asked for Kirpal's permission to hold public meetings in Washington to explain the theory and practice of the spiritual science. Permission was

given for him to act as the Master's representative, and seekers began to learn about the existence of a true and living Great Master Soul who was indeed alive and well and living in India.

The sincere seekers received the teachings of the Satguru like cool, refreshing water on a thirsty man's lips. New hope was born in their hearts and they longed for the day when they would meet the Master in person, when He would give them a first-hand experience of the Light and Sound Principle and put them on the direct pathway home to the Lord. Impatient and anxious to receive this priceless treasure, many voiced a desire to travel to India and spend some time with the great Satguru they had heard about.

In response to the demand, Kirpal wrote, promising that He would Himself come to the United States; but in the meantime, a system of group leaders could be set up in various cities to guide the seekers through all the prerequisites. Those prerequisites required that the applicants must maintain a strict vegetarian diet for six months, abstain from intoxicants, and have a thorough knowledge of the Master's teachings. Also, they must regard initiation as a serious undertaking and must approach their new way of life with responsibility.

When initiations were applied for, they would be forwarded to Kirpal in India and the good news of their acceptance would be communicated back by mail, wire or telephone to the representative. With Kirpal's authority, the initiation instructions would be read by the representative or the aspirant's local group leader.

Early in 1954, two small booklets had been printed – "Man, Know Thyself" and "Simran." Copies of these were distributed wherever there was a demand. They were concise but powerful studies by Kirpal on the subject of

spirituality – eye openers for those who had never considered it to be a pure science.

Applications began to arrive at Sawan Ashram for Kirpal's acceptance. On being accepted, applicants were read the instructions, followed by a meditation sitting, during which the Master connected each aspirant to the Light and Sound Principle. When the results were carefully recorded and sent to Kirpal, it could be clearly seen and witnessed that, through His grace, and thousands of miles from the Master's physical form, the seekers were receiving Naam, rising above body-consciousness, seeing Light and hearing Sound, going into the beyond and experiencing many wondrous things of the spirit.

These initiation experiences were recorded, signed by the new initiate, and placed in private files in Sawan Ashram. The files were a link for the Master and the disciple to keep in touch on an outer level. The initiation records were attestations that the seekers had indeed come to the feet of a True Master – one who had passed the criterion of being competent to attune the soul to the God Power within, revealing God's presence within the human form. The inner experience of Light and Sound affirmed the teachings of the Masters, the reading of which alone is not enough – 'Seeing is above all. It is a matter of revelation', was Kirpal's oft-spoken guidance and direction.

Every Master explains the truth in language and description that is in accord with the age. Kirpal had come in an era in which the wonders of scientific progress were seizing the minds of men; when every concept must be dissected and analyzed – torn apart bit by bit and accepted only when "scientifically proven". Faith and naivety of the past was in question and concrete evidence of a palpable nature in

demand. It was the Iron Age of logic, when man is ruled by the mind and unwittingly deceived by the illusion flowing strong through every expression of life.

Kirpal's bright flame of truth began to illuminate the dark corners of ignorance. His exposition appealed to the mind of the seeker. His approach was scientific; it was logical, it was practical and it was presented with love – that rare kind of love for which the soul yearns and which flowed from Him in perpetual radiance. Kirpal offered the Truth like a flower slowly unfolding its petals one by one to reveal the depths of beauty lying hidden there – beauty created by the Great Creator of All.

The opportunity to meet God does not come to man by his own bidding, but rather God Himself sets the time and place and then pulls the seeking soul toward Himself – toward God manifested in the human pole of the Master Soul.

The response in the United States seemed magical. Soon, letters and telephone calls from many parts of the country began to arrive at the Ashram. Some of them had interesting anecdotes to relate. One person had been given the address to write to by 'a man with turban and beard' appearing in a dream, saying that He would soon be there in the United States. The person wrote to the given address, asking for His date of arrival, and could they come to meet Him? Others saw Him while awake, just as one would see another in the flesh.

God was indeed listening to the cries of His hungry children and guiding them to Himself – where He was manifested. Like a great sunburst, the warmth of His love spread across America, shedding its rays, warming hearts with hope and anticipation. God was going to answer their pleas and satisfy their yearning.

Meanwhile, initiation continued through acceptance by Kirpal and instructions read by the representative or group leader. Kirpal was once asked how this incredible method of connecting the soul to the inner Light and Sound could work when the person was thousands of miles from the Master and there was no specifically appointed time or place for the initiation?

Kirpal's answer, as always, was enlightening. 'That which the mind considers incredible is more than credible to one who rises above mind and matter and has come into awareness. To such a soul, there is no such thing as incredibility, and the word "impossible" is found only in the dictionary of fools. You accept as credible pictures and sound seen through a collection of wires and tubes put together in a box; even that from thousands of miles, sometimes. That is because your mind has accepted it by seeing it. The apparently different embodied souls are actually parts of one whole Soul. Time and distance are only a part of the illusion the mind is under. Rise above mind and matter and you yourself will see all as it really is and will feel each other's pain as your own pain. Even telepathy is accepted by many as a means of communication between mind and mind. What is so incredible or impossible for that Power, which is All Awareness, to reach wherever it wills, or is wanted, or is pulled by attraction of its own yearning scion?'

In a comparatively short period of time, Kirpal's name was echoing around the world. First in India, then: U.S.A.; Canada; U.K. and other countries in Europe; Australasia; various parts of Asia. News of Kirpal's existence spread in different ways – by word of mouth; by the written word; through visions or dreams about the Master. Whatever the means, they were tidings of joy to the hungry souls.

Letters to Kirpal arrived at Sawan Ashram daily from around the world, pleading for permission to come to India; begging for a chance to see Him face to face. They were simple requests but the Ashram, as yet, was not in a position to offer hospitality to large numbers of overseas visitors. Later on, the "Guest House" would be a familiar place of shelter and accommodation to many visitors, but so far its construction had not even begun. So Kirpal would write and assure the dear seekers that He would soon come and visit them in their own countries. Thereby, many more would have the opportunity of meeting the Master.

Plans and itineraries were prepared for a tour of the West but when news of this reached the Indian sangat it had a disconsolating effect on the people. The thought of their beloved Guru leaving India to be absent for a number of months was unthinkable. Even His short Indian tours were hard to bear. How would they survive for so long without His presence?

When love is strong, reasoning has no significance. At Satsangs they sat before Him with heavy hearts and forlorn faces – their eyes and their voices imploring Him to not leave them. Who knows to what extent the power of love can go? No one but Kirpal Himself knew the reasons why His intended overseas tour was delayed – again, and yet again.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

While Kirpal's mission was growing abroad. His work in India was ever on the increase. New centers were opened in cities, towns and villages. This was especially true of Northern India, particularly the areas within reasonable reach of Delhi. Kirpal made short visits to these whenever He could, and was frequently away from Sawan Ashram. His name and reputation had traveled to the south of India also, where the thirst for spiritual knowledge was as keen as elsewhere.

When some satsangis from Bombay were visiting the Ashram, they spoke of the thousands of Baba Sawan's followers in that area. Relating a familiar story – a similar situation to that of Northern India – they told how five or six "successors" to Baba Sawan had each professed to be the true one. They were doing a great disservice to many of Sawan's children, who could see no deceit in them and were in danger of losing the guidance and protection of Sawan Himself by squandering their valuable attention on those who were neither authorized nor qualified to take care of souls. Furthermore, these so-called gurus were giving so-called initiation to new seekers – thus leading them away from the Truth. Blatantly using Sawan's name to draw people, they were increasing their following and taking money

from anyone who was willing to give, in order to maintain their position.

The false leaders themselves had reputations for being unable to sit in meditation for five minutes. All this was casting an insidious shadow on Baba Sawan's name; was very misleading to sincere seekers and highly dangerous to indiscriminating initiates of Sawan – who did not need any other Guru than their own Baba Sawan, who never ceased to take care of His faithful disciples. Would Kirpal please come on a visit? Kirpal heard them out and then agreed to give special time to the Bombay area during His tour in Southern India.

Before reaching Bombay, He spent a week in Deolali, a small town near Bombay, where some disciples had bought some property for the Satsang. It was a longish, barrack-like building near the railway line, but in a beautiful peaceful spot beside a river, away from the noise of the town, where the stillness was broken only by the sounds of nature and an occasional passing train.

They called it "Kirpal Ashram," and the large long room served severally as a reception area, a Satsang hall in wet weather, and a place for meditation. At the end they had made a small room for Kirpal to use on His visit. It was a most conducive place for meditation, away from the bustling population and surrounded by undeveloped countryside.

The first evening, a public Satsang had been arranged in the center of Deolali and Kirpal spent four hours there, holding the Satsang and afterwards granting interviews to those who desired to talk with Him.

The following day, some disciples came from Bombay and told Kirpal that the so-called gurus were getting agitated

over Kirpal's imminent visit to that city. They were circulating rumors around Bombay that Kirpal uses hypnosis when giving Naam, initiating just a few at a time who are made to believe by suggestion only that they can see the Light within and are having a true spiritual experience.

The faithful followers were concerned that this highly negative propaganda would drive away prospective seekers and block the future progress of the Master's cause.

Kirpal remained quiet for a while. Then, smiling at the worried faces around Him, He said 'For this once, to show that Hazur's way is the true way, you can announce all through the city that on the second day of my visit an open meditation will be held, and then let us see if there will be anyone who does not see the Light!'

The worried faces burst into smiles, their expressions changing to joy mingled with amazement. Until then it was unheard of for that precious gift of God – to see His Inner Light and hear His Music of the Spheres – to be distributed without distinction, unmeasured as it were, to any and all of the attending gathering. People came for various reasons: the curious; the skeptics; the idle, who turned up by chance. They all mingled with those who sought a true path to the Lord.

The Bombay disciples went away hugging themselves with elation, looking forward to the coming festivities. Before taking their leave, however, they had told Kirpal that the false gurus had sent some of their staunch partisans to Deolali, to spy on Kirpal's activities and report back their findings.

Kirpal just laughed. 'Do you not want the word of what I am doing to be spread everywhere? Now, without any encouraging from yourselves, these people will be doing your work for you!'

The Deolali program continued with success; the daily Satsangs were held in a large open field close to the town. On the third day this space was filled to capacity with people sitting cross-legged on the ground, listening to Kirpal's words with rapt attention.

Satsangs, in Delhi or out of town, were usually opened with a hymn from the writings of the great Masters of the past, sung by the pathi*, Pratap Chand, often known as "masterji" because of his experience as a music teacher. Traveling with Kirpal, Pratap Chand was there to sing the stanzas that Kirpal had chosen for the Satsang. Kirpal would enlarge on the verses, one by one, with clear, unambiguous and enlightening explanations.

The Gurus from the past had lived in different parts of India, had spoken a variety of languages and dialects, had used their own idiosyncratic modes of expression – peculiar to each one. To the layman, or even the learned, deciphering the truth from such writings is no simple task. The poor seeker can end up with any number of versions, translations, interpretations. As Kirpal explained, only a Master can know the true meaning in the words of another Master. Only Masters are qualified to make an accurate adaptation and commentary. Kirpal's written and spoken words were always delivered with a simplicity and clarity to enlighten people from all walks of life.

As Kirpal's talk came to a close that evening, the pathi sang a short hymn and then Kirpal folded His hands to the people in the usual multipurpose gesture of greeting, farewell, etc. that is preferred in India. A man rose up from the audience and addressed Kirpal: 'I want to say this in front of all these people. I had come to Deolali with some others,

* Scripture reader.

not to seek God but to spy on You. Those who are calling themselves successors to Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj are telling everyone that You are bewitching the people with nothing but hypocrisy. Many initiates are going from one “guru” to another, lost and having no proper guidance. So a group of followers came here to see what You were doing and, as far as we can see, there could be no Guru more true than You are. As You are giving the Holy Naam tomorrow, we plead that You would bless us also with the precious Gift. In repentance, I for one will in future spend my spare time spreading the truth – that You are indeed the true successor to Baba Sawan.’ Gracious as always, Kirpal received this confession with mercy and kindness.

It was late when Kirpal, Hardevi and one other disciple were at last able to leave and return to Kirpal Ashram. Hardevi reminded Kirpal of an appointment with a man from Bombay, and with this in mind she told the driver to go a little faster.

As they came to crossroads on the journey, Kirpal told the driver to take the right turn. The driver felt it was his duty to remind the Master that the right hand turn led to a much longer way back to the ashram than the left. Hardevi voiced a protest that this would further delay their return, but Kirpal kept quiet.

After another two miles or so, He told the driver to stop the car, and then pointed to a house near the roadside. There was a young girl standing near the house, barefoot and dressed very simply in a cotton sari*. She was looking at them expectantly – waiting for them, it seemed. As Kirpal stepped out of the car, she came forward and fell at His feet, placing her forehead on His shoes. Kirpal helped her to her

* Six-yard-long finished fabric wound round the body.

feet and patted her, saying, 'Do not do that.'

She began to cry like a small child. 'Why are You late? You said You were coming an hour ago and I have been standing here waiting for a whole hour. Now I am sick and You have come – why did You make me stand so long? I have cried so much, thinking that You were not coming and now You are laughing and making fun of me!' She started crying again.

Still laughing, Kirpal asked her, 'Are you not going to invite me into your house? Do you just want to stand on the roadside and talk?'

The girl shook her head. 'Now You are going to make an excuse to leave and get out of Your promise. You won't have all the things I have cooked for Your tea!' She continued to cry.

Hardevi was puzzled. *I know Maharaj Ji is getting late for the appointment, she thought, but I must find out what is going on here.* Addressing the sobbing girl, she said, 'Tell us who you are, and when Maharaj Ji promised to have tea with you.'

Kirpal was still chuckling, but He said, 'Let us go in the house and talk there.' Inside, a table was covered with delicious things to eat, including sweetmeats and nuts. Kirpal sat on a chair and smiled at the girl whose face was lovely in its sweet innocence, regardless of the tears.

Hardevi tried again. 'What is your name, child and when did Maharaj Ji promise to visit you and have tea?' The girl smiled a little through her tears. 'Ask Him!' she said.

Hardevi's tone turned a little firm. 'I am asking you, so answer me.' The forceful character of this amazing lady was famous among those who knew her and many a strong man had quavered before her stern rebukes. The young girl started at the slight change in Hardevi's voice, and quickly

began her story.

'My name is Daya. I was not feeling well and my husband is out of town on duty. I had heard about Maharaj Ji's visit to Deolali and I wanted so much to see Him, but I was sick and there was no one to take me to the Satsang, so I have been praying to Him and crying for the last three days. I have not slept at all, but have just prayed and cried. Then, just a while ago, He came and told me not to cry and said He would come and have tea with me in two hours. Since then I have been so busy preparing food for Him and then I stood at the gate for so long – I thought He would never come.' She again burst into tears.

Kirpal smiled at her. 'Why are you crying? I am here now.' 'Yes,' said Hardevi, 'You are here now, but how could You come here and promise to come to tea when You were holding a Satsang three miles away, in view of hundreds of people? Either You were here or You were there with us, so which one was You?'

Kirpal laughed and said, 'I myself am puzzled. She is saying I was here. I did not say that.' Hardevi shook her head in resignation. 'No one can ever understand You. You must have promised her You will come, otherwise why did we detour and come here?'

Kirpal said nothing to this, but turned to Daya and asked her, 'Have you anything else to say?' She replied, 'Maharaj Ji, I love You and I know You love me too, but people will think I am mad if You go on doing what You are doing.' Hardevi wanted to know what Kirpal was doing.

Daya explained: 'You see, Maharaj Ji is always with me when I need Him. My husband is a veterinarian, a major in the army, and he is called away frequently to treat the sick horses; and then there is his office duty, so I am alone a lot. When I get lonely and unhappy at being left alone so much,

Maharaj Ji comes and talks to me. That is alright, but then when I go shopping in the market, He also comes and walks along with me. That is not right, for when I talk to Him people stare and wonder with whom I am holding a conversation, for they cannot see Him. Some friends of ours mentioned this to my husband, but my husband understands for he also is a disciple.'

