

PART THREE

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

After the 1955 tour in the western countries, Kirpal's life on earth just got busier and busier. His days were filled with the demands of a world struggling to rise above the clutches of maya or illusion.

As His name became more and more known among seekers in India and abroad, so He faced the need to stretch the hours of His day to meet the ever-widening burden of work. From the simplest village farmer to the religious or political leader, from the unknown to the famous, they flocked to His door.

The various sects among the religious sought His attention, advice and uplifting company. The politicians brought their problems to Him – personal or official – knowing they could trust His wisdom and discretion. The followers were always seeking His darshan, just for its spiritual value and for consolation and inspiration – to get them through the difficulties of their lives.

To many of Kirpal's Indian followers, the 1955 Western Tour had seemed like an eternity. Some were able to seek Him out at Sawan Ashram. For others, Kirpal did His best to visit them in the various towns and villages that were fortunate to have a Satsang group already established. The

official work directed from the Ashram had piled up during His absence and required many hours of His attention.

From now on, Kirpal's days would overflow with activity, even more than they ever had before. Now the world would demand more and more from this man who was not just a man, but was: man filled to overflowing with the love of God.

In continuation of the previous chapter's subject, dealing with individual approaches to the Master, the account of a young woman's experiences on the spiritual path will be of interest. Simple and uneducated, her name was Permehswari and she lived with her husband and their two sons.

From early childhood, she had a strong desire to see God and He was never far from her mind - to such an extent that all too often her worldly duties were forgotten. Her husband constantly complained of her lack of interest in both himself and the children, for she spent most of her time quietly sitting in a corner or roaming around in a daze, her attention lost in some world of her own. One day she totally forgot to feed the children and on her husband's return from work he found the boys hungry and crying, with no food in the house for any of them. It was the last straw and he lost his temper, beating Permehswari severely.

This was such a shock to her that in the night she sneaked out of the house and ran away. Less than twenty years old, she had been brought up in a sheltered fashion and had never been out alone at night, but she ran on and on, trying to get as far away from her home as possible. When she ran out of breath, she slowed down to a walk and continued walking for two or three hours until, thoroughly exhausted, she threw herself on the ground, under a bridge, and slept.

Waking at daybreak, she got up and began walking again.

As she was passing a bus stop, a bus drew alongside and several people boarded. Permешвери followed them. No one asked for her fare and she sat there, lost in the remembrance of God. After several hours, the bus reached its destination. All the passengers disembarked except Permешвери, who sat quietly in her seat, lost in her own thoughts.

The driver and the conductor approached her and asked if she was sick, for they had noticed that she had not stirred from her seat the whole journey, not even to take a drink of water at any of the bus stations along the way. She told them, 'No', looking around her, bewildered. She asked them what place they had come to but, thinking she was a little unbalanced, they gave her some money and told her to go and eat something.

At a small roadside café, she had a meal and, on inquiring, discovered that she was in the town of Hardwar. This gave her a joyful feeling, to know she was in the sacred city. Hari-dwar, which means gateway to God, stands on the banks of the Ganga and is a holy place of pilgrimage for all Hindus.

Permешвери was happy, and thought that God Himself had brought her to the famous religious center. The café owner saw something in her manner that was different from most of the people who came to eat his food, and he asked her if she had a place to stay. When he learned she was alone, with no place to go, he was concerned and advised her to be careful for, he warned, holy places harbor many unholy people!

Giving her directions, he sent her to a certain pious and dedicated woman who spent her time helping women and young girls who were lost, destitute or in need of shelter. She lived in a small single room near the banks of the sacred Ganga, and she welcomed Permешвери with kindness and love.

Permehswari relaxed and enjoyed the modest security for a few days, but it soon became clear that her hostess had no money of her own, depending entirely on help from any beneficent source. If there happened to be no food to eat, she just said her prayers, thanked the Lord and went off to sleep!

To solve this very real problem, an interested person advised Permehswari to buy ghee* from a nearby village and take it to the city of Meerut, about ninety miles away, where she could sell it at a higher price. This would create a small income to live on. Supplementing the advice with enough money for the initial purchase of ghee, the kind person also gave her the return bus fare to Meerut.

With this modest business, Permehswari earned enough to keep them both in food, by making four trips in a year to sell the ghee. But life is full of change, and one day the old woman died. Once again, Permehswari was alone. She was young, but frightened and lacking in confidence. Facing the world alone was terrifying to her and in desperation she thought about ending her life. On the day the old woman was cremated at the cremation ground, Permehswari spent the whole of that day there, crying.

When night fell, she was still at the cremation ground, but fortunately had turned to God for consolation and was quietly sitting in His remembrance. As her thoughts reached out to the Lord, she suddenly saw brilliant light, and in that light was a white-clothed figure with a white turban and glowing beard.

The figure smiled at her and told her not to despair. 'Your time has come,' He said, 'and you will be rewarded for your sincere search for God.' The beautiful figure then disappeared.

* Clarified butter.

Permehswari could not move for a long time. She could hardly believe what she had seen and heard, but the face and the eyes of the heavenly being were imprinted in her heart, and she would not be able to forget them. An enveloping calm enwrapped her whole being, as if she was in the comforting lap of her mother. She arose and returned to her room feeling entirely uplifted and very happy.

A few days later, it was time to take the ghee to Meerut. When the bus reached there, she alighted with the rest of the passengers, some of whom were being met and greeted by a man. She heard snatches of their conversation: ' . . . we will go straight to the Satsang ground . . . Maharaj Ji will be there . . . '

Hearing their enthusiastic exchanges, Permehswari felt a strong desire to attend the same Satsang, so she asked if she might accompany them. They readily agreed. When they arrived at the Satsang, Permehswari stood still with amazement. She felt she must be dreaming, for there, seated on the dais and holding the Satsang, was the same person she had seen in her vision at the cremation ground.

It was like a continuation of the dream as she sat and listened to His wonderful words. After the Satsang, some friendly people took her and gave her food and found her a place to sleep. They told her that the very next day Maharaj Ji would be giving initiation on the holy path.

Permehswari, still in her dream-like state, had not uttered a word through all this but the next morning she was among the aspirants who made their way to where the initiation would take place.

Standing in line with the others, she waited to be accepted and, as Kirpal came along, He glanced at her and nodded His approval. Silently she sat through the procedures

and the follow-up talk given by the Master. Kirpal then returned to His temporary quarter for lunch and a short rest before returning to Delhi.

That afternoon, as Kirpal was getting into the car, a man came forward with his hands folded. He asked Kirpal what should be done with the girl who was initiated that morning and was still in deep meditation, out in the open at the place of initiation.

Kirpal told the driver to drive by that spot, and He got out of the car and looked at Permashweri. Turning to the man in charge of the Meerut sangat, He told him to have Permashweri picked up from where she was and placed in a room where she would not be disturbed until she came back to her body herself.

So this was done, and Permashweri continued her meditation for three days. When she finally returned to the body, she quietly picked up her can of ghee that had been kept near her, and made to walk out. The disciples, of course, did not allow her to leave just like that and they served her with loving kindness, giving her food and drink. Her ghee was bought then and there, and they begged her to spend some days with them. But Permashweri smiled and shook her head, and with fond farewells she returned to Hardwar.

Many months later, Kirpal was returning to Delhi by road, after a tour in the Punjab. He remarked that it would be nice to go via Hardwar and sit for a while beside the River Ganga before going on to Delhi.

Hardevi was surprised at this unusual suggestion, and pointed out that Hardwar was a considerable detour off their route, but Kirpal again expressed His wish, so off they went to Hardwar.

The disciples who lived in Hardwar were overjoyed at

their Guru's unexpected visit and ran from house to house or used the telephone to spread the news to all the Hardwar followers. Within half an hour, a small group of devotees had gathered around Kirpal beside the flowing waters of the Ganga. Steadily, the numbers increased until a large gathering had formed. Kirpal went on smiling and greeting each one of them, talking and listening to their problems.

After some considerable time, Kirpal's mood changed to a quiet and thoughtful mode. He then looked around the sea of faces and said, 'Isn't there a woman who lives here, who was initiated in Meerut just a few months ago?'

Everyone looked at each other blankly, until someone spoke up, 'Maharaj Ji, we think she must have left Hardwar, for she hasn't been seen for nearly two months.'

Kirpal grew silent once again. Then He got up and stretched a little, saying that it would be nice to walk around a bit before going back to the cars, and with that He started walking toward the other end of the bank. Of course, everybody followed Him.

They had gone some distance, leaving the busy area far behind, when Kirpal turned to one man and said, 'Didn't Permehswari live somewhere at this end?' The man replied, 'Yes Maharaj Ji, actually we are very near her place', and he pointed to a broken-down row of rooms. As they drew closer, he again pointed - 'That one is Permehswari's, but the door is locked and she has not been seen around for some time.'

Kirpal looked at the door and remarked, 'It is not locked from the outside,' and turning to another man, told him to knock on the door. When there was no response from inside, Kirpal told them to break in the door. Surprise and wonderment registered on the faces of the followers, but they did as Kirpal had instructed. As the door opened, one

man entered the room, but he came out in a hurry, exclaiming, 'There is a woman in there, but she is totally naked!'

On hearing this, Hardevi stepped forward, pushing everyone aside, and went into the room alone. She saw the thin, emaciated form of Permehswari sitting there without any clothing on. Hardevi draped her own shawl around the girl and then asked Kirpal to come in. He went inside, and placing His hand on her head gently, called to her two or three times. The few who had entered the room with Him saw a shivering movement pass through the young woman's thin frame and she opened her eyes. With an unbelieving wonder in them, she said, 'Have You really come?' Kirpal smiled and replied, 'Yes, you called me.'

Permehswari was washed, clothed and fed. She was extremely weak, for it came to light that she had been in deep meditation continuously for forty-eight days, without a break. She was then left in the loving care of some of the ladies of the Hardwar Satsang.

Hardevi remained quiet for a long time, but when they were on their way to Delhi, she said to Kirpal, 'Why is it that You lead us all a dance? Why could You not just tell us that You have to go to Hardwar to save this girl? Why go through these things as if they were coincidence? – as if You happened to be here when she needed help? Maharaj Ji, life would be so much easier if You would just openly do what has to be done, for You are all-knowing and are aware of everything that is happening. You play with us as if we were mere children.'

Kirpal laughed at this outburst and said, 'For one thing, I just go wherever He leads me. For another, if I was what you say, I would not dare to reveal it, for people would start worshipping me instead of God, and only an ignorant fool

would want that. No, I can only do whatever I am told to do.' He then changed the subject.

Kirpal, always the very essence of humility, was never heard to say that He had done this or that, but always gave the credit to Hazur's divine grace – to His Master, Baba Sawan. He was a perfect example always. He taught, by example, how one should acknowledge the higher power for all good actions and happenings in the world. Who He was, in truth, was always kept enshrouded in mystery.

To many people He was just a simple man, full of love and kindness. To the few whose eyes were truly open, He was much more than that. A careful observer could find clues among the small and larger incidents that occurred from time to time, and realize that there was a lot more to Kirpal than was obvious on the face of things. And naturally, those who tapped within, and rose above the superficial expression of life, discovered Kirpal's true nature.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

Each week, the regular Sunday Satsangs were held at Sawan Ashram. If Kirpal was on tour, a recorded Satsang talk was amplified for the gathering. One of the Sunday Satsangs – the “monthly” Satsang – was followed the next day by the initiation procedure, for those desiring to receive the precious gift of Naam.

Apart from the Ashram Satsangs, others were held during the week at private locations in other parts of Delhi. Once again, if the Master was on tour, the people listened to a recorded talk.

One of these locations was a large courtyard between the houses, in Rajender Nagar, about half an hour by car from the Ashram. During one Satsang there, something strange happened. It was around five or six on a beautiful calm and cool evening and Kirpal’s voice filled the air with a healing balm of sweet serenity that stilled the turmoil of the mind.

Everyone’s eyes were on the Master’s face, each heart absorbed in the wisdom of His words. Suddenly, the gentle breeze wafting through the gathering began to increase in force and within seconds had become a strong dusty wind. At each end of the open courtyard, the public streets were visible where pedestrians could be seen, their loose Indian clothing acting like sails, being driven along in

the wind, willy-nilly.

The people sitting in front of Kirpal became restless, were trying to hold on to themselves or each other. A few got up and ran off to find shelter.

Someone shouted 'Look!' and all eyes turned upwards where, in the sky, a terrifying mass of blackness was rapidly approaching. With thoughts of *hurricane* and *tornado* flashing through their minds, many in the Satsang stood up and began pushing each other out of the way in their fright.

Kirpal, who had, up to then, continued His calm address, stopped the talk and asked, 'What is the matter with you all?' A chorus of voices answered Him - 'Maharaj Ji, look!' and they pointed to the approaching menace.

Like a lion, His voice roared out, 'Sit still, what is the matter? Is that thing going to eat you up? Sit down!' He turned His eyes upward, to the gathering darkness which was just about to unleash its fury upon them, and suddenly the wind changed direction and forced the dark mass back from whence it had come. Almost immediately, all was calm and clear, with the sun shining once again. The whole incident had happened within a brief few minutes.

Kirpal calmly continued the Satsang as if nothing had happened, except for remarking that the Negative Power will always try to disrupt the course of souls and their re-union with the Source of All Life.

Only those who were present could see the intensity and severity of the force of nature that had threatened them. Only they knew just how, and from what danger, they had escaped that day, for each one agreed that the mercy of the Guru Power had blessed and protected them.

An interesting occurrence took place when Kirpal visited a tiny village in U.P., where there lived a very small number

of the Master's disciples. It was situated miles away from the nearest small town, and there was no road to link it to the highway.

Conditions of poverty among the villagers were clearly apparent and painful to see, but when Kirpal arrived in their midst their eyes and faces shone with joy.

The small party that accompanied Kirpal on this visit felt humbled and meritless in the face of such a wealth of spiritual strength. The awareness of, and response to, Kirpal's presence shown by these simple villagers could be likened to kings or gods in the company of the Lord Himself. Their very bodies radiated with the love Kirpal had brought and was showering upon them, washing away the images of thin forms and tattered clothing that had first impressed the minds of the visiting city-dwellers from Delhi. Instead, they started to enjoy the delightful company of these intoxicated souls who were sharing their joy and love with everyone.

It was a two-day program: morning and evening Satsangs and initiation very early on the morning of the third day. Kirpal gave clear instructions to Hardevi that they must depart from the village immediately after the initiations. 'We have to leave this village before noon. It is very important that we do so!'

The villagers enjoyed a wonderful day with the Master, who gave His time freely in addition to the scheduled Satsangs.

Before leaving to begin the initiations on the following morning, Kirpal again reminded Hardevi to be sure and get everything packed and loaded on the car, for He wanted to leave as soon as Naam had been given to the aspiring seekers. 'It is essential that we leave before noon,' He emphasized.

Poor Hardevi. It was unthinkable that Kirpal would start the journey without a meal, so she determined that He would have His lunch before leaving. She disregarded His

orders, therefore, and began preparing food. Even when a message was brought from Kirpal to tell her that initiation would be completed in twenty minutes and everything should be ready for departure, she continued directing the luncheon preparations.

When the procedure for connecting the souls to the Living Life Stream was finalized, Kirpal returned and found Hardevi busy in the kitchen. With a stern but resigned look, He asked her if she had forgotten they were to leave before noon.

She gave Him a beautiful smile and said, 'Maharaj Ji, we are not leaving until You have had something to eat.' He saw her concern and love, and the tense look vanished. With a smile, He said, 'Your concern for my physical welfare causes you to forget my wishes. Now, whatever comes, we will have to go through it.'

Hardevi's smile waned when she heard this, knowing that Kirpal's warnings were not given lightly. She pressed Him to explain His cryptic remark, but He merely said that she would soon know all about it.

After lunch, Kirpal sat and talked to the new initiates while the car was being loaded. He seemed to be in no hurry to leave and it was past two p.m. before they started on the return journey.

The car was a new one, belonging to a disciple who had requested that his Guru use it – with the driver – before he and his family. The road was just beaten earth and not much more than a pathway, but the vehicle rode the bumps well and for a while everything went along fine. Then suddenly, the engine gave out – just as if someone had switched it off!

The driver jumped out and opened the hood. He examined various engine parts but could find nothing wrong – everything appeared to be in order. There was gas in the

tank and the battery was alive, but the car would not start. The driver continued checking everything he could think of, until finally he stated that he could not correct the problem. By then it was past five p.m. and they had been stationary for over an hour, during which time nothing and no one had passed them by.

After looking at His watch, Kirpal said that they should all start walking toward the nearest town or village before darkness came, except for the driver, who would stay with the car until some help was sent.

They began to walk the long, dusty road and it was difficult for Hardevi, for she was unaccustomed to long walks. The cook and the other follower also traveling in the car walked behind Kirpal, who was striding out effortlessly. It was a joy for those following Him to watch His feet as He walked, for they appeared to barely touch the ground, and the proximity of His presence gave a sweet intoxication to the excursion.

After some time, they saw a bullock cart approaching from another dirt road at the side. They learned from its driver that the nearest place to catch a bus to the town was four miles ahead, and no settlements or villages on the way. He offered to take them to the bus stop, for he was going on past it to his own village further down the road. Fortunately, he had delivered his load in another village and the cart was empty.

Hardevi welcomed the idea of a ride, and everyone climbed into the wooden cart that had wooden wheels and was pulled by two bullocks. Every time the wheels went over a ridge in the bumpy, dusty road, the cart came down with a crashing thump at which Hardevi cried out to Baba Sawan for mercy. Kirpal would smile hugely at this and make some joking remark which uplifted and

filled their hearts with encouragement and joy, enhancing the strange journey.

When at last they were able to climb down at the bus stop, it was nearing eight p.m. and getting dark. A bus was scheduled to stop there every four hours, but fortunately a bus came along in less than one hour. It was crowded with villagers and their children, with numerous bundles and packages but, after some shuffling, a seat was made for the Master and for Hardevi. The stops and starts continued until ten p.m. that night, when the bus eventually arrived at a small town.

They found that the first train to Delhi was not until evening of the following day, so they decided to catch the early morning bus. But where would they spend the night? There were no hotels, inns or rest houses; so with considerable difficulty they managed to contact Delhi by telephone and were able to get the address of an acquaintance of a satsangi, who lived in the town. By tonga they reached the address and knocked on the door. The family were most surprised to find Kirpal on their doorstep so late at night.

They had heard about the famous Satguru but had never dreamed He would ever visit them. Overjoyed with the event, they quickly brought tea and food to refresh the weary travelers. A bed was made for Kirpal, no doubt gladly given up by a family member, and the others cat napped through the remainder of the night.

Early in the morning, another tonga took them all to the bus – once again overcrowded – which jerked, shook and rattled its six-hour journey to Delhi. When, with much relief, they reached the Ashram, Hardevi, who had not been totally well from the start of the trip, was quite ill. That evening, as she lay resting, she asked Kirpal, 'Can You tell

me, Maharaj Ji, why did we have to go through such difficulties? You knew what was going to happen, didn't You?"

Kirpal replied, 'Yes, that is why I had asked to leave that village by noon, for if we had crossed a certain area before four p.m. everything would have been alright.'

'What was it?' queried Hardevi. Kirpal answered, 'Just some Negative Power trying to show anger for the intrusion in his area.'

Hardevi was not satisfied. 'But Maharaj Ji, You, I know, are God, with all powers at Your command. The other day You just looked at that threatening black tornado during the evening Satsang and made it go back from whence it came and saved everyone from its terrible fury. Why could You not stop this too?'

Kirpal looked at her thoughtfully, then said, 'For one thing, I am not God. As for the other incident – if that tornado had hit the area, it would have damaged many houses and taken lives, but after this little adventure we are all alive and not harmed; just a bit of discomfort, was it not?'

With this, Kirpal picked up one of the files and began to work, thus closing the subject.

Another vehicle, with driver and mechanic, was sent to bring back the stranded car and driver. The mechanic checked over the engine but found nothing wrong. When he tried the starter, to their amazement the engine sprang into life just as new cars are supposed to do.

The whole adventure was yet another case in point that clearly showed how Kirpal had come to the earth for the all-important mission of reuniting the souls back to the Source, having little regard for any pain or physical discomfort He might undergo to do so. Each of His children was special to Him – a special soul who had the birthright to be reunited

with the great Father of All. He would bend over backwards to achieve that goal, knowing how helpless that soul had become, imprisoned in the intricate and unyielding web of the mind.

Some of those souls felt the anguish and pain of the separation from the Lord as they looked into Kirpal's eyes. Others had no inclination to improve their lot by devoting a little time to pursue the Truth, even after receiving the precious inner connection. For their sakes, Kirpal chose His words as if speaking to small children, making everything very simple to understand.

He would use examples from life to illustrate His meanings. When He returned from the 1955 tour, He told the people how huge cities became like children's toys when viewed from an aeroplane thousands of feet in the sky, with mighty rivers appearing like minuscule rivulets; explaining that only as the soul rises into the beyond can the world, with all its insurmountable problems, be seen as inconsequential; that the higher one rises, the closer one gets to the Truth. He would plead to those sitting at His feet to try and grasp how precious was the time in the physical body and how quickly it was ebbing away. From all the thousands who were fortunate to become initiated, very few really desired God for God's sake alone, and the majority could not sever their attraction to the outer and perishable things of the world and all its connections.

To illustrate this very subject, it is appropriate to relate the details of an occurrence that took place in the town of Rohtak, just a few miles from Delhi. Kirpal had visited there, to hold Satsangs, and had blessed a certain satsangi's home by staying there during the program. As was usual under those circumstances, on leaving, Kirpal gave some money to

cover the food He had partaken while staying there.

The hostess said, 'Maharaj Ji, we do not want money, for it is spent and gone so quickly – we want something that will never finish!'

At this, Kirpal laughed and pulled an additional ten rupees from His wallet and gave it to her saying, 'Keep this locked up separately and do not speak of it to anyone, and it will never finish.'

The lady put the ten rupees in a small metal cashbox and carefully locked it, keeping the key in a secret place. A few weeks later, she was in need of money and thought of trying out the cashbox. She opened the box, took out the ten rupees and relocked the box. The next day, she unlocked the cashbox and opened it. There was a ten rupee bill inside! Her heart turned over with excitement, but she knew she could not tell her husband or the children about the secret, for she had been forbidden to speak of it to anyone.

Time went on, and whenever she was in need of some cash she would take out the ten rupees from the box and, without fail, the same amount was mysteriously replenished inside the cashbox. So reliable was this small supply, and so frequently did she make use of it, that she gradually came to take it for granted.

One day the lock broke. She took the box to the locksmith for repair. When she returned to collect the box, the locksmith took a ten rupee bill from his pocket and gave it to her, saying that he had found it inside the cashbox. She took the bill with a smile and told him, 'Oh, this is the ten rupees Maharaj Ji gave me,' and she went on to tell him the whole story.

Taking the box home, she carefully locked the ten rupees inside and put it away. The next time she needed some money, she opened the box to remove the ten rupees, but the

box was empty!

That same day, she asked her husband to take her to Delhi to see the Master. As she sat at Kirpal's feet, she complained to Him that His blessing had "run out". Kirpal laughed and told her, 'It was not the blessing that ran out, but you forgot the blessing and lost it.'

In the course of everyday life, it is easy to get so engrossed in the worldly affairs that spiritual things become secondary and get pushed aside. Many blessings are lost, or not even realized, because the attractions and happenings of the world demand and receive most of a human being's attention, and blessings are accepted without a thought.

Sometimes a disciple complained to Kirpal that He did not love them as much as He used to, and Kirpal would explain that the Master's love does not diminish, but rather it is the receiver who has no time to be receptive to His love and attention, so occupied is he or she with other desires or interests. Those who really long for God above all else find that the gates are open wide.

1957 was a busy year, but what year was not? Kirpal had graciously agreed to visit Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh. This would not be the first visit, for a program had been organized in 1954*.

The local organizers had been given good notice, so had sent the word around the nearby towns and villages. It promised to be a well-attended event. The leading sevadar of the area, a Mr. Sajan Das and other helpers searched around until they found a piece of open ground large enough to hold several thousand people during the Satsangs. It was not totally level, so the ready and willing followers worked

* See p.293.

until it was clear and level. Dhurries were rented and stored away until they needed to spread them on the ground. The sevadars then got together to plan the necessary work.

At 6 a.m. on the morning of Kirpal's arrival, fifty people would gather to start the work of preparing the area: spreading the dhurries, erecting the dais, etc. Some would be given kitchen duty to make the food, and so on. They continued planning until all the work was accounted for, then sat down to meditate. Within a few minutes everyone heard the pitter-pattering of rain falling. Meditation turned to prayers as each and every one reached out to their Guru from the depths of their hearts. *Please, Maharaj Ji, stop the rain, otherwise we are lost!*

It was a troubled night for them all. The rain did not cease but fell heavily and constantly. In the morning, the rain was falling still. Some of the brave ones went to the ground to find out the condition – what a sight! Hardly any dry parts were visible – nothing but puddles, pools and rivulets. They gazed around, dismayed. Obviously, the Negative Power had its own idea and planned to ruin the intentions of the Positive Power, coming in the form of Maharaj Ji.

It rained all day and finally stopped at night. They knew they could not use the chosen ground after such a deluge and made an effort to find another place. The only available and dry areas were not large enough to cope with the thousands of people expected to attend. As they searched, they met with sarcastic humor – 'Who will attend your Sat-sang to get drowned?' The dhurrie renters wanted the mats back, to avoid ruining them. With more laughter, they said, 'These dhurries are not intended for lakes!'

Kirpal was due to arrive the next day. In the night they got together again and, in desperation, everyone began praying to

Kirpal: Maharaj Ji, we are helpless now. It is Your work and we cannot cope – please have mercy on us; please do something; we can do nothing; please give us Your strength and help us, O Emperor. For hours they prayed, but the rain started again and developed into a fierce storm which raged until morning.

That day, Kirpal would arrive. The rain stopped at 10 a.m., but the organizers gathered together and looked at each other. What to do? They agreed that they should view the Satsang ground to see if anything could be done. Up to then, they had not seen the ground since it stopped raining.

When they arrived there, they just stood silently and gazed around, unable to believe their eyes. The whole ground they had levelled and cleaned up was totally dry – just as they had left it after cleaning. It looked as if not a drop of water had touched it! All around, beyond the dry area, was nothing but wet sludge into which one's feet sank with a squelch.

Of course, they jumped and danced and sang with joy. The holy hymns rang out and so did the praise for their Sat-guru and His grace. The dhurries were brought out of storage and spread on the dry, clean ground. The shamianas were put up and the dais erected. Everything was just in time for the arrival of their gracious Guru.

The news of the amazing piece of protected land spread fast. Thousands came to see the phenomenon and then stayed on to hear the words from the Guru who was responsible for having pity on His faithful sevadars. His talks were eagerly absorbed by the raptly-listening thousands. Three Satsangs were held, each with a burgeoning audience, many of whom were spellbound by Kirpal's concept of all men sitting together to learn about the Truth, regardless of caste, race, religion, color or position in life. The Light of God

was in every man and every man could reach Him. The door was open for the sinner and for the righteous, and all could experience Him. Kirpal's love poured out with His words, and His words, simple and to the point, had appeal for the sincere seeker of God.

When the initiation day arrived, hundreds were there to receive the Naam and all had an inner experience; some more, some less, depending on each man's background. Two of these were blind from birth, and when they told of the wondrous Light of God they had seen, they expressed a deep pity for those who could see with physical eyes but had no inner sight. The grace that Kirpal showered upon Pilibhit would be forever remembered.

Masters do not care for the word "miracle". It suggests something other than a natural occurrence, whereas they (the Masters) have the power to control nature and thereby give valuable assistance to their children in a natural, but what would seem to the unenlightened, a "miraculous" way.

The further along the Path the student travels, the greater the ever-expanding view and the ever-awakening consciousness in himself; he, or she, begins to acquire a more realistic understanding of it all.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

‘Man has to rediscover himself for he lives, moves and has his very being in Truth, the Unchangeable Permanence, with three-fold attributes of Love, Light and Life which eternally shine like a lighthouse in the turbulent waters of the world. All this is not only a possibility but actually within the reach of all, and he who can dive deep from the surface of his being to the center of his being embraces the totality of his being and gets at the priceless crest jewel of his soul, finding which nothing else remains to be found, for he who grasps the human in himself understands all mankind. This is one grand truth to which all our efforts are directed and for which the World Fellowship of Religions stands.’

These words are from Kirpal’s message for the Second Regional Conference of the World Fellowship of Religions, held in Tehran on June 10, 1967.

From the day that Hazur had told Him of His proposal for a place where leaders of every religion would sit together to fully understand each other’s faith, Kirpal had kept to the fore of His intentions that which Sawan had clearly advocated. Hence: Ruhani Satsang (the “spiritual gathering” that Hazur spoke of) which now existed as successful reality, based at Sawan Ashram and growing steadily under the loving direction of Kirpal. Men, women and children of any

and every faith were welcome to sit together to learn about spirituality – spirituality pure and simple.

Further to Sawan's wishes, Kirpal continued to promote the concept of a platform where leaders from all religions would commune together, exchange thoughts and understand each other's faiths and beliefs. He found a fellow enthusiast in Muni Sushil Kumar, a prominent leader in the Jain religion, who offered to sponsor an international platform for religious leaders throughout the world – and from there, the World Fellowship of Religions was born.

Before the conference was planned, Kirpal – at the request of the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru – travelled by car or train to dozens of religious leaders to discuss the very dangerous situation facing the government. A number of religious groups were making outrageous demands, threatening to reach a riot stage. The army had been called out, but this only served to enflame the anger of the groups and to make things worse.

As a last resort, Nehru appealed to the Master and Kirpal suggested contacting the religious leaders personally. This had been tried already but they would not face any government official. Consequently, Kirpal Himself had started travelling around to address this problem and, due to the respect in which the leaders held this universal teacher, they welcomed Him and listened to His appeal. His humility and His request for their help to save the situation won them over and, when He told them about the upcoming conference, they agreed to attend and meet together on a common ground and equal footing. After travelling hundreds of miles dealing with this matter, Kirpal finally started working on the plans for the conference.

When the news circled around that Kirpal and Muni Sushil Kumar were planning to get the different religious

leaders together to form a fellowship, most people were sceptical – to say the least – if not scornful. It had never before been attempted and religions were such that gathering together to discuss each other's faith was unheard of – even in one's wildest dreams!

Nevertheless, Muni Sushil was the first to have faith in Kirpal's concept. 'Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj is what He is, and if He wishes and wants this which seems an enormous task, it will become as a child's play and it will succeed.'

The first World Conference was held at the Diwan-i-Aam (Hall of Public Audience) at the Red Fort in Old Delhi, and at Vigyan Bhavan, on November 17 and 18, 1957. Kirpal was elected unanimously the first president and continued to serve in that capacity for many years, presiding over a number of world and regional conferences.

From its inception, Kirpal advanced the principles that the WFR stood for: tolerant acceptance of the existence of faiths other than one's own; loving fellowship with members of other religions; understanding of others' ways of thinking; a recognition of the same truths and similarities that can be found in all faiths; acknowledgment of one Supreme Being, Who is Father to all His children and Who, at the spiritual level, exists in us all, and Who therefore is the One God we all worship; to state a few.

Wherever He went (including two more world and numerous Indian tours), whatever He did, Kirpal worked hard to encourage these basic but potent precepts. He knew His task was difficult, but narrowing the yawning gap between the various religions could do so much to promote friendship, peace and love – all of which in turn would help to draw everyone closer to God.

Kirpal could never forget that first time He felt He must disobey His father, when His father told Him to refrain from having any connection with a certain family which for a long time had kept very controversial relations with Kirpal's family. He had told His father, 'Forgive me, but it is not necessarily so, that your enemies must become my enemies. . .'*

From families to faiths is just a few thoughts away and Kirpal never ceased to regard the whole human race as God's family and therefore each individual His brother or sister.

At the 1957 Conference, the attendance was huge – about 200,000 people, over the two days. In response to the mighty effort of many helping hands, a considerable number of delegates from many religions, in India and from other countries, agreed to take part. If the principle leaders could not attend, many sent their representatives.

The conference and the concept of WFR was enthusiastically welcomed, supported and attended by many Government of India members, including the President, Dr. Rajender Prashad; the Vice-President; Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru; Education Minister Molana Abulkalam Azad; and many other members and officials. The President invited the delegates to Rashtrapathi Bhavan**, a very imposing building in New Delhi.

Kirpal met informally with the delegates a number of times. In a relaxed camaraderie they exchanged views and Kirpal expressed His thoughts in simple words which made a deep impression. The fact that each separate belief, in the end, pointed to the One Truth or the One God (known by different names), became very apparent – as did many other similarities.

* See p.26.

** The President's residence.

All in all, considering the nature of what was being attempted, that first conference was considered to be a great success. Archpriest Rogiski from Russia was delighted with it all. He told President Prashad: 'I have at last met a great spiritual man,' pointing to Kirpal; 'At last I have found the man I have been seeking all my life.'

The change in attitude among the delegates at the end was pronounced. Whereas they had first met in a cool and hesitant but polite atmosphere, after the conference they could be seen at Sawan Ashram, where many were staying, embracing each other and sitting in groups, enjoying deep discussions on the meanings of each other's beliefs.

The many opportunities for informal get-togethers, either with Kirpal or among themselves, had a wonderful effect of bridging wide chasms of distrust and cementing real friendship.

The WFR sponsored four world conferences and there were additional regional conferences. The second world conference was held in Calcutta in July, 1960; the third and fourth in Delhi – in February, 1965 and in February, 1970 at the Ramlila Grounds.

As President, Kirpal spent a lot of His time involved in directing the organization and the preparation of these important events, always with the thought of His mission in life foremost in His mind: to bring the souls closer to God. To whatever activity would further this aim, He gave His time and energy unstintingly.

The partition of India – into India and Pakistan – happened in 1947 and created many difficulties for both Hindu and Muslim, as already explained. The effects of partition were far-reaching, affecting many aspects of life.

Some of Baba Sawan's Muslim followers relocated across

the border in the new country and found that the new freedom in Pakistan did not include freedom of religion. Many Muslims were so staunch in their belief in Islam, to the exclusion of tolerance for any other faith. Some went as far as fanaticism and demonstrated their feelings in various ways.

Among Baba Sawan's satsangis was an elderly man named Nathe Khan, who had made considerable progress on the Path. Instead of using prudence and keeping his thoughts and feelings to himself, he talked around of his great Guru, Sawan, and sat in meditation quite openly.

Hatred between Muslims and Hindus was still running strong and Nathe Khan's cavalier stand for his beliefs and his Sikh Master offended some of the bigoted types, who told him repeatedly to renounce his Guru. His response was always the same – he refused. Friends, family and others advised him to do what they asked, at least outwardly, or he was in danger of losing his life. 'How can I save my life by rejecting the True Life? – how could I face my Master?' Nathe Khan was adamant.

The partisans beat him and tortured him. The old man was frightened and trembled as he faced their vicious onslaught, but the only sound from his feeble voice was 'Sawan, Sawan.' His bravery inflamed their anger and they took him to the flat roof of his house and proceeded to skin his poor broken body. With hardly a breath remaining, they left him for dead and ran off.

Nathe Khan's family and friends, scared to move until the ruffians had gone, gathered up his body, brought him down and carefully laid him on his bed. A weak whisper of 'Sawan, Sawan' came from his battered mouth and they knew he was still alive. They treated his whole body with soothing medicated salve and gently bandaged him up.

They shook their heads at each other, not expecting him to survive, but after several days of nursing he was able to speak to them. 'How did you manage to bear such torture and stay alive?' they asked him. He told them how hard it was at first, but then his Guru Sawan and also Kirpal came and held his hands and smiled at him. 'Then I was smiling at them, in happiness.'

Over a period of years, the strict rules of the governments in Pakistan and India gradually relaxed and they started issuing visas for people to cross the border and visit their relatives. Satsangis in Pakistan, however, were not allowed to visit India, even to see their relatives. The unhappy followers of Sawan wrote to Kirpal: 'We are the forgotten children of Sawan – please come to us!'

Kirpal's loving heart was full of compassion and He wrote to them, promising to come. However, it was two more years before He started on the journey, with Hardevi and four others. On April 20, 1958, Kirpal was met at the border by a group of Sawan's disciples. They had stood for hours in the sun, anxious to be the first ones to greet Him. For an instant they were stunned and overwhelmed when they saw His car. Then they rushed toward Him as He, with open arms, stepped out of the car. The reunion was so emotional, everyone shedding tears – even Kirpal had tears in His eyes. They were so overjoyed to see Him, to be near Him. He embraced them and told them that the happy event was all due to Sawan's grace, and they fell on His feet in gratitude.

In the house where He was to stay, everything was prepared, with a separate kitchen for His food. Everyone knew He would pay for His stay, but they had stocked the place with every delicacy* Lahore could provide and begged Him

* Lahore was famous for its plentiful and omnifarious food markets.

to pay only for what He ate. There was a large group of followers there, many who had come from miles away, and everyone basked in His presence and in the heart to heart conversation, with Sawan's name being mentioned throughout. They were anxious to tell Him about Nathe Khan and his agonizing experience, but the humble man protested strongly. This was ignored and the whole event was told, while Kirpal held Nathe Khan's hand and gazed at him with love. Kirpal's love was such that everyone experienced the impact of it and many felt intoxicated by it. The house was filled with such rejoicing and happiness that the children were bewildered by the unusual atmosphere at first, but also got swept up in the joy.

They gave Kirpal a tour of the city, showing Him the changes that had taken place. When they parked the car outside Kirpal's old residence, He stood looking at the building and a man passing by stopped and stared at Him. Then he came closer and said, 'I cannot believe what I see, but it is You!' He was, it appeared, a great admirer of Kirpal and lived in the same street, and he clasped Kirpal's hands and did not want to leave. Kirpal was recognized in many places in Lahore; all with joy, tears and so much happiness. All accepted Him as their Muslim Pir or Master, as the Muslims had accepted Nanak and other True Masters of the past.

This spontaneous meeting and the ensuing delighted recognition of Kirpal happened also at Kirpal's old place of work, called the Narsingh Das Building. A man ran up to Him with tears flowing: 'Oh, I wanted to see You again before I died, and now You have given me my last desire.' He explained to those accompanying the Satguru that, although not an initiate, he had always waited at the entrance to have a glimpse of Kirpal when He arrived and also as He left in the evening. 'That helped me forget my burdens – as

it now is doing.'

The old Satsang Hall in Ravi Road, where Kirpal – by order of Sawan – had held regular Satsangs, was still called "Dera Baba Sawan Singh" but was now being used as a school for children.

Kirpal gave talks in Urdu in the large hall of the house where He was staying, using the teachings of the Muslim Saints like Maulana Rum*, and passages from the Koran. Initiates and non-initiates alike came to hear Him. When asked what His religion was, Kirpal said, 'That question has been asked of many before me, what can I say? Only that one who has received the Kalma** is beyond the bonds of any religion or fear of not belonging to a religion. As an example, a man who does not sin or break the law, has no need to fear the police. Those who do break laws are very fearful of the police.'

When asked what He thought of Pakistan, He said, 'Pakistan is beautiful. Pak means pure and istan means land: the land of the pure. It will be lived up to when everyone lives a life of purity, and love for all humanity – and everyone helps each other.'

A Maulvi had come very far to see Kirpal. He bowed down to Him, saying, 'For three years I have seen You within, so please now accept me!' Many new people were initiated, but the Maulvi's experience was exceptional.

The visit inevitably came to an end. Kirpal and the rest of the visiting group could feel a strong and sorrowful sympathy for those left behind, who knew not when they would see Him again. However, the Master would make yet three more visits to Pakistan – in 1959, 1962 and 1963.

* Maulana Rum (pronounced "room") (1207 – 1273) – a great Sufi Saint from Persia.

** The Sound Current.

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

Around this period of time, during a Satsang, the Master related an account of a certain incident that Baba Sawan had told in His Satsangs. Pertinent parts of Kirpal's talk were later made into a circular letter in English for the benefit of His English-speaking followers. The incident that Baba Sawan favored was told by Kirpal, as follows:

'The rules and conduct of the Great Souls are very simple and straightforward. Hazur used to tell of a Kazi (Kotwal, or Censor of Morals) in Persia, who by a turn of fortune was compelled to leave his country with his only daughter. On the way, the caravan was attacked by robbers who killed many in the party, and in the looting that followed carried away the daughter of the Kazi with a view to selling her for money. The Kazi, though wounded, escaped with his life, and in a sorry condition reached a town where he began to eke out a bare living. The Governor of the town, on learning that the new arrival was learned in religious law, sent for him and made him the Kazi of the town.

'Time is a great healing force and gradually the memories of friends and relations, of deaths and losses fade away from the memory of a person. He either busies himself in rehabilitation and adjustment to new surroundings, or if touched deeply he turns toward God alongside his worldly

pursuits. The Kazi had had a heart-rending experience and sometimes he would find time in all his multifarious activities for devotion to God in solitude. Thus, several years passed.

'One day a few theologians appeared before the Kazi and complained that Hafiz, a great religious devotee in Persia, was guilty of blasphemy and spoke things against the Koranic injunctions. They asked that he should be tried and sentenced for heresy as he would lead the people astray from the path of rectitude and thereby endanger religion itself. The Kazi, after hearing the complaints, inquired as to what the accused preached, and was informed that he very often repeated a half-couplet which was nothing but un-Islamic. He would say: "Bai mai Sajada rangin kun, garat Pire mughan goeid." (Dye thy prayer carpet in wine should thy Master so ordain.) As the use of wine was an act of sacrilege, a teaching to the effect that the prayer carpet be dyed in wine was nothing but a horrible crime in direct opposition to the religious tenets, and tended to corrupt the morals of the people. The Kazi heard this with grave attention and inquired the address of the devotee. He told them that he would himself go to the man and request him to stop his pernicious teachings.

