Stumbling Toward God

THE YEARS WITH KIRPAL

Russell Perkins
Stumbling Toward God

A Spiritual Memoir
Param Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
1894-1974
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A Spiritual Memoir

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God Appears & God is Light
To those poor Souls who dwell in Night
But does a Human Form Display
To those who Dwell in Realms of day

—WILLIAM BLAKE

SANT BANI ASHRAM
Sanbornton, New Hampshire
2017
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY TWO BELOVED COMPANIONS

JUDITH
who lived it with me

AND

CLAUDIA
whose wisdom, love, courage and support
made it possible
The publishers are extremely grateful to The Crown of Life Meditation Society of Canada for the financial support which has made the publication of this book possible.
Preface

The men whom we call founders of religions are not really concerned with founding a religion, but wish to establish a human world that is subject to a divine truth; to unite the way of earth with that of heaven. –MARTIN BUBER

This book is my attempt to describe what it is like to know someone whose whole reason for being was to unite the way of earth with that of heaven: what it is like to be around him, to be loved by him, and to love him back; what it is like to recognize with your whole heart that this is what it means to be human; that any other endeavor is missing the point of our existence.

I have not of course succeeded; to do justice to the human mountain that was Kirpal is beyond my competence. But I have done my best, and I have especially tried to show how Kirpal balanced the universal and the particular: how his compassion and love and concern for the entire creation were reflected in the compassion and love and concern he showed one little teensy part of that creation—namely, me. The book is not in any sense a biography: it is, as the subtitle says, a memoir: the record of my personal encounter with a life-transforming colossus who combined power and compassion to an astonishing degree and to whom I related (to quote his own words) as to “a Will infinitely above me and yet infinitesimally careful of me.”

* * * * *

Many dear friends have helped me in the production of this book: First and foremost is Jan Classen, editor extraordinaire whose contributions are beyond counting, without whom the book would still be sitting in my computer, and whose skill and artistry with photographs visa-vis computers have added so much beauty to the book: she has done everything for this book except write it.

1 Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant, pp. 82-83
Don and Charlotte Macken have been involved from the beginning: it was while I was at a retreat at the beautiful ashram dedicated to Kirpal—Shamaz Meditation Retreat in Potter Valley, California—which they are responsible for that I began writing, in the summer of 2008. They have helped and encouraged since then in many different ways, and Don masterminded the movie utilizing archival footage from the Unity of Man Conference which is included with the book, which I think adds immeasurably to its value.

The professionals:

Jerri-Jo Idarius, consummate artisan and typographer, patient and understanding friend: it is her art and skill which has produced the volume you are holding;

Joe Gelbard, old friend and fellow alumnus of The Sant Bani Press, who is happily responsible for the printing and binding.

The photographers:

For the most part, I have long since lost track of who took which pictures, besides which I am not at all certain at this writing exactly which pictures will be included. But I want to mention a few that I am sure of:

The front cover picture was taken at the close of the Unity of Man Conference in February 1974, as I was leaving Sawan Ashram and saying goodbye to Kirpal for (although I did not know it) the final time. I tell the story in the book of how the Master stopped Jim Russell (also in the picture) and me as we went by and gave us parshad and one final darshan (although Jim saw him again that summer). The picture was taken by the late Bobbe Baker, whom I met for the first time at this Conference but many times subsequently, and published many of her pictures in the magazines I edited. God bless her.

The back cover picture, which is my personal all-time favorite picture of Master Kirpal and captures more than any other his personality and essence as I remember them, was taken at the Rock at Sant Bani Ashram, October 11, 1963, by Lala Howard; two or three other pictures from the same occasion taken by her are also included. The Master sits on the Rock at perfect ease, King of the New Hampshire domain spread out behind him, the toy bucket belonging to my three-and-a-half-year old daughter Miriam sitting undisturbed beside him,
just as he found it. I am eternally grateful to Lala for this unforgettable memorial to his majesty and simplicity and love.

And special mention to Lala’s friend, Doris Yokelson, who transcribed all the talks reproduced in Book III, “Twelve Days’ Wonder,” and which were originally published in Kirpal’s magazine, Sat Sandesh; this was a real labor of love for which I am eternally grateful.

I would also like to thank Richard and Susan Shannon: Richard for his valuable advice regarding publication and distribution of this book, but more generally for his many years of selfless service printing, editing, proof-reading, and taking responsibility for the books and magazines published by Sant Bani Ashram; and Susan, who shared the editing and proof-reading with Richard, but whose prodigious labor over the years in every aspect of the services provided by Sant Bani Ashram has its reward in the hearts of those who benefited from it. God bless them both: Sant Bani Ashram, its satsangs, retreats, publishing activities, agriculture, fellowship, would be infinitely less without them; and so would my life.

Last but very far from least:

My faithful and indefatigable readers who read through the whole thing while I was writing it and gave me invaluable feedback, suggestions, encouragement, advice:

My beloved sister, Helen Perkins, whose prodigious memory, far superior to mine, allowed me to correct several long-standing mistaken memories, and who recovered for me the letter I wrote Judith from India in September 1969 which I had long thought lost;

My dear friend Susan Dyment, who also corrected mistakes, whose idea it was to include the movie with the book, and who took the recent photo of me included at the back;

Dr. Kent Bicknell, old friend and fellow “talking head” in the movie who took most of the archival footage therein, and author of Rainbow in My Heart, a moving memoir of the early days with Ajaib Singh;

Dr. Claudia Welch, whose advice was especially meaningful because she is a distinguished author whose remarkable book, How the
Art of Medicine Makes the Science More Effective, 2 I found extremely interesting and helpful;

Greg Matthaijetz, dear brother of long standing;

Amy Kaufman, whose eager delight when she first began reading was very encouraging; and her husband, Jeronimo Garriguez, finder of lost pictures, who spent many hours combing through the Sant Bani Ashram archives;

and my two extraordinary children (although it has been a very long time since they were children!), Miriam Engle3 and Eric Perkins, both of whom figure prominently in the book; who gave me priceless feedback and encouragement; and for whose presence in my life I am thoroughly grateful. To all of you, my heartfelt thanks: I couldn’t have done it without you. God bless you all.

RUSSELL PERKINS

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2 The second edition of this book is published with the title, The Four Qualities of Effective Physicians: Practical Ayurvedic Wisdom for Modern Physicians. Under either title, the book is worth careful study; I have it on my shelf next to Stephen Jay Gould’s Wonderful Life, with which it shares a basic theme: namely, that what we see is very often determined (and limited!) by what we expect to see.

3 Not to mention Miriam’s husband, my good friend Jon Engle, whose recently published booklet, The Gifts of a Saint: Moments with Kirpal Singh, is a marvelous companion to Book IX of this volume.
Table of Contents

BOOK ONE

Jesus

The Yellow Brick Road ........................................... 3
Conversion .................................................................. 10
Dispensations and Covenants ................................. 14
Predestination ......................................................... 20
The Holy Spirit ......................................................... 25
Exodus ................................................................. 28

BOOK TWO

The Coming of Kirpal

Stumbling Toward Self-Knowledge ......................... 33
Walking Off the Board ........................................... 38
The Road to Kirpal .................................................. 43
The Merciful Lion ..................................................... 46
Initiation ............................................................... 53
Judith ................................................................... 63
Sant Bani Farm ........................................................ 70
The Coming of Kirpal .............................................. 83
An Ashram Is Born ................................................... 97
Days of Heaven ....................................................... 106
Following Kirpal ...................................................... 120

BOOK THREE

Twelve Days Wonder

Saturday, January 18, 1964 .................................... 139
Sunday, January 19, 1964 ....................................... 148
Monday, January 20, 1964 ..................................... 162
Tuesday, January 21, 1964 ..................................... 172
Wednesday, January 22, 1964 .............................. 176
Thursday, January 23, 1964 .................................. 183
Friday, January 24, 1964 ....................................... 202
Saturday, January 25, 1964 .................................. 211
Sunday, January 26, 1964 .................................... 226
Monday, January 27, 1964 ................................... 234
Tuesday, January 28, 1964 ................................... 245
Epilogue ................................................................ 251
BOOK FOUR

India: 1965
Transition: An Ashram in Its Infancy..............................257
The Mission of Kirpal..................................................259
Our First Journey to India............................................266
Reunion with the Satguru..............................................270
Sawan Ashram and Its Residents.................................272
The Great Birthday Celebration..................................278
The World Religions Conference.................................281
The Essence of Religion..............................................285
Further Sessions.......................................................292
The Tea Party............................................................293
In the Himalayas........................................................297

BOOK FIVE

India: 1969
Transition: Growing Pains............................................305
The Snowmobile Affair.................................................308
Depression...............................................................311
Shadows of the Future................................................314
With the Master Again................................................319
Sat Sandesh.............................................................327
Days of Heaven........................................................332
The Ramlila...............................................................337
Roger and Me..........................................................341
The End of It............................................................344

BOOK SIX

India: 1972
Transition: Growing Pains............................................351
The Satsang Hall........................................................353
Surgery!.................................................................354
Manav Kendra........................................................356
To Shave or Not to Shave..........................................360
The Great Birthday Celebration.................................363
With the Merciful Lion..............................................367
### BOOK SEVEN

**The Return of the King**

- The Third World Tour Begins ........................................ 379
- “Don’t Bend Your Elbows” ........................................... 382
- Return to Sant Bani Ashram .......................................... 383
- The Gift of the Living Master ...................................... 389
- The Tour Continues ...................................................... 393
- The Coming Spiritual Revolution ................................. 397

### BOOK EIGHT

**The Unity of Man**

- India: 1973 ................................................................. 401
- To Go or Not to Go ..................................................... 410
- The Great Conference Begins ................................. 415
- A Summary Report on the Conference .................... 416
- The Remodeling of Our Destiny ............................. 419
- The World Peace Conference .................................. 424
- Spotlight on the Panels .......................................... 427
- Mrs. Gandhi’s Address ............................................. 436
- Farewell ...................................................................... 439
- The Master’s Last Message ..................................... 444

### BOOK NINE

**Reflections**

- Preliminary ................................................................. 449
- Bachan Singh ............................................................ 451
- Dr. H. M. Brock ......................................................... 458
- Dr. Ann Martin .......................................................... 459
- Estella Brooks ............................................................ 466
- Ingeborg Gutwenger ................................................ 467
- Geoff May ................................................................. 469
- Shirley Tassencourt .................................................. 470
- Fletcher Lokey ........................................................... 485
- Farewell ...................................................................... 495
Jesus said:
Hear, O Israel, The Lord thy God, the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.

This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like unto it:
Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the Torah and the prophets.

Mark 12:29-31; Matthew 22:37-40;
Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18
BOOK ONE

Jesus
It is not an easy thing to dedicate your life to searching for Truth; apart from the arrogance of it, the assumption that human beings (or at least this human being) are capable of such a thing, there is the abysmal ignorance of what such “a search for Truth” involves: the shattering of preconceptions, the tearing down and building up, the “revolutionizing of the thought pattern of the disciple,” as my Guru, the late, very great, Kirpal Singh, used to say. Not to mention all the times when we think we are absolutely right about something, doing a good thing, maybe even a courageous praiseworthy thing, only to find out that we were dead wrong. I do not think that there is any doubt that “stumbling” is the only thing we (or at least I) can do as we attempt to move in that direction. Fundamentally we are dealing with forces and concepts that are beyond our comprehension, so lurching, staggering, reeling, stammering, mumbling, messing up, falling down, are really the only images that come close to conveying what is involved. Would that there were others! The Sufi Master says, “Oh God, You have put us on a raft in the middle of the ocean and commanded us not to get wet.” It certainly seems that way sometimes; yet still the raft may make its way to shore with a minimum of wetness, like Dorothy floating on the chicken coop in the tempest at the beginning of Ozma of Oz; or, for that matter, Noah’s ark. An ark is not a boat but a chest with a holy cargo; it can’t be steered or controlled; it is entirely dependent on the grace of God. And so are we.

Two things have seemed obvious to me from the beginning, although I was not able to articulate them until fairly late in life:
1) The overwhelming and inevitable fact of failure on the part of human beings; and
2) The overwhelming and inevitable love of God that never leaves us, and in fact turns our genius for doing the wrong thing into something that helps us rather than hinders us in our journey towards Him.

If this is a paradox, well, there you are: it’s a paradox. It’s also, I would suggest, the fundamental reality of the Universe which goes a long way to explain many of the mysteries surrounding the ideas of God, the Bible, and the human condition. God is love, says the First Epistle of John, and we are His children; children mess up, fail, display a lack of judgment, and sometimes act meanly or unworthily even according to their own lights; but their parents do not necessarily disown them, kill them, or condemn them to eternal torture. They might even forgive them and try to show them a better way, if they know one. Why, if God is love, should we expect less from Him? As Abraham asked, “Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?”

Of course, when I speak in the above terms of human failure and divine love, I am generalizing from my own experience: it is my failure that I am talking about, and the love of God for me despite my failure that has been the saving grace of my life. I am really not competent to speak of anything else. But since I am not all that different from others, it seems likely that my experience is applicable to others.

Kirpal Singh used to say, “That day is the greatest in a man’s life on which the question of the mystery of life enters his heart. It cannot be stamped out unless it is solved.” In my own case, the question of the mystery of life entered my heart a number of times, some of which were not evident until later, others of which seemed to be solved although the solution turned out to be temporary.

As a boy I had two favorite authors: Thornton W. Burgess and L. Frank Baum. I have always read voraciously but for years these two were my favorites. Mr. Burgess wrote animal stories, wonderful stories that were firmly rooted in nature (for the most part), but were imaginative, funny, and which opened my eyes to the oneness of all life: his books drove home to me that animals and birds really were our younger brothers and sisters in God, and that they counted. I learned to read on them, before I started school.
Mr. Baum was a world in himself. He was the author of *The Wizard of Oz* and its sequels, and my mother introduced me to them when I was four years old. That was 1939, the year the movie came out; she wanted to take me to the movie, but she wanted me to have a thorough grounding in the book before she did. She had loved the book all her life, as had my father, and she was very excited about the movie; and she conveyed that love and excitement to me. The combination of her careful reading of the book and our seeing the movie together shortly after we finished made a powerful impression on me and influenced my life in ways that I can hardly begin to count. The story is a parable of the homegoing of the soul that rings true in every way and yields new levels of meaning at every reading (or viewing, since the movie shares this truth with the book). The sequels, while they are not consistently up to the level of *The Wizard*, and while they vary greatly in quality and substance, also resonate with truth and repay frequent re-readings with insight and pleasure. I owe many things to my mother; she was a beautiful, loving, compassionate, gentle, supremely gracious woman who taught me by example and precept; but of all the things she gave me, sometimes I think I am most grateful to her for initiating me into the Oz stories—my very first initiation.

But these books led me on to the book of books, the book with which I have been in love since my seventh year, the book which I have never stopped reading even when I was rebelling against it with all my heart—the Bible. I got my first Bible in Sunday school at the First Baptist Church in Beverly, Massachusetts, upon completion of the third grade. It was of course the King James Version and I remember feeling that the secrets of the universe had just been handed to me. I looked at the first chapter of Genesis (the beauty and power of which has never left me) and thought, “This is what I’ve been looking for.” The very sweet lady, Mrs. Jones, who ran the Sunday school and had presented us with the Bibles had very appropriately written “John 3:16” on the flyleaf; this is the famous verse that lies at the heart of Christianity and reads, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life.” I remember thinking at the time that there was a real connection between the love of God expressed in the verse and the love of the lady who pointed it out; she still remains in my mind as an emblem of tender caring.
Along with the Bible was of course going to church; how I loved it! I still remember the beautiful sanctuary of that Baptist church and the eloquence of the minister, the Rev. Gordon E. Bigelow; I even remember some of the things he said. The whole mystique of the sanctuary, the pulpit, the minister and his sermons, the choir, the congregational hymn-singing and responses, all seemed ineffably holy to me. When we got home, my parents told me later (and I have a dim memory of it), I would corral my sister Helen (two years younger) and play church: she was the congregation, I was the minister.

A little later, another Sunday school teacher gave me a “graphic novel” version of the Bible; titled *Picture Stories from the Bible*, it became my constant companion. I read it and reread it for years.

Despite all this, I was of course a young boy with many varied interests beside the Bible; I still read voraciously, and developed a great love for comic books, of which I amassed a considerable collection; I grew to love music as heard on the records played on our wind-up acoustic phonograph, the popular music of the 1940’s, most of it negligible but including some excellent big-band jazz as well as the songs from *The Wizard of Oz*, which I listened to over and over; I loved listening to the radio, particularly the adventure programs aimed at kids broadcast between 5 and 6 each evening (“Superman,” “Tom Mix,” “Terry and the Pirates,” etc.) which I called “my programs” and became very attached to; I loved going to movies also, often with my mother who was a great movie fan; my only regret about that was that none of the movies was *The Wizard of Oz*, which I prayed every night that I might see again. Although I was not much of an athlete—I was (and am) very uncoordinated, which caused me great grief at the time—I did develop a love for baseball, both playing it (poorly) and following it. Helen and I became Boston Red Sox fans in 1946, the year they ran away with the American League pennant, only to lose the World Series to the St. Louis Cardinals in a heartbreaker, 4 games to 3; I am still a Red Sox fan and am grateful that I have lived to see them win the World Series, not once, not twice, but thrice.

Then when I was in my early teens, after our family’s move to Sanbornton, New Hampshire, two things happened which abruptly brought my attention back to the Bible and God. I can no longer be sure which happened first; in my memory they are simultaneous.
One of them was this: It came upon me suddenly one afternoon to read the Bible again. I had not read it for years, as I recall, although I had gone to church frequently and thought about it affectionately and reverently; but the desire came now very strongly to “get to the bottom of things.” I found my Bible, the same one I had received in Sunday school, and began reading at the beginning of the New Testament. I read the first four chapters of Matthew with great interest, and then—WOW! The Sermon on the Mount! It burst into my consciousness like a dive bomber. I couldn’t believe what I was reading. When I finished Chapter 7, I thought, “Has anyone ever read this? This is a Christian country we live in? A Christian civilization? What are people thinking? Do they know that Jesus said these things? Then how can we take him seriously as a teacher and completely ignore all this?” Those questions still resonate within me, and they still have no answer.

A little later I came across a copy of Thoreau’s *Walden* in my high school library and I had a very similar reaction: all my life I had heard Thoreau cited as an example of a wise man who understood many things; but again, I could not help wondering if anyone had actually read him; as with Jesus, his radical critique of the society he lived in seemed incompatible, to my teenage mind, with the way we actually lived. I later discovered that Thoreau himself had the same reaction toward the Gospels as I did; he says:

“It is remarkable that, notwithstanding the universal favor with which the New Testament is outwardly received, and even the bigotry with which it is defended, there is no hospitality shewn to, there is no appreciation of, the order of truth with which it deals. I know of no book that has so few readers. There is none so truly strange, and heretical, and unpopular. To Christians, no less than Greeks and Jews, it is foolishness and a stumbling-block. There are, indeed, severe things in it which no man should read aloud more than once.—‘Seek first the kingdom of heaven.’—‘Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth.’—‘If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.’—‘For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’—Think of this, Yankees!
Think of repeating these things to a New England audience! Thirdly, fourthly, fifteenthly, till there are three barrels of sermons! Who, without cant, can read them aloud? Who, without cant, can hear them and not go out of the meeting-house? They never were read, they never were heard. Let but one of these sentences be rightly read, from any pulpit in the land, and there would not be left one stone of that meeting-house upon another.”

The other definitive thing that happened at this time (this would have been approximately 1949-50) was my discovery of evangelical Christianity via *The Old-Fashioned Revival Hour* and the Rev. Charles E. Fuller. We were attending a liberal Congregational church in Sanbornton, New Hampshire, and I enjoyed very much going there; the minister, the Rev. Edward Ernst, was a good and wise man and I found his sermons very thought-provoking. But *The Old-Fashioned Revival Hour* was something else. An hour-long program on the radio (this was of course prior to my family’s association with television), approximately half devoted to gospel music, the second half to a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Fuller, it stirred my soul. I had never experienced anything like it. The music especially moved me; I remember thinking, “This is what religion is!” And Mr. Fuller’s sermons reached into my heart; at the end of them, he would give an “altar call,” asking those who wanted to be saved to raise their hands (and those of us listening at home to put our hands on the radio) and ask Jesus to save us. I grabbed onto that radio for dear life, it seemed so enormously important to me.

More or less simultaneously with these things (at least in my memory) was the discovery of three contemporary books which affected me deeply. The first one was *Kingsblood Royal* by Sinclair Lewis, a book (and an author) apparently forgotten today, but back then was very much in the public eye. *Kingsblood Royal* was a best seller and a very controversial book; I got it via my maternal grandmother who had gotten it from my aunt’s book club. This grandmother, whom I loved dearly and who gave me unconditional love as a child, was something of a racist, and she hated the book, which was about a World War II veteran, an officer and a gentleman, a pillar of his community, who

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discovers that his revered ancestor, legendary in his mother’s family as an explorer of early North America, was a black man; in the language of the time, “a full-blooded Negro.” In the light of this discovery, following the logic of the American system of racial classification (as the Sheriff in Jerome Kern’s *Show Boat* put it, “One drop of Nigra blood makes you a Nigra in these parts”) dating back to slave days, he feels compelled to reorient his whole universe and identify himself as black. My grandmother found his compulsion unbelievable, but I did not; and the picture of the black people’s world as it gradually unfolded itself to him in the course of his self-discovery I found very powerful. It introduced me to the concept of “civil rights” and the underside of the American dream years before Martin Luther King and his friends unleashed the explosive energy that brought that underside out into broad daylight. I couldn’t get enough of the book: when my grandmother realized how much I liked it, she hid it; I discovered where it was hid, read it, put it back, got it again, read some more, etc. I read and re-read that book throughout the summer of 1947 when I was twelve.

Somewhat later, a very different book—*The Razor’s Edge* by W. Somerset Maugham—captured my attention. This book, not nearly as forgotten today as *Kingsblood Royal* (and in the course of time made into two very interesting movies), introduced me to the idea of “searching for Truth,”—including the idea that “Truth” might be found in India—which later became such an enormous part of my life.

Later still, *The Seven Storey Mountain* by Thomas Merton came into my life, and introduced me to an author whom I still read and love with all my heart, and for whom I have enormous respect. I was in high school and working in my father’s store; it opened up vast new possibilities. To be a monk! Worlds beyond worlds!

Also, around this time, *The Wizard of Oz* was finally reissued, and I saw it again at last, ten years after my initial experience with it. To my great joy, it was even better than I remembered. Judy Garland’s performance as Dorothy seemed absolutely perfect to me; my memory of her had been rather vague, but now it came vividly and powerfully to life, as did the other performances. How I loved it! Indeed, I still love it; somehow, through various reissues over the next seven years or so,
I managed to see it fifty more times before it was sold to television, and hundreds of times since. I count it one of the blessings of my life.

Another reissued movie I saw at this time which affected me very much was Sergeant York. This true story of a Tennessee mountain man who converted to evangelical Christianity (which to him and his pastor included the idea of non-violence, since they took the Sermon on the Mount seriously) and his struggles to deal with the reality of World War I, eventually becoming the most decorated soldier in that war despite never giving up his belief in, and his efforts to live up to, both non-violence and truthfulness, struck deep chords within me. It too has become a perennial favorite; and at the time I first saw it, strengthened the longing I felt for the evangelical answer—and the sureness I felt in my heart that it was my way.

Then, in my junior year in high school (1950-51), everything came together.

Conversion

One of my best friends, a quiet farm boy named Alden Taylor, somehow managed to convey to me that he had not only been attending services at the First Christian Church in the nearby city of Laconia but had actually “gone forward” at the time of the altar call and been saved. This was exciting! I realized right away that this was in real life, right here and now, what I had been listening to on the radio, seeing in movies, and fantasizing about. But I had one qualm: Thinking about the Sermon on the Mount and the way it had affected me, I said, “Well, this sounds great. But maybe I should take a year or two and see if I can live up to the things Jesus said, before I make a commitment to follow him.” (It did not occur to me that the things Jesus said might not have that much to do with “getting saved.”) He indicated that maybe that could come later—that the commitment now might be a matter of my eternal salvation—and I didn’t argue; it made sense. So I agreed to accompany him to the Sunday evening service at the First Christian Church.

This was a “gospel service,” a kind of weekly revival meeting held every Sunday night in the basement of the church. The format was roughly that of the Old-Fashioned Revival Hour: half an hour or so of gospel singing followed by a sermon by the minister, the Rev. John S. Viall, concluding with an invitation to “come forward” and be saved,
accompanied by an appropriate final hymn, such as “Just As I Am”: “Just as I am, without one plea, / Except that Thy blood was shed for me, / And that Thou biddest me come to Thee, / O Lamb of God, I come, I come.” The service as a whole was unlike any church service I had ever been to before: very informal, very welcoming, and very exciting. I loved it.

But I was by no means ready to be saved. For months I attended services at the First Christian Church, went to the delightful “singspirations” aimed specially at teenagers held at the parsonage immediately after the service, engaged in long intense discussions on theological issues with my friends and the other kids at the church, and thought constantly about God, Jesus, the Bible, and salvation. Yet still I held back.

Then a series of events occurred which caused me to radically re-examine my life—literally “radically,” from the roots up. My father got sick; he had been plagued by a stomach ulcer for years, at a time when doctors didn’t have a clue how to treat them, and now it exploded. He had been working hard: we had left Beverly, Massachusetts, where both he and my mother had been born and gone to school, and where he had worked selling baked goods off a truck on a delivery route, and moved to New Hampshire, mainly on account of his ulcer. My parents had bought a small village store in Sanbornton, and the idea was that we could live a much simpler and less stressful life by operating the store as a family enterprise. It didn’t work out that way; my father was way too energetic and ambitious to live simply; he single-handedly rebuilt our garage into a store three times the size of the original; he developed two delivery routes, mostly among summer people, on alternate days twice a week; and he dived into the local community head first, becoming Town Moderator, Lecturer of Harmony Grange, chairman of various committees, director of and performer in minstrel shows, school bus driver (this of course was to augment our somewhat uncertain income), and a number of other positions. He was irrepressible; until it all backed up and dumped on him, and the whole house echoed with his terrible and (to me) very scary groans. The ambulance came and took him to Laconia Hospital where he had two-thirds of his stomach removed and stayed several weeks. In the meantime my mother and I ran the store, including the delivery routes, which was complicated by the fact that neither of us had a driver’s license. My mother had never
learned to drive; I had (my father had been teaching me) but I had just turned sixteen and had not yet gotten my license. In addition to the routes, we had to make several trips a week to various wholesalers, so it was a huge problem. I applied for my license and in the meantime prevailed on various kind-hearted neighbors (with licenses) to accompany me while I drove, which was legal in New Hampshire in those days. So I was driving a very great deal with no difficulty when my appointment for my driver’s test came through.

Many people—a great many people—assured me how easy it was to pass the test. My good friend Bill Chapman, who had gotten his license a year earlier, showed me the test route and had me drive it several times to practice; he also accompanied me on the day of the test, as my father was still in the hospital. Unfortunately, the regular examiner was sick, and the new guy did not know the test route, or did not care, and took me on a totally different route; I became more and more nervous and flunked the test. When the examiner told me that, I burst out crying; I blurted out that my father was in the hospital and how important the license was for my family, which was very embarrassing to him, and he mumbled, “Well, I don’t know about that,” and walked away fast. I was devastated. Suddenly, all our plans seemed to go up in smoke: what kind of miserable failure was I, who couldn’t even pass the easiest of all tests? I have had many crushing blows and disappointments in my life, but I’m not sure that this wasn’t the hardest; and I really hit bottom. I wanted to crawl into bed and stay there the rest of my life.

And then the thought came to me that my Christian friends would have been able to deal with this much better than I could, because they had Christ in a way that I did not. And that made me rethink the whole matter of my salvation: my relationship to Christ. I felt somehow ashamed for having taken the whole phenomenon of my finding that church and its message for granted; I felt that somehow I had trivialized the tremendous cosmic activity of God on my behalf. And I felt an overpowering desire to be saved.

But still: I was afraid. What was required was a commitment the like of which I had never made: who knew what the consequences might be? So I decided to ask for a sign, as I had read in the Bible: I filled the bathtub with water, preparing to take a bath (we had no shower); I ran only hot water, unmitigated with cold, so that it was very, very hot,
scalding hot; and I said to God, “God, if it is Your will that I am to go forward in church tonight—if I am supposed to be saved like this—let me be able to put my hand in the tub and leisurely pull out the plug without feeling any pain or discomfort.”

And so it happened: I reached in, moved my submerged hand slowly to the plug and without the slightest trace of pain or discomfort removed the plug, let the water partially drain, and then refilled it with cold to bring the temperature down so I could bathe.

A small miracle, you say? Hardly a miracle at all? Could such an insignificant thing really be a sign? Maybe not. But I was a small and insignificant person, and that sign was the best I could think of; at the time it seemed to reflect God hearing me and answering me, and it did the trick: I went to church that night, July 11, 1951, and during the invitation at the close of the service, went forward—actually shot forward like a rocket, as people told me later. With tremendous soul-satisfaction and relief, I was “born again.”

The next few months were heavenly. My father came home from the hospital, went with me to a follow-up driver’s test which I passed easily, and began recuperating; I continued to drive the delivery routes with great joy, singing gospel hymns as I drove, taking breaks to read the Bible; I went to church twice on Sundays and several times during the week, and loved every minute of it; we visited “gospel camps,” particularly one in Rumney, thirty miles to the north, which seemed to open up a new world; and I talked very seriously “about man and God and law” with friends of mine, both saved and unsaved, particularly my best friend Bill Chapman, with whom I sat in the car many nights reading and looking up verses in the Bible, going over and over the third chapter of John with its emphasis on being “born again,” and discussing various implications of this theology which we were just beginning to get acquainted with. It was a great summer.

A few weeks after my conversion we had a powerful thunderstorm in Sanbornton, during which the power went out (not a terribly unusual experience), and I was tending the store by myself. It was very dark in the store, although only late afternoon, damp and cold, and above all quiet—a deep unearthly quiet, because normally there were a great many machines running all the time: we had a walk-in meat cooler, an ice-cream freezer, an all-purpose freezer, and a soft-drink cooler,
among other things—all of which consistently and continuously made a
great deal of noise, which had now stopped dead. It was very depressing
and lonely and sad; and the idea came to me very strongly to ask God
to restore the power, which had only been off about half an hour or so
at that point. (It would normally be off for several hours if not longer,
once it went out.) But an idea which had been going round and round
in my head since my conversion forced its way out into the open at
this point, and I determined to ask Him for another sign. So I got
down on my knees and prayed, most single-mindedly and out loud:
“Lord, if You want me to go into Your service—as a minister, evangelist,
missionary, or whatever—please make the power come on right now.”

And before I got the “Amen” out, while I was still on my knees with my
eyes closed, I heard the machines starting up and felt the lights coming
back on. I was stunned; this was a sign like the ones I had read about in
the Bible; I had asked the Lord for a sign like that, and He had given it
to me! It had worked! From then on, I considered myself called to the
ministry, and the sense of certainty and purpose, of belonging, of being
part of God’s plan, that this provided me was immense.

A month or so later, on September 9, 1951, I was baptized by
immersion in Paugus Bay, Lake Winnipesaukee, by the Rev. John S.
Viall in a beautiful ceremony which my father, still recovering and
very weak, attended; the congregation at the lakeshore sang “Shall We
Gather at the River?” and I was sixteen years old and blissfully happy. A
year later, in September 1952, after a tumultuous senior year in high
school in which Bill, Alden, and I, and a few others, did our best to
convert the whole school to evangelical Christianity, and a trauma-filled
summer pumping gas at The Weirs, New Hampshire, where I learned
some very hard lessons about working for someone other than my
Dad, Alden and I entered Gordon College of Theology and Missions
in Boston to prepare for the evangelical ministry.

Dispensations and Covenants

Actually, the Rev. Mr. Viall and others in the church did not want me
to go to Gordon; they recommended strongly that I attend Providence
Bible Institute, which we all referred to as PBI. Mr. Viall had attend-
ed Gordon, although he had not graduated, but he greatly preferred
PBI, even taking me down there to meet the President and see the
campus. I did apply there; but in the spring of my senior year, at my father’s suggestion, I drove down to our old home town of Beverly (accompanied by Bill Chapman) to see our old minister, the Rev. Mr. Bigelow, tell him about my plans, and get his blessing. He was pleased to see me, but when he heard I was going to PBI, he immediately (at the suggestion of his wife) called a friend and fellow minister, the Rev. T. Downing Bowler, pastor of the Washington Street Congregational Church, who taught philosophy at Gordon, and asked him if he would talk to me; he told him that I was undecided between Gordon and PBI, which from my point of view was not true, as I was at that point totally committed to PBI, and Mr. Bowler asked me to come right over.

So for the next few hours Downing Bowler gave Bill and me a crash course on the difference between a Bible institute and a Christian liberal arts college, and explained how intellectual excellence and a thorough grounding in philosophy, literature, history, et al., were vitally important for anyone who wanted to influence others, including thinking people, on behalf of Christ, and make a real difference in the world. It was an extraordinary few hours; no one had ever talked to me on this level and in this way, and I was moved and impressed that this total stranger should drop everything and give two boys he had never met a completely new perspective on what being a worker for Christ could be. We were totally convinced; we left Mr. Bowler’s house planning to go to Gordon without a doubt (although Bill waited a year) and very grateful to him for so eloquently sharing his insights with us. Mr. Bowler left the Gordon faculty before I got there; I only saw him once more, when I went to hear him preach one Sunday (which he did beautifully); but I count him one of the major influences in my life and the time with him one of the pivots on which everything turns. When Bill and I got back, we shared with Alden everything Mr. Bowler had said, and he too was convinced; so, eventually, we all ended up at Gordon.2

Although my time at Gordon was immensely intellectually satisfying—the first day I was there I felt like I read a million books, mostly from talking with older students at the bookstore—I had of course

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2 Ironically, a few years later, PBI became Barrington College and a few years after that, merged with Gordon.
absorbed a certain amount of theology before I went, mostly by way of the Scofield Reference Bible.