'However, the other day, I went to the bazaar to buy vegetables. I was not feeling well and when the shopping basket became heavy, Maharaj Ji came and wanted to carry the basket for me. Now I did not like that, for how could I allow my Guru to carry my basket? I told Him not to do that, but He just laughed and said, "No, no, you should not carry such a load, I will carry it for you." I refused to let Him do that, and then I became aware that some people had stopped and were staring at me. It was bad because they could not see You, only me. That is why I am asking You not to do that, but come only when I am alone and no other people are around.'

Kirpal smiled at her and said, 'Alright, it will be as you wish.'

This was not the only instance when Kirpal was seen to be in more than one place at the same time. Sometimes He would have a meal with a follower, or help or protect one of His children in distress. The omnipotence of His presence ministered to their needs in so many ways.

One disciple was working as a mason on top of a high building when suddenly he slipped and fell off the building. Some people saw him fall and in shocked silence awaited the crushing contact on the concrete below. However, about halfway down, they saw the hurtling free fall change to a slow, gentle descent, almost like floating, and he hit the

ground gently, without any force. He stood up, and they saw him fold his hands in greeting to someone they could not see.

When the group of people crowded around him, demanding to know what had happened, he told them, 'When I slipped off the building and started to fall, my Satguru came and held me in His arms, and laid me down on the ground. As I bowed down to Him in gratitude, He vanished.'

These incidents often had witnesses. Many a group arriving at Sawan Ashram to meet Kirpal and to ask for initiation, came because they had seen His love, His concern and protection for His followers. He took the woes of His children upon Himself and often suffered intensely to free them from the consequences of cause and effect. It was agony at times for those around Him to see that suffering, the extent of which could only be known by Kirpal Himself, however.

He was in perfect control. In control of events, and of the natural laws. He could endure extreme dis-ease and yet, during the course of that, could arrest His suffering in order to attend to some urgent work or to hold a Satsang, conducting Himself with no trace of discomfort whatever. It was as if the problem had never been there. At the completion of the Satsang or other work, He would again resume the burden until the difficulty, or whatever, had been cleared.

To the careful observer it was clear that the Master had dominion over Himself and in all facets of life; however, the key to solving the mystery of the Perfect Master can only be found on a higher level of consciousness.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

On completing the Deolali program, Kirpal and His small entourage left for Bombay, where the followers had been busy preparing for His arrival. A large eight-storied building had been rented, with an extensive open space attached which was ideally suited for the Satsangs. It appeared that the building had been standing vacant for a number of years, due to its last occupier declaring it haunted. Consequently, it had been used mainly as stock exchange premises, and had been dubbed the “ready money mansion”!

At 7 a.m. on the morning after Kirpal’s arrival, people from a variety of creeds and cultures began taking their places on the cotton carpets spread over the open ground: Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Sikhs and other religions were represented. A raised dais had been erected and covered with white cotton fabric with a shamiana overhead for shade.

As the starting time drew nearer, it was evident that many thousands of people had arrived, reflecting all walks of life, from poor laborers to rich men of business. The news that Kirpal was offering a “blanket” experience of the inner Light to everyone present had certainly circulated and people were drawn to witness this unprecedented event. Obviously, some had come out of curiosity alone.

As everyone waited, there was a hum of expectancy and anticipation in the air.

When Kirpal came, all eyes were centered on Him. He told them to sit in a comfortable position and close their eyes; to forget the body and look intently inside, into the darkness. They were sitting in rows: all the ladies on one side, men on the other. As Kirpal began to walk slowly between the rows, His raised voice traveled across the people, 'Do not move your body; forget you have a body; just look – look intently with love.'

Many people in the south of India do not speak Hindi, so there were interpreters translating Kirpal's words into Gujarati and Maharati, which are the principle languages used in Bombay.

After half an hour, Kirpal told them to open their eyes, and volunteers went among the people asking each one what they had seen inside. Everyone had seen Light. Some had seen the rising sun; some the midday sun; some had seen brilliant red light, others the blue sky; some saw the cool white light of the moon and some the full moon; some had seen brilliant golden light, and many had seen the radiant form of the Master Himself. It was phenomenal – so many thousands, each one with a different inner experience and yet all witnessed some manifestation of the Inner Light.

One businessman had come in a car and had sent his driver to have some breakfast, if he wished. The driver had just sat where he was for a while and after Kirpal had given the meditation instructions to everyone, he got up and left the sitting to go outside and smoke a cigarette. After about twenty minutes, he returned and sat at the back of the crowd, which was still sitting in meditation. He also closed his eyes and soon he was having a tremendous experience

of being pulled out of his body into a bright red sun. The man had not even been interested in attending the spiritual meeting, but having enjoyed such a soul-shaking personal involvement, he was filled with a desire for initiation.

This astounding event, at once shared and experienced by so many thousands, became the main topic of conversation among religious thinkers and truth seekers all over the city. Inevitably, it reached the ears of those who were themselves professing to have spiritual powers. One of the pseudo successors to Sawan came to Kirpal's quarters and asked for a private meeting with Him.

As he stood before Kirpal, tears started running down his face and he hung his head down. Kirpal came forward and embraced him. The words came tumbling out: 'I have sinned; I announced that Hazur has made me His successor. I used to leave my body and go to higher planes, so I thought I could help the seekers, but on the day I made the announcement I lost everything I had gained and I now cannot even see the Light within. I heard that You gave an open sitting and showed the Light to every person who came here yesterday. I beg of You to give me just a glimpse of what I have lost. I know that You are the true successor, for no one else could do what You did.'

But Kirpal was not satisfied. He asked him if he was willing to declare his deceit to all his followers; that he was not the successor and that he could not help them in their spiritual progress.

The unfortunate man was caught up in a web of ego he had woven for himself. He cried, 'Do not make me do that, for I have more than five thousand followers who think I am spiritually advanced and it will break their faith in God if they lose faith in me. Also, I will be scorned and my family will suffer. I would rather commit suicide than face that!'

Kirpal, ever the merciful, always full of compassion, could not ignore his misery. He gave the man a sitting and re-attuned him to the Light and Sound within. However, He told him, 'If you ever again disclose the holy charged words to any non-initiate, you will lose the Light again, for no one can realize the Truth on a lie.'

Throughout the years of His mission, Kirpal gave secret initiation to many religious leaders: Muslim pirs; Jain munis; Hindu pandits; leaders also from Christian, Sikh and other faiths – each one a sheep in lion's clothing, who took the precious gift and kept the fact a secret. Many would have been excommunicated from their religion had they disclosed their acceptance and initiation into something other than their own doctrine; apart from losing face and followers. Kirpal was both generous and patient. Even when they returned to Him with admissions of laxity and failure, He would bless them, re-attune them to the Light and help them weed out their imperfections.

A Perfect Master is dedicated to saving His children – taking them back to the Ultimate Godhead. He never considers His own comfort or pleasure and will sacrifice His time, energy and physical well-being for the benefit of His struggling children – even those who refuse to confess to the innocent people who follow them that they are living a lie. Kirpal was the chosen philanthropist of God, dispensing with both hands the life-giving wealth of Naam.

He would say, 'In olden times, a disciple would run after the Guru, hoping to receive the great Gift, but these days the Guru must run after the seeker and persuade him to take that Gift. Times have changed and man has become a helpless babe with no strength to ward away evil, and so loses his grip and falls, rather than stand with his head high to

claim his lost heritage.'

That first visit to Bombay was like the sun bursting forth from dense storm clouds, to shed sparkling rays of hope and enlightenment upon blindness and despair; to touch the lost children of Sawan, to give them warmth, to secure them in the knowledge that Sawan's blessing was indeed continuing through Kirpal.

As preparations began for Kirpal and the others to return to Delhi, a certain initiate and his wife requested a short interview with Kirpal, which was granted momentarily. As they sat before Him, He looked at them kindly and asked what they wished. Together they explained: 'Maharaj Ji, we live in Bhopal and are the only two of Your followers in that city. We do our meditations and hold Satsang once a week in our home, just the two of us, but we feel that if You could only come to Bhopal and grace just one Satsang with Your presence, we are sure that many people will seek initiation when they see You and hear Your words. There are many seekers there but they do not know where to go for the Truth.'

Kirpal was thoughtful for a few moments, then told them that as Bhopal, a small state*, was on the way to Delhi from Bombay, He would break His journey for a two-day visit to Bhopal and then resume the journey by taking a train from Bhopal to Delhi.

The couple could hardly believe their good fortune, to have their hopes so quickly realized, and they were overjoyed. However, as the realization penetrated, they looked at each other with the same thought in mind – *what about the arrangements?!* They were modestly situated in a two-room quarter with minimum conveniences.

* Later absorbed into Madhya Pradesh State.

As if He were reading these thoughts Kirpal said, 'I will only bring three people with me – the rest will go on ahead to Delhi. Hardevi, the pathi to read from the scriptures, and one other follower will accompany me and you do not have to make any arrangements – Hardevi will do all that when we reach there.' The couple were amazed that in a trice, Kirpal had resolved all their worries for them and made everything so easy.

Kirpal gave instructions that all the Delhi people were to go on ahead to that city, excluding Hardevi, Pratap Chand and one other. At Bhopal train station, Kirpal and party were met by the young couple, who had returned to Bhopal in advance. Two tongas took them all to the humble dwelling that the couple had vacated temporarily, so that Kirpal could stay there, while they stayed with some friends for a few days. In a very short time, Hardevi had taken over the kitchen and prepared tea for Kirpal and everyone.

The two disciples had taken the initiative and planned a Satsang for that evening, to be held from 8 to 10 p.m. on a vacant lot about twenty minutes from their house. Before going ahead to the Satsang location, the husband had arranged for a tonga to come for Kirpal at 7:30 p.m. When Kirpal and the three others approached the carriage, the driver said, 'But it is against the law for more than three passengers and a driver to ride at one time.' Kirpal looked at His three followers and said nothing.

One of them was thinking, *Hardevi must go with Maharaj Ji, and the pathi has to read the scriptures at Satsang.* She voiced her thoughts to Kirpal, adding that she herself was the one of no account and should therefore stay behind and find some other means of transport. Kirpal smiled and said, 'Do you know that if you do not come, God will not come and without God, there is no Satsang!' His words penetrated

deep into the soul of the follower and gave her much food for thought.

Kirpal's constant counsel to the true seeker was to simply absorb oneself in the Guru; to forget oneself completely, to forget everything, except the Master. Like a mirror, one's desires were reflected back – health, wealth, knowledge, strength. He responded to whatever a person nurtured in their heart, and for those who wanted God, God could be seen in Him. No one went away empty-handed, but each received the desires of his or her heart. The old adage says, "Be careful what you wish for!"

It was decided that the pathi would find another tonga and follow on to the Satsang. Surprisingly, a goodly number attended the Satsang, for the two satsangis had worked hard in the short time, to spread the news by word of mouth. From Kirpal's visit and that modest beginning, Bhopal grew into a very active Ruhani Satsang center.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

When the sun rose on May 31, 1955, Indian satsangis awoke to what was for them a day of despair. For the western disciples, it was the long-awaited day of great joy, when Kirpal would begin His tour of the western hemisphere. Many thousands in that part of the world were about to meet the Living Master and would be changed forever.

On that auspicious day, Kirpal's flight was to depart at 7:30 p.m. from Palam Airport, New Delhi. At Sawan Ashram, satsangis had been arriving steadily for two days, determined to have the last darshan of Kirpal before He left for the airport; the Ashram was filled to capacity with many thousands, not just from Delhi but from all over the country. Announcements had been made for several days that no one should go to the airport, in order to avoid overcrowding the public areas with an excessive deluge of people. So the followers felt free to localize themselves in the Ashram. On the day of departure, the numbers were so thick that sevadars had to stand in double lines to form a pathway through the Ashram to give passage to those with duties to perform. Between each steward, long bamboo poles were hand-held, thereby forming a human fence on each side.

All the facial expressions were solemn and woebegone. Kirpal was going away for several months and tears flowed

in profusion as children were hoisted on their fathers' shoulders in an effort to discover if their beloved Satguru had come out of His quarters. He did come out, again and again, to console them, to calm their fears, to assure them that He would return in but a few months.

Broken hearts are hard to console. These faithful followers could think only of being separated from their Beloved, of those few months stretching ahead like a long, lonely tunnel filled with emptiness. Only Kirpal knew just how desolate they were, for heart speaks to heart and He Himself would suffer much more than His children.

As Kirpal's car made its way very slowly through the Ashram grounds, the crowd surged forward, eager to get close, following it through the gates, across the bridge, into the streets of Shakti Nagar. It gradually gained speed and left them behind, becoming smaller and smaller until it was out of sight.

Meanwhile, phones were buzzing at the airport, officials were running around in a panic. Seldom had they seen such a crowd at the airport, and getting larger by the minute, spilling into every hall and corner. Realizing they needed help urgently, they called for the police to come and control the mass of people. They were already tackling the task when Kirpal's car arrived; batons in hand, they were endeavoring to restore order.

It was a hopeless effort, for the devotees, who had ignored the special directive to stay away, refused to leave the building. Passengers were being swept aside in the crush; the airport workers were facing the same difficulties but some had the good sense to climb up on the counters, where they stood, helplessly gazing at the chaos around them.

Kirpal's entourage was quickly installed in the airport's VIP Lounge to await boarding. From there the noise of the

crowd could be heard clearly and when Kirpal inquired about it, He was told that the airport was filled with followers, all attempting to get a glimpse of Him, but so far had succeeded only in upsetting the airport's organization. Loudspeakers could not be heard above the noise, the police were almost giving up on the problem and the military were on the way.

Kirpal turned to the small group of Ashram officers near Him saying, 'But they were all told to not come to the airport.' He got up and told an airport official to take Him to a microphone, 'I will speak to them.' The officials did better than that: they saw a spark of hope in the situation and set up a microphone there in the lounge and made connections to the main amplification system throughout the airport.

Kirpal began speaking in His usual tempered voice, 'Brothers and sisters . . .' but the noise continued, for no one could hear Him. Then He raised His voice and said, 'Silence!' Instantly, the noise stopped and the crowd stood still, looking at one another – *that was the Beloved's voice, but where was He?* In bewilderment they looked around to try and see Him. Then His voice spoke again, telling them that whosoever had come to see Him off should leave the departure area and go to the side of the building, where He would come and see them all.

Now everyone wanted to be the first out, to gain a position of advantage close to Him and it was a scramble, but finally all the devotees were outside and peace returned to Palam Airport. It seemed almost empty with just the regular traveling passengers left! The workers got down from their elevated refuges and attempted to resume working. However, a little of their attention was wandering in attempts to get a glimpse of the Guru whose followers had such ardent devotion.

Kirpal gave His children their hearts' desire and spent several minutes with them outside, talking to them, reassuring them, but warning them to not enter the building again and cause so much disruption. His flight took off without further ado.

Although the first stop was London England, Kirpal and those accompanying Him – Hardevi and His private secretary, D. Narendra – had to change planes in Bombay. There would be an interim waiting period between flights, and when they entered the airport building they found about 200 disciples gathered there, hoping to see Kirpal. Once again there were heartbreaking and tearful farewells until the plane departed from Bombay at 10:30 p.m. For the first time, India was without the physical presence of the great Satguru.

After brief touchdowns at Cairo and Rome, the plane landed at Geneva, Switzerland, where the passengers were asked to alight for tea and snacks in the airport's restaurant.

As Kirpal and party were working their way to the restaurant, they heard an announcement that a Mrs. Schmidt was waiting at the Air India counter to see Kirpal. Her husband, Dr. Pierre Schmidt, had for a number of years been the attending physician to Baba Sawan, right up to His last day in the physical body. Mrs. Schmidt knew that Kirpal was the rightful successor to Sawan and when she saw Him standing before her, the tears started flowing down her cheeks.