'The next day after discharging his daily religious duties, the Kazi went alone to the man he had heard of, and after formal salutations he sat before him and said: "O thou respected being, I, thy servant, have received a complaint against thee from people who charge thee with leading others astray from the path of religion. Wouldst thou stop all this?"

'The Fakir replied that he only repeated a half-couplet before each of his visitors, which enjoined them to dye their prayer carpets in wine should a Master so direct. The Kazi

requested him to change or complete the couplet by adding the second half to it so as to clarify the meaning. At this the Fakir directed him to another religious Fakir whose abode was on a hilltop, who in turn told the Kazi that he would complete the couplet if he (the Kazi) would spend the night at a particular prostitute's house.

'This request came as a double-edged shock to the Kazi. He, as the saying goes, ". . . had come with a request for the abstinence from the observance of fasts (Mohammedans observed these to gain religious merit) but was asked to offer prayers as well!" To die the prayer carpet in wine was in itself a sacrilegious thing, but to spend the night in a brothel was intolerable blasphemy. The Kazi was indignant and on the verge of an outbreak of passion, when the thought of all his learning and his respect for the Man of God kept him under restraint. He tried to think of a way out of the strange predicament in which he found himself. He had often heard that the mysterious utterances of holy people are filled with hidden wisdom and that they utter nothing in vain. These thoughts prevented him from taking any hasty action against the man, and he therefore determined to fully investigate the position first.

'Reaching his home he accordingly sent word to the prostitute that he would spend the night in her house. When she received the message she was beside herself with joy at the thought of such a renowned visitor, and that night when the Kazi appeared she presented a young girl for his entertainment. As the Kazi looked towards this girl he saw that she was weeping and asked her what the matter was. Seeing the tears stream down her rosy cheeks, he consolingly told her that he would not lay a finger on her, but asked her instead to relate, without fear, her tale of woe. At these words the girl gathered courage, and after drying her tears she

informed him that she was a poor orphan girl from a noble family. For a long time she had been tended by prostitutes who were this very night using her as a helpless instrument in their nefarious trade. So far, she was spotless and requested the Kazi to spare her the ignominy, and as she concluded her story the tears once again welled in her eyes.

'The Kazi felt very sorry for her and inquired as to how she came to be with the prostitute, and where her original home was so that he could restore her to her parents. The girl then narrated her story in full and told him that when she was eight years of age she had accompanied her father on a caravan journey. The caravan had been waylaid by marauders who had murdered most of the persons, wounded many others, plundered their belongings, and had carried her off and sold her to a prostitute.

'In those days such incidents of people being waylaid and robbed were very common, and the Kazi had himself been such a victim some years earlier. He made up his mind to restore her to her parents and inquired of her place of origin, which strangely enough turned out to be his own home town. When she told him the street and the locality he was very surprised at this remarkable coincidence, but when she gave the name of her father, the Kazi, now beside himself with surprise and joy, drew the girl towards him in loving embrace, for it was his daughter who sat before him. They spent that night in relating to each other their experiences, and the following day they both went to the religious devotee to thank him. The Kazi prostrated himself before the sage and confessed that it was impossible for men of the world to understand the wisdom of the Great Souls. All worldly learning was of no consequence before such men, and it was only by implicitly following the sage's injunctions that he had been able to locate his daughter. He

expressed his utter inability to show his gratitude for the great favor bestowed upon him and asked for future guidance and instruction. Thereupon the devout man directed him to go back to Hafiz and ask him to complete the couplet by adding the second half of it. This Hafiz did: "Ke Salik be khabar na buad. Ze rah-o-rasame manzalha" (As the Master Traveller on the Path is not ignorant of the twists and turns on the Highway.)

'Thus the Kazi established his faith in that good man and from then onward became his disciple. The truth then, is that only a fortunate person can understand the meaning of their [The Masters'] apparently stray and off-hand remarks. Every word uttered by a Saint is pregnant with unalterable truth which lies far beyond the human ken.'

To further illustrate the same principle, there is another account that Kirpal would relate at the Satsang: of a poor man who faces a very real problem when marrying off his daughter. In those days, the cost of providing for dowry, reception, etc. would make or break not only his own reputation and respect, but his daughter's too when she faced her new life and new family members.

His only recourse was to appeal to his Master for advice, and he made his way there. The Master sympathized with his disciple, but having no money to give him at that time, agreed to let him have whatever contributions came to his door within the next few days.

Unfortunately, nothing was forthcoming, and the Master offered the man his own shoes, which could be sold on his way home for at least a small amount.

The disciple accepted the shoes with a heavy heart. How could he meet the costs of his daughter's wedding with a pair of old shoes? He set out to return to his own village.

On the way, he met a long caravan of camels loaded down with what was obviously a wealthy man's property. The wealthy man was leading the caravan and, as the poor man approached him, he was aware of a strong fragrance of his Master. The closer the poor man came, the stronger was the fragrance. As the man passed him and started to recede into the distance, the wealthy traveler impetuously called out to him.

The poor disciple, his heart still aching with disappointment and worry, turned and approached the caravan. 'What do you wish, Sir?' he asked, to which the wealthy one replied, 'Tell me, where are you from?' The disciple told him the name of his village to which he was returning after asking his Master for help with the wedding. He pointed out to the sympathetic listener that the Master had given only shoes, which he could sell for very little money.

'Will you let me buy them? I will give you most of the contents of my caravan, which are worth a considerable sum!'

The wealthy man was overjoyed to receive the blessing from his beloved Master and the poor man was so thankful to gain the means of solving all his problems which he never dreamed could be achieved with an old pair of shoes!

Each man went on his way – the poor man to his home, and the rich man to his Master. When he showed him the shoes, the Master asked how much he had paid for them. On being told that he had exchanged almost all of his valuable caravan for the shoes, the Master said, 'You got them very cheap!'

He was indicating that blessings from a True Master cannot be evaluated in terms of worldly wealth.

For the poor man it was a lesson in faith, for Masters have strange ways of working, and even when the disciple does not understand his Master's words or actions,

he should have faith that the disciples' welfare is always foremost in the Master's heart.

Kirpal used many methods in reaching out to those in need. The need was not always financial. There were those who had various burdens of misdeeds weighing upon them – some greater, some lesser. Having been found out, there was no forgiveness from their fellow men, or from the law which accused them. But Kirpal's compassion and forgiveness was of a higher law than man's.

Over the years, the Master extended His loving help to many, even those who were termed felons – sometimes to the extent of saving them from time in prison (by lack of evidence, for example). There were those whose lives completely turned around for good and they became worthy citizens.

Some who were in prison for their deeds heard about Kirpal and began to study His teachings, ending up as model prisoners, spreading the words and teachings of the Masters to their fellow inmates and even to some of the prison guards. Many such instances ended in initiation and an exemplary way of life. The Master's love and compassion was for everyone – not just the righteous. Kirpal always strived for change in human beings, knowing that in each and every person there is always room for improvement.

There were two friends who had not seen each other for a number of years. One had the good fortune to find the Master and was initiated. The other married a doctor of medicine. Her husband was desperate for them to have a child, believing that if he died without children he would not get salvation.

Unfortunately, the efforts of the couple to have a child

were unsuccessful. The husband arranged interviews with several specialists, resulting in as many as four internal surgery cures, which also were unsuccessful. The surgeons advised that the girl should have no more operations or they could be fatal, but her husband was adamant that the surgery should continue.

In fear of her life, Kalyani, the young wife, wrote to her friend, a follower of Kirpal, explaining her fears and expressing the desire to meet her before the forthcoming surgery, because if she had to die she wished to see her old companion once more.

The friend was about to accompany the Master on a tour of the Bombay area and wrote to Kalyani, giving her the itinerary of the tour and instructions to meet her in the town that was nearest. Kalyani was delighted and replied at once, giving information of her intention to meet her friend at a certain town. Looking out for Kalyani, the friend watched the allotted three days in that city go by, but Kalyani did not come. When Kirpal and His party were ready to leave for the train station, she requested to spend a few more minutes waiting for Kalyani, just in case. As she was finally about to leave, a taxicab drove up and Kalyani jumped out. Full of apologies and in tears, she threw herself at her friend, who begged her to control herself for they now had to rush to the train station before Kirpal left, for it was imperative that Kalyani meet Him.

With instructions to the driver to drive as fast as possible, the two girls were taken to the station. A huge crowd of followers was on the platform, endeavoring to have the last few moments with the Master. They made their way through the thickest part to Kirpal's compartment, and the disciple pushed Kalyani forward, at the same time telling the Master that her husband wanted Kalyani to have an

operation but she was terrified.

Hardevi wanted to know where the follower had been, for the train was due to leave in two minutes, but Kirpal raised His hand for quiet, and with love told Kalyani to sit on the seat opposite Him. He asked her what she wanted and she told Him she was unhappy and very tired of life and just wanted peace.

Kirpal told Kalyani to close her eyes and keep them closed until told to open them. She closed her eyes and about forty minutes later He asked her to open them. She gazed at Kirpal with deep wonder. She said, 'There was so much Light – and You were there – You gave me so much love and there was a great peace.'

She bent down and touched His feet in respect. Kirpal smiled at her and patted her head. He told her that she can now go in peace and she would never be alone.

The two friends left the compartment and bade farewell to each other. Kalyani said, 'How can I ever thank you for taking me to the Greatest Satguru? Now I am not afraid of anything, for I know He will always be with me; I am no longer alone and my heart is full of peace and happiness.'

The whole event was another example of the Master's abundant love and grace. Kalyani's friend had witnessed many like instances of Kirpal's generosity but it was always a staggering experience. Those who came to Him like children with simple but sincere hearts were always blessed so abundantly.

The train, it seemed, had a "problem" which took over an hour to fix and was therefore delayed for that much time. Kalyani died within a month – after an operation.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

In February 1959, a regional conference of the World Fellowship of Religions (Vishev Dharam Samelan) was held in Kanpur*, U.P. As President, Kirpal had to attend, as did the Sponsor, Muni Sushil Kumar. The Master traveled by car but Muni Sushil had to walk, due to the strict rules of the Jain religion, so he started several days earlier with some of his followers.

About 50,000 people attended the first open session. At the close of the meeting, the organizers led Kirpal to an elephant and requested that He ride in the gold and silver howdah** which was positioned on the elephant's back and decorated with flowers and bells. Thousands of people, nearly all those attending the meeting, joined the procession - some going ahead, strewing flowers on the road, while others followed, all chanting 'Sant Kirpal Singh Ji ki jai,'*** until they reached the town. From there, Kirpal was taken street by street, to bless and purify the city.

The Kanpur program covered two days of Satsangs and interviews and one day for the initiation of 300 people.

* NE of Delhi, about 275 km or 172 mi, by road. (Called Cawnpore when the British were in India).

** Litter, with seats and canopy.

*** Hail to Sant Kirpal Singh Ji.

India possesses a very comprehensive collection of historical records from the past, including accounts of the lives of the past great Masters. Many of these, although familiar names among the Indian population, are not so familiar to the people living in the western hemisphere.

Visitors to the great subcontinent often browse through the bookstores of New and Old Delhi, finding books with interesting "stories" of mystics from the past, many of which are sceptically regarded as mythological – parables, perhaps? Even the most learned historian with an abundance of intellectual knowledge would – with deference – most of the time be unable to divine the truly great Masters from among the wealth of information. Most of the great ones advise us that only a Master can really know a Master. "It takes One to know One".

Fortunately, Kirpal sometimes included incidents from past Masters' lives in His talks. What could be more reliable than what the Master Himself is relating? In each narrative there was a valuable lesson.

During one Satsang talk, given on April second, 1959, Kirpal told about Hazrat Ibrahim – not an easily recognizable name in the West. The following is a translation of Kirpal's words, including His introductory remarks on the subject of True Masters and how rarely they are recognized and appreciated.

'When Masters come [to the world], they come out of love and pity; for the lost and for those who are truly seeking the Truth.

'However, those who are enwrapped in selfish gain in the name of religion are filled with fear and greed. They will not welcome the advent of a True Master for fear of losing their livelihood if the facts were disclosed to their followers.

'This pathetic state of fear – along with arrogance, self-image and false ideas of security – incites an urge to work against the true Sons of God with propaganda and lies, and the ambassadors of God Himself are persecuted and insulted.

'What do they do in return for all that? I will tell you about Hazrat Ibrahim, who one day was crossing a river in a boat. Also, in this boat, was a rich man and his entourage. The rich man's party, seeing Hazrat Ibrahim sitting quietly aloof from everyone, in his simple clothes, began to deride and abuse him.

'Ibrahim ignored them, closing his eyes in meditation. God appeared to him and said, "Ibrahim, I cannot bear these insults that they are showering upon you. If you give me permission, I will drown all these offenders."

'Ibrahim replied, "But they are poor men [poor in God knowledge], they do not know what they are doing. You are so generous, why not open their eyes?"

'His prayer was answered and the very people who had insulted him fell at Ibrahim's feet and asked forgiveness.

'This illustrates how Masters regard life's incidents. When insulted, they just pity and forgive. I was talking about life and I want to stress how fortunate are those who have a True Master.'

During 1959, a program was made for Kirpal to visit Kashmir. A satsangi who lived near Pathankot, which is on the same route, begged Kirpal to spend a night at his home and the Master agreed. His arrival at the follower's home was greeted with tears of joy among the small group which included the satsangi, his family, and about a dozen others. Everyone enjoyed a beautiful Satsang.

The next day, initiation was held for those who sought

the Truth, and afterwards Kirpal and His party would continue on the journey after everyone had been fed. They were about to sit down to the meal when a large group of about 150 people arrived, saying that they had come for the Guru's darshan and to have food.

The host started to panic. He ran to Kirpal and said, 'Maharaj Ji, what shall I do? This new crowd is demanding food and we had only prepared for a few – how can we now feed two hundred?' Kirpal looked at him and became thoughtful. Then, He told the host not to worry but to leave everything in the hands of Data.

Kirpal went straight to the kitchen and arranged for a drape to be fixed across the kitchen doorway. He then selected a reliable satsangi sevadar and told him to half-cover the basket of rotis and half-cover the pot of cooked vegetables with towels. Then He instructed him to not expose the covered food nor to look under the covers, but baskets and containers would be passed to him from the other side of the drape and he was to go on filling them from the covered ones.

So, following the Master's orders, the baskets and containers were filled again and again and the food served from them was so delicious that the people ate until they could eat no more – as if they had not eaten for days.

After everyone was satisfied, the man who was guarding the covered basket and pot took away the covers and was amazed to find the vessels as full as when they had started – just as if no one had eaten.

A man arose from the large group of guests, approached Kirpal and threw himself at the Master's feet. He said, 'Please forgive us, we did not realize we were doing wrong – some of us were told by a religious leader to expose you as a charlatan; to test you by gathering all these starving poor

and beggars together and come here to demand food just when your small group sat down to eat. We knew that the food would not be enough for everyone, and now we know what a terrible mistake we made and insulted your greatness. Please forgive us!'

Kirpal forgave them and went on His way to Kashmir, leaving a large group of wonder-struck people.

When the second World Fellowship of Religions Conference was organized for February 2, 1960, Calcutta was chosen as the venue.

Kirpal had been re-elected President and had planned to attend, along with Muni Sushil Kumar, the sponsor. However, in June Kirpal got seriously ill and the doctors advised against traveling to Calcutta, adding that He should have total rest. Due to this problem, a special meeting was held wherein Kirpal nominated Muni Sushil as President, to take over that office. But Muni Sushil refused, explaining that Kirpal was known world-wide, respected by all religious leaders; the success of WFR was due to Him and the Calcutta Conference would be a failure without Him there, presiding.

He pleaded with Kirpal to go and promised the doctors that he himself would ensure that Kirpal would not attend the meetings but would only rest, and be available for consultation or advice, if it was required.

So two doctors and other attendants accompanied the Master and to keep Muni's promise, the Master lay on a bed in a room adjoining the conference hall, close to the open ground being used for some of the open gatherings.

The leaders debated each item on the agenda, including terminology and the meanings of various words applied by the different faiths. Everything went along smoothly, including consultation with Kirpal whenever necessary

- except for the last day!

The final resolution was due to be passed, whereby all the different religious heads were to agree to each item and sign the resolution. Without everyone agreeing on each point as it had been discussed, the document could not be passed.

The problem went on all day until late that night when the Jain Muni came to Kirpal's bedside, saying 'I feel we have failed this time and the resolution will not be passed because one religious leader of the Buddhist faith declares that they do not accept God as such but believe in good deeds, so the word "God" should not be in the resolution. The whole day has been spent in heated arguments, almost resorting to fights, but we just cannot convince them. What shall we do? You are our only hope so please come to the meeting in the morning and solve the problem, otherwise the whole conference will end in failure.'

The attending doctors were totally against Kirpal leaving His bed: they had sat beside Him constantly with care and anxiety. Suddenly, they were filled with amazement. Kirpal's face had a radiant, healthy glow – so radiant they thought His temperature had gone even higher. One doctor felt His pulse and rose with a beaming smile, saying that Maharaj Ji was no longer sick but appeared to be in perfect health.

This was not the first time Kirpal had risen from sick-bed with all afflictions mysteriously vanished, to attend to some urgent work. (The afflictions usually would reappear when the work was completed.)

So Kirpal greeted the delegates with an apology and asked them to forgive Him for not attending the meetings. He said, 'We all have a lot to learn from each other; being together and talking will reveal many things of which we

were, until now, ignorant/ He turned to the Guru who was so adamant that there was no God and smiled. He asked the leader if he believed in Mahatma Buddha? The man was astonished and opening his eyes wide, he said, 'Of course we do!' Kirpal continued, 'Mahatma Buddha has said, "Self shall find refuge in the Self" so the other Self mentioned can be nothing else but the Overself.

'Our Self is enthused with the other Self, which sustains us; without that link we could not live. It seems an enigma that we find it so difficult to realize that Self of our Self. Why is it so difficult? Because only the Self or soul can experience the union. It cannot be done by the senses, or the mind (intellect), or the pranas*.

'Until the soul liberates itself from the five deadly bonds, which are: taste, pranas, mind, intellect and enjoyment, it is unable to experience that. One has to rise above these barriers, even to get a glimpse of the Overself: so to realize that Overself is difficult, but not impossible. In all certainty, there is an Overself, which you agree with because that is your religious philosophy. That Overself has been named by many different names: God, etc. etc.'

With much love and kindness, Kirpal helped him to understand the theory of spirituality in simple words, clear and to the point, that the Overself he was willing to accept is called God by some people, among other names. The Buddhist leader smiled and nodded his agreement. The resolution was passed and everyone agreed that the conference was a great success.

Kirpal went on to say that it was so important for all religious leaders to work shoulder to shoulder, through which love for each other will develop and understanding of the true meaning in each other's religion will be established.

* Vital airs.

'That is basically the same,' He pointed out. 'To love one another and to realize God. There are many different religions, but the goal is the same – to reach and realize the Truth overhead.'

The 60,000 and more who attended the open sessions found great interest in hearing the different delegates disclose and discuss their beliefs and the meanings behind their faiths. More than 260 of these delegates attended, from parts of Asia, from a number of Western countries and from all over India. They all considered the effort put into the Conference well worthwhile.

After this WFR Conference, the Ashram returned to its usual routine and Kirpal continued with His usual busy days, which were filled from morning to night. There was no rest for Him between events, because the work was expanding incessantly. On certain occasions He traveled to Dehra Dun and spent some time staying at the Rajpur bungalow. The Dehra Dun area program was lighter than that of Delhi; but Kirpal took the opportunity to work on the files and other administrative paperwork or to write His books, which were always in demand and needed a quieter atmosphere than the busy Ashram.

The initiates in the western countries kept up frequent requests for the Master to visit the western world again. This had started almost as soon as He had returned to India after the 1955 tour. Kirpal told them repeatedly that He would do His best to go there as soon as possible. Up to that time, very few people from the west had spent time at the Ashram in India. They had not seen for themselves how full Kirpal's days were and how much demand was made on His time. But, as the years went by, Kirpal was well aware of the pull from the west and the yearning of His children there. Those

who had met Him in 1955 longed to see Him again, and the new ones who had never met Him were anxious for a glimpse of His glowing countenance and a glance from His eyes so overflowing with love, that they had heard about from others.

The Calcutta conference was held very close to the Master's birthday on February six. Kirpal's idea of celebrating a birthday was always the same – to use the day in furthering one's ambition. For a satsangi, that meant one's spiritual ambition. He always advocated that His children should spend His birthday in meditation; or, in the case of those who could be near Him physically on that day, to be present at the Satsang.

In His 1960 Birthday Message, He included this advice:

'... Birthdays are but arbitrary milestones of life's journey on earth but they do serve a very useful purpose, all the same. As one crosses each division of time and steps into the other, he is reminded of a stage left behind and finds himself a step nearer to the journey's end. Each birthday, therefore, offers a splendid opportunity to the traveler to know where he stands, how he has fared on the path of life, what progress he has made and what he intends to do next with new hopes, new aspirations and new resolutions for the new year that lies ahead of him. It is an occasion for taking a comprehensive view of the stock-in-life gathered already to be garnered thereafter and it can as such be profitably made use of to the best advantage.'

'On a day like this, I can only ask you, who have been put on the Path Godwards, to turn within and see, each one for himself or herself, as to the measure of advance made in the spiritual field. Blessed indeed are those who have done so and to them my message is that they should persevere

in full faith and confidence in the Master-Power overhead, and work hard to regain all the inheritance which is theirs and of which they have a foretaste. To those who are yet standing still for one reason or another, I would commend some sort of active striving with a will and a purpose. After all, each one has to make an experiment on his own and no one can vicariously do it for another. Again, there is no ill without a remedy and this sovereign and potent remedy is to be applied, whether we will it or not, by oneself if we desire a cure or else the disease of ignorance shall continue to persist and persist endlessly as it has done through ages upon ages.

‘Last but not least, the door of Salvation is open to all. It is not a prerogative for any one sect, caste or creed or even a religious order. Whosoever may run, can reach it. “Knock and it shall be opened unto thee” has been the message of saints and seers since the beginning of time. God is the God of all mankind and His Grace shines equally on all, but they alone who turn toward Him derive the greatest benefit. “Love” is the master key that unlocks the door leading to the Kingdom of Light. “Love and all things shall be added unto thee” is an axiomatic truth that has stood the test of time. It is, therefore, said – “Love God with all thy mind, with all thy heart, with all thy strength and with all thy soul.”*

‘My message today is none other than that of Love. Learn ye, therefore, to love all creatures as yourself. Live in and for the love of all and the Lord of Love shall reward you manifold in return for the sake of His own Divine Love. That is His Law, eternal and immutable. Try to cultivate a loving and a living faith in His Goodness and nothing shall stand in your way on the Path . . .’

* Mark 12:30.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

The Bhandara for Baba Sawan's Birth Anniversary was held in the Ashram for three days, beginning July 26, 1960.

In addition to His talk on that day, Kirpal chose to give what appeared to be a very personal message to all His children. That message was also made into a circular letter to go to all His English-speaking followers, as well as those who used other languages, which could be achieved by translating from the English – to German, Spanish, French, etc. This special message was as follows:

'I take this opportunity to address all of you over the microphone, and convey my love and best wishes for your spiritual progress. The sublime message which you have had the privilege to hear does not warrant more elucidation, yet I wish to speak further on this auspicious day – the Birth Anniversary of my Beloved Master Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj.

'The Sacred Forum of Ruhani Satsang was approved by Hazur and under His explicit orders it came into existence some fourteen years ago. It is through His Grace that the Gospel of Truth and Love has been carried to all corners of the world; and in practically all the countries of the world, its branches have been set up, and people at large have been blessed with the rare gift of Holy Naam – the Word, or the

Audible Life Stream.

'Those who have had the good fortune to come under the competent protection of the living Master have been granted the sacred boon of Holy Initiation into the Mysteries of the Beyond, and are progressing on the way back to God.

'From the sacred literature which has been released and published, you now have the sacred theory that is so simple and easy, requiring no austere obligations; but the practical aspect of the subject demands some action, namely: implicit obedience to the Holy Commandments, embracing cardinal virtues, strict observance of the dietary regulations, vigilance over the day-to-day deeds, cautious approach to the thought pattern, and regular devotion of time to the Holy Meditations in an accurate way. Moreover, all efforts helpful in the achievement of this sublime goal are to be honored and assimilated.

'The Holy Seed of Initiation is the check drawn in your favor and implanted in the soul, fructifying rapidly if the aforesaid virtues are pursued vigorously. Just as a check can be cashed at the counter, similarly the celestial manifestations of Divinity can be had at the eye focus, which you can reach safely under the protective guidance of the Living Master and for which you have a passport in the form of sacred charged Names. These Names carry the Life Impulse and, as such, are potent enough to grant you inversion into the realm of bliss and harmony. Their accurate use, coupled with deep faith and implicit obedience, bears much fruit. You should know it for certain that the Gracious Master Power is the constant and nearest companion of the child-disciple, and any time one turns his or her face toward Him, all gracious help and guidance flow in abundance. Just as a poor man who calls every day faithfully at the door of a rich person is sure to be blessed with alms, similarly that

Emperor of Emperors is waiting patiently for you all within, to greet you and escort you on to the true home of your Father. He is more eager than you, and the sweet heavenly melodies invite you to accompany Him within for sharing the utter bliss and divine intoxication.

'This is a subject of the heart and not of the head. Reasoning is the help and reasoning the bar. When you have arrived at certain conclusions and have been blessed with the boon of right understanding that this present earth life is a passing phase in the long journey of the soul from the lower categories of creation up to its origin, then hie onward lovingly and faithfully. Know for certain that you, while here in this world, living among mortals, are commissioned with the divine blessing of proceeding back to your true home. Soul in its present state is so enmeshed by the environment of mind and matter that it is difficult to talk of its proceeding homeward, for it has forgotten its true home. The holy meditations, when undertaken accurately and regularly, bless you with the right understanding of striving for the inner journey, and your conviction of the sacred truths is strengthened. Time factor is essential and, as such, much patience and perseverance are required.

'You sow a seed in the soil. Let it remain hidden within the earth and construct a strong hedge around it and strive for its regular watering and weeding in every possible way. To fall into sin is human but to remain therein is devilish. Never mind about your past, howsoever gloomy or unhappy it has been, because the gracious Master Power has blessed you with the climax of divine mercy when you were privileged to be led to the living Master and accepted by Him. Let the waters of repentance wash away the dross and impurity of heart, and strive for the better mode of living by complete dedication of heart and soul. The Light of God is

ahead within and the heavenly melody is inviting you to let it escort you to His holy feet.

'I recall a beautiful episode of my Master, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji, when once, during His lifetime, we were celebrating His birthday. Illuminating stanzas were composed and sung in appreciation of Him and there was invocation for His gracious mercy. He was impressed by the devoted humility of the congregation and spoke with emotion, "Look here, when you scale me with the Lord Providence or Almighty, I do not accept it. Let us for the sake of argument take what you say to be true. Then if you adore me like the highest saint gracing the earth and representing the Father, just keep my commandments and you will be benefitted and my mission will be successful." With the same thought I repeat and exhort with firmness that I count myself as His humble servant and call upon you dear ones to be firmly and humbly devoted to your holy meditations, thereby making your life sublime.

'You should become a source of help and inspiration to your less-gifted brethren who may better their lots by following your example. Please note: an ounce of practice is better than tons of theory. The world is fed up with preaching and child humanity is looking urgently for life and light. You can be the harbingers of peace and prosperity by living a life as enjoined by the Master. One developed soul will be helpful for many others. Spirituality cannot be taught, it must be caught like an infection which is passed on to others who are receptive.

'Satsang is the central theme of the sacred teachings and I always impress upon the dear ones here and abroad not to miss it, as it is during these precious moments when you are near the fountainhead of bliss and immortality, that you grasp the true import of the teachings and assimilate the

rare virtues of godliness, by sitting in the charged atmosphere which is filled with His loving life-impulses. Satsang is the sacred arena where spiritual stalwarts are built. It is the pool of nectar which grants blissful God-intoxication and all differences of caste, creed, or country sink down to their lowest ebb. We are all brothers and sisters in God and should attain this divine virtue of common brotherhood of man and Fatherhood of God. Love one another faithfully and devotedly so that others may know and see for themselves that you belong to the living Master. Remember, actions speak more clearly than eloquent words spoken under emotional impulses. Just live like a fragrant flower which blooms in a forest and fills the atmosphere with its rich fragrance. You should know it for certain that you are divine in all respects and are the master of your destiny which is full of higher potentialities. You are simply to make exertion to change for the better, and firmly stick to your resolutions. All else is to follow of itself, as the gracious Master Power is at your side to extend all feasible help, grace and protection.

'How to catch the gracious Master Power is a question which many of you would like to solve. It is so simple yet hard to be assimilated all at once. It is the self which stands in the way. You are not confined to body or its limitations. You are not the intellect or mind, yet you possess all these for some higher purpose. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"*. For that, you are to purify your body, mind and intellect by redeeming them from the dirt and dross of senses, while withdrawing yourself temporarily during your meditations by attuning to the Holy Naam, which gradually will manifest to you in all effulgence and glory. Just relax, and still more completely relax, and invoke

* Matthew 5:8.

His mercy by complete surrender and resignation to His will and His pleasure to grant and bless you with whatever He deems fit. Please note that you are not to guide but to follow. He who follows is escorted and led to the Supreme. The cup which is under the chalice is filled with the divine nectar. Hence, the rare virtue of reverential humility is an essential asset for the child-disciple, who should always remain wide awake and conscious of the ever-present grace being extended to him or her in ever-increasing measure. The gracious Master Power is ever with you. Nay, it is the very enlivening principle which is giving you life here and hereafter. Just catch hold of it and follow it implicitly, eliminating your ego and vanity, dropping them as outworn pieces of cloth. Please do not strain but await with patience and firmness.

'Love knows service and sacrifice and is considered the ennobling virtue for the assimilation of sacred teachings. As said above, unless the polluted mind and intellect are bereft of their sediment and dross, they fail to assimilate the higher truths. A vicious person shuns the holy company of the saints whereas a person blessed with the boon of humility rushes to the Master. The very physical body is blessed when one sits in the Satsang. Such a person knows how to still the body and mind by sweetly looking into the lustrous eyes and forehead of the Master, or the feeling of His auspicious presence. The heart is filled with the pious virtues of receptivity, humility, piety, and chastity. You learn the technique of invoking His mercy by humble prayer and supplication.

'Service is considered an ornament to a beautiful person that adorns and elevates his or her soul to become a clean vessel for His grace. Service of any type granted at the holy feet of the Master is beneficial and should be cherished as

whatever one does must bring its fruit, in accordance with the law of karma. The secret of selfless service is to deny the reward or recognition of any type and, on the contrary, consider one's self as an humble instrument in the divine hands which are the sustainers and protectors of all. All credit goes to the Master, yet the media of love are blessed with the superb divine intoxication which is of supreme magnitude.'

Masters have always stressed the importance of having humility; not by acting and posing, but rather as a part of one's human nature. Those ruled by the ego and lacking in humility should work on this problem and gradually become more humble in nature, was Kirpal's recommendation.

Kirpal's personality expressed His innate humility in many ways, clearly apparent to any person interested enough to take note of the example. The average man's innate and Godlike nature lies hidden, due to the overpowering strength of the ego; but the Master has explained how that nature can blossom forth through contact with the Naam, and with self-introspection.

The "monthly" Satsangs in Delhi were always well-attended by thousands and the hustle/bustle of the preparations created a non-stop busyness.

During one of these busy times of preparation, with followers from all over India filling the Ashram and zealous individuals vying with each other for seating places close to the dais etc., Kirpal walked quietly through the Ashram gates, waving aside the sevadars there, who would have followed Him.

Crossing the bridge outside the gates, He started strolling along the residential street which approached the Ashram. A small group of men stopped Him and asked, 'Is it

true that a great spiritual Mahatma lives in this Ashram?' Kirpal replied that it was indeed an ashram but He knew of no great Mahatma living there – 'Only people like you and me.'

They looked at each other and one said, 'He doesn't know anything' and they walked on. At the gate they asked the same question of the sevadars, who told them with smiles on their faces that they had overheard the previous conversation and the newcomers had indeed been speaking to the great Mahatma!

It is hard for a seeker to get a True Master to acknowledge what He is. It is something that each must discover for himself or herself. This great depth of humility, which is part of a Perfect Master's nature, often opens the floodgates of love – the very essence of His nature.

Just how much Kirpal loved His Master Baba Sawan and how much Sawan loved Kirpal is too difficult to define. One can only feel in one's heart that it was a very special kind of love on the part of both Masters.

Sometime around the early nineteen thirties, Kirpal, Hardevi and Raja Ram were in the Dera at Beas, visiting Hazur Baba Sawan, who gave them all prasad. Kirpal thought He would meditate first and then have some prasad. Putting the prasad in a paper bag under His pillow, He sat down to meditate.

On arising after meditation, he saw a dog snatch the bag and run out of the room. Kirpal shouted at the dog and ran after him. Several others saw this and joined in the chase. Hardevi also ran, but was not an athletic person and fell back to the rear. She suddenly saw that the prasad had fallen out of the bag piece by piece, as the dog ran, and she gathered the precious pieces one by one and carefully collected it all in her dupatta*. It had acquired quite a bit of mud in the process

* A light head covering.

and she carefully dusted it off. After some time, Kirpal returned. He was carrying the empty bag and looking extremely crestfallen. Hardevi said nothing about retrieving the prasad.

When Kirpal visited Hardevi and Raja Ram a few days later, He was still very unhappy over losing His prasad, and Hardevi quietly gave it to Him.

Later, when she went to see Baba Sawan, she told Him about the incident of the dog and Kirpal's prasad. When Sawan heard how Kirpal had run after the dog, He became very pained and concerned, saying, 'Oh, he should not have run like that. He should not have run so much. I would have given him more prasad. He could have had as much as he wanted!' When Hardevi saw the intense pain on the Master's face, she said no more.

On September 2, 1962, a rather unusual happening took place in the grounds of Sawan Ashram. Since Ruhani Satsang's inception, the Ashram had been a milieu for spiritual and related learning only, and not for secular events. So this particular occurrence was indeed unusual.

Kirpal's attitude to worldly acclaim, kudos and decorations, etc. was a polite but sincere deference to those who had earned legitimate honor in respectable fields, but He would never accept praise of any kind directed toward Himself. When such attempt was made, He always passed the commendations on to His Guru, Baba Sawan. If someone attempted even to garland the Master, the individual usually ended up with the garland around his own neck!

It is surprising, therefore, to find Kirpal about to receive an honor from a world-renowned source: the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights of Malta. He refused when the Golden Star of this order was offered, saying that He had

not come to the world for worldly recognition of any kind, but to help people to realize God – the only thing worthwhile – whereas worldly greatness is enmeshing to a seeker of Truth. 'From the depth of my heart, I have no liking for these things.'

However, with a great deal of pressure upon Him from many sources, He did agree in the end to accept the Order – once again passing the acclaim on to His Master. Satgurus sometimes have their own reasons for doing things different to their normal wont.

It was the first time the order would be given to a non-Christian, and it was to be presented by William Frary, Baron von Blomberg, who was himself initiated during the 1955 Tour, after experiencing, a number of years before, a vision of the Master within. When the Tour was advertised in U.S.A., along with Kirpal's picture, the Baron recognized Kirpal as none other than the personage of his previous vision, and was then able to meet his Master on an outer level.

The Baron, though born in the U.S., got his title through adoption into one of the noble families of Germany. He had represented a number of Orders of Chivalry, including the St. John Order and had served as secretary to the International Secretariat of the World Fellowship of Faiths. He had also acted as adviser to some of the royal families of Europe. During the first WFR Conference in 1957, Kirpal made him Secretary of the WFR in the West.

Many thousands were present as the special ceremony took place, including Shri Upadhyaye, a highly respected and very close colleague of Mahatma Gandhi, who represented Prime Minister Nehru. Many religious leaders from different parts of India, distinguished diplomats and various members of the Indian Parliament were also present. Afterwards, an official photograph was taken by

a leading New Delhi portrait photographer showing the Master wearing the order on His pristine white jacket.

1962 was the year that the Chinese army attacked India, on October 16. The confrontation did not last very long (the Chinese requested a cease-fire on November 21) but it had some political and territorial ramifications. The attack ended a long, friendly and peaceful relationship between the two countries, which, to date, has not been altogether restored.

Early in November, Kirpal brought up the subject during a monthly Satsang at the Ashram. What He said about the matter is interesting:

‘Although war is going on with China – and I know many of our sons and brothers are being killed or wounded, a great sadness has entered our homes and our hearts are bleeding over what is going on – do not allow hatred to destroy you too. That is the greatest enemy.

‘Remember this: all men are one, children of the same Father but scattered in various parts of the world; worshiping the same God, but by different names and in different ways. This [the war] does not alter the fact that we are children of the same Father and there should be no hatred toward anyone; but we must defend our land, which has nourished us with its life-giving gifts: food and water. That is why full rights are on us to defend it with our lives, or to do our very best for those who are sacrificing their lives for our safety.’

He asked for contributions to the Red Cross and those present emptied their pockets of whatever cash they had on them. Women removed their gold jewelry, if they had any, and gave it. A total of rupees twenty-thousand and 418 grams of gold were collected, to go toward the cost of tending the wounded.

A question was asked about the type of gifts or donations that should be given. Kirpal's reply was, 'The question of donations or gifts does not arise, for whatever we can do is for our own protection – to keep our freedom and to keep our high spiritual principles. If the invaders were to take hold of our land, we will not only lose land, wealth, freedom, but our ideals too! So give whatever you can afford – as much as you can.'

On Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's birthday (November 14), Kirpal handed over the collection to Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, in an official gesture of support from the Ruhani Satsang followers. The subsequent contributions from the satsangis went to the Red Cross, for the soldiers' welfare.

Kirpal was asked a number of times over the years about fighting in wars, etc. He always advocated defending the innocent who came under unprovoked attack – women, children and the aged, who could not defend themselves.

However, the principle of non-violence was not totally sacrificed. While defending the land, the people and one's freedom, ahimsa in thought must always be maintained. Deplore the sin but not the sinner. When Kirpal introduced the followers to the guide He advocated from His early years – a diary of self-introspection – ahimsa led the list of axioms to be adhered to, followed by truthfulness, chastity, love for all, and selfless service. By encouraging everyone to keep a record of failures in thought, word and deed, the task of "weeding out" one's unwanted traits becomes a straightforward habit.

The brief state of war precipitated by the incursion of Chinese troops on India's northern border caused a general

alarm in the country. Various precautions were taken as a means of defence, should the need arise, which included the civilian population, which was given warning of possible attack on the non-armed civilian areas. Consequently, local wardens were appointed everywhere, with full instructions for action, if necessary.

During a quiet darshan in the Master's reception room one day, a small group of satsangi sevadars was sitting at Kirpal's feet, explaining the various orders they had been given as local wardens, and they showed Kirpal the whistles they had been issued; these whistles would be blown loudly, should an attack on civil areas be started, or if parachute troops were dropped.

Kirpal turned one of the whistles over in His hands and a twinkle entered His eyes. 'Let us give Taiji [Hardevi] a scare!' He said. Putting the whistle to His mouth, He gave a long, loud blast on it; then He quickly hid the whistle in His hands.

Hardevi came running from the kitchen in an excited panic. 'The Chinese are coming!' she said, looking very worried. 'Maharaj Ji, what shall we do?'

Kirpal answered by chuckling with laughter, joined by everyone sitting at His feet. He held up the whistle to show Hardevi who the culprit was. 'Oh, Maharaj Ji,' she wailed, 'Why do you frighten us like that?!"

Kirpal's sense of humor was always ready to lighten any occasion that required uplifting. His laughter was not loud or raucous, but soft chuckles which welled up inside Him and bubbled over in a very infectious fashion. To join in Kirpal's humor was a delightful tonic.

On occasions, people put questions to Kirpal about war:

the approach to the onslaught of war; the obligations of war; and, in particular, what should be the satsangi's position in the event of war.

In a circular on this subject, a few years later, Kirpal said:

'... every citizen has an obligation to the country in which he resides. If that country is threatened by an invader, then it is the duty of every man and woman, in accordance with his or her mental and physical capacity, to protect the innocent people of the country. For example, one could render service in a non-combatant branch of the army such as the Medical Corps whose primary duty is to relieve the suffering of the wounded and the like.'

'If a government, for any cause, orders a general conscription of all able-bodied men to the armed forces, there is little that can be done. If one can honestly be excused from military service because of physical disability or any other valid reason, then by all means this may be done.'

'All Saints and Masters have greatly deprecated not only wars, but all forms of violence that bring suffering to mankind. These conditions are brought about by man himself, who, in his ignorance of the fact that God resides in every heart, will not allow his fellow man to live in freedom and peace.'

'All the dear ones who are obliged to fulfill their duty to their country should have courage and full faith in the gracious protection and guidance being extended to them by the Master Power working overhead.'

During the early part of 1963, the preparations for the coming (second) Overseas Tour took a great deal of Kirpal's time. Also, the Indian affairs must be left in a stable condition. All this activity was in addition to Kirpal's regular

program and timetable.

Kirpal's nature was to tackle all work calmly and serenely. His advice was to complete whatever one had started before retiring each night. This way, one could work and achieve without panic.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

True Masters have a deeply penetrating perception not commonly possessed by the ordinary person. They have an all-seeing ability to perceive the make-up or composition of anyone, physically, mentally and spiritually, at a glance, or without a glance if the person is not in close proximity.