I first heard about the Scofield Bible sometime after my conversion; I discovered that many of my friends had it, and used it intensively for their basic understanding of the Christian world view. Our minister, Mr. Viall, was not totally sold on it; he once cautioned me, after I had acquired it and was raving about it, to not assume that Scofield was necessarily right in all his assertions; I retorted, in my know-it-all mode which often irritated my father no end, that to be against Scofield was to be against the Bible. Mr. Viall, a very good and gentle man (and an excellent preacher) whom we all loved, was quiet; he was very patient with me always. But he did follow Scofield's basic outline of human history, including the Last Days and the millennium to come. I did not realize these were controversial until I got to Gordon.

The Scofield Bible was hardly known at all among the general public back then; for that matter, evangelicals were a distinctly oddball group in the America of the 1950's, and we were intellectually, at least at Gordon, often on the defensive. The thoughts and doings of evangelicals were of profound non-interest to the great non-evangelical majority. Billy Graham was becoming a celebrity, but he was the great exception and the standard by which we were recognized: "Oh, Billy Graham stuff, huh?" was a common response. Political consciousness among us was almost nil; we had a vague wish for Christian representation at high levels, but it stopped there. There were radical McCarthyites at Gordon, but they were the exception, not the rule, although the college was overwhelmingly for Eisenhower in the 1952 election. The idea that evangelicals, a.k.a. the "Christian right," would ever be a significant presence on the American political scene, and that the ideas of the Rev. C. I. Scofield would become topics of debate for the nation as a whole, would have seemed not only ridiculous to most of us, but also irrelevant: the point of Christianity as we understood it was the saving of souls, not imposing a political agenda on the unsaved.

At Gordon I discovered that many people, including those I most looked up to, drew a careful and scornful distinction between "evangelicals" and "fundamentalists," greatly to the benefit of the former; and, since most of the current "Christian right" would be classified by them as fundamentalists, I think it very likely that many of them would raise
serious objection to the “Christian right” program and its particular priorities.3

Of course, this distinction, so important to us, was subtle enough to be indistinguishable by anyone on the outside. Evangelicals and fundamentalists alike believed in the literal inerrancy of the Bible, at least as originally written—an inerrancy that included history and science as well as matters of faith. Both evangelicals and fundamentalists accepted the traditional Christian theology of the Trinity; both believed that Jesus was the one and only “Son of God,” the Messiah as prophesied in the Old Testament, who died on the cross to atone for the sins of the world (interpreted in practice to mean “some people,” namely, those who believed it); both believed in the overriding importance of evangelism, that is, the active preaching and witnessing of the absolute necessity of belief in Jesus in order to be saved from hell.

The differences lay in the areas of emphasis, priorities, and style; I wish I could say that among those priorities was a recognition of the radical, soul-transforming nature of the things that Jesus actually said, but I cannot: in the two years I was at Gordon, I attended chapel service daily and church every Sunday (sometimes twice), and participated in countless theological discussions with my fellow students; my memory may be faulty, but the sad fact is that I cannot recall one chapel or church service or one discussion which centered around the Sermon on the Mount or anything else that Jesus actually said: the overwhelming number of sermons and discussions were on the epistles of St. Paul, or on the peculiar understanding of ethics as related to “separation from the world” as an aspect of “witnessing,” that is, things like not drinking or smoking, not going to movies, not dancing, etc.; or on the Book of Revelation and the last days. The whole range of Jesus’ teaching on non-violence, not judging others, forgiveness, transcending social and ethnic distinctions—His radical inclusiveness—was conspicuous by its complete absence.

This does seem to be changing among present-day evangelicals: the ethical dimension and radical other-worldliness of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement, for example, does seem to be present to some extent in the worldview of some contemporary evangelicals,

3 As indeed is happening on the evangelical scene as of this writing: see for example, “The Evangelical Rejection of Reason” by Karl W. Giberson and Randall J. Stephens (both professors at Eastern Nazarene College), New York Times, October 17, 2011.
and was certainly the most important single element in the life and teachings of Martin Luther King and his mentor Howard Thurman. It is also a major factor in the Christianity of Jimmy Carter, as his writings and example make clear.

The Scofield Bible popularized the particular theology known as “Dispensationalism,” which originated among the members of an obscure sect called the Plymouth Brethren. The name referred to the idea that the human story as told in the Bible is best understood as a series of different covenants between God and human beings, resulting in different “dispensations,” that is, separate eras in which the demands of God were essentially different. Traditional Christianity has understood this idea in a simple form as the difference between the “Old” and “New” Covenants (or Testaments); Scofield however presented eight covenants and seven dispensations. 4

This outline of human history struck me as very plausible when I first read it; it seemed to reflect the basic thrust of the Bible, I thought. As Scofield quoted Augustine, “Distinguish the ages and the scriptures harmonize.” And if we don’t, they don’t. If we accept the literal inerrancy of the Bible as our starting point, which all evangelicals do, then something like that would seem to be necessary. It was only under the influence of my Calvinist and amillennial5 friends at Gordon that I left

4 The dispensations, as listed by Scofield, are: 1) Innocence (the Garden of Eden); 2) Conscience (from the fall of Adam and Eve to the Flood); 3) Human Government (from the Flood to Abraham); 4) Promise (from Abraham to Moses); 5) Law (from Moses to Christ); 6) Grace (our present age, beginning with Christ); 7) Kingdom (after the return of Christ). The covenants, corresponding roughly to the dispensations, are: 1) Edenic; 2) Adamic; 3) Noahic; 4) Abrahamic; 5) Mosaic; 6) Palestinian; 7) Davidic; 8) New.

5 The terms “amillennial,” “premillennial,” and “postmillennial” all refer to different understandings by Christians of the thousand-year reign of Christ and binding of Satan as prophesied in Revelation 20 and how it relates to His second coming: the premillennial position, which is overwhelmingly popular among modern evangelicals, holds that the thousand-year reign, the “millennium,” is in the future and will be preceded by Christ’s return; the postmillennial view, which was very popular in the nineteenth century, is that Christ will return after we have brought about the millennium by bringing about a world in which His teachings really do constitute the norm that people live by; and the amillennial view, which was and is the standard view of the Church, Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox, is that the “thousand years” represents the era of the Church; some amillennialists hold that the reference in Revelation 20:3 to Satan being “loosed a little season” after the “thousand years
dispensationalism behind. But certain points that Scofield made stuck with me for years. One of them was his cheerful dismissal of the whole Creationist controversy by way of the “gap theory”; that is, the idea that between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 is an enormous gap of time. As he says, in his notes for those verses:

But three creative acts of God are recorded in this chapter: (1) the heavens and the earth, v. 1; (2) animal life, v. 21; and (3) human life, vs. 26, 27. The first creative act refers to the dateless past, and gives scope for all the geologic ages. Jeremiah 4:23-26, Isaiah 24:1 and 45:18, clearly indicate that the earth had undergone a cataclysmic change as the result of a divine judgment. The face of the earth bears everywhere the marks of such a catastrophe. . . .

Scofield doesn’t believe in evolution, certainly; but neither does he believe that the earth was created six thousand years ago (although that is when he thinks human history began) and that the scientific evidence pointing otherwise is some sort of cosmic trick on the part of God (or maybe Satan), which is the modern Creationist view. Many of my Gordon compatriots dismissed the “gap theory,” sneering at it as a kind of cop-out; but it has always seemed to me that it was a valiant attempt to reconcile two irreconcilable understandings of the formation and history of the Universe without insulting human intelligence.

Another point that Scofield made, and that Dispensationalists generally share, is his rejection of the standard Church position in regard to the Jews and their scriptures:

The Old Testament is a divinely provided Introduction to the New; and whoever comes to the study of the four Gospels with a mind saturated with the Old Testament foreview of the Christ [the Messiah], His person, work, and kingdom will find them open books.

For the Gospels are woven of Old Testament quotation, allusion, and type. Therefore, in approaching the study of the Gospels the mind should be freed, so far as possible, from mere theological concepts and presuppositions. Especially is it necessary to exclude the notion—a legacy in Protestant thought from post-apostolic and Roman Catholic theology—that the Church is should be fulfilled” refers to modern history, beginning in 1914. The premillennial position, while held by a minority of Church Fathers such as Papias and Irenaeus, and despite its popularity today, was considered to be heretical throughout most of Church history and was not held by the mainstream Protestant Reformers.
JESUS

the true Israel, and that the Old Testament foreview of the Kingdom is fulfilled in the Church.⁶

The corollary of this is that Israel is still the “chosen people,” has not been superseded, and still counts in the eyes of God.

Finally, while many of Scofield’s comments on various parts of the Bible are dismayingly trivial (compare, for example, his comments on the Book of Ecclesiastes), his recognition that Psalms 22, 23, and 24 “form a trilogy” illustrating the threefold aspect of God’s love—suffering on our behalf, sustaining us, and ultimately gloriously triumphant—resonated with me from the beginning and still does.

However, despite having left for Gordon as a Dispensationalist, even though I didn’t know the word at the time, and despite the fact that I continued to use the Scofield Bible for my personal study and devotion, I soon came under the influence of two schools of thought coming from radically different ends of the evangelical world: Calvinism and Pentecostalism. Although I initially resisted both of them, I eventually subscribed to them both—more or less at the same time. They appealed to different parts of me: Calvinism offered an intellectually consistent view of the Biblical tradition, more satisfying, at least in the short run, than Dispensationalism; and the Pentecostal way of worship appealed to that in me which had always loved the Gospel singing and the part that joy had played in evangelical services.

Predestination

My introduction to Calvinism came very early on in my Gordon career; I expressed surprise at the number of books on that subject in the Gordon bookstore, and I was informed that a great many of the most intellectual students were in fact Calvinists. This was unsettling: I knew little about Calvinism beyond the bare idea of predestination, which had always seemed monstrously unfair. Someone said, “There’s a rock-ribbed Calvinist over there,” pointing to a slight dark-haired man standing on the other side of the store. I immediately went over to him: “They tell me you’re a rock-ribbed Calvinist!” He laughed: “Why ’rock-ribbed’? I’m a Calvinist, sure.” “Why?” And he told me.

Now what he told me—basically, that Calvinism provided an intellectually consistent Biblical theology which satisfactorily dealt with the whole scope of the Bible—was convincing to me at the time; but it contained within it the seeds of the whole crumbling of evangelical thought that took place within me two years later. He explained Calvin’s thought by means of the acronym “TULIP”—

- Total depravity;
- Unconditional election;
- Limited atonement;
- Irresistible grace;
- Perseverance of saints—

Meaning, as he said, that humankind is indeed *totally* depraved, with no goodness about it at all, so that it does not deserve salvation, but rather eternal punishment in hell (this was seen as the result of the Fall in the Garden of Eden); that God, in His infinite mercy, with no preconditions as to goodness, etc., (which, as we have seen, is impossible anyway) has decided to save *some* of depraved humanity; that Jesus died on the cross for those predestined or elect sinners only, not others; that those who are destined to be saved cannot help but be saved, because God’s grace is far more powerful than their resistance; and finally, that those who are destined to be saved *cannot* fall away, for the same reason; if someone who seems to be saved does fall away, the conclusion is that he or she was not really saved in the first place—or perhaps has not really fallen away.\(^7\)

Now this particular theological viewpoint may strike the uninitiated reader as bizarre, even perverse, at odds with the whole idea of “God is love,” also attested from the Bible,\(^8\) and at the time I became involved with it, it was a minority viewpoint within a minority sect,

\(^7\) All of these points can be supported by copious Biblical references; these can be found and the theology articulated in great detail in Calvin’s own magisterial *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (John T. MacNeill, editor; Ford Battles, translator; Library of Christian Classics).

\(^8\) Compare the following from John Adams, American Founding Father: “Now, my friend, can prophecies or miracles convince you or me that infinite benevolence, wisdom, and power created and preserves, for a time, innumerable millions to make them miserable forever for his own glory?” Letter to Thomas Jefferson, Sept. 14, 1813; quoted by Garry Wills, *Head and Heart: American Christianities*, p. 129.
in relation to American (or world) society as a whole. Yet, historically, this view is of the utmost importance: it was not only the view of Martin Luther, John Calvin, Oliver Cromwell, it was also the viewpoint of the Puritans who settled New England (including Jonathan Edwards, widely considered to be the first American philosopher), the Dutch who settled New York and South Africa, and the Scotch-Irish who settled much of the American South. It was in fact and to a great extent still is the basic theoretical construct of Protestant Christianity. And the problems and contradictions within this viewpoint lie at the heart of the great gap between organized religion and genuine spirituality: the assumption that our logical mind, our understanding at the level of our individual ego, can grasp and deal with concepts that are way too much for it. Karen Armstrong has elaborated on the distinction between *mythos* and *logos*—the mythopoeic and logical ways to look at the universe. As she points out, the core revelations in all religions are from the point of view of *mythos*; but the written scriptures as we have them, and particularly as we comment and expound on them, are the result of imposing *logos* on those core revelations.\(^9\)

Several years later, after leaving Gordon and the evangelical faith, I came across P. D. Ouspensky’s description of the four methods of knowing in his *A New Model of the Universe*. Ouspensky is dealing with precisely the problem we have discussed above: that of trying to measure reality with an instrument that can’t handle it. (As C. S. Lewis put it, “We can’t expect the gods to meet us face to face until we have faces.”) Ouspensky, the distinguished Russian philosopher and mystic, posits four ways of dealing with the universe, four methods of understanding it:

1) Defective;  
2) Logical;  
3) Psychological;  
4) Esoteric.

The logical method is what we call “common sense,” and it works beautifully most of the time, like Newton’s laws; when it is applied to phenomena with which it cannot deal but which we think that it can, it becomes defective. On the other hand, if we recognize that the

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logical method is not working effectively, and make efforts to “think outside of the box,” as the current phrase has it, we are using the psychological method. Advances so-called in human thought and discovery, dramatic breakthroughs, are the result of using the psychological method.

But the psychological method too has its limits; some things, according to Ouspensky, we really cannot deal with without help from beyond our normal capacity: and that is where the esoteric method, which assumes that there is such a thing as “higher mind,” comes in. The original revelations at the core of our major religious traditions, such as the teachings of Buddha or Jesus (as distinguished from what subsequent generations have made of them), are examples of products of higher mind, and the level of understanding that produced them is the result of the esoteric method at work. Whatever ability we have to understand them is due to our use of the psychological method, and our total inability to put them into practice, and to substitute all sorts of other things which fly in the face of them, is due to our attempt to understand them via the logical method, which of course becomes the defective method when used that way.

I owe a great deal to Ouspensky; his description of these methods enabled me to understand how the Gospels and the Biblical tradition could be seen as part of a cosmic spiritual tradition which far transcended the terrible relentless pathological logic of the Calvinistic system.

One of the most satisfying and lasting of my intellectual adventures at Gordon was the discovery of C. S. Lewis. First, The Screwtape Letters and Mere Christianity; then a friend of mine told me about his science

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10 P. D. Ouspensky, A New Model of the Universe: Principles of the Psychological Method in its Application to Problems of Science, Religion and Art, pp. viii-x.

11 “Pathological” may seem strong, but compare the following passage from Jonathan Edwards, probably the greatest American Calvinist preacher of the eighteenth century, describing what it will be like in Hell: “How dismal will it be, when you are under these racking torments, to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them; to have no hope; . . . when, after you shall have worn out the age of the sun, moon, and stars in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without any rest day or night, or one minute’s ease, yet you shall have no hope of being delivered; when, after you shall have worn out a thousand more such ages, yet you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are not one whit nearer to the end of your torments . . . ” and so on and so on. Quoted in Garry Wills, Head and Heart: American Christianities, pp. 109-110.
fiction. I had loved science fiction since reading *The 101 Short Stories of H. G. Wells* as a boy; both before and after my conversion I had read *Amazing Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories, Astounding Science Fiction, Galaxy,* and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction,* among others, regularly, as well as paperback books by Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Clifford Simak, Theodore Sturgeon, and many others. So the idea of *Christian* science fiction was exciting beyond words. And I did indeed enjoy the Ransom Trilogy (*Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra,* and *That Hideous Strength*) very much, and have re-read it many times down to the present day.

But one book of Lewis’s that I missed which might have helped me greatly as I struggled with the demons of Calvinism was *The Great Divorce,* itself an example of Ouspensky’s psychological method at work. This little book, which represents Lewis’s wrestling with the same philosophical problems relating to Christianity as I wrestled with, displays an understanding of Time and Eternity beyond the grasp of the Christian theologians I had read—particularly in its explanation of Christ’s descent into Hell, as put in the mouth of George MacDonald, the Universalist clergyman and writer of *Phantastes, Lilith,* and *The Princess and the Goblin* (another book my mother read me which I loved!), and Lewis’s inspiration and guide into Christianity through his books. Lewis has dreamed that he was in hell but has spent a day in heaven, at the end of which he meets MacDonald. Lewis asks how it is possible for souls to go back and forth between heaven and hell, and MacDonald answers,

“Only One has descended into Hell.”
Lewis asks, “And will He ever do so again?”
MacDonald replies, “It was not once long ago that He did it. Time does not work that way when once ye have left the earth. All moments that have been or shall be were, or are, present in the moment of His descending. There is no spirit in prison to whom He did not preach.”
Lewis said, “And some hear Him?”
“Aye.” 12

Lewis’s brilliant and compassionate picture of human beings captured and enveloped by Time struggling to comprehend Eternity while still

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limited by Time and not recognizing that limitation, would have helped me understand my difficulties better had I been aware of it during my Gordon years. But I wasn’t.  

The Holy Spirit

My years at Gordon were by no means totally defined by struggle and conflict, although they were certainly a major presence during my last days there: the joy that I had experienced my first summer as an evangelical continued well into my stay at Gordon, particularly through my encounter with Pentecostal people. During my senior year at Tilton-Northfield High School, Bill, Alden, and I had frequently been accused of being “Holy Rollers”; at that time, we were by no means sure what “Holy Rollers” were. Mr. Viall explained to us that it was a derogatory term for “Pentecostals,” but we were by no means sure what “Pentecostals” were, either, except that he didn’t seem to fully approve of them. So I did some investigating; through reading I found that they were evangelicals who believed that the initial conversion experience—“the new birth”—was only the beginning: the culmination of one’s spiritual career was baptism in the Holy Spirit, marked by extraordinary experiences such as speaking in “tongues,” interpreting “tongues,” dancing in the Spirit, being “slain in the Spirit,” etc.

I was extremely interested in all this, but I was scared too: Pentecostal services had a reputation of being very wild and out-of-control (hence the nickname “Holy Rollers”), and I was intimidated by this. I learned that there was a local Pentecostal church (in those days, in New England, evangelicals were scarce, let alone Pentecostals): the Full Gospel Church in the nearby town of Belmont, and I resolved to go there. (“Full Gospel” refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit with its above-mentioned “gifts,” which in the opinion of Pentecostals is missing from the standard evangelical program.) I did go; but I was too scared to go beyond the church door, I am sure to the amusement of the members of

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13 For an excellent discussion of the issue of predestination vs. free will as it has played out in Christian history, and particularly with Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation, see Richard Marius, Martin Luther: The Christian Between God and Death, pp. 456-468. And for a discussion of these ideas in relation to Indian philosophy and esoteric teaching, see “The Question of Grace” in my Introduction to Ajaib Singh, The Rescue: The Vars of Bhai Gurdas, pp. xiv-xvii.
the congregation, who were very polite and gracious to me and waited for me to leave before getting into the “wild” part of their service. Not an auspicious beginning; and on the way home from the church, the muffler fell off my father’s car, which was even less auspicious. On the whole, a downer of a night.

But I was still very curious; and when I learned that the “Beulah Camp Meetings” were held by Pentecostal people every summer in a field on a dirt road between Belmont and Canterbury, I resolved to attend. This was a totally different experience. My memory of that magical night is still with me and is pervaded by beauty: for the first time, I heard someone speaking in tongues, and I found it extraordinary. The sound of the teen-age girl speaking was beautiful in itself; something like a very sublime version of “scat” singing in jazz; but the interpretation, by a teen-age boy not far from me, was like a Biblical psalm. As I listened to them both, a thrill went up and down within me; I thought, “This is the real thing!”

But I did not explore Pentecostalism further until Gordon, where I met a young man named Alexander Skinner, who became a very good friend. He had graduated from Zion Bible Institute in Providence and had married the daughter of a Pentecostal minister who had a church (The Revival Tabernacle) in his house in Roxbury. His father-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Fitzgerald, was a house-painter by trade and was not paid for his ministerial services, which were extensive: several meetings throughout the week and twice on Sundays. His congregation was small but integrated: black and white mingled freely, which in 1953 was no small thing. I was very much welcomed there and immediately felt at home.

On Washington’s Birthday (February 22, 1953) there was an all-day gathering of the brothers and sisters from all over New England, held at the Revival Tabernacle. (I never quite got it straight which group of Pentecostals this was, but Zion Bible Institute was their flagship school, and they were most decidedly not connected with the Assemblies of God, the most “mainstream” of the Pentecostal denominations. The Rev. Mr. Fitzgerald explained to me that the Assemblies of God did not want black members.) I was warmly invited to attend this gathering, and I asked a couple of friends of mine from Gordon if they wanted to go with me; they were very interested and immediately agreed to go.
That day, which was certainly the high point of my Pentecostal (if not evangelical) career, has lived in my memory ever since. The not particularly large church was filled to the rafters with excited, joy-filled, shouting, clapping, dancing worshipers, evenly divided between black and white. The music was heavenly: there was a small band—piano, guitar, drums, saxophone, plus Rev. Fitzgerald’s tambourine—and if they didn’t play jazz, they came very close. “When the Saints Go Marching In” was definitely one of the hymns played and sung that day, and in later years, when I heard Louis Armstrong or Sidney Bechet or Jack Teagarden play that song, it always brought back the memory of that congregation singing their hearts out. Another song that day, a favorite of mine that we had sung many times in the First Christian Church of Laconia, was “The Hallelujah Side”:

Once a sinner far from Jesus, I was perishing with cold,
But the Blessed Savior heard me when I cried;
He threw His robe around me and He led me to His fold,
Now I’m living on the Hallelujah Side.

Then glory be to Jesus! Let the hallelujahs roll!
Help me ring my Savior’s praises far and wide!
For I’ve opened up to Heaven all the windows of my soul
And I’m living on the Hallelujah Side.

A very beautiful and distinguished woman with a terribly pockmarked face sang “The Stranger of Galilee” in a thrilling contralto which resonated within my soul. The memory of her and her song stayed with me so much so that I later used it as the title of one of my books.

At one point, Alex said to me (we were outside the sanctuary at that point), “Russell, have you ever seen dancing in the Spirit?” I hadn’t. So he led me into the room and there the entire congregation was dancing—not with partners or formally in any way—just dancing with joy and abandon, as a physical equivalent of the music. I thought of David leading the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, “dancing before the Lord”; this is what he was doing!

But somehow, although I loved the Pentecostal people and enjoyed their services enormously, and although I preached my first sermon at the Revival Tabernacle at their kind invitation (it was on the Sermon
on the Mount), it was very clear that the Holy Spirit in this form was not for me. I was never baptized in the Spirit; I never spoke in tongues, or danced, or “was slain”; and it never particularly seemed to me that I should. It was not my thing. But I thought then, and I still think, that the Pentecostals had grasped a radical part of the New Testament phenomenon which was closed off to many of their more logical brothers and sisters, and I was grateful to have been given the appreciation of it.14

Exodus

About the middle of my second year at Gordon I began to have very serious doubts about the evangelical world view. There were both theological and psychological reasons for this. Psychologically, I developed a reaction to the evangelical view of human relationships (as I understood it): the idea that other human beings existed to be converted, that is, they had no value unless they could be made to agree with me in every particular. This is not how it seems to the young evangelical at the time, of course: from his or her point of view, she is saving the other from eternal torture provided by the God of love. And it is certainly true that if you really believe that the overwhelming majority of human beings are condemned to eternal torture, and you really care about them, then you will do anything you can to save them from that.

But something about this did not ring true to me from very early on: I became aware that at the moment of confrontation with the other, the moment of making the other aware of his or her eternal fate, I shrank back; something within me did not want to do that. It seemed to me that there was something fundamentally dishonest about relating to other human beings from that point of view. Later, when I became a door-to-door salesman (first, encyclopedias; then Bibles), I recognized

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14 A couple of years later, after I left Gordon and the evangelical faith, I had the great honor and privilege of being, for a while, the boy friend of a truly lovely (in every sense of the word) girl, Miss Sheddon White. She was very interested in religious ideas and phenomena, and when I told her about the Revival Tabernacle, she expressed a great interest in experiencing it. I called my friend Alex and made sure that services were still being held at the same time, and we went. Mr. Fitzgerald, as a good evangelical, used the occasion to preach directly at me about my backsliding; his text was “You’re gonna burn!” from somewhere in Daniel, and he preached a large part of the sermon standing in front of Sheddon and me. When we left, Sheddon said, “That was all about you!” I agreed, but I was not surprised.
the same unwillingness within myself to impose my desires on another, regardless of what he wanted. Basically, an active evangelical’s relation to the world around him is that of a salesman; and I didn’t like it. This set up a collision course with evangelical theology and its concern with eternal torture although it took a while for me to recognize that. But if I really believe that the man or woman next to me or walking down the street or waiting on me is going to go to eternal hell, where there is no hope, to suffer anguish forever and ever and ever, and if I truly loved that man or woman as myself, why would I be unwilling to do what is required to save them from that?

Why indeed? It took me several years to realize that at the bottom of my reluctance to evangelize lay a profound and stubborn disconnect with evangelical theology: I did not, in my heart of hearts, really and truly believe that any God worthy to be called “God,” certainly not Jesus’s Father, the God Who is love, Who welcomed back the prodigal and moved heaven and earth for the lost sheep, Who sends rain on the just and the unjust, would treat His own children this way. And Calvinism, with its emphasis on the power of God and the helplessness of humans, and the relentless logic of its Biblical exegesis, raised the stakes even higher: no longer could it be said that God wanted everyone to come to Him, it was just that we humans were too dumb to get it, so we chose not to.

No; Calvinism was very clear: there is no human choice involved, because human choice does not exist. There is only the Will of an all-powerful and all-knowing God, Who freely chooses, for His part, to save a few and damn the others for eternity; Who, in fact, created human beings knowing fully well that He was going to do this. This is a God of love? Talk about absurd universes . . .

At the age of nineteen, there was a very great deal that I did not know, but what I did know was clear enough: that that God did not deserve to be worshipped.

But this realization did not come quickly or easily; in the three years since I had been saved, my whole life had been ordered around the evangelical faith, which was a huge sun right in the middle of everything.

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15 This tenet of Calvinism, of course, contradicts I Timothy 2:3-4 (“God our Savior . . . wants everyone to be saved and reach full knowledge of the truth”) but none of us noticed this.
My friends, my academic studies, my career possibilities, my basic concepts: the whole way I thought about myself and my connection to the rest of the universe—in a word, everything—was centered around the evangelical world view and had meaning (or so I thought) solely in relation to that. The entrance of doubt was a very big thing, an enormous thing—a very scary thing—in my world. Many months went by while the doubt grew and I began to rediscover the world I had left behind when I had been born again. The universe became bigger than it had ever been, but also very familiar: a whole host of things I had totally forgotten about—art, literature, music, non-evangelical ideas and philosophy, intellectual freedom, a lifestyle not hedged in with don’ts—flooded in on me and made it possible for me to exit my world. So in June 1954 I dropped out of Gordon, and I have never regretted it, although years later, through the love and guidance of my teacher Kirpal Singh, I rediscovered the Bible and saw it in an entirely new light; as I have written elsewhere, Kirpal showed me the life in the teachings of Jesus.16

BOOK TWO

The Coming of Kirpal
The Coming of Kirpal

Stumbling Toward Self-Knowledge

I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being. The supremacy of the theatre derives from the fact that it is always “now” on the stage.

—THORNTON WILDER

The next few years were spent in reacting to almost every phase of evangelical Christianity. Although I never in my heart rejected Christ, I distanced myself completely from anything that might remotely be considered “Christian.” I rediscovered old ambitions and ideals that had been buried and began to write; one little poem written just a few months after leaving Gordon captures my feeling of confused liberation exactly:

Once upon a time I used to think
That good and bad
And right and wrong
Were just like black and white;
And I was oh! so very pious then
And thought I knew exactly what was sin;
But now
I don’t know what to think.

I had been working at the New England Baptist Hospital for a year, and when I left Gordon I moved into a dormitory they provided for workers. It was a good deal and a good job and I was happy there; I worked both in X-ray and the Operating Room as an orderly and on the various floors as a nurses’ aide; all in all, I was there four years from 1953 to 1957, and the single most pivotal event of my life—the turning point
that made everything else possible—happened there. But in that summer of 1954 I was a long way from that. I was just happy—happy to have finally worked through the seemingly endless bog of doubt and guilt and confusion over the nature of God and ready to embark on what I later called my career of wild Bohemian agnosticism. The confusion that I felt now was different: it was very humbling, actually: an admission that I did not know—and could not help not knowing—very much at all; a startlingly different feeling than the evangelical experience of knowing everything and being obligated to convince everyone else besides. That summer was very relaxing, mentally; and before it was over I applied and was admitted to Boston University School of Fine and Applied Arts, Division of Theatre Arts.

My interest in theater dated back to my high school days, before my conversion; as a tenth-grader at Tilton-Northfield High School I had been given the lead in the Senior Play. Up to this point I had had no acting experience whatever; but the play was *January Thaw* by William Roos (from a novel by Bellamy Partridge) and the lead was an elderly New England farmer. It so happened that I had become fascinated, since our move from Massachusetts, with the speech and movement patterns of rural New Hampshire people and had become very good at reproducing them; this was noted by many of my fellow students and when they had problems finding a convincing teen-ager to play an old farmer, somebody thought of me.

Well, it was the perfect part for me; I found it very easy and a lot of fun, and I enjoyed and profited by the whole experience immensely. It immediately made me a well-known figure in the school, which was helpful for my sense of self and a new thing for me: my self-confidence grew apace. And I found myself cast in a number of other plays, both in and out of school: the title role (following in the footsteps of George M. Cohan!) in *Peck's Bad Boy*, for Harmony Grange; Andy Andrews in *Aunt Minnie from Minnesota*, for the Methodist Church; Pooh-Bah in *The Mikado*, Grampa in *Professor, How Could You?*, and the Narrator in Jacques Offenbach’s *R.S.V.P.* for the high school. All of which I thoroughly loved and was reasonably good at, so everyone said; so I began to consider the theater very seriously as a career option.

Then came my conversion, and with it the belief (so I was told) that the theater was an essentially sinful way of life; my call to the ministry,
shortly thereafter, drowned out any regrets. But after losing my faith and leaving Gordon that summer of 1954, I saw in *Theater Arts* magazine an advertisement for a new Division of Theatre Arts just starting at Boston University, utilizing the services of professional Broadway directors; I knew instantly that this is what I wanted to do. Although I had no money, I had done well enough on my entrance exam so that I was able to get a scholarship for one semester, thanks to the tireless efforts of Rebecca Miller, a beautiful lady in the Admissions Office who pulled out all the stops on my behalf, even intervening after my audition with the great Sarah Caldwell was less than impressive. Thanks to her, I found myself enrolled at Boston University less than a week after taking the exam, although I was unable to transfer my credits from Gordon, which was at that time unaccredited.

Then began a very exciting two years. Exciting for many reasons: an exhilarating sense of freedom, compared to the constriction I had felt during my last few months at Gordon—primarily the sense of intellectual freedom: I no longer felt compelled to force my understanding of the universe into the vise of believing in or reacting against the Biblical God. Also exciting were the people I met, my fellow students: every single one of them, apart from me and one girl from the South, smoked—something I discovered at the first break in the first assembly, when everyone lit up, with the exception of her and me. At that point, I resolved to learn to smoke, and I did, practicing by myself on the streets of Boston until I felt confident enough to light up in the presence of the others.

But far more exciting than that, even, was the obvious fact of their evident talent: these were very talented people whom I saw clearly were going to have exceptional careers. And many of them did: among my fellow students during the two years I was there were the great Olympia Dukakis; the equally great John Cazale; the wonderful Verna Bloom, who went on to co-star with Clint Eastwood in *High Plains Drifter* and appeared in many other movies and stage productions; my friend Sharon Gans, who was especially kind to me and who was a beautifully memorable wife to Michael Sacks in the magnificent *Slaughterhouse Five*; the diva Grace Bumbry; the exquisite Susan Harrison, who was discovered while starring in *The Crucible* at B.U. (which I was also in, in a very minor part later almost totally rewritten by Arthur
Miller), cast opposite Burt Lancaster and Tony Curtis in *The Sweet Smell of Success*, and went on to star in the classic “5 Characters in Search of an Exit” episode of *The Twilight Zone*; John Heffernan, a remarkably talented actor (also in *The Crucible*) whom I later saw as Polonius in *Hamlet* on Broadway, and later still as Eddie Niles in *The Sting*; and many others whose talent was equally impressive. It was a very heady place for someone who was essentially still a country boy and whose worldly experience was very limited. Many of my peers were from New York and had attended the High School of Performing Arts, later featured in the movie *Fame*; they had known James Dean, who had just gone to Hollywood, and followed his career with tremendous enthusiasm, and were (as were we all) devastated by his death, which followed so soon after.