Kirpal took her hands and held them. His love flowed out through His eyes – a love that goes from soul to soul. 'Let us go and have tea,' He said.

When the tea had been ordered, Kirpal asked after her husband, Dr. Schmidt. Mrs. Schmidt told a sad story that

spanned the past seven years. She told how her husband had discovered that something harmful had been given to Sawan, in order to bring His earthly sojourn to an end. From then on, he was strange, a different man, and he withdrew into himself, associating with no one, not even Sawan's initiates. 'He became very difficult to live with,' she added. She felt that something unexplainable had happened to him, for after some time he was approached by a self-declared successor of Sawan who asked Dr. Schmidt to work for his organization. Since that day he did work for them, like a man demented. He worked at their propaganda plans, not caring if what he did was right or wrong, accepting the money they paid him.

The poor lady began to cry and she implored Kirpal to help her by helping her husband. 'You are my only hope; I came in secrecy – he does not want to hear Your name even. Please help him to be the kind and loving man he used to be.' Kirpal told her to have faith and whatever was God's will would come to pass. She nodded and asked Him if He would permit her to see Him on His return journey to India.

When they reached London, they went straight to the Grosvenor Hotel, where they would stay overnight before going on to the United States. There were some Indian disciples living in London who came to the hotel to have the Master's darshan. Also, the editor and the owner of the well-known magazine "Voice", Joseph Busby and Mrs. Upton, both arrived and requested an interview. They had many pertinent questions about Kirpal's mission, gathering content for an article in their magazine. Toward the end of the interview, it was apparent that they both were personally interested in Surat Shabd Yoga. They told Kirpal of

their many years searching for the truth. They had met and interviewed various people, supposedly spiritual masters of a high order, but were always disappointed.

Meeting Kirpal had raised their hopes that the search for God had not been in vain. They wanted initiation that very day, but Kirpal told them to wait and think carefully and deeply about it, and gave them two of His books to read and study: "Man, Know Thyself" and "Simran." He promised that if they were still of the same mind when He returned from U.S.A., they would then be able to receive initiation. Mrs. Upton invited Kirpal and entourage to stay at her home in Southwick, Sussex for the length of His visit to England and He graciously accepted.

On June 2, the tour party left England for New York at 8 p.m. by Pan American World Airways. In New York, the representative and a small group of disciples were at the airport to greet the Master. With tears of joy and hearts full to overflowing, at last they were face to face with their Master – He who had accepted them as His children and had given them the inestimable gift of the Holy Naam, the connection that would take them back to their true home.

None but another devoted soul would understand that first physical meeting: the hearts that were fit to burst, the ecstatic joy registered on the faces. Some lost control and threw their arms around Him, and some even kissed Him. For the two Indian disciples with Kirpal it was an unusual scene to witness, for in India it was not acceptable to touch the Satguru. Kirpal frequently would tell people to not touch His feet, even though it is a widely practiced custom between guru and devotee on every level of Indian religion. He would say, 'I am up here!' (pointing to His eyes).

From the twinkle in His eye, it could be seen that Kirpal

was amused. He looked at Hardevi and smiled, mischievously. She was appalled at the behaviour of the western initiates toward their Master, but the secretary calmed her down by explaining western greeting customs, pointing out that they meant no disrespect – it was rather their way of honoring Kirpal, as a child would to its father. However, decency must be upheld, particularly as the Master was from a country that had totally different mores, and the representative was advised to explain the accepted method of greeting to the western followers.

The first city on the itinerary was Washington D.C., and everyone traveled to that capital by train. What an auspicious and rare occurrence – a Perfect Master placing His holy feet on the western hemisphere! How many actually knew the spiritual significance of the occasion?

Accommodation had been reserved at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, but to avoid flooding the hotel with satsangis, it was arranged to officially welcome Kirpal at the train station. Several hundred followers had arrived from all over the continent by air, road and rail. Some had traveled up to three thousand miles, including Mr. and Mrs. Charles and Dona Kelley from California, who were disciples of Baba Sawan.

So the entire restaurant at the train station had been reserved, and there they all were, waiting for the Master. They had brought flowers and tears and laughter and anticipation. Who can explain that first darshan? – the first look into His eyes that renders one speechless and is ever after held to be the very special happening of one's life.

They sat around Kirpal and gazed at His beloved face. Many had seen His radiant form within – during their meditations – surely nothing could be more beautiful than that? Yet now they began to realize that the Master in the physical

form, the same kind of form as themselves, was indeed an unbelievable and immeasurable blessing.

His movements and gestures were graceful; His hands vibrated expressively with life; His eyes were deep wells of love into which one tumbled headlong, forgetting everything – the past, the future, the world with its heartaches and despair, relatives, friends and family – all was as naught for that brief few moments when it would seem that the gates of heaven opened and one's whole being was absorbed into God's pure love, overflowing in such abundance it took one's breath away!

As they left His presence that day, they knew that they would never be the same, for the rest of their lives. They hugged unto themselves the wonderment and peace that remained with them, intoxicated with the strange upliftment they felt.

The tour organizers for North America had made Washington a headquarters, as it were, and additionally there were programs in Louisville, Baldwin, Chicago; and in California: Beaumont, Hollywood, Santa Barbara, San Jose, Oakland and San Francisco. From there, a return to Chicago, then back to Washington, followed by Philadelphia. St. Petersburg in Florida came next, then back to Washington. The very last city on the American itinerary was Boston, from where the Master would board a flight to England, en route back to India.

It was a lot of traveling with tightly-packed programs. There were public talks; private and group interviews; meditation sittings; informal talks especially for the disciples; and initiations, which lasted six to eight hours each time. Mail was arriving daily from satsangis in India – letters of woe, bemoaning the separation of the Guru from His flock at home, begging and pleading with Him to return to India soon.

News arrived about one particular disciple – Malkeet Singh – who was existing on nothing but liquids and meditation for the duration of Kirpal's physical absence from India, and who was firm in his resolve to eat no food until the Satguru returned. Kirpal read each letter and dictated a reply, or in a few cases wrote the reply in His own hand.

He graciously visited the homes of disciples and accepted invitations to make exchange visits with religious leaders who came to see Him and who wanted Him to see their centers and meet their followers. One Swami Parmanand Ji, after an audience with Kirpal, persuaded Him to grace his ashram, called the Lotus Temple, located in Washington. Kirpal accepted this and many similar invitations. It seemed as if He was at the beck and call of anyone and everyone.

A total of one hundred and five public talks were given in a variety of churches and other meeting places, including the YMCA, the Society of Friends, the Metaphysical Library, the Theosophical Society, different schools, colleges and open grounds. He appeared on nine different television programs and eleven radio broadcasts. Press meetings were held wherever He went and photographs along with write-ups appeared in newspapers and magazines.

Always He had time for the children, regardless of His busy schedule. He was very pleased with one child who, when Kirpal asked him what he would be when he grew up replied, 'I want to be a Master, like You!' In the years that followed, Kirpal would tell of this conversation many times, adding, 'That is why it is said we should be like innocent children who, in their purity, can perceive the truth that is hidden from the eyes of the intellect.' He smiled at the child and told him, 'Why not, for I was a child like you, and you should strive to realize your desire.'

On June 5, Kirpal held a public Satsang at the Friends' Meeting House in Washington. In the audience was a certain Russian gentleman who was so affected by Kirpal's talk on the subject "Man, Know Thyself," that he approached Kirpal afterwards and offered five thousand dollars to help the cause.

Kirpal was kind as He explained that He had not come to the United States to collect donations, but rather had come to give the free gifts of God to whomsoever desired them. He added that just as air, water and love are considered to be free, so this Gift is neither bought nor sold.

The Russian gentleman was very impressed and said that he had never met anyone who refused money to help the people at large, through their work, etc. He was so fascinated with, in his mind, such a novel idea, that he turned up at the Mayflower Hotel late that evening and asked to see Kirpal. As he sat facing Him, once again he pleaded with the Master to accept the donation he had offered. Once more Kirpal, with love, refused.

It was His rule, established from the beginning, that the Satsang would not take donations from non-initiates; furthermore, any money accepted from initiates must be within the limit of what they could afford after covering their own and their family's needs.

He had always stressed, 'A person accepted into God's fold becomes a member of an ever-growing, huge family and therefore a part of his or her earnings – ten percent or less – should be given to help the needs of other members of the same spiritual family. Money that has been earned by non-initiates could be somewhat in question, it being not clear under just what kind of principles the income has been earned.' Kirpal's maxims for lifestyle and conduct would not be accepted by the world at large, but He constantly

maintained this rule and would reiterate, 'I do not want to poison the children with questionable money.'

Meditation sessions were open to initiates and non-initiates alike, during which His grace flowed in abundance, as could be seen by the results recorded from the sitters' own accounts of their inner experiences. Everyone saw the Light within in varying forms and degrees; many of the initiates saw the radiant form of the Master, or Baba Sawan, or one of a number of other great Masters, like Kabir or Nanak, Swami Ji and others; some saw Jesus Christ. The word spread around that real spiritual experiences were being enjoyed at Kirpal's sittings and the seekers after truth came knocking at His door.

A certain young woman attended the talks with her mother. She was already having some inner experience and after Satsang she had a question for Kirpal. 'Why should it be necessary to get initiation from you and follow a certain type of meditation practice, when I already can see Christ and be with Him in my own contemplations?'

Kirpal asked if she just saw Christ, or did she travel to the higher planes at will? She replied that she just saw Jesus and talked to Him, and that was all she needed. Kirpal pointed out that what she experienced was not in itself the ultimate goal of a true seeker and advised her that the next time she saw Christ, she should ask Him what she should do further to realize God. She accepted this recommendation and went home.

On June 7, a talk was scheduled at the open-air grounds of Washington's Sylvan Theatre. By the time Kirpal arrived and took His place on the platform, the audience had grown to a considerable number. He sat smiling at everyone before beginning His talk, when suddenly a huge cloud opened up and

it started to rain – in fact it rained profusely. People began to jump to their feet and look around for some shelter to run to.

Then Kirpal's voice was heard above the disturbance, ringing out clearly through the amplifying system. He was asking them if they were afraid of a little rain? Many had run away already but those who were left looked at each other, smiled and sat down again.

After an hour's talk, Kirpal stood up and suddenly the rain ceased – as if someone had turned off a faucet somewhere. Kirpal's laughter rang out and He said, 'The blessings of Sawan are upon us in torrents! We are very fortunate.' This could be understood only by those who knew that the rainy season in India is called "Sawan" – the month of July in English terms – and it is accepted among Indian satsangis that Baba Sawan often showered His blessings on them in the rain. Who knows what blessings were received that day by those who had the courage to sit in the rain and hear Kirpal's words?

Kirpal had been in Washington about a week when it was decided to move from the hotel into a rented house in Maryland: 8822 First Avenue, Silver Springs. It was a good move for all concerned and everyone enjoyed the peace and beauty of the new quarters. By now, more people were attending the meditations, and inner experiences continued to flourish under Kirpal's grace.

During one of the sittings, a man saw the radiant form of Kirpal inside. He said that Kirpal was with Kabir and both were sitting on a huge lotus flower. The man asked Kabir what would be the fundamental ultimate goal for the souls on Earth? Kabir's reply to this was that God, the Greatest Power of All, wants all those who have forgotten Him and are lost in the illusion, to come back to their true Home; that

all possible help is given – He Himself comes to Earth in the form of man to guide His own children back; that this work would not cease until all are gathered into His fold.

This man's inner experience, and the experiences of others, were told to Kirpal in front of everyone present at the morning meditation sittings. Their accounts were witness to the spiritual upliftment they were receiving and were confirmation that Kirpal indeed was no ordinary man. What He was in entirety would be discovered only if they were willing to work hard. Meanwhile, the beautiful experiences were opening up doors and transforming their lives, all of which was apparent in their glowing faces as they sat in Kirpal's loving presence.

However, not all the people who came to Kirpal were true seekers. A few came just to try to outdo the Master from India, convinced as they were that they had the greater knowledge. One man, obviously learned by academic standards, succeeded in disturbing everyone's peace and joy. Insisting on putting question after question, he barely listened to the answers, so full of his own ideas was he. As with everything in life, Kirpal's methods of explaining the teachings were simple and direct, using ordinary everyday language. Even the most uneducated and simple-minded person could understand His meanings.

But the gentleman was not satisfied to accept what he was being told and chose to misunderstand and argue, trying to bring forth his own theories. Pride of one's own knowledge can sometimes bar the way to the truth, and he just could not be humble enough to accept another's knowledge of the subject.

Kirpal was patient and kind and continued to answer his questions for two hours. When He saw that it was to no avail, His mood changed and His eyes began to twinkle. With

a smile He said, 'You know that two half-loaves of bread can make a whole one, but one hundred half-witted men cannot make one wise man!' Everyone laughed at this, relieved to enjoy the joke with the Master and shake off the restlessness that had been growing during the discussion.

On June 19, the President of the Central YMCA in Washington invited Kirpal and certain disciples to a formal breakfast, for Kirpal to give a talk in a hall filled with members of the YMCA. The subject of the talk was "Spiritual Discipline in an Atomic Age". The talk provoked a lively barrage of questions afterwards, but this time the Master's answers were received as food for thought, as was clearly apparent from the expressions of interest and wonderment. At the close of the meeting, the President came forward to ask Kirpal if He would accept an honorary life membership in the YMCA; and said that in future the organization's auditoriums were always open for Kirpal to give His talks.

A series of five successive talks were given at the Friends' Meeting House, over five days. The talks covered the teachings from the fundamentals up to the higher spiritual practices and values. On the sixth day, many people attended initiations at the same place and received the inner connection.

In His own words, the Master gave the clue, or key, that unlocks the door to spirituality and God Knowledge: 'By comparative studies I have come to know, by the grace of my Master, that there is one God, one Truth, and one way back to God – that is the Word living within you. By transcending the body you come in contact with that. That is the way back to God.'

These words described the solution in a nutshell for the true seekers. He also warned that to achieve this solution,

the seeker must find, and be accepted by, a Perfect Master – One who has the competence to make the spiritual connection whereby the soul is able to transcend the body. His talks were lucid, with a simplicity that rendered them intelligible to everyone.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

Very few people could understand Bibi Hardevi. Appointed by Sawan Himself, to be with Kirpal, to look after His food and clothing, to help in the many aspects of administration and organization; she had also the unusual capacity of a guard – to guard Kirpal from endless streams of human beings, ever demanding His time and attention. It was a difficult role to play. Frequently, she had to show a firmness that was not necessarily in her heart. Sometimes it meant being rude to people if Kirpal's welfare was at stake. It was not always obvious to people at large that at times Kirpal needed rest, or some few minutes not surrounded by a crowd. As she was in His company more than any other single person, she knew what was required and what was her duty; a duty given by her Master. She had worked diligently at this from the beginning of Kirpal's mission.

However, the follower is always anxious to see as much of the Master as possible – to be near Him, to talk to Him; he or she does not always think beyond his or her own need and is not always aware of what is happening in the over-all picture. Many misunderstandings occur thereby, which are unavoidable. The interest of the individual is on one side and concern for the Guru's welfare on the other.

One incident during Kirpal's stay in Washington,

concerning this subject, had interesting and rather unusual consequences. A certain initiate came to Kirpal and cried, telling the story between sobs, that he had come a long way to see Kirpal and wanted to talk to Him desperately, but Bibi Hardevi had thrown him out of the house; his heart and faith were broken.

Kirpal at once turned to Hardevi, showing a fierce anger for hurting the young man. Immediately following this, Kirpal left to keep a previously arranged appointment with a throat specialist. It can only be speculated how Hardevi's mind must have administered its own inimitable brand of torture, as she sat alone, laboring under the sting of Kirpal's anger. Perhaps she was no longer needed, if she was not to be allowed to ensure that Kirpal had even a minimum of food and rest? He is seldom able to sit and peacefully finish His meal. Undoubtedly, her concern for Kirpal and for her duty weighed heavily on her heart as she pondered the problem; finally, she turned to her meditation.