Usually, the Master accepts all those who apply for initiation from outside India, if they have prepared themselves. In India, the procedure is somewhat different, as the applicants approach the Guru personally and are accepted or rejected face to face; group leaders therefore are unnecessary for this process. It is the moment of decision. Some may not be accepted at that time due to a lack of preparation in diet or conduct, attitude, etc. These souls may have the opportunity of trying later on, after more preparation.

Truly speaking, initiation occurs at the very moment that the Master accepts a soul, no matter where that soul may be. The initiate, however, may not be aware of this at that actual time, but needs to go through a formal "initiation procedure" for the mind to accept the significance of the event. On rare occasions, souls have been initiated from within – some even before meeting the Master physically.

The initiation of so many thousands of souls, even though the number be small compared to the total population of the

world, is something wonderful that has happened at this point in history. In the past. Masters were not always so generous with their spiritual largesse. The seeker spent many years searching, as Kirpal Himself had done. Guru Amar Das, the third Guru of the Sikhs, sought for 70 years to find His Master, Guru Angad*. (Even Perfect Masters have their struggles!)

However, when found, the past Gurus were not always ready to give freely to the unworthy. Many aspiring seekers had to spend years with the Guru before they got a glimpse of spiritual enlightenment, the Guru ensuring they were ready and up to His choice of standard before starting them on the inner road.

Kirpal often reminded everyone how fortunate they were to get an inner experience on the very first day: the day of initiation. He often told about the King of Balkh-Bukhara who went to Kabir Sahib. He sat at His feet for many years. After several years had passed, Loi, a close disciple of Kabir, asked the Master why He did not give something to the king. 'Oh, he is not ready,' said Kabir. Loi pointed out that the king's conduct, speech and attitude seemed acceptable in every way. The Master told her to test the king by throwing all the household trash over his head as he passed under her window. She did so, and sure enough the king reacted with anger and remarked that if he had been in his own Bukhara, he would have dealt with the incident in no uncertain terms. Loi had to agree with her Master – the king was not ready!

Some years later, Kabir Sahib remarked to Loi that now the king should receive some spiritual experience. Loi pointed out that she saw no difference in the king. Kabir advised her to go and throw the night soil and refuse from

* Second Guru of the Sikhs, (1504-1552).

the bathroom over the king, and when she did so, the king's humility came forth as he verbally admitted to whoever was within hearing that he was '... worse than all that'. After so many years of preparation, the king was accepted as Kabir's disciple and was put on the spiritual Path.

Kirpal has explained that, today, man is not fit for such stringent methods of training. The Master, in His mercy, bestows His grace on the struggling souls and starts them on the Path. With the connection to Naam, the follower can contact the inner Light and Sound regularly, which in itself will start to change him. The more he contacts the Naam, the faster will that transformation take place.

'I beg and plead with you to keep up your practice regularly.' Kirpal was constantly giving this advice to the sangat. The opportunity is there for any sincere seeker who has his priorities steadfast in his heart. Only obedience and dedication are then required.

The 1955 Tour was a memory – a memory lingering in the hearts of all those who had met the Master and who had basked in the aura of His august presence. That kind of memory does not simply fade away, neither does it die, but returns again and again like the sprinkle of refreshing rain in the heat of midsummer. How He looked . . . how He smiled . . . His sweet concern for each and every one of His children. Was there ever anything else like that? Was there ever anything that could banish the woes and troubles of the world, merely by sitting at His holy feet and absorbing the love-laden glances from His beautiful eyes? Oh, to be able to have that experience once again!

And what of those who, in the interim, had received His precious gift of Naam, but had never met Him face to face? They listened to the stories – each person's own per-

sonal impressions – and they wondered at the wonder of it all. What would it be like . . . to meet Him face to face; to hear Him address oneself in His own unique tone of voice; to relax in His company and learn about being a disciple of a Godman?

The requests went out to India from many centers: *Master, please come to us – again.* The replies came back: 'Yes, I have a mind to come. I hope I will be able to come soon, God willing.' But the time went by and still He did not come. They did not understand what was keeping Him!

Those who have ever spent some time in Sawan Ashram can understand. To see the Master's daily schedule; to see Him squeezing appointments and meetings into an already overcrowded day; to watch Him stretch the moments to comfort some unhappy follower, or solve an insoluble problem for them. Anyone who has spent even one whole day in His company will marvel at His tireless constancy, His never-ending, single-pointed attention on His activities. A meeting here; an appointment there; a Satsang talk outside of Delhi; two or three regular Satsang talks within Delhi every week; a summons to a government office; visit of a dignitary to the Ashram; a tour in Punjab or U.P. or any other state nearby; a tour in South India – Bombay (Mumbai) and other cities; a trip to the Himalayan foothills and the Satsang groups there: Dehra Dun, Hardwar, Rishikesh; a long journey by car to Jammu and Kashmir, to the centers there; or to Pakistan and the satsangis in Lahore.

How can anyone measure the work of a Perfect Master? He even works when we think He is asleep! How can one say that this or that event is not necessary and can be cancelled? How can anyone but the Master know what is and is not necessary? However, patient hearts know that everything happens when God wills, and so it is with the God

in human form. There will be a special time for it; He will come when the time is right.

When 1963 rolled into action, there it was: the Master's tour would start in June – He would fly to Germany and it would all begin. How magical! How wonderful!

As in 1955, the lamentable cries of the Indian satsangis rose and fell for many days prior to the departure of their beloved Guru. The sad (for them) reality was that He had to go – His work lay in another theater of action in the world's battleground. Eight months without the physical darshan of their beloved may as well have been eight years. Kirpal has said that there are two kinds of intensely anxious events: one is when meeting a special someone; the other, when one is being parted from that special someone – and this was the parting. Now they must look ahead – look forward to the meeting once again – and meanwhile to do as He admonished: more meditation!

Kirpal's plane took off from Palam Airport at 10:45 p.m. on June 8. He was accompanied by Hardevi and a close disciple, Princess Devinder Bir Narendra. At Frankfurt the following day, the Master was greeted by a group of German disciples, including Frau Bianca Fitting, the representative of the area, who presented Kirpal with a bouquet of flowers. Baron von Blomberg, who had visited India as representative of the Order of St. John the previous year, was called by the Master to join the tour as the WFR (western) Secretary, in order to bridge the approach to religious and other dignitaries who would meet the Master throughout the tour of the west. Kirpal was intending to further WFR's cause in addition to meeting His existing spiritual children and adding more to their number.

The approaching program with its extensive itinerary

would cover many stops, innumerable conversations, a huge number of discourses (some complete with interpreter) and countless miscellaneous events, an outline of which is all that can be given here*. The 1963/64 tour would likely be three or four times as busy as the 1955 one. Kirpal's ministry would always remain the same: to bring the children of God closer to their Father, which was the bedrock of all His work, regardless of the different superficial facets.

For Kirpal's stay in Frankfurt, the tour party, consisting of Kirpal, Hardevi, Baron von Blomberg, and the authors, would stay at the home of a Dr. Germa, President of the Society for Harmonious Living, a group whose interests were "in harmony" with those of the WFR. That evening, the members of the society arrived at Dr. Germa's house and were introduced to Kirpal, who gave a short talk. This was followed by questions from the group, who felt relaxed in the informal atmosphere.

The program for the five-day stay in Frankfurt was a simple pattern of meditation in the morning, followed by an informal talk at Dr. Germa's house. The more formal evening Satsangs were held in the city center. The afternoons were an opportunity to meet more of the local residents with prominent positions: officials, educators, religious heads, businessmen etc., either at Dr. Germa's home or in other parts of Frankfurt. Private interviews for satsangis were arranged and dovetailed into the program as required. This type of daily program was very frequently used throughout the tour. Press conferences, at almost every segment of the tour, were also slotted in according to convenience. For meetings with the local government – mayor and council, etc. – a mutual time slot would be agreed upon.

* For a more detailed coverage, read "The Harvest is Rich" by George Arnsby Jones.

On the evening of June 14, Kirpal and party traveled by car to Dusseldorf for a five-day program in that city. The program would cover many meetings and interviews with religious groups, politicians, even refugee organizations – the appointment record book was full! Included in the program were regular Satsangs and meditation sittings, as always. A special reception for all the visiting dignitaries, both from Germany itself and from other countries, was held on June 15 when the Master received and welcomed them, many of whom were so impressed with Kirpal's outline of the WFR goals, they expressed hopes of attending the next Conference in New Delhi in 1965. Some offered to receive Kirpal and His party as their guests, when the tour reached their own city or country.

The WFR concept of bringing together representatives of different religions was often the popular subject of interest and conversation with most of the dignitaries that met and spoke with Kirpal. They considered it a unique idea and were fascinated with the methods of how it would work, and *if* it would work. Time and the conferences to come would demonstrate and prove the feasibility of the theory. Only Kirpal knew.

A number of religious and public figures were prepared to become members of WFR, some even to represent the Fellowship in their own area. This type of interest was present everywhere Kirpal went on the tour. Meanwhile the amount of spiritual interest was growing simultaneously, as was the number of Kirpal's initiates. Time was allowed for the German satsangis to have private interviews with Kirpal; for many of whom this tour was their first physical meeting with the Master.

On the evening of June 19, Kirpal and party left Dusseldorf

by air for a three-day visit to Hamburg where they stayed at the Carstens Hotel.

The following day, the Master and party, on invitation, traveled to Mecklenburg Castle, about 70 miles or 112 kilometers from Hamburg. The castle lies at Eutin, a small town on the Baltic side of the Schleswig-Holstein peninsula and is an imposing structure. Both the Duke and Duchess of Mecklenburg and the Duke and Duchess of Oldenburg received the Master; the former being of the parent generation. Tea for everyone was served in their drawing room where friends of the hosts were also present, along with a few members of the local press.

Both royal houses have a long and distinguished history; Peter the Great and Catherine the Great come quickly to mind, as both came from the house of Oldenburg; Catherine more indirectly, via her mother.

When the younger Duke escorted everyone around the palace, a large model sailing ship was seen on display in a glass case, proven to have been built by Peter himself who was well remembered as having had a deep interest in expanding and promoting Russia's maritime activities. When the Duke asked Kirpal if He had enjoyed seeing the castle, the Master agreed that it was a 'nice place'. Obviously, the pomp and circumstance of worldly life was of secondary importance. A number of speeches were made, including Kirpal's response to the warm welcome, followed by a short talk. The noble hosts found considerable interest in the WFR and the elder Duke agreed to take on a vice-presidency of the Fellowship.

A five-day program in Berlin was the next stage of the tour. In those days, Berlin was still part of Eastern Germany and had been split into zones – Russian, French, American

and English – immediately following World War II. The Russian Zone was occupied by Russian troops, who had built the infamous “wall”, separating their area from the Western area. The segregation of eastern Berlin was an extremely sore subject with Berliners, most of whom could not pass beyond the wall. The division of the whole country was an equally bitter pill for all Germans.

When Kirpal arrived at the chosen hotel, the Bristol-Kempinski in central Berlin, a large group of disciples awaited Him, in addition to those who had met Him at Tempelhof Airport. The love for their Master was evident and one follower, a Frau Hilda Georg, finding an opportunity among the large throng to speak to the Master, told Him that she had hoped He would be staying at her home in Wansee, on the outskirts, but the organizers had booked at the Kempinski. She looked so sad as Kirpal smiled and gazed into her eyes: ‘Alright, I will come and stay with you.’ She was astounded!

The reservations were cancelled and everyone went off to Wansee, where at #66 Matterhorn Strasse, Hilda and her sister ran a large residence, also a nursery garden on the adjacent land. They were overjoyed to receive the Master and His whole party. Many informal get-togethers were held here, where tea was made frequently for the delighted satsangis.

The following day, after meditation and Kirpal’s talk, a tour of the city had been organized. Of course, it would be confined to the west side and not go beyond “the wall”. Pfarrer Wendelin Siebrecht, Director of the International Committee for the Defence of Christian Culture – who represented not only his own group but several other Christian movements in welcoming Kirpal to Berlin – had carefully arranged the tour to be of interest to Kirpal.

One of the first stops was a place near the notorious wall, where everyone could get a close view of the concrete monstrosity topped with barbed wire: a definite blot on the landscape!

Pfarrer Siebrecht told the story from its “unveiling” when the people of Berlin awoke one morning to find it there, separating families and friends, with all its menacing prognosis. The number of deaths attributed to its presence were marked by flowers of remembrance placed regularly at the spots where the brave had been shot while attempting to scale the ugly structure. These memorials brought the tragedy closer. Wherever one went throughout the city, the plaintive cry was repeated: ‘Please help to rid us of the wall!’

Kirpal’s compassion was ever-present, and He agreed to make a statement, which was promptly published in all the West Berlin newspapers:

‘It is the right of everybody to be free. We know that “Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage.”* Birds fly freely anywhere. The spirit is free. Man, the highest of God’s creation, should therefore certainly be free. The inexorable law of nature is that all who do wrong must pay. Whosoever is responsible must pay for all cruel suppression of humanity; for all aggression. In the meantime, we of India, who have enjoyed the freedom of life and spirit, pray for those who do not enjoy their right of freedom. We know their situation, we do not forget them. All humans should have the right of self-determination as to where they wish to live. The spirit is all and the spirit will overcome.’

These sentiments were so well received by the people of Berlin that, wherever Kirpal went around the city, someone or other would refer to the statement and thank Him for it.

* From Richard Lovelace’s poem.

The round of meetings with religious and political leaders went on each day and Kirpal gave regular public discourses. Kirpal had always shown an interest in political matters, especially the attitude of those governing, regarding their duty to the people. On numerous occasions, He remarked that politicians should be, "of the people, by the people," and "for THE GOOD OF the people." In other words, it was their duty to take care of the people in their charge. Under the banner of the WFR, which was always of great interest to politicians, Kirpal was able to meet the ruling section of various aspects of government and introduce not only the aims and principles of the WFR, but also the spiritual side of humanity and the duty of each individual to his own spiritual advancement and toward the welfare of his fellow men.

Bidding farewell to His tearful children in Berlin, the Master and party were driven to the airport to fly to Hanover, where a train connection would be made to the small town of Goslar in Westfalia, in order to attend a special ceremony of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights of Malta, of which Kirpal was now an honorary member. The ceremony was scheduled to take place in a very ancient, tiny church in Goslar, the interior seating of which was small and not able to cope with the numbers of satsangis traveling to each station of the tour (seeking the maximum possible time with Kirpal while in Germany). However, many of the followers were able to get reservations at the Goslar hotel where Kirpal was to stay.

CHAPTER FIFTY

The aircraft carrying Kirpal and the rest of the party, and some of the accompanying disciples, took off from Tempelhof without ado. Within the first half-hour of the flight, it was obvious to everyone aboard that the weather was not ideal.

Through the small windows the lightning was clearly visible, and the plane became subjected to fierce turbulence. Suddenly, the mid-size passenger aircraft began to rise and fall, helplessly in the grip of the strong winds. The passengers had obeyed the order to 'fasten seat-belts' and were thereby safely fastened to their seats – that is, all excepting one lady who, for some reason, had ignored the order. On a downward plunge of the aircraft, she rose out of her seat and hit her head on the ceiling of the fuselage. Blood poured out from a gash in her forehead. There was nothing the flight attendants could do at that stage – all the passengers were desperately trying to keep themselves on an even keel. As the plane rose and fell with the wild tempest outside, the people, with prayers on their lips and stomachs in their mouths, clung to the arms of their seats and wished the storm would finish – before it finished them all!

Kirpal, sitting with Hardevi in the front row, was calm and serene. He rose up slightly in His seat and looked to the two seats just behind them, where the present authors sat

with sickly expressions! He raised His beautiful hand and "patted" the air: an often-used wordless sign that "said": '*Have no fear, everything will be alright!*' And in another fifteen minutes or so the plane levelled off and flew on smoothly toward Hannover.

A flight attendant quickly began some first-aid treatment on the lady who had hit the roof – literally! Everyone began to breathe normally again, and soon the aircraft was taxiing along the runway toward the terminal amid loud applause for the pilot.

When they finally climbed down onto the tarmac, the green-faced passengers began to believe that all was well – they were still alive! Was it due to the fine skill of the pilot or did Kirpal have something to do with the rescue of the flight? Every disciple aboard knew the answer. As they staggered along, several suggested a cup of tea or coffee in the airport cafeteria. The idea was popular and they all assembled in the cafe to order hot drinks.

The authors had their duties – to check on all the luggage – and there it was, a huge pile consisting of a bag for each of the followers and several pieces of luggage for the tour party, including a large box containing mostly kitchen items – the means of making tea etc. at the drop of a hat; Hardevi never went anywhere without provisions to take care of the Master.

While the huge pile of luggage was being checked, Kirpal approached, looked at the luggage and wanted to know, 'What is this box?' The reply was, 'It's the kitchen things, Maharaj Ji.'

The Master said no more, but took a pen from His pocket and wrote on the box's label: KHUKU – KITCHEN UTENSILS. That done, He then asked, 'Where is everybody?' On being told of the poor condition of all the stomachs and the detour to

the cafeteria, Kirpal spoke firmly: 'Go and find them. We have to make our way across town to the train station and catch a certain train. When we reach the train station, *then* they can have tea.'

So everyone left the airport with little loss of time and made the way over to the train station by public bus service. Fortunately the train was boarded in good time and everyone was at last able to breathe a sigh of relief.

At Goslar, the whole group booked into the hotel and relaxed. Not surprisingly, the subject of conversation was Kirpal – and the shake-up plane ride they had had with Him!

On the morrow, Kirpal and just five others to accompany Him, walked to the tiny chapel about ten minutes away from the hotel, and took their places for the ceremony. It was normally performed without observers, following the strict rules of the organization, and most of the procedure was a mystery to the watching visitors.

After retracing steps back to Hannover, Kirpal's new destination was now the West German capital, Bonn, which had four days to enjoy Kirpal's visit, starting with His arrival on June 30. The regular routine for each station included meditation sittings, during which many people were given an experience of the Light and Sound Principle within, without having to take initiation – although most of the sitters did subsequently ask for the gift of Naam.

These spontaneous sittings were one of the unique occurrences in the Master's work. To start with, no Guru in the long line of Satgurus before Kirpal had traveled abroad to take the news of contact with Naam to countries other than India, except for Guru Nanak, who went on arduous journeys to Tibet and China, just north of India; Ceylon (or Sri Lanka), just south of India; Burma, just east of India; and

some parts of the Middle East. Even Sawan, the immediate predecessor to Kirpal, had not traveled beyond the mother country.

So the long tours abroad (1955, 1963 and one in the future: 1972) were in themselves unique and gathered many more children into the Father's fold. But the meditation sittings were a special "free gift" whereby anyone could sample the Master's "stock in trade". Anyone could join in, no prerequisites required – as there were for regular initiation applications – just the wonderful inner experience given freely with His grace and benevolence. Surely, God was bestowing His wealth through the generous hands of the God-in-man.

Bonn, being a federal center of government, was a beehive of political and diplomatic activity. Kirpal had a busy program of official visits and interviews. Three public talks were given in the city.

Early morning on July 4, Kirpal took the train to Nürnberg (Nuremberg) in Bavaria, where the enthusiastic crowd of German disciples that greeted Him seemed to be getting bigger. The Master and party were due to stay at the country home of Mr. and Mrs. Flor, both devoted followers. However, many initiates also followed the Master's car to the small town of Wachendorf – near Furth, which is a slightly larger town, about ten kilometers from Nürnberg. The peaceful atmosphere of the Flors' home and garden was a welcome change to the bustle of cities, while being a convenient short journey by road to reach Nürnberg for the public talks and interviews during the five and one-half days' program.

München (Munich), the capital of Bavaria, was the next

stop on the German leg of the tour and, after arriving by car on July 9 at the Hotel Drei Lowen, a five-day program would begin the next day, similar to the previous cities in Germany.

To cross from Germany into Austria is very simple from München, a distance of about 80 miles or 128 kilometers by road. The Master's hotel was located just outside the city of Innsbruck, on one of the picturesque mountain slopes that surround it – the "Hernstein".

Famous for its older architecture, including the well-known building that wears a roof covered with gold leaf, Innsbruck (capital of the Tyrol) presents a city of charm and culture. The journey to and from the hotel offered a very pleasant vista of the valley's beauty.

Among the various dignitaries who met Kirpal, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Innsbruck showed a deep interest in the teachings of the Path. A press conference was held at an Innsbruck hotel for the Austrian journalists; a tea and reception was arranged for the diplomats of a number of European countries; a short, professional film was made to show in the cinemas, and a longer documentary to be made in India was discussed at some length; a radio interview was held and broadcast; a meeting was held for the religious leaders in the area, to discuss the cause of the WFR; Her Highness, the Grand Duchess Sofie, of the House of Hapsburg, attended one of the public discourses in the Deutches Museum; Kirpal addressed the student priests at the Jesuit College and, during a private interview, the Rector invited Kirpal to visit the Jesuit Headquarters in Poona, India. It was a busy week's program.

The Governor of Tyrol, along with the Mayor of Innsbruck, had a serious discussion with Kirpal, explaining their

concern regarding the incendiary differences between Austria and neighboring Italy, which had reached a point where war was somewhat imminent between the two nations. They asked Kirpal – what should they do? Kirpal told them that He appreciated the urgency of the situation, but His advice was to delay any action for as long as possible. The politicians thanked Him for the advice and told Him they would seriously consider it. They must have accepted His guidance, for war between the two nations was indeed averted.

All talk and thought of war was forgotten when the disciples gathered together at Kirpal's feet in the charming grounds of the hotel on the hill, to which He would return each day. Somehow or other, Kirpal spread and stretched His time and presence to meet all demands – the officials and His children.

The next stop on the itinerary was Greece, home of the Olympics, those enlightened Greek philosophers and Greek mythology. The Master flew into Athens (Athinai) on the evening of July 22.

The intellectuals of Greece are deeply aware of, and very proud of, their ancient heritage. Consequently, those who were fortunate to meet the Master during His visit were amazed, speechless and delighted to be in the company of an eminent and contemporary proponent of those very ancient teachings as they themselves understood them.

The first to welcome Kirpal to Greece was Professor Anthony Halas, also a writer and journalist, and Professor Choumanides, a scholar of some considerable renown (official title: Count of Lentrisko), accompanied by their friends and colleagues. The Master graciously agreed to stay at the home of Professor Halas which provided an ideal opportunity for the professor to hear about the teachings from

the Master Himself, in intimate surroundings. He had been seeking the Truth for forty years and knew he would only find it face to face and not from the countless books he had read throughout that period. Except for one small booklet that drew him up sharp: Kirpal's "Man, Know Thyself!". He may have just put it aside with all the others had his attention not been arrested by the photograph at the beginning. It registered so deep in his heart that he felt compelled to read the book from cover to cover. He read the booklet many times and knew that this was what he was seeking and was a familiar voice out of the ancient past of the old great ones. As Kirpal has told many times, 'The old Greeks spoke of this teaching: "Gnothi Seauton" and the old Latins: "Nosce Te ipsum" – the idea of knowing oneself before knowing God.'

Professor Halas, in the familiar surroundings of his own worldly home, listened to the Master's voice telling him of his true home, his spiritual home, in words that reminded him of those ancient great ones: Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Jesus and others. What a stupendous revelation!

The next day, Anthony Halas was the first Greek seeker to receive the holy initiation from Kirpal. With the Master's permission and encouragement, as the Greek Representative he planned on starting a Ruhani Satsang center in Athens.

Public talks were given, and also informal talks in private homes. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Athens and Archbishop Jacob of the Greek Orthodox Church were greatly interested in the ambitions of the WFR. Also, through the Master's influence, two branches of the Greek Christian Church met in good friendship after a gap of many years.

Considering the facts that there had hitherto been no regular Satsang Center in Greece and the WFR was still very young as yet, Kirpal's visit to Greece was a huge success

and stirred the interest of sincere people of integrity, which hinted at a prolific future for both Ruhani Satsang and the World Fellowship of Religions.

The political and official groups had also their share of Kirpal's attention. As it was habitual in His Indian daily life, every minute was put to positive use – all with the Master's grace, while He passed on all praise and credit to His Master, Hazur Baba Sawan. The first public initiation held in Greece was on July twenty-seven, an anniversary date which always belonged to Sawan.

"All roads lead to Rome", they say, and it was Rome's turn to have Kirpal's holy presence for a five-day program. The Master arrived at Hotel Reale on August 1. That afternoon, the Mayor of Rome welcomed the Master officially to Italy, followed by a meeting with the Rome Council President.

The Pope's interest in co-operating with other religions had started the New Ecumenical Council. The aims and principles of the WFR – as Kirpal clearly explained them – were warmly received by the Papal Commission on Co-operation with Non-Christian Religions. The Cardinal-Vicar of Rome offered every help in doing Italy's part toward the development of WFR; while Count Vanni Teodorani M.P. agreed to be the Representative in Italy for WFR.

At a meeting on August 5 with H. H. Pope Paul VI in the Vatican, and in response to Kirpal's outline of the WFR's efforts in the name of peace, the Pope said, 'We shall pray for India and we shall pray for you'. At the end of a busy five days, the Rome tour ended with a dinner in the Master's honor given by the Indian Ambassador to Italy and his wife.

France was fortunate in having already a group of

disciples, and Kirpal was met by a number of these on His arrival at Orly Airport in Paris on August 6. Strangely, a similar instance to what had happened in Berlin occurred in Paris. Although rooms had been reserved in a hotel, a very devoted disciple came forward and asked the Master to stay at her home. Kirpal smiled at Mme. N. Goldenberg and said to her, 'Why not? That is also my home.' The entire house was handed over for the use of the Master for the length of His visit to Paris.

The French group leader, Mme. Denise Mafille, who had come forward at the airport with a beautiful bouquet for Kirpal, was on hand to direct the proceedings in Paris. The Master gave two public talks at the Centre International de Meditation Hindoue, organized by Mme. Choisy, the Center's director; other public and private talks were given elsewhere, including the Russian Orthodox Church of Saint Denise. Monseigneur Kovalesky, Metropolitan of the Church, agreed with the work being done by the WFR and promised to do all he could to help, including attending the forthcoming conference in India.

Other political and cultural meetings met with success, including: the Jewish leaders, who wanted to plan Kirpal's visit to Israel, where the Chief Rabbi would receive Him; the humanitarian Academie Raymond Duncan, where Raymond Duncan, the famous poet and playwright explained the purpose of the Academie to Kirpal; The Sufi leaders in Paris; the Coptic Church leaders; and the Ambassador of Ethiopia who, on behalf of the Emperor Haile Selasse, invited Kirpal to visit their country.

After initiation was held at Mme. Choisy's International Centre, the Master prepared to leave Paris on August 13 to fly across the English Channel to London. The European initiates who had endeavored to keep up with Kirpal's

traveling would return to their homes at this point, including the two French group leaders and Frau Fitting.

The program in London turned out to be so busy that the allocated time was increased to twelve days. Public talks were given at Caxton Hall in London's center, which was very convenient, as the Master was also staying in the center of the city. The number of political, cultural and religious leaders to meet the Master was considerable, but nevertheless, the keen seekers were given private time with Kirpal by slotting them in between the official engagements.

Even a trip to Southwick in Sussex, where Kirpal had stayed at the home of Mrs. Upton in 1955, was included - to meet Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Busby and the staff of "The Voice", the well-known magazine that covered all spiritual, mystical and religious subjects. Two public talks were given that day.

The Indian initiates living in and around London were very excited to see the Master; for many of them it was after a long and lonely time. They came to the hotel daily in the hopes of having His darshan and perhaps a few minutes in His presence, in between appointments.

Among those appointments were: the British Council of Churches; the High Commissioner of India; the Director of the World Fellowship of Faiths; Reverend James McWhirter, Editor of the Protestant magazine "Everyman"; Amnesty International; the British Vegetarian Society; a director from the B.B.C., to discuss the arrangements for the Master to broadcast.

At the Sikh Cultural Society, additional talks were given in Punjabi, especially with reference to the Guru Granth Sahib, and were received with much enthusiasm from the listeners. Many remarked upon the clear

explanations that Kirpal gave of these holy scriptures.

A visit by Muriel, Lady Dowding, reminded those who were in Britain during the second world war that she was the widow of the late Air Chief Marshall Hugh, Lord Dowding, who was very instrumental in directing Britain's defence during the "Battle of Britain". Many diplomats met the Master – London being a particular city where many countries are represented. It was noted that among these were Islamic officials, both diplomatic and religious, who showed considerable interest in the principles of the WFR.

Two separate initiation procedures had to be arranged for the seekers, due to the large number of applicants, not all of whom could be accommodated in one session in the room engaged for the purpose. The Master's stay in Britain ended on a busy note.

The Aer Lingus flight to Dublin, Eire (the Republic of Ireland) on August 25 began in London when the officials of the airline were on hand at Heathrow Airport to assist and offer any service that the Master required. As the flight took off, Kirpal, Hardevi and the two disciples relaxed in their seats, appreciating the rest after the busy London program.

The "rest" was a short one, for when the plane landed in Dublin, the action machine was set in motion again. As the Master and party walked down the tarmac toward the terminal, a small crowd of television and newspaper people were coming toward Kirpal. As the two groups met, the publicity men and women began to back up, cameras still rolling. It seemed that the arrival of the Master was real news in Dublin!

In the terminal, the Master paused so that the television and news cameramen could get the pictures they wanted. A news conference in the airport building followed, with

Baron von Blomberg – who had met Kirpal as the plane landed – giving information about the tour and WFR. The Master answered their various questions. The coverage was seen in the following day's newspaper and was so extensive, with large photos and text on the front and inside pages.

Mrs. Una Byrne had been enlisted as the Irish representative of the WFR., and she had really excelled at organizing the whole Dublin and area programs, including publicity. It was evening by the time everyone arrived at Jury's Hotel in central Dublin.

Among the dignitaries that Kirpal met was President Eamon de Valera at the Presidential Palace; the name immediately brings to mind the bid the Irish made for their freedom from British rule, when de Valera was one of the very energetic leaders.

Although blind now, as President he still served Eire with energy and showed serious interest in spiritual matters and the work of the WFR. Prime Minister Sean Francis Lemass gave a reception for the Master, and those present were anxious to assure Kirpal that Ireland was supporting all efforts for world peace and unity. The Lord Mayor of Dublin received the Master at the Mansion House; the Indian Embassy invited the Master to tea with the Ambassador, where news and talk was exchanged about India and the coming WFR Conference.

All the representatives of the various religions in Ireland were able to meet Kirpal and exchange ideas, including: the Chief Rabbi; the Vicar-General of Ireland, Monsignor O'Halloran; Monsignor Cassidy, the Papal Representative in Ireland; and others.

A little over 30 miles or 50 kilometers north of Dublin lies the town of Drogheda, connected by the proverbial "bumpy road to Dublin"! In this old town a very religious

organization was busily at work, known as "The Medical Missionaries of Mary". Reverend Mother Mary Martin herself had founded the Mission in 1937 and was still very active in watching over the work. They had built an extensive hospital in which to train the missionary nurses and doctors who came from many parts of the world to take the training and then be sent wherever there was a need.

Reverend Mother Mary was a petite bundle of enthusiasm and she took great delight in showing off her heart's work to Kirpal and party. Luncheon was given to everyone after a tour of the hospital. Following this visit, a detour was made to Navan (about 20 miles or 30 kilometers) to the Columban Fathers' Headquarters, where the Vicar-General welcomed Kirpal. Following a long talk together about the WFR., the party left to return to Dublin.

The Irish program continued, and when it finally reached the end, everyone declared that it had been exceptional – that the people of Dublin and surroundings were really most charming and hospitable, including Mrs. Byrne who could not organize enough for the Master; the Jury's Hotel, which could not do enough for the Master, and the press and television, who could not get enough of the Master! The last item was an informal press conference at Jury's at 12 noon on August 31. And so, farewell and on to cross the wide Atlantic – "the pond" as it is affectionately referred to.

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

As the Master has told us, the time of waiting is an anxious time, as is the time of parting. The North American disciples felt they had waited a very long time for His visit, and now, eight years after He had left them in 1955, He was due to arrive at any minute. A large group had gathered at Idlewilde International Airport in New York (now Kennedy Airport) – initiates from across the huge United States of America and from the even wider expanse of Canada. The plane carrying the Master arrived at 3:30 a.m. and was met not only by a large crowd of disciples, but by members of the press and the Aer Lingus representative, who seemed to want to see the journey through.

As they waited for the 7:10 a.m. connection to Washington DC, the Master's children gathered around Him and could not take their eyes from Him. At Washington Airport, the awaiting group of initiates was even bigger. They flocked to Him as He came into view. After the drive to the Khannas' home where the Master was to stay, Kirpal spent some time giving darshan and talking to everyone and was finally able to relax and rest.

That evening, a public Satsang was held at the Friends' Meeting House, a large auditorium run by the Quakers. The date was Sunday, September 1, 1963.

In the Meeting House, a low dais had been prepared with microphone, etc. As Kirpal sat on the dais and prepared to begin His talk, Mr. Khanna stepped forward and spoke quietly to Him. The Master jumped up and picked up the small ornate prayer-rug He had been sitting on and, folding it, placed it on His head. He then sat down, carefully putting the rug aside.

Kirpal began talking, but was so choked up that He could not speak. After some time, He recovered and began the talk. It was not until afterwards that the reason for this emotion was learned, when Mr. Khanna explained that he had told the Master that the prayer-rug was one of Baba Sawan's, given to him when he left India for U.S.A.

That small contact and reminder of His Master was enough to stir that huge love in His heart for Hazur.

The very next day, the round of appointments began again. Many disciples wanted a quiet talk with Kirpal, so the first half of the day was devoted to private interviews. In the afternoon, the Master held a meeting for all the leaders, including Mr. Walter Cowan, the representative for western U.S.A. This was followed by a Satsang at 7 p.m.

This Satsang was the first of many informal talks to be held in the large living-room, which was really not big enough, but everyone managed to squeeze in, using the hall and the staircase – which were open to the living-room – for overflow areas. These informal talks were heart to heart, full of love; full of everyone's eager, anxious listening to every word. In later years, people blessed those who recorded these wonderful sessions with Kirpal – they have many times been declared to be among the very best of all the English recordings of the Master.

The following day started with another conference for

group leaders and representatives. Sometimes organizational matters and differences take time in solving. A press conference at the Washington Press Club followed in the afternoon. In the coming days, from September 4 to 27, meditation sittings would be held at 8 a.m. followed by a talk, except for those days when special appointments coincided. Evening Satsangs were scheduled almost every day at 7 p.m. either in a private home, or at a public auditorium.

On September 4 afternoon, Kirpal attended a broadcast interview in English and Hindi at the Voice of America Studios. Radio station WAVV in Arlington, Virginia, also conducted a broadcast interview the following morning at 11 a.m. in English only and CBS aired a radio interview at WTOP Station.

The days went by in Washington, as busy as the European tour, including embassies, churches, religious and cultural groups. The Indian Ambassador, Mr. B.K. Nehru, was happy to meet the Master and discuss the WFR and other matters, after Kirpal gave a talk at the Embassy. The politicians were not left out. When the Master was invited to the Capitol, He met many of the senators and representatives, including the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. McCormack.

A discourse was given at Johns Hopkins University at 4 p.m. on September 26 and, on the following evening, Kirpal gave a special Satsang talk for the initiates. The next morning, He traveled by road to Philadelphia and a long, station-by-station tour began.

Just three days had been allotted to the city of Philadelphia, a city that reminds us of colonial history, the Liberty Bell and the hero William Penn.

A very good radio interview was broadcast at WCAU

Station, with a call-in period for the public to ask questions. Fortunately, this interview was recorded, a copy given to the Master's party and eventually made available to all the satsangis. Three wonderful talks were given by Kirpal at the Essex Hotel and one more at the Bellevue Stratford Hotel. Initiation was held early on October 1. The Master left by car for New York City in the afternoon.

New York was one of the busiest stops on the U.S. tour, where almost every minute of the Master's time was in demand. The whole party stayed at the Lexington Hotel at 48th and Lexington, and the Master's visitors congregated there whenever the Master was in the Hotel. New York, being one of the most cosmopolitan metropolises, it was natural that a cross-section of people from other nations would come to Kirpal's door and the Master was, as always, generous with His time, love and attention.

During the six-day program, the Master gave talks at Steinway Concert Hall and the Community Church. Each talk was full to the building's capacity with hungry, enthusiastic seekers. Early mornings were devoted to meditation sittings and the days were filled with interviews; there was also another radio interview on the Eden Gray program at Station WNCN. The New York program ended on a holy note when many of the seekers were initiated on October 7 morning.

On the evening of the same day, the Master and party arrived at the home of Mrs. Mildred Prendergast, the Boston group leader. A public talk at the Beacon Street Church in Brookline followed soon after arrival. The three-day visit covered: discourses; meditation sittings; press interviews and conferences; a visit with the Mayor at City Hall;

a reception at the Rotary Club; various interviews with religious leaders and diplomats; a reception at the golden-domed State House, given by Governor Peabody and Lieut. Governor McLaughlin, where Kirpal was introduced to the various members. The Master met with a number of dignitaries, many of whom were interested in the WFR.

On October 11, after a string of noisy cities, it was refreshing for the Master and party to wend their way through the woods of New England, replete with the glorious colors of the Fall, to a quiet spot in central New Hampshire. There, in the small town of Franklin, the Master's local group leaders had extended their farm into a Satsang Center, the name of which was later changed from "Sant Bani Farm" to "Sant Bani Ashram" – a meditation retreat for those disciples who, whenever they could glean some time away from their busy lives, enjoyed a few days in the peaceful atmosphere, to draw closer to the Master through meditation.

Sitting among the trees, Kirpal expressed His appreciation of the beautiful, peaceful surroundings of nature, telling the huge group of followers sitting around Him how conducive is such an environment to the pursuance of contact with the Lord within, through the Holy Naam – an observance He had made many times in India.

A local church in the town of Franklin was an ideal venue for the evening discourse. The next morning, the long convoy of cars, growing ever longer, proceeded to the neighboring state of Vermont – the Green Mountain State; a very typical example of the quaint New England countryside.

Here, near the small town of Worcester, a young lady had made her residence into a small retreat, naming it "Kirpal Ashram". Once again, the Master spoke of the value of such retreats amid the peace and tranquility of nature.

The owner of the property led Kirpal and the initiates over the land where many took advantage of the pastoral setting to photograph the Master. The peaceful afternoon in these idyllic surroundings was made complete by Kirpal's informal talk on Karma. A public discourse in nearby Goddard College followed in the evening.

October 13 saw the long convoy traveling back to New Hampshire again, to visit Hampton, on the Atlantic coast, where the Master stayed for two days. Here, interviews had been arranged with local people who were interested in the WFR. At the request of a local minister, the Master gave an evening talk at the Exeter Congregational Church, just a few miles away. The following day, the Master and party were introduced to Governor King at the State House of New Hampshire.

The next day found the Master and party at Wentworth Castle, Jackson, in the northern half of New Hampshire. The tiny "castle" was the home of Countess Bnin de Bninski, who had been introduced to Kirpal when He was in Europe and she had invited Him to stay at her home. Meanwhile, the large entourage of disciples traveling with the Master found some local accommodations, hoping to – at some time – continue to enjoy the Master's darshan. This was dovetailed into the WFR program scheduled over the next few days in Jackson, N.H., and in Waterbury and Greenwich, Connecticut.

The tour group proceeded on to Rochester, New York, where the Master stayed at the Powers Hotel. During the one and a half days allowed in Rochester, the Master gave three public talks at the Powers Hotel, and an initiation procedure late in the evening of October 21, completing the procedure the following morning at 7:30 a.m.

The journey to Rochester from Connecticut and the continuation on from Rochester was made via the renowned New York Thruway, one of the most efficient and busiest highways in the U.S. On reaching the Buffalo area, a convenient route to Canada is to leave the Thruway and take the road to Niagara Falls, where one can easily cross the border into Ontario. En route to Hamilton, the Master was able to have a brief few minutes viewing the famous Falls which is, as everyone who sees it observes, 'an awful lot of water!'

Once on the Canadian side, Hamilton is just a few miles, where the home of the local group leader was ready and waiting – and so were more of the Master's followers. It can be noted that during the length of Kirpal's tour, His initiates would endeavor, if they could, to travel along with, or follow, the Master. Whenever their free time ran out, they would return to their homes with sadness at having had to depart, but with the rich reward of having enjoyed some days with their Guru. What better way of spending one's leave?

The Hamilton two-day program included three public talks – at the Connaught Hotel and at the Y.M.C.A. A radio interview was conducted by CHML Station. Some rather surprising admirers – a group of schoolchildren – came to where Kirpal was staying, to see "The Great Saint" of Whom they had heard. They came, not in one batch, but at different times, and they called him Santa Claus – not so frivolous when one remembers that these children knew nothing of the Master's Path and who the Master was. Quite a compliment, really! They were very enthusiastic and asked questions. They sat on the front lawn at Kirpal's feet and gazed at Him with shining faces. Kirpal answered their questions and gave them prasad in the form of apples. Several bushels

were needed to supply the crowds of excited children. It was such a joyful variance on the journey.

Someone suggested a meditation sitting for the children. Kirpal asked them if they would like to see the Light within. They all shouted 'Yes!' Their inner experiences were so good, they told their parents about it, some of whom came to meet the Master, even bringing other children. It was a unique happening on the tour. Naturally, the news reached the local journalists who were soon at the door requesting interviews and photographs, which appeared in the newspapers. A taped message by Kirpal was broadcast locally and on various other stations.

The Master left Hamilton late in the evening of October 23 for Toronto – approximately one hour by road. It was late when Kirpal and party arrived at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. It had been a very long day.