Many of my fellow students—probably fifty per cent—were gay: a brand new thing for me. I was of course aware—vaguely aware—that such a thing as homosexuality existed, and I bought into all the stereotypes; but I was surprised to find that the overwhelming majority of gay students did not fit those stereotypes at all. Not the least of my surprises was the realization that they had no sexual interest in me or any other straight person; they were erotically interested only in each other. Getting to know and respect these people led me to believe that the only “homosexual agenda” was the wish to be accepted and respected for what they are, without the necessity to pretend to be just like those who despise them: that homosexual desire is no more subject to choice than heterosexual desire; and that “Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Matthew 7:1) applies here as much as anywhere.

It was, indeed a brave new world that I had entered; and the most astonishing thing about it in retrospect is the degree to which it paved the way for all the things that happened later.

This happened in several ways: first, the growing recognition of the actual nature of theater, of what it really was. Over the proscenium arch of the Boston University Theater was inscribed the words from *Hamlet*: “TO HOLD, AS ‘TWERE, THE MIRROR UP TO NATURE.” Indeed. I looked at those words hundreds of times over the two years that I spent there, each time with more appreciation of their simple truth. For that is indeed what theater is supposed to do and what at its best it does do: provide a mirror in which we can see our selves in all their
nakedness. And how it does that was the substance of what we learned in Acting I under the guidance of Alexander Kirkland, veteran of stage and screen, one-time husband of Gypsy Rose Lee, devout member of the Christian Science church who neither drank nor smoked, a gentleman of the old school who was unfailingly polite, respectful, supportive, and very, very wise. He was also a very, very good acting teacher, and his students loved him. We learned from him the essential truth about acting: that in order to effectively become someone else, we have to find within ourselves that in us which corresponds to that other person. And to make that happen, requires at least a smidgen—a beginning lurch—toward self-knowledge. I developed in my two years at B. U. Theater a healthy respect for actors and their ability to understand and empathize; it is a great mistake, I think, to denigrate or dismiss actors who take public stands as somehow unworthy to think about things on the grounds that they are “only actors”; they may be capable of a lot more thought than those who dismiss them.

Another aspect of theatrical reality which again runs counter to its supposed “illusion-ness” is what Thornton Wilder has called its “perpetual now.” To a very real degree, “theatrical illusion” gives us a glimpse of an extra-dimensional perspective: by repeating over and over the same “present” we are able to get outside the relentless forward movement of Time, the fourth dimension we are stuck in. Anyone who has ever watched a well-loved movie over and over again has experienced this; but perhaps it is even more marked in connection with live theater.

In the winter of 1958 a touring company of Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot came to Boston, and I went to see it. At that time I knew nothing about the play except that it was controversial and that Bert Lahr (the Cowardly Lion!) had been in the New York production. This was an extraordinary company—all black—with Earle Hyman as Vladimir, Mantan Moreland as Estragon, Rex Ingram as Pozzo, and Geoffrey Holder as Lucky; it played in Boston for two weeks, and I saw it three times, dragging as many friends as I could to see it with me. Although I have seen two other versions since, listened to the Bert Lahr records over and over, and directed an abridged version (with all teen-aged girls!) much later at the Sant Bani School, it is still the voices of those wonderful actors that I hear when I read the play. Surely Thornton Wilder’s eternal “now” is best exemplified in this
incredible glimpse into the real nature of Time. I had read by this time Ouspensky and Nietzsche on “Eternal Recurrence” and was very much affected by their ideas of the cyclical nature of Time as we experience it—crawling along the fourth dimension, like an ant crawling along the third—and here those ideas were being acted out in front of me!

I know that many people think that Waiting for Godot is a negative, depressing statement of the emptiness of it all. But from the beginning it has filled me with inspiration and hope. As long as we think we’re awake, we won’t try to wake up. The cure of any disease starts when it is diagnosed correctly, and the diagnosis is not necessarily much fun. Godot is a powerful, beautifully written diagnosis of the human condition and its bondage to Time; and once we know the disease, we can begin the cure. As it is said, “Self-knowledge precedes God-knowledge.”

Walking Off the Board

I left Boston University in June 1956 and after a summer in a cabin in New Hampshire went to work full time in the Operating Room at New England Baptist Hospital, where I had worked nights as a nurse’s aide for three years. By this time I was fully involved in what we called “The Coffee Corner,” a very informal group of poets, writers, painters, actors, musicians, artists, and dissenters from the 1950s consensus, who met night after night in the Lobster Claw bar and, when that closed, continued on in two all-night cafeterias on the corner of Gainsborough Street and Huntington Avenue (across the street from the Lobster Claw) in Boston’s Back Bay—a corner adjacent to the B. U. Theater, the New England Conservatory of Music, not far from the Boston Fine Arts Museum School, and one block from Symphony Hall. Many of us lived in a remarkable rooming house at 53 St. Stephen St., just one block up Gainsborough from Huntington, whose owner, the wonderful Mrs. Florence Coughlin, had a soft spot for young people of artistic talent and welcomed us all. All of the pivotal events of the next couple of years took place in the context of the Coffee Corner; all of the people who joined together in our search for truth came out of the Corner; everything I heard and read about esoteric thought I

1 The late Harold Hobson, drama critic for the Christian Science Monitor, was of the same opinion.
understood in the light of intense discussion with others on the Corner.

In the fall of 1956 I came back from New Hampshire, moved back into 53 St. Stephen St., rooming with my friend Kimon Loukas, a poet a few years older than myself whom I admired tremendously, went back to work in the Operating Room, read Dostoevsky, Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, E. A. Robinson, worked on my writing, went to parties, took out girls whom I tried to impress, and somehow or other . . .

Somehow or other. This is the time when everything changed. I have written about this time in my book, *The Impact of a Saint*, and there is not a lot to add: how, through the poetry and alcohol, the parties and distractions, the self-importance and busyness, somehow or other, the voice of my inmost Self managed to reach me. Consciously, it began with the movie *The Ten Commandments* during Christmas week of 1956. But somehow or other I realized that I had been hearing that voice all along. It was no longer connected with evangelical Christianity, nor even with Jesus (I thought); it was still impossible for me to react positively to anything overtly Christian. I didn’t know what it was connected with. I began attending services at King’s Chapel in Boston, a Unitarian church with a traditional Episcopal-style ritual; before the American Revolution, it had been Anglican. I liked it very much; but it wasn’t enough. The turmoil was extreme.

Then: New Year’s Day, January 1, 1957. If not my new birth, at least my new conception. Alone in the Operating Room at the Baptist Hospital (I was working as a call orderly, to respond to emergencies; my only duty that day, apart from that, was dusting the big lights) everything came to a head: in that quiet, quiet place, usually so busy and noisy, my inmost Self collided head on with what I thought was “me,” and I had to pay attention. I knew in that moment (and it really was a moment: talk about the fourth dimension!—everything imploded into one point outside of Time) that there was nothing worth doing in the world (for me) except search for the Absolute (which is how it came to me: not “God”) because, if there was no Absolute Truth, then it didn’t matter what I did; and if there was, I saw very clearly that my purpose, my thing, my reason for being alive, was to find it. This was overwhelmingly clear; there was no argument possible. I knew this was going to define my life from then on. And it did. From that moment,
things came together in a way that seemed to me then and seems to me now as miraculous.

As I have already mentioned, Kirpal Singh used to say, “That day is the greatest in a man's life in which the question of the mystery of life enters his heart. It cannot be stamped out unless it is solved. That this question has arisen shows that God wants to give you what you hunger for. ‘There is food for the hungry and water for the thirsty.’”

The next day, Tony Uva, an optometrist and one of the Coffee Corner regulars whom I knew fairly well, told me urgently (as I remember, out of the blue) to read the chapter on “Christianity and the New Testament” in Ouspensky’s *A New Model of the Universe*; at that point I had never heard of Ouspensky and had hardly ever heard of the concept of “esotericism,” the central theme of Ouspensky’s book and an idea that leaped out of his pages and into the forefront of my mind. Because reading that book was the first of a long series of “enlightenments,” all of which followed my initial epiphany in the Operating Room like one footstep after another. At each step my awareness of what was possible—of what Ouspensky called “the miraculous”—expanded in quantum leaps. I had never dreamed of such a universe—or rather, I had had only fitful glimpses of it from time to time.

One of those glimpses was this: One afternoon several years earlier I had walked into the lounge at Boston University Theater School and discovered about a third of the student body clustered around a remarkable woman holding forth in a very authoritative manner. She was obviously middle-aged but quite attractive and very charismatic, and spoke as though she knew what she was talking about. I was curious, and asked around about her, getting replies that ranged from the worshipful to the contemptuous: her name was Leonora Luxton, she was some sort of astrologer-medium-occultist, and she was either a genius or a fake, depending on who you asked. It turned out she was in her sixties although she looked like a woman in her forties, and her husband, Earl, who was also present although I had not noticed him, was in his thirties. (I felt respect for him: he worked hard as a pressman at the Boston Globe and totally supported his wife, whom he thoroughly believed in.)

Somehow or other Leonora and I got into a conversation and she expressed a desire to teach me—she said that I was a “very old soul.”
I was not unwilling and she did in fact teach me two things which proved very helpful later: she explained the idea of *karma* (the law of cause and effect, or action and reaction, extending over many lifetimes—my first exposure to this idea); and she advised me not to eat red meat: the first time I had heard this, also. She explained that meat keeps the attention down and makes it very hard to meditate; in this, as I learned later, she was absolutely accurate.

But something in me resisted Leonora as my teacher; the more I thought about it, the less I wanted it. So, in my usual fashion, I postponed doing anything about it and thought that she would lose interest; but she didn’t. Sometime later, I was horrified to hear her voice calling my name in the Baptist Hospital rooming-house where I was living: “RUSS! RUSS!” I realized that I must have given her the address, but she did not of course know which room I was in. Seized by panic, I dived under my bed (I did not dare to lock the door for fear she would hear me) and waited until she eventually gave up and left. Shortly after, I wrote her a letter and made it clear that I did not want to be her student.

Far more influential was the psychologist William Carr. I started going to him while I was still at Gordon; I had volunteered for a testing being done by psychology students there, and the results were so dire that the Chairman of the Psychology Dept., Professor Edwin K. Gedney, an Advent Christian minister and truly wonderful man, called me in and had a long talk with me; in retrospect, I see that he picked up on the depression that has plagued me off and on my whole life. (Not that he used that word; at least, I don’t recall that he did. This was 1953, and many things were seen and labeled differently then.) He strongly recommended that I see a psychologist he personally knew and whose methods he approved of. I agreed, and went out to see this man, whom I assumed was an evangelical Christian. He wasn’t, although he never said a word to me against the faith that I was still part of, although already on my way out. But he introduced me to a way of looking at life, and myself, which was radically different; and when I began my search and came across the idea of “esoteric knowledge,” and all that it implied, I realized that I had heard much of this before—from Mr. Carr.
He was tall, stoop-shouldered, thin, balding, soft-spoken and very wise; at first I wasn't sure if I liked him, but he grew on me very quickly. Some of the things he said to me reverberate to this day: “It is better to play the game than for the game to play you,” and, when I was studying theater and liked to think of myself as an actor, “You are not an actor; you are a man who acts.” But the memory of those sessions that is the most constant and relevant is that of a picture of a chess game on the wall of his study. On the chess board the pieces looked like real humans—not on pedestals, but with hands and feet. The knight was a real knight, the king a real king, the queen a real queen. And these three were the only pieces on the board: the queen and knight, whose heads were thrown back and who were roaring with laughter, were checkmating the king, who was a picture of abject and total misery, in a corner square.

I looked at that picture for months, and finally one day I asked Mr. Carr, “Why do you keep that picture on the wall? What’s the point of it?” He said, “I keep it there only to remind me, all the time, that all that king has to do is walk off the board.”

And as I studied esoteric ideas, through Ouspensky and Gurdjieff at first, then through Eastern philosophy, finally through my teacher Kirpal Singh, I saw more and more clearly that this was the whole point: that we have the option to walk off the board, out of the framework of karma that we have been born into and over which we seemingly have no control, and look back on the board from the point of view of one who is no longer on it. This of course is the point of Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave,” Mozart’s The Magic Flute, Blake’s The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Dostoevsky’s The Brothers Karamazov, and many, many other works down through the ages. All of these works, teachings, and ideas came to mean a very great deal to me; but the first time it really hit me was in the office of William Carr as he explained a strangely wonderful picture on his wall.
The Road to Kirpal

Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

MATTHEW 7:7-8

In the beginning we were three: Kimon Loukas, Larry Davis, and me. I remember the night—about three days after my breakthrough in the Operating Room at the New England Baptist Hospital, and two days after Tony Uva had recommended Ouspensky’s *A New Model of the Universe* to me—that the three of us, sitting in the Lobster Claw bar on Huntington Avenue in Boston—realized we were all on the same page. Larry said that his cousin Sidney Davis was also a seeker, and so he very soon joined us, and for a while was the most proactive member of the group. Tony Uva also expressed his interest, and then we were five; although Tony remained on the outer fringes of the group—always interested but somehow holding back. This was of course early January in Boston—not a fun time.

I remember well the bleak cold and wind of that January, the snow-covered streets, and at the same time the tremendous excitement within us that our search generated. Suddenly it seemed as though our world—that is, the sum total of all that we were aware of—was alive with possibility. The conviction that there really was such a thing as Truth with a capital T was very strong.

I remember walking along the snowy, windy Fenway, having just read *There Is a River: The Story of Edgar Cayce* by Thomas Sugrue, and thinking what a marvelous universe this was with people like Edgar Cayce in it. We went to Spiritualist meetings, talked with mediums, looked up Rosicrucians, and read, read, read—first Ouspensky and Gurdjieff, then various books on Buddhism and yoga, including *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, and then the *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramhansa Yogananda, which opened us up to the infinite possibilities of the universe still further and made it clear to us all that what we were ultimately looking for was a guru, and that the place where a guru would most likely be found was India.
The term guru, of course, was new to us; now it is super-familiar in the West, and often as a negative or derogatory term, due to the predatory behavior of many so called, but it was very different then. We had defined our search as “looking for someone who knows more than we do”; but when we understood from Yogananda what a guru was, we saw that that was what we wanted. And of course we meant “knowing” in the most practical sense: knowing how to do that which we wanted to do with all our hearts, namely, find Truth. The concept of “esoteric schools” which we had derived from Gurdjieff and Ouspensky of course implied something like a guru; and Ouspensky’s idea of the “superman” pointed directly to it; but it was Yogananda’s triple-edged depiction—of his guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar; of the Swami’s guru, Lahiri Mahasaya; and above all of the great grand-guru, the founder of the line, known only as “Babaji”—that brought home to us something of what it was like to actually have a guru, to actually be in the company of a guru. It was heady stuff.

The fact is, the guru is a means to an end. And it is a recognition on our part of the inadequacy of our equipment—what we have to work with—to do what we want it to do that leads to the recognition of the necessity of accepting help and guidance from someone who has done it.

The problem, of course, is to be sure that that someone really has done it and is not fooling him/herself and/or others; and that’s not always so easy to know. But if we take the promise of Jesus seriously (“Seek and ye shall find,”) and always keep in mind what it is that we are really looking for, the problem is not insurmountable. The search for outer help has to be connected with the acute remembrance of why we wanted that help in the first place, or the guru becomes a deus ex machina savior figure. With that remembrance, we can have faith in Jesus’ promise and in the integrity of our own search, and we will know whether or not we have really found what we started out looking for.

If, on the other hand, due to doubts about the possibility of really finding a guru, or skepticism as to whether one is really needed, we try to do the “inner work”—realize “the seeds of something higher” within ourselves—without the help of a guru, we run the risk of drowning in

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2 “Man finds superman within himself when he begins to look for him outside himself, and he can find superman outside himself when he has begun to look for him within himself.” A New Model of the Universe, pp. 128-129.
our own subjectivity: the screen over reality created by our own ego, our own desires and fears—in short, the very condition we are trying to transcend. As the Cistercian monk (and Christian mystic) Thomas Merton put it:

Actually, wherever the contemplative life is taken seriously, the first thing required of the novice is the willingness to submit to a master, to obey, to renounce his own judgment, to practice humility and to learn a doctrine of the interior life from a spiritual master.³

* * *

We searched, pretty much full time, from January to June 1957. I was still working in the Operating Room at the Baptist Hospital, but I quit in March, mainly to put more attention into the search. Around that time, Kimon, Larry and I were invited to a weekend party at the apartment of Nancy Bullard, a poet and friend; Nancy told us ahead of time that she was inviting a special friend to the party, “very different from any of us;” she was, among other things, a vegetarian! This was a new thing; up to now, I had met only one vegetarian, a fellow worker at the hospital who was a Seventh-Day Adventist. Nancy told us that this friend of hers was very sensitive to the sufferings of animals, which was why she didn’t eat meat; she didn’t even like to look at meat or think about it. She was a student at Brandeis University and her name was Judith Weinberg.

Well, Nancy gave her party, which was a great success, and we all met Judith and liked her very much; she, in her turn, was fascinated by our search for Truth and promptly joined us. A few weeks later, she invited Kimon and me (she and Larry had become a couple almost immediately) to a party at her apartment in Waltham, where we met a number of her friends, including a young composer named Jim Forte who also joined forces with us.

During this time, many of us on the Coffee Corner made a point of going over to Marsh Chapel at Boston University every Sunday to hear Howard Thurman, the Dean of the Chapel, preach. It was Kimon Loukas who first discovered him, and he mentioned him to the rest of us; and church-going suddenly developed another dimension: one of profound spiritual awareness. Dr. Thurman, a middle-aged African-

³ *The Ascent to Truth*, p. 147.
American preacher, had been to India to see Mahatma Gandhi, and was a mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr., who was just emerging into prominence; but we didn’t know that. All we knew was that he spoke to our souls and to our hearts, and we loved him.

About this time, I visited my family in New Hampshire, going up on the 4 a.m. mail train which ran in those days, walking the three-and-a-half miles up to Sanbornton Square from the train station in Tilton. It was a gorgeous walk, in the early dawn; springtime in New Hampshire is almost as beautiful as the fall. Interstate 93 had not yet been put through, and the beautiful road was still the way I remembered it. I had a sweet visit with my parents, and on the train ride back to Boston I read Androcles and the Lion by Bernard Shaw with tremendous delight: somehow or other the Introduction, with its cogent analysis of historical and present-day Christianity and its questionable relation to the teachings of Christ (Shaw refers to the history of the Church as “two thousand years of saying, ‘Not this man but Barabbas’”, 4 a point very similar to Dostoevsky’s in “The Grand Inquisitor”) brought many things together for me. Suddenly an overwhelming desire for a Guru came over me and I prayed, from the depths of my heart, to Babaji (the great spiritual figure in Yogananda’s Autobiography of a Yogi) to lead me to a Guru of my own—one as great as he was.

That prayer was answered: the Guru I was led to was Kirpal.

The Merciful Lion

**DISCIPLE:** “Could you explain to me what the meaning of ‘Kirpal Singh’ is?”

**THE MASTER:** “Names are names.”

**DISCIPLE:** “But does it not have a meaning? ‘Singh’ means something and ‘Kirpal’ means . . . ?”

**THE MASTER:** “‘Kirpal’ means ‘merciful.’”

**DISCIPLE:** “And ‘Singh’?”

**THE MASTER:** “‘Singh’ means ‘lion.’ When the two are put together: Lion of Mercy. So his ways are full of mercy. He’s very strict, mind that. He has got an iron hand, but his gloves are very smooth-like.”

*The Light of Kirpal, pp. 445-46*

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4 A reference to John 18:40.
As it happens, these are the very last words in the book, *The Light of Kirpal*, a marvelous record of conversations between the Master and various disciples mostly in the years 1970-71, all taken verbatim from taped recordings made at the time. It’s an appropriate conclusion, since it sums up succinctly everything that precedes it, and indeed, there is no better way, I think, to approach Kirpal than through his name: he was, in fact, the most astonishing combination of power and strength on the one hand, and gentleness and tender love on the other, that I have ever met or ever hope to meet. The beautiful thing, from our point of view, was that this was obvious to us from the time we first heard about him: somehow it came through loud and clear through photographs, through the few writings that were available, through the very occasional tape recording that we heard, and above all (for me) through the reminiscences of those disciples in Boston who had met him. For he had been in Boston just two years before, in the fall of 1955, had initiated a number of seekers, and those seekers were in fact the disciples we met when we started attending the meetings which were then held twice weekly in the Vedanta Chapel at 202 Commonwealth Avenue.

When I asked Wava Sanderson, who was the Group Leader in Boston then, what her first meeting with the Master was like, she said, “When I opened the door, I saw Jesus Christ standing there.” When I asked Seymour Swetzoff, who was kind of a mentor to us young people, the same question, he said, “The first time I saw him he had Madame Hardevi’s purse and was holding it behind his back so she couldn’t get it.” Those two answers gave me a very accurate picture, as I later found out, of what Kirpal Singh was like; he was indeed Jesus Christ personified; he was also a very dear, funny, and altogether human being—an image, as it were, of what human beings are supposed to be. He was both extraordinarily powerful—awesome in the true sense of the word—and very lovable. He has been the anchor, the focus, the centrifugal force, of my life since the day I first heard his name. Whatever success I have achieved in my life, I owe to him; the many failures are due to not understanding him or rebelling against him.

“Writing about the Master’s life is like an ant exploring the Brazilian rain forests.” 5 These words, coming on the 871st (and next-to-last) page of a biography of Kirpal, sum up the matter exactly. The fact is

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that a Master’s life can only be understood in terms of the lives he
touches and transfigures; and there are a hundred thousand or so of
those. So each of us can only bear witness to what we know, even as
the authors of the biography have done.

As I wrote about Kirpal much later: ⁶

Sant Kirpal Singh Ji (1894-1974) was the towering spiritual figure of his
time: a giant of Biblical proportions, whose remembrance lives on forever
in the hearts of those who knew him. A seeker after Truth from the be-
ginning, he met his Master, Baba Sawan Singh Ji of Beas (1858-1948) in
1924, after seeing him within for seven years.⁷ After a discipleship that was
remarkable both for his closeness to his Master and for the degree to which
he was able to become a living example of his Master’s teaching,⁸ he was
entrusted with the Guruship when his Master left the body in 1948.

He established his headquarters (“Sawan Ashram,” in honor of his
Master) just outside of Delhi and gave solace and spiritual healing to the
thousands of suffering refugees pouring into Delhi from the first India-
Pakistan War. His reputation as an absolutely authentic spiritual Master
grew and grew, and he expanded his mission constantly, making three
World Tours (1955, 1963-64, and 1972), becoming President of the World
Fellowship of Religions in 1957, establishing the Manav Kendra (Center for
Humanity) in Dehra Dun in 1970, and presiding over the World Conference
on Unity of Man in 1974—all of which were variations of the theme of
effecting the spiritual revolution, as he explained later.⁹

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⁶ In the Foreword to his The Coming Spiritual Revolution, pp. ix-x. Previous
biographical material includes The Beloved Master: Some Glimpses of the Life of Sant
Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj by Bhadra Sena, and The Harvest is Rich: The Mission of Kirpal
Singh by Dr. George Arnsby Jones. (There is also a pictorial biography, mostly in the
Master’s own words, accompanied by a host of beautiful pictures, called Portrait
of Perfection, which has no author credited but relies heavily on the recollections
of Darshan Singh, the Master’s son.) Bhadra Sena’s book is very brief, although
very interesting; Dr. Jones concentrates on Kirpal’s Second World Tour of 1963-
64. Narendra and Wigg incorporate material from both these books, while adding
a wealth from other sources, notably the recollections of Bibi Hardevi, Kirpal’s
longtime friend and principal co-worker, as well as Narendra’s own experiences (she
was a close disciple of Kirpal for many years).

⁷ See below in Book III, the chapter “January 24, 1964,” for Kirpal’s detailed account
of his search and how he was led to Sawan.

⁸ For a wonderful eyewitness account of Kirpal’s discipleship, see “The Merciful
One” in A. S. Oberoi, Support for the Shaken Sangat, pp. 57-94.

⁹ Many, many details on all these projects will be provided as this book goes on.
But as this book makes clear, Master Kirpal’s main work was always and ever the bringing about of that revolution through the connecting of the individual seeker with the manifestations of God within his or her own Self, and the taking of that seeker from plane to plane until he or she reached his or her place of origin at the heart of the Universe. This is the eternal work of the Masters in all religious traditions, and it was the preeminent work of Kirpal.

He did not use the term “spiritual revolution,” as far as I know, until late in his career, but the term described a concept which had been central to his teaching from the beginning. Quoting Jesus (and John the Baptist), he would often say, “Change your mind! For the Kingdom of God is at hand”—“Change your mind!” being a more accurate rendering of the Greek meta-noeite, usually found in English as “Repent!” But the word literally means “turn around,” and implies the kind of shifting of angle of vision that we associate with the word “revolution.” And all his life Kirpal Singh taught the kind of turning around, or mind change, that enables us to see the presence of God in all life: to know that “God resides in every heart” and to act accordingly. This is the essence of the spiritual revolution, and it is a message that those of us living in this contemporary hell we call our world need to hear if we are to survive with a recognizably human soul.

Those are the bare facts of the Merciful Lion’s life and teaching, leaving out millions of important details, some of which we will get to later. His standing and influence in India were indeed extraordinary, as I observed myself during a number of visits to his ashram; but what was the substance of this very remarkable Saint’s many discourses? We will examine some of these discourses as we go along, but by way of an introduction, we can say that there are actually two answers, or rather one answer on two levels, to this question:

The first level is, simply put, the science of *Surat Shabd Yoga* (or to give it its Islamic name, the *Sultan-ul-Azkar*, or “King of Remembrances”) which Kirpal received from his Master, Baba Sawan Singh, and which had been handed down from ages past through a long line of Masters, both Muslim and Hindu, including Rabia al-Adawiyah, Jalaluddin Rumi, Kabir, Nanak, Tulsidas, Mirabai, Swami Ji Maharaj of Agra, and many others. The name *Surat Shabd Yoga* means literally, “The union (Yoga) of the attention (Surat) with the internal (and eternal) Sound (Shabd, also called Name or Naam, Word or Logos, Tao, Nad, etc.) that has created the Universe and is present within all of us in our inmost Self.” To explain this further, the Masters often resort to
using three words, *Satnaam, Satguru,* and *Satsang,* which sum up the teaching very succinctly:

*Satnaam* (usually represented in English as two words, *Sat Naam*) can be translated either as “True Name,” which is the simple literal meaning, or “Expression of Existence,” God naming Himself. It is the basic fact of the Universe and is the esoteric reality lying behind the universal concept of the True Name or Word of God, as found in all scriptures and traditions. YHVH, OM, HU, are all attempts to express this inexpressible Truth in human language; Name, Word, *Tao, Shabd,* as mentioned above, are all attempts to describe what that Truth is: that is, that the same Love of God Which has created the Universe has the power to bring us back to the Universe’s core, which in fact is that same Love. The Masters say that that Love of God is present within each human being (actually, within every living creature) and that each human being has the ability and the *birthright* to access that Love (which, say the Masters, expresses Itself as Light and Sound—The Word or *Logos,* “The Eternal Song,” or “Music of the Spheres”)—and retrace the steps of his or her exile back to the heart of God. This is the meaning of the beginning of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void; *and God said,* Let there be light.” The famous Prologue to the Gospel of John is even more explicit:

*In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1:1-5*

The light shines in the darkness even now, and the darkness still is not overcoming it; and this is an eternal drama that every human being can experience within him/herself. And the Masters say that to experience it is in fact to solve the mystery of life.

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10 *Sat* (Sanskrit *satya*) means both “Truth” and “That which exists.”

11 On the relationship and meaning of YHVH (Hebrew) and HU (Arabic/Sufi), see Martin Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant,* pp. 49-50.
Satguru: But how to begin to approach this? If this is the ultimate Reality of our own selves, why do we not know it? Why do we not live in the light of it? Bikha, a sixteenth-century Indian saint, puts it this way:

None is poor, o Bikha,
Everyone has rubies in his bundle.
But how to untie the knot he does not know
And therefore is he a pauper.

How to untie that knot!—That is the question; and someone who has untied it for himself can show us how. Because, as Kirpal used to say, “It is our birthright to become God.” As human beings, we are His children, made in His image, male and female, as Genesis 1:27 very specifically tells us; and He cannot help but love us, regardless of the mistakes we may have made, what we deserve, or how bad we are. In the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 15, Jesus tells three stories to illustrate the never-ending, never-taking-no-for-an-answer love of God: the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son (“the prodigal”). Because God loves us as His children, by virtue of our existence, and because He wants to bring us into His presence and show us what our heritage is so that we can see it for ourselves, He will do it: no matter how long it takes, no matter how many turns of the Wheel, no matter how much resistance we put up, He will eventually bring each one of us into Himself—because that is what is meant by “God is love.” Rabia, the great Sufi Master, said, “Love is the core of the universe.” She meant exactly this: that love which is the heart of the universe will bring us to Itself, and we will happily come. And as the Bible says, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: and we beheld his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father.” 12 It is a great mistake to assume that this statement is bound by Time; the Word is eternal and all of Its functions are happening always. It is continually creating life and sustaining it; It is continually being made flesh. As Clement of Alexandria, the great Christian church father, said, “The Word of God became flesh so that man might learn from man how man becomes God.” 13 That is the idea exactly, and the need for us to learn that is as great today as it was at

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12 John 1:14.
13 Quoted in Victor Gollancz, Man and God, p. ?
any given moment in history. The Satguru is a means to an end: Jacob’s stairway to the presence of God,\(^\text{14}\) the proof that “Eternity is in love with the productions of Time,” as William Blake put it.

**Satsang:** But in order for the Master to reach us, there must be something there for him to reach; as we have already quoted from C. S. Lewis, “We cannot expect the gods to meet us face to face until we have faces.” And this interaction between the Master and the disciple, the reaching out of the Master and the disciple’s response, is the esoteric meaning of *satsang,* or “association with Truth.” As Kirpal once wrote me in a letter: *If the disciple takes one step toward the Master, He takes a million steps toward him.* This is what Kirpal always referred to as “man-making,” the growth, deepening, and learning on the part of the disciple that follows as a result of association with the Master, who is Truth personified, “the Word made flesh,” by virtue of his own association with his Master and his own practice. This connection between the Master and the disciple\(^\text{15}\) is the heart of the Shabda Yoga, also called in India *Sant Mat,* variously translated as “The Path of the Masters” or “The Way of the Saints,” and generally referred to by disciples as “The Path.” It is also the only part of the Path that someone like me is really qualified to write about from the point of view of personal experience, and it is the core of this book.

The second level of Kirpal’s teaching consists of the implications of that which we have just described. Kirpal spent a great deal of time and energy in getting across to us all these implications; they were terribly important to him. He summed them up under the heading of “The Spiritual Revolution,” and a very great deal of what he *did,* in addition to what he *said,* was devoted to living out those implications and bringing about that Revolution.

In his wonderful Christmas Message of 1967 he referred to these levels as “methods,” and explained them as follows, speaking as the Biblical prophets did in the voice of God:

\(^\text{14}\) Genesis 28:12; John 1:51.

\(^\text{15}\) Expressed with great poetic insight by Hermann Hesse in *The Journey to the East.*
God says:

“All saints and prophets I sent to the East or West, their lives have been filled with the rapture of the vision of the unity of all races and religions in the spirit. The outer is the expression of the mind: unless you first establish unity in your hearts, you cannot develop the unity of all human beings.

“There are two methods by which you can achieve this end:

“One is the interior method of meditation to go into the silence of the heart where flows the fountain of My love, all bliss and joy. You must be reborn; except you be reborn (or twice born) you cannot enter into My Kingdom, which is within you. They that have once drunk the Water of Life from this fountain are intoxicated forever, and love flows out in all its joy and gracefulness from them to all humanity—overflowing as they are with the love and intoxication of Me—giving vent to ‘Peace be unto all the world over, under Thy Will, O God.’ Mind that it is not the religion that failed you, it is you who have failed religion.

“The second method is to understand the meaning and the purpose of knowledge, which in one single thought is ‘service’ to all My creation: human beings, beasts, birds, etc. The meaning of true life is service and sacrifice.

“So long as you want first and foremost to be blessed yourselves and you expect others to minister to you, you will remain a stranger to the way of spirituality. When you will wish the others to be blessed, you will begin to speed on your way back to Me.

“Let you not be a reformer to whip others into goodness, but be a witness of love, radiating all love in thought, word, and deed. Be an example rather than giving precepts to others. You are indulging in oceans of talk but how many ounces of action?

“An ounce of practice is more than tons of theories. ‘WANTED: REFORMERS—NOT OF OTHERS, BUT OF THEMSELVES.’ ”

How he lived the actions and words that laid down the ideal and the actuality of the Spiritual Revolution will, I hope, become clear as we go forward.

Initiation

The summer before I learned about Kirpal, I worked as a messman on the M.V. Boston Belle, a cruise ship that sailed from Boston to Provincetown every day. I had quit my job at the hospital in March and a couple of months later had moved in with a beautiful woman whom I loved dearly; this coincided with a lessening of intensity regarding
the Search, although it was never far from my mind. To get the job on
the ship, I had to get my merchant seaman’s card; and it did occur to
me that I could get to India that way. To get a seaman’s card (at least
in those days; I have no idea if this is still true) one had to be hired by
a Captain; but legally, one could not be hired unless one had a card.
In practice, I guess, on most ships, this confined hirers to people
personally known or recommended to the Captain; but on the Wilson
Line, the non-union company that owned the Boston Belle, it worked
differently. My good friend and fellow seeker Kimon, who already
worked there, told me what I had to do: we had to find the Chief Cook,
Henry Neville, and get him to hire me (Kimon knew there was an
opening); then I had to start working without the card, illegally (which
involved hiding from the Coast Guard every morning); at some point at
everyone’s convenience the Captain would sign a recommendation for
me to get my card; on my first day off I would go to the Coast Guard
office and get temporary papers while applying for the permanent
card; then I would be legal, and once the card came through I would
be a proud member of the United States Merchant Marine. And that’s
exactly what happened.