When Sawan appeared inside, she asked if she might leave the physical world and be with Him inside. While she was in meditation, Kirpal's secretary entered the room and found Hardevi stretched out stiff on the floor, as still as death. At first she was not concerned, accepting that Hardevi was just in deep meditation.

However, as time went by she started to worry, and she hoped and prayed that the Master would return soon. To her relief, He did return, and on being informed of Hardevi's condition He said, 'I know, that is why I hurried back.' He went straight to Hardevi, felt her pulse and said with urgency, 'Quickly, get a doctor!'

Although the representative called a number of doctors on the telephone, each call brought the same result: regretfully, they could not come – the emergency doctor for that

area should be contacted, or alternatively take the patient to the hospital. But the area doctor was not available. The secretary related all this to Kirpal, adding that the only way Hardevi could get medical help was by taking her to a hospital, so should they call an ambulance?

Kirpal looked rather strangely at her as He said, 'It will be too late!' As she stood there feeling helpless, she was about to witness a strange event. Kirpal knelt beside Hardevi, put one hand under her neck, placed two fingers of His other hand on her eyes and the thumb on her forehead. With great authority and in a deep, powerful voice He thundered, 'You are not to leave; you are wanted for further work!' Nothing happened. Again He spoke: 'Do you hear me? Come back at once!' Then, a miracle. Hardevi's stiff and cold body stretched out suddenly as straight as a plank of wood and jumped about a foot into the air. Then, with a loud thud, it returned to the floor. On hearing the commotion, the representative came running into the room.

The secretary stood speechless in astonishment at what she had just witnessed. She knew in full faith that Kirpal was the God Power – that should He so wish, He could destroy and reanimate the whole world in a second – but what she had seen astounded her. It was not like the Master to demonstrate His power; His greatness was always held under a cloak of normalcy. His humility always took pre-eminence over show, and if He wanted to give a blessing it was often indirectly.

Past instances, and those to come, disclosed that if He wished to free a person of some incurable disease which had caused the patient and the doctors to give up hope, He would sometimes suggest to the doctor to try a certain medicine – and the patient would discover that a cure had been effected. Sometimes, He would give some

homeopathic remedy Himself. At times, the person would find himself free of the malady even before taking the medicine. Masters do not advertise their powers but keep them well-hidden from the eyes of the world, using them in subtle and unseen ways.

Now, watching Kirpal order a soul back to the body was indeed a rare privilege. When Hardevi returned to her body, she broke down and wept bitterly. Kirpal placed His hand on her head and, with love and intense seriousness, told her that He knew how difficult it was for her to help Him in His work; He was full of gratitude for all that she did, but there was little time left and so much to be done. He begged her to bear with Him, and told her that great rewards were ahead for her.

Shortly after this, Kirpal left for a TV station, to appear on a broadcast interview, so Hardevi was able to rest and think over what He had told her.

During Kirpal's stay in Washington, several political functionaries were able to meet Him. The Indian Ambassador invited Him to the embassy to meet a group of dignitaries from various countries. The ambassador from Pakistan extended an invitation too, and welcomed Kirpal with respect and enthusiasm. He said that although he was a Muslim and Kirpal was from the Sikh religion, he knew what Kirpal stood for and that He was above all religious dogmas; that the Muslims also could claim Him as their friend. Listening to these words as the ambassador walked with Him to the car, Kirpal was reminded of the great spiritual Master from the past, Guru Nanak, who also was claimed by the Muslims as their own. Kirpal's universal appeal was ever-apparent by the followers He drew from all religions and races, regardless of any superficial

differences. He always advocated that they remain in their own religions, but take up the spiritual practices in addition.

On July 2, Kirpal was scheduled to leave Washington for Louisville. Early that morning, two ladies arrived at the house and asked Kirpal if they both could have initiation, but He explained that He was leaving for Kentucky and there was no time. The younger of the two, the daughter of the other, started crying and begged Kirpal to not leave without giving her the inner connection.

Kirpal looked at her for some moments and said, 'You are the one who sees Christ and talks to Him. You were here some days back; you were not interested at that time, what has brought on this change of heart?'

The girl replied, 'Master, You told me to ask Jesus what I should do. I used to commune with Him quite often, but from when I last saw You He did not come to me. It might be I was confused and could not contact Him, but this morning I saw Him clearly and I asked Him what I should do, and He told me to come to You. He said, "Follow Him and obey Him implicitly," so I have come for initiation.'

Kirpal's expression was serious, and again He told her that there was no time just then. Tears poured down her face and everyone could see that her pure heart was broken. Kirpal's own heart melted with love and He told her that in a few months He would return to Washington and she would then receive initiation. She smiled at that, but said it was a long time to wait. Would He give permission for her to visit one of the stations on His itinerary? Kirpal smiled and said that would be alright. Later in the tour, the girl and her mother flew to Hollywood and there, both were initiated by Kirpal, and both enjoyed very good inner experiences.

In Louisville, Kentucky, the Master was greeted by Mrs. M. Gordon-Hughes, the group leader, who had been seeing Kirpal in meditation for some years and was therefore rejoicing to finally meet her Guru in the physical form. Also, in Louisville, a psychic lady said that she had been seeing Kirpal in visions for the past three years. In the company of many other seekers in Louisville, she was initiated during Kirpal's visit.

The program lasted for seventeen days during which public talks, interviews and informal talks were held on a schedule very much along the pattern of the Washington program. The days were long and busy, filled with activity – there was very little spare time.

The officials of the "Courier Journal" asked Kirpal if He would come to their building and record a question and answer session, prepared and set up by a local radio station, which would then be broadcast in the evening. A Roman Catholic bishop, a rabbi, another Jewish leader and the editor of the Courier Journal would also be there, all of whom would put questions to Kirpal about His teachings.

With a smile, Kirpal agreed to answer all their questions on the subject of spirituality, and they proceeded to make it a very lively interrogation session, firing a barrage of questions at Kirpal. To the small group of Kirpal's followers that was present, the questions were familiar but the answers were given and everyone seemed to be satisfied. The discussion continued like this for some time, then the bishop said, 'It is all very well, you giving us the theoretical answers, but how do we know that you have mastered what you teach and have the practical experience of it? It could all be speculation on your part!'

Kirpal was quiet, and the silence in the room was electric with anticipation as all eyes focused on Him, wondering

how He would reply.

He thought over this question for a moment, and then, 'This cannot be answered in words. One has to experience contact with the Truth to know what it is like.' He smiled as He continued, 'Just like a stomach-ache – the one who has not got the pain cannot understand what it is like. Similarly, if one has not had experience of that bliss by coming in contact with the Truth, one cannot understand what it is like because that kind of experience cannot be put into words or be understood by words.'

Later on, some television people requested Kirpal to come to their station for a TV broadcast. They had heard the radio program and felt it was an interesting subject for television. Kirpal kindly agreed, and that was arranged for July 8.

After one of the many meditation sittings, someone asked Kirpal if the world was in danger of any kind. Kirpal answered, 'Yes, very much so, but if mankind changes to an ethical way of living and takes up a higher expression of life, the world can be saved; otherwise, it is on the brink of destruction.'

Mr. Gray, a gentleman learned in biblical scripture, requested Kirpal to remove some doubts he had on some very controversial statements in the Bible. After his talk with Kirpal, he was so satisfied that he declared, 'We need a man like You to teach us the Bible; the Church is in need of You.'

During the Master's visit to Louisville, His secretary was able to learn the background to Mrs. Gordon-Hughes' search for her Master. Here is her story in her own words:

'In 1928 – it was April, I remember – I was seriously ill for two and a half months. I felt that my end had come, and

my family felt that I was not going to be with them for long. Then one night I felt the end very near; I tried to think of the past, to hold onto something, to lose myself in it, for I was very frightened and did not want to die. I could not breath; I tried to get up, but could not. Terrified, I tried to call out for help and that also I could not do. I lay there as if lifeless, relaxed and awaiting death.

'At that time I was facing a wall in my room. All at once from the corner of the wall I saw a light which, as I gazed, increased in dimension and brilliance. Then, from the center of the light, a figure became apparent. I had never in my whole life seen such a beautiful and imposing figure – tall, slim, with a long white beard, each part of Him shimmering in Light. He seemed all Light Himself; He stepped toward me, His blue eyes so full of love. Looking into those eyes, I felt as if He was entering my innermost self. He was like an angel of Light standing in Light. His clothes and turban were pure white, but limitless rays of shimmering colors were coming out of that purity. His beautiful hands were folded and resting on His chest ... I thought God Himself was there. I went on looking at Him, so surprised that I could not even blink my eyes. And He, with love-filled eyes, went on looking at me. Then slowly He advanced toward me and it seemed as if He was entering my diseased, pain-filled body.

'Next morning, my family were amazed to see me; instead of lying down helpless in pain, they saw me out of bed and smiling. No sign of any disease or pain was left in my body. From that day onwards I began my search for that Being who had taken all my pain away and made me whole again. I left my Episcopalian Church and went to many different sects and religions: Christian Science, White Brotherhood, Rosicrucian, Bahai, etc., but nothing satisfied me.

'Many years passed, but I never gave up my search. Then again in the month of April, 1948, I had another experience. I felt as if I was leaving my body, floating up, and then I saw the one I was seeking for twenty long years: the same gloriously white clothes, the same love-filled eyes. But there was another with Him, who had black piercing eyes, dressed also in white, a strong and regal physique. I saw these two many times afterwards, and sometimes a third figure with them, all three conversing. Later on, I found out that [the third figure] was Guru Nanak.

'I doubled my search for a spiritual teaching which would satisfy me; then in 1952 a friend told me of a book, "The Path of the Masters" by Julian Johnson. I read that book and somehow felt at peace. One thing led to another. I came in contact with a representative of a spiritual Master from India. When shown a photograph of His Holiness Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, I at once recognized Him as the One who was always with the blue-eyed One. Of course when I was shown Hazur Sawan Singh's photograph, I at last saw my search ending. I had found what I was searching for, for 20 long years.

'In June 1955 I was at the [Washington] railway station to meet the train which His Holiness Kirpal and His party had boarded in New York.

'The train came and stopped, the doors slid open, and He stood there, the same Whom I had seen so many times with Sawan. But oh, so much more beautiful – there are no words which can describe that beauty, the magnetism of His presence, His piercing eyes. I can only say that each movement of His was full of freedom and power, like a towering Emperor of the Truth.

'He greeted all – each one got a loving glance, standing there in that doorway of the train. Then He looked at

me with recognition and smilingly lifted His right hand and said, "See?", and I saw.'

Kirpal's visit to Louisville drew to a very successful conclusion and on July 19, He left to travel to Baldwin, a small town in Michigan, where a four-night stay had been planned. Hotel accommodations had been arranged, but these were cancelled when, at their specific invitation, Kirpal graciously agreed to stay at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Thompson. Public Satsangs were held in the town center and informal talks at the Thompson home.

The Chicago program was scheduled to start on July 23. In this city, it seemed, the hand of the negative power had been at work, doing its best to form a barrier between Kirpal and the true seekers. Some followers of the group that had taken over in Beas in India had apparently felt it necessary to try and undermine the work of Ruhani Satsang, and even started some disruption tactics in the public Satsang when Kirpal began giving His talks.

However, Kirpal's love and the pristine purity of His teachings won over the day. After attending a couple of talks and the meditation sittings, the would-be zealots confessed to their blindness and admitted they had been foolish; folding their hands to Kirpal, they humbly asked for forgiveness. Kirpal's loving grace is always very special for those who have the courage and character to admit they are wrong and ask to be forgiven. As He was always reminding His children, 'To fall in sin is manly, but to remain there is devilish!' Fortunate indeed are those who, realizing they are in the wrong, can, in all honest sincerity, pray for His grace and forgiveness.

Kirpal would also quote Baba Sawan on this subject: 'Once you know it is wrong, cease, and do no more.' Kirpal

made it clear that the Guru always knows what the chela* is doing, but never exposes him or her publicly, preferring that they come to Him voluntarily, confess whatever it is that burdens the heart and receive His loving forgiveness. His comforting words: 'Every Saint has His past, and every sinner a future', have been profound consolation to many a weary follower on the spiritual path.

While in Chicago, Kirpal – remembering one of Sawan's disciples, a Dr. Stone, who lived in the area and whom Kirpal had known when the doctor had visited Beas some years before – telephoned him. When Kirpal voiced a wish to see him, Dr. Stone refused and explained that he was working for the successor to Sawan. But Kirpal could see deep into the hearts of people and would not give up. He went Himself to Dr. Stone's home to see him. After two hours of conversation together, the good doctor was won round and touched the Master's feet to show the new respect he had found for Kirpal that day. Like many other events of the tour, this was recorded on movie film. The Chicago segment continued without serious mishap.

Kirpal made extra effort to meet the initiates of Baba Sawan. If they did not turn up to meet Him, He would seek them out whenever possible. He would stretch the already tight schedule that had been planned and travel miles to find one of His beloved Guru's disciples.

While in California, Kirpal was told of another of Sawan's followers, a Mr. Mayers, who lived about sixty miles from Beaumont. 'Tell him to come and see me,' said Kirpal, but when contacted, Mr. Mayers also had no wish to meet Kirpal because he too was 'following Sawan's successor.' It was a very unfortunate situation, in which many misguided

* Disciple.

followers had been caught. Kirpal became sad when they told Him and said that Mr. Mayers was a good man. 'I would like to see him. I have done him no wrong – why does he not want to see me? He is my brother, and if he does not want to come here, then I will go to him.'

So Kirpal went the sixty miles – to see a man who did not want to meet Him. Such are the ways of the Masters. When he saw Kirpal standing there, he began to shiver and would not come near. The fact that Kirpal was so full of love and joy was confusing to him at first, but true love accepts no obstacles and his doubts were gradually washed away.

During the six-day program in Beaumont, from July twenty-seven, Kirpal and the others stayed at the home of Dona and Charles Kelley. A devoted disciple, Dona had always carried the torch high for her Master, Baba Sawan.

The daily meditations were held on the lawn, with Kirpal's dais positioned under a beautiful fully-laden tree of ripe apricots, like a golden umbrella over His holy head.

July 31, the morning of initiation, dawned bright and sunny with not a cloud in the sky. The Master sat on the dais and the lawn was filled with prospective initiates. Kirpal had given the theory and had pronounced the holy charged words, when suddenly from nowhere, it seemed, large drops of rain began to fall from that cloudless sky, filling the air with a delightfully fresh and heavenly fragrance. Kirpal smiled and said, 'Dona, Sawan is very pleased and has blessed us with His grace.'

At the end of the Beaumont program, Kirpal spent three days in Hollywood, where public Satsangs were held. The Master also visited the Yogananda Center, named India House.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

San Jose was the next station on the California section of the tour and during the six days in that area, Kirpal and a group of satsangis went to the famous Redwood Forests. A rare day of relaxation, everyone enjoyed and absorbed the silent peace of the surroundings. The atmosphere was obviously very much to Kirpal's liking. Appreciation of the beautiful giant trees and the running streams was apparent in His expression and mood.

The fortunate ones who were present silently congratulated themselves – Now we have Him all to ourselves! – but the day fell a little short of their expectations when Kirpal began to show another aspect of His nature and became quite aloof and detached. Who knows where and with whom was His attention? At first confused by this different mood, they stayed some distance away and watched Him from afar; but gradually the peace emanating from Him drew them closer and one by one they sat down around Him and began to meditate. When comments were exchanged afterwards, they learned that everyone had experienced a wonderful meditation and never before had enjoyed such bliss.

Among those present was a young Russian girl who was meeting Kirpal for the first time. She told how she lived

with her husband and two sons, high on a mountain near the sea, where they had a quiet but hard-working life. One day she had been storing a large amount of beef in the freezer, ready for winter, when she saw a great bright light and Kirpal's face shining within it.