Meditation at the hotel the next day started the Toronto program, and this was followed by a talk. Afterwards, there was an appointment with the Lieut. Governor of Ontario, the Honorable Earl Rowe, at his office in the Government Buildings. In Canada, the Lieut. Governors of the provinces are counterparts of the more senior post of Governor-General, who represents the Queen of England. One of the more prominent functions of the Governor-General is to open the Canadian Parliament each year.

As the Mayor of Toronto was absent from the city, the City Clerk received the Master at City Hall and presented the Master with a medallion.

Meditation was held each morning and public discourses each evening, except for the last day, when a wedding ceremony was performed in the Master's hotel suite.

A young Toronto couple, both initiates, wished to be

married in the Master's presence. They asked the Unitarian minister if it would be possible for the Master to perform the ceremony. The good Reverend agreed, provided he sign the marriage certificate himself. The Master, however, said that the ceremony should follow the usual procedure, and stood beside the Reverend during the service and, having kept the ring in His pocket, handed it to the groom at the appropriate time. After garlanding the newly-married couple, Kirpal spoke on the subject of marriage for a few minutes. A reception for friends and family and members of their spiritual family – a large group of initiates – followed and was enjoyed by everyone. Early that morning, the Master had given initiation to a large group of seekers.

The Toronto page cannot be turned without relating how, during the busy program, the Master learned that Mr. James Straw, ever-willing assistant group leader and Master's devoted initiate, was sick and in St. Joseph's Hospital. Kirpal insisted on visiting His disciple. It was a pleasure for those who accompanied the Master to see Jim's face light up with joy and gratitude to behold his Master face to face – close up and personal – when he had thought he would be missing everything. The Master's visit put him firmly on the path to recovery.

En route to Chicago, Illinois, by road, brief one-day stops were made at Detroit and Grand Rapids, in Michigan, on October 28 and 29. Public talks and press interviews occurred in both cities. It is interesting to note that before the start of the Master's talk at the Fountain Street Church in Grand Rapids, the hall that had been allotted became full to overflowing, and the Minister suggested everyone repair to the main body of the church, which was eminently larger and which also ended up full to capacity.

Arriving at Chicago mid-afternoon on October 30, the Master and party went to rooms reserved in the Hotel Hamilton. A press conference at the hotel was held soon after the Master's arrival. A busy Satsang center thrived in the Chicago area under the guidance of the group leader. The one-week program was very tightly filled, covering public talks, meditation sittings, press interviews, religious meetings, visits to the University and other organizations, and a large number of private interviews with members of the public, who constantly requested time with the Master. Kirpal conducted two initiation procedures: on the mornings of November 2 and November 6. At the Chicago Space Club, Kirpal spoke to a group of space enthusiasts who were delighted with the interesting insights the Master had to offer. Over the years, Kirpal fielded many questions on innumerable subjects. He was very frank sometimes, in His answers. At other times, for His own reasons, He did not always answer the question in the way the questioner had hoped. Perfect Masters can open up the mysteries of the universe. They also are mysteries in themselves!

In Western Springs, Illinois – about one hour's drive from Chicago – the Master spent the day at "Kirpal Ashram", staying overnight at the residence of Gianmata Nikunja, a disciple who had started seeking the true spiritual path at a very young age. She had had an early vision of the Tibetan leader Ahazulama, who had promised initiation after a lengthy preparation. She worked hard but did not get the initiation or much experience. Meanwhile, she became a leader of others, including her guru's followers, after his death. When he appeared to her in 1961 and told her of Kirpal's forthcoming visit to the U.S., she was able to make contact with Ruhani Satsang and was initiated into the Master's Surat

Shabd Yoga. When she saw Baba Sawan within in 1962, He told her, 'You have contacted by Beloved Son, with whom and by whom I am very pleased.' At her request for a name, she was told, 'Kirpal Singh'. Since her initiation and since meeting Baba Sawan within, she had served only Kirpal. Many of her own followers were initiated. During the Master's visit on November 7, she and her husband served the Master and everyone who had accompanied Him.

After a brief stop at Galesburg, the Master and party, and the long entourage, went on to Davenport, Iowa, on the border of Illinois – about 150 miles from Chicago. When, after a talk at the Black Hawk Hotel, six people asked for initiation, they were told that there would not be enough time, but they could join everyone at the next station – Louisville, Kentucky – for initiation. However, the disappointed faces moved Kirpal to give them their desire and He spent from 10 p.m. to midnight doing so.

CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

On November 9 the Master left early for Louisville, arriving at 7:45 p.m. The six-day program in Louisville had been geared to serve the Master's children and the seeking souls with early meditation sittings, public talks, or heart to heart talks, private interviews with initiates, seekers and officials and, on November 14, initiation in the morning. Mrs. M. Gordon-Hughes*, the Louisville/Mid-West group leader, had, as always, worked hard on the program to ensure the Master had access to whomsoever wanted to meet Him.

Not the least of His children, a certain Ernest Beldauf from nearby New Albany had a most personal and amazing experience. First, the news came to Louisville that Ernest had been driving to meet the Master when his car had a nasty accident. Ernest was severely injured and not expected to live. The Master declared He would go to the hospital, taking also Mrs. Gordon-Hughes. The hospital people refused access, stating that the man's condition was critical. The Master entered Ernest's room anyway. The poor man was in pain, obviously, and could not speak but his eyes lit up on seeing the Master. Kirpal went to the bedside. He laid His hands gently on the sick man's chest, knowing that this

* Mrs. Gordon-Hughes' account of her approach to the Path can be found in the section covering the 1955 Tour, at p.353.

position was the pertinent spot. Ernest smiled at Kirpal and slowly nodded his head. The Master smiled back and told him to meditate and not to worry.

It was the next day that everyone learned about the "miraculous recovery" of Ernest Beldauf. The crushed chest bones were no longer crushed and Ernest was sitting up and smiling.

At the American Printing House for the Blind, Kirpal made a recording of His talk so that individual copies could be given to physically blind people. When He had visited the Blind School in Dehra Dun in India, He had initiated a number of the students there, who had experienced such wonderful inner sight that they no longer regarded themselves to be "blind". On this subject, Kirpal frequently quoted Kabir, who had said that the blind were not those 'without seeing eyes' on their faces, but those who had no inner vision.

The Governor of Kentucky received the Master at the State Capitol in Frankfort, and honored Him the Kentucky way, by bestowing the rank of "Kentucky Colonel", saying that he was very pleased to recognize in some small way the amount of humanitarian and spiritual work the Master had done and was doing.

If one amazing healing was not enough for the followers to think about, another unusual happening occurred when the group leader from New York, Ben Ringel, who was traveling along with the Master, heard some sad news.

Now, Ben had been following the Master's convoy constantly – not just in his car, but towing a U-Haul trailer filled with all the trappings and paraphernalia that were necessary to conduct an efficient tour and serve the Master at any

time. He had been recruited for this labor of love to ensure that nothing they would need throughout the long tour was unavailable. As one can imagine, each mile traveled added a few odds and ends to the inventory of the U-Haul. At the end of each station could be heard a typical conversation: 'Where is Ben Ringel?' 'Oh, he is packing up the U-Haul!' At each stop, it became more difficult. 'It's like a jigsaw puzzle!' Ben would say.

On November 13, Ben Ringel heard from his wife in Philadelphia that his mother, ill with terminal cancer, was dying. Thinking of all the work he was doing on the tour, and then of his mother, whom he loved, he went to the Master. What should he do? The Master asked him what he wanted to do and Ben replied that he wanted to do what was absolutely necessary. The Master told him to continue, but to keep in touch with his wife daily. When he omitted to do this one particular day, the Master reminded him to call home. Ben made the call, and discovered that the latest tests at the hospital revealed that the cancerous tumors were gone and the results were negative. The cancer had disappeared along with the tumors!

Kirpal tells us that Masters do not, as a rule, perform miracles – not because they cannot, but because miracles are not very high on the priority list of Perfect Masters, who are chiefly interested in the soul, not the body. Having said that, He also tells us that Masters have a huge, unimaginable compassion. That compassion works under the law of love, not the law of give and take. The Master's love expresses itself in so many ways not cognizant by the ordinary mind and does not work under the laws governing miracles.

To continue with Ben Ringel's tour experience, we find him traveling alone in his car, towing the U-Haul to Seattle from Minneapolis (the station immediately after

Louisville) via Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana and Washington States. Although the Master and party would go by air, anyone who could not fly would drive all the way; of course, reaching there sometime after the Master's arrival. Ben, with his over-stuffed U-Haul, could only take the luggage by road, or leave everything behind, but, conscious of his duty, he was not about to do that.

Cheerfully starting his long journey, he made good time until Montana, where the car developed clutch trouble. Ben stopped in a town, got it replaced and continued on his way toward the goal of Seattle on the Pacific Coast. The route was through the mountains of both Montana and Washington.

It was not an ideal run in the month of November, when winter starts early in the Rockies and other ranges. Driving along in bad weather, the car suddenly skidded on the road, crossed the highway and went over the bank, landing sixty feet below. Ben heard the voice of Kirpal reassuring him as the car dropped. When it landed, it was on all four tires, right way up, as was the U-Haul. The engine was running merrily! Ben, there and then, said a silent prayer of gratitude to his Master, for only He had saved him, *and* had saved the car, the U-Haul, and all its contents. How fortunate are Kirpal's children who do their work, whatever it may be, with the Beloved Guru alongside them all the way. The journey continued on to Seattle uneventfully.

Meanwhile, Kirpal had finished the Louisville program with initiation on November 14. That night, the Master boarded a train for Minneapolis. The train left at 11:15 p.m. but did not reach the destination until 5 p.m. the next day. With a short program of one day only, the Master was on the dais of the Mayo Memorial Auditorium of the Minnesota University Hospital at 8 p.m. This was followed the next day with an early morning initiation. The Master caught a

flight to Seattle in the afternoon. The group leaders there welcomed Him at the airport, along with Dr. John Lovelace from San Jose, California. The familiar pattern was put into action for the Seattle program of two days.

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada has a large contingent of Indian residents, including many Punjabis. It was fitting, therefore, for Kirpal to speak first at the Sikh Gurudwara in the city, and to choose some passages from the Guru Granth Sahib to include in His discourse in Punjabi (with English alongside).

The large audience was so delighted to hear their own scriptures so expertly commented. The Master was very much in demand, especially by the Indian and Canadian initiates. It was difficult to accommodate so many and also include the various dignitaries i.e. the French Consul-General; the Premier of British Columbia; the Reverend George Tuttle of the United Church; the Marquis of Castelthomonde; Reverend Hayden Stewart of the Agape Fellowship; the Roman Catholic Archbishop; and a reception by Mr. Peter Schroeder who presented a number of other Christian leaders; and various other officials. The Vancouver group leaders, Mr. and Mrs. Nagra, were on hand to assist in every way. Each evening a talk was offered at a different venue. Initiation was held on the last morning of the program, with two more talks that day.

The next station was San Jose in California, so the Master and party left Vancouver at 6:45 a.m. by air for San Francisco, on November 22. That date will be remembered by most as the fateful day of President John Kennedy's assassination in Dallas, Texas. Kirpal was given this news while in the air. His remarks on this tragic happening were:

'President Kennedy was truly a great man. If he had lived longer, he would have helped the world situation greatly.'

The journey from San Francisco to San Jose (about 50 miles) took approximately one hour. Kirpal would stay at the home of Dr. and Mrs. John Lovelace, the group leaders for the area. The first day was filled with interviews with the followers, a press conference and an informal heart to heart talk in the evening at the Lovelace house. Morning meditation continued each day, and more interviews with religious leaders and officials to follow. November 24 and 25 had two public talks each day instead of one, and another press conference on the 25th. A visit to the Lovelace goat farm was included.

A two-day program followed at Carmel (about 85 miles from San Jose), during which time a wedding ceremony for two initiates was performed in the Master's presence.

After initiation on the 28th, everyone left for Fresno (about 170 miles). In the two-day program, the first evening talk was given in the home of a follower, where the Master stayed. The second evening talk was at the Y.M.C.A. in Fresno. The usual interviews and meditation filled in the program, with initiation on the morning of November 30.

The plan was to return directly to San Francisco after the initiation procedure, but the Master had heard about Frank Laginha, whose legs had been crushed by machinery and who was being treated in a hospital in Sonora. Frank was bravely refusing non-vegetarian food, about which the hospital was being very difficult. He struggled without food for eight days, when the doctors gave in and allowed him food from home. It was a reward for such staunch obedience to his Guru when his Guru Himself walked into his room. He considered the whole thing worthwhile to be able

to have the great blessing of Kirpal's darshan, when he had feared he would miss His whole visit.

One and a half days in San Francisco and three days in Santa Barbara followed. The home of an initiate couple was open for the Master and the group accompanying Him, and a very successful reception was held there, along with two public talks in San Francisco and initiation on the morning of December 2. In Santa Barbara, the local group leader, Mr. Dara Emery, had organized two public discourses at the Church of Religious Science. A press conference and a radio interview were also on the program.

Group leader Mrs. Lucille Gunn, who had just previously spent some time in India with the Master, had prepared her home in the Los Angeles area for His arrival on the evening of December 5.

The dedication to her Satguru was readily observed when she gave her keys to the Master and told Him that she would be staying elsewhere, in order that His visit to Montrose may be free from any difficulty. Also, she had stocked her garage with every kind of food and supplies, so that those accompanying Kirpal might be fed and cared for. The long entourage was considerable by this time - California being well-known for an abundance of seekers after spiritual things. It was not surprising therefore, that Lucille had also prepared a well-packed program.

Public talks were given on the 7th and 8th evenings, with a visit to Ananda Ashram at La Crescenta on the 6th evening, where the Master was welcomed by followers of the late Paramahansa Yogananda, led by Sri Mralini Mata, in the absence of the leader, Gayatri Devi.

Everyone there enjoyed the Master's talk. An additional discourse was given on the morning of the 8th on the

subject of "We are the children of Light. How can that Light be known and how can we become one with that Light", at the Unity Church of the Valley, in La Crescenta.

In nearby Los Angeles, Baces Hall was used for meditation sittings, public talks and initiation, together with numerous interviews, from December 9 to 11. On December 12 the Master was invited back to Ananda Ashram and a tour of the entire center and gardens was enjoyed by everyone, followed by tea and refreshments. The Master left immediately after this for Tustin, to visit the Cowan Heights Ranch, a few miles beyond the Los Angeles suburbs, in a south-easterly direction.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter and Elsie Cowan, Western U.S. Representatives of Ruhani Satsang, offered hospitality not only to Kirpal and party, but to as many followers as the huge ranch could cope with. A cafeteria was set up for all comers to enjoy meals all day, with a car-park set aside for the hundreds of vehicles. Beds were made available for those satsangis who could not find other accommodation. The Master gave a short talk at His reception. Interviews followed and a regular discourse in the evening, all at the ranch. Meditation was held early on the morning of the 13th after which Kirpal left for Escondido (about 70 miles SE of Tustin).

At Harmony Grove, Escondido, the Master gave four public talks in two days. Many followers and newcomers attended the program of talks, meditation and initiation in this beautiful retreat.

On December 15 afternoon, the Master returned to Tustin. That evening a meeting was called in the Master's presence for group leaders on the western side of the continent, and administrative matters were discussed at some

length. Tustin had a further three-day program of talks, meditation and interviews, with initiation on December 18.

Dona and Charles Kelley were disciples of some seniority and had, in fact, been initiated by Baba Sawan Singh. However, since meeting His successor, Kirpal, in 1955, Dona had seen the qualities of her Guru in Kirpal and had remained a staunch and devoted group leader, working hard for the cause, which she considered one and the same as her Master's. Hazur would always be embedded securely in her heart, but our souls are part of that ever-omnipotent God and cannot but recognize the Light of that God when it shines in all its fullness.

The visit to the Kelleys' home in Beaumont (about 75 miles from Tustin) began on December 19 but was just for one and a half days. The party returned for the evening of the 20th.

The next morning, Kirpal traveled from Los Angeles to Dallas, Texas, by air where He was greeted by Baron von Blomberg and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence who would be the Master's hosts. Organized by the Baron, there were many meetings and interviews with prominent personages of Dallas, who were introduced to the concept of the WFR by the Master, speaking as clear and concise as ever. At a reception in the Statler-Hilton Hotel on December 22, Kirpal enlarged on the theme. With the recent scene of tragedy in Dallas, religious and political leaders were very receptive to the aims of the WFR and could approve the value of approaching all problems of establishing world-wide peace from a positive, harmonious and religious viewpoint. At the city hall, the Mayor of Dallas introduced Kirpal to the city council; this was followed by the Master's address in

the council chambers.

The next stop was Houston, Texas (about 250 miles by road) and the Master, with a long convoy of cars trailing, left early on December 24, arriving in the afternoon at the Savoy-Field Hotel in downtown Houston; a press conference in the hotel followed, and that night Kirpal gave a discourse at the World Trade Center. Late that evening, as a follow-up to the press conference, the Master appeared on television.

On Christmas Day, regular meditation started the day's program and many interviews were given by the Master. During the evening talk at St. James Episcopal Church, Kirpal spoke of Christmas and told how the Christ Power had been in the world long before Jesus and that everyone should celebrate that power each and every day.

Through the years, at different times, people have asked the Master, 'When is Christ returning?' His answer was, 'Has He ever left you?' Kirpal's explanation of how that Power is extended through the generations, from one human pole to another, was always a very feasible conception of God working among His children. God manifests His power in the human form, He is not the human form itself, even though that form is given due deference.

The day after Christmas was busy too, with two visits to radio stations, interviews and a conference with the Catholic nuns at the Convent of the Good Shepherd, which ran a home for delinquent girls. A reception was held for Kirpal at the Junior Achievement Association, with the TV cameramen present to record the event for television. A public talk at the World Trade Center completed the day. The group leader felt the Texas tour had been both successful and auspicious, especially as they had had the pleasure

of the Master's company on Christmas Day.

During the stay in Texas, the Master had dictated His usual Christmas / New Year message, which would go out to all His children the world over. In that message was a number of pointers to all His followers, including a beautiful phrase: 'Like a flute, be all vacant from within, so that the Master may make sweet music of your life.'

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

When the Master flew into Tampa on the west coast of Florida the evening of December 27, that state's program was about to start. After being greeted by three of the Florida groupleaders, the Master was then driven to Palmetto (about 50 miles), where He would stay that night.

In St. Petersburg the next day, interviews were arranged at the Toffenetti Hotel. In a break for lunch, the Master was driven over to the home of an initiate lady. Some years later, this lady told of the strange happening while the Master was staying at her home in St. Petersburg.

On the patio, an orange tree was growing. For many years, it was barren. The gardener had said, 'This tree will never produce fruit!' During the Master's stay there, He enjoyed walking around the grounds and garden, morning and evening.

The amazing thing was that from the Master's visit onwards, this same tree produced oranges each year, all year round. The quality of those oranges was confirmed by two small children who politely asked for some fruit from the tree one day. One child said, 'These oranges are delicious, for I have eaten from this tree before; the Lord came and blessed them!' Perhaps the same tree is still there on that patio.

Two public talks were given at the Scottish Rite Club and on the 29th morning Kirpal was the guest speaker for the United Church group, at the same venue. He spoke on comparative religion.

On December 30, the Mayor of St. Petersburg, Mr. Herman Goldner, presented the Master with the Key to the City. The press were there in force and the ceremony was televised on two channels. That evening, Kirpal spoke at the Women's Club of Sarasota (about 30 miles from St. Petersburg). The busy program had been interwoven with interview periods for initiates and officials. Initiation was at the Toffenetti Hotel, followed later by an informal talk with the new initiates in the hotel lounge, covering a number of aspects of the Master's teachings. That evening Kirpal spoke to all the disciples and gave them advice for the start of the new year, which was on the morrow.

New Year's Day, 1964, started with another informal talk before the motorcade left for Miami, a long trip of about 270 miles. In the evening, Kirpal arrived in Miami to stay at the home of Phil and Etta Perrin in northeast Miami.

Jerry Astra Turk, group leader in Miami, along with many initiates, also welcomed the Master and His party. An informal talk was given after a short rest and food. The Perrin's home was an ever-open door for the length of the Master's stay. Food for everyone was always available, with the Perrins on hand to offer hospitality.

After meditation on the 2nd, an interview at the Miami Herald office led to an excellent write-up in the newspaper. Members of the press were present when the Master was taken to see the Seaquarium on January 4 where He was received by the Director of Public Relations for the establishment. The dolphins caused a mild sensation when they

obviously enjoyed the very closeness of the Master, when He was allowed to sit on the wall of the tank. As He put His hand closer, one dolphin appeared to "nibble" at the Master's sleeve, to the great delight of the huge observing crowd, made up of members of the public as well as many initiates. A manatee or sea cow also "rose" (literally) to the occasion, a rarity for that mammal. A boy, watching with his mother, declared excitedly many times that Jesus had come to the Seaquarium.

Nightly public talks were given at various venues. Each day was filled with interviews and meetings. A Reverend Mark A.C. Karras awarded Kirpal the Imperial Order of St. Constantine the Great, on behalf of the Hellenic Sector of the Constantinian Order in U.S.A. The Reverend spoke of the Principles of the WFR and how akin they were to those of the Byzantine and Constantine Orders. Kirpal gave a short speech, and referred to some of the leaders He had met in Athens.

Before leaving for Panama, the Master gave a talk to the initiates, on the morning of January 7. The flight to Panama left in mid-afternoon, arriving at 8:30 p.m. and was met by the group leaders who were also the hosts, and also by a large crowd of initiates and people from the press who covered the arrival of Kirpal very efficiently, considering the condition in Panama at the time, which made very urgent daily news.

The unrest in Panama rendered the public section of the program very difficult. The following day's program comprised interviews with disciples, a press conference, a television interview and an evening discourse at the Canal Zone Jewish Welfare Board. This same venue was used the next evening. At this point in the program, martial law took

effect in the city and all public functions were forbidden – this included the Ruhani Satsang program. Although the streets constantly threatened danger, Master's children and other seekers braved the issue and ran the gauntlet. Those who did so enjoyed beautiful moments with the Master and invaluable meditation sittings.

The Master's visit to Panama City was acting as a central meeting point, not only for those living in Panama but for many from other countries in Central and South America. Some of these initiates and seekers came thousands of miles to be with the Master, including the group leaders for Bolivia, who had taken on the important work of translating the Master's books into Spanish.

On the way to the talk on the 9th, the small convoy – consisting of the Master's car, then an initiate and her two small sons and three others, plus two other cars filled with more followers – was attacked by a large crowd of rioters. With curses against Americans, they smashed the windshield of one of the cars, rendering it almost impossible to see through. (This car and the others following were consequently separated from the Master's car.) Ducking behind the wheel, the driver accelerated and managed to get through the worst of the mob. The car behind followed closely and also came through. All the cars following the Master were badly damaged by the rocks that had come hurtling at them, but no one was hurt. One of the small boys had jubilantly shouted encouragement to others in his car: 'Don't worry, the Master is with us!' And so He was.

When the convoy reached the auditorium, the Master was there, waiting. He went straight to one of the drivers, who was covered in broken glass but unharmed. At the Master's concern for her, she just thanked Him for saving everyone.

A store owned by the group leaders was near a building that had been burned down. When the angry rioters came to it, one of them shouted, 'No, this is not an American's store!' The Master was thanked for this grace.

That night, talk of more riots in their residential area caused some panic. The Master ordered that six men should guard the neighborhood and everyone else should sleep - every night until peace returned. Even after warnings from the military that everyone should leave, Kirpal reassured everyone, but told them to be on guard. The Master's protection was clearly proven to everyone during those anxious days, and no one connected to the Master suffered any harm.

However, one inconvenience caused some small problems. The Pan American Airlines building was set on fire by the rioters. The passports of the Master and the other Indian members of the party had been left with the Airline to complete the flight reservations, and the passports were burned in the fire and had to be replaced as quickly as possible through the Indian Diplomatic Corps. Everyone agreed that this was an insignificant setback, compared to the danger that had hung over everyone's head.

On January 17, having completed the meditation, initiation and (at private houses) the discourses of the program, the Master and party boarded a Pan American flight for Miami in the late afternoon. At Miami, the Master stayed the night at the Perrins' house; a meeting with the disciples was organized in the morning, followed by an informal talk. Then the flight to Baltimore left in the afternoon with the whole entourage continuing on to Washington DC by road.

In Washington, the final North American tour program was put into operation with meditation sittings, public and

informal talks, a visit to the Indian Embassy, a large press conference and many interviews – especially with the initiates, who wanted every opportunity to be close to the Master on those last few days before His departure to India.

On January 25, a celebration of the Master's coming birthday (February six) was held and attended by many disciples. A cake was made and placed before Kirpal that evening, although this was never a thing that He approved of when it had been done in Delhi. There were many candles on the large cake. These all were lit and the Master obliged the excited people by using His handkerchief to "wave" out the flames. Through all the years of birthdays, Kirpal voiced His disapproval of making much of the special day but His kindness, knowing the motive was one of love, usually took over and everyone celebrated the event.

After completing the busy last days of the North American section of the tour, on January 29 the Master and His Indian companions flew out of New York en route for India. He left behind many a wet eye at the airport.

It was not a direct flight, but went via Frankfurt, Germany. At Frankfurt, just for a few hours, some of the German initiates were fortunate to be able to briefly enjoy His presence. The next stop was Munich, where He would board the flight to Delhi. Frau Fitting and some other disciples accompanied Him to Munich. There, inevitably, came the sad final tour farewell, and He boarded the last flight. Saying 'farewell' to the Master had been very painful for all His followers, wherever it happened, all through the tour. Some had spent just a few days with Him; some only hours; and some had tried to keep up with Him for the whole itinerary; but, wherever it occurred, saying farewell to the Master was a heartbreak thing for those who loved Him.

At 5 a.m. on January 31, Kirpal's plane landed at Delhi Airport. A car drew up to the aircraft and the airport authority politely requested that Kirpal should get into the car and drive away, detouring the official immigration and customs checks, in order to avoid causing a large congestion. They told Him that the airport's main terminal hall and other areas were packed with followers – all anxious to have a glimpse of their Guru, Who had been away from them for so long.

Try as they may, it was impossible to circumvent the difficulty, for Kirpal was seen as the officials were leading Him through certain areas. The whole crowd surged forward, each person determined to exit the airport and meet the Master outside. Kirpal did His best to greet as many as He could, but at the insistence of the airport officials, He finally left the area in the car, bound for Sawan Ashram.

The Ashram was an even busier place, filled with happy disciples, smiling at each other, congratulating each other that today they would all be in His presence once again.

The huge sea of faces included people from all over the country, all sitting happily at His feet as He gazed with love at everyone from the height of the Satsang dais. Eventually, Kirpal was able to descend from the dais and slowly make His way to His Ashram house where Hardevi insisted that He rest for a short time and take some food.

The excited initiates were not the only ones to join in the welcome. A sizeable selection of religious dignitaries, headed by Muni Sushil Kumar, was there also to greet Kirpal and to congratulate Him on His long and successful tour. A press conference was held on February 2, attended by journalists and reporters who wanted information on Kirpal's work abroad.

The Ashram was in the throes of preparing for the coming

birthday celebration. There would be many more people gathering there for that event. The sevadars were kept running around, allocating sleeping areas and eating areas; the Ashram kitchen staff were frantically organizing meals for multiple thousands. There was so much to do and the day would soon arrive.

On the birthday eve, every corner of the Ashram grounds was filled with sleeping humanity, although many were too excited to sleep. The uncountable multitude were drawn from all over India, like the action of a magnet – drawn to Kirpal by a magnificent power of love. As always, they were expecting, hoping, that the Master would come out from His house early in the morning and, until that time, many were singing hymns of love that entreated Him to come and join them. And so He did, and everyone was able to have that first darshan of the day. It was a very, very special time. As He faced them all and greeted them with folded hands, a hush settled over everywhere and the atmosphere was alive with love and with light – a totally indescribable moment of wonder . . . a rare experience.

The Master told them all to meditate – to make the best use of this rare opportunity – and they did, for about an hour. After a brief interlude for breakfast, the morning Satsang started and the dais was filled with religious leaders – all of whom had something laudable to say about Kirpal.

The rest of the day progressed. Everyone had lunch. Then evening Satsang. It was a long, happy day. The Master had composed His annual “Birthday Message” to be sent to all His disciples throughout the world. Included in that message, He said, ‘A true man is one who is truthful, lives a life of continence, radiates love for all others, for the sake of God residing in them, and knows “giving”,

“giving”, and always “giving”. We never lose anything when we give.’

There were hundreds of adults and children who wanted to receive the Naam and the next day was devoted to Initiation. Muni Sushil Kumar had called a press conference, and a very large Sant Samagam, or Gathering of Saints, had been organized, to be attended by all the religious leaders plus members of government and other officials, in order to honor Kirpal for His work on the tour, including spreading the news of the WFR.

The event was held at the huge Ramlila Grounds. The attending public was in the thousands and their enthusiastic cheers rose above the voices of the speakers. Muni Sushil Kumar took on the task of describing how the Master had worked for the WFR throughout the whole tour, which, through His love and wisdom, had appealed to so many people. Each leader in turn rose to voice his appreciation of all Kirpal’s efforts over the long eight months abroad.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

Jawaharlal Nehru was born in Allahabad*, Uttar Pradesh, on November 14, 1889, into a wealthy Brahmin family, the highest class in the caste system. He spent his school years at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, in the United Kingdom. In the long years of India's bid for freedom, he was very closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi. When that freedom was finally realized, he was the obvious and popular choice for Prime Minister of the new Republic, having gained enormous favor with the people through his unselfish and dedicated service during the country's struggles to cast off British rule.

His Prime Ministership began on August 15, 1947, and he was still working at this post when he died on May 27, 1964. He was a man of the people and his loss was a massive blow to them, for they felt they had lost their hero. They flocked to New Delhi from everywhere and the cortege was surrounded by an uncountable mass of mourning humanity. Nehru's body lay on the open bier, his face calm and serene.

Pandit Nehru had met Kirpal many times, especially at different public functions. However, shortly before Kirpal was due to leave on the 1963/64 Tour to the West,

* 643 km./402 mi. southeast of Delhi, by road.

He received a message that the Prime Minister would like to see Him.

Kirpal went to the P.M.'s residence* and was ushered into his private chambers. The doors were locked – no one was allowed in. What went on in that room for more than an hour, nobody knows, except the two people present inside. Kirpal never mentioned it.

The one difference that was observed in Nehru after this event was his various references to a Higher Power, with remarks like 'There is no hope for mankind, but for spirituality. Spirituality is man's ultimate hope.'

Shortly after Kirpal's return from the tour, Nehru again requested a private meeting with the Master at the P.M.'s residence to hear all about the tour and the progress of His work. A few days after Nehru's funeral in New Delhi on May 27/28, 1964, Kirpal was sitting in His reception room late one evening, a few followers present. With a sad expression, He spoke: 'Jawaharlal Nehru was a great man, devoted to his motherland. He sacrificed everything for India. But his greatness did not end there. His love reached lands far away. He loved the whole world, selflessly, without thought for himself. He wanted to serve the whole of humanity. No ordinary man can be like that – only the chosen few are sent to Earth to do that work.'

'Such souls sacrifice their family, riches and comfort for the sake of others. What these rare beings do is beyond ordinary men's power. Ordinary men are self-centered and think only of their own interests and welfare. Through their narrow-minded outlook, they are their own enemies, and through creating hate, avarice and bloodshed around them, religious wars develop and millions are killed because of it.'

* After his death, this New Delhi residence was made a museum, dedicated to Nehru's memory.

Continuing, Kirpal said, 'I had a close connection with Nehru Ji, since the last four years – actually, since 1957. We met many times. Always he met me as someone meets his own. It is true he avoided customs and rituals of various religions; he had no sympathy for hypocritical show, but true Dharma* was a part of him. Without showing any interest in outer religion, he was in fact a truly religious man. He once said that the leaders of the country have failed in their duties not just in India, but the whole world has this failing. "There will be no hope for man until he learns to stand for the Truth. Spirituality is the only hope for the world all over."'

It was rare for Kirpal to comment in depth on the life of any individual, and indicates the considerable regard He had for Jawaharlal Nehru.

Kirpal was touring the Ruhani Satsang centres in Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), when the 1964 monsoon started. Delhi had non-stop rain for a week, so there was widespread flooding, including the Ashram and the nearby colonies (the neighboring Electric Colony, etc.).

For a night and a day, water in the Ashram was anything from two to four feet deep. Women, children and the elderly were helped to leave the Ashram at 3 a.m. on August 15, and were taken to a building on higher ground, owned by a satsangi. What a strange and frightening sight to see the Ashram with the flotsam of food, vegetables and other detritus floating around, with the snakes and rats, etc. washed out of their holes. Kirpal's residence also had about two feet of water.

* The meaning of Dharma is given in Kirpal's book, "The Wheel of Life", Ch.1: "The moral and religious basis upholding and supporting the Universe."

Kirpal was expected back from His tour that very evening, but it was feared He would be delayed by the bad condition of the roads for miles around the capital city. However, as He had promised, there was His car around 4 p.m. sighted by someone who ran with the news: 'Maharaj Ji has come, Maharaj Ji has come!' Everyone forgot their woes, the fear of their houses collapsing and so on. (Due to the lack of time and funds when building the Ashram, brickwork was mortared and plastered with mud, sand and straw.)

Now, everything was forgotten in the joy of seeing their beloved Master stepping down from the car and walking toward them. The car had been driven as close to the Ashram as possible and Kirpal waded through water a foot deep to reach those who had come to greet Him.

Fortunately, the flood receded almost as fast as it had come and Kirpal went to every house and every room of the residents to assess the damage. Only then did He enter His own rooms, which had been somewhat cleaned up by the sevadars. Kirpal gazed sadly at His damaged books, but quickly gathered everyone together, encouraging them to think not just of their own homes, but of the whole Ashram as theirs, and to start with a will to clean up and repair wherever it was urgently required, from one end of Sawan Ashram to the other.

This willing spirit kept the work agoing, with Kirpal helping each group in turn, inspiring them with His presence and His fellowship, working alongside them, pitching into the work with His own hands. It filled their hearts with joy and happiness.

This severe flooding was the reason for raising the whole Ashram by about two feet, including the houses, roofs, other buildings, the grounds, etc. It was a huge project, but everything was done in a few months, due to the devotion of the

satsangis from Delhi and other places, who worked tirelessly.

The architects and engineers among the followers and visitors to the Ashram were fascinated with the question of how the structures had kept erect during the onslaught of water, knowing that they were held together merely with mud. What was it that prevented them from collapsing?!

In that same year, the Master also travelled to Punjab and Rajasthan.

Early in 1964, a representative of the "Friends of Social and Cultural Association", along with some of its members, visited Sawan Ashram to have a long talk with Kirpal. The entire complement of the society had been so very impressed by Kirpal's ideas, suggestions and all His work through the WFR to bring about peace and harmony among all religions, that they wanted to see another conference of leaders to further the work, and offered to host such an endeavor. They had been following all Kirpal's work in this regard and looked upon Him as the only one who could achieve such a difficult task. His humility, love and sincerity and His dedication to the worthy cause had endeared Him to their hearts and rendered Him high in their respect and admiration.

They suggested that, as so many years had passed since the first big WFR Conference, it was time for another one in the capital city. Kirpal approved this, so they requested His presidency over a meeting to discuss the forthcoming event, to which He agreed.

Following this, an open meeting was held in the Central Park at Lodhi Colony, New Delhi, on April 5, 1964. Owing to the Indian government's deep interest in the religious situation – unrest and riots linked to the name of religion – many officials attended, including the Minister of Broadcasting,

Mr. Shiam Lal; the Minister of Aviation, Mr Ahmed Mahihu Din; and a number of other senior officials.

The religious leaders were there in strong force. From Pakistan, a well-known Islamic leader, Pir Makhdoon Fazal Shah, was so interested in Kirpal's talks on the subject that he said in his speech, 'This wave, which has started to string together all the different thoughts on religion, will join everyone like so many different flowers in a garland of love and understanding. It has so overwhelmed me that I am going back to tell the people of Pakistan about it.'

This gathering was followed by another meeting. This time, the principle officers of the WFR convened at Lady Harding Road, New Delhi, and the suggestion of another WFR Conference was enthusiastically received and approved. Once again, the members of the Government would be happy to take part.

So plans for the third (World) WFR Conference began and, eight years after the first Conference in 1957, it was held in New Delhi in February 1965. It was well attended by religious leaders, politicians and a huge assemblage of the public.

Kirpal's welcoming speech at this event covers some very interesting points, some of which are recorded here:

'My own self, in the form of ladies and gentlemen: We have, once again, gathered together in the historic town of Delhi. This time the Conference of the World Fellowship of Religions, the third of its kind, is being held at a place known as Ramlila Grounds – grounds made hallowed, year after year, by the performance of scenes from the life story of Lord Rama who, in the ancient epic age, symbolized in him the highest culture of Aryavarta, the land of the Aryans. He is worshipped even now as ever before as an ideal in the

different phases of life – an ideal son, an ideal brother, an ideal husband and an ideal king; and significantly enough, his life portrays, above all, the eternal struggle that is going on between virtue and vice, both in the mind of man and in the world around him, leading to ultimate triumph of good over evil.

'The idea of World Fellowship of Religions, as you all know, is not a new one. We have had instances of it in the past when enlightened kings like Kharwal, Ashoka, Samudra Gupta, Harsha Verdana, Akbar and Jehangir held such conferences, each in his own way, to understand the viewpoint of various religions prevailing at the time, and invited the learned men of the realm to translate the scriptures of various religions in the current language of the people. In the present era, the idea was revived when in 1893 a Parliament of Religions was held at Chicago. The present forum was thought of by Muni Sushil Kumar Ji, who conceived the idea of instituting a World Fellowship of Religions under whose auspices international conferences could be held and sustained work could be undertaken for promoting mutual respect and understanding of various religions.

'Our first Conference was held in November 1957, in the Diwan-i-Aam, the Hall of Public Audience in the Red Fort. About three years later, in February 1960, Calcutta became the venue for its deliberations. I am glad that the Fellowship has, during this interval, grown from strength to strength. It is encouraging to see all the delegates that have assembled from the four corners of the earth, representing countless shades of religious thought and opinion, but united in one common endeavor to find out the essential and basic unity of all religions, the common meeting ground where all faiths are one. In short, we are in search of the Grand Truth of Life, the bedrock of all existence, no

matter at what level.

All religions agree that Life, Light and Love are the three phases of the Supreme Source of all that exists. These essential attributes of the divinity that is one, though designated differently by the prophets and peoples of the world, are also wrought in the very pattern of every sentient being. It is in this vast ocean of Love, Light and Life that we live, have our very being and move about and yet, strange as it may seem, like the proverbial fish in water, we do not know this truth and much less practice it in our daily life; and hence the endless fear, helplessness and misery that we see around us in the world, in spite of all our laudable efforts and sincere strivings to get rid of them. Love is the only touchstone wherewith we can measure our understanding of the twin principles of Life and Light in us and how far we have traveled on the path of self-knowledge and God-knowledge. God is love; the soul in man is a spark of that love, and love again is the link between God and man on the one hand and man and God's creation on the other. It is therefore said: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love."^{*} Similarly, Guru Gobind Singh says: "Verily I say unto thee, that he whose heart is bubbling over with love, he alone shall find God." Love, in a nutshell, is the fulfillment of the Law of Life and Light. All the prophets, all the religions and all the scriptures hang on two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."^{**} 'Questioned as to our attitude toward our enemies, Christ said: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to

* 1 John 4:8.

** Matthew 22:37,38,39.

them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."*

'With the yardstick of love (the very essence of God's character) with us, let us probe our hearts. Is our life an efflorescence of God's love? Do we keep our hearts open to the healthy influences coming from outside? Are we patient and tolerant toward those who differ from us? Are our minds coextensive with the creation of God and ready to embrace the totality of His being? Do we bleed inwardly at the sight of the downtrodden and the depressed? Do we pray for the sick and suffering humanity? If we do not do any of these things, we are yet far removed from God and from religion, no matter how loud we may be in our talk . . .

' . . . This world, after all, is not and cannot be so bad as we take it to be. It is a manifestation of the Life Principle of the Creator and is being sustained by His Light. His Love is at the bottom of all this. The world, with its various religions, is made for us and we are to benefit from them. One cannot learn swimming on dry land. All that we have to do is to correctly learn and understand the basic live truths as are embodied in our scriptures, and practice them carefully under the guidance of some theocentric saint. These scriptures came into being by God-inspired prophets, and as such, some God-intoxicated person or a Godman can give us a proper interpretation of them, initiate us into their right import by reconciling the seeming discrepancies in thought, and finally help us inwardly on the God-path. Without such practical guidance, both without and within, we are trapped in the magic spell of forms and minds, and cannot possibly reach the esoteric truths lying under a mass of verbiage of

* Matthew 5:44,45,48.

the bygone ages now solidified into fossils, and, with the lapse of time, into institutionalized forms and formularies of the ruling class.

'Every religion has of necessity a three-fold aspect: first, the traditional, comprising myths and legends for the lay brethren; second, the philosophical treatises based on reason, to satisfy the hunger of the intellectuals concerned more with the why and wherefore of things than anything else, with great stress on the theory of the subject and emphasis on ethical development, which is so very necessary for spiritual growth; and third, the esoteric part, the central core in every religion, meant for the chosen few, the genuine seekers after Truth. This last part deals with the mystic personal experiences of the founders of all religions and other advanced souls. It is this part, called mysticism, the core of all religions, that has to be sifted and enshrined in the heart for practice and experience. These inner experiences of all the sages and seers from time immemorial are the same, irrespective of the religio-social orders to which they belonged, and deal in the main with the Light and Life of God – no matter at what level – and the methods and means for achieving direct results are also similar. "Religious experience," says Plotinus, "lies in the finding of the true home by the exile," meaning the pilgrim soul, to whom the Kingdom of God is at present just a lost province. Similarly, Henri Bergson, another great philosopher, tells us, "The surest way to Truth is by perception, by intuition, by reasoning to a certain point and then taking a mortal leap."