Henry was a difficult guy to work for, although I got along with
him reasonably well, so much so that at the end of the summer
he asked me to work the trip down the East Coast to Wilmington,
Delaware, where the Boston Belle was going to winter; this was an honor
(only a skeleton crew went down) and it enabled me to get a Coastwise
Discharge, much better for future employment purposes than the
Harbor Discharge which my summer’s service would have entitled me
to. But he was a true original, and very easy to cross: he was an alcoholic
who delighted in insulting the executive officers of the company (not
the ship) with truly imaginative obscenity (which they seemed to
enjoy) and who told the most far-fetched lies about himself and his
importance. He was also an illiterate, of which he was very ashamed
and which he hid as much as he could. He woke us up at 6 every morning
by holding a lighted match two inches from our face and bellowing
into our ears, “Rise and shine on the Wilson Line!” We (the messmen
and assistant cooks) worked from 6 to 8 am, preparing breakfast and
serving it to the crew; then we had a two hour break, during which the
ship set sail; we worked from 10 to 2, doing the same for lunch; then
another break, during which the ship came into port at Provincetown and during which I usually slept soundly, although I did explore Provincetown a few times; then we worked again from 4 to 8, preparing and serving supper, and with every meal of course, cleaning up. The ship usually docked in Boston about 8 pm. It was a fourteen-hour day, although we actually only worked ten hours.

Henry could be mean and occasionally even vicious to his men, but he was far from the worst boss I ever had; he was capable of empathy, compassion, and occasionally wisdom. Once when I had mopped the floor very sloppily, he called me on it, and then turned to my fellow worker Eli, an older black man whom I respected very much, and said very quietly, “Eli, you do it; show him how.” Eli started to, but I was very ashamed and said, “No, no, Eli, I’ll do it,” and gently took the mop away from him and did it all over again—a much better job this time.

The work was hard, the job was demanding, and the pay was poor: approximately $60 every two weeks. Of course we got our meals and slept on the ship, so we didn’t have many expenses. There were compensations, though: I loved being out on the sea every day; I never got tired of the view of the Boston skyline every night as we sailed into Rowe’s Wharf; and the trip down the coast to Wilmington is one of my happiest memories from that time. At the very end we sailed up the Delaware River early in the morning; watching the pilot maneuver the boat in the darkness and fog, smelling the river air, and just being there was awesome. I loved it.

And of course the biggest compensation of all: the embossed card headed “United States Merchant Mariner’s Document,” with my (22-year old) photo on it, and the levels which I was entitled to work: “Ordinary Seaman, Messman, Wiper.” I eventually lost it; but for years I used it as an ID, and sometimes I would just take it out and look at it.\footnote{I never was able to ship out; after I got back from Wilmington I went down to the National Maritime Union headquarters and asked about jobs; they were very nice and put me on the list, but it was a slow time for shipping and I had less seniority than anyone else.}

During my time on the ship, I had been at the Coffee Corner only on my days off (one a week), my romance had cooled down, and I had pretty much lost touch with my fellow seekers. One night, shortly before we went to Wilmington, I was walking near Kenmore Square with
Carole Adams, my friend David Harris’s girl, when we ran into Larry Davis. He was glad to see me, and there was obviously something on his mind. He looked around and said confidentially, “Some of us have run into something pretty good, if you’re still interested.” I assured him that I definitely was, and he said, reluctant to talk in front of Carole (he didn’t realize that she was a seeker herself; she got initiated much later) that he would be in touch. And he went off.

Well. I wondered what was going on, but I had a lot on my mind, what with my slowly ending romance and the upcoming trip to Wilmington; so I didn’t think much more about it until I got back to Boston. I moved in with Dave Harris and Carole and went to work selling Collier’s Encyclopedias door to door, along with Dave. One night in late October my friend and fellow seeker Jim Forte came over to see me. He didn’t waste any time. “We’ve come across the real thing, and we think you ought to be a part of this too.” I was polite but distant: “I’m not interested in anyone unless he’s as high as Babaji.” Jim leaned forward, looked at me steadily, and said with absolute conviction, “This man is higher than Babaji.” Suddenly I was jolted awake—my heart skipped several beats, and I said wonderingly, “How can that be? Is he nine hundred years old?” Jim laughed. “No,” he said, “he’s not. But that’s not the criterion. This man is a Satguru—a Master of Masters—the very highest Master there can be.” Satguru! I had never heard that word before. “What is his name?” “His name is Kirpal.”

And that was the beginning.

The following Monday Jim came and took me to satsang, where I saw a number of old friends and fellow seekers: Jim, of course; Kimon Loukas; and Larry Davis and Judith Weinberg, who were then living together on Brighton Street in the West End. Most of the other people present (probably fifteen in all) were much older than we were—middle-aged or elderly, by my standards at the time. The satsang was held twice a week in the Vedanta Chapel at 202 Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, a facility it shared with a Vedanta group presided over by Srimati Gayatri Devi, and with the “I Am” Activity, a group devoted to the Comte de St. Germain. The first thing that struck me as I entered the chapel was a huge picture of Ramakrishna, a nineteenth-century Indian

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17 The legendary nine-hundred year old Himalayan yogi who was the founder of Paramhansa Yogananda’s lineage and to whom I had prayed for a guru.
I stared at it for several seconds, and all I can say is that it was no surprise. I do not mean that it came as a great emotional recognition; it was not like that at all. It is just that it was no surprise. I said mentally, “Of course, that is the way he looks.” And I felt happy.

The meeting included a lot of reading, most of which I didn’t understand, although there were ideas I was certainly familiar with, and a half-hour meditation, which was pleasant but inconclusive. After it was over the young people, plus the Group Leader, Wava Sanderson, and Seymour Swetzoff, who was closer to our age than most (he was probably in his forties) and whose background as a seeker was not that far from ours, retired to a nearby Hayes-Bickford’s, where a great deal of information was given me—more than I could comfortably assimilate. I heard for the first time many of the ideas and precepts of Sant Mat that I mentioned above, including that there was a special esoteric practice (Shabda Yoga) to be initiated into, and that I also could be initiated, but first I had to be a vegetarian for at least three months.

A vegetarian! That stopped me.

In all my readings I had never noticed the vegetarian idea connected with mysticism, although I realized when I went back over them that this was due to my own carelessness. But still—becoming a vegetarian did not fit my self-image, and I didn’t like it. I asked, “Why?” and I was told that animals are worth something in the eyes of God Who made them and that killing and/or eating any form of animal life causes heavy karmic reaction and stands in the way of successful meditation. The answer made sense in the light of the little I already knew, but I still didn’t like it and I was far from convinced. (Much later I came across the Buddha’s comment in The Surangama Sutra that sums up the matter perfectly: “If anyone is trying to practice meditation and is still eating meat, he is just like a man who is putting his hands over his ears and shouting and then complains that he cannot hear anything.”)

Other things that were explained to me that night suited me much more; a lot of it was familiar. The ideas of Karma and Reincarnation,
for example, had figured in many of the books I had read, especially Yogananda; so the image of the soul taking birth in body after body while carrying with it always the effects of its actions (the totality of which, “good” or “bad,” is called Karma) gave me no trouble at all. Neither did the concept of the Satguru as a God-sent being whose primary purpose was to free us from this endless series of rebirths, show us what our real possibilities were, and help us to realize them. But how he did this was both new to me and very appealing: for the first time in my life I heard about the Sound Current. For the first time in my life; yet, as I listened, I knew that I had heard it all before, long ago, and that I was rediscovering something that I had always known but had forgotten.

The “Sound Current” is a rough English translation of the Sanskrit word Shabda and its modern Hindi equivalent, Shabd (usually pronounced something like “shubbud”); it is a poor translation but no better alternative has yet been suggested. It is poor because it is inadequate. The concept or fact that the term represents is tremendous: God is seen as Absolute, indescribable, inconceivable, unreachable: the only way He can be described at all is to say that He is an Ocean of Love. And what is called the Sound Current, the Name (Sanskrit Nama; Hindi Naam) or (as in the Gospel of John, Chapter 1) the “Word,” (Greek Logos) is a tidal wave of that ocean, manifesting as Light and Sound on different levels in different ways, and ultimately projecting Itself as the created Universe and as all individual persons within that Universe—from the personal God Himself to the lowest form of microscopic life. Therefore, if any individual could penetrate deeply enough within himself he would eventually find the Sound Current there, and ultimately the Ocean from which the Current came. Such a person, who has become one with the “Word” or the essence of the Universe, is called a Satguru; and from our point of view it may be unclear as to whether he has become one with the Word or the Word has become one with him. Such a Satguru continues to live on in the world, but only to help others achieve what he has achieved; that is his work. He does that by showing those who want his help how to contact the Sound and Light within themselves and eventually reach the absolute, the Ocean of Love.

It was a supremely breathtaking view of the universe, and I took it seriously from the beginning. I did not necessarily accept it all at
once—it was too much for me; but I certainly respected it. I noted, for example, that while Light and Sound were the primal projections or manifestations of God, His essence would have to be love. It followed that a Satguru or a Master would be an incarnation of love. This was certainly how his disciples viewed him, and my inclination was to agree; but of course I had little enough to go on that first night: a subjective reaction to his name, his picture, and some of his words. How did I know anything? And I did not want to give up eating meat.

But I did. It didn’t happen overnight, but it happened. For about six weeks I marked time: I continued to attend Satsang, I studied Kirpal Singh’s writings (which in those days consisted of a few pamphlets; none of his books in English had been published yet), and I let the teachings roll around in my mind. I made no changes in my life other than that. I studied carefully his writings on Karma, which I already knew something about from Yogananda and others, because the teaching on diet was closely bound up with Karma. Kirpal Singh taught, as we have seen, that all life is one, a projection or manifestation of the Word: that to kill, especially to eat, any form of life that is animate or conscious (or is an embryo form of such life) is a serious crime against less-developed children of God; we are, in other words, not supposed to build our bodies on the pain and suffering of others. He also taught that while it was also a crime, ultimately, to kill and eat plants, that we had no choice while in the physical world—to maintain our bodies we had to eat something; and the Karma or penalty incurred for killing plants was not so heavy as to prevent us from meditating and penetrating through to our essence. Because, really, the justification for vegetarianism was practical: eating meat prevented us from meditating effectively and finding that which we wanted to find. If we wanted to meditate effectively and reach our goal, we had to stop eating meat. Very simple. Very logical. But I didn’t like it. Intellectually, I could see it; but it didn’t connect with anything inside me. And I didn’t want to make such a major change without an inner conviction.

I went home to New Hampshire for Thanksgiving, as was my habit; and on Thanksgiving Day we had, as usual, a turkey. My parents tended to make an elaborate ritual over their Thanksgiving turkey, and I had always thought it a lot of fun—as well as enjoying the turkey. But on this occasion the pattern broke: as I was looking at the turkey lying on
the dish just before my father began carving it, my perspective consciously shifted (that is to say, I felt it shifting) just a little bit, and I saw very clearly that what was lying there on the plate was not delicious food for me, but a corpse—the ruins of something that had once enjoyed pleasure and felt pain even as I did, and that had been of infinite worth in the eyes of God. I saw this in a split second—in much less time than it takes to write about it—and, while I reluctantly ate the turkey that day, it was the last time: the next morning I vowed to become a vegetarian. I did not eat meat again.

Around this time I finally quit my job as a door-to-door salesman and went to work as an office boy at WHDH-TV, Channel 5, in Boston. Again I got the job because a friend of mine—in this case, Norbert Nunes, a Coffee Corner regular who had no interest in the Path—worked there. I was there several months, eventually quitting in an orgy of self-righteousness over something or other; but during my stay one incident happened which has resonated over the rest of my life.

I was then and am now a jazz fan; one of the fun things, for me, of working at WHDH (which was a radio as well as a television station with not one but two jazz disc jockeys) was proximity to the world of jazz. This came to a head one morning in February or March 1958 when Louis Armstrong came to the station. He was playing in Storyville (the extraordinary Boston nightclub owned by George Wein) that week, and had come to the station to film something for future broadcast and to be interviewed on tape by John McLellan, the more scholarly of the jazz disc jockeys. His arrival created a sensation among the WHDH staff, and we all gathered around the enclosed glass sound-booth where the interview was being conducted. Louis was in there sitting on a couch; McLellan the interviewer was on a chair; and another man, who had accompanied Louis to the station, was sitting on another chair. The person standing next to me, a woman in her forties named Bette Phelan who had always been kind to me and who knew that I was a great admirer of Louis, said to me, “Why don’t you go in, Russell?” I was astonished. I said, “I can’t go in there!”

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18 WHDH, which was owned by the Boston Herald, later lost its television license and continues today as a radio station only.

19 I think that was his name; the not-so-scholarly dj, who had an all-night show and who was very friendly, was Norm Nathan.
She said, “Why not?” I thought about it, opened the door, and went in. Louis looked at me, a great smile spread over his face, and he patted the couch next to him, inviting me to sit beside him. I don’t know what I had expected but it was certainly not that.

The other two men in the room paid no attention to me; the interview went on; and for more than an hour, as I recall, I sat next to one of the greatest musicians (and human beings) in the world, with his complete approval and blessing. I don’t remember much of what he said; at one point he talked about Jelly Roll Morton and how he would go days at a time without sleeping, and how he (Louis) advised him to at least try to get a couple of hours at the minimum, no matter what. Other than that, the interview is a complete blur in my memory; what I remember and have never forgotten is the complete love and acceptance with which Louis greeted me and made me feel completely at home in a place where I had no business to be.

A little later—six weeks or so before my Initiation, probably in March 1958—I was given, by the grace of God, an actual firsthand experience of the greatness of this particular Master. I was neither expecting it nor desiring it; I was at peace with myself, the decision having been made and the turmoil over. In those days Satsang closed with a half-hour meditation, to which everybody, initiated or not initiated, was welcome—and fairly detailed instructions were given (this was before Kirpal Singh had clarified his wishes on this matter). I always participated in the meditations and enjoyed them, although nothing had ever happened—I had seen nothing, heard nothing, experienced nothing. But then I didn’t expect to—I wasn’t initiated, after all—so it didn’t bother me.

But on this particular night, just after Wava had put us into meditation, I experienced a calmness and peace that went far beyond any-

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20 I am reminded of the following, from Gary Giddins’ *Satchmo*, p. 11: “Responding in 1949 to a ‘Blindfold Test,’ in which he was asked to rate unidentified records with one to five stars, Louis Armstrong said: ‘I couldn’t give anything less than two stars. You want to know why? Well, there’s a story about the sisters who were talking about the pastor, and only one sister could appreciate the pastor. She said, “If he’s good, I can look through him and see Jesus. If he’s bad, I can look over him and see Jesus.” That’s the way I feel about music.’ ” Giddins follows this with a quote from Duke Ellington: “I loved and respected Louis Armstrong. He was born poor, died rich, and never hurt anyone on the way.”
thing I had experienced before. I became completely immersed in it and lost all track of time, so that I have no idea how much time had gone by when I became aware that something was going to happen. I don’t know how I knew this, but I did. Suddenly I was looking into a long, long tunnel made of the most beautiful golden light; it was as though I was standing at one end of the tunnel, looking down it toward the other end. Far away in the distance at the other end of the tunnel I could see a figure moving—a very tiny figure, because it was very far away. I couldn’t take my eyes off it—I was completely fascinated by that little figure moving towards me. As I watched, it came closer and grew bigger, and finally I was able to make out the features of Kirpal Singh, so often seen in photographs. Slowly, but with increasing speed, he came closer and closer; I was able to observe in minute detail his walk and the way he stood. His hands were hanging by his sides, palms toward me, and on his face was the most beautiful, loving, compassionate smile that I had ever seen—the knowledge of the whole universe was in that smile. Closer and closer he came, walking on the Light (although I also understood that all the Light I was seeing was in reality coming from him); smiling on me all the while till I thought he was going to walk right into me; but just as he loomed so large in my inner vision that everything else was blotted out Wava called us out of meditation and I lost it.

The impact of that experience was almost more than I could bear; it almost shattered me. I had never had an experience remotely like it in my whole life, and suddenly I was forced to treat as a reality that which I had been treating as an abstraction. The realness of the Path I had chosen to follow was forced on me, as it were; I had had my nose rubbed in glory.

About six weeks later, on May 11, 1958, six persons were initiated into the Shabda Yoga by Mr. T. S. Khanna, Kirpal’s representative who came up from Washington, D.C., for the occasion, in Boston. Five of them—Kimon Loukas, Larry Davis, Judith Weinberg, Jim Forte and myself—had been fellow-seekers after Truth since the year before; the sixth was an elderly woman named Mary Baker. Once again Jesus’s words, “Seek and ye shall find,” had proven true; our Father does not give us a stone if we are hungry for bread. The Universe keeps the promises it makes.
Judith

Amazing is the Nad;\textsuperscript{21} amazing are the Vedas;  
Amazing are the jivas;\textsuperscript{22} amazing their distinctions;  
Amazing is the Form; amazing is the color;  
Amazing is air; amazing is water;  
Amazing is the fire that works many wonders;  
Amazing is the earth; amazing are the species;  
Amazing are the tastes to which the jivas are attached.  
Amazing is the union; amazing the separation;  
Amazing is the hunger; amazing is the indulgence;  
Amazing is the praise; amazing is the eulogy;  
Amazing is straying from the Path; amazing is the Path.  
Amazing is the nearness; amazing is the distance;  
Amazing are those who see Him manifested everywhere.  
Amazed am I to see these amazing things;  
Nanak says: Only through perfect destiny can one understand it.  

\textbf{GURU NANAK}\textsuperscript{23}

As I write this, it has been fifty-nine years since my Initiation; I was 23 then, I am 81 now. By human standards, a long, long time. By cosmic standards, a blink of an eye, if that. By eternal standards, everything that has happened between then and now all happened at once and is still happening; nothing has been lost, since Time is that which binds us to the chronological norm: the essence of \textit{Maya} or illusion is the perception that things happen one after another. But however we look at it, the hymn of Guru Nanak quoted above expresses my feelings about life exactly: it is so amazing! So very, very amazing—every little bit, and the whole scope at once. Incredible! Who would believe it if we did not live through it?

The first year after my Initiation was very pleasant and very interesting. Meditation was very easy for me that year—May 1958-June 1959—so easy that I tended to discount the value of the gift that I had received. I was

\textsuperscript{21} The Sound Current  
\textsuperscript{22} The individual souls under the bondage of mind.  
\textsuperscript{23} From the Asa di Vars in the Guru Granth Sahib; quoted by Ajaib Singh, \textit{In the Palace of Love}, pp. 25-26.
living with my friend Jim Bax, who much later got initiated, in an apartment on Eaton Street in Boston’s West End—a wonderful low-income neighborhood with a marvelous mix of ethnicities that was on the brink of being razed to the ground in the name of Urban Renewal, so that a series of high-rise, high-rental apartment buildings could be erected and bring great profit to somebody. This project involved the destruction of thousands of buildings, including many holy places of worship: an Orthodox Jewish synagogue was just around the corner from our building, and I passed by others—Pentecostal, Catholic—daily. For some reason, the West End Methodist Church on Cambridge Street was spared, but as I remember, that was the only one. As for the people who lived there—well, who cared about them?

Jim and I were the last tenants to leave our building (it was a fifth-story walkup apartment) and I spent many hours in very sweet meditation there. But throughout that first year, I was plagued with a kind of arrogance which manifested itself sometimes as a kind of smug taking for granted of what I had been given, and sometimes as a kind of stubborn skepticism. On the one hand, I often doubted my experiences, which were many; and on the other, I cheerfully ignored many of the explicit prohibitions (particularly the drinking of alcohol). Both of these manifestations joined forces in what must have been to my friends an infuriating self-righteousness.

One of my first lessons at the hand of the Master occurred one night sometime that summer when I ran into my friend Rick Lloyd in downtown Boston. Rick had been drinking, and although he was not drunk he was uninhibited. We started to walk across Boston Common and Rick informed me in very clear terms exactly what he thought of my current self. My first reaction was one of resentment and self-defense; but as I listened I became absolutely convinced that, despite Rick’s condition and despite the fact that I was initiated and he was not, it was Kirpal who was talking to me. I listened carefully and it seemed very clear to me that every word he was speaking was right on, and if I valued my practice I had better pay attention to what he was saying.

That summer three more of our fellow seekers were initiated, this time in Washington, D.C., where Mr. Khanna lived—Nina Gitana, John Duvarier, and Margo Nyhan. Nina had turned up in satsang shortly after I had and quickly made friends with us. She was an actress; Nina
Gitana (“little gypsy”) was her stage name.24 She had been part of the famous and respected Living Theater company in New York and had worked with Julian Beck and Judith Malina, the founders of that company (Judith and Julian were friends and supporters of Dorothy Day, the founder of the Catholic Worker movement, who mentions them often in her writings). She had a cabin on the ocean front outside of Provincetown, on the dunes of Cape Cod, where a number of us visited her. (I actually stayed with her there on two occasions, and loved it.) She was very single-minded in her devotion to the Master. Margo also became a very dear friend, and both she and Nina figured prominently in my later life.

At some point that summer, Larry Davis and Judith Weinberg were married, in what they told me was a very beautiful Jewish wedding, under a canopy, with a Rabbi officiating. I was very happy for them. Later that fall, I moved in with them for a while in an apartment they had on Symphony Road, and grew very close to both of them. Eventually they took an apartment in suburban Needham but we remained in touch, and that spring they presented me with a very exciting idea: they were going to purchase a farm, using Judith’s money, and they asked me if I would go with them and help them make a go of it. They were both city people, and I was a country boy from New Hampshire who had taken Vocational Agriculture for three years in high school, had raised chickens as a teen-ager, and had at one time wanted very badly to be a farmer. Nina was also coming along and we would be starting a rural satsang community!—this was 1959, some years before the idea of communes became popular, but that was basically where we were at. The idea was immensely appealing and we set out to find the farm we were going to buy—a carload of us, including besides Larry, Judith, Nina and me, our friend and fellow satsangi Bob Kubal, who was a young lawyer and who came along to provide legal advice regarding titles, deeds, etc., about which the rest of us knew nothing.

As it happened, it was not difficult to find a farm—the very first one we looked at, a mile or so from the village of Maple Corners in the tiny town of Calais, Vermont, twelve miles north of Montpelier—won our hearts completely and when we heard the price—$3500—we couldn’t

24 Her birth name was Shirley Gleaner.
believe it; as Bob said, “A hundred-acre farm\textsuperscript{25} for the price of a car?” But as we found out, that was not unusual for abandoned farms in northern New England. This farm had been run by an old man who had six cows and had milked by hand; there was electricity but no plumbing, and running water by gravity feed into the kitchen sink only. It was not any longer economically viable as a farm, and in those days before the Interstate highway system brought everything much closer together, there was not yet a demand for second homes in what was then a remote area. But it was incredibly beautiful; it seemed to us to be a paradise; and generations of satsangis and seekers since, who knew it first as “Kirpal Ashram” and later as “Wawasikhi,” will understand exactly how we felt.

So we bought it—that is, Judith bought it—and we (Larry, Judith, Nina, and me) moved in in early June 1959, with a lot of help from our friends.

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What happened next is very difficult to write about, and I am not at all sure to this day that I have any understanding of what happened. I have said that Larry and Judith were good friends of mine, and that Larry had been a fellow seeker from the beginning. I had supported their marriage and been very close to them both. But one afternoon Judith and I had gone into Montpelier together on an errand, and on our way back to the farm, Judith said, “You know, my father was wrong.” I said, “What do you mean?” She said, “He always said that there was no really platonic relation between a man and a woman; but you and I have proved him wrong.” I looked at her, pulled the truck over to the side of the road, and took her in my arms. It was really, as the old cliché has it, lightning striking: somehow when she said that, something was unlocked between us and from that moment on we were totally, thoroughly, and irrevocably in love with each other—a love that lasted on both our parts (with, granted, some rocky times) until the day of Judith’s death some 39 years and three months later.

It was clear to both of us that we were in love, but in the beginning Judith was more at peace with it than I was. I had not realized that she

\textsuperscript{25} It was actually 77 acres.
had been deeply unhappy in her marriage with Larry; we had never discussed that. She always had much more of a sense of the reality of the flow of events than I did; she saw the eternal implications of things much more clearly than I, who was, of course, fully conscious that I was betraying one of my closest friends and brothers and violating a fundamental commandment that was basic to Kirpal’s teaching as well as that of Jesus and the Bible. That night as I sat in deep confusion in my room, I recognized the power and reality of our love; I could not deny it; but I considered very carefully the possibility of just walking down the road and not coming back. Totally bewildered, I consulted the *I Ching*, the Chinese “Book of Changes,” that many of us on the Coffee Corner consulted from time to time. I got Hexagram 64—the very last one—“Before Completion”! I was stunned at its relevance, and I did not leave.

Our affair devastated Larry and caused a scandal among the Master’s initiates; all of us except Nina left the farm and tried to deal with what was left of our world. I acceded to Larry’s request that I clear out for a while to give him a chance to reclaim his marriage, although it broke Judith’s heart: Rick Lloyd and I drove Larry and Judith’s brand-new Chevrolet Apache (an early SUV) across country to San Francisco, a trip financed by Larry who thought it was well worth it to get rid of me. The trip was the first time I had ever been west of New York; Rick and I slept in the truck and thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it, but once we reached San Francisco, we turned around and drove back: I knew with every molecule of my being that I belonged with Judith and that it was impossible for us not to be together. Shortly thereafter, in September 1959, we left Boston and flew to Reno, Nevada, where Judith began the proceedings for a divorce (in those days, not so easy to get elsewhere). Her divorce became final on December 3, and we were married ten minutes later by a friendly Justice of the Peace; his secretaries were our witnesses. We set up housekeeping in Reno and were blissfully happy; our daughter Miriam was born in March.

There were of course ramifications. The knowledge that what we had done was fundamentally against the Master’s teachings was so strong that we left the Path (or thought we left the Path; the Path is not leavable). Our married life began with our abandoning the meditation practice and, to some extent, the vegetarian diet: we never ate a lot of
meat, but we got very careless about it, and I resumed drinking alcohol, mostly beer. During all this turmoil, we had never contacted the Master directly, not once, to ask him what he thought about it. We assumed that we knew; the teachings were clear. Because we felt guilty about the scandal we had caused, we left off contact with our fellow satsangis, with the exception of Nina Gitana, who was still living on what was still Judith’s property. At some point while we were in Reno, she told us her dream of turning the farm into an ashram. It seemed good to us, and Judith arranged for the title to be transferred to her in exchange for her paying the lawyer’s fees involved in the transaction. The deal went through, and Nina did indeed establish “Kirpal Ashram” on the farm property within a year.26

At this point, I feel compelled to say unequivocally that despite the ramifications I have mentioned above, despite the hurt caused to others, and despite the scandal among the Master’s initiates, I know from the depths of my heart that Judith and I were destined for each other from the foundation of the world. Not only the rest of our life together but the words and deeds of the Masters themselves bear witness to this. Kirpal never said a word to us about the beginning of our marriage; he blessed our marriage in Toronto in 1963, telling us that we were two bodies with one soul; and when Judith brought up this subject to him in Anaheim in 1972, he told her that “It never happened.” And both Kirpal and Ajaib made it very clear to us that they wanted us to work, and to be, together.27

26 She later changed the name to Wawasikhi, an American Indian name with Punjabi echoes.

27 Much later I found the following passage in The Zohar, the great Kabbalistic masterpiece, referring to the well-known sin of King David and Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, whom he seduced and who later became the mother of King Solomon and David’s most respected wife (II Samuel 11-12): “King David, when that incident befell him, was frightened. That moment, Dumah [the angel of death; the overseer of hell] rose in the presence of the blessed Holy One and said to Him, ‘Master of the universe, it is written in the Torah: A man who commits adultery with a man’s wife [is surely to be put to death, the adulterer and the adulteress]. . . . David, who ruined the covenant by lewdness, what shall be done to him?’ The blessed Holy One said to him, ‘David is innocent, and the holy covenant stands arrayed, for it is revealed before Me that Bathsheba was destined for him since the day the world was created.’ ” (Zohar 1:8b, Pritzker Edition, Vol. I, pp. 54-55)
I will recount a number of instances of this as this story moves onward. As I mentioned above, Judith and I were together for almost forty years; she died very suddenly, of a massive heart attack brought on by high blood pressure, at 10 p.m., Thursday, September 10, 1998 (September 11—Sant Ajaib Singh Ji’s birthday—in India). The following paragraph is from a talk I gave on her life, her seva (selfless service), and her relationship with the Master—at her memorial service the following Sunday:

* * *

Judith was my sweet wife, the mother of our children, my best friend, my confidant, my co-worker, my partner, my companion in body, mind and soul. We were together for thirty-nine years, and I loved her as much on the day she died as I did the day we were married. I consider her the most beautiful woman in every way I have ever known. I admired her, respected her and worked with her. I belonged with her; where she was, was home. She was the perfect wife for me. I am grateful above all for the supreme gift of being allowed to share my life with such a woman. I am grateful also that I was with her when she died and that she left the way she did, instantaneously, between the incoming and outgoing breaths, which was what she wanted.

* * *

We stayed in Reno until the following June, getting more and more homesick for New England by the day. We drove back across country, the three-month old Miriam in Judith’s arms, stopping in Wheaton, Illinois, for my sister Helen’s graduation from Wheaton College, and arrived in New York at Judith’s parents’ house, around the first of July. Our original plans had been to stay there; but after a week or so we traveled north to New Hampshire to stay some time with my parents, and we never left. After a month or so living on my parents’ porch, I got a job as a printer’s apprentice at the Journal-Transcript, a local weekly newspaper and job shop, and we rented the second floor of a house across the street from my parents. That fall, I quit smoking when it became obvious that I was getting sick—literally, nauseous sick—every time I lit up. I was not practicing meditation or in touch with the Master at that time, but in later years it seemed clear to me that this was the first of many interferences that the Master made in the course of my life that had major repercussions later.
That January we moved to New York temporarily so that I could attend linotype school, a three months course, which would enable me to earn considerably more money as a printer. We returned to Sanbornton to the same apartment we had been renting; I resumed working at the *Journal-Transcript*; and we enjoyed settling in to a small-town life. Judith was pregnant again (she had had a very scary near-miscarriage in New York) and our big desire at that time was to find a house of our own. We spent most every Sunday afternoon driving around Sanbornton and nearby towns looking for a suitable place. We knew what we wanted: an isolated farm where we could bring up our kids, raise most of our own food, and live as much apart from the system as possible. We were not thinking at all about Kirpal or the Path at this time; we did feel some spiritual longings, but we satisfied them with attendance at the Unitarian Church in nearby Franklin, which had a very beautiful universal liturgy.

Sant Bani Farm

The period of our non-meditation was exactly two years: September 1959 to September 1961. One afternoon that September, just before our son Eric was born, I was working on a paper-cutter at the print-shop when the thought came to me completely unexpectedly: “Suppose I went back on the Path? What would it be like?” I began thinking, as I worked, of all of the adjustments and accommodations I would need to make before such a thing could happen; at first it seemed impossible, but by the end of the afternoon, I knew that it had already happened, in spite of me: I was going back on the Path. I went home and told Judith and she was astounded; she did not share my feelings then but she did a little later.

The next morning I got up early and sat for meditation—the first time in two years. I assumed that it would be as easy as it had been before I had stopped. I got a bitter lesson indeed—one of the bitterest I had ever gotten up to that time. I sat with my eyes closed and saw nothing whatsoever—no Light at all. I listened for the Sound, and there was dead silence. With one great rush I understood the enormity of what I had done: I had been given the greatest of gifts and I had thrown it away. Tears of self-recrimination and self-pity flooded my eyes as I recalled how easy it had been and how thoroughly I had taken for granted that precious
gift. I understood very well that now I would have to work hard and struggle in order to regain that which I had lost.

That day I wrote a letter to the Master. I worked very hard over it, as I was aware that I had not been worthy of what he had given me, and I wanted to impress him. I mailed the letter, and a few days later there was a letter from him in the mailbox. I was amazed: a few days! It took usually a month for letters to get to the Master and back. What could this mean? I read the letter, and it was clear that he was not replying to my letter at all; he had written me without my writing him—a very unusual circumstance. Reflecting further, I realized that he must have written the letter about the time I had decided to come back on the Path—that his attention had been directed toward me at that time. It was my first awareness of the Protection of the Master, but by no means the last.