At that moment in time she had no idea who it was, and wondered what this amazing vision meant, for she had never heard about Kirpal. But there was no fear in her heart – just an indescribable peace.

Her husband had gone to town, but on his return with various commodities for the house, he brought also a newspaper he had purchased. When the wife opened the newspaper, there was the face of her vision looking at her!

Along with the picture was the address where Kirpal was staying for the next few days. She told her husband about the vision and said, 'I must go and see Him.' Then she added, 'I don't know why, but the thought of all that beef makes me feel sick – I think I want never to eat any more meat.'

After meeting Kirpal and attending the Satsang talks, she asked for initiation and thereafter followed Kirpal during His tour around California, driving her little car from place to place.

A true Master's help and protection is always at hand for the faithful disciple – even for trivial things. One young man had carefully saved enough money to travel along with the Master. Every spare dollar had been put aside by living very frugally, even going hungry, until he could buy a small used car. Heartbroken, he came to Kirpal with tears in his eyes – he could not follow Him because two tires had burst and he had not the money to cover two new ones. He was so overwhelmed with disappointment that he could hardly

speaking. Kirpal smiled at him and said, 'Whatever the child wants, the Father gives it to him.'

The boy looked puzzled at this, not knowing how to apply the words. The representative advised him to go to the nearby garage and have them patch up the tires, and the Satsang fund would pay the bill. An hour later, he returned with a radiant smile on his face. 'You will not believe what has just happened,' he said, with the joy inside him bubbling out through the words. 'I went to a small garage and the owner was there. He looked at the burst tires and said they were defective and straight away gave me two new ones in exchange. Now I understand what the Master meant when He said, "Whatever the child wants, the Father gives it to him." Oh, thank You, Master!'

This delightful surprise made it possible for him to travel with Kirpal throughout the California tour. When Kirpal traveled by air, he took off by road, joining everyone later at the destination. Sometimes Kirpal would take a ride in his car – what a blessing!

On conclusion of the itinerary for western U.S.A., Kirpal returned to Chicago by air on August 26 for another five days' visit. Once again the round of interviews, talks and meditation sittings began; the days were a combination of activity and serenity. Kirpal, showing no fatigue, bloomed with godly countenance and spiritual fragrance, filling everyone with His overflowing love and grace.

After a talk at the temple of the "I Am" movement, a Presbyterian minister told Kirpal that although he had been a minister of the church for forty years, it was the first time he had truly understood the hidden meanings in the words of the scriptures.

Before resuming the traveling, ten days were spent in Washington D.C., where the busy program continued in the

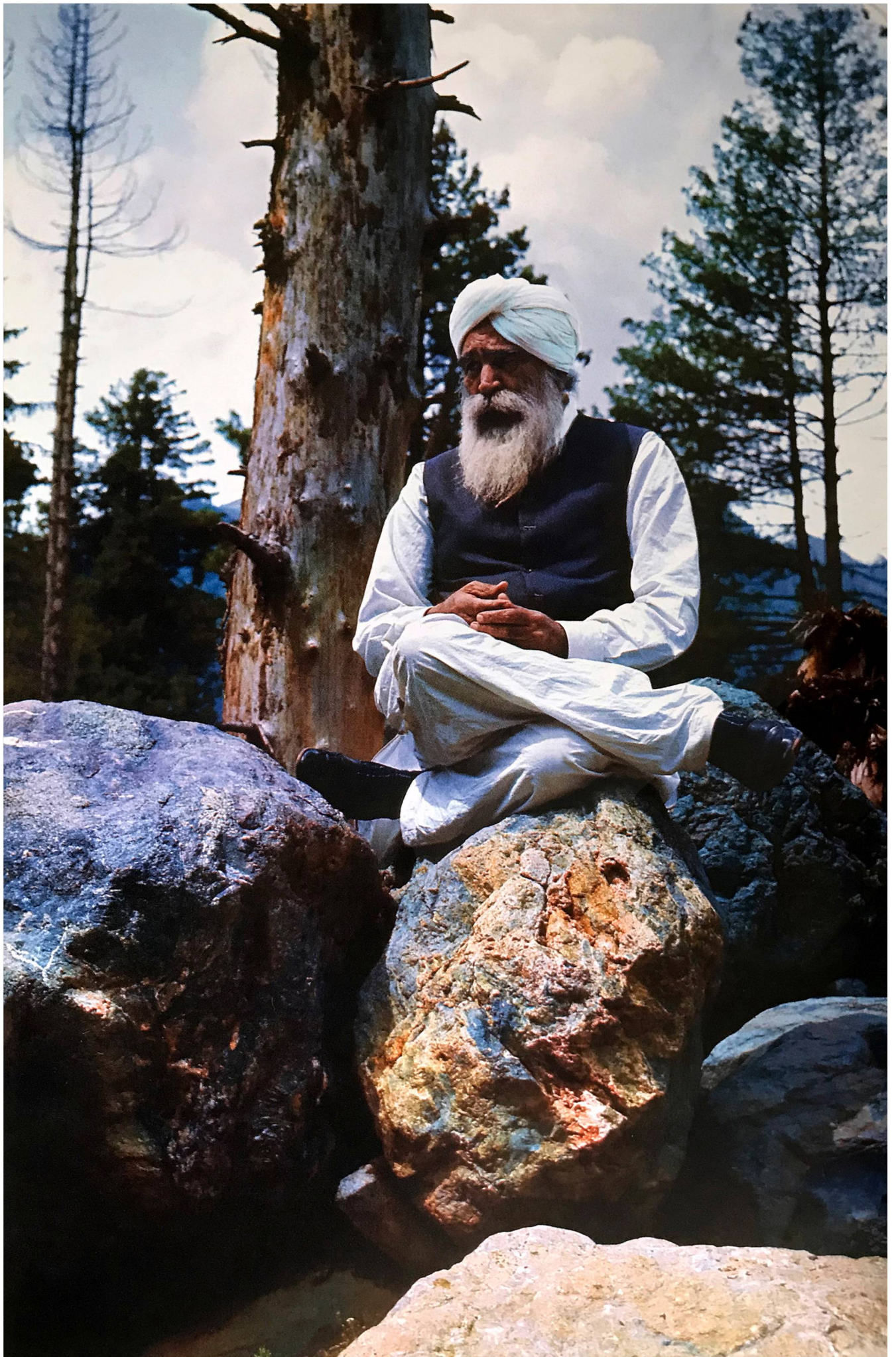






Left: Rishikesh foot bridge, 1962.

Above: with Hardevi and Devinder at Rani-ki-Kothi, Rishikesh, 1962.

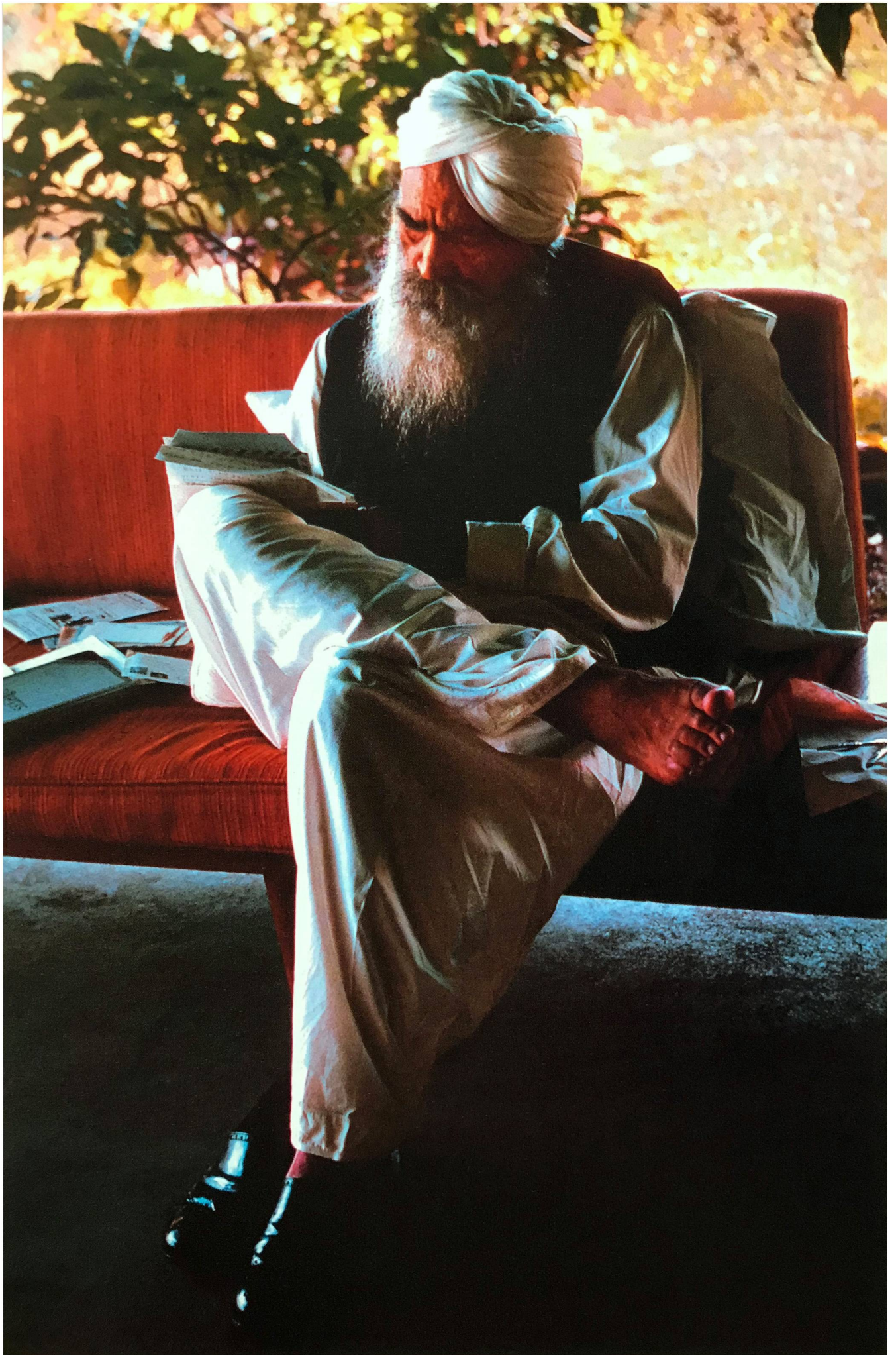


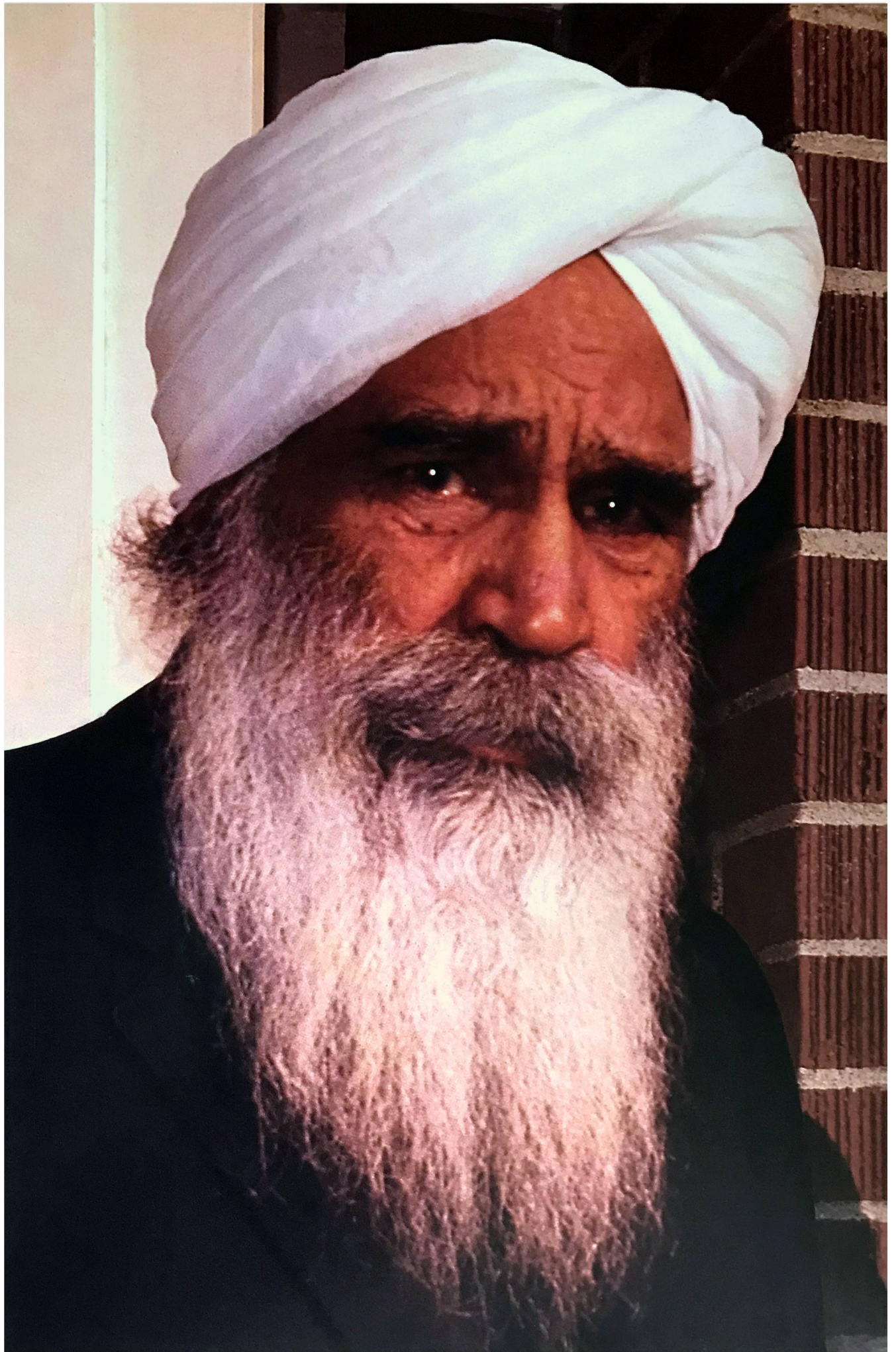


Left and Above: Master at Phalgam, Kashmir, 1968.



Above: Master's house, Sawan Ashram.
Right: On the 1963 Tour.





same fashion.

One man was so impressed by Kirpal, he declared that at last he had met a man of God who truly practiced what he preached. After being initiated, he begged Kirpal to accept his collection of rare books on religion and related subjects. Kirpal graciously went to his home to view his small library and accepted the books for the library at Sawan Ashram.

Another man, coming over to Washington from Louisville, spent several hours in discussion with Kirpal. He had been studying for many years, trying to define God or the Truth scientifically. He left Kirpal's room in a thoughtful and humble mood. The next day, he received initiation from Kirpal and experienced brilliant Light and the Sound of bells. He returned to Louisville a changed man, filled with the peace of God's love.

A four-day visit to Philadelphia was scheduled, beginning September 10, where Kirpal stayed in the home of a disciple named Dr. A. R. Smith, a neuropath. With Kirpal's permission, the doctor had arranged a meeting with Reverend M. E. Divine, known as "Father Divine." The reverend, it appeared, had declared himself to be God on earth and was a powerful figure with a large following. He was black himself and had done a lot for the black population, working hard to bring blacks and whites together.

Two chauffeur-driven limousines arrived from the Reverend Divine to take Kirpal and a small group of disciples to his home for dinner. He lived in a large mansion on top of a hill, and as they stepped out of the cars they were greeted at the door by young girls, both black and white, singing songs of welcome.

It was very much apparent that Father Divine lived like a king in a royal palace along with his queen, a young and

very beautiful white girl. Everything within the mansion spoke of material opulence. The expensive but gaudy furniture and furnishings overpowered the rooms. The young women were dressed in rich fabrics and heavy jewelry.