'These philosophers have said nothing new. They have just repeated in their own way the time-honored ancient truths regarding Para Vidya, the Knowledge of the Beyond, the references to which in terse and succinct form we find in all the scriptures of the world. For example, in Christian

theology we have: "Learn to die so that you may begin to live"; and St. Paul significantly adds: "I die daily"; Also we have: "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it."**

'The holy prophet of Arabia speaks of "Mautu Kibal Ant Mautu", i.e. death before actual death. Dadu and other saints likewise say: "Learn to die while living", for in the end, of course, everyone has to die.

'Thus, we have seen that "Life and Light of God" constitute the only common ground at which all religions do meet and if we could take hold of these saving lifelines, we can become live centers of spirituality, no matter to what religion we owe our allegiance for the fulfillment of our social needs and the development of our moral well-being.

'God made man and man in the course of time made religions as so many vehicles for his uplift, according to the prevailing conditions of the people. While riding in these vehicles, our prime need is to raise our moral and spiritual stature to such an extent as to come nearer to God and this, it may be noted, is not merely a possibility but as sure a mathematical certainty as two and two making four, with of course proper guidance and help from some adept well versed not only in theory but also in the practice of the Science of the Soul. It is not a province of mere philosophers or theologians or the intellectually great. I take just two instances to illustrate my point. God, according to all scriptures, is described [variously] as the "Father of lights"; Nooran-ala-noor; Swayam jyoti swarup; all of which are nothing but synonymous terms. But ask any religious authority as to the connotation of these words and he would say that these are only figurative terms without any inner

* 1 Corinthians 15:31

** See: Thomas a Kempis "Imitation of Christ"; and Matthew 10:39.

significance. Why? Because he has not actually experienced in person His [God's] Light – uncreate and immortal, self-effulgent and shadowless – which Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Nanak, Kabir and others of their kind actually witnessed and realized, and taught those who came in contact with them to do likewise.

'Again, like the practice of lighting candles (symbolic of the inner Light), there is another practice of ringing the bell or bells in churches and temples and giving of Azaan* by Mouzan** which has a much deeper inner significance than is realized and, surprisingly enough, is taken to be just a call to the faithful for prayer. Herein lies the great hiatus between learning and wisdom, which are at poles asunder; for this too is symbolic of the music of the soul, the Audible Life Stream, the music of the spheres, the actual life principle pulsating in all the creation.

'Without taking any more of your time, I would like to emphasize one thing: that all religions are profoundly good, truly worthy of our love and respect. The object of this Conference is not to found any new religion, as we have already enough of them; nor to evaluate the extant religions we have with us. Again, we should shed the idea of drawing up "One World Religion", for all religions – like so many states – are, in spite of their variegated forms and colors, but flowers in the garden of God, and smell sweet. The most pressing need of the time, therefore, is to study our religious scriptures thoroughly and to reclaim our lost heritage. A Saint says, "Everyone has in him a pearl of priceless value, but as he does not know how to unearth it, he is going about with a beggar's bowl." It is a practical subject and even to call it a religion of soul is a misnomer, for soul has no religion

* Islamic call to prayer.

** Islamic crier who calls the devoted to prayer.

whatsoever. We may, if you like, call it the Science of Soul, for it is truly a science – more scientific than all the known sciences of the world – capable of yielding valuable and veritable results, quite precise and definite. By contacting the Light and Life Principles, the primordeal manifestations of God within the laboratory of the man body (which all the scriptures declare to be a veritable temple of God), we can virtually draw upon the "bread and water of life," rise into Cosmic Awareness and gain immortality. This is the be-all and end-all of all religions, and embedded as we all are in the one Divinity, we ought to represent the noble truth of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. It is the living Word of the living God and has a great potential in it. It has been rightly said: "Man does not live by bread alone but by the Word of God."* And this Word of God is an unwritten law and an unspoken language. He who, by the power of the Word, finds himself, can never again lose anything in the world. He who once grasps the human in himself, understands all mankind. It is that knowledge by knowing which everything else becomes known. This is an immutable law of the Unchangeable Permanence and is not designed by any human head. It is the Sruti of the Vedas, the Naam or Udgit of the Upanishads, the Sraosha of the Zend Avesta, the Holy Spirit of the Gospels, the lost Word of the Masons, the Kalma of the Prophet Mohammed, the Saut of the Sufis, the Shabd or Naam of the Sikh scriptures, the Music of the Spheres and [the Music] of All Harmonies of Plato and Pythagoras, and the Voice of the Silence of the Theosophists. It can be contacted, grasped and communed with by every sincere seeker after Truth, for the good not only of himself but of the entire humanity, for it acts as a sure safety valve against all dangers with which mankind is

* See Luke 4:4.

threatened in this atomic age.

'The only prerequisite for acquiring this spiritual treasure in one's own soul is self-knowledge. This is why sages and seers in all times and in all climes have, in unmistakable terms, laid emphasis on self-analysis. Their clarion call to humanity has always been: "Man, Know Thyself." The Aryan thinkers in the hoary past called it Atam Gian, or knowledge of the Atman or soul. The ancient Greeks and Romans in turn gave to it the name of Gnothi Seauton and Nosce Teipsum respectively. The Muslim divines called it Khud-Shanasi, and Guru Nanak, Kabir and others stressed the need for Apo Cheena or self-analysis, and declared that so long as a man did not separate his soul from body and mind, he lived only a superficial life of delusion on the physical plane of existence. True knowledge is undoubtedly an action of the soul and is perfect without the senses. This then is the acme of all investigations carried out by man since the first flicker of self-awakening dawned in him.

'This is the one truth I learned in my life, both in theory and practice, from my Master, Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, and have today placed it before you, as I have already been doing, before the peoples in the West and East during my extensive tours all over, and have on experience found it of ready acceptance everywhere as a current coin, for it is the sole panacea for all the ills of the world, as well as ills of the flesh to which man is a natural heir through the workings of the inexorable law of action and reaction - "Ye shall reap, as ye shall sow."*

'All of our religions are, after all, an expression of the inner urge felt by man from time to time, to find a way out of the discord without, into the halcyon calm of the soul within. "The light shineth in the darkness and the

* See Galatians 6:7.

darkness comprehendeth it not.”* But we are so constituted by nature that we feel restless until we find a rest in the Causeless Cause. If we live up to our scriptures and realize the Light and Life of God within us, then surely, as day follows the night, Love would reign supreme in the Universe and we will see nothing but the Unseen Hand of God working everywhere.

‘We must then sit together as members of the One Great Family of Man so that we may understand each other. We are, above everything else, ONE – from the level of God as our Father, from the level of Man as His children, and from the level of worshippers of the same Truth or Power of God, called by so many names. In this august assembly of the spiritually awakened, we can learn the “Great Truth of Oneness of Life” vibrating in the Universe. If we do this, then surely this world with so many forms and colors will appear a veritable handiwork of God and we shall verily perceive the same life-impulse enlivening all of us. As His own dear children embedded in Him, like so many roses in His rose bed, let us join together in sweet remembrance of God and pray to Him for the well-being of the world in this hour of imminent danger of annihilation that stares us in the face. May God, in His infinite mercy, save us all, whether we deserve it or not.

‘Before I sit down I heartily welcome you, my brothers and sisters, and thank you warmly for your kindness and sincerity in furthering such a noble mission that has brought us together.’

* See John 1:5.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

On a day in July, 1965, Kirpal, busy as ever, was about to go to a meeting and was getting into the car when a taxi turned into the Ashram gate, full of people. They were all members of one family, satsangis (except for the grandmother), and they poured out of the taxi and ran to the Master's car. By then, Kirpal had already exited His car, and was waiting to greet them.

One man came forward, folded his hands to Kirpal and said, 'Hazur, I have brought my grandmother over to see You. She is not an initiate but is a very pious woman. She is so unhappy because she has lost her sight now, in her old age, and cannot bear the constant darkness. Maharaj Ji, please, we beg You to have mercy on us all.' He fell down and put his head on Kirpal's feet.

Kirpal bent down and raised him up. Looking into his eyes He saw love, faith and sincerity there. After some moments, Kirpal asked the name of the grandmother and, 'Where is she?' The blind lady, whose name was Nandrani, was still in the taxi. Kirpal went over and asked her if she was feeling well. She replied that she was, and Kirpal placed His thumb on her forehead. 'Do you see anything?' She replied that she did not see anything. Kirpal told her to continue to look deeply into the darkness. 'Do you see anything?' He asked

again. She now said, 'Yes – light – a great Light!'

Kirpal then told her to look into that Light and tell Him if she could see anything there. For a while, all was silent. Then her voice came in wonder, 'Yes, there is a man – white clothes, a beard.' She went on describing Kirpal exactly. Kirpal said, 'Well, there – now be happy and go on looking there, whenever you have time, and you will never be alone nor in darkness from now on.'

Kirpal turned to the family members, standing near with tears of joy flowing down their cheeks at what they had seen. 'I am sorry, I have not the time to sit with you – I am already late for a meeting which I have to attend.' He folded His hands to them, got into the car and went off.

How can anyone explain such graciousness and love - such humility? He gave the greatest Gift of all in just a few moments to a blind woman, who saw the inner Master in brilliant Light; and then, to ask forgiveness for His lack of time to sit and talk? Surely it is beyond human understanding.

In the latter half of 1965, tension and unrest, due to religious differences, gradually grew stronger in India. In the fall of '65 and in particular on October 2, which was Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, the disturbance accelerated into riots, fights, looting, even killing; all in the name of God. This was happening mostly in the larger populated cities: Delhi and a number of Punjab's big cities. It reached a stage that demanded strong handling, and military personnel were given the job of controlling the situation, but how long would it take and how many people would die before peace was restored?

Kirpal was on tour. When He reached Nagpur* some of

* In Maharashtra State; 985 km./616 mi. south of Delhi.

the people there came and begged Him to do something about the bad conditions. Kirpal was sad and told them that it happens too frequently; in the name of God, we kill and torture His children.

However, Kirpal got on the telephone and contacted as many religious leaders as He could. He told them that if they did not control the followers, there would be no religions left to follow: love will turn to hatred – even among families and friends. He added that the religious heads will be held responsible for the actions of their people. Wherever it was not possible to talk by telephone, messengers were sent with personal letters from Kirpal. With these actions, word went out from one end of the country to the other.

The result was declared miraculous. Within a day or two, order was re-established. Damage to stores and houses was the only obvious evidence that could be seen of the recent desperate situation. It was visual proof of how dangerous it had been and how much it could have escalated without Kirpal's timely intervention. People could hardly believe the complete turnaround, and were amazed at what one person had achieved in defusing the threatening situation. They turned to Him, acknowledging the success of His higher thinking. Kirpal suggested the solution: the reason the WFR had been formed was to call all the religious leaders together and exchange views and information on each other's religion and the various ways of worship. Now was the time to put the principle into practice.

Everyone agreed, and a meeting was held at the Rajghat Grounds* at which Kirpal was unanimously elected President of the meeting. The idea of religious amity was still

* A large area in New Delhi where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated; marked in his honor by a simple, marble memorial; subsequently used as an open meeting place.

quite new – even though the WFR was working hard to spread the concept.

So the public at large was still rather sceptical, and was astounded to see such a variety of religious representation. They were fascinated by the free exchange of views and beliefs, and Kirpal was there to rescue the situation, should any disagreement arise, and to remind them of the central pivot of one God with His tenets of love, peace and humility.

The conclusion of the meeting was harmonious and friendly, with a popular suggestion of another get-together. This was followed through with a meeting on October 2, 1966, once again presided over by Kirpal. With His management of this combustible predicament, Kirpal's reputation and the esteem in which He was held continued to rise.

Every year, in February, Kirpal's birthday was celebrated. As they came around each year, Kirpal Himself had little interest in His birthdays; He stated many times that He would prefer to have them come and go unnoticed and unheralded. But, for His adoring followers, that was unheard of. How could they just ignore the anniversary of that holy day when their Beloved entered the world and, for thousands of His children, changed it forever? He knew how they felt and gave in, with some reservations. In order to prevent the occasion turning into a grand show, He emphasized the meditation periods and allowed the Satsangs to take the prominent position. Many religious leaders were happy, even anxious, to sit on the dais beside Him and give their own talks, very often in praise of Kirpal.

The followers came in the thousands. For many who lived far away, it was the one time each year when they saw their Guru, and they made the long journey with joy in their hearts. Needless to say, the Ashram became a hive

of humanity with excited initiates filling every corner. For many years, there was no permanent shelter other than the meditation "Shed". During the bhandara, the shamianas remained in position, forming an awning over the central open area of the Ashram, in front of and covering the dais. This was some protection against the weather – cold and sometimes rainy in February, and very hot and humid in July (when Baba Sawan's birthday was celebrated).

Much later, some extra buildings were constructed in a corner of the Ashram grounds, providing badly needed permanent shelter. However, through all the years between, the dauntless and cheerful followers braved the elements without complaint. With an attitude of gratefulness to be there in their own home on earth with their very own Father, what more could they wish for? The weather could do its worst – and very often did!

In 1966 the visiting followers and observers came to the Ashram in droves. They started arriving on the 4th and stayed on until the 7th. The Ashram space was quickly filled to overflowing and the sevadars began erecting tents wherever they could, across the nallah*, via the bridge. It was hardly enough and many had to find a place wherever they could find the room to lie down, with the open sky above them. They were given cotton rugs to sleep on, but it was bitterly cold in the night. The sevadars soldiered on, coping with the influx.

Kirpal was everywhere, greeting the arrivals, directing the sevadars, tending the welfare of His children with so much love that they forgot the hardships that faced them. They had His love, their food was provided, and the spiritual upliftment they would receive over the next few days

* An open, wide drainage canal, flowing along one side of the Ashram property, and sporting a bridge for access from the Shakti Nagar residential area.

was a bounteous gift to raise their souls above all worldly things. They were a happy bunch of people.

Kirpal did not sleep. Night and day He carried on, tending the needs of His flock. Someone suggested that He retire to His quarters and the doors should be closed to warn the people that He was resting. But the Master would not hear of it and told them, 'How could I refuse to see Hazur? For He is in each one of them!'

In the night the rain came. Not just a shower but heavy, incessant rain, soaking the people, their bedding and their belongings. They sat in the rain, soaking wet and shivering. Then suddenly Kirpal was among them. He too was wet through, but He set to, organizing the sevadars to make room for everyone in the sheltered areas – even if it was only sitting room.

The work went on all night, and in the morning the sun came out. It shone on the people and gave a cheerful light everywhere. The people were grateful – but they had enjoyed that night so much! Had they not spent the whole night with their Beloved? Did He not show them how precious they were and how much He loved them – worked for them with concern for their well-being? What a wonderful experience! Their joy was apparent for all to see, in their radiant faces.

Early on the sixth morning, Kirpal spent the much anticipated special time with the people and later, in the morning Satsang, He talked about simple and honest living, coping with life on a low income. He said, 'When I was working, my position gave me an opportunity to make a lot of money, had I so wished. Those who had held that post before me became rich enough to own a number of properties and had large bank balances – on just the same salary that I was receiving.

'I was offered large bribes, frequently, and my fellow workers advised me to accept them, explaining that everyone adopted this habit. When I refused, they looked at me as if I were a strange being. Some recommended that I consult my wife in this matter, for she was the one who had to cope with lack of funds. I thought I would test her, telling her that we were always short of cash, trying to make it go round; it was difficult for her, to not have things that other women had, and if she so desired she could have a large house with luxuries and plenty of spare money for extras. I told her that I could do all that if she so desired.

'Do you know what was her reaction? She said, "I have no need of such wealth, or to have a house bought with ill-gotten gain!" The whole world's condition lies in the hands of the woman, and if the woman is strong and righteous, her house will be like a fortress where no evil can penetrate; but if she is not like that, what can a man do? Even if he is honorable, he would keep the peace by stooping to any level to satisfy the woman. This way, an example is set for their children – good or bad. The food cooked and served by a virtuous, pure woman can bring peace; and love will vibrate within the walls of such a home.

'I was attached as an accounts officer to the Sikh Regiment in 1912, in Banu, Peshawar, where continual fighting was going on with the Pathans. I was given an orderly to look after my needs. As you know, a soldier's life is hard, and he becomes hard too, both within and outwardly. I called the orderly and told him, "Whatever you have done for yourself and whatever you are going to do is your problem. I am not responsible for your actions, but as long as you are with me, I want you to work in peace. When cooking my meals, do not let anyone else come near you, and no talking of any kind while you are cooking."

'For a few days, everything was alright, but then one day, after my meal I felt uneasy and my mind wandered a bit [in meditation]. I knew at once what had happened. I called the orderly and asked him if he had someone with him while cooking. He was astounded, but denied that anyone was with him. I told him not to lie, and then repeated the same question. He then asked for forgiveness, admitting that a man had come by and they had talked together.

'You see, even our thoughts get into the food we eat and react on the person eating the food; and the reaction will be according to the thoughts of the one cooking the food. Thoughts are very potent. The whole world's condition is in such a terrible state because we put no importance on things that are truly important. We want to be modern. Our home life today is, forgive me, like a brothel house, with impure thoughts, drinking, dancing and worse. This is the modern way of living, and those who live a pure life are looked down on and marked as insane people; whereas, truly speaking, it is the other way around.'

During the entire Birthday event, construction continued, building the guesthouse annex – work that had already been planned and started before the bhandara. With the considerable increase in foreign visitors, the guesthouse accommodation had become inadequate, and many of the visiting Indian satsangis welcomed the opportunity to work in the Master's Ashram.

In light of the subject of give and take that the Master had taken up during that 1966 Birthday Satsang, it may be interesting to recount also, a part of another of Kirpal's talks, given on October 27, 1966. This is the story of Sher Singh.

The Master said, 'In 1909, Sher Singh, a sepoy* in the

* Soldier.

Indian Army, was sent to Peshawar, to the front. Before leaving, he entrusted all his savings to the army munshi* and made him his trustee. When later, the munshi heard that Sher Singh had been killed in action, he made inquiries, privately, if Sher Singh had left a wife, or had any parents. On learning that he had no near relatives, the munshi transferred all Sher Singh's money into his own name – a total of four or five thousand rupees, a fair sum in those days.

'After a year passed by, the munshi took early retirement and went home to Saharanpur** in U.P. A son was born to him, whom he grew to love very much. After four or five years, his precious son fell ill and the munshi spent a lot of money on various treatments, but with no success. When all medical attempts to cure the boy had failed, the munshi tried a well-known spiritualist healer, but he also failed. The munshi paid the healer and the man left.

'The boy started laughing. His father was overjoyed, thinking the laughter indicated that his son was cured after all. He asked the boy why he was laughing. The boy said, "I am laughing because in paying the healer that much money, the accounts are now cleared." The father was amazed, and asked, "What accounts?" The boy replied, "I am that Sher Singh who trusted you and who entrusted all my hard earnings to you, but you betrayed me, so I came back to reclaim my money, and giving the healer his fees has finished the accounts."

'Saying this, the boy left his body and passed on, leaving a heartbroken father. The pain of separation from his son was very hard to bear, but yet he felt as if a huge load had been lifted from him, leaving a feeling of peace at last, for it had always bothered his conscience knowing he had

* Accountant.

** Approximately 163 km (100 mi) north of Delhi.

betrayed Sher Singh.

'I have related this story to show how strict are the laws of give and take. Oblivion of the past actions is good, otherwise people would not help each other. Give and take should be gone through with pleasure and love. All accounts then become nil. Do not take away the rightful claim of others. Do not misuse trust placed in you.'

'How did this story come to be commonly known? After the cremation, the munshi threw a large feast. Hearing the woeful cries from the mother and other relatives, a guest inquired why such a rich feast was served, when so much sorrow was being endured. In his reply, the father explained the reasons, and the whole story came to light.'

'So give and serve whenever you can. Accept all that is given to you with gratitude. Karmic debts have to be cleared, so always be grateful to God for finishing up each give and take action – and do not accumulate new debts through greed.'

In another Satsang talk, the Master spoke of living within one's means. He advised the audience to:

'Beware of going into debt; to owe something and not be able to pay back has such a strong effect that one loses his balance. So try and live within whatever one has.'

'An incident in my life happened in 1912, when I had spent all my money and had only four paise left* and pay day was yet six days hence. I wondered how I would survive on only four paise [about six cents in those days]. I thought about borrowing some money from someone, but the thought of it becoming a habit prevented me. *I must live on whatever I have*, I thought; and so I did, passing those six

* This has been mentioned in earlier pages (see page 46) but is worth repeating, in view of the subject taken up.

days on just four paise. If you live a simple life and praise God for whatever He gives, your peace within will never be shattered/

Each succeeding WFR Conference was as fruitful as its predecessor. The highly successful February 1965 Conference in New Delhi created a ripple of positive reactions which strongly affected the delegates present. The message to all the leaders at the Conference penetrated deep into their hearts, making an indelible mark on their way of thinking and outlook for the future.

Kirpal's love, His attitude to all His fellow men, His thoughts and ideas on peace and harmony and fellowship among all human beings had made such an impression, they took these aspirations with them when they returned home to their own countries. For instance, the French delegates began to share with their colleagues, and anyone else who showed interest, everything they had heard at the Conference.

The result was phenomenal, considering the unusual premise that all different faiths should gather and sit together in harmony and friendship. Although some were sceptical that such a thing could be possible, given the past history of wars and terror in religion's name, yet the delegates patiently explained how being in Kirpal's presence and experiencing His way of life, they had developed a great faith in Him, that He *could* make a success of the concept, with all its aims.

Consequently, with their enthusiasm overflowing, they wrote to Kirpal, requesting His permission to hold their own WFR Conference in Paris. Kirpal readily gave His permission and they in turn asked Him to preside. Unfortunately, it was not possible for Kirpal to travel to Paris at the chosen

time of the Conference: February 19-21, 1966. Instead, He sent a message to be read out at the opening. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister at that time, also sent to Kirpal her good wishes for the success of the Paris Conference, before the conference began. This was immediately cabled to Paris and was read out during the proceedings.

The ambitious concept and the unusual cause of the WFR met hesitation, doubt and scepticism at first, but those who were fortunate to have heard Kirpal on the subject had found faith and inspiration in His positive and logical viewpoints. He had enthused in them an ability to see just how possible it was to make a difference – and how necessary – for the peace of the world. Their faith and enthusiasm was transmitted to those present and the Paris Conference ended on a strong and positive note.

Similarly, the delegates from Iran who had attended the February 1965 WFR Conference in New Delhi also returned home filled with the impact of the experience. They too shared their excitement with colleagues in Iran and came to the same conclusion: they would love to hold a regional WFR conference in Tehran. These men were yearning for peace and love throughout mankind and were ready to make every effort to work toward that goal. They wrote to Kirpal and asked for permission to hold the conference, also requesting that He come to Tehran to preside over the proceedings.

Kirpal was delighted with their keen enthusiasm, and quickly gave permission. It was unfortunate that He was again unable to attend, due to His crowded program, but the Irani religious leaders went ahead with their plans with strong belief in everything the WFR stood for. This Conference was convened on June 10, 1967.

So, from the big world conferences sprang the smaller ones, spreading the same news in various parts of the world. The universal power of Love can create a beautiful environment for man to live in. It needs but a change of direction – to turn one's attention from a negative way of life and take up the positive path of Love.

Kirpal has said so much about the power of the attention, which is really the power of the soul. He tells us that wherever a man's attention is, so is he. He has explained this wonderful truth to His followers many times, pointing out that if the attention is always on the Master (no matter where He may be), where then would the disciple go at death? Naturally, he will go to where his, or her, attention is: to the Master. If all one's love and attention is in the Master, one *cannot* go anywhere other than to Him.

Among the Muslim Masters, Kirpal has told us of Bulleh Shah, who went to Shah Inayat and asked him, 'O holy man, tell me, how can one find God?' Inayat Shah, who was transplanting rice plants at the time, turned to Bulleh Shah, and showing him with a small plant said, 'It is very simple: uproot from here and transplant there!' To quote the writings of Inayat Shah: 'What is there in reaching the Lord? One needs only to transplant the heart.*

In Kirpal's words: 'You have to withdraw the attention from the outer world and concentrate it within.' Whatever subject or project demanded Kirpal's time and attention, His ultimate goal was constantly in the foreground of His heart: The children (souls) must go back to the Father (God).

* See "The Crown of Life" by Kirpal Singh – p.163.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

Radhakrishna Khanna, M.A. LL.B., was a very devoted disciple of Baba Sawan. An exceptional advocate with a brilliant legal mind, he was fortunate in that, as well as being Sawan's initiate, he was also His lawyer and legal adviser. Khanna's name was prominent among the lawyers of Lahore and his reputation for honesty and adherence to the law was unblemished.

When Hazur left His physical form, the lawyer was courted by a number of so-called "successors" to Sawan. He refused their overtures and would not visit them, for he knew who was the true one who had been chosen by Sawan Himself. Although he knew that Kirpal was that chosen one, he was so devoted to Sawan that he did not wish for anyone else.

After many years had passed, Khanna eventually did come to Sawan Ashram, in 1964, and paid his respects to Kirpal, telling Him that he knew always that Kirpal had undertaken the Mastership on Sawan's orders, but he had not seen for himself the spiritual oneness of the two Gurus. Having at last, through Sawan's grace, been satisfied beyond any shadow of doubt, he was now so happy to visit Kirpal. Sawan's disciples were always welcome at Kirpal's door and He always treated them as brothers, receiving

them with love. Subsequently, Radhakrishna Khanna became a familiar figure at Sawan Ashram and was respected by everyone. He was always readily available for any work Kirpal might have for him.

His son, Hari Krishna Khanna, was also Sawan's initiate and, in that same year, he came one day to see Kirpal. He confessed that, having difficulty with his meditation, he had allowed it to lapse. He was then about to leave for U.S.A., to study oil technology, and was reluctant to take up residence in a foreign land with no inner spiritual connection and protection, facing the danger of totally forgetting his Guru. He begged Kirpal to help him. Obviously, he had received some good advice from his father and had acted upon it. Kirpal studied the boy and saw his honest sincerity. He smiled with love and gave him a sitting, during which not only did Kirpal restore the inner Light to him, but took him to a higher plane where he saw for himself both Sawan and Kirpal together.

On his returning to everyday consciousness, Kirpal told him to never be afraid of forgetting Hazur, for He (Sawan) would always be with him and guide him, every step of the way.

Two years later, Hari Krishna returned to India and, before going anywhere else, went straight to Kirpal. He said, 'Hazur, I know that You know everything but I wanted to come, with gratitude, to tell You how much Your grace was upon me when I was in U.S.A., and how much protection and love You gave me. You not only helped me attain my engineer's degree, but even after that You were with me constantly, taking care of me in such a way even a mother could not do. If I went to a restaurant to eat, You, Hazur, would tell me what and what not to eat; if I went to a store to buy clothes, You, Hazur, would advise me what to buy.

You were always with me, looking after me.'

Who can fathom the depths of a True Master? Who can know exactly what He is? Who can measure the love and grace He extends – not only to His own disciples, but to the faithful disciples of Sawan too?! Some souls have had the good fortune to experience a glimpse of His attributes. Does He give any clues? Kirpal has told us of the advice that Sawan used to give: 'When you meet a Master, keep quiet, and with luck He may tell you something very interesting, something very special.' Yes, the Master does give clues – to those willing to listen and absorb.

Sometimes the "clues" are wide open and direct, given with Kirpal's profound ability to make the Path come alive with revelation. On the subject of receiving the Master's pleasure and grace, He once gave a talk in Hindi, using examples from the past to illustrate beautifully the heart of this important lesson. This talk was translated into English by the authors, given the title "To Gain His Pleasure" and printed in the December 1970 issue of the Sat Sandesh journal.* It is an ideal time and opportunity to reproduce a part of that talk here:

'... Perfect Masters do not allow vanity, self-importance and self-praising to remain in their followers, but gradually weed them out. Bulleh Shah, who belonged to a high caste, took Initiation from Sai Inayat Shah Sahib. One day, the Master sent some of his followers to Bulleh Shah's home, telling them to sing and dance outside his house. They did

* "Sat Sandesh" is the monthly journal owned by Ruhani Satsang, published in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and English during the Master's lifetime and under His orders. The English issues began in 1968 and continued until 1976, when it was decided to postpone the monthly issues until further notice, which is the position to date.

this, calling out, "Oh, Bulleh Shah, we are your gurubhais*", so come out and meet us." Now, singing and dancing in the streets is considered to be unseemly behavior, that of very low-caste people, and when Bulleh Shah was told that his brother disciples had come, he said, "No, I do not know them – they are nothing to do with me."

'When the disciples recounted this to the Master, he told them "It does not matter, from today I will not water that plant." Remember, that the Guru gives nourishment to the disciples through His attention, even if they are thousands of miles away. "A Satguru looks after His disciples with His own life impulse." Only a few days ago a disciple in the West wrote to me: "When I sit for meditation, and even for some time afterward, there is a sweet fragrance." I explained that this is a direct result of the thought-waves which are received when one is receptive to the Master. Receptivity is very necessary. If a radio set is not tuned properly, there will be no sound. It is most difficult to please a Guru: He is above offerings of money, property and worldly goods. You cannot have His pleasure by demand either. His pleasure may be gained through respectful attention, obedience to His wishes, devotion, and selfless service to humanity. If the disciple does not wish to live like this, then what can be achieved without the Guru's mercy? I remember once in Lahore, my Master called me and said, "Kirpal Singh, I have planted the saplings, you have to give them water." I replied, "Hazur, however much water you send through this hose-pipe, will be given." To be careless about our attitude and actions in respect to our Guru is very dangerous.

'Bulleh Shah's inner enjoyment was stopped from that moment, and by the Guru's orders he was also not allowed to enter the Master's court. In those days, Shah Inayat

* Brother disciples of the same Guru.

permitted his followers to express the holy hymns in song and dance before him, and appeared to show his pleasure at such occasions. There was a certain prostitute who was very talented in her execution of the holy songs, and she would attend him regularly each week*. For Bulleh Shah, it was as if both worlds, inner and outer, had sunken into deep and silent gloom – such was his condition without the glance and thought-transference of his Master. So in desperation, and greatly anxious to regain his Master's favor, he went to the prostitute and begged her to give him any amount of work, in return for teaching him how to sing, with the hope of giving the Master some enjoyment. For instance, if a Master approves of selfless service and helping the poor, then His disciples should do that, for to become His true loved ones they should develop the Master's own habits within themselves. Merely pretending to do His will has no effect, for He knows and sees everything.

'So Bulleh Shah studied the art of singing and dancing for nine months, and one evening he said to his teacher, "Tonight, let me go and sing for the Master, instead of you." She agreed, giving him her clothes to wear, and with quickening heart he hurried off to the Master's house. His songs even now are heart-rending to the reader, filled with great sadness as he describes his separation from the Master. He who knows everything can recognize a person by what he is, not by what he is wearing, and when Bulleh Shah sang with so much pain and feeling the Master could not help himself and, rushing from his seat, wrapped Bulleh Shah in his arms. Now many who were watching this began to wonder that such a great Master would embrace a prostitute, so Shah Inayat said, "Listen, brother Bulleh, take off this finery, that the people's doubts may be removed."

* We have to remember here the Master's goal of helping the soul to progress.

'How can you recapture the Master's pleasure when He is displeased with you? And then, when He restores this blessing, what do you gain? This hymn of Guru Arjan Sahib will disclose some knowledge on the subject:

"I fall at His feet to gain His favor.
Oh, meet a Satguru who is God Himself!
There is no one else like Him."

'If the Guru is pleased, then so is God, for God has manifested Himself in the Guru. Satguru is the very image of Truth, the ruling Power, for His will governs everything and there is no one comparable to Him in this world or the next.

"I have searched all Brahmand;
But not found one like my Guru."

'A person can only speak of whatever level he has reached. The worldly will think on a worldly level, but they who have reached Brahmand and beyond say that even in Brahmand there is no one to equal the Guru. He is Truth itself, and He is also the pole at which the Truth is manifested.

'When two hearts take joy in the same thing, most decidedly they will love each other. If one likes to serve the poor and do meditation, the other should do the same, and without any effort love will grow between them. Maulana Rum has said, "He who approaches you, approaches God; and he who departs from you, goes away from God." Uttering empty words will be futile, for saying one thing and doing something else may hoodwink the world, but no one can deceive the Guru. My Master used to say that the Guru Power is all-awareness and if a soul is not fit he will not be given the inner road. There should be nothing left of the

mind or senses. Guru Arjan Sahib, whose hymn I am now taking, was tested very severely by His Guru*. The Masters test the disciples again and again to see how much the disciple can sacrifice, how much loving devotion he has, and to what extent he still remains under the influence of the mind. He who sacrifices everything for the sake of his Guru has achieved all.

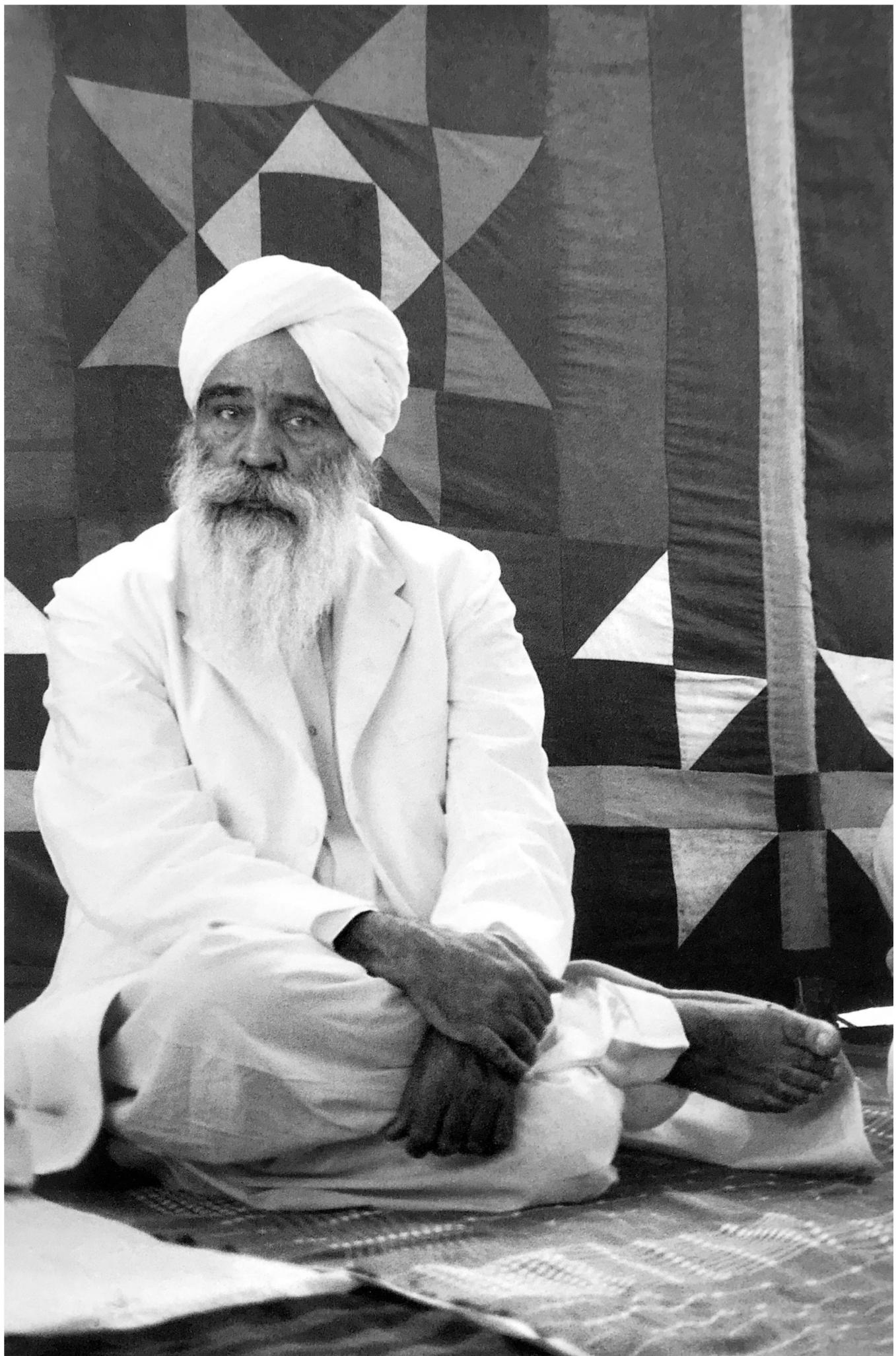
‘During the strife-worn days of Guru Gobind Singh**, a certain man named Nabi Khan Ali Khan was killed, and someone went to inform his wife of her husband’s death. On hearing the news, her first words were, “Is my Guru all right?” For a true disciple, the Master is more beloved than any other relationship, for it is one of the soul with God.

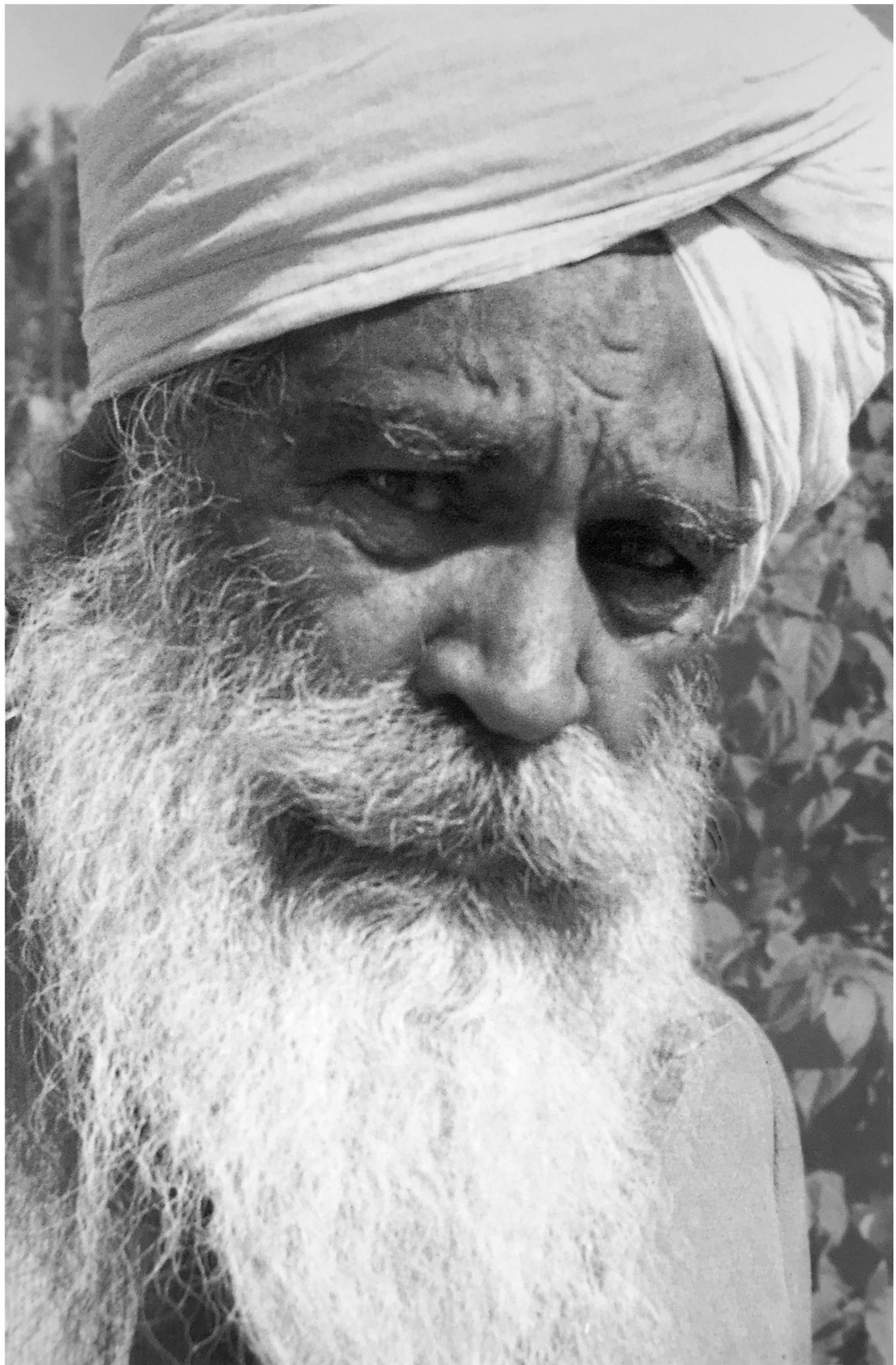
‘Naturally, the child who heeds his father’s slightest wish will enjoy his pleasure. Whoever insists on his own ideas and does not want to obey, doubtless he will also get the Master’s love, but the inner key will not be entrusted to him.