This was also the time when my son was born. Judith had not had a good experience with the birth of Miriam in the hospital at Reno; she had wanted a natural childbirth but there was little recognition of that back then, and although the doctor had promised her that he wouldn’t use forceps, in the event, he did. So she determined very early in her pregnancy with Eric that he would be born at home. She was in touch with a group of home-birth mothers called “The League of Liberated Women,” and they had produced an extensive literature about their experiences. They used a manual, called Emergency Childbirth, intended for police, firefighters, taxi-drivers, and others who might be stuck in a situation with a mother about to deliver, and most of them had given birth at home with only their husbands in attendance; midwives were very hard to find in 1961. At my insistence (because the prospect of home delivery with only me there scared me to death), Judith tried to find a doctor who would attend her; but she could not. So it ended up with only me there, as I had dreaded; but with the grace of God, everything went beautifully. I had read the manual and got enough out of it to know what to do, thank God; but we managed to terrify my family and half the town of Sanbornton, including our landlady, who found out what we were doing only at the last minute. But I counted few times in my life more awe-inducing than the hours I spent accompanying Judith in her labor, and the minutes during which Eric emerged into the world for the first time. God, he was beautiful!
Sometime after he was born, I received another letter from the Master, dated October 9, 1961: this one in answer to the letter that I had written him. Thirteen years later, in October 1974, in the month after Kirpal had left his body for the final time and we were all in deep grief, I reread that letter, found great solace in it, and published it in Sat Sandesh, Kirpal’s monthly magazine that I had been editing, with the following editorial note:

_This beautiful letter has been a constant source of encouragement and consolation since I received it thirteen years ago this month. I had written Master in a mood of deep despair—over having wasted two years of my life away from Him, and over the fear of nuclear war, which seemed imminent. Some readers will recall that year of the fallout shelter, when we were being encouraged to accept the inevitability of wholesale catastrophe, and solid citizens were debating the ethics of shooting their neighbors if they dared to encroach on their shelters. The absurdity of the world and the whole worldly outlook, on which I had staked my identity, came home to me in an awful rush, and the Master pulled me back to Him in the space of one afternoon. But confusion, resentment and despair remained: How could God let things like nuclear wars become so probable? How could He create such a world? Out of such a mood was forged the first honest letter I ever wrote to Master; this was His reply:_

“I am glad to find that you have achieved a stable existence in a small rural town and have learnt the trade of a printer to carry on a smooth life. A settled and peaceful life is a helping factor for the spiritual undertakings. My best wishes are with you all.

“I am sorry that you had for some long time past neglected your meditations and grown careless in diet and generally lost interest in spiritual things. I am glad that you are again meditating, and have taken a turn for your spiritual side. This will stand in your good stead. You should not take things only from physical angle. While one has to perform physical duties, the duties towards one’s own self and God are not less important. ‘Is not body more than raiment and life more than the meat?’ ‘What does it profit a man if he gains the possessions of the whole world and loses one’s own soul?’ The physical life together with all its possessions and allurements is subject to decay and disintegration. The precious moments of earth life spent in the holy meditations are superbly best utilized and are a step in the right direction towards one’s eventual return to one’s True Eternal Home. Whether by ups and
downs of the world or inner yearnings one is fortunate to tread on this Path of deliverance.

“You have got the sacred books and at present are reading *Naam or Word*. . . . What you read in these books is to become a part of your life and this you will achieve step by step if you are regular and devoted in meditations and develop within from day to day. Man is the noblest of all creation and the highest ideal in this body is to meet the Lord and for that purpose he has to know himself first. Self-knowledge precedes God-knowledge. Man has made wonderful progress physically and intellectually but his spiritual side has been ignored. He is gaining control over the forces of nature in the shape of Hydrogen bombs etc., which are threatening the destruction of all mankind. Had he gained self-knowledge before having this control of forces of nature, these very things would have gone to the service of mankind. These weapons are being used for gaining supremacy over the others. Even the darkest clouds have a silver lining somewhere. To err is human; by suffering one learns a lesson and tries to avoid sin and looks for virtuous life. This threat of destruction will go a long way to change the trend of humanity for the better: to live and let others live too. Providence has His own miraculous ways for guiding the destiny of Child Humanity. But the fact remains that ‘A Living Master is a Great Blessing’ and all those coming under His protective care and guidance will pass off unscathed by following His commandments, viz., ‘Love God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy strength,’ and ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself.’

“If we give more value to a thing than is intrinsically due it, the fear of its loss will be considerably out of proportion to the actual facts. You need not worry about anything. Being under the protective care of the Great Master Power, you are really a blessed soul, having always at your disposal the facility of drawing on that Great Power. The way how to do it is already with you. If you will just walk one step, He will come down a million of steps to pull you, help you and guide you at every stage. You have simply to tune your receptivity to the fountain head. The way to do it is to faithfully obey Him and devotedly carry on as enjoined.

“All action has corresponding reaction. An individual action has an individual reaction. Collectively people are asked to do ethical actions.
This brings up good collective reaction. Reverse of it produces collective bad reaction. Nature has its own way of correcting and fulfilling reactions of individual good and bad action. Likewise collective reactions are to be fulfilled. One may not be able to truly understand the depth of these things for his perception and understanding is limited to gauge these depths. Internal ascension into higher regions opens our vision to see things clearly. We should, therefore, strive fully, honestly, faithfully and diligently to proceed within. Those who are earnest and devoted are crowned with success. Many things become clear which otherwise with all the reasoning and intelligence will be at best hazy and foggy. But to those who are regularly devoted to meditation in the accurate way their inner development takes them face to face to the radiant form of the Master within, in which God Power appears—who talks to them as we talk outside, guides them in all matters—when the time comes for their leaving the physical body He tells them that they have to go. There is nothing strange in it. It is every day happening.

“The spiritual aspirants inculcate a sense of aversion for the sensuous pleasures as they have tasted the elixir of Naam within with the grace of the Master. All beauty and glory lies within and if you will please be lovingly devoted to your holy meditations in an accurate way as discussed in a copy of brief instructions which I enclose for your guidance, you will find that you will be benefited immensely with His grace.

“So please be lovingly devoted with deep faith and sacred earnestness. Master Power working overhead will be extending all feasible help, grace and protection. . . .”

The days continued and so did my struggles with meditation. What had once been ridiculously easy was painfully difficult, and I usually did not sit for more than a half-hour. After a few months, I did begin to hear the Sound again, but the Light was kept from me (except for one isolated but joyful sitting about a year after I started again) until the Master came in person and gave it back to me.

Some months later, in the spring of 1962, I learned that there would be a big gathering of disciples from all over the East Coast in Boston on the first weekend in May. I had not seen any brothers or sisters, except for Nina, since I had left the Path more than two years before. I wanted to go, but I was afraid. I was afraid that the others would be more spiritual
than me; that they would judge and condemn me both for having left the
Path and for the circumstances under which I left it; that I would not be
at home in such rarified company, and that I would not like it; and I was
afraid of the hazards or uncertainty that precedes anything new, or any
major departure from the norm. But I also wanted to go, very much.

I drove down to Boston on a beautiful Saturday morning and, since
the meeting was to be held on Marlboro Street, I parked my old Jeep
station wagon in a parking lot near where Marlboro Street runs into the
Public Gardens. Then I walked up the street. As I grew nearer to the
building where the meetings were being held, all my fears rose up in one
mighty rush, and I began to sweat and tremble. The closer I came, the
more certain I was that I couldn’t go in. I was noticing the numbers on
the doors and, as I drew abreast of the correct house, I made up my mind
with absolute conviction: “No! I will not go in: I’ll call up some of my old
friends from the Coffee Corner and drink beer with them.” And I kept
on walking. Not more than three steps later, a large, heavy-set white-
haired woman, neatly dressed in black, whom I had never seen before,
stood squarely in my way and spoke to me: “Hey! Do you know which
house this Hindu thing is in?” I said politely, “I believe it’s in that one
there”—pointing. She looked me in the face a moment and then said,
“Come on! Let’s go in!” grabbed me by the wrist with a vise-like grip and
led me into the house, up the stairs, right into the meeting room.

Now this woman was a real person; I later got to know her a little bit,
although we never discussed this incident. She was a real person, not
an apparition conjured up by the Master. But if she had been an appa-
rition, the effect of her appearance on me could not have been greater.
This was the second time that the Master had deliberately and directly
interceded with me to save me from myself and, while it would not
be the last time, in some respects it remains in my memory as the most
miraculous of all my experiences with him. This incident, in bright
sunlight on Marlboro Street in Boston, with the Master working through
the form of an unknown woman, perhaps symbolizes better than any
other the basic benevolence of the Universe, once an individual seeker
has committed him- or herself to its care. For the fact is that those
two days of meetings were wonderful; no one judged me; I was treated
with great love and respect by everyone; all my fears proved groundless,
and I received an enormous lift. Had I not gone in I doubt that I would
have survived. I needed very badly the company of those who were doing the same thing I was. I had gone as far as I could alone, and the Master knew it.

A few months later Mr. Khanna, the Master’s American Representative, asked me to hold Satsang in Sanbornton. I was reluctant to do so, and wrote the Master myself to make sure it was really all right with him. He replied that he was glad to learn that I was holding Satsang! My reluctance continued, however, and it was not until six months later, in January 1963, that we started doing it.

In the meantime, in September 1962, we purchased the abandoned farm that later became known as “Sant Bani Ashram.” It was never, at any time, our intention to found an ashram. As I mentioned above, we were looking for an isolated place in the country to live quietly and raise our kids. We had found, as a matter of fact, three different places that we were perfectly happy with and had agreed to buy; each one of them had fallen through at the last minute, and none of them could have functioned as an ashram. But that of course was not one of our criteria. In desperation we had published a classified advertisement in the Laconia Citizen: “Wanted: Large Isolated Farmhouse—far from traffic and neighbors.” Then Clem Orr, an elderly neighbor and friend who was developing a real estate business, dropped by one day and told of us a place over on the other side of town that might be what we wanted. We went to see it, and it was.

Judith fell in love with it immediately; I had my reservations, the main one being that there was going to be an awful lot of work involved. The farm (it had been a dairy farm and apple orchard, until a fire in the 1930’s destroyed the barn) had been abandoned for many years; most of the windows were broken; porcupines had eaten large chunks of the floor, leaving gaping holes; there was no electricity or plumbing of any kind; the only well on the property was dry; and so forth and so on. (On our first inspection of the property, I opened the cellar door and started to go down the stairs. But it was pitch dark, I couldn’t see a thing, and I decided not to. Later we went into the cellar from outside by opening the bulkhead door, which let in a lot of light, and we saw that there was no cellar stair! The entire staircase had been eaten by porcupines. That was the first job we worked on, my brother Bruce and I: building that staircase.)
But it was two houses (the large main house, beautifully built, dating from the 1790’s, and a smaller more recent house nearby) and two hundred acres, for $5,500; and the setting was indeed beautiful. It took us a few days, but we agreed to buy it, and we were very happy.

The farm had been owned by Martin Grossman and his wife, from New York; but we never met them. They had an agent in Sanbornton, a local farmer-wheeler-dealer named John Hill, whom I had known since high-school days: I used to deliver groceries to him. John Hill’s family had owned the farm for many years, after the fire in the 1930’s; and they used to spend summers there, moving out “when the snow flies.” He ran cattle there still, and when we looked at it, young dairy cattle were grazing within a few feet of the big house. What Martin Grossman sold it for—$5,500—was exactly what he had paid for it when he bought it from John Hill five years earlier. And John Hill told me how that purchase had come about:

He said that he was in negotiation with a local couple whom I knew well—Richard and Louise Morrison—who wanted very badly to purchase it and they had agreed on a price and had gone to the bank to see about a mortgage. While they were gone, Mr. Grossman had driven up (the farm was at the end of a dead-end dirt road), got out of the car, looked around, said to Mr. Hill, “I’ve been looking for a place like this for many years,” asked him the purchase price, wrote out a check, and gave it to him. When the Morrisons got back, the place had been sold. While this made them very unhappy, they did find a very beautiful farm not far away shortly after; and in the meantime the Grossmans never visited the place once. Neither did they put it up for sale until we were ready to buy it: it was as though the place was kept in reserve for us.

We put some thought into the naming of it. There were two giant maples (both of which have since died) growing near the front door of the Big House, and we considered naming it “Twin Maple Farm”; but we decided we wanted to name it something specifically spiritual. I had an old book which I had bought back around the time of our Initiation, called *Mysticism: The Spiritual Path*, Vol. II, by Lekh Raj Puri, written in the time of Baba Sawan Singh, Kirpal’s guru; it was in fact the first book on the Path I ever bought,28 and I liked it very much,

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28 The first book on the Path that I *owned* was given to me by Wava Sanderson, the Boston Group Leader: it was *Radha Soami Mat Prakash* by Rai Saligram.
not least because of the beautiful picture of Sawan that served as a Frontispiece. It was published by The Sant Bani Book Depot, and that name had always resonated with me; I thought it was beautiful. Sant Bani has a variety of meanings on different levels: it can refer to the Sound Current, to various scriptures or holy books, or to the teachings of the Masters. I never was sure exactly which meaning we intended, maybe all of them; but Judith agreed with me that “Sant Bani Farm” would be a very appropriate name. And so it was called, until Kirpal came a year later and renamed it “Sant Bani Ashram,” which it has been ever since.

Years later, during my trip to India in 1969, the following conversation took place between Kirpal, Muni Sushil Kumar Ji (a Jain holy man who worked closely with the Master on the World Fellowship of Religions), and myself:

Kirpal: “He is from America; he has an ashram over there.”
Muni Ji: “California?”
Kirpal: “No, east side. Sant Bani Ashram.”
Muni Ji: “What does that mean?”
Kirpal: (to me) “What does Sant Bani Ashram mean?”
Me: (gulp) “Well, uh . . . Sant means the Master, Bani means the teachings, and Ashram . . .”
At this point Kirpal and Muni Ji spoke briefly in Hindi, and Kirpal said very pointedly to me: “Sant Bani Ashram means, ‘Where the teachings of the Masters are put to work.”

However, thoughts like these were far from our minds in 1962. What was on our minds was the overwhelming realization of how much work there would be in fixing the place up so we could live in it. We started immediately replacing the glass in the windows and redoing the flooring where the porcupines had eaten; as I said, my brother and I built the cellar staircase first thing. But I was working full time at The Journal-Transcript, and I knew the work was far beyond what I could do on weekends. So Judith and I asked Jim Bax, my old friend and roommate from the Coffee Corner, if he would like to stay with us for several months and work on the house during the day while I was at work, in exchange for room and board—no salary. He was very happy to do that, and he did move in with us; every day I drove him over
to the farm in the morning before I went to work, and then picked
him up in the late afternoon. Sometimes I would stay and work with
him for a while, especially if he was in the middle of something; and on
Saturdays we generally worked together, often with Judith and sometimes
with David Wiggins, a young artist whom I had known since he was five
and I was thirteen, and who had become the first initiate of Kirpal in New
Hampshire. He was often away, but when he was home he helped.

Jim stayed with us through the winter, and a rip-roaring New
Hampshire winter it was: snow was piled so high on the side of the
roads that on Miriam’s birthday, March 23, you still couldn’t see out
the car windows. He got very depressed over this, and when I finally
took him down to his mother’s house in Lynn, Massachusetts, he got
so excited at the sight of the bare lawn that he danced his way from
the car to the house. But before he left, two important things occurred:

The first was that Jim introduced me to The Catholic Worker and
its distinguished Editor, Dorothy Day. I had never heard of her, but
Jim had, and he admired her very much. As a result, I began reading The
Catholic Worker and still read it to this day; and Dorothy Day has
become one of my authentic heroes, along with Rabia al-Adawiyyah,
Ramakrishna, Milarepa, Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Abraham Lincoln,
St. Francis, Mahatma Gandhi, Paramhansa Yogananda, the Baal Shem
Tov, Howard Thurman, Thomas Merton, Louis Armstrong, and the
Sixth Zen Patriarch Hui Neng—all of whom I have read or listened to
over and over, and on all of whom I have tried to model my own life.

The second was this: Somehow we ran into Margo Nyhan, who had
gotten initiated a few months after Judith and I. Margo at one time had
been in a special relationship with Jim, and he still admired her very
much; we discovered that she was now married to George Lockwood, a
Boston artist who knew many of our old Coffee Corner friends, had
two children, was living in an apartment in Boston, and—was actively
involved with a Gurdjieff group! Now, Gurdjieff and Ouspensky had
been of the utmost importance to us in the beginning of our search,
and two of Ouspensky’s books—A New Model of the Universe and In
Search of the Miraculous—were (and still are) among my very favorites.
And at this point—November 1962—it seemed as though we would
never meet the Master personally. Rumors of an American visit had
been flying since the time of our Initiation, now almost five years
away, and he had never come. So the idea of an actual Gurdjieff group, under the guidance of a real, live, developed teacher who could really show us esoteric truth in person, seemed very, very good.

And in fact, the teacher, Willem Nyland, was very, very good.

He had been a direct disciple of Gurdjieff, knew him well, and loved him. He had a group in New York, and a country estate of some kind upstate. He came to Boston, to the Lockwoods' house, once a week, on Thursdays, which posed a problem for us. One of my jobs at *The Journal-Transcript* was that of a pressman; I did composition, (occasional) linotyping, and in fact anything there was to be done, but the paper came out on Thursdays, and on Thursdays I ran the big old double-decker flatbed web press, which printed directly from the type, not from plates. This meant that I often had to crawl across two or three newspaper-sized lead pages covered with ink to get at some problem or other that may have developed during the press run. By Thursday afternoon I was covered with ink from head to foot, and normally I went straight home and took a long hot bath with a scrub-brush before I did anything else. But if we wanted to get to Boston on time for Mr. Nyland's meeting, we had to leave directly from the *J-T* office, and if there was time down there I would wash up as best as I could. It was a hassle, all right, but the meetings were worth it. For Mr. Nyland was a free man.

The only people I had had personal contact with that far in my life who seemed free to me were Howard Thurman (whose daughter attended the meetings!) and Louis Armstrong; but Mr. Nyland seemed different even from them: he seemed aware of his freedom in a way that they did not. (Of course, my acquaintance with them was very far from deep.) Mr. Nyland could talk. He opened his mouth and a stream of pearls came out. In his presence, all the ideas that had been present in our heads throughout our search suddenly became objectively real and took form right in front of us. But the devil was in the details.

Our flirtation with Gurdjieff lasted only a month; but it was an exciting month. C. S. Nott's *Teachings of Gurdjieff: The Journal of a Pupil* had just come out, and I bought a copy and loved it: it brought home to me what it was like to study and work directly under a Master's supervision. (I was also introduced to Rene Daumal's *Mount Analogue*, a wonderful unfinished novel about a group of seekers and finders,
which has remained one of my principal inspiring books. Daumal was a disciple of Gurdjieff in Paris, and no one has ever captured the ambience and excitement of a spiritual search as powerfully as he.) And it was great reconnecting with old friends: a number of people from the Coffee Corner were attending, including Dave Barbero, an artist whom I knew well, and his wife, Diana, who was Kimon Loukas’s sister. (Paul Caponigro, later famous as a photographer and a good friend of our fellow seeker Jim Forte, and Ira Friedlander, who later wrote a beautiful book on the Sufis, were very prominent in these meetings.) Listening to Mr. Nyland was heavenly; and we never felt that we were abandoning Kirpal and his Path, but rather that we were focusing on the huge areas which they had in common.

The basic practice of Gurdjieff’s system, at least as we understood it, was self-remembrance; and a basic practice of the Shabda Yoga was remembrance of God. The two were not the same, certainly; but psychologically speaking, the effort required to remember oneself was not different from the effort required to remember God. Kirpal’s early discourse, Simran: The Sweet Remembrance of God, which we knew and loved, had made that very clear to me from the beginning. But when I tried to put self-remembrance into practice, it didn’t work for me. That is not to say that it wouldn’t have worked with more instruction and more effort; but it became clear to me as I was working on it that this was not my practice.

Then we received a message from Mr. Nyland to everyone in the group to read the final chapter of Gurdjieff’s epic Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson before the next meeting. I had tried to read this book a number of times but I had never been able to get much beyond the third or fourth chapter, but I gave it another shot and started on it. After a few pages the internal message I was getting was very loud: “This is not for you.” I gave up on it and the whole Fourth Way at that point, although I have never lost my respect for the psychological and cosmological truth of the system.

29 Dave later took initiation from Kirpal when he was in Boston in 1963; when I asked him why, he said there was no point in putting all his eggs in one basket.
31 Books about Gurdjieff and his system by Ouspensky, Nott, Kathryn Hulme, and others have been very helpful to me over the years; but Gurdjieff’s own writings
But our experience with Mr. Nyland and his group had taught us a lot, among other things, how important it was for people who were working toward the same end to be working together. Judith and I had been very reluctant to hold satsang: we did not relish the idea of being authority figures and we were by no means certain that we understood the teachings well enough to present them to others. In addition, the only person who had been initiated into the Shabda Yoga in New Hampshire was David Wiggins, and he was away much of the time.

But nevertheless we remembered what Master had written us (“I am glad to learn that you are holding satsang”) and resolved to go ahead with it. Our first meeting was held early in January 1963 and four people attended: Judith and me, Jim Bax, and Gloria Alley, a local lady who had some awareness of mystical ideas. Two weeks later, we had our second meeting and again four people attended, but this time they included Frank Irwin, a gentleman somewhat older than me (I think he was in his fifties) whom I had worked with briefly at The Journal-Transcript, and who I knew was very interested in Zen Buddhism. He was a printer, which is why he worked at the paper for a while; but he had developed his own publishing company, printing miniature books on a hand-fed press in his house and selling them to collectors. He was a fascinating guy and became a close friend, although in the beginning he was skeptical about Kirpal and the Path, which seemed too redolent of Bhakti Yoga or the Yoga of Loving Devotion; as a Buddhist, he was more drawn to Jnana Yoga, the Yoga of Knowledge.32

Two weeks after that, at our third meeting, only Judith and I were there. We went ahead and held satsang anyway, and didn’t mind a bit. But that never happened again.

That May, work on the house at Sant Bani Farm had proceeded enough so that we could move in—very exciting. We had had a well drilled, and we got water at seventy-four feet, which was very auspicious as our finances were very limited at this point. Electricity had been put in, but we didn’t have a telephone for four years, and plumbing came continue to defeat me. Mr. Nyland had enormous respect for Beelzebub’s Tales, and I know that students of the Fourth Way consider it “a masterpiece of objective art”; but I have never been able to connect with it.

32 Actually, as Frank later discovered, Shabda Yoga includes the three psychological yogas, Bhakti, Jnana, and Karma (the Yoga of Action) as essential components of itself. See Kirpal’s great book, The Crown of Life.
slowly: we did not have a flush toilet for several months after we moved in. But at this point news of the Master’s forthcoming visit reached us and, motivated by God knows what, we wrote to Mr. Khanna and invited the Master to Sant Bani Farm. Not long after, we were pleased to get a schedule of the tour in the mail, and we saw that the Master was due at Sant Bani Farm on October 11, 1963. It was now May or early June (I don’t remember exactly which) and the house was still in terrible shape; between then and October lay an incredible amount of work.

The Coming of Kirpal

July 1 was Judith’s birthday, and to celebrate we took an unplanned trip to Boston. Our routine was to go to Boston in early December every year, to celebrate our anniversary (December 3), to do Christmas shopping, and to stock up on other things (for me, it was when I bought books). But this year seemed special and we went down. We stopped in to see our old friend and mentor Seymour Swetoff at his frame shop on Beacon Hill, and invited him to come see our place. He knew that the Master had agreed to go there, and he was curious, so he did indeed come up and visit us the next day. He took one look at the inside of the house and blanched. “My God, you expect the Master to come to this place? You must be out of your minds!” It was a real wake-up call. From then on we devoted our every waking minute to preparing for the Master’s coming.

Of course, I was still working at The Journal-Transcript. But that changed very soon. Sometime in early August, Dick Ames, the Foreman of the print shop, went on vacation, leaving me in charge of the flatbed press. He had been training me for a year or so, and I had pretty much mastered all aspects of it except the adjusting of the tension on the web. The newspaper was printed, eight pages at a time, off a big roll of newsprint paper which ran through the two stories of the press and then folded itself into a newspaper, cut itself off, and deposited itself into a bin at the end of the press, just above the big roll of newsprint.

33 By any objective standard, it seemed highly improbable that the Master would agree to come to such an out-of-the-way place with so few initiates. In this respect, the existence of Kirpal Ashram in Vermont was surely a big help; the Master was in Boston for a few days and was then scheduled for Vermont on October 12.
The paper was threaded through the two stories of the press (each containing four pages of the paper) in a very convoluted way, and as the roll got smaller and smaller the tension on the web changed and needed to be adjusted; if it wasn’t, or if it was adjusted incorrectly, the web snapped, creating total chaos.

Dick thought I understood how the adjusting for tension worked; I guess that I thought I understood it; but I didn’t. I made adjustments as the roll shrank, but I didn’t know what I was doing, and somewhere along the way the web snapped. It took several hours with the whole company, office and shop alike, trying to figure out what to do (the web had never snapped before in living memory, and nobody, least of all me, had any real idea of how to rethread the web) which of course made the paper very late and caused everyone to work into the night. Mrs. Lewis, the owner, was obviously very unhappy, and I knew that my name was mud.

The next day I called in sick and spent the day trying to find another job before I was fired; I also went to Dick Ames’s house to let him know what had happened before he heard it from Mrs. Lewis, but it looked like he was having a party at his house and I chickened out. I also tried calling him, but I couldn’t get through. The following Monday I went into work to find that Dick was in the front office getting talked to by Mrs. Lewis; when he finally emerged he was as angry as I’ve ever seen him. He said, “I’ve just had my ass chewed off for an hour and a half about you,” went into the pressroom, took a yardstick and attacked the web with it. “Now,” he said, when it was thoroughly demolished, “thread it up!” I said, “If you’d rather I not work here anymore”— he turned, went out to the office, came back a minute later, and said, “All right, Russell, if that’s the way you want it”— and I left.

Now this was a major failure on my part, and it left a big scar. Ever since I have been in horror of a situation where I am presumed to have a competence that I in fact don’t have; it seems to me the ultimate nightmare. And when I am depressed, which happens, I see myself as a sham, an impostor, pretending to abilities which are not mine. I identify very easily with the young Mark Twain apprenticing to a pilot on the riverboat, who discovered to his amazement that he was actually expected to retain the information he was given about the Mississippi River; although of course the big difference is that he did learn
the river and became an excellent pilot; whereas my days running a flatbed web press were over.

But then: who said I had to run a flatbed web press? The fact is that I had hated that job. I liked printing; I loved operating the linotype which I rarely got a chance to do at the J-T; I loved composition and page makeup, too. But I really, really disliked that monster of a press. And the fact is that in order to prepare for the Master’s coming I had to stop working; there was no way around it. As it was, we barely got ready in time.

The Master spent the summer in Europe; he flew into Washington, D.C., on September 1, 1963. We left the kids with my parents and drove down to see him, not without some apprehension: we were expecting so much from him, how could we help but be disappointed? We missed his arrival at the airport but drove straight to Mr. Khanna’s house on Delafield Place where he was staying. When we got there it was about 3:30 p.m., and Mr. Khanna told us that Master was just leaving for the Friends Meeting House to hold Satsang, and we could follow him over. We jumped in the car, backed into a driveway across the street so that we were facing the house directly, and just at that instant Master came out! We had a marvelous darshan\(^{34}\) for just half a minute; even now, after seeing him many hundreds of times, I cannot forget that first incredible sight of him coming out of the house and getting into the car. Just the way he held his magnificent head and walked out was moving beyond words. At sight of him, Judith burst into tears: and I was overwhelmed with a sense of my own triviality. Seeing him, I understood instantly why the books lay such stress on the company of Saints.

Master stayed in Washington for 27 days, but we were only there for three of them; the work on our house was calling us back. But a number of things that happened in those three days were memorable.

The second day, September 2, he met with many of us very informally in his room at Mr. Khanna’s house. This was the first time we had seen him up close and we were able to get a sense of what he was like; it was wonderful. Mr. Walter Cowan, a very prominent disciple from California asked him, “What can we do to promote harmony throughout all our groups?” And the Master answered as follows:

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\(^{34}\) **Darshan** is the sight of a holy person, considered to be a great blessing.
“First of all, we should forgive and forget the past. That is the foremost necessity. As I told you in my talk last night, many misunderstandings creep up, and the majority of them are due to hearing through the ears of others and seeing through the eyes of others. Take it as if they had not told you; then you will be all right.

“Whatever has been done—if it is at all true that it happened—cannot be mended now. We have to forget. I tell you, the man who can forget is a very strong man. The majority of men cannot forgive. Forgiveness requires a very big heart. And how can those who do not like to forgive others expect forgiveness from God?

“We wish that we would be forgiven. We pray for that, is it not so? He will forgive us only if we forgive others, too. If we don’t forgive the God in others, how can the God, who is there in others, forgive us? Do you see?

“The first thing is to forgive: not only to forgive, but to forget. Start afresh. And in the future, don’t believe what others say. Others say what they have heard or seen. Unless you see something for your own selves or hear it with your own ears, don’t believe it. If somebody tells you something unbecoming, know that a man has different moods; we are not perfect. If we have love for others, that very love beautifies even the worst of things. You have to see from that level. That is the only way.

“This is what should be done about the past. As for the future, you have to start your slate afresh. Many little things are already embedded in your mind. When others sometimes say, ‘Oh, yes, it must be like that,’ you see it through the smoky glasses of the many things already lying within you.

“So the first thing, I would say, is to forgive and forget. And along with that, keep your diaries. Introspect your day-to-day life; enter any infirmities on your part in your diaries, and try to weed them out. This is the outward thing. The other is to devote regular time to the meditation practices. Both these together will work wonderfully.

“If you sit by fire, all cold will be gone. If you come in contact with the Light and Sound Principle, naturally all infirmities will leave you. That is its effect. Some infirmities will go by outer self-introspection, and others will leave you by coming in contact with the God Power within. In this way, you will grow in love. When love overflows, everything
becomes new to us, and we will also have more progress from within.

“One thing which is still more important than all of these is to know that we are working for one common Cause. As I told you last night, we have been brought into a relationship that can never end or break, even after death. We are grateful we have the human body; we are grateful we have some experience to start with on the way; and we are more grateful that we have been linked in such a relationship that it can never be broken. If anybody who is related to you—for instance, your child—slaps you on the face, what would you do? Would you kill him? You would simply say, ‘All right. He is ignorant; that’s all.’

“When all of you are working for the one common Cause before you, the more one can do, the better. The more each man can do, the more he will be respected by others. But, mind that, there should not be any egoistic feeling in what you do, that you are the greater man.

“Take the word, ‘world’—w-o-r-l-d. If you eliminate the ‘l’ from it, what remains is ‘Word.’ The Word is God. If you eliminate your ‘self’—the thought that you are doing it—you are God’s. You become the mouthpiece of God. I think, if you put this into practice for two or three months, you will find a radical change.

“Sometimes there is this spirit: ‘Well, I know more; I am more important.’ We are important insofar as God works through us. And we are working all for Him. There is no need of caring whether anybody is watching you work or not. Be true to Him. He is within you. I think that in a very short time you will see for your own selves. You will grow more in love.

“If another man can do more or if anybody comes up to help you, the more fortunate you are. There is no question of possession or domination. These are very simple things that I think all of you know already. I am not telling you anything new.

“First of all, we should forgive. We may have little daily dyings: ‘Such and such man told me that. He thinks of me like that.’ That prepossessed idea is already within you, and you judge everything that happens with those smoky glasses.

“I think this will give you progress from day to day. You will find more love. And we should have confidence and trust in all those who are on the way. You can also have trust in others, for there are good people everywhere. But, God knows, you are selected to be good people.
“I remember an event in the time of the third Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Amardas. A man who was initiated was giving his small child a bath in the river, and somebody came running up to him and said, ‘Master wants you.’ What did he do? He left the child right where it was and ran to the Master. And others asked him, ‘What are you doing? Your child will drown.’ ‘Oh, my brother is with him,’ he answered.

“We should have such like trust and confidence in one another. When we are all working for the same Cause, what more is wanted? Don’t look from the individual angle of vision. We have to look from the angle of vision we have been given. But this can develop only if we have no evil thought about anybody else. Even if anybody else does, it does not harm you. It harms you only when you take it for yourself.

“It so happened that somebody came up to Lord Buddha and began to call him names, like anything. Sometimes you find such opposition comes up because there are rivals or parties. He came in the evening, and he went on this way into the night. When a man is in an angry mood, he forgets everything all around him. It got dark, then he thought, ‘Oh, it is getting dark; I have to go back.’ As he was turning away, Buddha told him, ‘Well, look here, dear friend.’ ‘Yes, what do you have to say?’ ‘Look here, if someone brings a present and the person for whom he has brought it does not accept it, with whom does that present remain?’ ‘Well, naturally, with the one who has brought it.’ ‘Well, whatever present you have brought me, I do not accept.’

“These are the lessons we learn from the lives of great men. I have been very fond of reading biographies ever since I was a student. You will find there is something in each great man. We have to just follow in their footsteps.

“I tell you, to reach God is not difficult, but to make a man is difficult. We are all on the way to perfection, some ten per cent, some twenty per cent, some forty per cent; but we are not yet fully perfect. But we have to be ‘perfect as our Father is in heaven.’ That is our goal. And God loves all, even those who call Him names, who do not believe in Him. Is it not so? If you want to realize the God in you, you should also do the same.

“I think this is the way. I have told you no new thing; but we should start with a clean heart. What is past is past; it should be forgotten: first forgiven and then forgotten. Even in forgiving we say, ‘Oh, I have already forgiven you; why should I forgive you again?’ This was put
to Master Jesus. He was asked, ‘What should we do to forgive others? How many times should we forgive them—what do the scriptures say?—seven times?’ Jesus said, ‘I say forgive him seventy times seven.’

“This scripture is not only meant for reading or ruminating over. It is to be learned. Whatever you learn should become part and parcel of your life, and you will change like anything.

“I think that you have put a very good question. I already gave you a hint yesterday that it is all up to us. If Mr. Khanna is there or you are there or Mrs. Kelley is there or anybody—A, B, C or D—is there, they are working for the Cause of the Master. There may be little flaws here or there. But if we look from the angle of love, we will see that everyone is doing his best in his own way.

“One thing more: we should learn appreciation of others. If you learn even that much, I think that it will sweep away all the dirt. It won’t add any more dirt to it. Whatever little a man does, appreciate it. If he does more, appreciate it still more. Appreciation, I think, will save you from adding more trouble, more dirt to your mind. We don’t appreciate others, I tell you. We all say, ‘I have done the most. What I can do, nobody else can do.’ When that ‘I-hood’ enters in, it spoils the whole show. A little poison added even to something sweet will kill you.