The reverend and his wife greeted Kirpal most graciously and offered drinks to everyone. As every member of Kirpal's party was an abstainer, they all politely refused. Leading the way, Father Divine and his wife conducted the party into a long banquet hall where a huge table was laid out with sterling silver plate and cutlery. Numerous giant chandeliers hung from the ceiling.

Suddenly, as if in response to a fanfare of trumpets, dozens of liveried attendants entered the room from both sides, carrying silver platters of food. More than fifty dishes bearing a variety of fare, including meat, fowl, fish and a selection of desserts, were brought in what seemed to be a never-ending procession. The guests had their own attendants standing behind their chairs to serve them, but Kirpal and His followers, all vegetarians, took only small portions of salad and fruit.

As they sat at the table, politely listening to the singing chorus of young women, they felt strangely out of place in such surroundings, in view of their own simple lifestyles and in the light of Kirpal's teachings on the subject. Kirpal Himself, all through life, was a perfect example of what He taught, living very simply and sharing what He had with others in need.

During the course of the evening, Kirpal made several attempts to talk about the subject of spirituality, but found no response in Father Divine. The following day, the reverend's secretary came to ask Kirpal if He would give Father Divine some time and Kirpal agreed, but again the reverend showed little interest in or knowledge of the subject,

although it was clear that he had done a lot of good work for his people.

At the end of the Philadelphia program, Kirpal returned to Washington where the Washington satsangis and many others from all over the country were anxiously awaiting Him. Their joy at seeing Him again had a tinge of sadness too, for the very next day He would be boarding a flight for Florida.

Among the many people who took advantage of the great Saint's visit to St. Petersburg was a young woman named Jean Adrial, and that lady had an intriguing story to tell.

When she was a small child, a man with a short beard would come and play with her. She told her parents about this and they laughed and told her not to imagine things. She never mentioned the matter again and gradually, as she grew older, the visits from the bearded man became less frequent, until finally they ceased altogether.

Through the years she had searched for Truth and, in seeking, met many spiritual teachers. Among these was Meher Baba, an Indian guru, who impressed her considerably at the time and she wrote a book about him. Just after the book was published, she realized she had made a mistake, but it was too late and the damage was done. The book was influential in attracting many people and there was an increase in Meher Baba's following in the United States.

The thought that she had misled people played on her mind and she sunk into a deep depression. Fortunately she had the good sense to turn to God in her hour of need and one day, when she was crying bitterly and feeling that her heart would break, she saw once again the companion of her early childhood standing beside her. She greeted Him

with joyful tears and was so grateful that He had returned to her just when she needed Him.

He told her that He was there just for a short while, but to take heart, for another would be coming to help her and she should accept Him. Jean asked how she would know He was the True One and was told that at the time He would reveal Himself to her. She cried, and begged Him not to leave her, but He said that He could not stay. She said, 'Can I take a photograph of You that I may keep with me until I meet the One that will come?' He told her that no camera could take His picture, but suggested that she might paint a portrait of Him.

She had only painted nature and had never attempted to make a likeness of the human form, but she got the paints and brushes and began. After a few attempts, she cried, 'I just cannot do it!' He said, 'Let me do it.' As Jean Adrial described, 'It was done in no time – just as if He took my hand, made a few strokes and it was finished.' She gazed at the painting in amazement and then turned to speak to Him, but He had vanished and so far, she had not seen Him again since that day.

Jean heard about Kirpal visiting the U.S.A. and had a strong inclination to meet Him. When she did meet Him she had the experience of something pulling her – as if her soul was being dragged out of her body. She had never before had this type of experience, but her mind suggested that this again might be a mistake. Because of the doubt and caution she felt inside, she requested if she might have a meditation sitting before taking initiation.

Kirpal explained very kindly that she could have as many sittings as she liked, without taking initiation, because He did not want people to take the responsibility of initiation unless they were completely satisfied, really wanted it, and

were prepared to carry it through.

During the meditation sitting, she saw Kirpal and her childhood companion, together, smiling at each other and then at her. After this experience, she tearfully begged Kirpal to give her the holy initiation without delay; now that she knew the path was the true one, she could not wait any longer for the inner contact. She was initiated with twelve others, eight of whom saw the radiant form of the Master, either alone or with other past Masters. Everyone's experience was excellent and very evident to all present as each one told the Master what they had seen and heard.

When Jean's turn came, she related that she had gone to a place that seemed to have no beginning and no end. Kirpal was seated on a brilliantly glowing chair which emitted far-reaching rays of light. Around Him were other men and among them was her childhood companion. All were radiant with light, but Kirpal outshone them all. As she continued watching them they discussed things among themselves, which she could not understand. Then her childhood friend turned to Kirpal and said, 'We are all very proud of You. You have done that which none of us could do. In these heavy loaded and darkened times on Earth, Your power has pierced the impregnable force of the negative powers to reach the true seekers and bring them out of darkness. Greater hard times are ahead but all our powers will work with You to save the true ones.'

Jean Adrial wanted to know who the others were and through photographs, pictures, and by description, Baba Sawan, Guru Nanak, Soamiji and Baba Jaimal were identified. As for her childhood visitor, it was none other than He who is known as the Father of Spirituality: Kabir Sahib.

Sad was the day for those who were left behind when, on

September 20, Kirpal left St. Petersburg to return to Washington. Among the many devoted ones awaiting His return was an elderly man of over ninety years of age, from Nashville, who had been in search of God for as long as he could remember. He had met many who had called themselves spiritual masters, but none had satisfied his inner yearning, so could Kirpal help him?

Humble as always, Kirpal told him that if God so wanted, he would get help, and during the following day's meditation sitting the man saw Kirpal inside, shining with a brilliant light. Satisfied that at last he had found a True Master, he stayed for initiation and then went back to his home a happy man.

All too soon, the evening of September 26 arrived. It was the last evening, for Kirpal would be leaving the next day for Boston and from there, on to England. His evening farewell talk was so full of love and compassion, there was not a dry eye among those present; Kirpal too had tears in His eyes. To leave one's Master or to have the Master leave is a kind of separation that no one can know unless it is experienced. It is an excruciating pain that goes through every part of one's being – soul, mind and body – and for which there is no balm but His presence once again.

The last few days in Boston were the bittersweet finale of a wonderful tour in U.S.A. Hundreds of followers had come from all over the country to spend the last few hours with their beloved Satguru. They smiled at each other in sympathy, with tears in their eyes. Even new people turned up and wanted to be initiated, and so the compassionate Kirpal, who was ever sacrificing His comfort for the love of others, agreed to hold an initiation on October 2. He would be leaving that evening so, forfeiting His allocated

day of rest, He initiated nineteen people on the last day of the U.S.A. tour.

Only a few people in U.S.A, knew that Kirpal had visited their country. Among the millions who populate that great nation, just a few had grasped the rare opportunity of meeting face to face a Perfect Soul who also resides in the human form, and who had placed His holy feet on North American soil.

Christ said that many are called to the path, but few are chosen. Of those that sat and listened to Christ's words, just a few had taken them for the truth and had captured the prize as it was held out to them. But the Masters also tell us that the soul arrives at the feet of the Master Soul through a profound destiny. No one can create that destiny – it is a part of God's will and pleasure. And no one can prevent that destiny – God Himself ensures that.

Those who stepped forward into their destiny stepped into the Light. Through Kirpal's grace and competence they were awakened from a deep sleep. They became conscious beings. He says that it is a subject of consciousness – a conscious awareness of the God Power that permeates all creation, including the human being.

While on the tour, Kirpal had met a group of renowned scientists. Long discussions ensued about the advancement of science. They had considered that the advancement of science had surpassed any religious or spiritual concept proposed by Kirpal or any other person qualified in the field.

Then Kirpal's question came – like a bomb! 'In spite of all the scientific development, have you been able to create an ounce of consciousness?' The question was met with a stunned silence, which seemed to give even more power to Kirpal's words. Then the spokesman had to admit

truthfully that science had not been able to do that thing. He then asked them, 'Have you analyzed the atom?' They replied, 'Yes.' Kirpal then asked, 'What did you find therein?' They said there is movement going on within the atom. On being asked whether the movement is haphazard or controlled, they replied that it is very much controlled and very rhythmic. The Master said, 'What is it that keeps that movement in the atom under control?' When they had no reply to this, the Master added, 'That is the Power that is controlling all the Universe. It is controlling us in the body too. Once that Power withdraws, dissolution or grand dissolution takes place. That is the Power we have to know in the man-body.'

Kirpal then explained that not only were spiritual Masters a full manifestation of all-consciousness, but their work was to bring the consciousness in other human beings into awareness and attune it to the all-consciousness, which pervades existence in all its expressions.

No value can be computed for such a blessing. It is a pure gift from God, dispensed by the Master Soul. Kirpal would often exhort a warning by quoting Christ: "'Take heed, therefore, that the Light which is in thee be not darkness.'" Keep the inner lamp ever burning; do not throw away the precious Gift that cannot be valued, by allowing that Light to go out.'

CHAPTER FORTY

When Kirpal arrived in the United Kingdom on October 3, He went straight down to Southwick, Sussex, to stay for two weeks at the home of Mrs. Upton, who had arranged for the entire program to be in that area. During that period, the usual talks and interviews were given and the Master held the initiation process twice, when almost forty souls were re-connected to the Primal Source, the Naam or Word. Mrs. Upton herself enjoyed a beautiful experience within and saw Kirpal together with His Master, Sawan, both in radiant form, laughing with great joy. So intoxicated was she by her inner visions that she spent most of the following days in meditation.

Kirpal was due to go to Germany on October 16. There were no initiates in that country at the time, except for one man from India, a Mr. Malhotra. In a discussion at Mrs. Upton's, it was suggested that a program in Germany would be difficult, for not everyone spoke English and the Master did not speak German – how then would He make them understand? Kirpal smiled as He replied to this, 'I am not going there, I am being sent there and whoever is sending me must have made some arrangements.'

Arrangements indeed had been made. A young German girl named Margaret Moyat, who had been brought up in

England, was at the time visiting relatives in Berlin, the very city that Kirpal would visit first. On the last day of her stay there, she went to see a friend and in the course of their conversation, the friend mentioned that an Indian mystic would be coming to Berlin. Would Margaret like to stay on and see Him too? Margaret declined, saying that she was not interested and had to return to her work in England. But her friend had been looking for the newspaper which contained an advertisement about Kirpal's visit, and when she showed Margaret the picture of Kirpal in the paper, she was astounded to see the reaction in her friend, who had turned white and was staring at the photograph as if she had seen a ghost.

Margaret explained why her reaction to the picture had been so startling. She had been sitting in the train on her way to her friend's and was looking out of the window at the passing scenery, when suddenly a face appeared, as if in the window, and the vision remained for some minutes, just looking at her. It was the very same likeness as the photograph in the newspaper. Now she felt a strong desire to meet this person and immediately cancelled her return to England.

It was one of God's many ways of getting His work done, for Margaret was proficient in both German and English. She met the hosts of the Master's stay in Berlin, a Mr. and Mrs. Kaul, and along with a Mrs. Hahn and a few others, all were at the airport to greet Kirpal when His plane landed. With Kirpal's approval she was appointed official translator for all the talks and interviews.

The day after Kirpal arrived, two eager seekers were given a very hurried initiation, as they were leaving right away for Russia. They spoke no English or German but fortunately there was someone who knew a little Russian.

However, the problems of overcoming the language difficulty and the need to condense the initiation procedure did not hinder their inner experiences, for both enjoyed a rewarding talk with the Master inside, where everything is above the barrier of language.

One seeker, an elderly man named Nicolai Schimmum*, who had been a friend of Leo Tolstoy, had been seeking the inner connection for sixty years. After receiving his initiation, he approached Kirpal with the joy in his heart registered on his face and tears streaming down his cheeks. He told Kirpal that he was so thankful God had at last taken pity on him. He went on to relate how he had been initiated by the great Sufi, Inayat Khan, but with no inner experience. Traveling to India, he had been initiated by one of the well-known yogis, Swami Sivananda, but again with no inner experience. After two great disappointments he had given up all hope of ever receiving the inner connection to God.

Now at last he had received the fulfillment of his life's desire and was saved. He was so full of joy and gratitude for the great gift that he just wanted to be near Kirpal the whole time. Kirpal's grace seemed to be upon him in abundance, for at each meditation sitting he was dragged upward and inward; each experience more wonderful.

During the eight days of Kirpal's visit to Berlin, seven public talks were given to audiences that filled the hall. Each morning a meditation sitting was held, and a total of thirty people received the holy initiation. The Berliners were amazed that each event in Kirpal's program was free of charge; no collections or admission fees were taken and Kirpal Himself accepted no payment for His work.

When the newly initiated disciples pressed Him to be allowed to donate something, they pointed out that there

* Spelling may not be correct.

were numerous expenses to be covered, rental of the auditorium and various other things, so Kirpal appointed one of them to be in charge of all the mundane work connected to the holy cause.

Before leaving for Bonn, the Master held a meeting with all the new initiates. The Kauls were very keen to arrange for "Man, Know Thyself" to be translated into German for the benefit of other seekers coming to the Path, and Nicolai wanted it translated into Swedish.

There was an amused twinkle in Kirpal's eyes as He said, 'Before I left England, they were concerned about the difficulty I would have in starting God's work in Germany, owing to the language barrier. I had told them that it would be impossible if I was doing it, but God's work is done by Himself – I am only a servant carrying out His orders. Now just look, I have done nothing, cannot even talk to all of you without an interpreter, and yet here is a group of thirty initiates all so eager to expand the work and bring help to the seekers. Without any effort and with no pre-planning, the work has started and it will continue until all who are destined to get the inner connection through me have received it.'

The first talk in Bonn was given at a school. A Professor Ray interpreted throughout the talk and went on to interpret all Kirpal's talks and interviews in Bonn.

The Indian Ambassador and certain members of his staff came to pay respects to Kirpal, where He was staying at the home of Mr. O.P. Malhotra.

During one assembly for meditation, with their eyes open many of the sitters saw Kirpal walking among them with Sawan. In actual meditation, some saw the radiant form of the Master or Baba Sawan, and one person saw Jesus Christ.

The receptivity of the German people was acute. In the

middle of one talk, the audience told the interpreter to stop translating for, 'We can understand more from His eyes than from your translated words!' Their souls were awakening to receive and absorb the spiritual food radiating from Kirpal's presence, and in particular from His eyes.

On October 30, twenty-three people were initiated and everyone had a very good experience. Six people saw the radiant form of Kirpal. Some saw Kirpal and Sawan together and some saw Christ. They were delighted and overwhelmed at receiving such a priceless gift given freely from God – unearned by any merits of their own. Some had searched for the Truth all their lives and had given up hope of ever realizing it. Now they walked on air, as it were, as if elevated and released from bondage, and a great rejoicing filled their hearts at this unbelievable good fortune and blessing from God.

On November 1, Kirpal was scheduled to leave Bonn at 9:30 a.m. to be at the airport in Dusseldorf one hour before take off. The initiates did not want their newly discovered Guru to leave them. They bound Him to them with their love. 'Just one minute more', or 'Just one more word.' His heart filled with compassion and He gave in to their pleadings.

Mr. Malhotra was starting to panic. Again and again he came to plead with folded hands – it was getting late, it would take nearly an hour to reach the airport and reporting time was at least a half-hour before departure. But Kirpal only said, 'I cannot leave without tending to the needs of the seekers; that is my work. You needn't worry, the flight can wait!'

Mr. Malhotra, convinced that the Master had not understood the situation fully, tried again: 'But Maharaj Ji, these are international flights and they cannot be delayed and we

should be there earlier because some formalities have to be gone through. You could see the disciples at the airport.'