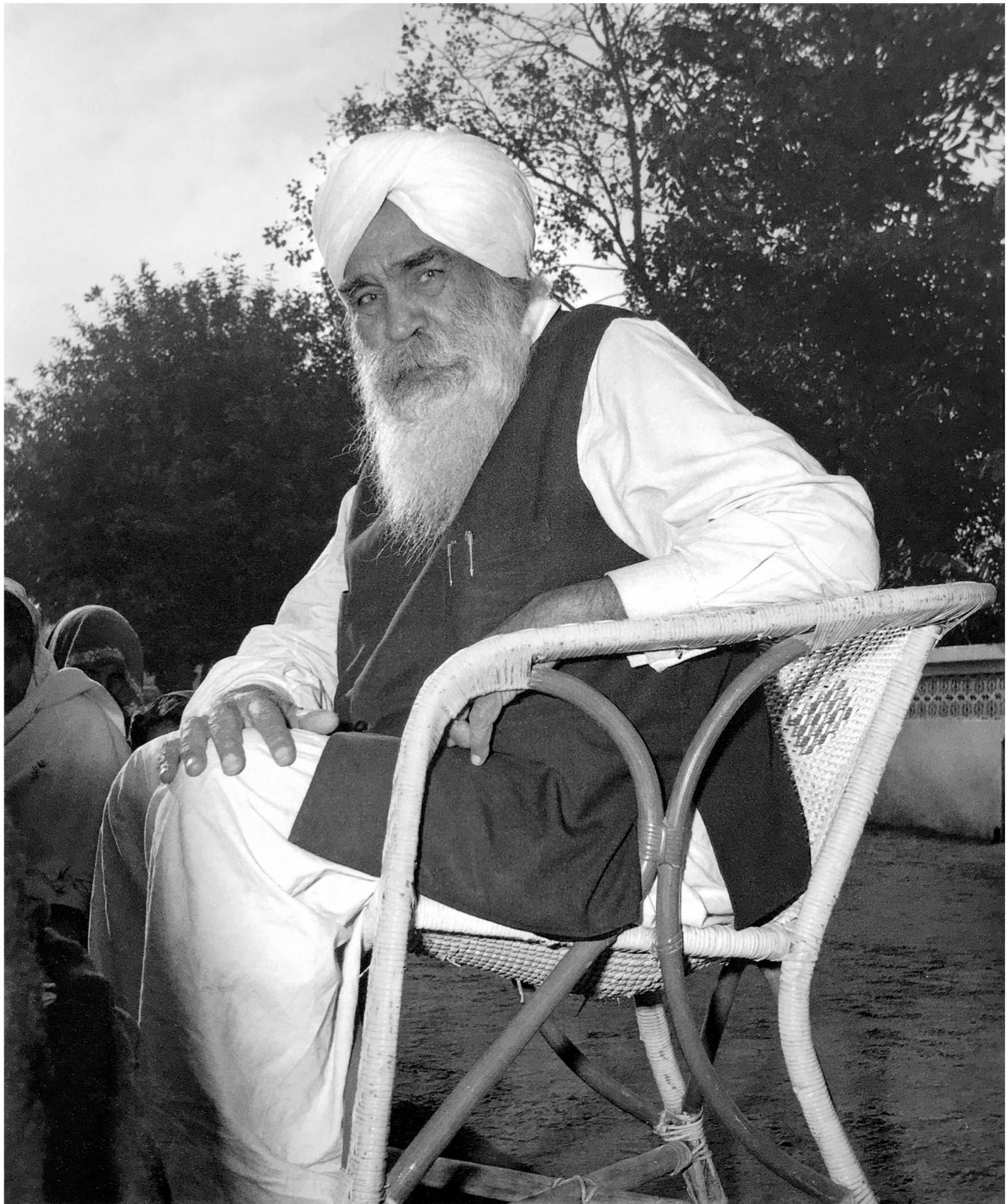
‘I will now tell you how Guru Arjan won his Master’s pleasure. It happened that one of the relatives of Guru Ram Das Ji was getting married in Lahore, but the Guru himself was in Amritsar at the time. So he sent for his eldest son, Prithi Chand, and told him to go to Lahore and spend about fifteen days there, over the wedding. When these highly enlightened personalities come, they are always surrounded by people who either want their money, or wish to be their successors. In reply to his father’s orders Prithi Chand protested, “If I go there, who will look after everything here?” He was afraid that his father would give the succession to Guru Arjan, who was most beloved of the Master, and so he refused to obey. The other son of Guru Ram Das was Maha

* Guru Ram Das (1534-1581).

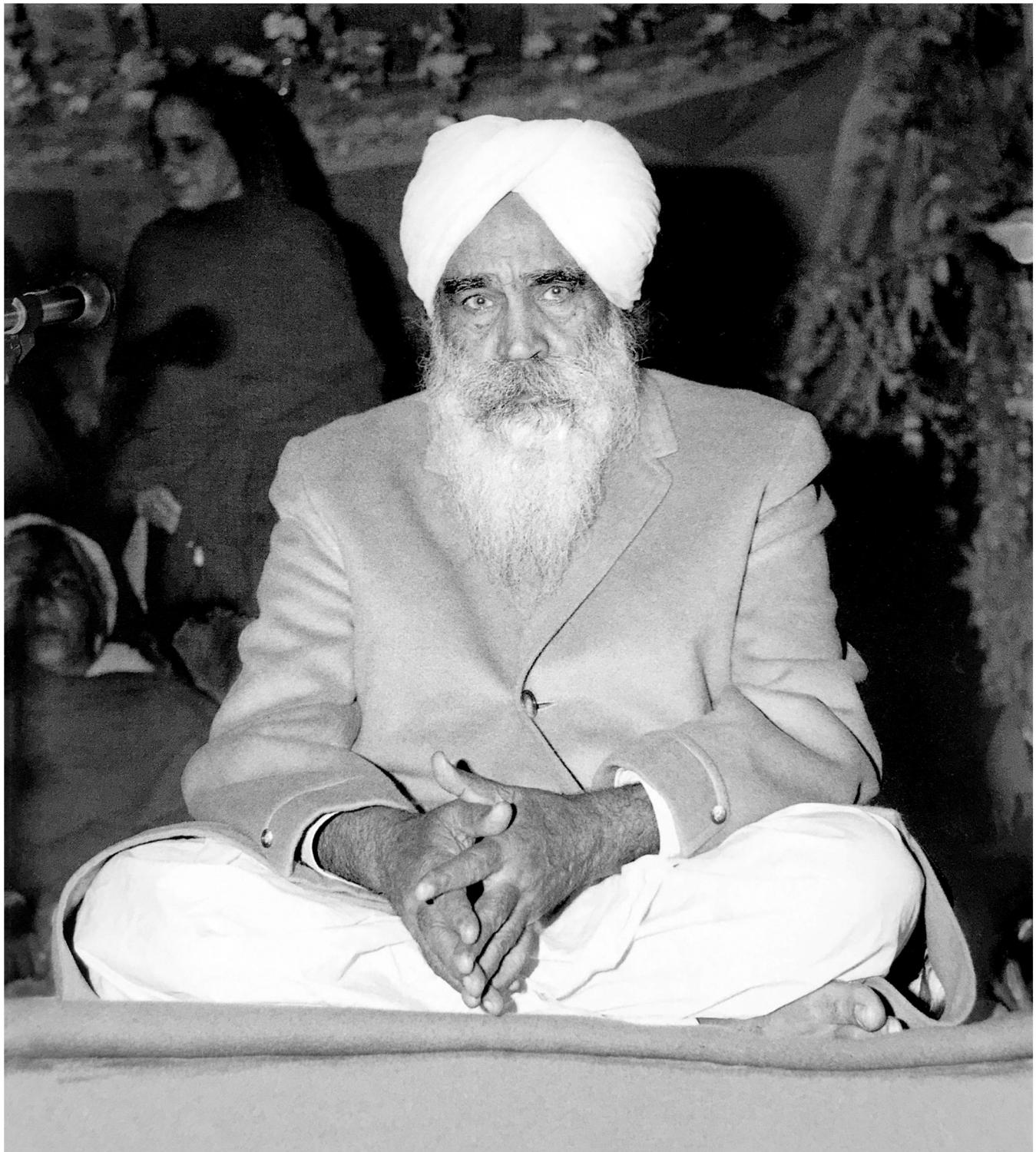
** Tenth Guru of the Sikhs (1660-1708).



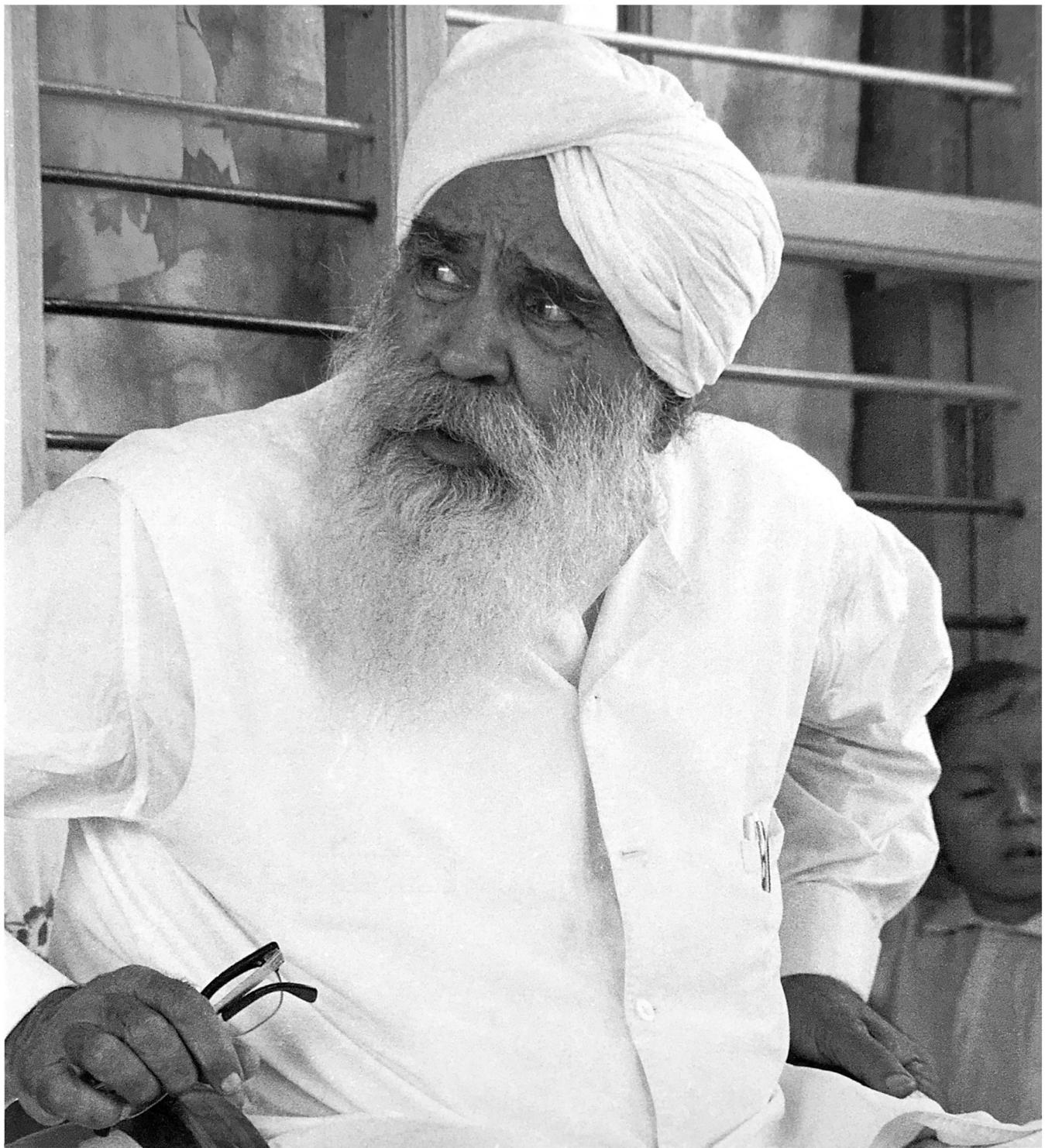




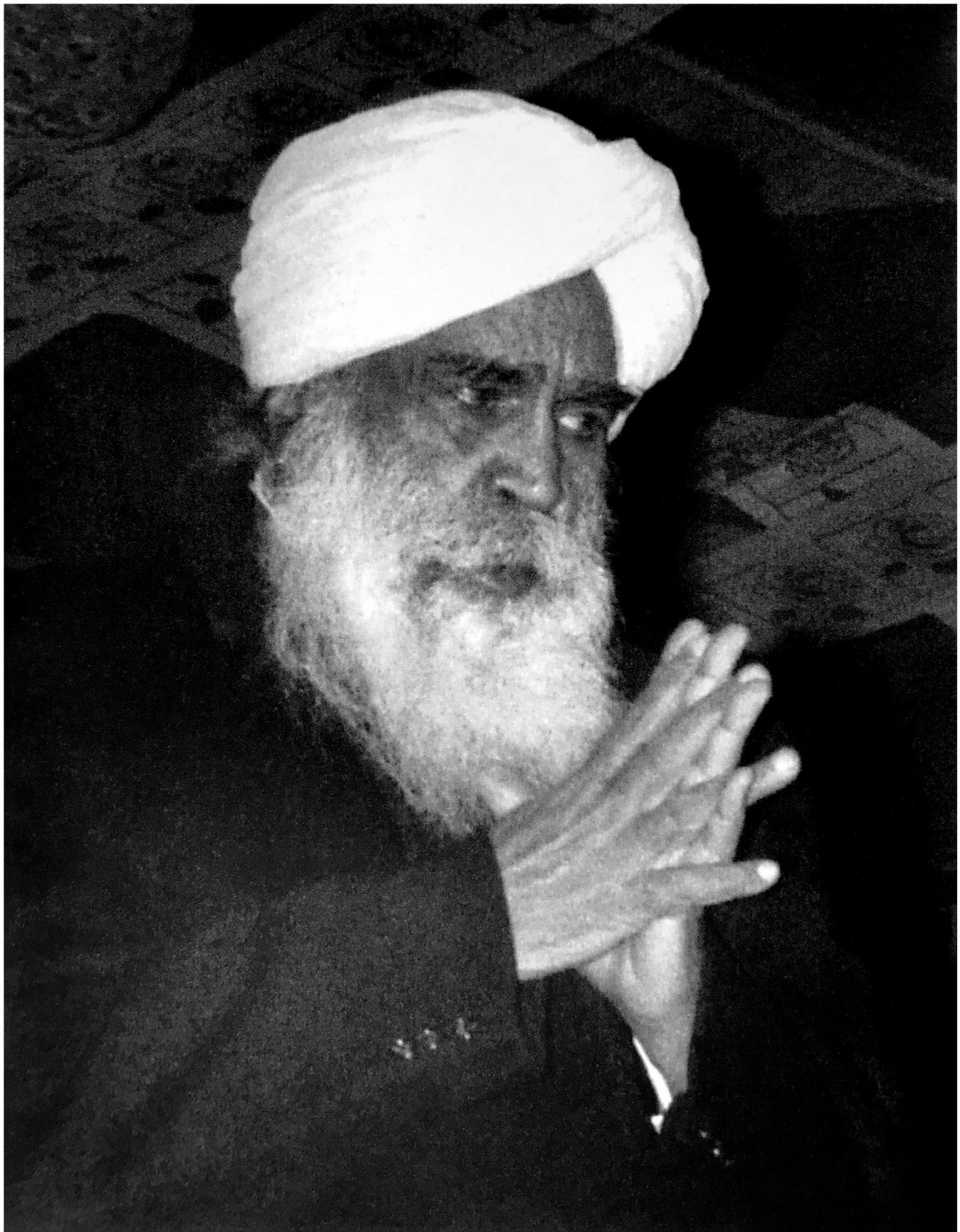
Above: Sawan Ashram, 1970.



Sawan Ashram, February 1971.

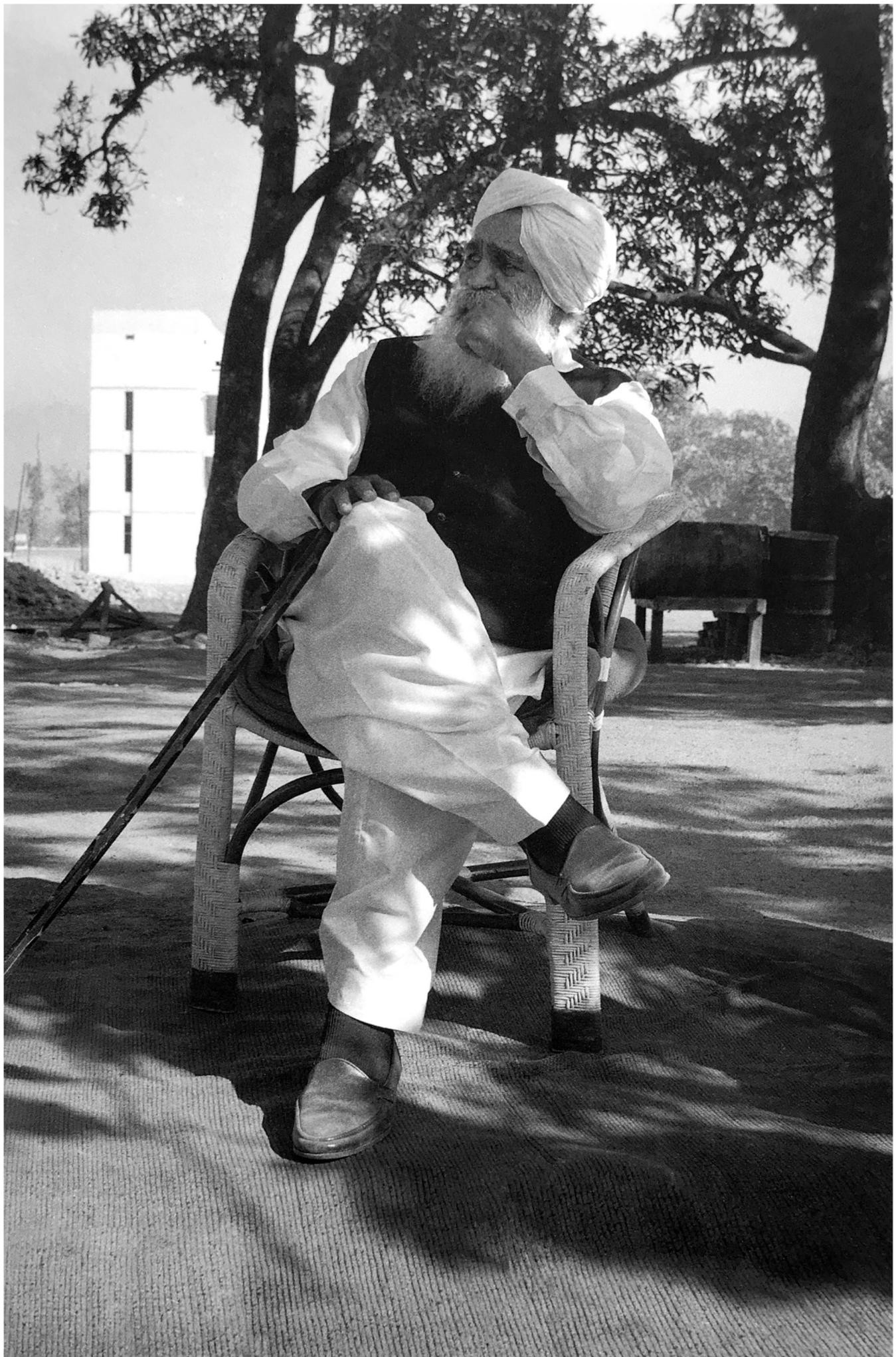


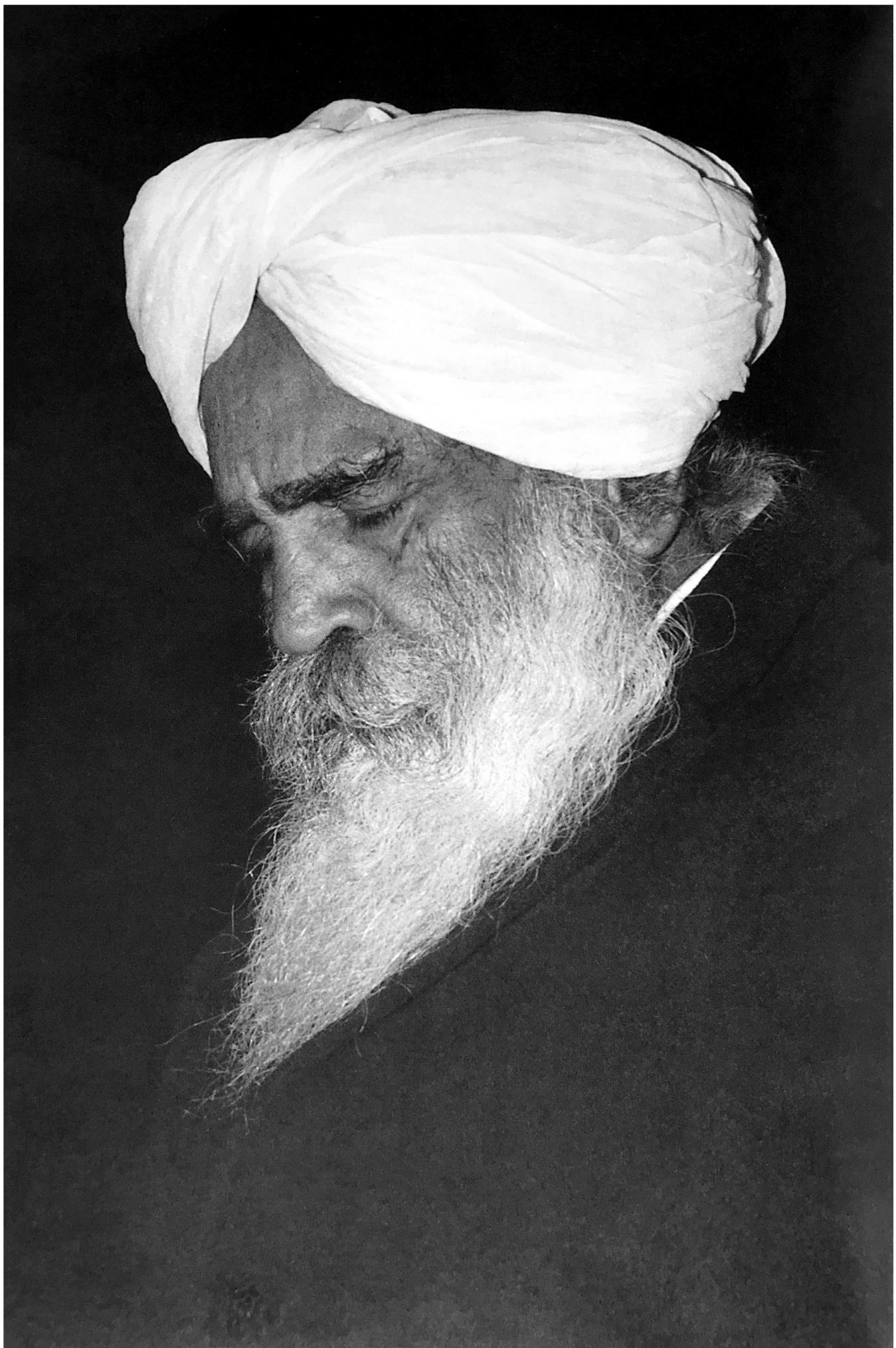
Master's verandah, Sawan Ashram, September 1969.



Above: Sawan Ashram, February 1965.

At right: Manav Kendra, 1971.





Dev who was usually in a spiritually intoxicated state, so the Guru sent for Arjan Sahib and told him to attend the wedding instead of Prithi Chand, and then instructed him, "Do not return here until I send for you."

'Guru Arjan took the Master's orders without question and left for Lahore. A person of lesser spiritual strength would have ignored the orders and declared that out of love for the Master they had to return, but for Guru Arjan his Master's orders were of supreme importance, making a barrier between the Master and himself which he would never think of surpassing. Remember, he who obeys orders will achieve success in his goal. Many days passed and there was no word, so Guru Arjan Sahib wrote these words and sent them to the Master:

"My mind is desiring Thy darshan;
 Like the Chatrak* bird in anguish,
 The thirst remains unquenched -
 there is no peace; I am living like that
 without the Beloved's darshan."

'He sent these words to his Master by a man, but the man gave the note to the Master's son Prithi Chand, and therefore it never reached the Master's hands. What a dying man does not do in desperation! He wrote another letter. From Lahore to Amritsar is only thirty miles, but he could not go there because of his Master's orders. Remember, he who breaks the wall of the Guru's orders will never realize the inner knowledge. He may get a little inner experience and help, but he will never become perfect. So in the second letter he wrote:

* Indian Red-legged Partridge, which becomes enamored of the moon and which drinks only raindrops and not earthly water.

“Glory be to that place where You reside;
 Your face is so beautiful, seeing this,
 the inner Sound easily vibrates.”

‘This letter also got into Prithi Chand’s hands and again there was no reply. He then sent a third letter, which he marked with a number “3”. In this he wrote:

“The separation of minutes was likened to an age;
 O Beloved, when will that time be
 when I may see You?
 I cannot sleep, and the nights cannot pass
 without one who is my Lord.”

‘When this letter arrived, fortunately Prithi Chand was not there at the time and the Guru Sahib received it. Though the Masters know everything, they do not disclose what they know, but allow things to come out openly of their own accord on the material level. Forgive me, but we frequently consider our Guru to be less than a man. The Guru Sahib called Prithi Chand and asked him about the two previous letters, but Prithi Chand replied, “Maharaj, do you think that I am a thief?” The Master gave him a hard look, and turning to another man said, “Go and look in the pockets of his clothes.” He then sent for Guru Arjan Sahib, and when he arrived, told him, “You wrote me three letters, and whoever will complete that poem will be my successor.” When a test comes, a simple thing becomes difficult. I remember that I also sometimes wrote poems to my Master – through separation the thoughts would come, and the poems were written. Some rivals started copying me, but always there is a difference between wine and water. Guru Arjan wrote the fourth stanza thus:

“With great destiny I met Him;
 The Ever-Permanent Lord was found in the house;
 I desire only to serve, and never be
 separated for a moment:
 I am Thy servant, O Lord.”

This shows the kind of respect the disciple should have for his Master. I once wrote to my Master and requested Him to give me the ability to love, but only that kind of love which does not transcend the limits of respect. The Master was in Dalhousie when He received it, and after reading the letter He placed it on His heart and said with such humility, “I really appreciate such-like love.” A devoted one’s poem is written to gain his Master’s pleasure. Guru Arjan Sahib was one of those rare devotees who truly achieved this, and at the end of this hymn He indicates what is gained by it.

‘Just as we cannot say what God is, so is it impossible to describe the Guru. He has a physical form, but He is not the physical form; if He were, what could He give us? If the whole earth became thin paper and the seas turned into ink and all the trees were made into pens, were we to cover the paper with praises to the Lord we would never succeed in describing His glory. I used to study in a Christian school, and always had an inquisitive nature. I knew that we said “Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj,” for in India we attach many respectful terms to the names of Masters and certain respected people, and had noticed that the Christians called their great Saint merely Jesus. So I went to a Christian bishop and questioned him: “Why do you not put a prefix to Christ’s name, when even the most insignificant common man is at least referred to as Mr. Somebody?” The bishop said, and I can still distinctly remember his reply, “We consider Christ the son of God, and as we cannot glorify God,

so we cannot extol Christ. If we start prefixing his name, we will make him smaller, not greater."

'Another Master says, "You are the Emperor above all; how can You be praised?" Without doubt, there is none equal to the Guru. He who starts seeing another as equal to his Master, HIS SOUL BECOMES AN ADULTERESS. Truly, the Light is in everyone, but not manifested as in the Guru. When two great souls meet and see the God in each other, that is something different again – something qualified. I remember one incident in Lahore in a house called Pari Mahal* where, at the time, Maharishi Shivbrat Lal Ji was staying on a short visit to Lahore. He was the successor to Rai Saligram Ji, who was one of the chief disciples of Swami Ji. When my Master was told of his presence in Lahore, He went to see him, and I accompanied the Master. It was a very strange sight that I saw. My Master, who was always the very depth of humility, was trying to touch his feet, but *he* wanted to touch Hazur's feet.'

During the period between the two birthday bhandaras of 1966, a rather unusual event took place in the Ashram, in the very hot season.

An ex-Member of Parliament and popular politician, Shri Dharam Dev Shastri had been an admirer of Kirpal's for a long time. He had never taken the step of asking for initiation, but had eminent respect for the Master, and this fact was emphasized when he put a strange request to Him. He wished, on his death, to be taken to the Ashram and his funeral to be under the direction of Kirpal. Only a Master can see the whole picture, and Kirpal agreed. He was always the perfect judge of character and could see exactly the condition and depth of the heart.

* Fairy Palace.

So, true to this unusual promise, when Dharam Dev Shastri died, his body was brought from his residence to the Ashram. There, in the guesthouse conference room, his body lay on the floor (according to custom), surrounded by large blocks of ice – due to the weather. His relatives took up vigil beside the body. Many satsangis who knew him – from his frequent visits to the Ashram to see Kirpal – formed a large crowd outside the room, seated on the lawn. Various political associates of the deceased came to pay their respects, including Shri Morarji Desai, M.P., who later would serve a period as Prime Minister of India.

The body was carefully laid out, placed on the bier and carried from the guesthouse grounds to the Master's house by sturdy satsangis, and Kirpal completed that stage of rituals*. Then the bier was placed in the Master's Studebaker stationwagon and driven to the cremation grounds. Here, the final (family) rituals were performed in Kirpal's presence. Many satsangis attended and everything went along with a quiet dignity.

Visiting satsangis from U.S.A, were also present and took part as interested observers of the event, which was a new experience for them. In India, bodies are cremated in the open air, with open wood fires.

Although Kirpal always stressed the preference for a simple life and for simple worship – 'The sky overhead and the earth beneath' – yet from childhood He had always acknowledged the appropriate customs, social and religious. He accepted religions as a necessary part of life and often said that to do away with any religion would just require a new one to be formed in its place. He called them "social bodies".

For funerals, weddings or attendance at the various places

* Sprinkling of blessed water, etc.

of worship, He followed through with the accepted rituals and customs. It was a man's inner self, his soul, that Kirpal directed along the straight and simple Path of the Masters; a path stripped of outer forms and formalities – but one which could be followed without resorting to leaving a person's religion.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

Every now and then, Kirpal would become ill; though He invariably reiterated that He was not sick, His *body* was sick.

Most satsangis learn, while accumulating knowledge through their sojourn on the Path, that Perfect Masters, in shouldering the burdens of their many spiritual children, often visited those burdens upon their own physical forms and suffered physically, for some reason known only to themselves. However, each individual disciple rarely knew much of the great load of karmic debt, of one form or another, that was lifted from his or her head and carried by the merciful Satguru.

In the hot summer season of 1966, Kirpal became ill, and lay on His bed for many days. To the concerned sangat it was unthinkable that their Beloved Kirpal should be sick for so long. They had seen Him at times, arise from His bed of sickness and conduct a regular Satsang of two hours or more and then return to His bed and resume the “malady”.

But this one was very long so they worried, and they inquired after His welfare. Eventually, they lamented over the loss of darshan – they desperately wanted to see Him, even if only for a few minutes. This growing desperation naturally filtered through the satsangi grapevine and was communicated to Kirpal, and He agreed to go for a few minutes

and sit on the large dais in the Ashram. Hardevi was totally against the idea, knowing how ill He was, but Kirpal got up from His bed.

It was far from a usual darshan. Kirpal made His way very slowly from His house across the open area in the Ashram. He had to climb several steps to the top of the dais. A chair had been placed there for Him, and He sat down.

Many from the surrounding area had heard about the special darshan and the Ashram was filled with satsangis. Kirpal gazed at their faces and seemed to give each one in turn a loving glance. Everyone could see how sick He looked and the whole group was singularly solemn, very silent and obviously very moved.

After a few minutes, Kirpal made His slow and painful way back to His quarters. The people dispersed, silently and thoughtfully. Surely Masters are strange beings – impossible to fully understand. As Kirpal had said many times, 'Only a Master can know a Master.' What had caused the heavy burden?

Whatever had caused Kirpal to take on so much was resolved by the time Baba Sawan's birth date came around and, as always, it was very well attended.

July twenty-seven was still the hot season, although the monsoon season often began in July. This brought refreshing rain showers or downpours, but not a great deal of relief in temperatures until the rain season became firmly established.

When the bhandara began, the weather was hot, the number of people in the Ashram was legion, accommodation was short and everyone had to be fed three times a day. Well, difficulties had always been solved and would be solved again.

The regular program was put into operation – that is: Satsang, meditation, meals in between, and last but not the least, initiation at the end. Many of those already initiated, either by Kirpal or by Baba Sawan, had the impelling ambition to see as much of the Master as they could, and knowing this, Kirpal was everywhere and made Himself available as much as possible for close conversation with small groups at a time in the enclosed verandah of His residence.

The intense heat of the Indian summer months was always difficult to bear – even for the Indian people who were born to the climate and learned to live with it throughout their lives. Intense heat, with day and night temperatures of similar figures, created unbreathable smoggy atmospheres in cities like Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay (Mumbai) and others, where open fires were used for cooking and there was very little breeze to blow air and oxygen into the heavy, yellow atmosphere.

Winters were cool in Northern India, with nights even cooler – to chill homes that used but a few lighted coals in a bucket to heat the frosty air. The elderly could be seen in the thin dawn, wrapped in blankets, seated outside their huts, quietly awaiting the slow-climbing temperature of the wintry sunlight. At the height of the day it was warm enough to thaw the chill from their bones, until the sun disappeared over the horizon and another night arrived.

The Ashram's visitors from overseas had been increasing slowly in numbers from the start of the sixties and many came in the hot season, for some reason. The Master, knowing how difficult the Westerner found the heat with no air conditioning etcetera, would often take a party of visiting disciples on tour with Him, particularly if the itinerary covered the cooler places. It made sense to travel to the cooler

spots in the summer season and the warmer areas in the winter. His program at each stop was very similar, with early morning meditation followed by a talk, and a public Satsang in the evening. The last day at each place would be kept for initiating those who wanted to be put on the Path.

The foreign visitors appreciated the lower temperatures after the heat of Delhi. However, depending on the program, not every station had the facilities to accommodate people used to modern living. Each visitor had to accept the fact that he or she would be living a simple life, even more austere than in the Ashram sometimes.

Due to Hardevi's soft heart, the Ashram's guesthouse rooms were simple but adequate, with running water, flush-toilets, and bathrooms with a depressed wet-area where one could bathe in Indian fashion, with a bucket of hot water and a large plastic mug.

It is probable that learning to concentrate only on the main purpose for coming to India was an invaluable lesson under such circumstances. The Master would ask, 'Why are you here? You have come, not to see the sights like tourists; not to make friends and spend your days gossiping, but to concentrate on improving your meditation, to progress on the Path, and to make the best use of the Master's company.'

The secret to all this was to fix one's attention on the Master and not remove it. With the attention on Kirpal alone, who would even notice what was going on around one?

The various hosts at the various tour points would do their best to make the foreigners welcome. It was all part of serving Maharaj Ji: a pleasure and a privilege. They would provide everything they possibly could to make the visitors feel comfortable and at home.

During the summer of 1966, the Master left Delhi to travel by road to Nainital*, Uttar Pradesh, for a short period, taking along with Him a few sevadars and three overseas visitors from U.S.A.

During the time of occupation in India by the British, a number of hill-stations had been built in the Himalayan foothills to offer respite from the summer heat of the Plains. Nainital, with its beautiful lake, was such a hill-station, as was Simla, Mussoorie, Ootacamund, and so on.

In Nainital, the Master followed His usual program of meditation and public Satsangs, enjoyed by everyone. The three visiting disciples from Florida also appreciated the pleasant surroundings and lower temperatures, which were much more conducive to meditation than Delhi's heat.

A short trip was made to nearby Bhimtal, a small town with a small lake. This brought back childhood memories to one of the authors whose father had owned the large villa on the hill and where she and her siblings had spent many happy vacations. There was considerable discussion between the Master and some of the local disciples about the feasibility of a meditation/Satsang center in Bhimtal and a property site was pointed out to the Master. When the time came to return to Delhi, the whole party felt refreshed and recovered.

Mahatma Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869, and every year a special commemorative gathering was held at the Gandhi Grounds, New Delhi, where a simple marble memorial had been erected at the site of his cremation.

In 1966, Kirpal was asked to attend and give a blessing at the event. He accepted and, accompanied by a large entourage, arrived at the Grounds. Prominent religious leaders

* Approximately 400 km or 250 miles northeast from Delhi by road.

were there as well as a large number of government ministers and other members of parliament. Kirpal's blessing was followed by a selected group of speakers, including Kirpal, who spoke of Gandhiji in particular and of death in general. Many of the audience present were Kirpal's own followers.

At the end of 1966, Kirpal sent out His Message for 1967 to all His western children, in English:

December 5, 1966

'Dear Ones:

'This year is going out and the New Year will soon be ushered in. The present year is gone old. Let it depart. You need not worry. It had been kind to you – not so kind as it should have been, but God willed it so. However, you must strive to be different from what you are during the present year. Strive to reach Him; be a true devotee; crave for blessings from the Almighty. Pray for His mercy. Promise unto Him that you will go up the Divine Path at any cost and nothing shall deter you from achieving this object.

'The New Year will be happy for you if you do not waver in the Divine Path or slacken your pace therein. Remain firm and go ahead, caring for none and heeding none except the One – the Master. Follow your Master with full faith embedded in your heart. If the faith in the Guru dims, the disciple falters and falls. Faith carries him forward in the regions which are otherwise impossible of traversing.

'This New Year means a new life to me and those who are attached to me in the noble cause of God. In this period we have to make sacrifices which alone lead to bhakti. These sacrifices will be of one's low desires, hatred, ill will, malice, name and fame, pride and egoistic life. Unless we are ourselves symbols of sacrifices, we cannot advance any further in the divine Path. Without sacrificing all that we have,

how can we reach His bhakti?

'New Year has come. Be new; leave the sloth of the old. Implicitly follow what is required of you. You failed to do so this year and you suffered. The mistakes are not to be repeated.

'A central place of worship should be established in the east and west of U.S.A, and everywhere, where the refreshing waters of Naam may rain forth to soothe the lacerated hearts of thousands and thousands of the grief-stricken human beings. They are unhappy because they are drifting away from Him evermore. Blessed are they who are chosen in the set-up of Master's work.

'The Christmas and New Year is starting with happy congratulations. May your life be devoted to the service of the Lord and the Guru. May your body and mind get imbued with intense love for the Beloved.

'The teachings of the Masters have been:

- 1) "He who loveth not his brother abideth in death;"
- 2) "My children: let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth;"
- 3) "Beloved: let us love one another (especially who are linked with the silken bonds of love of true brotherhood at the feet of the Master), for love is of God and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God;"
- 4) "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love;"
- 5) "God is love. And he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him."*

'The law of the Kingdom is love. The entire code of conduct of one who belongs to the Kingdom may be summed up in two thoughts:

- 1) Love of God, and
- 2) Love of man.

* 1) I John 3:14; 2) I John 3:18; 3) I John 4:17; 4) I John 4:8; 5) I John 4:16.

'Let us live a new life of peace, harmony and love. The essence of religion is love, peace, humility, service, and sympathy. Love all – not merely your relatives and friends. Love the sinner, too. Bless them that curse you.

'Pray like Guru Nanak:

"Peace be unto all the world over,
under Thy Will, O God."

The Master's activities, daily, weekly, monthly, were seldom secluded and were readily apparent for all to see. Consequently, anyone from the multifarious multitude that formed His followers could verify the extent of His work and the length of His working days. It was generally opined that He accomplished the work of three or four men each day. Although His uppermost motivation was the spiritual progress of the souls in His charge, both existing and those to come, this did not preclude His interest in any phase of life that would, even indirectly, be instrumental in improving the moral and spiritual well-being of humanity at large.

This universal attitude showed very clearly during Kirpal's second world tour, over the course of which a large part of His time was spent with religious and political leaders, especially through the World Fellowship of Religions.

The Master made observations at times about the quality of government. He often quoted the well-known motto attached to democratic rule: "of the people, by the people. . ." and then amended the last phrase to His own preference: ". . . for the *good* of the people." He stated firmly that those in a ruling position should first and foremost take *care* of all the people in their charge, and lead them righteously. He was heard to observe: 'Where are the men?' These words keep repeating again and again – 'Where are the men?'

His interest, therefore, in the governing of India is not surprising. He saw the corruption and mismanagement in many of the government departments and the civil service in general. He had discussed this with a number of senior officials, pointing out the initial problem: of people who, not knowing the meaning or value of the vote – and quite often did not know the candidates themselves – would vote for corruptibly-inclined men. More than 60% of the voting populace was illiterate, with very little understanding of the subject. Even a single victory for the wrong person can undermine the efforts and good intentions of others.

Kirpal suggested a conference and open meeting, before any voting takes place, in order to educate the vast population; to explain the responsibility of each voter and to promote a desire to use their vote wisely for the benefit of everyone. His suggestions, placed before the right people, were enthusiastically received. But it was another two years before this seed, planted by Kirpal, matured.

On January 22, 1967 the All India Voters' Conference, the first of its kind, was inaugurated by Pandit Hirdya Kunzru. Dr. Zakir Hussain, President of India, was to have performed this function, but was suffering with ill health at the time. The Speaker of the Lok Sabha, or House of Commons, Sardar Hukam Singh, was selected to preside over the Conference. They asked Kirpal to take charge of the Reception Committee. Patel House in New Delhi was the chosen venue.

Kirpal was mainly responsible for this event taking place: the result of His untiring efforts. In His capacity as Chairman of the Reception Committee, He rounded up many of the disciples who worked selflessly in arranging accommodation, transport, and, most importantly, interpreters, to cope with the exchange in the many languages that exist all over

India, each one very different from the next. Of course, English would be used freely, whenever possible.