“So, again, it is not difficult to reach God, but it is difficult to make a man. It takes time. The human body is the golden opportunity we have, and we can do it; each man can change. There is hope for everybody: every Saint has his past and every sinner, a future. A man who is now reading in the M.A. class or has a Ph.D. was once reading in the primary class. And if a man who is now reading in the primary class gets the same help and guidance, he too can get the same degree.

“We should look at everybody from his level. If you have an M.A. or a higher degree and you think, ‘Oh, why does he not do as I am doing?’ that involves some condescension. These things, little by little added up, give the mind unrest. They also drive away every iota of love within you.

“Forgive and forget. Have appreciation for whatever anyone does. Do work for the sake of the common Cause we have formed. Don’t feel that others do less; why not do your best? Each one should do his best and have appreciation for one another. I think this would be a very good ground for your meditation, too.
“These small thoughts vibrate. If you strike a small wire, it continues vibrating for some time. Every little thought vibrates. That is why, for some reason or another, our meditations are sometimes not good.

“You will remain a man outwardly. Master is a man like you. He has only two eyes, not four. Do you see? He passes through the world, and He becomes an example for others, too. He does not have four hands, or four feet for walking, but He has developed inwardly. You can also develop in this way, with proper help and guidance.”

Mr. Khanna asked the people in the back of the room if they could hear, which they could, and then Master says, “I don’t give lectures, you see; I give heart-to-heart talks.”

Then Jerry “Astra” Turk, the Group Leader from Miami, said, “There are three beautiful children outside and they are waiting for days to see you; can I bring them in?”

And Master replied, “Surely, oh yes, bring them in. ‘Suffer little children to come.’ They are the budding hopes of the coming generation—the budding hopes.”

The children—teenagers from the neighborhood—did come in, and then someone said, “Master, give us that parable about bending the elbows again, would you please?” And the Master said:

“The parable goes that the God Vishnu, who provides for the world (the same God, but the aspect that is demarcated for a certain function), invited all the good and bad people—the gods and the demons—and prepared a very big banquet for them. The food was laid out, and seats were arranged for everyone. They all sat together. Naturally, in events of this kind, the host has to say something. He said, ‘All my dear friends, I welcome you. But there is one condition I have made, and that is, when you eat your food, don’t bend your arms. (Of course, only when you bend your arm will the food reach your mouth, not otherwise.) It is all for you. Enjoy it.’

“Those people who were called ‘bad’ had not developed. The demons racked their brains and thought, ‘Well, what are we to do? How are we to reach our mouths?’ They could not find any solution. So they said, ‘Perhaps we have been simply ridiculed,’ and they left the place. But the others who were still there said, ‘There must be something in it. Those who are developed do not say anything unnecessary. When
you hear something from them, there is some meaning in it, something in it. We should try to understand.’

“They came to the conclusion: ‘Yes, he said something very good. All right, we won’t bend our arms. We will simply take the food and stretch out our arms and feed each other.’ If you stretch out your hand it will reach my mouth; my hands will reach your mouth.

“This is a parable from which we have to learn. We only want to feed our own selves. If you would make others eat, make others happy, then I think, all would be happy; there could be nobody who would remain unhappy.

“Share with others. This is given in all scriptures. They laid down the law of ‘tithing,’ that is, giving something for the good of all the people. Some start with one-fortieth, until everything is given away for God. If we learn to share with others, there will be no feeling of otherness. What is causing all the trouble? One brother is rich; the other is poor; this one has been killed; that one is going hungry; another does not care.

“I told some governors I met during this tour that all the problems of the governments will be solved. I told them, ‘Look here, you have been given custody of certain people under you. Look after their convenience to the best you can. Have love of service. Service of humanity is service of God; God has entrusted you with that. No matter what the number of people your country has, let them be served. You are responsible to God for that. If one country has more people to serve than it can manage, let the people of other countries manage to provide for them or transfer them to their country.’ Everything can be solved; and in two or three cases, they did change.

“We should think that whatever we have, others certainly have the same right. In our dominating spirits, we simply spoil the show—just for a little ‘I-hood.’ The ‘I’ should be eliminated from ‘world,’ and the Word will remain. These things are given in our scriptures, but we simply ruminate and go on devouring anything, not taking anything to heart and making it part and parcel of our lives.

“When I was young, I used to read my scriptures of the Sikhs. It is a very voluminous book, covering over fourteen hundred pages, big size, and I think there are hundreds of hymns in it. I used to read only one hymn and then put it down in writing. I considered that that was the lesson given to me for the day. I read it once, twice, four times—all throughout the day, and sometimes for two days. If we read scriptures
in that way, I think we will change. We simply read them and then forget what was written there. We listen to a talk and on the same day we forget what the subject of the talk was. We should first learn wholeheartedly by attending wholeheartedly, and then grasp the meaning and make it part and parcel of our lives. The food which is digested will give you strength. If the food is not digested, it will create some disease, some ferment in the body.

“This is what has to be done. Everybody knows what is best, but we simply learn and forget. Don’t learn anything to be forgotten. Learn one thing, and other things will follow. Learn to love, and everything will be all right: service will follow; sacrifice will follow; everything will follow. Love always knows giving. One who loves won’t eat; he will give to others. A mother won’t eat even if she has to take the morsel out of her own mouth and give it to the child. Similarly, make one point in your life definite: other things will follow. Be truthful. If you always tell the truth—who you are, what you are doing now, what you were doing last night—naturally, if you were doing anything wrong, you will be ashamed. You will try not to do it again. Similarly, if you digest one thing and make it part and parcel of your life, your life will change. I think so many of you know so much, perhaps in many cases more than I do intellectually, but the difference is only that you have not digested it. That’s all.”

Mr. Khanna said, “I think all group leaders and representatives are requested to get together at 3:30 for an hour or so, so we can talk things over in the presence of the Master. It is just for the leaders.”

And Master said, “The leaders are as dear to me as you are; but if they have any difficulties in their work, we can have a heart-to-heart talk. It is only because you have some practical difficulties bothering you.

“This is what I suggested at the very beginning, in 1955: that all representatives who were chosen should lay their heads together at regular intervals so as to see what the difficulties are and if there can be any solution to them. If all of you sit together and love each other, it will be a very good example for others. If you don’t meet with any other person and you are talking too highly about your own self and denouncing others, that is a bad name on the very movement. Do you follow me?”
Someone asked, “Master, would you just give us a couple of words on love before you go?” The Master said, “Love: what is a sign of love?” The questioner repeated, “What is a sign of love?”

The Master said, “Yes, an outer sign. The one whom you remember, whom you love, is never forgotten, even in your dreams. So love so much that even in dreams you see Him: even in your deep, sound sleep you may be giving out the same thing. Out of the abundance of heart a man speaks. That’s all.”

The following day, September 3, Mr. Khanna had scheduled a press conference at the National Press Club Building (I believe that was the name of the building) and we all went to see how the press would deal with the Master. But when we got there, there was no press! As somebody said, you can schedule a press conference but you can’t make them come. So we were all recruited to find reporters and persuade them to come. Betty Shiflett (an older disciple) and I went together and we found a reporter for Newsweek in her office. We talked very fast, and I showed her a picture of the Master I carried in my wallet, and she agreed to come with us.

When we got back down to the auditorium, there were a number of reporters there, and one of them was talking with the Master. After listening to him a little bit, my heart sank: there was no doubt that that reporter had been drinking. But Master listened to him very patiently, answered all his questions, and treated him with great respect. In the meantime, the other reporters all got up and left. It seemed like a complete fiasco; yet the Master did not seem to know that. As we were leaving, one of the disciples said, “Master, you know that man was drunk!” Master was in great spirits; he laughed and said happily, “That’s all right!” It was the first time, but not the last, in my experience, that Kirpal had a totally different perspective on what was going on than everybody around him.

The night we were due to leave, he granted us a very sweet darshan in his room, gave us parshad, and talked lovingly about coming to our farm. He also told us very firmly that we should stay over and attend the meditation he was conducting the next morning. We did.

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35 Parshad is any gift, but especially food, given by a Master: it carries his charging.
I had never attended a group meditation conducted by the Master before, and was totally unprepared for this one (the first of the 1963 tour). After giving us really excellent instructions, he left the room for an hour while we sat; on returning, he questioned each person individually as to what he had seen. The problem was, as usual, I had seen nothing; I hadn’t expected anything different really; it didn’t bother me, because it was what I was used to. I noticed, however, with a real sense of foreboding, that out of a hundred people or so in the room, I was one of maybe four that hadn’t seen any light at all. Person after person reeled off their experiences while I listened incredulously; even Judith had had an experience! But not me.

By the time Master reached me, I had worked myself up into blaming Master for not giving me anything. He looked at me. “Yes?” “Nothing, sir” (sullenly). “Nothing?” “Nothing.” He fixed me with the most penetrating gaze I had ever seen. “Why not?” “I don’t know, sir.” “Were you conscious of your breathing?” “No, sir.” “Did you have a headache?” “No, sir.” “Then why not?” “I don’t know, sir.” (In my heart I was thinking, Aren’t you supposed to know that? Isn’t it your fault?) Master looked at me again. Oh, God, that gaze! “Everyone else had this thing; why not you?” I was defeated: I said weakly, “I don’t know, sir.” He looked at me again. “Are you initiated?” (Oh God, I thought. Oh God! Doesn’t he know whether I’m initiated or not? Oh God, oh God!) “Yes, sir.” “Did you have an experience when you were initiated?” “Yes, sir.” “If you had then, why not now?” “I don’t know, sir.” He looked at me again, a long, long look. “All right; go and sit over there; I will give you another sitting later.” I did not get another sitting; we had to leave too soon. In the car on the way home, all the pent-up rage and frustration and humiliation burst through, and for many minutes I am afraid that I cursed the name of the Son of God: I can say this because I know that he has long since forgiven me.

(Later of course it became perfectly clear to me what Master had been doing with me in those minutes: He had been giving me a crash course in humility and ego-smashing which I desperately needed if there was to be any hope for me at all. He knew perfectly well, of course, exactly who I was and if I was initiated or not: just the night before he
had assured me that he would come to our farm. But every one of his questions was aimed at breaking down a very hard rock of arrogance which was effectively preventing any further development. Just two nights previously I had been introduced as a group leader, much to my ego’s satisfaction; to be asked by the Master himself in front of the same people if I was initiated or not was so humiliating it was unbearable. But Masters don’t fool around; they look into the heart of the disciple and give him what is required in order to bring about the greatest possible growth.)

Eventually I calmed down, and even the nightmare of those minutes faded away; remaining were the very moving recollections of the way Master looked as he moved about, the loving darshan that he had given us, and the sense of timelessness that had pervaded the whole stay; as though we had stepped out of the modern world for a few days. Anyway, we had a great deal of work to do, preparing for his visit; so much work that there was literally no time for morbidity. We worked day and night; Judith and I did nothing but work on the house twelve or fourteen hours a day. My meditations which were no good anyway were forgotten about (Judith kept hers up by getting by with two hours sleep a night—literally); all sense of a future was lost—as far as we were concerned, the world ended on October 11 (the day Master was coming). Those were difficult days in many ways, but I think they were the happiest days of my life up to that point, despite the fact that the repairs on the house involved our going into debt with absolutely no assurance of being able to pay it back. But we could see only one thing—the Master was coming!

The next time we saw him was in Boston at Mildred Prendergast’s house where he was staying.

He was sitting on Millie’s bed, cross-legged. His face seemed sad, and the total effect of his presence was that he seemed too large for the room. He looked at me and asked right away, “How are your meditations?” (Oh, no!) “Not so good.” “Why not?”

I started to say, “Because I’ve been working on the house, getting ready for you,” but didn’t. Somehow, something in me knew better.

He looked at me. “Are you initiated?”
This time half of my mind gave up and spun off a great distance away. From what seemed like many miles I heard my voice say, “Yes, Master.”

“When were you initiated?” “May 1958, Master.”

He looked thoughtful. “Five years. That’s a long time.” Suddenly I realized that while his words were hard, his tone was very gentle; and I saw the love in His gaze.

He asked me very softly, “What is the use of taking the Initiation if you are not going to do anything with it?”

Suddenly the part of my mind that was away came back, and I felt with that question, It’s going to be all right. I looked at him. “No use, Master.” But I was beginning to understand.

That night Master gave the second of three discourses at the Second Church in Boston. It was difficult to follow his talk: the acoustics were bad and there was a decided echo; but if ever a Biblical prophet stood in a Christian church it was that night.

Two days later, on Thursday, October 10 (his last day in Boston, and the day before he came to Sant Bani) he gave Initiation. Something very strong told me to attend that Initiation, and I did. I got up early on a frosty morning and drove down to Boston, my heart singing; Master had given me peace, though I could see no reason for it. At the Initiation, the first ever that I had attended with Master personally conducting, he gave me back everything I had lost and more besides. Never in my life had I swum in the Ocean of Light as I did that blessed golden morning in Boston. “Oh God, thank you, Oh God, thank you,” I kept saying over and over, tears in my eyes.

After the sitting the Master came around asking the new initiates what they had seen. He came to the back where we older ones were sitting and asked cheerfully, “Everything all right here?”

I could say nothing; I looked at him and caught his eye, and he twinkled. Oh thank God! Thank God! And it was all him; he knew all about everything and always had!
An Ashram Is Born

The following day he came to Sant Bani Farm, and our new life in him began. Later it seemed that the great gulf fixed between the old and the new opened on this day. One twenty-four hour period and what changes it wrought! All of the hard work and the nightmare anxiety of the previous five weeks faded away in the unearthly joy those twenty-four hours brought. After it was over, I reflected that it was the one event in my life that had not only been as good as I could have imagined, but infinitely better. I understood for the first time what it is like to be loved—really loved—by Someone Who knew what I really was. I had a taste, that is, of the love of God.

I had gone (with our three-and-a-half-year old daughter Miriam) to the nearest exit off Interstate 93 to meet him and the caravan (five or six cars) that was accompanying him. When we arrived at Sant Bani, I jumped out of my car and rushed over to his. Judith, with our two-year old son, Eric, in her arms was already greeting him. He spoke to us very kindly, and slowly climbed the little hill on which the house stood. When he reached the front door, he turned and looked slowly and thoughtfully over the beautiful New Hampshire landscape spread out before him. He laughed and said, very quietly, almost under his breath, “Nature is always beautiful, except when tormented by man.” Then he went in the house.

A little later Judith and I were looking out the back window when we saw him walking up the little hill behind the house to a large and prominent rock under a cherry tree. He was accompanied only by Bibi Hardevi (called Tai Ji), his housekeeper who looked after his needs. When he reached the rock, he took off his turban and lay down on the grass, Tai Ji squatting nearby. Judith and I watched wide-eyed; we nudged each other in suppressed excitement. What happened then was surely the most light-hearted Satsang ever! As the disciples discovered where he was, they gathered around him (there were about fifteen or twenty people) while he sat on the rock, put them in meditation, tossed them parshad apples, joked and teased with them, took pictures of them (because they had been taking pictures of him) and in general made them very happy. But not me: I and three others were at the Unitarian Church in nearby Franklin, where the Master was scheduled to speak...
that night, getting the auditorium ready for his talk. We missed the whole thing.

That night the Master gave his talk, and I am going to include the beginning and the ending, along with the questions that were asked that night and the answers Master gave. He said:

Dear brothers and sisters: I am a man like you. Of course I had the good fortune to sit at the feet of my Master Baba Sawan Singh of Beas, through whose grace I solved the mystery of life. Religions were made by man for his moral and spiritual uplift. These were made for man and man was not made for them. The purpose of joining a religion is to know God, which is the highest ideal before us. And the human body is the golden opportunity we have got in which we can know Him. . . . So all of us who are sitting here—we are fortunate that we have got the human body. And we have also joined various religions to achieve that object of life which we have got before us. We have to see now how far we have succeeded in achieving the object of Life which is before us. . .

So I am here not to advocate any new religion to you. Remain where you are, but be true Christians. What did Christ say? “Open the inner eye to see the Light of God within you.” He who sees the Light of God is a true Christian. And if you have not seen the Light of God, then—we’ve joined that school of course, but we have not become true Christians. Similarly, a Sikh is one who sees the Light of God.
Remain in the outer forms, that is the first step: to belong, to believe in some religion is a blessing. But you must rise above. If we did not live in any religion, there would be corruption, or we would have to invent new religions. Why don’t you stay in the religions which have stood the test of time? If there is any corruption, you see, just leave it aside and follow the true teachings which the Masters gave from time to time. So, as I told you, I have not come to advocate new religions. Remain where you are—this is the Truth that has been given by all Masters. Just try to meet somebody who knows the Way. We want a teacher in any line, you see. Whatever subject you have to take, naturally, sit at his feet. He is your true friend, your true brother, he is competent to give you some experience. And all credit goes to him. No son of man can do it, but the God in him, which is manifest, He is competent to raise you up and give you an experience of his own self, you see.

With these few words, I’m glad I’ve been here at Sant Bani Ashram for a day. They wanted me to speak something, what little I know; to the best I can, I have given you a digest of the same in a few words. These words are for your calm consideration. If you’ve got true hunger, thirst for God, it is God above Who has to make the arrangements. He will bring you in contact somewhere where you can be put on the way. So whenever Masters come, they see people from the level of the human body or from the level of the embodied soul—not from the level of the outer badges of different religions that we are carrying. That is why his first work is to collect all children of God together, not to blend their religions into one, to let them simply remain where they are; but to rise above body consciousness to come to the Truth, you see. And he has the competency to raise you up and give you the experience within to start with.

So thank you for your patient hearing.

QUESTION: “Did the Master say that one day we would reach perfection?”

THE MASTER: “Yes, there is hope. In the human body, you see, I would say, we have got the birthright to be perfect, to know God. Christ said, ‘Be ye perfect as your Father is in Heaven.’ If there were no hope, I don’t think that he would have given that statement.

“We are spirit in man and spirit is perfect. We are simply environed by mind and matter and other things. When we shake off, we are perfect, you see. And human body is the only time, the golden opportunity which we have got to go back home.”

QUESTION: “Do you declare that when we drop this body that we take on another one?”
The Master: “There is life after death, that is definite, that’s sure. I have come from India; I am no more in India, but here in America. There is a transfer from the physical to the astral. I told you from the beginning that macrocosm is in the microcosm of the human body. God has given us bodies to work through the three planes. In the physical plane we have the physical body. When we shake it off at the time of death, or even if now we are able to shake it off—of course, with the guidance of somebody, you know, who can take us into the beyond—if we shake off all these three bodies we see we are souls. God is within us and we are in God.”

Question: “I still don’t understand from how you answered my question about perfection.”

The Master: “As I told you, I think if you had understood properly, the man who has got the human body, he has the birthright to be perfect, to know God, you see? The time factor is a necessity—if he is left alone, it may happen, in due course. But I will give you the example of a fruit tree. If you leave it alone to nature, it will bear fruit in six or seven years. If you give it some scientific food, it will give fruit in two or three years. If trees can take some help from outside and give fruit quickly, why can’t the conscious man have help from the higher conscious man to bear forth fruit quicker? So there’s hope.”

Question: “Do I understand you that, after death, there’ll be a rebirth on earth again?”

The Master: “Well, you see, my point is, some Masters have referred to it and some have not.”

Question: “Reincarnation?”

The Master: “I tell you. Some Masters have referred to it—reincarnation—and others have not referred to it. The same question was asked of me when I went to Pakistan. Muslims generally don’t believe in reincarnation. Those people came up to me—so many—and said, ‘Well, do you believe in reincarnation?’ I told them the very same words that I have now told you: that some have referred to reincarnation and others have not. Then I told them, ‘Before I reply to you further, I would like to ask one question from you: I have come to Pakistan, I am abiding by all the laws of this country, I am living very lovingly with all, everybody lives lovingly with me. But with all that, you have got prison houses, a police department and records. I say
that there is no police or imprisonment for me.’ So the Masters who have not referred to it say, ‘Become true Christians.’ When you live by God, you see, you love God the most. Where is reincarnation for you? That is only for those who are attached to the world. You see? That is why some Masters have not referred to it.

“So I think that the human body is the highest in all creation. We have got the golden opportunity and we can live, if we can find God within this human body. Where is the question of returning?”

**Question:** “I still don’t know if I understand you right or not—you do believe in reincarnation?”

**The Master:** “Past Masters have left their proofs for that, you see. Direct proofs, paper proofs—and even incidents they remember from their past births, and that has been checked, too. But not for the souls who have attained God, you see.”

**Question:** “It seems that the big difference in this type of talk is the fact that the Master is needed, you know, direct contact with a Master. So my question is, who is considered a Master?”

**The Master:** “Yes.”

**Question:** “In the United States, particularly . . . I know in India . . .”

**The Master:** “Whether in the United States, or not, I think you know better, because you have been here all along. I have only come for a trip. Last time also I only came for a trip. But the point is what the Masters say. Who is a Master? Who can be called a Master? One who sees and can make others see. You see? Who has the competency to raise our souls above the body consciousness, open the inner eye. And you testify that there is Light. He who can give you that experience—who is competent to give you that—he may be called superior to you, anyway. If we can rise above our own selves, well and good. A blind man needs two eyes to see. If not, in worldly things we do seek the help of others; why not in this most important case? The general rule is man learns from man. The teacher of man is a man. Of course the man at whose pole that God Power is working alone has the Power, not the son of man, as I told you before. It is the God in him manifested that has the competency to raise your soul above the senses and enables you to see, to see the Light and hear the Voice of God.

“All right. You have to go alone.
“To the best I know, I have placed before you, with the grace of my Master; it is for your calm consideration, to see how far you can derive benefit from that.”

There are several noteworthy points about this meeting and this talk. For one thing, about seventy-five people attended, and the population of the area around Franklin was then about 7,500; so one per cent of the total population came to see the Master. If one per cent of the total population of New York City, where the Master had been a few days previously, had come to see him, there would have been seventy thousand people in the hall.

Then, several people who attended that night, including two of the people who asked questions (Penny Golden, who asked the two questions about perfection, and Bill Simpson, who asked the question about where a Master might be in the United States) later took the Initiation and practiced Shabda Yoga.

If you read the questions and answers carefully, you will note that Master is not at all clear about whether he teaches reincarnation or not, much to the frustration of one lady who kept trying to get a straight answer. Of course, he did teach it; but there is a story behind the obfuscation.

Among the attendees was a man named Gerald Boyce. He was a native of Franklin, had worked at the G. W. Griffin Co. hacksaw factory much of his adult life as a trouble shooter; had spent time with the great teacher Krishnamurti in Ojai, California; had been a vegetarian since the age of twenty-five, when a farmer’s wife he was working for had asked him to kill a chicken and he found he couldn’t do it; had grown his hair and beard long at a time when no one (and I mean no one) did such a thing; and had two things in his mind about Kirpal by way of tests: Did he wear leather? Did he teach reincarnation? He had studied the occult scripture Oahspe for many years, and while that book advocates vegetarianism it denies reincarnation. And to him, wearing leather was consistent with vegetarianism. When the Master came in the hall that night, he was in his stocking feet; he had left his shoes outside. This was not at all his usual practice, and I noticed it at the time. Then, of course, Gerald heard the talk and loved it; as he told me later, “I saw it had an inner logic to it.” When the questions
about reincarnation came up, what he got from it was that the Master didn’t teach it; by the time he found out the truth of it, he didn’t care anymore: he was totally convinced of Kirpal’s greatness and was initiated a year later.

And of course the noteworthiest thing of all: the Master’s reference to “Sant Bani Ashram.” Prior to this, our farm had never been referred to that way; after this, it was never referred to any other way.

Judith had ridden to the church that night in the car with the Master. On the way in, he said to her, “Your husband missed everything this afternoon.” She explained that I was preparing the hall for the talk that night, and he nodded.

The following morning the Master held a group meditation at our now-ashram. It was the first time I had meditated since the Master had given me back the light two days before. This time the Light was even more intense and more bright; and through it I caught glimpses of much more. When the Master came to me afterward, I told him what I had seen, and he twinkled. Later I went up to him and said, “I just want to thank you for that beautiful meditation this morning. I know I couldn’t have done it by myself.” He looked at me and said, matter-of-factly, “Well, you missed all the fun yesterday,” and smiled into my eyes.

Before the meditation started, I noticed that Gerald Boyce (of course, I did not know his name then) had just walked in. The Master saw him and said to me, “Now it’s time to start. People are arriving.” I later found out that Gerald had walked the entire distance from Tilton, where he was living, to the ashram in Sanbornton, by way of Franklin where he had hoped to find a cab (but the cab company wasn’t open yet): a distance of some fifteen miles. When he arrived, it was time to start.

Later that same morning the Master was standing behind the big house alone, and I went up to him: “Last night I heard you refer to this place as an ashram. Judith and I have talked it over, and we agreed that we would like to give it to you.” He said, with great emphasis, “You keep custody! Maintain it according to my teachings, that’s all.”

We all left around noontime, after an orgy of picture-taking, for Kirpal Ashram in Vermont, managed by Nina Gitana. On the way out an incident occurred which none of us, except the Master, were remotely aware of at the time, yet it is an excellent example of how the
Master works: we think we understand what he is doing, we include him in our mental catalogue of categories we are familiar with, yet the truth is we see only the barest sliver of what he is and what his activities include. The following is an article written by Charleen Girouard much later, and published in the August 1993 issue of Sant Bani Magazine:

The year was 1963, the month October. I was twelve years old, living with my family in Massachusetts. My oldest sister was going to a Catholic boarding school in Hudson, New Hampshire (about an hour drive from Franklin). One Sunday, our whole family drove over to visit her. After leaving the rest of the family at the boarding school, my dad decided to go for a drive in the country, so I went along with him.

Dad loved to ride up and down the winding dirt roads—which were quite common in that part of the country—to see what was at the end. On this particular day, we had gone some distance down a road when my father slowed to a stop to let four or five cars coming down a steep dirt driveway, drive past us. While we watched, a man in the back seat of the first car leaned forward with his hands folded and bowed slightly to my father, while staring at him quite penetratingly and very seriously. He had a white beard and a white turban and deep-set eyes. I was in the back seat and had seen him, but he had not looked at me. I zoomed over to the other side of the car and with my face pressed against the glass window just hoped, for some reason, (I didn't understand why) with all my heart that this man would look at me too. Just when it seemed the moment had been lost, he leaned forward and with folded hands, looked at me! (Very sadly, I thought in my twelve year old mind. Why is he so sad?) But then I felt a sense of relief—he had looked at me. Somehow, this was very important.

Well, dad and I decided to go up this driveway and investigate. A turban and a white beard in New Hampshire? At the top was a wood frame house. A sign read “Sant Bani Farm.” Being Catholic and my father being French, I thought maybe it was a farm for men studying to be priests and dedicated to the Catholic Saint, “Saint Boniface” (in French?). My father shrugged his shoulders and we drove back to the boarding school, picked up the rest of the family and drove home.

Over the years I forgot about the incident although the picture of that man with the long white beard always intrigued me. I left home at an early age, but returned home for visits periodically over the course of the years. Meanwhile, my parents had relocated to eastern Canada.
A few years before my dad passed away (1986) he started mentioning this incident to me from time to time, but with some embarrassment. He was a strict Catholic. Around this time, he would occasionally complain to me of a ringing in his right ear.

Since I had taken some nursing training, and he was a dentist, we would try to figure out the cause. I don't know if he mentioned it to the other members of the family. Sometimes we would just be sitting together eating and this ringing would start in his ear. He found it quite annoying.

A few months before my father passed away (which was quite suddenly at home, of a heart attack), we were sitting at the table and he asked me bashfully if I remembered that strange man in the white beard (referring to that fateful encounter in 1963). He told me that he was having dreams about him that seemed so real. We both wondered who he had been. As he was telling me about the dreams, I could tell he was disturbed but somehow happy about them. Well, we just looked at each other and wondered what it was all about.

After my father died, I dreamt about him three or four different times. In the last dream, he told me he was doing great and that he was on his way to “New Jerusalem.” It was a phrase he had never used while alive, and I was not familiar with it, until a couple of months before my Initiation in 1989 when I found reference to it in Sant Kirpal's book *Naam*.

In December 1988, two years after my father died, I was sleeping and was awakened by a touch on my forehead. This happened a couple more times and led to a number of inner experiences, but they were without figure or form. Meanwhile, a satsangi was working where I was employed and I felt quite drawn to her as she seemed to evoke that same warm, loving quality that was akin to my night time experiences.

Well, one thing led to another. She lent me a book on Sant Mat. I asked her for another. I bought two more of my own. At first, I was not at all interested in Sant [Ajaib Singh] Ji. By then, I had remembered vividly the incident with Master Kirpal (1963) and recognized his face from the pictures in the Sant Mat books I was reading. I realized that my father was safe—he was with Kirpal!

As I sat reading these books and looking at the pictures of Sant Ji, I was drawn to those eyes, although if anyone had told me even a few months earlier that I was going to have a Master, I would have laughed. But Sant Ji had his way, and has his ways. I fell in love with him. A few trips to the Ashram (Surrey, British Columbia), a few satsangs and a few weeks of his eyes and I wanted Initiation, which came that summer.
Days of Heaven

That afternoon at Kirpal Ashram was lovely; Master held satsang on the lawn and answered questions on Karma, a talk since reprinted as the Introduction to his book on Karma, *The Wheel of Life: The Law of Action and Reaction*. Miriam and Eric and other kids played happily (on the tape of this occasion you can hear them in the background). But we did notice the presence of two men who seemed totally out of it as far as the Master was concerned. When I questioned Nina about them, she just said that they had been there a few days.

That night the Master spoke at Goddard College in nearby Plainfield. I was standing in the back of the hall, watching him intently; I was amazed to see that all through the talk his face kept literally changing into that of his Master, Baba Sawan Singh of Beas, who died in 1948. I had often heard of this phenomenon but had never before personally witnessed it, although I was to see it fairly often from this time on. It was a very specific and tangible thing: he would look down a moment, in the course of his talk, and when he lifted his head again, he would be Sawan Singh completely. Throughout the talk his features kept shifting back and forth in this way.

When we arrived back at the Ashram after the talk we were astonished to find the driveway filled with police cars, strobe lights, and men in uniform telling us we could not come any further. What in God’s name was happening? Rumors flew, but no one knew. Eventually we saw the Master being escorted into the house by a policeman! Now Judith, Miriam, and Eric had not attended this talk; Judith stayed at the Ashram with them to put them to bed. The Princess Devinderbir Kaur Narendra (known as Khuku) had also stayed home and was visiting with Judith when the police arrived. She was able to tell me what had happened: The two men we had noticed earlier, who, it turned out, had nothing whatever to do with the Path, had apparently broken into a clinic of some sort, stolen drugs, and come straight back to the Ashram—all so ineptly that the police traced them there almost immediately. Wow! After an hour or so, the police left; Judith said that they had treated the Master respectfully and did not hold Nina or the Ashram responsible in any way for what had happened.
Master called a meeting, during which he went over the legal papers involved in the ownership of the Ashram, and after examining them, called Judith in from the room where the kids were sleeping. He told her that it was clear from the papers that she was the person who had given the Ashram to the sangat, and in front of everybody he thanked her. She was embarrassed and moved. He told Nina that it was very important that she not allow people who were working against the purpose of the Ashram to stay there, and told her that if something like that happened again to call the police if necessary. Earlier, before the meeting had begun, I had been sitting on the floor watching him go through the papers, and marveling at the attention he was paying them. He looked at me (I hadn’t said anything), and said with a chuckle, “You know, I can’t keep this world and the next in my head at the same time.”

The next day we went down to the Baron von Blomberg’s house in Hampton, New Hampshire.\textsuperscript{36} I was leading the way again. We came into Barre and I made a wrong turn on Route 14 and went north instead of south. I didn’t realize what I was doing and I was driving along very happily until somebody beeped a horn behind me. I turned and this car from the rear of the caravan had caught up to me and the guy hollered out, “I think you’re going the wrong way.” Oh my God.

\textsuperscript{36} William Frary, Baron von Blomberg, was an initiate of the Master and a very interesting guy. Originally from Lynn, Massachusetts, he managed to get adopted into a family of German nobility, and inherited the title. He was an antique dealer by profession, but over the course of his life he had developed contacts, and was on a friendly basis, with a vast number of wealthy and influential people, all of whom he approached on behalf of the World Fellowship of Religions, of which Master was President at the time. The next few weeks of the 1963 tour were centered around the Baron’s friends, on behalf of the WFR.

The Baron incidentally was responsible for the existence of the Boston Satsang, and therefore indirectly for my own Initiation. He met the Master while traveling in California in 1955, and was very impressed; he called friends in Boston (he had many contacts with the so-called “occult” community in Boston) and told them, “I have met a genuine saint. He will come to Boston if you will pay his way.” So the community, including Vedantists, astrologers, metaphysicians, etc., collected enough money to pay his fare, and the Master made an unscheduled trip to Boston at the very end of the 1955 tour, just before he left for India. The Baron, along with many others, was initiated during that visit, and the satsang that my friends and I discovered a couple of years later was started.
soon as he said it I realized it had happened. I was overwhelmed with remorse. It may seem like a very small, dumb thing but I was leading the Master. It was a chance to do things right and here I was goofing him up. I just felt—so small. So I turned the truck around and drove back, but I felt increasingly dumb that I was the leader. I felt like anyone could do a better job than me.

As we drove along I was feeling bad all the way down. We got to Boscawen, New Hampshire, where there was a Howard Johnson’s in those days, and the caravan stopped and we all went in to eat. Master went in too. He was much more, I would say, he was infinitely more accessible during that tour than in 1972. He would often go into restaurants and sit down with us at the table although he seldom ate much. So he was in there about ten minutes and then he went out. I realized he was gone and I really wanted to apologize, so I went outside and saw him way at the other end of the lot all by himself, pacing back and forth. When I walked up to him, he was quite lost in thought. I said, “Master, you know I’m really very sorry that I failed so badly up there.”