With patience, Kirpal explained that some of the initiates would not be able to go to the airport and therefore He had to talk to them here, and added, with His eyes twinkling, 'Don't worry, I am not going to overstay my welcome, and we will be in time.' He laughed at Mr. Malhotra's serious face, as if to reassure him.

When at last they reached the airport in Dusseldorf, they found that the plane had been delayed for some reason and would be one and a half hours late in taking off. Everyone laughed at this, overjoyed with the extra blessing of Kirpal's company for another hour. They sat around Him, imbibing His precious darshan, oblivious of everything else.

As always, there was a tearful and heart-rending farewell when Kirpal and His accompanying party prepared to board the flight. The tears fell and the beautiful souls were aching as His newly awakened children strove to reach out and just touch His physical form before He left. The days of heaven when they had Him among them would be remembered and cherished always.

Relaxing in their seats awaiting take off, Hardevi remarked, 'Maharaj Ji, it's a pity You could not see Mrs. Schmidt in Geneva on the way back. She had seemed so very troubled and unhappy when she met You. Will her wishes to have Your darshan once again just go unheeded?'

Kirpal smiled and said, 'It is not in my hands, all is according to whatever God wishes.'

When the plane touched down in Geneva it was 4:30 p.m. and the passengers were allowed to spend the ninety minute interim in the airport, so they made their way to the restaurant. It was during this break that an announcement

informed everyone that owing to a serious engine problem the plane would not take off as scheduled. Another flight had been ordered for the next morning and the passengers would be spending the night in an hotel.

Immediately, minor chaos erupted among the passengers who began to run around, making telephone calls to cancel appointments, attempting to secure alternative flights with other airlines, and so on. Amid the noise and confusion, Kirpal sat on an airport bench in majestic calm and serenity. He then told His secretary to phone Mrs. Schmidt and ask her to come to the hotel that evening.

When they reached the hotel, Kirpal relaxed in a chair, but Hardevi looked at Him accusingly and said, 'Could You not have made some simple program to be here for Mrs. Schmidt's sake, rather than upsetting the schedules of so many others?'

Kirpal laughed outright at this. 'I did not do anything. I never make plans – it might be that Mrs. Schmidt's God is very powerful and arranged it in this fashion.'

When Mrs. Schmidt arrived she could not speak to greet Him, but just stood and cried. Eventually she said, 'I cannot thank You enough for granting my wish. I have been praying to You night and day to give me this opportunity to be with You on Your return.'

It transpired that she had lost touch with the inner connection, so Kirpal was gracious and gave her a meditation sitting for half an hour. Later, as she left, she just clasped His hands into her own and, bowing low, touched them with her forehead. There was no need for words, her eyes were expressing the deep gratitude.

The next morning, November 2, Kirpal and the two ladies reached the airport in good time for the flight. When they

stopped in Cairo, the passengers spent a short time in the terminal while the aircraft was refueled. As they went forward to reboard, Kirpal turned to His secretary and said, 'Whatever has to happen, has to happen, but people should do their duties diligently.' She stared at Him and said, 'Maharaj Ji, I do not understand.' He said, 'Well, the engines on the plane – they should see and check them very thoroughly.'

The secretary felt she had learned something about the procedure for flying and maintaining aircraft from her husband, who had been an officer in the Indian Air Force, so she very reassuringly told the great Master that no plane leaves the ground until it is thoroughly checked and re-checked. With an "eyes wide open" and innocent expression, Kirpal looked at her and just said, 'That is good.'

But His look remained etched in her thoughts, and one hour later she felt filled with shame and foolishness to have attempted to reassure the great God-man who was the very manifestation of all wisdom and knowledge. For, they had been in the air for about fifty minutes when she noticed something strange. Kirpal had brought His knees up under His chin and was fastening the seatbelt around His knees and tightening the belt as tight as He could.

Just as she was about to ask why, the flight attendant came along the gangway telling the passengers to fasten their seatbelts. The plane gave a sudden lurch, which was not only uncomfortable but told everyone that all was not well with the aircraft.

A few minutes later, confusion could be plainly seen among the crew, although it was announced several times that everything was under control and there was no need to panic. But everyone sensed that there was indeed trouble in the air. Meanwhile, Kirpal sat holding tightly to His knees,

lost to all that was going on around Him.

Confirming the passengers' apprehension, it was announced that the aircraft would be turning round and returning to Cairo. It would be an understatement to say that everyone aboard was relieved when the plane landed safely at the airport in Cairo.

Kirpal stepped off the plane, turned to the secretary and said, 'Do they really check the engines as they should be checked?' It was discovered later that not just one engine had failed while they were in the air, but in turn three out of four had failed. The pilot was highly commended for his skill in bringing the plane back and landing it safely. How could they know that the Power of God had worked that day and had saved all those on the aircraft from a terrible disaster? Many things are hidden from man, and mysterious are the ways of God. The rest of that day and night was spent in a Cairo hotel, due to the plane's engine troubles.

This would not be the only time that Kirpal would avert a catastrophe in the skies – He would again do so eight years later, during the 1963-64 tour.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

The differences between religious leaders, of which there are many, and a true man of God – a God-in-man – of which there are very few, are legion. Kirpal constantly showed personal examples of these differences, which anyone with a discerning interest could observe. A perfect example was His insight into, and understanding of, the human heart.

A glimpse of this is revealed when He said, 'There are two occasions which are very difficult for the heart: when one is waiting for someone to come, and when one is saying farewell to someone.' The Someone referred to is, of course, the Master. This He said a number of times, when greeting some of His children after a physical absence.

For the anxiously awaiting Indian disciples, it had been a long and devastating five months. As they suffered the unbearable absence of Kirpal, they could only console themselves and each other that every passing day brought His return closer.

Ecstatic is the word to describe the rejoicing in their hearts as the great day approached. They were bubbling over at the thought of seeing His beloved face again. Would the day never come? The fortunate ones who were able to leave the body and meet Him inside had true consolation. But then, the Master in the physical form was something

different – something singular and indescribable, and the greatest blessing in life that God gives.

What of those who, as yet, were not enjoying that communion with Him inside? Was their love and yearning for Him less? Only He knows, but everyone found the pangs of separation hard to bear, and the anxiety of the hundreds who were fortunate to reach the airport and were waiting there was etched in their faces.

It was a cold November night when His plane landed at eleven p.m. on the 3rd, but the faithful ones who stood outside the terminal for hours did not feel it. Heedless of atmospheric conditions, the hundreds of hearts had but a single thought which superseded all bodily discomforts – *When He comes out, will I be able to get a glimpse of Him?*

The traffic problems in the airport at the time of Kirpal's departure from India had alerted the authorities, who now took precautions by controlling the crowds and not allowing them into the terminal buildings. Although they had confined the people and cordoned off the main entrance, yet they were wary. Several officials followed Kirpal as He left the building, such was their concern and anticipation. A rush of bodies; a minor riot; who knows what they expected? Under the circumstances they can be forgiven if they were awestruck by the silence that fell as Kirpal walked toward His followers with folded hands. It was as if their very breath had frozen on their lips, and in their intensity to savor even the tiniest glimpse of Him the stillness was complete. That is, until He reached His car and got inside. No longer spellbound, they awoke and like an instant tornado, rushed toward their cars or the chartered buses, in an effort to follow Him closely, back to Sawan Ashram.

The Ashram was lit up like it was daytime. From the tiniest twinkling bulb to beams nearing searchlight power, not a

corner was dark on that winter night. They waited for Him in the thousands, sitting cross-legged on the open ground of the Ashram. The voices through the loudspeakers advised them to, 'Sit where you are – do not move, and all of you will get His darshan.' They sang hymns and they waited, they laughed at each other in shared joy and they waited.

Then suddenly the agonizing pain in their hearts turned to tears as He Himself mounted the dais and stood before them, greeting them with folded hands. What happiness there was that night as He looked down at them through the tears that He too shed. It was spring in November. Kirpal had returned to India and the disciples basked in the rays and warmth of His love. All sadness was gone and elation had taken its place.

From the first day back, Kirpal's days and nights were busier than ever. From morn to late at night, He tended the needs and demands of His children. Everyone wanted a few minutes of His time, and the numbers were legion. Apart from the interviews and Satsang talks, there was the mail which He saw personally, as always, and which had increased steadily over the years – of late, in leaps and bounds. As His days were filled to overflowing, most of the correspondence He perused, checked and approved during the late night hours, often until the early hours of the morning. Some of His followers wondered if He ever slept. In that regard, He has always said, 'My body sleeps – I do not sleep.'

He had concern and time for everyone, remembering each disciple he had not seen since before the overseas tour, inquiring after their welfare, ensuring that all was well with their families and in their lives. No earthly mother or father could have more solicitude for their children. (Finally, after

a few days, the Master had to leave the Ashram without announcing His destination, to avoid being followed; otherwise, the thousands of followers that had flocked to see Him at the Ashram would not have returned to their homes.)

One of those He inquired after was Malkeet Singh who, surprisingly, had not come to see Kirpal upon His return to India. Everyone knew Malkeet Singh to be sincerely devoted – that he was able to go to the higher planes and was an inspiration to all with his love for his Guru and his progress in meditation.

Upon Kirpal's inquiry, the report came back that Malkeet Singh was still fasting – he had not eaten a morsel of food for five or six months and was now a very sick man. A letter was sent, asking him if he could come to the Ashram. In response to this he came, sick as he was, and his wife accompanied him. An extraordinary scenario was about to take place for all to see.

His previous visits to Sawan Ashram had been special occasions. Loved and respected, there had always been a small crowd to surround him, to gaze at his glowing face so full of love for his Master. Now, when he arrived, the people looked at him and drew back, uncertain and confused. All the inner glow had left his countenance, his eyes were hollowed with pain and misery; his unkempt hair and person gave him the air of a madman. The rumor was whispered that he was in the grip of tuberculosis and the usually friendly crowd were inclined to shun him.

All this was shocking in itself, but there was another perplexing factor. Although Kirpal had caused the letter to be sent, calling Malkeet Singh to the Ashram, where a room was given him, nourishing food arranged for his meals and a doctor instructed to attend him, yet there was no loving

welcome from Kirpal as there always had been in the past.

A friend had been watching all this going on and asked Malkeet Singh what had happened to set his fortune on such an insecure footing. The world and its illusion spreads its fickle influence, even among the unsuspecting, and if the admirers had turned their backs it was not so unusual, but why would that very One who was Love itself personified seem to be so indifferent? Malkeet Singh saw the concern in his friend's face and broke down into tears. Slowly, the story was told.

'Since the very first day that I saw Him and heard Him, I knew somewhere within me that I had found that which I had searched for my whole life through, although at that time I did not fully realize it consciously. But He appeared to me and gave me initiation within; He made me His with no effort from me – like a drop of water sliding into the ocean and losing itself.

'Then when He accepted me outwardly, I felt as if all my strings that were attached to the world had been severed, and I floated upward effortlessly. He took me to higher planes and showered me with His eternal love. He made me take a dip in the holy Water of Life, the Mansarovar*, every time I went up on my way to the higher regions. He blessed me with such gifts that are beyond the imagination – even that of some gifted spiritual people.

'They say a dog is just a dog,' he continued in the same sad tone of voice. 'It is true. Take a starving dog, wash him in scented water, seat him on a silken cushion upon a golden throne, serve him the choicest food and attend on him hand and foot. But if he sees a dirty, dry old bone, he will leave everything for it, for he is just a dog after all.

* Lake in the spiritual planes.

So it was with me.

'People came to know about my inner progress and they started looking up to me. I resented this at first for I knew I was nothing and Maharaj Ji was everything. But gradually my mind – the dog in me – started relishing the adoring eyes. My ego made me feel and believe that I was something special and I began prancing around like a peacock.

'Then one day a man came to me. He was a yogi but he had tuberculosis. He had been discharged from the hospital, as the doctors could do no more for him and he had just a few more days or months left to live. He wanted to talk about the higher life. I asked him what he would do if he was given another span of life. He said, "I would spend every breath that I took in remembrance of God."

'Hearing this, I told him that I would take his sickness upon myself. Full of ego, I knew I could do it, and I knew also that I would then go up inside to that Lake of Life and take a dip in it, thereby washing away all the karmas I had incurred.

'So with the inner knowledge I had learned, I took his sickness upon myself and then sat in meditation. When I left my body, I went straight to the Mansarover. Maharaj Ji was standing there beside the lake and I bowed down to Him and made to go into the lake for a dip. But Maharaj Ji lifted His hand and stopped me. He told me that I would not be allowed to have that plunge in the holy water and that I would have to pay the karmic debt through my body, for I had transgressed the holy law. I returned to my body. I was sorely sick in mind and agonized in my soul.'

With eyes filled with pain, he turned toward his friend. 'Since that day I have not been able to concentrate. My mind has taken over and I am like a weakened child in its power. I have lost the inner Light and I have lost a hope of regaining

that which I have lost. Funny thing is, I do not care. I do not care what happens to me. I only want my Beloved's love. If only He would love me again, I would go through any hell with laughter on my lips.'

A few days later, Malkeet Singh and his wife left the Ashram and returned to Kanpur. After some months, the news came by telephone that his condition was much worse. When Kirpal was told, He left for Kanpur by car that evening, canceling everything on His schedule for the next two days. It was a long drive and the car did not reach Kanpur until the early morning. Kirpal went straight to Malkeet Singh's home and greeted him with loving tenderness. Malkeet Singh sobbed bitterly and everyone present had tears running down their cheeks.

After a little while, Kirpal told him to ask for anything he desired and it would be given. Malkeet Singh said, 'Maharaj, there is nothing in this world or the other worlds that is greater than Your love, so please give me forgiveness and love, that is all I want.'

Kirpal smiled and told him that it would be as he desired. Then he told him to close his eyes and meditate. During this meditation, Kirpal remained seated beside the bed. No one knows what blessing the Master bestowed, but after half an hour Kirpal spoke his name and the eyes of Malkeet Singh opened and turned to his Guru filled with adoration and tears as he folded his hands in gratitude.

Back in Delhi some days later, Kirpal was informed that Malkeet Singh would be entering a sanatorium, which up to then he had refused to do. To put a conclusion to this narrative means accompanying the Master, at a much later date, to His bungalow in Rajpur.

When the Rajpur bungalow was bought, privately, in the

Master's name, it was intended as a quiet retreat so that once in a while the Master could gain a few days' respite from His very heavy daily routine in Delhi. Tucked away in the peaceful foothills, it was an ideal location, not too far from the capital city and the Ashram. With a minimum of traffic delays enroute, the one hundred and sixty or so miles by road could be covered in five or six hours, depending on the number of rest stops.

A Godman is both God and man. How they work together remains an enigma to mankind, but one thing is apparent to our old friend, the discerning observer: the God in Him does not demonstrate extraordinary powers for the sake of the man in Him. His body is vibrant with the overflowing presence of the God made manifest within it, giving it the ability to accomplish that which normally would require the strength and capabilities of ten ordinary bodies. But when His body is weary, it is weary. Except for certain extenuating circumstances, He does not use these God-powers to relieve His bodily weariness. He allows nature to take its course.

What better place for recuperation than a retreat in the Himalayan foothills? However, could there really be any place in the world where Kirpal would go and remain alone, except for His personal staff? His generosity, His compassion, His true and unceasing love for His children, would prevent Him from cutting Himself off – even for a few days.

So 207 Rajpur Road, Rajpur, became a retreat for others too – some with special needs; some with a desire for serious meditation; some who had traveled thousands of miles to be near Him for a short time; some lived nearby and were unable to journey to Delhi frequently and were grateful to visit His verandah and sit at His holy feet or to meditate in a

calm, peaceful atmosphere which pulsed with the life and power of His presence.

It was also a perfect environment for Kirpal to write His books. A plain wooden table set under a tree behind the house was all He needed. Many of His English books* were born in this spot. Then the inevitable paperwork was always His companion on His visits to Rajpur, including the ever-growing pile of overseas correspondence files.