The General Secretary of the Conference pointed out in his speech that many areas of the country provide – of the total number of voters – only 10% who actually come out to vote, and the conference would help to remind people not only to vote, but to vote for the right person. Each vote is invaluable and can be instrumental in helping to produce the right kind of leaders. He added that although the All India Voters Conference had been registered since 1965, yet it would have come to naught, but for the efforts of His Holiness Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, with whose blessings it will be successful in its aims, not only here in India but His power is felt all over the world. The conference was the beginning of a worthy cause – it is hoped that the desired aims will follow, and from this single meeting the idea and the purpose would spread and grow, all over the nation.

To honor the 1967 anniversary of Baba Sawan's birthday, on July twenty-seven, the Master issued a special message. The following are a few extracts:

'In my previous years' messages, I have been mostly dwelling on rising above body consciousness, to be reborn, and to learn to die while alive, etc., so as to enable one to enter the Kingdom of God, which is within us – as prescribed by all the past Masters now come to us through His Benign Grace [Baba Sawan's]. There are many aspects of His Divine Life but I will now dwell on the two most important ones, viz., humility and simplicity – the most needed at this hour which, if followed, will set our lives in the right direction and enable us to achieve perfection.

'Man knows so many things, but he does not know himself. A man has so many sheaths in himself, covering the

depths of his heart. Man learns and unlearns all through life. It is wiser to remain a student than to be a teacher – a student of the Mystery of Life.

‘A parable goes to say that a seeker of God, in the quest of Heaven, wandering here and there, found himself perchance at the Gate of Heaven. The gatekeeper asked him, “Who are you?” The seeker answered, “A teacher.” The gatekeeper asked him to wait, and went in to report. After a while he returned and said that he could not let him in, as there was no place for teachers in the heaven-world. He was told to go back and wash the dust of dead words clinging to him in the waters of silence.

‘So many teachers are vain; they parade their learning. How can there be a place in there for him who lives in a world of vanity?

‘Every day he sat in the silence and listened to the words of Saints, and his self-consciousness began to develop, and he became humble, and prayed to be the servant of all men, lonely and lowly ones, and animals – a servant of God’s creation. Then the portals of Heaven were opened and he entered in and beheld the Master’s face: pure and fair beyond compare.

‘All the Masters of the past and the present say that, “The Kingdom of God is for the humble of heart.” So many of us, alas, are proud, vain; in ego lost; and, blind to the wisdom, we do but wander from darkness to darkness.

‘The God that rules millions is the ego; enthrone on your heart the God of Love, and cease to wander – and what should be done to do so? Become humble as ashes and dust.

‘The world is full of the proud of purse or power or learning. Whereas, we should be humble and simple and empty ourselves of all “self” that the Lord might do with us what He would.

'The truly humble are the truly happy. For want of humility, men and women are leading an unbearable, miserable life. All this misery is from within. It is not a change in our circumstances, but deliverance from the thraldom of the self, the petty "ego" that sits a tyrant, robbing us of the bliss that is our heritage as children of God. We are, as it were, in a cage of self-centeredness, and until this prison is opened by the key of humility, the swan bird of the soul is not free and cannot swim to the regions of radiance and joy.

'Rightly has it been said that if there were no humility in the world, everyone would long ago have committed suicide.

'When the light of humility dawns on the soul, the darkness of selfishness disappears and the soul no longer lives for itself, but for God. The soul loses itself in God, lives in God, and is transformed into Him. This is the alchemy of humility. It transforms the lowest into the highest. The great Chinese sage, Lao Tse, expressed the thought in beautiful words: "How does the sea become the king of all rivers and streams? Because it lies lower than them."

'Each one of us is unique in his own way. There is a divine purpose behind the life of everyone who comes into the world; no one has been created for nothing. We have something to learn from everyone. This is the mystery of humility.

'The truly humble person does not compare himself with others. He knows that none of us, however evolved, is perfect; none of us is complete in himself.

'The humble person does not regard one as better than the other; he believes in the divinity of each. If one says and asserts that he is better than others, then he is not perfect as yet.

'It is only when one realizes his nothingness that God comes and fills him with Himself. Where man is, God is not;

where man is not, God is! God cannot enter the heart of the self-seeking person. He who is full of himself considers himself as above others and so puts a limit on himself. God is without limit. How can the limitless enter the limited?

‘O ye who seek God: see that you do not set yourself above others. Give up all that you are and all that you have, empty yourself of all “self,” cast the ego out, and you stand face to face with God.

‘A man may strive to be humble, but for all his efforts, may become all the more proud. There is such a thing as the pride of humility; it is a very dangerous thing, for it is too subtle to be discerned by the inexperienced. There are some who will take great pains to be humble; they make humility impossible. How can a man be humble who is all the time thinking of how best he can be humble? Such a man is all the time occupied with himself; but true humility is freedom from all consciousness of self, which includes freedom from the consciousness of humility.

‘The truly humble man never knows that he is humble. The truly humble man accepts everything as coming from the hands of God. He knows that in him there is nothing praiseworthy. All the good that is in him is from God, and the praise that men give him belongs to God. When the young man called Jesus “Good Teacher”, Jesus quietly said, “Why call me good? There is none good but God.”

‘The humble man makes no fuss. He is at harmony with himself and others. He is gifted with a wondrous feeling of peace. He feels safe and secure, like a ship in harbor, unaffected by howling storms and lashing waves. He has found refuge at the Lotus Feet of the Lord and the storms of changing circumstances have no power over him. He feels light as air. The burdens which we carry all our life – the burden of the self and its desires – he has laid aside, and he

is ever calm and serene. Having given up everything, he has nothing to lose, and yet everything belongs to him, for he is of God, and God is in him. Having broken the bondage of desire, he is as happy with a piece of dry bread as with a sumptuous meal. In every situation and circumstance of life, he blesses the Name of God.

'He who would walk the way of humility must renounce his earlier ways of living. He must give up the opinions he has formed, the standards to which he is accustomed. He must have a new outlook on life. The things the world would worship are to him of no value. His values are so different from those of other men. Rich food, fine houses, costly dresses, positions of power and authority, the applause of men, honors and titles, no longer attract him. He feels drawn to a life of simplicity. He is happy in living a hidden life in the hidden Lord.

'He is dead to the world; he is alive in God. At times he actually behaves like one dead.

'Yes, the truly humble man is, in that sense, the "dead" man. He has "died." God alone lives in him. His self has been annihilated. His self has vanished into God, and only God remains. God works in him and through him, and God emits in his eyes. God speaks in his words. On his feet, God walks the earth; and through his hands gives His benedictions to all.

'Such men are the real strength of the world – its illumination and inspiration. To see them is to commune with God, for God dwells in them. They are the living, moving temples of the Lord. They are the ones who keep the world intact, though they do not know it themselves. The whole earth depends on them without anyone being aware of it. Their hearts and minds are in tune with the great heart and mind of humanity. They are in complete accord with

all that lives. They give their love to all living beings, as though they were the sons of the one sweet Mother. They have broken all fetters and entered into the freedom of the children of God. God does their will, because they have merged their wills in His. God fulfills their least desire, for it is He Who desires all their desires. They are the little saviors of humanity.

‘I wish each one of you to follow the lesson of humility, born of love and simplicity.’

There are many aspects of the spiritual path, and the Master has covered them in many ways, always seeking to describe and explain so that anyone and everyone will understand without difficulty. This short discourse for July twenty-seven, 1967, is a rare insight into the depth of the subject of humility.*

* For many other thoughts from the Master on the practical aspects of the path to spirituality see the Master’s book: “Morning Talks”, available from the Book Department, Ruhani Satsang U.S.A. Also on CD.

CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

During Kirpal's discourses, He gave many examples, told many "stories", actual accounts of the lives of saintly people from the past. Among these was the story of a woman called Rabi'a Basri. This name – by which she is more commonly known – indicates her birthplace, which was Basra, in Iraq. She is known also as Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya, and she was born in the eighth century (circa 717).

Her parents were poor. They had three daughters already when Rabi'a was born and they called her Rabi'a, which means the fourth. Their lives were full of troubles and the mother died when Rabi'a was very young. She was still a child when her father died, and the sisters were left in a deprived state. During a bad famine, the four sisters were separated somehow, and three are believed to have died.

Rabi'a did not know where to turn and accepted an offer from a man who said that he would give her food and security. With these false promises he gained her confidence, but took her to a rich man's house, where he sold her into slavery.

Her owner was a cruel man who inflicted pain and atrocities upon her. Very late at night, when her tasks were done, she would go to her tiny room and cry out in her pain to God, who was the only One she could appeal to. But her

master's cruelty only got worse, until she could no longer bear it and resolved to run away. So one dark night she stole softly from the house. Stumbling, she fell, breaking her arm. Impelled by the severe pain, she cried out from her heart, 'O merciful God, what have I done to displease Thee? I have suffered so much from birth and now, when I try to run away from this cruel man, you have broken my arm.' She dissolved into tears.

A voice spoke to her: 'Child, do not worry, your difficult days will soon be over. Your name will be praised by all lovers of God and the gods in heaven will bow their heads in your remembrance.' As the voice became silent, Rabi'a thought deeply: 'If God is pleased with me, I should take whatever He gives – misery or joy.' With that thought, she returned to the house of her suffering.

From that day on, all her trials were seen in a different light: whatever sufferings she bore, she regarded them as God's own gifts to her. All these things were forced on her physical body, but her attention was ever elsewhere. With each breath she remembered God's name and her nights were spent in meditation and prayer. People noticed that there was a radiance about her bearing.

One night her owner awoke from his sleep. As he came to normal consciousness, he heard a small sound. Following the sound, he came to Rabi'a's doorway, which had no door. He looked into the room and was struck spellbound, for the room was aglow with a light. There was no lantern or candle, and he saw that the source of radiance was the girl herself. As she knelt with closed eyes, he heard her words: 'Oh, my Lord, I just want to live by Your Word – Your Word alone; but it is so difficult – I am a slave and cannot do as I wish, please forgive me.'

The man came near to her. Her face glowed with

unearthly beauty and its radiance pierced his heart with fear. 'Oh, I am doomed,' he cried. 'I have made you my slave and have treated you worse than a dog. Please forgive me Rabi'a. I beg you to forgive me.' He knelt in front of her and repeated this again and again, telling her that from now on, he would serve *her*, not she him.

Rabi'a smiled and assured him there was nothing to forgive, for it was all God's will. The man went to his own room and considered it all. He resolved to release her from slavery. She told him that she wished to go away to a lonely place, where she could spend the whole time in remembrance of God; and he agreed.

She found a lonely cave and spent all her time there. As the years went by, however, people got to know about the lover of God living in the cave, and came to get a glimpse of the Saint. Spending all her time in devotion to God, she little knew what was going on around her.

One day a devotee found her looking sad and dejected when he arrived at the cave. He asked her why that was, and she told him, 'Today my mind betrayed me – it took me to the gates of heaven, and seeing this my Beloved looked at me with disapproval, so I am sad because for a while I left His company and strayed off with this miserable mind.'

(Those who follow the Path of the Masters remember their warning: that even desire for spiritual things – mystic powers, out-of-body experiences, glimpses of heaven, etc. – can be a detriment to the seeker. Only the desire for God and love for God can keep one safely on the straight and narrow way. Heeding the mind's suggestions can lure the soul away from its goal. The mind is cunning and can be very subtle.)

When a devotee named Sufiyan arrived one day and

found Rabi'a very ill, he bowed his head but could not speak his mind. Rabi'a saw this and told him to say what he wanted. At this, Sufiyan said, 'I beg you to ask God to take this sickness from you.' Rabi'a smiled, saying, 'Don't you know that whatever happens is God's will?' 'Yes,' he said, 'I know that.' Rabi'a told him, 'If you know that, how can you ask this of me: for God to take away what His love has blessed me with? He is my true companion; he does everything for me, and always with overflowing love. To ask for something against His wishes is not worthy of my love for Him.'

Sufiyan asked Rabi'a if she would like to eat something. She replied, 'You know, I always wanted some dates, which grow in plenty everywhere, but for ten years I have lived here and have not even tasted them. I belong to Him and whatever He gives is a blessing and I take that blessing. To want anything more is a sin.'

Once someone asked her if she had no wish for marriage, and she replied, 'You speak of physical union when I am His, and so is this body: to serve Him and no one else.' Her simple and total devotion rendered her completely belonging to God, and to be apart from Him was something impossible for her to contemplate.

Once, she was asked, 'How did you reach such heights of spirituality?' Rabi'a answered this question the only way she knew: 'By losing everything I had, I found Him.'

Another question: 'You speak of God, but have you ever seen Him?' She said, 'How could I worship Him whom I had not seen? But I cannot describe Him; He cannot be weighed on a scale.'

This single-pointed attention for the love of God alone won Rabi'a the respect of devoted people everywhere, especially in the East, and particularly among the Muslim Sufis.

She is believed to have found contact with God due to her utter surrender to Him alone, from the day she first heard His voice.

The Master has often spoken of surrender to the Lord and its immeasurable value. He has quoted Guru Ramdas* on this subject:

“The true facts and stories of the Lord are told by the Guru, who is the true friend; Unto Him I joyfully surrender myself in sacrifice.”

In commentary, the Master explains:

‘He says that one would give oneself in complete surrender or sacrifice unto such a Guru. Brothers, would you not also joyfully surrender at the feet of a complete Guru, if you were fortunate enough to meet one? But make sure you surrender only to Him in whom the Truth is awakened. Guru Ramdas is telling us about His Guru. Only a true Master can know what a Master truly is.

‘He tells us of how He has found a true Master, and how abounding and unlimited is His Guru’s love. Only those with full faith can ever come to know of it; but how many have the inner conviction of their Guru *being* a Guru? He who really knows what the Guru is, becomes a Gurumukh.’

Kirpal continues to quote from Ramdas’ hymn:

“Come, my gurusikh**, come;
You are the beloved of my Guru.”

Then Kirpal continues His talk:

‘Who actually is beloved of the Guru? He who becomes a true disciple – who lives up to the teachings of the Guru; who obeys the Guru’s every command. Such

* Fourth Guru of the Sikhs (1534-1581).

** True disciple of the Guru.

a follower is a gurusikh. Otherwise, he is a mansikh or disciple of the mind.*

The Master usually chose stanzas from the writings of the True Masters of the past, to be sung out by the pathi during His Satsang talks, to show those present that the true teachings of spirituality have not changed over worldly time, or from Satguru to Satguru.

India has become so well-traveled over the years that many of its customs are familiar throughout the world – even to those who have never set foot in the country. One of those well-known customs is the Hindu rite of taking a purifying bath in any one of the sacred rivers. The most prominent of these is the Ganga or Ganges. The practice can be seen along the shores of this holy river at Varanasi (Benares) and other cities.

One can take a holy dip at any time, but it is considered to be more beneficial during the Kumbh Mela. The Vedic legend explains how the gods and the demons made a bargain, to make amrit** from the original ocean of milk, and share the harvest equally. But the demons ran off with the kumbh or pitcher containing the amrit. In the course of the 12-day war, with the gods fighting the demons to retrieve the precious amrit, some drops of it were spilt in four different places.

Consequently, melas or fairs are held in those sacred spots. Two are on the eastern side of India – Allahabad and Hardwar, in Uttar Pradesh, and two on the western side – Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, near Bhopal, and Nasik in Maharashtra, near Bombay (Mumbai). The full Kumbh Mela is held every twelve years and the Adhi or Half Kumbh comes

* From "Joyfully I Surrender" – Sat Sandesh (Eng), Feb '72.

** Nectar of Immortality; Water or Elixir of Life.

at each sixth year in between.

At Hardwar, the ancient Hindu rite of that dip in the holy water for salvation is enthusiastically celebrated during the Kumbh Festival. The actual dates of the Kumbh are determined by the holy men who carefully study the mystical and astrological signs and charts, to arrive at the correct time. Then every Hindu who can possibly make it travels to Hardwar, or another of the four cities, at this special time. The attending numbers are in the millions – more on a full Kumbh and almost as many on a half Kumbh. The mela or festival has the very essence of Hinduism at its roots, something comparable to Christmas or Easter festivals in Christianity. Every Hindu wants salvation and believes that a dip in the holy Ganga at the significant time is the ideal way, by gaining the benefit of the Nectar Power that reputedly continues to exist in the waters.

Kirpal made a point of avoiding this type of event, observing that in the case of the Kumbh, surely if one could get salvation just by a dip in the river at the auspicious time, then would not the fish, frogs and other creatures having the same dip also get salvation? So when the Kumbh Committee invited Him to join the April 1968 Festival of the half Kumbh, He did not intend to accept. When the satsangis heard that Ruhani Satsang would not be going, they begged Kirpal to change His mind, pleading for the sincere seekers who were hoping to gain salvation by the holy dip in the Ganga. Surely there must be some of those seekers who were destined to meet the God-in-man? And would not many others meet Kirpal and hear Him speak, starting them on the right way of thinking?

The Master relented and agreed to be present at Hardwar from April 5 to 15, 1968. It was something of a precedent for a Guru of the Positive Power to be there in the middle of the

Negative Power's domain at such an important function!

When the River Ganga is at its full flow from the mountains, a small island is formed, just outside the town area at Hardwar, by a small branch breaking away from the main flow. When the current is less, this branch becomes more of a trickle and sometimes dries up altogether. The committee had chosen this "island" area for the festival site, dividing the land up into small lots, which any group could reserve.

Ruhani Satsang chose a sizeable space, with enough room for tent accommodations, a space for Satsangs, as well as a place to run a kitchen, with tables and seating. A satsangi restaurateur from Delhi, along with working volunteers from the Satsang, volunteered to provide well-cooked, wholesome vegetarian meals at cost prices, with free meal coupons for those who could not afford it.

Kirpal sent some sevadars over from the Ashram to organize the camp preparations and finally, when all was finished, the whole Ruhani Satsang Camp was one of the most efficient in the area. The kitchen became a popular place for everyone, serving visitors from other camps and Kirpal's followers alike.

Kirpal's "tent residence" was given special attention, with separate outdoor "tent bathroom" and surrounding landscaping of flowers in pots.

The Satsang space was repeatedly full of eager crowds listening to Kirpal's illuminating talks, or participating in group meditation sittings. Kirpal had warned the followers to not bring along children or the elderly to the Kumbh, due to the hazards of children getting lost or kidnaped and the danger of disease due to the crowded areas and the not very hygienic conditions. However, attendance was high and

enthusiasm infectious.

In accord with Kirpal's instructions, Ruhani Satsang Camp was quiet, peaceful, a suitable atmosphere for meditation and inner peace. However, from all sides, except the side which faced the river, the surrounding camps were using their amplifying systems to loudly proclaim the efficacy of their particular teachings and various gods. It was actually difficult to understand exactly what was being said as each speaker's voice became louder and louder in attempts to out-voice each other!

When Kirpal held Satsang, the volume of the amplifying system was turned low to reach only within the Satsang boundaries. His voice could also be heard in the kitchen by means of an extra loudspeaker there, so that the kitchen workers would not miss His talk. Many of the Hindu leaders, yogis and politicians visited the Satsang talks and sat with Kirpal on the dais.

The prominent Swami Shankaracharya, a respected Hindu leader with a very large following, also came, along with a gold chair – keeping the custom of that sect for the leader to sit always on a chair of gold.

The Swami, a learned man, seldom visited other gurus, though very hospitable himself. People were surprised when he came to Kirpal at the camp, carried into Kirpal's room on the golden chair. He had a serious conversation with Kirpal and asked Him many questions on spirituality. At the Satsang, Kirpal asked him to say a few words and bless the people, before the talks began, but he declined, choosing to speak after Kirpal. When Kirpal's talk ended, Kirpal again requested that he say something to benefit the huge crowd present. The Swami shook his head, saying, 'Sant Kirpal Singh Ji is asking me to say something to you all, but what can I say? Only this: There are many

different strengths of electric bulbs. A 1000 watt bulb is much brighter than 100 watts, but in the brightness of the sun, *all* lighted bulbs become dimmed. Even when you put many lighted 1000 watt bulbs together, still their brilliance will be overshadowed by the sun. The Satguru's [Kirpal's] Light is far brighter than many suns together, so what can I say in front of Him? He has set before you the essence of spirituality in such simple words. He has explained it all.'

One day when Kirpal was giving a talk at another camp by invitation, a man rushed up to Him and, interrupting the Master's talk, said with great agitation, 'Maharaj Ji, the camp is on fire, please come at once!' Kirpal, raising His hand to calm the man down, said very sweetly, 'It is all God's will; all will be well, so go back.' Having said that, Kirpal continued with His talk from the exact point of interruption, as if there had been no break in the talk at all. The other speakers sitting with Him were amazed. When the meeting was finished and all the speakers had spoken, one of the religious leaders turned to Kirpal and asked Him if He was not concerned about His camp. Kirpal told him that not only was He concerned about what went on in His camp, but the concern came from His heart; however, everything happens according to God's will.

They found out later that by the time the man returned to the camp, the fire was under control, but had destroyed two thirds of a three-room tent. Everything was consumed by the fire, which had started by an electric shortage in an appliance – everything, except a small photograph of Kirpal in a plastic frame, a copy of Gurmat Sidhant, and an apple given by Kirpal to the tent occupier. These three items were still in position on top of the air cooler within which the fire had started and which itself was badly burned. Another

item had escaped being consumed: a locked trunk in which some camera equipment was stored, along with the paper money-takings of several days from the cafeteria, placed in the trunk due to lack of any other place of security in the camp. The camera equipment was undamaged, also the money, although the fire fighters had to wait some hours before removing the trunk from the fire, as it was intensely hot. The occupier lost bedding, clothing, beds, etc. but the book, photograph (both paper items), and the apple were not even baked or warm. It was indeed a mystery; or perhaps not!

Not every yogi or sadhu one meets is advanced spiritually, nor even of elevated intelligence (and there was a goodly mix at the Kumbh). Many live the life purely for the opportunity of begging a living or for snaring unsuspecting followers who donate their hard-earned rupees in the hopes of gaining some religious or material blessing. Some seek to pad their reputations as spiritual adepts by indulging in "bhang" (Cannabis Indica) in order to impress upon the innocents their ability to rise into samadhi.

Kirpal always warned of the dangers of such practices and, on the subject of narcotics and the like, the Master was always very clear: 'Drugs, opiates and intoxicants should not be partaken, as these will not only affect your health adversely, but shall be detrimental to your spiritual progress. You should please leave off such drugs.'

The Master announced that all the followers should go home on the buses that were leaving early on the 14th morning. No one wanted to go, for Kirpal would be staying on for two more days, but most of them obeyed, including a number of foreign initiates.

By leaving, they escaped a very fierce storm which

started threatening on the 14th afternoon, until it developed into a very strong force with rain, thunder, lightning, and high-powered winds. Some trees were blown clear out of the ground and local residents declared it was the worst storm for many years.

The camps were flattened to the ground; tents blown all over the area. Cries of pain and fright could be heard above the noises of the storm, all over the island. It was also happening in Kirpal's camp but those who had not left on the buses were thinking of each other, helping each other, singing hymns and thanking God for being alive. Some were pinned under the tents by the heavy wet canvas and the heavy tentpoles, but they still helped each other if they could. Some could not move at all, yet they continued to thank God. Afterwards people asked them if they were not frightened. 'Oh yes, but Maharaj Ji was with us and joy filled our hearts for we knew He would keep us safe. Later, everyone learned that not one person had been seriously hurt in the Ruhani Satsang Camp.

The authors had been doing some work in the town market streets, and had taken shelter from what they experienced as just a heavy downpour. When the rain ceased, they left their temporary place of shelter – in a fabric store – and began to walk back to camp. It was quite far – out through the town, across the big bridge spanning the Ganga, and some distance along on the other side of the river, to get onto the island.

On the way, they met some people who shouted, 'Your Ruhani Satsang Camp is blown away in the storm!' They looked at each other – how could the camp be blown away by just a rain shower? They had seen nothing of the ferocious extent of the fierce windstorm over the island.

Hurrying back to camp, they were shocked to see, on

the way, so many camps razed to the ground. In their own camp, there too was considerable destruction, but they were quickly reassured by some of the satsangis that everyone was okay and no one was hurt. As they gazed at the devastation around them, once again (as had happened many times before) their thoughts of gratitude went out to the Master for extending His loving grace and protection.

Next day, as the Master walked around what was left of the camp in the early morning light, He smiled at everyone and, gazing around at the debris of the storm, remarked softly, 'The Negative Power must have been very angry to have us in His domain!'

CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

In the summer of 1968, Kirpal made a journey to Kashmir. The Kashmir Satsang was based in Srinagar, the capital city of that state and the principle location of the group of followers who had specially requested Kirpal's visit.

The Indian summer was the only feasible time of year for a journey by road from the plains into the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Going via Ambala, Jullundur, Pathankot, Jammu and Udhampur, the highways up to Pathankot were in reasonable condition – although India's traffic is always very mixed everywhere. However, the continuing route from Pathankot gets more difficult as it proceeds to Srinagar. It looks alright on the map, but is in fact a very poor road. The surface is bad and the width of the roadway is very narrow, with very little room for two-lane traffic – one each way. To make it worse, many herds of goats and some sheep are driven north into Kashmir at that time, to avoid the hot summer weather. Passing a huge herd of these animals on the road is slow and exacting; something to try one's patience.

A few people accompanied Kirpal on this trip, including one or two overseas initiates. The Delhi group consisted mainly of Hardevi's family members and a few other disciples.

After two or three days of difficult travel, the vehicles arrived at the tunnel through the mountains, which is the gateway to the Kashmir Valley. During the winter this tunnel is impassable, and even in summer the tunnel walls are still iced up and the melting ice drips constantly from the roof onto the vehicles.*

Emerging from the tunnel, one can enjoy the beautiful and breathtaking vista of the Kashmir Valley spread out in a continuous panorama. Rice paddies in graceful patterns are laid out on the valley floor and partially up the slopes of the foothills. Behind all this, in the background and in stately grandeur, rises the rocky, ice-capped range of the Himalayan mountains. Certainly a spectacular sight!

Unfortunately, it was dark when the vehicles emerged into the valley and the views were restricted to a few feet lining the roadside, illuminated by the cars' headlights.

As the moon was bright, one could see also the two rows of Chinar trees, one each side of the road. The Chinars are reminiscent of the Poplar, with branches lifting like arms upward to the sky; but the Chinar's branches are fewer in number than the Poplar – more spaced-out and with larger leaves. When the breeze picks up, those branches sway and the leaves shake, to perform a beautifully graceful dance to fascinate the observer.

The destination in Srinagar was the home of Jaswant Singh and his family, the group leader of the area. Here, everyone was able to rest after the tiring journey.

Wherever one goes in Kashmir, one can see the fresh, clear, fast-rushing streams lining the roads, coming down from the hills. They make a lasting impression that is not forgotten; an impression that comes quickly to mind at the least mention of Kashmir.

* At least, these were the conditions in 1968.

The Master's public talks would be held in the city center at a large auditorium. Whosoever wanted to attend Kirpal's Satsang would have to come to Srinagar Center, as the numbers of satsangis outside the city were few. Each day Kirpal gave a talk in the grounds of Jaswant Singh's house. All the local disciples attended and sat on the lawn, with the Chinars waving their greetings behind and above the Master. Perhaps they were happy to be so near Him. The local initiates and everyone else certainly were. Very few living in Kashmir were able to go to Delhi and they were overjoyed to have Kirpal in their own town for a few days.

The group leader and his family were keen to take the Master to Pahalgam, a small village in the mountains, approximately seventy-five kilometers or forty-seven miles from Srinagar. As usual, Kirpal was kind to consider the wishes of His children and agreed to the trip. Everyone was looking forward to seeing more of the mountain country, and it was decided to spend the night in Pahalgam and return the next day.

No one was disappointed – the scenery was beautiful and what better company than the Master? A picnic was suggested, at a certain spot alongside a fast-flowing river, just a short drive from the cabins where everyone would sleep. The location must have brought some sad memories to the family, for at this place their small daughter had drowned in this very river, several years before.

This day, however, everyone's mood was cheerful and everyone enjoyed the picnic. A Mr. and Mrs. Kapoor, Delhi satsangis, had come with their son, a young man who energetically attempted to climb a nearby steep slope, and fell at about half-way up, tumbling down to the ground level. As the boy tumbled down, Kirpal jumped up from the picnic

circle and began walking up and down, working His right shoulder, moving His right arm backwards and forwards, up and down, while several people ran to the boy to see if he was hurt. He told them he had fallen badly on his right shoulder, but now there was no pain whatsoever. Kirpal put His arm around the young man – ‘Are you alright?’ He replied that he was fine.

Two sturdy Kashmiri horsemen on even sturdier horses came galloping through the small valley. Their cap-like hats and billowing cloaks put them very much in character with the mountain atmosphere. Later, two young goat-herds brought a large herd through, along with several baby goats. Even the animals were getting the blessing of Kirpal’s darshan.

After sleeping the night amid the cool mountains, the journey back to Srinagar was broken on the way by an interesting visit to a small temple. Its principal attraction was a large “tank” filled with clear spring water, but the interesting part was the temple’s records – going back several generations.

The records were in the form of large books filled with signatures and pertinent information about the various signers, written by the signatories themselves. The custodian of the records brought out one of these record books and showed Kirpal where several members of His physical family had signed – ancestors from the past. The man was obviously delighted to have the darshan of the Master and took pleasure in revealing a small part of the Satguru’s family history. At his request, Kirpal also signed the appropriate book and listed the required personal information.

The pride of Srinagar is the lovely Dal Lake, which glitters a deep blue color in the clarified air. To stand along the

roadside and lean on the wall, gazing over the calm waters – one's searching eyes seeking the blue/purple mountains on the horizon – is a pleasure that any nature-lover would appreciate and would love to stand, absorbing the tranquil beauty for a passing hour or two, if one had the time.

The last evening in Srinagar ended in a public Satsang in the city auditorium. The following day, the Master began the long return journey to Delhi.

On the way to the tunnel gateway leading out of the Kashmir Valley, the group leader was anxious to show the Master some land being proposed for a Satsang Center, to request His approval and suggestions. By the roadside, in a cool spot under the trees, a picnic lunch was being laid out, directed by the serene Hardevi. Everyone spent the very last few minutes having lunch with Kirpal, before His car drove away to begin the journey to Delhi. As had happened on the way to Kashmir, several stops would be made at Satsang stations en route.

Every one of Kirpal's birth anniversaries was special. His children – His spiritual family – looked forward the whole year to that very special celebration.

The year 1969 was no different in that respect. However, Kirpal would be seventy-five in February 1969 – wasn't that something really extra special? This was discussed at length by the followers for several months. Finally, the Ruhani Satsang Committee decided to approach the Master for permission to organize an exceptional celebration in His honor. Very brave of them!

Kirpal laughed and said, 'Honor is for those that seek it,' adding, 'I am here just to serve and bring people into a clearer understanding of what Truth is.'

Of course, they begged Him to allow them to plan *something*.

‘Alright’ said Kirpal, ‘If you want a special day, it should be called “Integration Day”.’ When the banners were printed sometime later, both titles were used: Diamond Jubilee Celebrations and National Integration Day.

Shri Hansraj Gupta, Mayor of Delhi, accepted the position of Chairman of the Diamond Jubilee Celebration Committee, and got together with the committee members, some of the WFR members and certain prominent followers of Kirpal. Together they worked out the best possible program.

Invitations were sent around India and abroad to religious leaders, government officials and politicians, welfare and voluntary groups, even certain businessmen who were interested. There was a great response, not only in India, but from many overseas countries. The Indian Government itself was enthusiastic, with a certain Minister declaring: ‘If any one man can bring a better understanding of the different faiths and their integration, it is His Holiness Sant Kirpal Singh.’ This letter, containing these words, opened many doors to obtain extra help for the hard-working committee.

Help they needed, for one big problem was how to accommodate so many people? The dozen or so rooms in the Ashram guesthouse would quickly be filled with satsangis coming from abroad.

One suggestion paid off. They held an open meeting and appealed to the people of Delhi to offer rooms in their homes for overseas guests or those from other areas in India. The positive response was amazing. Also, the Indian Government offered rooms in their hotels and guest-houses. The Ashram built more rooms and, by extending a wall, the kitchen was enlarged. The open space of the Ashram measured about two acres only, so it was a difficult jigsaw puzzle to use that space wisely.

Near the Ashram was a large complex of residences known as the Bijli – or Electric – Colony (units for their workers) which had a sizeable open ground which could be used for tents to sleep in, and open space enough to hold Satsangs and meditation sittings. It was a great boon which solved many difficulties.

There was still the task of organizing the food and feeding the followers. They would need breakfast, lunch and dinner. The only way was to use whatever space was available in the Ashram and lay down narrow strips of jute carpeting for sitting cross-legged, with space to walk between them. A stainless steel plate and tumbler was placed before each person and four sevadars would bring the food from the kitchen and serve dal, vegetable, roti and water. Even then, the hungry people would have to come in batches and the sevadars would need to serve in shifts. It was an efficient effort to cope successfully with caring for the needs of large numbers.

In the kitchen, giant iron sheets were placed above large holes in which open fires blazed away. About twenty ladies sat on the ground around the hot plates, cooking the rotis and cheerfully singing hymns as they worked with long-handled spatulas to turn the bread. The baked rotis would be kept in baskets ready for the servers to carry to the long lines of people. The vegetables and the dal were cooked in huge pots. The smiling workers and the delicious aromas were an attraction to the astonished visitors from overseas, who came to witness the magic that was going on in the kitchen in preparation to feed the many thousands.

Frequently, Kirpal would enter the kitchen to fulfil the age-old custom of the Guru blessing the food with His holy glance. The love for His willing workers could be seen in His eyes as He gazed at each one of the cooks, as well as the

food. They wondered, *does He ever rest?*! He seemed to be everywhere.

The activity was a tempting magnet, drawing the movie people who had arrived from Bombay. Led by the satsangi Rajender Singh Bedi, well-known movie maker from “Bollywood” in Bombay, who had brought his team along to make a documentary of the occasion, they struggled to erect and set up their equipment. As there was no space free for the scaffolding, a platform was constructed in the highest tree. Where there's a will, there's a way!

As had happened every previous February six, the followers began to arrive, each with a blanket, to take their places in front of the huge dais very early in the morning. Each one wanted to get as close to the dais as possible – all hoping that Kirpal would come out from His house and sit before them. Some had spent the entire cold night sitting there, waiting, nodding in sleep, meditating . . .

At 4 a.m., the popular Chela Ram kirtan singers arrived, sat on the dais and began their music – sweet voices rendering the holy songs with melodious harmony. Sometimes the happy people would raise their voices in joyful chorus. The atmosphere was electric with anticipation. At last, about 5 a.m., Kirpal came from His residence and climbed up onto the dais. He stood before the crowds, folded His hands and bowed to them. Somehow, each and every person received the power from His gaze roving over the huge mass of people – the love that went deep down into their very souls. This is what they had come for. The silence and His presence filled the night with an indescribable wonder.

By that time, a large group of religious dignitaries had taken their places alongside Kirpal on the dais. One particular and popular leader, Mahamandleshwar Swami Ved

Vyasanand, known for his lively speeches, said during his short talk, 'I have attended many large Satsangs, but the atmosphere of peace and love which is here, I have never felt in my life and never witnessed such a huge gathering with such a single-pointed intensity as if everyone was one instead of many – the same source in thousands of bodies. I cannot properly express in words that which I feel here.'

Quoting from the famous Hindu scriptures, the Ramayana, the Swami said, "'One who does not see the Saint and take him as God, his eyes are like the dead eyes in the feathers of a peacock. The tongue that does not speak Ram Naam [the name of God] is like the tongue of a frog that croaks endlessly. Similarly, the ears that do not hear the Music of the Spheres are like the holes where the serpents live.'"

Then the Master spoke of birth and re-birth and, as the people listened with rapt attention, He said:

'This human birth we have got, and if we learn about the second birth – of the spirit – and after rising above body consciousness, travel into the Beyond, we will profit fully from it. Transcending the physical body, we enter into the astral and then the causal regions. After transcending all three, one attains the state of mergence with the Lord: "I and my Father are one."* You brothers and sisters have come from far-off places in this cold weather. I am grateful for it. I am more fortunate in this respect: when I have met you – so many – and you have met only one – me. But I wish that you should take such a birth, after attaining which there is no more birth in this world.'

* John 10:30.

CHAPTER SIXTY

As the Master completed His talk, as usual He recommended that the people should go at once and sit in meditation, knowing the value of using the upliftment received in Satsang to rise further in consciousness, via accurate meditation.

The 8 a.m. session was held in the Electric Colony, starting with one hour's meditation. The Satsang that followed was attended by a larger number of visiting dignitaries, and was presided over by the President of the Celebration Committee, Union Minister Shri Govinda Menon.

The Chairman of the Committee opened the gathering by welcoming everyone. In his speech, he said:

'Most respected Sant Ji Maharaj, worthy acharyas, brothers and sisters. It is a great occasion of extreme joy for all of us who have assembled here to participate in the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of Sant Ji Maharaj. I am thankful to you and welcome you all.

'For all these years Sant Ji has been bestowing on us sweet showers of His love, the Love and Light of God and the knowledge he has acquired at the feet of his Master. Great souls like Sant Ji come from time to time; those who come in contact with them, and remain in their service, succeed in the mission of their life. They learn how to lead their lives

and realise God within. Such gatherings are rare occasions in our life and the object of these gatherings is that those who attend should be benefited. It is a unique occasion on which we, instead of congratulating Sant Ji, should congratulate ourselves. We have been given an opportunity to follow the path that Sant Ji has shown us and develop within us the purity of thought and deed, and love and respect for all religions and faiths.

‘At this time when our society is torn by rifts and dissensions resulting in strife and restlessness, we are fortunate to have amongst us Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, a noble and lofty soul. Various religious leaders who have come in contact with Him are all agreed that He possesses the spiritual gift of God and bestows the gift of grace to one and all to enable them to follow the path of righteousness, no matter to which religion and faith one belongs. His fame has spread far and wide in India and abroad. People have faith and devotion in Him. It is because He does not speak for any particular faith or religion. He wants that all of us in this world should love each other. We should rise above the physical self and realize God within to become spiritually strong. This is Sant Ji’s message. On this auspicious occasion, all of you are invited to traverse this holy Path. Those who are on the way are blessed indeed. Others can also get the Light from Him and proceed on the God-Path. I feel that to live up to His teachings is the true tribute to Him; only then we shall prove ourselves worthy of His blessings. Thus we shall be benefiting from this occasion today.’

A member of the Metropolitan Council of Delhi, Shri Prem Chand Gupta, said in his address:

‘Respected Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, respected acharyas, brothers and sisters. Today is a day of great rejoicing for all of us and for the whole country, as we are

celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of our Guru, Param Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj. The way in which our devotion to Him is finding an expression is a matter of great satisfaction and happiness to all of us.

'Realised souls come to the world with hearts full of mercy, unbounded love and fathomless compassion ready to extend help and guidance to all. Why is it that everyone feels attracted to Sant Kirpal Singh Ji? From my personal contact extending over five years, I can say that the greatest magnetism in the personality of our Maharaj Ji is His inexhaustible love which is extended to all, high or low. This is the mantra, which reconciles conflicting ideas and interests. It is His love that draws us to Him. We ask for His advice and instructions. We err a hundred times and in His loving forgiveness He forgives us a thousand times. This generosity of spirit is the hallmark of truly great men. His love and grace is boundless.

'Tomorrow, in this capital city of India, we will declare, as a part of the celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee of our Satguru, that this year we the people of this country will all work for National Integration.

'Our slogan will be the slogan that Maharaj Ji has given us - "Be Good, Do Good and Be One". What a great significance this slogan carries! The rivers and rivulets merge into the sea to become a great ocean. Such is the state of our great country as one Rashtra [Nation]. This unity can be brought about spiritually.'

The Reverend Bishop Abdul Haq said:

'I have known Sant Ji Maharaj for the last 10 years. If I am asked to describe my relation with Sant Ji I can explain it by one word - Love. I am a Padri, He is a Sant. But on the level of Love, we are one. Whenever I get a call from Him, I feel it is a call from a brother and I leave all my other

work and hasten to His service. The greatest testimony of His love is what we see here; we find here Padris, Jainis, Sanatanis, Muslims and Sikhs – Sant Ji's love has brought us all, with our different faiths, at one place. Our religions are different, our rituals and ways of living are different, but in the parliament of love, we are all one.'

And in prayer, he said:

'We are grateful to Thee for giving us Your true devotee in Sant Kirpal Singh Ji whom You made Thy lamp to light our path and thousands of people are bearing witness to Thy Light being bestowed to them through Him. We thank Thee O Lord, for His life with us on earth. We pray Thee, O Lord, Thy True Son [Kirpal] may have long life so that the world may continue to receive Thy Light and Life, and the darkness of ignorance and hatred that is spreading be dispelled.'

Dr. Joseph Busby, the President of the Spiritual Unity of Nations in the United Kingdom – and an initiate of the Master – also spoke, and concluded his talk with: 'Beloved Master, we speak as we [he and his wife, Louise Busby] travel around the world in your name, in your spirit and your truth, and as we move on to other countries we will take the memory of this gathering, this devotion, this glorious happy birthday celebration Jubilee, to the occasion of millions of people, through our journal and through the spoken word, through radio and television. We will let the world know that the sun of glory has come in the person of the Master, Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj.'

Kirpal, in His talk said:

'The Masters say that unless you control the mind you cannot realise God. The question is how to control the mind? There are two types of knowledge – Para-Vidya (Spiritual)

and Apra-Vidya (Terrestrial). All actions performed on the level of the senses, like study of the scriptures, observance of rites and rituals, prayer and recitation of holy books, pilgrimage, charity, penances and fasts, form part of Apra-Vidya. How can a man who is identified with mind and the senses, to the extent of losing his real identity, rise above them through actions performed on the level of the senses or of intellect? The Upnishdas* say, "Unless the sense-organs are controlled and the mind and the intellect are stilled, one cannot realise the soul." The science of controlling the mind is called Para-Vidya.