He looked at me in total incomprehension.

“What?”

I said, “I’m really sorry. I took a wrong turn and I led the whole caravan out of the way and I delayed you and I am just very sorry.”

He looked at me absolutely blankly for about ten seconds and then the most beautiful light broke over his face and a dazzling smile and he said, “Oh, that’s all right.”

And he turned around and kept on pacing. I realized that he had totally forgotten and forgiven. It was my first experience of Master’s forgiveness, but by no means the last. It was a small thing that was a huge thing to me.

The next few days he was with the Baron and we didn’t know what he was doing or where he was. Our memories of the preceding week were very much with us, and unlike any memories we had ever had before. Then we got a phone call: the Master would be speaking that night in Jackson, New Hampshire, which is in the White Mountains about seventy miles north of the Ashram. There was a forest fire in Sanbornton that afternoon (1963 was the first year of a three-year drought, which greatly increased the fire danger) which I felt obligated
to help fight, but with the grace of God we got it under control by late afternoon, and five or six of us went up.

The Master spoke in the Congregational Church to the townspeople. When we walked into the church, he saw us come in and greeted us from the pulpit. When he had finished speaking, he came out on the sidewalk and joined us, the group of us from Sant Bani. He stood in the middle while we formed a circle around him and he asked us how we were doing like we were old friends. He had just met us a few days before, but the thing is that the church was full of important, aristocratic people and we were a bunch of nothings and he was talking to us! We couldn’t believe it. Frank and Eleanor Irwin were there and they wanted to get initiated, a couple in their sixties, and he was talking to them about that; he apologized because he couldn’t do it himself. He just didn’t have time, he said. He said, “Prendergast can do it.” It’s the same power.”

Judith and I had to go back but some of the people including Frank and Eleanor decided to stay overnight up there in a cabin and see him the next morning too.

The day after we had gone up to Jackson, I was walking around the Ashram. I was just feeling so . . . the Master had just been there, the house was still full of him. I went up to his room and it was radiating Master all over. I wanted to see him so badly and I thought everything had ended. I was wandering around the place up by the rock where he had sat and I was just wishing he’d come, and . . . the cars started driving up the road . . . only Master wasn’t with them. But everybody else was there. Mr. Khanna was there and Eileen Wigg and Frank and Eleanor. Frank grabbed me by the front door of the Big House and said, wiping sweat off his face, he was so excited, “I’m telling you, I never saw anything like it! The Man’s a Saint, I don’t mind telling you. It’s absolutely true!”

When I was able to piece it all together, this is what I found out: The Master, along with the Baron, Taiji, and Khuku, had stayed at a castle in the town. The next morning the satsangis, including Frank and

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37 Millie Prendergast, his Representative in Boston. At that time, I did not have the authority to initiate.

38 Yes, a real castle. This was a wealthy community, and the castle, built in imitation of European ones, belonged to a Countess who the Baron was approaching on behalf of the World Fellowship of Religions.
Eleanor, Mr. Khanna, and others, had gone over to see him. But when they knocked at the front gate, the maid refused to let them in. They didn’t know what to do. Master was inside and they couldn’t get to him. She wouldn’t even let them stay on the property. They had to go outside the fence and the gate was shut behind them.

Frank said that Master came out of that castle, walked over to them and climbed the fence to get to them! He stood there on the outside of the fence and talked with them for half an hour or so and then went back in.

Khuku told me afterwards that she had said to him, “Well, if you speak to the maid you can work it so that they can come in.” But Master said, “No. There’s a Punjabi proverb that says ‘If you don’t want someone to be treated badly, then don’t put him in a place where he’s going to be treated badly.’ Why should my people have to put up with that sort of thing? I’ll go to them.” So he did.

Now Frank had been coming, as I noted above, to satsang from the beginning; he was the guy interested in Zen who was very skeptical about Bhakti Yoga, which is how he understood the Path. But he had been waiting at Sant Bani for the Master to come, and when he saw him walking up the path to the Big House, he commented to me that he seemed to be pure spirituality. He and Eleanor were initiated a month later; Millie Prendergast did come up from Boston and put them on the Path.

Well, everybody—the Master’s party minus the Master and a few others—all piled in and Mr. Khanna held satsang and we ate. Then Mr. Khanna said to me, “We need another vehicle to carry luggage because we’re losing a car. You’ve got a nice truck. Would you like to carry luggage down to Connecticut for us? I’ll cover all your expenses, and as soon as we can make other arrangements you can come back.”

Would I like to! They couldn’t hold me back. I was in the cab of the truck before anything could be done. Now, at that point, we had no money at all. We were flat broke because we had spent everything fixing up the house for the Master, and I, of course, had lost my job. My truck, a 1950 GMC pickup, was a crummy old green thing: It looked kind of sick and it was old and rattley. We piled up the luggage in it and I got in and Eileen Wigg rode with me down to Connecticut. I went down, leaving Judith and the kids, wearing the work clothes I had on, with a half-grown beard that I had started a few weeks before;
I was in Connecticut driving that truck around mansions and rich people's houses for five days.

The following is taken from a talk I gave a few years later:

We met the Master and the others in Waterbury, and we drove from there to Greenwich; the Baron was driving the Master via the Merritt Parkway, a beautiful road that is closed to trucks. When we reached the entrance to the Parkway, the Baron stopped the car in which he was driving the Master, which meant we all stopped; the Baron got out and he walked over to my pickup (which at that point contained Betty Shifflett and me) and said, "You know you can't take the truck on the Parkway." I said, "I know. It's all right. I just won't go on the Parkway. I'll go another way. Don't worry. It's all right. You go on."

He went back and got in the car. I looked up ahead and saw him talking to the Master. He finally got out and, looking very sad, came back and stood there. He said, "The Master says he won't go on the Parkway if you can't go on the Parkway."

I was so moved at the Master's concern for me and that truck that I just couldn't bear to think that he would go even fifteen minutes out of the way for my sake. I said, "Oh no, please, please, just drive him on the Parkway. I'll go the other way. Please don't make him delay on my account." I backed the truck around and drove off to Greenwich another way.

When people talk about the Master's love, I'll tell you that it's the realest of the realest of the real, and it comes out in the tiniest possible things. You just can't fathom it.

We went to a house owned by some Jordanians where the Mayor of Bethlehem was staying (Bethlehem was at that time in Jordan). The Baron, who had been a friend of the old King of Jordan, Abdullah, knew the family. These people were Muslims and they were interested in the World Fellowship of Religions. They were not initiates.

So we all got invited in. I'll tell you how that happened. This is a funny story. The Baron comes out like a villain, but really he just wanted things to be right. And I didn't mean any harm; I was just down there doing the job that I had been asked to do there. Naturally I wanted to be around. I was at the time about 28. I was still a pretty young kid for my age in a lot of ways. But I just wanted to be with the Master. There were others too. The Baron didn't like lots of satsangis following the Master around when he took him to these rich people's houses. So he was very good at losing us. If we were following him and he'd come up to a light, he had an interesting way of getting to it just as the light was turning red, and he'd go through, and we stayed. But I would follow him through anyway. I pretended there was a chain on his car hooked to my bumper
and I couldn’t stop. So we got to this house. Two other carloads of satsangis had somehow gotten there ahead of him and the people in the house were very gracious and had invited them all in. When he got there, they were all inside. I wasn’t planning to go in. I was carrying the luggage and I waited in the truck; I just felt that if they don’t want me in, I don’t have to go in. —So Mr. Khanna came out and hollered at me. “Come on in!”

So I went in. And there was everybody else in there. Tai Ji saw me. She said, “Sit on the floor, Russell.” She wanted to make sure I knew my place—it was full of socialites, you see. Really rich people were there. They had no more idea of what the Master was than a man in the moon. You should have seen him. He was sitting there with them just as if they were his children; it didn’t faze him a bit. One man was talking to him about lion taming. And Master was laughing.

The man who owned the house had a really profound face. I noticed the way he looked at the Master. He knew nothing about him. He didn’t know that he was a Saint. They knew he was active in the World Fellowship of Religions, that he was an important man, but they didn’t know he was a Saint or anything. Then this man said out of the blue to the Master, “You have the face of a prophet, Sir. You have the face of a Saint. Will you favor us with a discourse?”

And the Master got right up and spoke for ten minutes about the inner teachings. It was beautiful. The atmosphere was crackling; it was electric. I was sitting there enthralled. He was standing and smiling. He said, “You’ve got to go inside,” and he talked about the Light and Sound Current, the God-into-Expression Power—the full thing. He held nothing back. Tremendous power was flowing forth from him into that room. These people were sitting there and I don’t think they’d ever had an experience like it in their life.

When he sat down, the old man that had asked him, the host, was rocking back and forth in ecstasy. He was hugging his knees. The grin on his face was so wide it was touching his ears. When Master was through, the man said, “Thank you, thank you so much.” He was so happy.

The hospitality and reverence for guests, including me, that this Muslim family demonstrated, were beyond anything I had experienced in my life up to that point. “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” indeed. It was a lesson for me.

When I got back to New Hampshire, I discovered the kids at my parents’ house and Judith gone; impatient at my prolonged absence and missing the Master very much, she had driven to Rochester, New York, to see him at his next public stop. When she returned, we made plans to go
to Toronto and arrived late at night, almost penniless, to have Master greet us so warmly, again as if we were old friends. We loved it there, especially the radiantly beautiful wedding of Stanley Shinerock and Edna Robinson where the bright movie lights illuminated his incredible face so that every line seemed etched in acid, and where he blessed our marriage and told us that we were two bodies with one soul. We even loved the Initiation there where a Salvation Army band played outside the window during the Sound Current practice.

We were able to join him next in Louisville, and this time we took the kids with us; at the motel in Louisville where we stayed, the Master stuck his head in the window of our Corvair sedan, saw the mattress we had in lieu of our back seat (so that the children could play or sleep, as they wished) and chuckled about our traveling home.

In Louisville we said goodbye to him for what we were sure was the last time, because our money (including $500 which we had raised by selling a carpet Judith had inherited) had finally run out and the future looked bleak. That afternoon I had a private interview with him; he was sitting cross-legged and his smile was dazzling. “Well,” he said first thing, “When are you going back to that very sweet place?” I told him we were leaving early the next morning. He nodded and asked me if I needed any money. I was taken by surprise; I did, of course, but the thought of taking money from my Master did not appeal to me and I said “No.” (This was the first time the Master had offered me money, but was not to be the last; eventually I learned how to respond more appropriately.)

That night the Master gave a stunning farewell talk in Louisville and among other things said the following:

You know that Christ once said to his disciples, “I don’t want to make you slaves, but friends.” Slaves do not know what a friend can be. Slaves only know how to do what is said. You can appreciate anyone if you work along with him and see what he is doing. So Christ said, “I make you my friends.” I think it is better that I address you as friends: because I have told you many times that I am a man like you, with the same privileges that you have from God. But I have developed in a certain way; you have not. And that development is due to the grace of God, or the God working through my Master: that is, how to die while alive, how to be reborn, how to be cut off from the attachments of the world, the body and other things. That is a way within you already.
So I love you as friends, I would say. I regard you as the children of Light. Because I love God and that Light is everywhere, so I have to love you and have regard for you as well.

What I would especially like to bring to your notice is that initiation does not mean that you have become perfect. It is a way to perfection. One does not become a satsangi simply by being initiated. The word *satsangi* means: *sat* means unchangeable permanence; and *sangi* means one who is constantly in contact with it. We have been put on the way to analyze our soul from mind and the outgoing faculties and to have some touch, some contact, with the God Power. When you remain a constant companion of that God Power, only then will you become a true satsangi. Now you have something, of course, to start with: you have learned how to contact it. But unless you begin to be conscious of that power all through, you are not a true satsangi.

We have to work up to that. We have to mold our lives in accordance with the principles of satsang in thought, speech and action. If you simply take a medicine and put it on the shelf, will your disease go away? All Masters say that those who live up to what they are told are destined to have the Master become their slave.

Let’s say that a father has four or five children. Some children obey him, others do not, and some children—not just because of obedience—even surrender to the will of their father. As I told you yesterday, when you surrender, the Father becomes your slave. If a father has a very obedient son who just works according to his intentions and never asks for anything, what would the father do? When he leaves, he would simply hand over his key to that son, not to everybody.

The Master says, “Always look to the interest of others. Don’t let others starve.” That is what is required of those who live up to what they are told.

Love requires, first of all: “If you love me, keep my commandments.” We don’t keep the commandments: some do with modifications which suit their own interests. Unless we live up 100 per cent to what the Master says, we cannot truly get to know what God is.

So, “actions speak louder than words.” And thoughts are even more potent. A satsangi must, in his daily conduct, reveal what he is: not what he says, but what he is. If he says, “Love all,” then see whether he loves all. If he loves all, is he always ready to help others, without any show? If he still loves, is he ready to sacrifice his everything for them? Everyone can know so much about these things: libraries are full of them; scriptures are full of them; but it is just like—what do you say? —loading an ass with books. What is it really? If a paddle or spoon moves through a sweet dish, will it get any taste out of it? To know so many things in your brain will do you little or no good; or perhaps it will do more evil than good, because then you will act and pose:
“Oh, I know so much.” But you don’t live up to it. So the main thing is, we must live it, and live it not willy-nilly, but with pure love and devotion.

Obedience comes next. And obedience is also not sufficient: we should surrender. This is what is needed. All Masters have been saying that. If someone finds some shortcoming in you, what does he say? “Oh, a satsangi is like that. Perhaps the Master teaches that way.” Some people have been writing to me on account of some shortcomings here or there. I always reply to them, “Pity it is that I have to carry on with imperfect people. They are all not perfect—they are all on the way to perfection. Those who are on the way to perfection, here and there, they do fall. So just forgive and forget. We should be on the way for the common cause of God.”

That is why what is needed is to live up to it. Truth is above all, BUT TRUE LIVING IS STILL ABOVE TRUTH. People don’t know whether you can have a contact within with the light of God or not: they will see how you live, how you behave, what your treatment of others is. Are you fighting with others for selfish motives? Are you usurping others’ rights? Are you sucking the blood of others? They will see you from that level. Here’s a bulb. If the glass is besmeared with filth, although the light is there, it won’t give off light. So the bulb should be pure, quite clean, without any dirt. Our hearts must be pure: what we have in our hearts should be at our mouths, and what is at our mouths should agree with our thoughts. When there is agreement between these three, then consider that it is right. Sometimes we do one thing for many days; it becomes a habit. Habit turns into nature. It is very difficult to remove that habit that has formed itself to our nature.

So, first of all, what are we to do? I would say, perform no action in secret. There is no doubt about it: you will find this a very helpful factor. Perform no action in secret. If anything requires secrecy, abandon it at once. Deeds of darkness are committed in the dark. This is the first thing. That is the criterion of a sin: you want secrecy. Just consider this in all your ways of life.

Then, further, do nothing which, after having been done, leads you to tell lies. That is also a criterion for something wrong. Lying follows a sin because you want to conceal it. I tell you, the criterion of a Saint is that you will find him doing the same thing everywhere, inside or outside, at midnight or during the daytime, in the pulpit or in private rooms. Hafiz says, “When we go to the pulpit we give very long yarns of talks, but when we go to secret places, we do otherwise.”

Mind that, God is within you and the God Power—the God-in-man—watches everything. How can you deceive him? You can deceive others. Our Master used to say, “If a child of five years of age is sitting by you, you won’t do anything unbecoming in his presence. You will require secrecy.” When you think that when the Master gives initiation, the God Power takes posses-
sion of you within, looks to the very thoughts that arise and knows the very trend that you have to follow, then how can you deceive him? So I always say, “Be true to your own self.” If you are true to your own self, how can you deceive others? This is the main criterion.

And further, don’t desire evil for anyone, irrespective of creed or color, even in thought—for anyone, not just necessarily your initiate brother: because whatever thought arises poisons you. Others don’t know it, but you will be poisoned. And because of their radiation, you will find that thoughts are more potent. The other day I gave you the example of Akbar the Great, King of India. Birbal was his minister. He told the King that whatever a man thinks about anyone reacts in the other’s mind. The King said, “How can that be proved?” So the minister took him away to some place along the roadside. A man was coming at a distance and the minister told the King, “Just think anything about him in your mind.” The King was going bareheaded. He thought in his mind about that man who was approaching: “I should shoot him.” When the man came by, he passed the King, and the King said to him, “Look here, tell me truly; I will forgive you if you say it; but what struck you when you saw my face?” The man said, “I thought I should break your head with my fist.”

That reacts, do you see? Never think evil of others. These things are thinking evil of others: when we say anything against anyone, what is that but thinking evil of others? When we backbite, what do we do? We think evil of others. When we make parties, one against the other, what do we do? We tell this side one thing and that side something else. You are deceiving your own selves, and the God in you sees you...

These are my few words. God knows whether I will come again or not: it is in His hands. But if you live up to this, you will never be left alone, and God will help you. Convey these, my words, to whomever you meet. Love one another, that’s all. I think if a father sees his children in an all-loving embrace, he will be pleased—even to hear about them. At least I am pleased. Before I came I was not so pleased as I am now on leaving. You have a more loving attitude, and I wish you to progress still more.

Love beautifies everything, that’s all. If there are any shortcomings anywhere, realize that each one has his shortcomings: forgive and forget. That’s the only thing we can do.

I tell you, as my Master loved me, I have loved you—for no compensation, but to do the will of my Master. I wish you would live up to what you are told to do, that’s all. These words are coming out of my heart. If you just abide by them, you will progress wonderfully. God never leaves anyone alone. Christ said, “I shall never leave thee nor forsake thee until the end of the world.” Bodies do leave; but that God Power working at the human pole does not leave.
So, with these best wishes I would like to depart; but my wishes will always be with you, and I will always be hearing from you. And if loving thoughts are radiated to me there, I'll simply be too pleased. If any father sees his children loving one another, I think the father is pleased. If you are obedient, so much the better; if you surrender yourself, all is yours, I tell you.

This is the greatest thing, and it starts from keeping a diary, I tell you. Don't underrate the diary; it means something. There are those of you who have no time for it; but like a hard taskmaster, don't spare yourself. If you do this, one and all, you will find change in your lives. You will see change for your own selves. This is, I think, all that I expect of you. It is in your own interest and earns my pleasure for nothing. Our Master used to say, “Don't be doing ‘civil disobedience’ and lie down and let everybody carry you while loading you on cars and trucks. You should also help.” That is helping the Master, too, in a way. The task becomes easier. What does he want to give you? God—I tell you honestly: but you're not ready to have It. He will give you something, but you don't appreciate it.

My best wishes have always been with you and remain with you, with God's grace—the God working through my Master.

**COMMENT:** “On behalf of the group known as the Ruhani Satsang of Louisville, Kentucky, we wish to express our deepest thanks.”

**THE MASTER:** “No—no thanks. Thank you. True thanks will be given when you live up to it, each one of you. I don't think that you're not living up to it but, still, become ideal.”

**QUESTION:** “Master, I have a question.”

**THE MASTER:** “Yes, please.”

**QUESTION:** “I judge that the love you're talking about is a very positive out-going type of force or emotion or whatever you want to call it. Speaking for myself, and perhaps for quite a few other members of this group, I find it very difficult to really love everybody. Very difficult. I find it possible to take a negative approach and maybe suspend my dislike of people. But if somebody wrongs me in my judgment, about the best I can do is, well, I won't dislike them. But as far as turning on a positive power of love, that is extremely difficult. And, of course, in addition, it seems to me fair to say that there's a very marked temperamental difference between a scientific man with a scientific point of view, who certainly is not so trained in the power of affection and love as a man, say, whose bent is toward politics.

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39 This question was asked by Mr. Edward Strater at whose house the Master had been staying. The preceding comment was by Mrs. M. Gordon Hughes, the Master's Representative in Louisville: a very remarkable woman.
“Then, the only additional comment I have, if you want to call it a question, is this business of God-hunger. I’m afraid I, speaking for myself—and this is a moment of complete honesty—I’m afraid I don’t hunger for God. I think that may be my trouble. That may be the reason I’m not progressing any faster. I mean, God to me is a theoretically desirable person or force or state or condition, or whatever—you look at it one way one day, another way the next—but I’m afraid I don’t actually hunger for Him, hunger with all of my heart and soul. Can you suggest any practical means for people in my predicament that would speed us up?”

The Master: “Yes. It is the grace of God that we have the human body. Out of millions of people, we may not have a very strong hunger, but we have made some choice, and by a little discrimination we have considered that this is the right thing for us to do; it appeals to us. Out of millions of all those who are given up to the other things, how many have come this far? Those who have some inkling, even some slight thought, have it by discrimination or as a reaction of the past. Sometimes a man is born with this way of living and has it as a child; others gain it by discrimination and by the company of those who have been on the way. If you want to be a doctor, then sit in the company of doctors. By their company, by radiation, by constantly living with them, you will naturally develop an interest, a hunger, to be a doctor. Some have had this as a child. But generally, when we come up, we use the intellect: we have to work by discrimination; that is, to discriminate right from wrong. But when we get even a little thought for the mystery of life and what it is, I consider that day to be the highest in a man’s life, the greatest day in a man’s life: because that question cannot be stamped out. If you stamp it out by being very busy in one way or another, that question will still be raked up. When God sees that raking up, He makes some arrangement to bring you in contact somewhere, where you are put on the way.

“Then further, company helps you: discrimination and company, and getting something to contact within. When you sit by ice, all heat will go. Naturally, when you come in more contact with this, your hunger will grow further still—and then, more and more: the more you have of that taste, naturally it will result in your having more in comparison with others. As I said at the beginning of this talk, we are not made satsangis in one day. ‘Rome was not built in a day.’

“It is because we have some inkling of this that we are together here. Why are not thousands or millions of people living in the towns here? This is the fate of those who, by the grace of God, have had some inkling of this and that inkling enables one to seek, either by discrimination or through literature or by company. He makes some arrangement, somehow or other, to bring him into contact somewhere, where he can be put on the way.
“To be put on the way, as I told you, does not make a man a satsangi: we are on probation on the way. The more we contact that God-into-expression Power, all qualities will become ours. We are souls; we have the same qualities as those of God, but they have been hidden. I mean, deep down you have that inkling, and you have had some contact. The more you have a contact and the more you are in the company of those who are that way, the more your hunger flares up and becomes strong.

“This way is the only way. We cannot love everybody—that’s right. If you have no hatred for others, you have improved: that is only if a man thinks evil of you. If you have no inkling like that, naturally it won’t affect you. It will go back and affect the very person from whom the thought emanated. You are saved. Love comes next. When you come in contact with God, as He resides in everyone, love will be developed. It is already ingrained in us. But if you have no hatred for others, I think this is, on the way, halfway to perfection. Then naturally you are saved from so much.

“With due deference, I quite appreciate this frankness. Really, we are on the way to it. That is why I suggest keeping the diaries. I quite see that a man does not become a satsangi in one day. We are called a satsangi: we have not become one so far. To become a satsangi, we have joined this thing; we have got something. If we go on earnestly like that, I think we will be overflowing with the love of God and also those with whom we come in contact. When you come in contact with some God-intoxicated man, with a man who is overflowing with God, the same intoxication is radiated to you.

“So, we are all on the way to perfection. If we start that way, the day will come when we will reach our goal. At least something, either as a reaction of the past or by discrimination or by company, has come within us. We are trying, of course, to go. The flesh is strong, but the spirit appears to be weak. But it helps when we come in contact with it. That is why I suggested to you to have group meetings. And every morning, after meditation, take up some scriptures. They will give you an impetus to be on the way—to hie on the way.

“These are the helping factors. If you are really after it, the day will come when you will become like that. If you sit by a wrestler daily, you will begin to exert yourself. You cannot become as strong as a wrestler in one day, but, in time, by regular practice, you will become like that. ‘Every saint has his past and every sinner a future.’ There is hope for everybody.

“God help you, that’s all. My best wishes are with you. That’s all I can say.”

That night the Master was leaving Louisville for Minneapolis by train. I went to the station to see him off—the last time, for all I knew, that I might ever see him. In prospect, I had felt sad—these weeks with him had been the happiest I had ever known. But when we were actually at
the station standing on the steps of the train seconds before it pulled away, I felt such intense happiness at being with him again that all I could do was laugh. The joy of being with him in the present was stronger than the sorrow of leaving him in the future.

At other times, when I left him, the sorrow would take over after the parting had happened; this time, the joy remained and settled into a sort of blissful calm. Maybe something in me knew that I was going to see him again, and in a very short time too. Whether I knew it or not, that is exactly what happened: Judith's parents chose that time to make over to her some money they had been holding for her in trust, and just three weeks after the farewell in Louisville, we were on our way to California, our debts paid and our hopes high—we planned to stay with him for the rest of the tour, if he didn’t mind.

Following Kirpal

Three days before we left, President Kennedy was assassinated. My insurance man told me while I was paying up for the coming year. I couldn't believe it—I stumbled out to the car to discover that Judith had been told simultaneously by a passer-by. We were both stunned—I had once, in 1955, pushed John Kennedy in a wheelchair back and forth between his room and the X-ray department for the better part of a day when I had been a hospital orderly. He had impressed me very much, and I wanted him for President almost before he did. I thought he was a wonderful President, and while I am no expert on the ins and outs of national Karma, I felt and still feel that if he had lived, not only would he be remembered as one of our greatest Presidents, but that the terrible wrenching traumas of the Johnson-Nixon years would never have happened. I later learned that the Master had deep respect and appreciation for Kennedy’s—indeed, all the Kennedys’—efforts.

We—Judith, Miriam, Eric and I—left for Santa Barbara, California, the day after Thanksgiving 1963. We drove almost non-stop, spending one night in Amarillo, Texas. Somewhere in Arizona the strain grew intolerable and Judith and I had a terrible fight. I mention this only because of its possible bearing on what happened next.

We reached Santa Barbara just four and a half days after leaving New Hampshire, and about an hour before the Master arrived from San Jose. When we finally saw him, he seemed very glad to see us.
There was a reception scheduled for him that night in the home where he was to be staying, and all the local satsangis, as well as those who were following him from other places, attended. We for our parts were so happy to see him again that we just sat at his feet and drank deep—a long, beautiful, loving reunion. After some time, when it became evident that we were the only ones paying attention to him—at this party that was given for him—he ordered us to go mingle with the others. We were grateful for what we had been given however—especially in light of what was about to happen.

The next morning, after the meditation, the Master came up to me and said, smiling, “Well, Russell—how long are you going to stay with me?” A flash of fear went over me: I thought, if I tell him the truth—that we want to stay for the rest of the tour—maybe he won’t like it! So I answered evasively, “Oh—a while, Master.” His eyes narrowed: he looked at me closely: “A while? How long is a while?” “Oh—just a while, Master.” He turned and walked away; and that was the last time he looked at me or spoke to me lovingly for two weeks.

The following day he was sitting at a little table on the patio behind the house he was staying in, again just after morning meditation; he had been giving interviews, but they had just ended, and Mr. Khanna humorously took me by the hand and led me up to the Master, saying, “Come on, Russell Perkins, you have an interview too!” I was certainly willing and I marched right up to him, bright and eager to talk with him, but the closer I got the less eager I was—because he was not there. His eyes were looking at me, but he was not seeing me. I stood silently for a few minutes, then, feeling vaguely ashamed, sneaked away. This was the moment that I realized that something was terribly wrong, although I did not connect it with my evasiveness and dishonesty toward him until much later.

The only saving grace during this time was the growing relationship between my daughter Miriam and the Master. When she had first met him at Sant Bani Ashram, she had been shy; but that shyness didn’t last long, and during the stay in California she became very determined to be with him as much as possible. If we couldn’t find her, we would go directly to the Master’s room; there she would be, standing near the door, out of the way, looking up at him while he wrote letters or talked with visitors or whatever he was doing. We would remove her with
apologies but the Master would wave his hand and say that she was no trouble, that he liked her there.

The Master stayed a few days with Lucille Gunn at La Crescenta. While we were there, she arranged for him (and with the grace of God, some of the people traveling, including us) to visit the nearby Vedanta Ashram, presided over by Srimati Gayatri Devi, a disciple of Swami Paramananda, who had been a direct disciple of the great Swami Vivekananda, who of course was the foremost disciple and successor of Paramhansa Sri Ramakrishna, the great nineteenth-century Bengali mahatma.⁴⁰ The visit was very sweet; Master was very beautiful and spoke movingly of his love and admiration for Ramakrishna (who was also a great hero of mine). He said, “He was God-intoxicated all the time!” Gayatri Devi and the ashramites were very loving and respectful, and I remember that visit with great sweetness.

The Master spoke one Sunday morning at the Unity Church of the Valley in La Crescenta. After the service was over, as we were in the parking lot preparing to go, he came up to us and addressed Miriam: “Who do you love more—me or her?” pointing to Judith. A hard question for a three and-a-half-year old! Miriam clung to her mother. The Master looked at her, his eyes twinkling and kind, his voice insistent: “Who do you want to ride back with—them or me?” Suddenly shy again, she said nothing. I whispered to her, “Don’t you want to ride in Master’s car?” She shook her head. The Master smiled, said “All right,” and left us. As soon as we were in our car, ready to follow him out, Miriam erupted with a terrifying, blood-curdling scream: “Daddy! Hurry up! Stay close! Don’t lose him!” and then began to sob uncontrollably. All the way back I struggled to keep his car in view; all the way back Miriam cried as though she were coming apart inside.

Another incident, this time in Tustin: the Master was staying in a house at the top of a very high hill, almost a mountain. The parking lot was separated from the house by a great gulf forested which led into a grassy valley accessible from both the house and the parking lot.

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⁴⁰ Gayatri Devi was familiar to us; she was the guru at the Vedanta Chapel at 202 Commonwealth Avenue in Boston where satsang had been held back when we were first coming to it. Swami Paramananda had actually developed two ashrams; the other one, where Gayatri Devi spent half the year, was in Cohasset, Massachusetts, and we had visited her there on special occasions.
On one occasion, after we had parked, the four of us stood for a moment looking down into the grassy valley, when suddenly we saw the Master all alone, walking purposefully down into the valley straight to a tree, where he sat down and removed his turban. Delighted, we watched him until suddenly we saw a little figure headed down into the valley from our side, going straight to him. It was Miriam, and we hadn’t even noticed she had left us. She went to him and sat down beside him. There were just the two of them. We did not disturb.

Later I asked a friend of mine who had joined them later if she had any idea of what had gone on between them. She said only that when she got there they were engrossed in conversation, and that Master had said to her, “She is my friend.” Miriam herself would not tell us, and now she cannot: she has forgotten.

Both Miriam and Eric were given Sound Current initiation when they were very young, a year or so after the 1963 tour; they meditated daily for a couple of years, and then Master told us in a letter to give them the Fifth Name. Eric continued on and received full Initiation at the age of ten, in the summer of 1972. Miriam went through a stage of rebellion against her parents, the ashram, and the Path, and left off meditating. When Kirpal came in 1972, she didn’t want to see him privately: she attended the public gatherings, but would not go down to his house to talk with him. When Judith conveyed this to the Master, he said, “Tell her I’ll give her a tea party.” And indeed he did: she came (Judith and I also were there) to his house, and Harcharan Singh, Master’s attendant, served us all tea very beautifully. By September 1973, though, she had begun high school and was really very rebellious, so much so that I was very worried about what she might do. I saw Kirpal in India at that time, and I started to tell him my worries; as soon as he realized what I was saying, he stopped me: “Don’t worry about her! I will take care of her.” And he did. I stopped worrying and let her do whatever she wanted; she led a free (somewhat) wild life for a while before taking full Initiation at age 23 from Sant Ajaib Singh.

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41 The Shabda Yoga mantra is composed of Five Names, what the Masters call the Basic Names of God; see Kirpal Singh, The Way of the Saints, the chapter called “Simran: The Sweet Remembrance of God,” for further details.
Apart from the flickers of light mentioned above, however, these last weeks in California are among the darkest in my memory. For the intimate loving relationship I thought I had established with him was over, and the Master seemed not to care whether I was there or not. Day after day went by, and he totally ignored me: he did not glance into my eyes or speak to me, even when I was standing in a place where it was difficult for him not to. I felt that I didn’t exist, that I was a cipher, nothing. This combined with the strain of following him with the whole family made me desperate. I began to rack my brains: Why is he treating me this way? Why? Why? What have I done? Since I could not or would not (at this point) face up to my evasiveness and dishonesty in Santa Barbara, I lunged here and there at any possible explanation I could dredge up. The obvious conclusion was that I wasn’t meant to be with him. Once I had thought of that, I was tortured with guilt over not earning my own living. I felt like a parasite.

Judith did not share my feelings, and she did not want to leave the Master—not at all. Since my thoughts were driving me to one conclusion—I should go—and since she refused to go, I realized that leaving the Master meant leaving my wife. I did not mind this: the strain had been so great, and the feeling of everything turning bad and sour was so pervading, that I was happy to leave everything behind and start again.

I asked for an interview the last afternoon in Tustin, thinking that maybe he would clear everything up. But he did not. I asked him if he would rather I weren’t with him, and he said impatiently, “Dear friend, that is up to you. I don’t mind. If you can afford it….” His attitude throughout was stern and distant and I left him surer than ever that I would have to leave.

The next morning the Master and everyone left for Beaumont, California, not far from Palm Springs, in the desert. We drove there too, but somehow got our signals crossed and managed to reach everywhere the Master had gone sometime after he had left. That evening I told Judith that I could stand it no longer, and asked her to drive me to the bus station. I told her she could write me care of General Delivery, San Francisco, kissed her and the kids goodbye and got on the bus for Los Angeles, where I took the bus to San Francisco.