In the early days, short booklets written by Kirpal were available: "Life of Baba Sawan Singh"; "Man, Know Thyself"; and so on. In 1959 His full-length subjects began to be published, starting with: "The Jap Ji"; "Spirituality"; "Prayer". Other subjects followed until, over a number of years, a considerable collection of Kirpal's works in English was available.

The written word has the power to impress the truth upon the reader to a very great extent – especially when written by a Master of the Truth.

A man once sat at Kirpal's feet and begged for guidance on some problem. When the Master gave him the advice, he protested that the Master was saying something different to what He had written in a certain book. Kirpal carefully explained that each man was an individual, had individual conditions in his life and therefore there can be slight variances in the solutions to each man's problems.

The books contain general terms, whereas, to his advantage he was receiving guidance as an individual, especially for his particular condition; and as Kirpal Himself had written the book, He should know what He is saying.

But the poor fellow found it very hard to release the words of the book and absorb the words coming from

* The Master's books are available through the Book Department of Ruhani Satsang U.S.A.

the Master Himself. Such is the strange mystery of the workings of the mind.

While the Master was in Rajpur, meditation sittings were held mornings and evenings, usually in the open at the front of the bungalow, but sometimes on the verandah or in the large living room; very occasionally in Kirpal's own room. His room was frequently filled with people, sitting on the floor before His bed, where He sat writing or relaxing or talking to those present.

One evening, a small group of followers was in His room but Kirpal did not speak to anyone. Every now and then He expelled a deep sigh, or made a remark about putting importance on useless worldly things. The next evening, the sighs continued. Then Kirpal said something about the foolishness of man, throwing away an invaluable gift for empty seashells. The evening was spent in this fashion and finally Hardevi could contain herself no longer. She burst out suddenly, 'Maharaj Ji, what is the matter? I have never seen You like this – is the world going to end?'

The Master replied, 'No, but through foolishness, sometimes valuable time is lost.' Everyone could see that Hardevi was apprehensive, but in a brave, bantering tone she said, 'Please do not talk in riddles; if something very bad is going to happen at least warn us about it.' But Kirpal said no more.

The following two evenings passed in the same solemn way. Hardevi was worried, but the years with the Master had taught her that there were times when it behooved a person to remain silent, so she sat in a quiet and meditative mood. As the evening light began to fade into shadows, Kirpal stretched out on His bed and closed His eyes.

After a while He murmured, 'Data, Data, it is as You

will.' Then He sat up, smiled at Hardevi and asked for a cup of tea. By the time tea was made and brought in from the kitchen, He was talking and laughing with everyone as usual. Later, when Hardevi pleaded with Him to tell her what the evenings of sighs and sadness were all about, He just said, 'You will know by tomorrow.'

The next afternoon, Hardevi was sitting in the courtyard at the rear of the bungalow when Kirpal came out, holding a telegram in His hands. 'Malkeet Singh died yesterday evening,' He said.

When she heard this, Hardevi's eyes overflowed with tears. 'Your love for him must have been great, that You suffered with him for three nights.' Kirpal said, 'He had to pay for what he did, and was made to suffer.'

Someone else asked a question, 'Maharaj Ji, Malkeet Singh had advanced so much inwardly, then he did wrong and all he had gained was taken from him. Has he to work from the beginning again?'

Kirpal answered, 'No, whatever a soul has realized is never taken from him permanently. Just as you can lock up your money in the bank for a certain amount of time and cannot withdraw it until the prescribed time expires, so it can be with spiritual advancement under a Living Master. If the Guru sees that the disciple is ruining all he has been given, his earnings are locked up until the disciple is capable of looking after the Gift again. Then he starts from wherever he had reached, and the Guru releases the previous spiritual advancement so that whatever had been earned is restored to him.'

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

A Master Soul cannot be fully comprehended at the human level. Kirpal quotes Baba Sawan's advice: for the seeker to accept Him as a teacher, a father, a friend, but to go inside and meet Him on the spiritual planes, where, one can then ' . . . call Him by any name one likes.' It means, the Truth can only be found at a spiritual level.

Similarly, a Master's love and mercy cannot be measured or described – it is beyond the normal intellect, an unknown quantity, a strange mystery ... an enigma. A disciple may make every conscientious effort to obey and please the Guru, yet it may appear to be all in vain, with no apparent results. Conversely, an individual with no faith or belief in the Guru can appeal to Him in some half-hearted fashion to help a small problem and may receive an abundance of grace and attention. This is puzzling, but to wrangle and debate the subject is futile when the human level allows but a narrow view of the picture, while the Master sees the whole panorama.

A young girl named Pushpa Kumari* who lived in Delhi was married at seventeen years of age to a young man named Mahesh Kumar Malik. The young man's parents were initiates of Sawan, but the father had taken to following another

* Not to be confused with Hardevi's daughter.

guru after Baba Sawan's passing.

This was frowned upon by his wife who was regular in her meditations and who warned him that he was wasting his time when he could be attending the Satsang of the true successor to Sawan – Satguru* Kirpal – in whom flowed the full Power of God. The husband, along with their son and the newly acquired daughter-in-law, laughed at her warnings and made insulting remarks when she mentioned Kirpal's name. Although they forbade her to attend Kirpal's Satsangs, she kept her faith and prayed to Him to forgive her family as they were ignorant of the truth.

In due course, Pushpa Kumari became pregnant and on September 8, 1956, gave birth to a son. It was a difficult delivery but everyone was delighted that the baby was born healthy. Unfortunately, as a result of the stress at childbirth, Pushpa Kumari lost her sight. Specialists were consulted, including the most renowned eye surgeon in Delhi at that time, a Dr. Kaul of Ganga Ram Hospital, but the prognosis was not good. Following a series of examinations they were told that very little could be done to restore the sight; there was a very slim chance through an operation, but they were not to build any hopes on it.

The joy that the baby's birth had brought changed to gloom and the whole household was filled with sadness. After two miserable months, the faithful mother of the young man could not sit and watch the situation any longer and went to the nearby home of another satsangi, named Sheila Dhir, where weekly Satsangs were held by Kirpal. When she asked if Kirpal could be informed of the misfortune in the family, it was suggested that she attend the coming Satsang and tell Kirpal about it herself.

So, as she sat at Kirpal's feet in the Satsang, her thoughts

* True teacher and teacher of the Truth.

and prayers went out to Him silently, her tears flowing constantly. When the Satsang ended, Sheila Dhir approached the Master with folded hands and told Him what had happened to the woman's daughter-in-law. Calling the woman forward, Kirpal asked her what He could do for her.

She said, 'Maharaj Ji, what can I ask? I cannot even ask You to bless my home for my husband, son and daughter-in-law are all against You. But I know You are God Himself, and that full power flows through You, so do whatever You think is right, but please bring peace into my home.' She again burst into tears.

Kirpal's expression was kind as He smiled into her tear-filled eyes. 'It may be that your family is against me, but I am not against them. Just now I will visit your home and meet your daughter-in-law.'

After the Satsang, Kirpal went straight to the house of the faithful mother. Pushpa Kumari was not much more than a child herself as she sat on a bed, sightless, with the husband and his father standing helpless nearby, their silent dejection speaking volumes for their sorrow.

Kirpal placed a chair near the bed and sat down. He talked to the girl for over half an hour and as He was about to leave Pushpa Kumari began to cry and to plead with Him to help her.

The heart of Kirpal, ever compassionate, was touched by her plea and He put His hand on her head, consoling her and telling her not to worry for God is merciful. He then told her to gaze intently into the dark space between and above her two eyes and not to despair but to have faith in God and whatever His will may be, will happen.

Early on the morning of the next day, Kirpal left Delhi for a fifteen-day tour of Uttar Pradesh. On His return to

Sawan Ashram, a large gathering of followers was waiting for Him, which was not unusual when the Master had been away from the Ashram, even for a few hours.

Among the awaiting devotees was Sheila Dhir, who bowed low before Kirpal with her hands folded. She gazed into His eyes with such an expression of awe and wonder that He laughed and said to her, 'Am I a figure of fright or something, that you look at me like that?' She replied, 'Maharaj Ji, the whole Malik family is here. May they come forward and pay their respects?' The family came forward and settled themselves at Kirpal's feet, and the whole incredible story of what had occurred was told.

After Kirpal's visit to their home, the blind Pushpa Kumari could not forget Kirpal's voice. Three days after His visit, she said suddenly, 'Could someone bring a chair for Maharaj Ji?' Her husband replied at once, 'But there is no one here!' His mother had more understanding and told her son to do as his wife requested. To humor Pushpa Kumari, they brought a chair and placed it beside the bed, but they were all entertaining the same thoughts – that the shock of becoming blind was gradually affecting her mind as well.

For the following two days and nights the blind girl carried on what gave the impression of a conversation with Kirpal, but the others present could hear only her side of the dialogue. She eventually addressed herself to the family members who were anxiously keeping watch over her. 'Maharaj Ji is telling me to open my eyes and look out.' Then after some minutes she added, 'Why, I can see a little light!'

The glimmer of light continued to increase steadily, until to her great joy she could see normally. Her eyesight had fully returned and she was no longer blind.

The mother, father, son, Pushpa Kumari and the rest of their family sat at Kirpal's feet with tears of joy mixed with remorse, begging His forgiveness for their negative attitude and pleading with Him to give Pushpa, Mahesh and other members initiation. Kirpal, always ready to give, was kind and granted them the precious boon. It was yet another example of the lengths to which a Godman will go to draw His children unto Him and set them on the true, straight path back to their Home.

Kirpal did not come to the earth to perform miracles, but the overwhelming force of His love and compassion could burst forth at His will and pleasure, bringing new hope and a fresh lease on life to the afflicted. He knew the contents of each man's heart. As Baba Sawan used to explain, the Satguru sees the makeup of each person, like looking at the contents of a glass jar and knowing if it is "pickle or jam"!

In November 1956, Kirpal was involved in an Indian Government project to hold a UNESCO* conference in New Delhi. To further the success of this conference, exhibitions were planned and constructed to demonstrate the various aspects of culture on the subcontinent. Lectures were included in the program, to expound Indian science and education. These things opened up the whole country to the overseas visitors. The government built two hotels in New Delhi, the Janpath and the Ashok, to accommodate the 2000 or so delegates that were to attend from all over the world, from November 5 to December 5.

At this time, one of UNESCO's aims was to promote and motivate an attitude of peace around the world by encouraging nations to collaborate. This idea of course had a flavor of things close to Kirpal's own heart, in His hopes to

* United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

gather the religious leaders together for a collaboration of faiths. So the Master agreed to speak at the conference and He spoke on the all-important spiritual part of Indian life and heritage.

One of the delegates, a Dr. Kim from South Korea, was intrigued by a pamphlet about this very subject, that he was given at his hotel. The outcome was a visit to Sawan Ashram, where he met Kirpal and enjoyed a long talk with the Master. This led to Dr. Kim's initiation, and he became a delighted new follower, enthusiastically expressing his joy to everyone he met and his gratitude for his good fortune.

Later, when speaking at the UNESCO conference, Dr. Kim told the large audience gathered there about his new path in life: 'I was a Christian, but today I belong to nothing. Today I can say that I have really found my Path.' He explained how he had agreed to follow the Master's advice – to stop eating meat, fish, fowl, etc., to clean his heart and love everyone – even those with enmity toward him. 'If everyone loved everyone, there would be peace in the world,' he said.

'I am South Korean and come from a prominent family with an intellectual background and have been searching for this inner knowledge from a very early age. Now I can declare with great assurance that I have found the inner Path. We have to be true to ourselves, then only will peace descend on earth.'

He pointed out that in the Satguru's speech at the conference, "World Peace in the Atomic Age", His Holiness had again recommended the value of a clean heart without animosity. He was convinced that by following Kirpal's words there could be peace in the world. 'We hear many arguments about peace,' Dr. Kim continued, 'but the question in my mind is: what decision do we make about all the

fighting going on around the world? The answer to this is that everyone should turn their minds inward instead of outward and look within themselves. The atom bomb and other scary methods of destruction would disappear. I have full faith in this and I have myself now taken the first step on this new road to travel.'

The UNESCO Conference in Delhi was a success, and as for Dr. Kim, he returned to his home in South Korea a very happy and determined man.

A sincere yearning for God cannot be hidden from the Master, even though it may be hidden from the world, and His mercy can reach out and touch the soul, whether near or thousands of miles away. Distance is no impediment and a distress signal from an agonized heart can invoke a response within the Godman's own heart and set the great power that He is in motion.

Each child claims His love and grace, though at times it may seem that He is not listening. Every true and faithful follower receives His guidance and protection, unasked for. His true disciples are those who want nothing more than to follow Him and be a part of His spiritual family; obeying His orders and hoping that His love will transform them.

What of those who surround the Satguru, professing their love but wanting only the fruits of this or other worlds: name, fame, fortune, psychic powers. They too receive in abundance, but those with such desires are not given the inner glory.

Kirpal knew the desires and hopes of each one who came to His door, and acted accordingly; none went away empty-handed. But it was the pure in heart that reaped the true reward. Kirpal said many, many times: 'Be pure, like a child.' It was invaluable advice, proven often by the small children

when they sat for meditation and had astounding results after a short fifteen minutes of concentration.

A six-year-old named Veera was the daughter of an initiate, and the mother, vegetarian herself, did not stop her children from eating meat, eggs or fish, although she would not allow these foods to be cooked in the house. However, when visiting relatives, Veera and her brother Deepak ate whatever was given, including meat etc. Veera explained to her mother, 'I do not want to eat it, but when meat is served I cannot resist.' The mother reassured her that she should not force herself to refuse the meat simply because her mother would not eat it, but the child insisted that she really wanted to stop and asked her mother to help her.

The mother knew that some stronger help was needed and told her daughter to 'Go to Maharaj Ji and ask Him what you should do.' When the child took her problem to Kirpal, He said, 'If that is what you want, then just do not eat it!' And the very next time her relatives brought a meat dish to the table she had no difficulty in refusing, for the very sight of it was nauseous to her. From that time on, through Kirpal's grace, she remained a strict vegetarian. She began sitting in meditation and was blessed with experiences to amaze the other sitters.

As her seventh birthday drew nigh, in January 1957, Kirpal left for a pre-scheduled tour of the Bombay area. The season was cold as mother and daughter sat one evening in their home. The girl said suddenly, 'Mummy, do you know what I want for my birthday?' The mother's heart sank, for gifts had already been purchased. Nevertheless, she smiled and asked what it was. 'I want Maharaj Ji to come to my birthday party!' was the reply.

The mother carefully explained that Maharaj Ji was not due to return until ten days after the birthday, that each

place on the tour was allotted a certain number of days and then two days for traveling back to Delhi on the train. But the child persisted in her wish and, at a loss, the mother advised her to tell the Master Himself as she sat thinking of Him in her morning meditation.

At 5 a.m. the next morning, the girl went to her mother's room and awoke her. 'Mummy, wake up! Maharaj Ji says that He will come to my party.' Careful not to dampen the youngster's enthusiasm, the mother said, 'That is good. What else did He say?' The girl shook her head. 'He said nothing else, only that He will come. But He looked so different, so beautiful. His eyes, His face, hands, everything was of light. Even His turban was made of light and I looked at His shoes – they too were made of light.' She paused and was very thoughtful. 'Tell me Mummy, who was the tailor who made Maharaj Ji's clothes*?'

It was very clear that this was not a story the child had made up, for she had described the Master's radiant form in full detail. That same evening, an announcement was made in Sawan Ashram that a telephone message had been received from Bombay, informing everyone that Kirpal had cancelled all onward engagements of the tour and was returning to Delhi.

Arriving in Delhi on the day before the birthday, He kept His promise to a small child and graced her birthday party. A Saint's life is mysterious, and to ordinary human beings His ways are difficult to understand. It would appear on the surface that a child's wish had denied thousands of others the blessing of the Master's presence, through the shortening of His tour, but only He knows the why and wherefore of His actions.