'In the life of Lord Krishna we find the allegory of a thousand-headed serpent who lived in the River Jumna. Lord Krishna subdued the serpent by the charms of his flute. Which is that thousand-headed serpent? It is the mind which beguiles all mankind. It has a thousand ways to inject the poison to lead one astray. It can be subdued only by the eternal Sound, the Naam or Word, which reverberates in every human heart. It is the manifestation of the God-into-expression Power which has two phases: Light and Sound Principle. How to have a practical experience of the Sound and the Light of God? A competent Master of Spirituality can bring one above body-consciousness by the power of his life-impulse and contact him with the Light and Sound reverberating within. Through His grace we see that the same Light shines in all.

'There is a small incident in the life of Guru Nanak. He was taken to a kazi** who said "Nanak, you say Ram and Allah are the same. Why not come and say Namaz*** with us?" So He went to the Mosque.

* Ancient Hindu scriptures.

** A Muslim judge.

*** Prayer.

'The priest was leading the Namaz and the Muslim judge standing by. Guru Nanak did not participate in the rituals of Namaz. Subsequently, when the kazi enquired as to why He did not join the congregation in Namaz, Guru Nanak replied, "With whom was I to say Namaz?" "With the maulvi, who was leading the prayer," said the kazi. Guru Nanak said that the maulvi was worried lest the foal of the mare may fall into the well in his house. "You could perform the prayer with me", the kazi persisted. Guru Nanak replied, "You were busy buying horses in Kabul." All of which was true. The kazi finally enquired as to who He [Nanak] was?

Guru Nanak said, "Outwardly I look like a Hindu, but if I say so, I will be killed, because you look from the level of the religious labels. You have taken Islam to be a religion of outer symbols only, according to which I do not qualify to be a Mohammedan. My body is a combination of five elements and the unseen Power which sustains it; *That am I, Nanak.*" Masters come to clear up misunderstandings and prejudices that usually arise due to wrong preaching and a dearth of Master souls. Masters bring out things in their real perspective.'

Everyone was back at the Electric Colony at 5 p.m. after a break for lunch and a short rest. To begin the session, the Master gave a short speech wherein He said:

'The truth is, if He (God or the Godman) does not give us anything, what will be our life? I know that if anyone is experiencing the Truth, it is only due to His grace. In the years 1914, 1915, I was blessed with the Divine powers of Ridhis and Sidhis*, but I prayed to the Almighty to keep

* Special spiritual powers. For more comprehensive explanation, read "The Crown of Life" by Kirpal Singh, available from the Book Department, Ruhani Satsang U.S.A.

them in reserve with Him, and further prayed that while in this world I may lead the life of an ordinary person, and if anybody was benefited through me I should not know of it. I assert that the entire credit goes to my Master. This is not a new science but it is very old. The science of soul is very simple and there is no philosophy in it.'

Anyone who knows the unique spot in the Himalayan foothills called Rishikesh (place of the sages) will recognize the name and reputation of Yogiraj Raghuvacharya who, at the time of the Jubilee Celebration, was one hundred and thirteen years old. His devotion to Kirpal had never ceased since they met in 1948, and by the glow on his face one could see that he was very happy to be present on this auspicious occasion.

In his short talk, he told of an instance from Hindu scripture:

'It is a rare boon to be blessed with the holy company of a true Saint. We are all fortunate in this respect. Once, the denizens of Paradise decided to hold council to search for Amrit – the Nectar of Immortality – so that they might partake of it to become immortal. Narad, the son of Brahma – the Creator – was elected to preside over the deliberations. Various views were expressed concerning the whereabouts of the fabled Amrit. One god said that Amrit might be found in the depths of the oceans, another said it was to be found in the moon, a third said that it was in Paradise, while still another said that it was hidden in the mouth of the king of snakes. None could give the correct answer. At last, Narad Ji arose and declared: "Amrit is found in the company of Saints, the true worshippers of God." Pointing toward Kirpal, Raghuvacharya said: 'He belongs to that category of Saints Who spread the message of God everywhere, and Who have no attachment, no jealousy, no hatred, only love

for all humanity. Through His grace all men can discover Amrit – the Nectar of Immortality – because His sublime company gives detachment and freedom from the temptations of the sense objects.'

The Master Himself gave a short version of the reasons why taking up the spiritual Path is so important. He never stopped seeking those to whom the mystery of life was beginning to have an appeal. His children could be found in all walks of life, at every level of life and in all kinds of situations or events.

At 5 p.m. on the evening of February 7, a gathering was held in the modern auditorium at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi. At this event, the Abhinandan Patra* was to be presented to Kirpal – a scroll signed by various notables. It was presented by Kaka Sahib Kalelkar, the scholarly and highly respected associate of Mahatma Gandhi and one of the few of those original patriots and leaders of the freedom movement who were still living. He started his presentation speech with: 'We are gathered here for a very noble and important work – to honor and pay tribute to Sant Kirpal Singh Ji for His spiritual greatness. He has completed His seventy-five years, and heads of different religions will jointly present Him an Abhinandan Patra on this occasion. I belong to the Ashram of Gandhiji, where we held equal regard for all religions and held joint prayers of all religions; hence, I was selected for presenting this Abhinandan Patra.'

At the conclusion, Kaka Sahib said, 'The ideal of unity and co-existence is based on the principle of the universal brotherhood of man, regardless of caste, creed, color and nationality. Different faiths should live like one family. It is

* In this instance, a Scroll on which the recipient's achievements are presented and acclaimed.

not good to fight amongst ourselves. All religions must co-exist. This is the noble mission undertaken by Sant Ji.'

As he presented the scroll of honor to the Master, a great burst of applause filled the auditorium where the dignitaries and visitors had assembled.

The Abhinandan Patra was worded as follows:

"Gracious Master!

"We greet Thee on the completion of seventy-five years of Thy sojourn on earth. As we look back and survey the two decades of Thy ministry, and the quarter century preceding it spent at the feet of Thy great Master Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, we perceive the meaningful celestial dispensation that named Thee 'Kirpal', the Compassionate One.

"Illustrious Son of Thy Master!

"Thou hast fulfilled the divine mission of bringing mankind together in one common fold of spirituality. 'Ruhani Satsang' is the living embodiment of that mission where all seekers of Truth can have the quickening touch of Eternity from Thee. The appellation 'Ruhani Satsang' suggested by the great Master Baba Sawan Singh, not inaptly describes the place where teaching and first-hand experience is given to aspirants without distinction of caste, creed, nationality or color. It is fast growing into a world-center of spiritual effulgence. Its metaphysical base is embedded in the 'Gurmat Sidhant' – the scripture for aspirants and practicants on the spiritual Path, comprising in its literary sweep the basic tenets of all great religions on which has been founded the World Fellowship of Religions, under Thy aegis; and as its President Thou hast blazed the torch of pure spirituality in many countries far and near by Thy world tours.

"As the President of the World Fellowship of Religions,

Thou hast fostered the spirit of unity amongst the followers of different faiths in the world. At a time when the mad lust for domination has ridden the world with suffering, when the atmosphere is laden with explosive gunpowder ready to usher in the holocaust of thermo-nuclear war, when mutual bickering and dissension have threatened the very existence of humanity, Thou art a great solace, revealing the divinity of soul and kindling in all the fond desire to unite.

“Through numerous channels like international meets, world-wide centers of the Ruhani Satsang, discourses and esteemed publications which have since been translated into various languages, Illustrious Master! Thou hast striven to spread Thy message of Peace and Unity, Love and Truth, to the agony-stricken souls. Like all illumined Masters of the ages, Thou shineth like the sun radiating Light and beneficence across this dark world, awakening within us the divinity of human soul.

“Selfless Benefactor!

“Linked with the Word Eternal and endowed with Cosmic Consciousness, Thou hast spread the gospel of the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man to the earthbound millions. The visible and invisible barriers which separate men from God are thus sought to be lifted so that eager souls may bathe in the rays of Enlightenment. We pray to God and to Thee that Thou mayest carry on this beneficence for countless years so that Thy votaries and others may have inexpressible pleasure and privilege of celebrating the centenary of Thy abode on the terrestrial plane.”

In His reply, Kirpal said:

‘Dear brothers and sisters and Heads of the various religious formations chosen by God to lead humanity to Him, the Abhinandan Patra presented by Kaka Sahib Kalekar on

your behalf I consider to be an expression of goodwill, a blessing from you. This Abhinandan Patra is not for me. It is a tribute to the Truth which is one. Saints and seers who came from time to time realized that Truth and gave first-hand experience of it to those who came to them in the time of their life. Such enlightened souls came in all countries and societies and gave out the same Truth in the languages and idioms of the countries whence they came.'

He also said:

'Integration starts from one's own self. One has first to become a perfect man himself before he can reform his family and his country. This is the greatest need of our country today. In the olden times there were three or four religious formations which had differences. Today there are more than seven hundred religions in the world. It is impossible to have a single religion with the same outer forms and symbols for the whole world. There are differences of temperament and climate, history and geography. Let us therefore remain in our respective formations to which we belong. We are all one as man, as soul, and as worshippers of the same God.'

And:

'We are all children of the same Father (God) and as such are all brothers to each other. Unity is already there but we have forgotten it. I thank you all for the Abhinandan Patra that you have presented me with all your love. I have the same love for you all. This Abhinandan Patra is not for me but for the Truth which is in all of you. The credit goes to God or my Satguru, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, at whose feet I had the good fortune to sit. With these words I thank you all. Be good, do good and be one with God, with all humanity, first in your country and then in this world.'

Other speakers had praise for the Master. This last session was called to give homage and tribute to the great soul who had lived seventy-five years, most of which had been spent in serving and inspiring others. But how can you praise a Godman? Is it the man whom we praise? He will pass it on to His Master and to the Godhead. Is it the God in Him whom we praise? That would appear to be an impossible task, just as it is impossible to describe Him.

Well, no matter, for the Master knows what is in each and every heart. He sees also the mind and the motives. If we take an opportunity to try and express our gratitude, He accepts every sincere thought and the joy that wells in the heart.

How can we be sure of that? In many talks Kirpal reminded us of the small boy looking after the cows. He was praying to God: 'Oh Lord, if You come to me I will take care of You, give You warmth by my fire, give You milk from the cows and sing sweet hymns to You.'

Father Abraham overheard these simple words of prayer and chastised the boy: 'What nonsense are you praying to God? He does not need your fire and your milk. He does not want to hear your songs. . .' and so on. But God Himself spoke to Father Abraham and in turn chastised him. 'I am trying to bring my children closer to me. Why are you driving them away? This child's simple prayer has a depth of love for me. This is the kind of sincere prayer that I want!' So God or the Godman knows what we are and what is in our heart.

Concluding the evening's program, Hardevi sang a stanza from a poem that had been written by Kirpal to His Master, Baba Sawan. Kirpal usually chose Persian for the language of His poems, which is not easy to translate

accurately into English, but some effort has been made.
May He forgive any mistakes:

“O Beloved, make my heart Thine abode,
Thou may or may not dwell in my eyes.
Do not leave the temple of my heart,
Thou may dwell in my body or not.
As the fragrance lives in flowers
and sweetness in honey,
So dost Thou enter my heart and
make it Thy abode.
I care not that Thou may giveth me salvation.”

CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE

In the summer of 1969, the Master ordered the authors to prepare translations of His talks for Sat Sandesh (English) which, although it had been started in India in 1968, had been given by the Master to some American followers to be printed in the U.S.A., starting from the January 1970 issue.

Along with the Master's talks, it would be the authors' job to gather information of events and happenings that went on around Kirpal, for the issues that would be printed each month in the U.S.A. Photographs also would be required, and provided whenever possible.

In the course of finding news and other items for the newly American-printed version, the authors got into conversation with one of the satsangis at work in the Ashram, doing some seva*. The consequence of this conversation was the story about some events in this man's life, which was printed in the February 1970 issue. It is an interesting story and worth including here.

The satsangi concerned was a follower of Baba Sawan and who, as the story will show, came to appreciate the love that Kirpal extended him.

Bachan Singh had a desire for God from childhood; longing to meet Him, to put his arms around Him and be held

* Selfless service.

in the depths of His love. He would be able to say to Him, 'Hallo God, who are You?' The essence of this desire stayed with him as he grew into manhood – still searching.

Born in the Hindu faith, he attended the temples, offering his unswerving devotion to God via the images on display. His deep sincerity earned him no assurance that God was drawing him closer. Perhaps he was in the wrong place – maybe God did not come to Hindus? His approach was simple and naive.

He joined the Sikh faith, hoping to have better fortune in his search, and was rewarded by a strong increase in his devotion and determination as he became engrossed in the beauty of the music and the powerful words of the holy scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib. But, with all his rapt attention, he was yet to have an experience of God and was disheartened to think that even though his desire had increased, he was beginning to suspect that God was not to be found in the Sikh religion either. The beautiful words were just words, after all. Filled with confusion, he ceased his attendance at the Gurudwara or any other place of worship, concluding that God was not to be found *anywhere*.

It was a very difficult time for him; no God – a world with no real truth to be found. What was life's purpose then? His confusion drove him to despair, thrashing these thoughts around in his mind, until the decision took hold: he would finish his life and its uselessness.

There was a deep well he knew of, which would serve his purpose. Having read somewhere that one should sit quietly and consider before making any important moves, so he sat beside the well, closed his eyes and began to think deeply over the subject.

Gradually, the darkness behind his closed eyelids thinned somewhat and a hazy figure appeared before him.

The figure wore a turban and was slightly built – his thought immediately went to Guru Nanak, who was the first Guru of his last faith, Sikhism.

The beautiful form merely smiled at him, but when he opened his eyes he felt a wonderful peace within him. The form had disappeared but he felt so much at ease that he returned to his quarters.

Many days passed with no glimpse of the beautiful soul and Bachan Singh began to doubt that it had been a vision after all. Perhaps it would be better to jump into the well; but as he reached its vicinity, the mist came and the same figure appeared. The form told him not to worry and, 'You will get what you want.' The form went away but the power of the experience stayed with him and he was even more impressed at seeing this with open eyes, feeling that God was showing him that He did actually exist. Again he returned to his quarters.

Time passed without further visions, but he held the assurance in his heart. His work took him to Daryagang one day – a street in Delhi – and as he worked on the first floor of a building, a colleague told him that his own Guru was going to hold a Satsang on the floor above. Bachan Singh told his friend that he had no desire to go, but as he worked at his carpentry he could hear the talk, due to the loudspeakers. He was drawn to the voice and what the voice was saying; the words seemed to go right inside him.

His colleague did not come to work for five days and on his return Bachan Singh accosted him, demanding to know why he had left the work for so long without a word. He was told that the Guru had got on the train to return to Beas in Punjab, and his friend, acting on impulse, had jumped on the train and spent some time in Beas to be with his Guru.

Bachan Singh's response was a sceptical remark that voiced his disbelief that a man could leave his work for days to run after a guru. But the man emphasized his conviction that *his Guru* was God Himself in the human form.

Questioned further, he told how the Guru gave practical experience of the Truth within one's self. Something about this seemed to capture Bachan Singh's attention and his heart beat fast with a strange feeling. He asked his friend to describe his Guru, and the description was exactly that of the form he had seen years before, which he had never forgotten.

He excitedly begged his friend to take him to the Guru. The man protested that he had just taken the time off to go there and could not afford more time from work. At the offer of having all his expenses paid, the friend indignantly refused. How could he take money for helping someone to have his Guru's darshan? It was unthinkable! He would gladly take him there and pay his own expenses!

On a hot day, they arrived in Beas. The Dera was some distance away and the heat got to Bachan Singh as they walked. He began to feel very sick, but the sun suddenly disappeared behind a giant cloud, keeping the men shaded until they reached the Dera Baba Jaimal Singh.

Seated on a large dais, holding a Satsang, was the physical form of the beautiful image of the vision. Bachan Singh suddenly knew that all his hopes and dreams depended on this, and he had a strong desire to get near the Guru. It started to rain heavily and the Guru announced that the talk would be continued later, so that the people could take shelter from the rain. The crowd stood and started to move, and Bachan Singh was moving too – but toward the dais – until he was at the front and close to the Master standing above

him. Just as suddenly, the rain ceased, the people returned and sat down, and so did Bachan Singh. As the Master continued His talk, he knew this was the one who had saved him by appearing to him at a very crucial time. Baba Sawan looked at him directly and smiled. Bachan Singh knew at that moment that he belonged to Him.

He was initiated while at the Dera, spending the time there in raptures of happiness, having found what he had been seeking for so long. After this he went to Beas as often as possible. He would take a month's leave each year and go to the Master's farm in Sarsai* when the Master was in residence there. The followers were delighted when they were permitted to spend time helping on the farm.

On one occasion at the farm, Bachan Singh was doing some carpentry during the daytime and building a wall with some others in the evening. Baba Sawan was sitting nearby in a chair. When the bell for the evening meal rang, the Master told them to go and have their food. Trying to finish the section he was building before dinner, Bachan Singh continued working. He intended to stop in a short space, but he forgot everything else and went on working.

Suddenly, he realized it was too dark to see properly. He was sitting on a ten-foot high wall with no ladder. His head spun and he knew he could fall and break his neck. He remembered that a little way along, the height of the wall was only six feet; if he could get there, he could jump down to the ground. He started to walk along the top of the wall, watching his feet but not looking down.

He was so engrossed in this attempt, he had not realized that some yards away, Baba Sawan was still there, watching

* North-east of Beas, in the Kullu Valley, about 125 miles or 200 km as the crow flies; considerably more by any road route.

all this. He walked along the wall slowly, and the Master walked toward him. When he reached the six-foot section, he jumped down and jumped right into the Master's awaiting arms. The Master held him close – Bachan Singh was struck dumb. When Baba Sawan let go of him, He smiled and said, 'Now you can ask me who I am.' Bachan Singh remembered his childhood and his childlike thoughts and he knew his Master had always been with him – from the beginning of his life.

One day, he was walking along in Sarsai and the Master's car was coming toward him. He stopped, folded his hands in respectful greeting and waited for the car to pass him, thereby having the joy of the Master's darshan. The car did not pass but stopped. The Master gestured from the window to beckon someone. He was looking in Bachan Singh's direction, but the disciple had no thought that the Master would be calling him, and stood quietly watching. Again the Master waved His hand – and poor Bachan Singh turned to see who was near him, but there was no one.

It suddenly hit him that the Master was calling *him*. He started to shake. *What have I done?* He went to the car as quickly as possible. Baba Sawan spoke to him: 'Bachan Singh, go to Delhi and settle down there. Do not live in your village any more.' (He had been living in the place where he was born.) 'I am going to be in Delhi and there will be work for you there.'

It was a strange order, but he obeyed and moved to Delhi. He knew no one there and had little money, but he built a small hut to live in and went from house to house with his tools, trying to find work. The Master blessed his efforts and he found work wherever he went. People trusted him,

giving him money, even in advance, to buy wood for the work. When he protested, they reassured him that it was alright. All this good fortune, he knew, was the grace of his Master, and he worked hard and prospered.

He was grateful for his success, but knew that material progress had no value compared to spiritual blessings. This was driven home to him very hard when he heard the news that Baba Sawan had left His physical form and he would no longer see his beloved Master as a human being. It was an indescribable sorrow and stole every bit of joy from his life.

Some months later, he heard that Kirpal Singh had come to Delhi. He knew that Kirpal was the Master's principal disciple by Sawan Himself indicating that, in a number of ways. He thought he would go to Radio Colony where Kirpal was living and have his darshan, but in his heart he was hesitant. Was he truly the One? Did he truly have that great power to give the holy gift?

He need not have worried. A strong positive assurance took over his heart as he met Kirpal, and that feeling never left him. He saw his beloved Sawan appear in the face of Kirpal, as he sat at His feet. This happened to him many times as the years went by.

Every evening he went to Radio Colony to sit at Kirpal's feet. Kirpal did not appreciate people hanging around for any length of time and told them frequently to go to their work or their homes or to their various duties. One evening Bachan Singh heard the Master saying this and he got up and started to walk away. But, hearing his name called, he stopped and turned around. Kirpal walked up to him - 'Bachan Singh, come at 7 a.m. tomorrow, for there is some work for you.'

Bachan Singh was delighted that the Master wanted him

for some work and his heart overflowed. At 7 a.m. the next day, the Master was ready and waiting for him. He told him to climb back onto his bicycle, and he followed the Master for about five miles. They came to a wild kind of place, no houses or farms, just a large plot of overgrown land near a railway line.

There were other satsangis there and everyone inspected the plot of land. It was bereft of anything civilized, except for a broken-down well with a bucket on a rope. It appeared to have been used for some domestic purpose. Someone there and then cleaned the bucket with mud and drew up some water from the well. He requested the Master to give them all water to quench their thirst.

The water was clear and sweet, and as Kirpal poured from the bucket into each one's cupped hands, it marked the very first prasad given on the new land that was to be Sawan Ashram. It was an auspicious sign for the many thousands who would bring their spiritual thirst in the years to come.

Soon, that lonely plot of land became a beehive of industry, in preparation for the establishing of the Ashram. First the land was cleared of growth, then it had to be leveled by shifting and relocating the soil. During this operation, the Master Himself picked up a basket and went to those who were filling the baskets with earth. They protested, saying 'No, Maharaj Ji, not You!' The Master laughed and said, 'Is there no one who will fill this basket for me?' Bachan Singh said, 'Yes, I will,' and filled up the basket with soil, packing it down firmly until it was totally full. He had difficulty lifting it to place it on Kirpal's head. Folding his hands together he said, 'Maharaj Ji, You can take any burden.' The Master walked away laughing.

People came in large numbers to help with the work. Kirpal told them, 'I do not want people who are conscious

of their wealth. I only want the poor and the humble. Those who work will have to forget their homes, clothes and money, and come in humility as a poor man. This is the kind of work I want.'

And that was the kind of worker that came. They worked unceasingly and selflessly, doing the muddy work, singing joyful hymns and smiling in their happiness. Bachan Singh remembered those happy days when his total cash supply at the time, of one hundred rupees, gradually disappeared and he borrowed one hundred more to provide for himself and others too. He heard about his little hut, which had been completely wrecked in a storm, and he was homeless with hardly any clothes and no money; but he was overflowing with joy to be so fortunate. He was working for the Master and was near Him every day.

Negativity was at work, even in those early days, when a certain group was endeavoring to lure people away from Kirpal and stop the progress of His cause. They came among the workers to persuade them that Kirpal was not Baba Sawan's true choice of successor but was an instrument of the Negative Power.

Over a period of time, the strength and perseverance of these people were a threat to sincere believers. Bachan Singh refused to take heed of their ravings, but after so many attempts he began to wonder about the issue – something like repetitive advertising! With this problem on his mind, he decided to go to the Ashram – now in some advanced stages of the work – and speak to the Master.

As he approached the area, he saw Kirpal standing alone, almost as if He was waiting for him. The disciple went toward Him and Kirpal looked at him; but Bachan Singh suddenly stopped, for there beside Kirpal was his Guru, Baba Sawan, and behind Him was Baba Jaimal Singh. Baba

Sawan looked directly at Bachan Singh, then put His hand on Kirpal's shoulder saying to Him: 'This is all yours; You have to look after many souls.' Kirpal folded His hands and bowed down saying, 'Whatever You wish.'

Bachan Singh felt sad that he had allowed himself to harbor negative thoughts and listen to those who wished to break his faith in his Guru and in Kirpal. Over the years he had many experiences like this, seeing his beloved Sawan with Kirpal, although he told no one. [Until the writing of this story]. But his gratitude to both Masters always filled his heart and kept his thoughts on their love and on their protection.

He continued working at the Ashram whenever he could. Whenever he got a strange urge and a pulling from within, he would go there and spend as much time as possible doing his carpentry or any other task he was privileged to be given.

Kirpal always welcomed those He called His brother-and sister-disciples. Always His only motive was to keep them close to their own Guru. Credit or praise from any direction was always passed on to His Master, Baba Sawan.

His way of life and His attitude to life were constant reminders to Baba Sawan's followers that their own Guru was everything to them. His own devotion to and respect for Baba Sawan were constant lessons for Kirpal's own followers too.

A tour of Punjab had been arranged for September 1969. The Master would visit Ludhiana, Firozpur and Amritsar, which lie north and west of Delhi* and a few villages in

* Delhi to Ludhiana: approx. 300 km or 188 mi., Ludhiana to Firozpur: approx. 125 km or 80 mi., Firozpur to Amritsar: approx. 125 km or 80 mi., Amritsar to Delhi: approx. 450 km or 280 mi.

those areas. Overseas visitors who were not due to return to their countries would be able to go along with the Master to the main cities, where accommodations would be available for them.

Three vehicles set out for the Punjab: the Master's Ambassador sedan, the Master's old Studebaker station wagon and another Ambassador, loaned for the tour by an Indian satsangi, along with his driver. The latter two vehicles would carry the visitors: Kira and Robert Redeen, a couple from the New York area, and Werner Drexler, from Baden-Baden in Germany (and the two authors) would travel in the borrowed Ambassador. The other six visitors – including a small child – would travel in the Studebaker driven by the Master's elder driver, Ram Swarup.

The three cars drove out of the Ashram, watched by the remaining staff and residents, all of whom would miss the Master's presence until He returned.

The route to Ludhiana stretched ahead; a brief stop was made at one place where the highway ran quite close to the town of Kurukshetra – site of the great Mahabharat battle – where a group of the local followers was able to have Kirpal's darshan for a few minutes, as He was to visit the home of a satsangi nearby. Refreshments were served to everyone.

The day clouded over and as the small convoy continued on its way, it started to rain quite heavily. To the driver of the borrowed car however, the bad visibility and road conditions had no meaning, and heedless, he put his foot down, driving fast along the two-lane highway.

The passengers, each in turn, endeavored to slow down the driver's careless speed, but to no avail. Inevitably, while attempting to make a badly-timed pass around another

vehicle, the speeding car came face to face with an oncoming truck. Too late, the driver saw the truck and pulled the wheel sharply to the left to resume traveling in the correct lane*. The sharp turn was too much for the maneuver and the passengers realized that the car would not make it. With a screeching skid, the vehicle began to turn over.

When the authors compared notes later, both agreed that everything seemed to happen in slow motion: the skid, the car turning over, gradually, gradually; and then, as it met the ground on its side, what should be there but a large metal drum, exactly in the right place for the car to lean upon and use as a pillow! It slid off the "pillow", but due to the "soft" collision, the car did not continue to roll over but stayed on its side. How opportune that the drum was just in the right spot!

One of the authors, with quick thinking, turned off the ignition. After unwinding the heap of bodies that had fallen to the bottom of the left side of the car, everyone climbed out of the right-side doors positioned on top of the vehicle. Although each one was shaken up, there were no serious injuries. Kira felt some problem with her neck at the back, which she says stayed with her for years, but it was the sole physical hurt. The car only suffered a dent in the side.

The Master's car arrived as the passengers were disentangling themselves. The Master got out and calmly watched the proceedings. The car was straightened back on its wheels and the whole experience was declared a miracle of survival. A local farmer had witnessed the incident and told how he had not expected anyone to live through it.

With a caution to the driver and a word of encouragement to the shaken passengers, Kirpal returned to His car and the convoy continued.

* Indian traffic drives on the left.

Later, the travelers learned through Hardevi that the results of the inauspicious adventure would have been much worse, had not Kirpal postponed the commencement of the tour by one day. When one is with the Master, *everything* is taken care of.

The journey proceeded uneventfully, except for the intermittent short stops along the highway, where several small crowds of followers were patiently waiting for Kirpal, to have His darshan.

Soon, the three cars arrived at Ludhiana. The visitors were to stay in the local agriculture college of the university, which had been built by Americans. It was, therefore, a perfect hostel to accommodate the overseas visitors, and was indeed duly appreciated. The program in Ludhiana would be for two days.

Firozpur was the next stop. A border town, on the Pakistan border line, it had a strange atmosphere – almost as if there was a palpable feeling of impermanence wherever one went. Basically quite a pleasantly laid out town, but so carelessly administered, with an obvious lack of husbandry. A general thread of apprehension rippled through the people – a look of expectancy tingled with fear reflected on their faces. Dissatisfied groups often organized demonstrations.

If the border had been a more amicable one, perhaps the whole town would have had a different outlook, but relations between the two countries had never been good, from partition onwards. Firozpur residents obviously never knew if tomorrow would be calm and peaceful or if an outbreak of dissension would brew up. Property, real estate, etc. was at an all-time low, so even those who had inclination to move further away from the border found it difficult or impossible.

The Master's visit was like a breath of fresh air. His

public Satsangs were very well attended and spirits were uplifted. Everyone stayed at the large home of a retired medical colonel. A temporary extra kitchen was erected in a courtyard, to cope with the numbers to be fed – not only the foreigners but many local followers would come to see the Master.

An unusual event occurred early one morning. The Master gave a talk in a brightly decorated Hindu temple, among the gods and idols on display. Regardless of the surroundings, Kirpal told of the immutable truths of the Path of the Masters.

Kirpal kindly visited a local school for the blind, gave a talk and helped to distribute clothing brought along by Hardevi. The Master told them about inner sight and the blindness of every person who is not able to see the Light of God within.

The Master's itinerary in Firozpur included a visit to a leper colony nearby. The visiting initiates from overseas received this knowledge in quiet shock. No doubt the visit would be the first of its kind for all of them and the idea struck them as a trifle daunting. With a ready will, they pushed any hesitancy aside and remembered the Master's protection.

It was a simple compound with small huts for the residents, and fortunately boasted a small hospital, though very frugally equipped. The residents, in various stages of leprosy, with smiling faces welcomed the diversion of the crowd of visitors, as the doctor led the tour of inspection. The visit was short – just a darshan for a few minutes really – but only the Master Himself knew the reason for the visit and what it had accomplished. Additionally, the group accompanying Him were a little more appreciative of their own lots in life

and were quick to offer up a private prayer of gratitude and an appeal for a blessing on the suffering ones.

At the end of the Firozpur program, initiation was conducted by the Master for a large group of would-be initiates.

The final stage on the tour for the visitors was the journey to Amritsar and the Master's program there. During their stay in that city, they were able to see the splendor of the Golden Temple: a famous edifice venerated by the Sikhs because of its history of being built under the direction of Guru Ram Das and in the likeness of a certain temple on the inner planes.

After Amritsar, the Master would continue on, going to a number of other locations on His Punjab tour. Due to the lack of appropriate facilities in the remote villages, the westerners would return to Delhi and await Him there. They had experienced a tiring but enlightening trip that would make an indelible mark on their lives.

Apart from the addition of the overseas visitors, it had been a typical tour, the type that Kirpal made regularly to the various corners of the Indian subcontinent. Although not covered in minute detail, some indication of His busy programs has been given. Suffice it to say that each hour of His day was freely used for the upliftment and spiritual well-being of the many souls that needed Him, wherever they happened to be. No effort was too great, no place too far, no day too long.

CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO

The year 1969 heralded the arrival of the Master's seventy-fifth birthday – His Diamond Jubilee they had called it – the joyous celebration in February. This same year marked the five hundredth anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak, born in 1469, and claimed by the Sikh religion as their beloved founder.

In actual fact, when Guru Nanak was born, there was no "Sikh" religion, which did not begin until nine Gurus later, with Guru Gobind Singh, who found it necessary to make His people easily distinguishable (when defending themselves against the invaders, who were Muslims) and termed them "Sikhs".

However, Guru Gobind Singh was tenth in that line of Gurus – from Guru Nanak onwards – hence, the foundership.

As Guru Nanak has always been loved and respected, not only by the Sikhs but everywhere in India, His anniversary of five hundred years was lauded and commemorated all over the country.

The government requested Kirpal to write a special article in English about Guru Nanak for this important occasion, which He did, and which appeared in leading newspapers and magazines throughout India. In addition, the Master

held a special Satsang on November 2 to observe the day. Various religious leaders of different faiths sat beside Him on the dais and spoke in honor of the great Guru Nanak.

Although there is some contention regarding the fact, there is reason to accept that the line of Gurus did not end with Guru Gobind Singh but continued on through the link of Tulsi Sahib; then Soami Shiv Dayal Singh; to Baba Jaimal Singh, who was Baba Sawan's Guru – all highly reputed spiritual Masters – and of course from Baba Sawan to His beloved son Kirpal. One need but to compare the teachings of all these great souls, who supported and verified those teachings with the gift and the grace of inner experience and connection with the holy spirit of God within man: the Naam.

It was Kirpal's practice to select passages from the teachings of the great ones like Nanak, Kabir, Guru Arjan and others in His Satsang talks, so that the seekers and the followers could clearly see that He was teaching '... no new thing, but the old, old Truth that never changes.'

As time goes by, things like phraseology, terminology, language and dialect give slightly changing flavors to the words but the essence of what is being said, and to what the seekers are being led, remains the same: perpetual and ageless food for the soul – self-realization and God-realization.

Kirpal's article was very well received everywhere. An excerpt is included here:*

'Guru Nanak is not the sole monopoly of the Sikhs nor of India alone. He belongs to all mankind. He belongs to the world and the world belongs to Him. He bore witness to the glory of one God, one brotherhood, one law: the law

* For complete article, see Sat Sandesh (English), January 1970, p. 23.

of human fellowship and love. He came to reconcile all religions and all faiths. He came to harmonise all the scriptures of the world. He came to announce the ancient truth in the common man's language, the one wisdom that is so eloquent in the teachings of all the prophets, the apostles, the sages and the seers; and to show that one flame of love shone in all the temples and shrines and sacraments of man.

'The love of God and the love of man were the very core of the message of Guru Nanak. We need to learn to serve the poor gently, quietly, unostentatiously, and to have reverence for all the Saints of the past. This is the first great teaching of the Guru. When He went to Multan, the land of pirs and fakirs, the latter sent Him a bowl brimming over with milk, implying that the place was already full of saintly souls and there was hardly any room for more. Nanak, who knew the implication in the offer made, just took a jasmine flower and, placing it on the surface of the milk, returned the bowl, meaning thereby that He would float as lightly as the flower and give fragrance to all of them. The true Saints, as a rule, have no quarrel with anybody. They talk gently and work quietly in the service of God and man.

'He traveled far and wide, unlike any other prophet who trod the earth before Him. He undertook four long and arduous journeys on foot, each extending over a number of years: one, to the north into and across the snow-capped Himalayas where He met the Lamas, the Sidhas and the Naths, the Tibetans and the Chinese; the second, eastward into the modern states of United Provinces, Bengal and Burma; the third, to the South as far as Sangla Dwip or the modern Ceylon*; and the fourth, to the middle-east countries of Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Persia, Arabia as far as Mecca, and Jerusalem, Turkistan, Egypt, and Turkey – all

* Now, Sri Lanka.

these journeys covering well-nigh 30 years in times when there were no satisfactory communications, nor transport worth the name.

‘Guru Nanak’s teachings revolutionised people in diverse ways. His teachings are of as great interest today as they were in His own time. The nascent Republic of India needs His inspiration in the task of rebuilding the nation on a sound footing, for India is still bristling with many problems and its freedom is yet far from complete.

‘Guru Nanak came at a crucial time in the history of India. The country, torn as it was by factional fights, was fast slipping into the hands of the Mughals. We get a glimpse of the chaotic conditions prevailing at the time from the words of no less an authority than the Guru Himself: “Kings are butchers. They treat their subjects with gruesome cruelty. The sense of duty has taken wings and vanished. Falsehood is rampant over the land as a thick veil of darkness, darkness darker than the darkest night, hiding the face of the moon of Truth.” The Hindus and the Muslims were bitterly opposed to one another. The very semblance of religion had degenerated into formalism, and the spirit in man was stifled and suffocated by rites and rituals and by creeds and ceremonies. Too much importance was attached to the outer husk and shell at the cost of the kernel within. Casteism and untouchability were waxing like anything. The people were losing faith in themselves. The political and the social conditions in the country had reached the lowest ebb. The chaotic conditions could not be more chaotic. In the blessed name of religion, all kinds of atrocities were being perpetrated by those in power, swayed as they were by incontinence, greed, lust and immorality. Mistrust and hatred were the order of the day. Both the rulers and the ruled had lost all sense of shame and decorum.

'In such a dark hour of history, Nanak appeared to set the house in order and to shape the destiny of millions of Indians. He went about preaching in the name of God, asking nothing for Himself, but anxious only to serve the people and save them from degradation and downright damnation.

'Nanak saw the deep tragedy that was menacing the country. He saw the world caught in the pernicious web of suffering and woe. Moved by the piteous cries of the helpless and the afflicted people in their deep agony, he prayed for the grace of God: "O Lord, the whole world is being consumed in the invisible flames of fire. O save the world in this hour of darkness. Raise all unto Thee. Raise them in whatever and however a way Thou mayest." On coming in contact with Babar, the Mughal king requested the Guru to ask for some favor. He politely and yet firmly declined the offer saying: "Hear O King! Foolish would be the fakir who would beg of kings, for God is the only giver munificent beyond all measure"; significantly adding: "Nanak hungers for God alone and he asks for naught."

'Babar had great respect for all men of piety. Once, when he came to know that Nanak had been put behind bars, he ordered his immediate release. On request from the king, the Guru gave his advice, called "Nasihat Nama", in which he counseled the king to worship God everyday and to be just and kind to everyone. He told him that the Naam, the Sat Naam, the holy Word of God or the Kalma, was a panacea for all ills of life, here and in the hereafter. It was Kalam-i-Qadim, the most ancient song of God, singing in the heart of all, and could be heard only by the pure ones. "Be pure," said the Guru, "and Truth would reveal itself to thee. Have love of God uppermost in thy heart and hurt not the feelings of His creatures."

The Master's beautiful treatise on Guru Nanak showed clearly how universal in thought and in lifestyle was the Guru, and it was appreciated by everyone regardless of religious attachments.

Kirpal was constantly exposing the similarities in all the great Perfect Masters of the past, revealing the existing Truth deep in all religions: that as Man we are all one and the same, and God is the same, within each one of us.

The following is a hymn by Guru Nanak Himself:

“The body is thought to be immortal,
But the world is just a play.

We overburden ourselves with greed, desire,
and all things low:
I have seen you [body] deteriorating from fine clay into mud.

Listen, listen to my teaching:
Do good in this life, it may not come again.

I tell you, physical form, listen to my teaching:
You have lost faith, falsely condemning and defaming others.

Your eye covets, you steal and backbite;
The soul will go, and leave you like a forsaken woman.

You, O body, remained in a dream and
what karmas have you earned?
Whatever my mind desired, I even stole for it.

Your actions hold no glory,
You have not earned the Naam but have wasted your life . . .

O Baba Nanak, I am standing all alone;
No one has a thought for me.

Arabian and Turkish horses,
Gold and finery surrounded me.

Nothing goes with you, O Nanak;
The foolish again and again deceive themselves.

Sweetened fruits, all have I tasted;
But only the Naam Nectar of Immortality is food.

You make the foundation stronger and stronger;
But this house will crumble to dust.

Hoarding and grabbing, the blind man
claims possession, thinking all is his.

Gold, property, money, nothing will
leave this world with you.

Listen, foolish innocent mind,
Your actions will reap their own rewards.

Our Emperor is the greatest of all,
And We are His Emissaries.

The soul and the physical are His;
Life and death are subject to His will."

Later, this beautiful hymn by Guru Nanak was chosen by Kirpal for one of His talks*. It tells us clearly how the body and the "foolish innocent mind" are, from birth to death,

* "All the World's a Play" – translated from the Hindi by the authors and printed in Sat Sandesh (English), October 1972.

leading the soul astray, involving it in the worldly affairs and desires. To read it is to feel, deep in the heart, how true it is.

Kirpal explains the whole hymn in His talk and reveals the true condition of the soul, imprisoned in the physical form and led away to follow the guidance (misguidance!) of the mind.

In late 1969, the Master went to Kurukshetra, which is about 150 km or 95 miles from Delhi, on the road to Chandigarh, in the state of Haryana.

Kurukshetra is reputed to be the original site of the great battle fought in the epic "Mahabharat". This is the story of the quarrel and battle between the Pandavs and the Kauravs - all relatives of Lord Krishna. It is said that many foreigners also fought in this battle.

The saga is known to westerners nowadays, due to various movie productions, in English or with sub-titles. The Mahabharat is believed to be the work of Bhagvan Vyas, compiler of the famous Vedas, and who was the son of the great sage Parasar. It has been recorded to have happened sometime between 5561 and 3139 B.C.

Scholars have divided opinions as to the truth of it - some say it actually happened, while others declare it mythological - a legend. Some say it did happen but not everything written is accurate. But there are those who have asserted that if you dig down deep into the soil of the battle-site you will find traces of the blood of thousands who fought there. The battle area covers the town, including the university's acreage, and some of the surrounding countryside.

Perhaps the most commonly discussed part of the Mahabharat is the "Bhagavad Gita", (Lord Krishna's sermon to his relative, Arjun) which, although not guaranteed to

have its origins in the original Mahabharat, yet is the jewel from that event that is influential and familiar everywhere.

The University of Kurukshetra received the Master, along with about two dozen followers, including some from overseas. Naturally, it was an interesting historical location and the overseas satsangis enjoyed hearing about the university's famous antecedents. A few miles away, they were able to explore the actual spot where the Gita was purported to have been delivered, before the battle commenced. It is now endowed with a large "tank" and attractive landscaping.

A special guest of the University's Vice-Chancellor, the Master was gracious to all those fortunate to meet Him. He gave three talks, giving time for questions from the students, and was given a guided tour of the whole area by the Vice-Chancellor.

Everyone agreed there must be great significance in the Master's holy feet walking the ground of such an occurrence in ancient Indian history. Someday we may see the expanded picture, revealing a more significant purpose to the visit.