It is important to clarify here that even though I was leaving the Master physically, I had not stopped believing in him. On the contrary: I had
become convinced that he didn’t want me around, and to that extent I was still trying to please him. There was more to it than that, of course: even though I still saw what he was, and recognized him as the Master, I had lost the connection between him and me, and I felt now that, regardless of his greatness or the truth of the Path, I couldn’t do it. It was too much for me. So as I rode through the California night my dominant feeling was relief. The strain that I had been living under was broken.

When I arrived in San Francisco, I took a motel room and debated what to do next. My mind, which had been a whirlpool, now became a cesspool: storms of insatiable sexuality and unrestrained violence raged over it. For three days I was jerked this way and that by the terrible power of my own thoughts. But I had no regrets about leaving, and I felt that it was inevitable. I missed my kids, but my only other emotion was continued relief that I had escaped.

After three days (approximately) I made my decision: I would go to Seattle, where my sister lived, and start a new life there. Making that decision gave me some peace, and I went to the airline office downtown to buy my ticket. As I left the office, I thought, “I had better check at the post office to see if a letter from Judith is there. I would love to hear about the kids.” I was handed a letter with Judith’s familiar handwriting on the envelope, and I opened it up and started reading. I had read several sentences before I realized that it was not a letter from Judith at all—it was a letter from the Master! This is what it said.

Dear Russell—
I was shocked to learn how you left for San Francisco without seeing me—I have so much love for you, and have great appreciation of the sacrifice of you both that you are making by leaving your hearth and home and accompanying me throughout—I was wondering if you may not be undergoing any financial stringency—I have love for you and you are on my mind—Be rest assured I would love you to be with me—if otherwise not inconvenient for you.

With all love,

Yours affectionately,

KIRPAL SINGH
When I finished reading it the first time, I thought, “Well this is really a very nice letter from the Master; I will have to write and thank him for it, but I can’t go back”—then I read it again—and again—and again—and I went back to the airline office as fast as I could and I changed my ticket from Seattle to Houston: I could not get back to him fast enough. Somehow that letter changed everything. The nightmare was over; I knew that whatever had been wrong had been righted. In my personal affairs also: I suddenly missed Judith terribly and longed to see her
again. It was as though a great fountain of forgiving love had erupted out of that humble handwritten note and cascaded over me washing away all the hurt and fear and despair and making everything right.

I arrived in Houston the night before the Master did, and the next morning I was waiting for him when he arrived. He took one look at me and smiled: a loving warm smile, and I knew that everything really was all right. I thanked him for his beautiful letter, and he said, “Your family is all right; they will be here soon.” I said, “I hope so, Master,” and he replied, “I am telling you that it’s true: they are all right and they will be here soon.” And within half an hour, it happened: Judith and the kids were there, and I felt like I had come back home and it was so good.

Judith filled me in on some of the things that had happened while I was gone. After driving me to the bus she had gone straight to Master and told him what had happened. He had said, “All right, you write him a letter and I will write him a letter.” Then he had written out his letter right then, and given it to Judith. She did not, however, write a letter of her own, but had simply addressed the envelope and mailed it with the Master’s letter in it. I discovered also that she had had a very hard time without me. The Master had flown from Los Angeles to Dallas, which meant that those who were driving had to drive non-stop if they were going to see him at all. In my absence, Judith had no one to share the driving with, and she had to drive all day and night without sleep while taking care of the small children. It was really a heroic feat. At one point she fell asleep at the wheel, the car went off the road and nearly turned over; the kids were thrown from one side to the other, but Judith, waking up at the last minute, did very intense Simran and the kids didn’t even wake up, let alone get hurt.

It was difficult for her in other ways too. She told me that when she finally reached Dallas, exhausted, she left the kids in the car while she went into a restaurant (with others who were following the Master). Coming out from the restaurant, she was dismayed to see, at a table near the door, Miriam and Eric, our kids, in the company of a policeman. When she claimed them, the policeman told her that it was against the law in Dallas to leave children in a parked car, and lectured her blisteringly on what an irresponsible mother she was.
Also in Dallas, the other followers (some of them) began to complain that Miriam and Eric were dirtier than they ought to be. Judith was at her wits’ end trying to be herself and me at the same time—what could she do? Once the Master stopped at her table while she was eating and said compassionately, “Your children are disheveled. In this country, that’s a crime.” All in all, my sudden departure had caused more than its share of difficulty and suffering for her, and we were both ecstatically happy to be reunited.

The following day the Master was scheduled to visit a prospective ashram site some distance from Houston. Judith had taken the children and gone to the laundromat, hoping to get a wash done before everyone left. But before she got back, the Master was out on the sidewalk, ready to go. I had been waiting there, just hoping to see him, and I was enjoying his presence again. He waited and waited, but no car came. Finally he turned to me and said with a big smile, “Car of Burt?” I knew instantly what he meant—a disciple had donated a car that was available for whatever use the Master wanted to put it to. Although in most places, there was some local disciple who wanted to drive him, still this other car was always there. I said, “You want me to get it for you and drive you, Master?” Smiling, he said, “Yes.” I was beside myself with joy—to drive the Master was a long-held desire of mine that had never yet been fulfilled. I raced over to the parking lot and found another disciple just getting into it. I jumped in ahead of him, took the keys out of his hand, shouted, “The Master told me to get it!” and drove off, leaving him standing there.

When I drove around on to the street, I saw the Master was talking to someone. I pulled up beside him, and he got in and sat down, while continuing to talk with whoever it was, so that his back was turned away from me. I was looking at him anyway when I heard a voice from outside my window say, “Get out, Russell!” I whirled my head around. It was the owner of the car, his face grim. I stared. He replied, “Get out, Russell. You’re not going to drive this car. I am.” I couldn’t believe it. I said, “But Master told me to”—He said, “That’s all right. He didn’t know. Now get out!” Master didn’t know! What was going on?42

42 The owner, Julius Burt, was of course angry, and with excellent reason, over my irresponsible disappearance, and was invoking his property rights accordingly. Several years later he apologized to me for this incident.
I looked over at him, but he was still absorbed in the conversation; so, almost ready to cry, my joy curdled into bitter disappointment, I climbed heavily out of the driver’s seat and walked around to Master’s side. Master looked up and saw me. His eyes opened wide and he said, “What—?” and turned instantly around and looked at the new driver, who said placatingly, “That’s all right, Master. I’m going to drive.” Instantly comprehending the wholeness of the situation, the Master turned back to me and said, eyes twinkling, “Would you like to ride next to me?” and patted the seat between him and the driver with his left hand.

Now this was a very great honor: it was rare for anybody to ride in the front seat with him, let alone me. But my traumatic disappointment over not driving him had forced a sudden change of perspective, and I was now acutely aware that Judith and the children had not yet returned, and I was feeling responsible for them: if I went off now with Master, how would they know where to go? I had put her through too much in the last few days to inflict this upon her now.

So I said, with a brave smile, “That’s all right, Master; my wife isn’t back yet, and I think I’d better wait for her—“Mr. Khanna in the back seat interrupted me: “To hell with the wife! The Master invited you, you should go. It’s a great honor, you see!” But Master silenced him and smiled at me so lovingly, and said, “All right; wait for your wife,” and I felt in my heart that he was not displeased.

I tried to find out from the others where exactly they were going, but I couldn’t. It was as though there was a conspiracy, although I don’t really think there was. Nevertheless, all I could learn was that they were going down some highway and the general direction (both of which I have long since forgotten). Before I could find out any more than that, they had all climbed in their cars and driven away; the last car to go was Leon Poncet’s distinctive blue van. Then I was standing alone on the sidewalk, watching them disappear around the corner. My eyes began to mist and my mouth to tremble as I walked into the hotel. Then all the ups and downs of the last few days, and especially the heartbreakingly overwhelming ache at being once again separated from my Master, so soon after rediscovering him, pressed down on my heart and I began to cry as I had never cried in my life: it was as though there was a thunderstorm going on inside me, giving vent to a never-ending torrent of tears.
When Judith came in maybe twenty minutes later, she found me lying across the bed, still crying. She tried and tried to find out what was wrong, but I wouldn’t tell her: I just kept on crying. Finally after many minutes had passed, she got me to sit up and calm down, and I told her everything that had happened that morning, including the departure of the Master and everyone else to the proposed ashram site almost an hour before. She was thoughtful. Then she said, “Come on! Let’s go too!” I started crying again: “But how? I don’t know where to go!” She said, calmly, “We know they went on the highway, and we know which direction. What have we got to lose? Come on!” Without any hope, I agreed that we had nothing to lose and we set out.

We had been on the highway not more than ten minutes when I saw a long line of cars obviously traveling together up ahead. I couldn’t believe that this was the Master’s caravan; after all, they had had a head start of more than an hour. Yet the last car bore a vivid resemblance to Leon Poncet’s blue van. I picked up speed, my heart pounding: Yes, by God, by the living breathing six-foot tall God Who played with time and space as if they were his own personal toys, it was the same caravan that had left Houston more than an hour before, driving along the turnpike as though nothing at all were amiss. Smiling gratefully, with a prayer of joy in my heart, I drove up behind the caravan and quietly joined it; neither Judith nor I said much, but we both quietly enjoyed our own personal miracle, and we never forgot it.

That night the Master spoke at a Trade Center; I was in the audience, and for the second time in my life I observed him changing into Baba Sawan Singh. This time the room was brilliantly lit, and it would perhaps be more correct to say that Baba Sawan Singh gave the talk and occasionally changed into Kirpal Singh. Several others, to my personal knowledge, also observed this and commented on it to me afterward.

The next day was Christmas. That night the Master spoke at St. James Episcopal Church and the talk he gave on the mystery of Christ became well known: it was later published under the title “God Power, Christ Power, Guru Power,” has gone through many printings, and is included in the Master’s book of short writings, The Way of the Saints. I however did not attend that talk, as it was my turn to watch the kids. Soon after everyone got back from the talk (but not Judith who was
late), I got a phone call to come up to the Master’s room: he was having a party. I looked at the kids: they were sound asleep, our room was just around the corner from the desk on the first floor, and I took a chance that they would be all right. I went up. The Master was very pleased to see me. He was sitting on a couch, his feet on the floor, a coffee table in front of him. On the coffee table was a big bowl full of gigantic walnuts, still in their shells, which he was giving out for parshad.

When he saw me he said joyously. “How many children you have got?” I said, “Two, Master,” although I knew he knew well how many there were. He said, laughing, “You will be the gainer,” as he poured nuts into my waiting hands until they cascaded on to my lap and down to the floor. “For you and your children,” he explained. Then, when he saw my happy, happy face looking up at him, he said softly, “I liked your place the best—and you left me.” I felt as though I had been stabbed, but he continued to joke with me and kept me near him. Judith came in at some point and also got an overload of parshad, then Bibi Hardevi began talking in Hindi. The Master laughed and requested a member of his party to translate. This is what she was saying: When Master sat on the rock under the tree at Sant Bani Ashram, Guru Nanak43 appeared to him and told him that he also used to rest in just the same way on his travels. Tai Ji could hear the Master talking but she could not see Guru Nanak. She became indignant and requested Master to make it possible for her to see Guru Nanak also, which he did. Then she was happy.

At one of the Houston Satsangs I was outside watching the children (Judith and I used to take turns attending the meetings) and I had, as was my habit after the children had gone to sleep in the car, crept into the back of the hall for just a few seconds—just enough to have a look at him. (I used to go back and forth quite a lot between the hall and the car.) On the night I am remembering, as I was standing just outside the outside door, it opened and a couple came out accompanied by Mr. Khanna. They were arguing. When he saw me, he said to the couple, “Talk to him—he left everything for the Master’s sake,” and disappeared back into the hall. I looked at the couple. The man

43 A famous sixteenth-century Saint, in the direct line of Kirpal Singh. His life story is told in Servants of God by Jon Engle (Sanbornton: Sant Bani Ashram, 1980).
was angry and the woman was embarrassed. I asked them what was wrong. The man said, “Why can’t he talk so we can understand him?” I was incredulous: “What?” “Why can’t he talk so we can understand him? What is the use of his making this trip and giving talks if we can’t understand a word he says?”

A wave of anger began to rise somewhere in my stomach. I said, “You can’t be serious! I can understand him perfectly.” He said, “I’m very serious. Have you ever read Yogananda’s Autobiography?” Of course I had. “Do you remember how he couldn’t speak English, and then on the ship when he had to give a talk, he just opened his mouth and English came out?” The unfairness of his attitude grated on me, and I said, heatedly, “That’s not a fair comparison! Yogananda was talking about learning English, not speaking it without an accent! I bet he had a heavy accent! And this is the first place we’ve been where people have complained about this. In New Hampshire he addressed an audience of brand-new people, and they asked him lots of questions afterward which showed they had understood him—the questions didn’t make any sense otherwise.” (Master’s accent was fairly heavy, but his English was excellent, and it is true that most people, with a little empathy and patience, could at this stage of his life follow him fairly easily. As he grew older he became more difficult to understand.) I added “Maybe it’s your Southern accent that’s causing the trouble. Why blame him?” He looked at me and said, “Is this part of his teaching—getting angry like this?” I looked away—ashamed but still angry—“No. I’m sorry”—but I wasn’t. I felt that Master had been stupidly, trivially, dealt with, and I was furious. Just then someone came up and said, “The Master is giving private interviews now if you would like to see him.” The man said, “Yes, we would!” and to me, “I’m going to bring this up to him and we’ll see what he says!” and they left.

I felt sick at heart: They were going to complain to the Master about his own speech! And what had I done to help matters? I had only made him look worse by reacting in a juvenile way. Thoroughly miserable, I hung around until the couple came out. Seeing me, the man came up to me triumphantly, and said, “I told him the same thing I said to you, and do you know what he said?” I shook my head. He said, “He looked down and said, ‘Yes, I know, I have a bad speech problem!’ ” I made no
reply. I walked away. But Master’s humility took on a new dimension for me that night, and I appreciated his greatness more than ever.

Soon he flew to Florida. We were driving: two cars (ours and one other\textsuperscript{44}) were going to drive nonstop and we each agreed to look out for the welfare of the other. First we went to the airport to see him off. Just before he boarded the plane, he said to me, “Well, Russell! Are you going to leave me again?” He was looking at me with so much love I could hardly believe it. I looked up into his eyes and I felt full of love from head to toe as I said from my heart, “I will never leave you again.” And I never did.

In Florida, he visited St. Petersburg and later Miami, and those stays (especially Miami) were happy times; in Miami we stayed at the home of Judith’s aunt, and this made things much easier for us. Several incidents from this period stand vividly in my memory—but I no longer recall their exact chronology.

The first few days of the Master’s stay in Miami, there were no public talks scheduled; all of the Satsangs were held in the home where he was staying. One night it was my turn to attend, and I was shocked at the sound of the Master’s voice: it was so hoarse that it sounded like it was stretched on a rack, and he coughed—great racking coughs—constantly. The pain that he felt was so intensely real to all of us that we were sitting on needles throughout the talk. For he insisted on giving his complete talk and, except for the sound of his voice and the coughing, gave no indication at all that there was anything wrong: he was animated, a beautiful winning smile on his face, and gave a breathtakingly beautiful talk. Watching him do what he had to do that night, observing both his pain and his ability to not let it deter him, some inkling of what the crucifixion meant in real human terms seeped in; I also realized that night for the first time that the Master was going to die.

At the conclusion of the talk, after we had sighed with relief that his ordeal was at last over, he asked if there were any questions. A woman who was seeing the Master for the first time raised her hand. Mr. Khanna jumped on her: “Why are you asking questions? Can’t you see the Master is sick?” She was abashed. But the Master silenced him with a wave

\textsuperscript{44} Belonging to Doris Yokelson and Lala Wiemers (later Lala Howard) who had driven with Judith from California to Texas also, to my great appreciation and gratitude. Doris and I took turns recording the Master’s talks on her tape recorder throughout the tour.
of his hand, and leaning forward, his beautiful eyes alight with love and deep concern, he said in a voice barely usable but still somehow touched with gentle compassion: “Please ask your question. Please ask it. Please?” and she did. The Master answered it completely, asked if there were more questions, and when there weren’t, left the room.

The next day there was no trace of his illness. Later an initiate who had been there that night told me that she had been troubled all her life with a severe throat problem, including a hacking cough; that she had aggravated the problem by smoking heavily, but while she had made many attempts to stop smoking, had been unable to do so; that she had had an interview with the Master that afternoon and told him all this, and he had told her not to worry; and that night, as he was talking and suffering, she had felt her own trouble recede; and she was able to stop smoking that night, and had never experienced her cough or throat problem again.

Shortly after this, I was standing on the lawn near the Perrins’ home (where Master was staying) one afternoon when Master came up to me and beckoned me to follow him. He led me a little way off from the others and started to speak to me. The expression on his face was most peculiar—he looked like a little boy—and he reached into his inside jacket pocket and pulled out his wallet, at the same time saying, “I was thinking maybe you needed some money?”—in such a human sort of embarrassed way that a great wave of love for him just surged up within me. I refused the money—“Oh no no, Master, I can’t take money from you!”—which I came later to feel was a major error; I would not have refused anything else from him and if he Who is the Giver wants to give, why should the receivers refuse?45 I don’t know of course how much he would have given me but it is a fact that when we returned home after the tour was over we had managed to spend every cent of the money that had been made available to us, and it was five months before I could get a steady job: the bleakest poverty of our married life lay ahead, and I do not think it was unconnected with that refusal.

As I said earlier, during the stay in Miami we were able to stay in the home of Judith’s Aunt Robbie.46 This was a great blessing for us,

45 Actually, it was Mary McTier, then the Group Leader in Hamilton, Ontario, and a dear friend, who pointed this out to me. I did, eventually, learn this lesson.

46 The widow of the philosopher John Dewey. Interestingly, Dr. Julian Johnson had
financially and psychologically. It meant that we were not around where the Master was as much as we had been, but I thought this was a good thing: I felt that the other satsangis were getting tired of us and our kids and our problems, and that if we kept a low profile for a while, so much the better. Of course we continued to attend all the meetings, sharing the babysitting as before.

One afternoon, I was standing on the steps of Miami High School where the Master was scheduled to talk in a few minutes. I saw him arrive and start up the steps, way on the other side, accompanied by Mr. Khanna. I was looking at him from a distance and loving him, but I did not move any nearer. Suddenly the Master veered and walked across the steps until he had reached me. He stopped in front of me and looked directly into my eyes. He was standing straight and tall and looking very stern. “Where have you been?” I was completely taken aback: “Well, I—we've been staying at Judith’s aunt’s”—he took one step closer, said deliberately, “You should be around more. I missed you!” He raised his hand and, to my utter amazement, struck me on the chest; then without another word, turned around and walked into the building. The blow didn’t hurt a bit; rather it felt warm and good, but the whole incident was and is incomprehensible to me.

After Miami, the Master left for Panama and we left for home. We drove to New Hampshire non-stop and visited our home (now Sant Bani Ashram) for the first time since November.

mentioned Dewey, whom he had known and admired as a young man, several times in his book The Path of the Masters, written during the lifetime of Baba Sawan Singh. I found those passages and read them to her, and she appreciated them. She also went to hear the Master speak and loved him.
BOOK THREE

Twelve Days Wonder
Twelve Days Wonder

The twelve days weren’t supposed to happen, according to conventional wisdom; they were not on the schedule. The Master was supposed to go to South America, via Panama, and return to Washington for a few days before departing for India on the 29th. He did go to Panama, but they were having a revolution there, and although the Master and his party had no problem at all surviving and serving the sangat, they were put to considerable inconvenience, in that among the buildings burned was the Pan Am Building where their passports were. This ended the possibility of going on to South America, and they returned to Washington, D.C., for twelve days of wonder. Judith, Miriam, Eric, and I had driven back up the East Coast from Miami after the Master had left, and we were settling back in when we got a call (via my mother’s house, as telephone service had not reached as far as the Ashram back then) from Barbara Kondos alerting us that Master was coming back to Mr. Khanna’s house for ten days or so!! We asked my mother if she could take the kids for those ten days, and she agreed; thank God for her! Judith and I drove down in our Corvair, accompanied by Jim Bax, my old friend from the Coffee Corner, not yet initiated; David Wiggins, our first initiate in New Hampshire; and Frank Irwin, the Zen Buddhist who had fallen in love with the Master at first sight and had, along with his wife Eleanor, been given the Initiation Instructions by Millie Prendergast in November. We arrived at Mr. Khanna’s house on the evening of the 17th; the Master was due the next day.

Saturday, January 18, 1964

On this cold Saturday with an unusual (for Washington) amount of snow on the ground, the Master flew in to Friendship Airport. I was with a small group of disciples that met him there; he greeted us lovingly, happily and warmly, and we followed him through the airport. How my
heart rejoiced to see him again! Walking behind him, my happiness overflowing, I was struck by the beauty of the back of his neck.

He was driven directly to Mr. Khanna's house. When we arrived there, he sat down in a big chair in the living room and began to talk with us, laughing and joking and prophesying, about any and all subjects. We were all very happy to see him again, and he seemed equally happy to see us. Only ten days or so had gone by since we had seen him last, but I realized (and this is something I would realize again and again over the years) that I had completely forgotten what he was like: the total impact of him.

This particular conversation was totally spontaneous and covered a great deal of ground. A lady began it by asking, "Master, will you speak to us on the three gunas or qualities?"

The Master replied, "These are the different states of mind, I would say. When a man is inclined for good things—compassion, love, sympathy and helping others—when the ramifications of mind are inclined toward the good things, that is called satva. When you find some laziness, slothfulness and putting things off for tomorrow—'We'll do it some other time'—that is called tamas or tamogun. And when you are vehement in doing something and active, like taking over and exerting yourself—people have their own nature; some are exertive and pushing—that is called rajas. . . . These are three different attitudes of mind, you might say.

"So we are to leave off this sloth and laziness, putting things off till tomorrow.

"The satvic man has an inclination for good. If the rajsic element is present, he will push on, like an unruly horse, which, if bridled and under control, will take him to the destination sooner. So literally, I mean these attitudes of mind are called three qualities.

"We must rise above the three qualities. Discard the first quality [tamas] altogether. The second [rajas] helps if it is directed toward good. If it is directed toward doing not good, such as killing, it is also dangerous. But when it is combined with the satvic side, man works wonders. These three attitudes of mind are called by different names by different Masters. The rishis called them by the names used here; the Mohammedans call them by their own names. So these are the different attitudes of mind, that's all. We have to rise above them."
“Of course, satva is a stepping-stone on which we have to transcend all these qualities. These are the attitudes of the mind. We are to take up the satvic way as a stepping-stone to rise above them. But even the satvic attitude is binding: like chains of gold or chains of iron, that’s all. So we have to rise above these three attributes. In these few words, I think you’ll find it to be like that. It is not very clearly given in the books, you see.”

The lady asked, “What does it have to do with the third word of the charged words?”

THE MASTER: “These have little or nothing to do with that, I tell you. These are the three attitudes of mind that we have to transcend: then true spirituality begins. Mind has a very large scope. It has the physical; it has the astral mind; and there is the causal mind; there are three different degrees. Do you see? When you transcend the three planes, that’s a different thing. But mind is also in all these three planes; it is called by different names. The rishis have their own names: pindi manas, andi manas, and brahmandi manas. The physical works in the physical body, the other in the astral body, and the third in the causal body. We have to transcend all these three. And the qualities are the three different attributes of mind.”

QUESTION: “And on what plane for sure is there no Sound? Does the Sound ever stop?”

THE MASTER: “Sound is going on all through creation—in all the planes.”

QUESTION: “Through the fifth?”

THE MASTER: “Through all the planes, I say. When God came into expression, there was Light and Sound. There was Light; from Light proceeded Sound. In the beyond, in the Wordless state of God, there is no Light and there is no Sound. There is all ‘hush-up’; there it ends.”

QUESTION: “The Sound is throughout creation.”

THE MASTER: “Throughout creation.”

QUESTION: “But where it’s Nameless, there is no Sound. Is that it?”

THE MASTER: “In the Nameless, Wordless state there is no Sound, no Light. But that is Something in Itself. It cannot be expressed. That’s all I can say.

“Very few people really ask or have asked this question of the three attributes, at least in the West. So the satvic element is the stepping-stone. And we have to rise above it, to transcend it.
“Those who are tamsic people—those who are of the lowest degree—will do what others goad them to do: goading; they require goading. They won’t do it otherwise. When anyone does not like to do it of himself, he has to be goaded to rise up: it requires constant goading. And the rajsic person is the one who is an unruly horse: he requires bridling. That, if combined with satvic, works wonders. Rajsic just means ‘vehement,’ that’s all.

“Now, all foods have their own attitudes or results. Each food has its own effect. That is why you should discard all this meat, etc. Milk, fruits and vegetables are satvic. And there are so many tamsic-like things in the vegetable kingdom, too. Something that causes a flaring-up is rajsic. In the Gita of Lord Krishna,¹ he has given the three different elements and enumerated which is which. That is why the satvic element—the fruit diet, the strict vegetarian diet, grains and milk—is advised. These are satvic, they create the satvic element. For example, if a dog is kept on meat, it is always growling and howling, you see? If you keep it on vegetables, it becomes very amiable.

“So diet has a great part to play. But it is not necessarily all. You might follow the whole diet, but mind still has to be transcended. The diet is a helping factor, of course.”

The conversation took a number of turns after this, but before long the Master was commenting on the most interesting, and for some of the devotees, I think, the most shocking, subject of the night: his interceding for and advocacy of the Dukhobors or Spirit Wrestlers, the radical religious sect from eighteenth-century Russia that rejects all external authority in favor of direct revelation and which settled in Canada at the turn of the twentieth century, where the majority, about 20,000, now live. They had been befriended by Leo Tolstoy, who saw in their vegetarianism, non-violence, and chastity, his own concerns mirrored and who had written his great novel Resurrection in order to help them emigrate to Canada when they were being systematically persecuted by Tsarist Russia; all his royalties from that novel went to the Doukhobors and basically financed their emigration. They had been featured in headlines in the American press lately, and the conventional wisdom consensus was that they were crazy fanatics; but the

¹ See the Bhagavad-Gita, Chapter 17.
Master, like Tolstoy, had a different idea:

THE MASTER: “During this tour I met a certain group of people in Canada with a very troublesome cause. They don’t like to send their children to the schools. The government is pressing them to go to the schools. They say, ‘We don’t want the education they give; we want to keep our children with us and give them our own teachings of celibacy, chastity and a good life.’ The government is against them; they are being put in jail. There’s a hunger strike in Vancouver. And we interceded. This matter came to me and the Baron [Blomberg]. We called the Prime Minister [of British Columbia], and he came over there. We reconciled them. ‘Let them have their own schools, their own teachers. Why do you force them to do what is not, I mean, moral?’ What are schools doing nowadays? The teachers are not chaste, I tell you. Some children are spoiled at home and the rest in the streets and then in the school. . . .”

Steve Kozitsky, a devoted disciple of the Master who was overjoyed to see him again (he, like many Washington disciples, had been unable to travel with the Master) and who was asking many questions during this session, asked, “Did I understand you to say that the Baron and you got together with the Prime Minister?”

THE MASTER: “Yes, yes. He came from Ireland. We had a talk, and they were agreed on the matter after all. There was a hunger strike, and they were dying of hunger. We helped them with food.”

Steve said, “I remember for the last five years we’ve been reading about them here in America. They used to take their clothes off.”

THE MASTER: “Yes!”

STEVE: “And they said they were crazy. But now you tell us a different story. They’re very spiritual.”

THE MASTER: “They’re not crazy. They are spiritual. They don’t want these things. Their leaders came to us; they were dying of hunger, some in prison, some outside in the cold winter. This is what is required. Who is going to do this?”

STEVE: “Our newspapers give us the wrong story then!”

THE MASTER: “That’s altogether wrong. I know what happened and what has been reconciled. Now the government has agreed to give them the right. I told them, ‘Why don’t you give them their own
schools? Let them bring up their own children in the way they like. Why do you force them to do otherwise?' And they want their children to go to those schools which are spoiled. Our whole system is wrong, I tell you. People might tell me, ‘What nonsense he’s speaking about these things!’ But these are common-sense points. I am appealing to your common sense.

“Then I left, but they were reconciled; the government agreed. They were in jail, you see. Inside the jails, they were hungry; outside they were going on a hunger strike. Some were all-naked; some had clothes, others not. I gave them at least food for a fortnight or so, so that they might not go on hungering. Khanna was there. Do you remember?”

Mr. Khanna commented, “Master gave them about 200 dollars’ worth of food.”

THE MASTER: “Yes.”

STEVE: “There are a lot of things we don’t know about. Will that come in a report? That’s good information.”

THE MASTER: “The reports sometimes tell about what I’m doing in connection with the World Fellowship of Religions.

“This is also part of the spiritual life. If we do not love the hungry and naked gods moving on the earth, what will our God, Who is in heaven, do? Is this not so? This is what Christ said: ‘If you do not love your brother whom you see, how can you love God Whom you do not see?’ We don’t go into the spirit of the teachings. That’s the pity. Then we go by the letter of the rule, that’s all: ‘We are Christian; we are Hindu. Oh, heaven is reserved for us.’ Who says so? A Christian is one who sees the Light of God. And a Sikh is one who sees the Light of God. Those who do not see, cannot go to heaven. Who says they will go? I must be very frank, I tell you. These are truths. We are after truth, you see.

“I tell you, let all the ministers of all the religions be taken away from their jobs; not paid anything. Then let me see how many ministers there will be remaining. They get ample money to stand on, for living, enjoying themselves, drinking and eating. And simply, for an hour or so, they cry like anything. What is this? I do not denounce the prayers, I tell you. I am simply talking about the attitude they have taken. It is like a business. Christ said when he got rid of the money changers: ‘Go ye out of the temple! You have made the house of my Father a business home.’
“I saw the ceremony for our President on television. The deacon was drinking and dispensing wine throughout. Is that God-intoxication? With due deference to the system, that intoxication has been changed into another form. That is why, when Masters come, they politely change the angle of vision. They don’t force it on people, but they awaken them to what they’re doing. Do you see any truth in what I’m telling you?”

STEVE: “I see very clearly.”

THE MASTER: Yes. The only remedy is that we should stand on our own legs: now, not tomorrow; from this moment on! Change your lives! Have chapels made in your homes, small chapels. Have honest lives. Be true to your own selves. What more do you need? This is what is wanting, you see. It is not difficult to get to God, but it is difficult to make a man. One poet, Iqbal, said, “Why did Moses go to the mountain to meet God? Was he not aware that God is Himself in search of men?” He does not find any men. He finds all are beasts in men. They’ve beastly habits. Beastly men with beastly habits. They have the noble form of a man, but they’re not men. They are in the form of a Christian, but they are not true Christians. They are in the form of a Sikh, but they are not true Sikhs. They have these outer badges, and they are not living up to what the Masters demanded of us.”

STEVE: “Master, what is meant by the frequently quoted phrase in the Bible: ‘Man is made in the image and likeness of God.’ Does that just refer to his soul?”

THE MASTER: “Soul, yes. Soul. God is all-consciousness. Our souls are conscious entities. God is all Light and we are Light. We are children of Light. God is all wisdom and we are after wisdom.”

STEVE: “Some interpret that exteriorly. But that has no reference to the body?”

THE MASTER: “God is neither with form nor without form. Excuse me, if there is a meeting of buffaloes sitting together, and they think of God, they will think of God as a big buffalo. [laughter] That’s all. Do you see? That’s how they can see. God is Light. God is Spirit. And furthermore, what will you find? God is Spirit, and we are Spirit in man. God with form and formless, both are the attributes of the Wordless

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2 The funeral ceremony for President Kennedy. Master was touring the United States at the time of the President’s assassination.
state. And what is the Expression? It is Light and Sound. That is the true Christ-spirit.

“I gave a talk in a Unity Temple. I told the minister that Christ also lived before Jesus and after him. He was very quiet. Then I asked him, ‘What are you thinking?’ He gave me a book. It said, ‘We believe Christ was before Jesus and after him.’

“What is Christ? Christ said, ‘I shall never leave thee nor forsake thee till the end of the world.’ Christ is God Power or Guru Power or Master Power, the God-in-Expression Form that controls all creation. When that manifests in any human form or pole, that is the Christ Power or God Power. It helps humanity.”

STEVE: “May I ask this question, Master? Do you think as initiates that someday or sometime in our development we’ll ever find an answer as to why we were created? That’s a question that is always asked.”

THE MASTER: “I will tell you the answer. But may I ask you one question?”

STEVE: “Yes, sir.”

THE MASTER: “It is a very ordinary, common-sense question. Why do you beget children?”

STEVE: [long pause] “Probably because everybody else does? I don’t know.”

THE MASTER: “It’s common sense: because you wish it. It’s God’s Will that He created. Why did He create? We will go to Him and ask Him. That would be a better thing to do. He would be able to explain it better. But all Masters say that it is His Will. When He sends us down, we have to abide by the rules of that plane. I am usually in India. But so long as I am here, I have to abide by your American laws. Do you see? I cannot use the law of India. In your physical plane, you have to abide by the physical law. So, ‘as you sow, so shall you reap.’ But why did He send us down? Well, it is His Will—His Pleasure. Or let us go to Him, and ask Him. When you go there, then, I think, this intellect won’t be with you.”

STEVE: “My intellect won’t go with me? Oh, oh, I won’t be able to ask!”

THE MASTER: “Try it. I’m not putting forth any inferences by discussing it in any intellectual way. This is common-sense talk.”

STEVE: “Many years ago an Indian sage came here, and I think I asked him that question. He didn’t answer it. He said, ‘That’s one of the mysteries.’”
THE MASTER: “What mystery? It is a very common-sense thing, you see. When you’re physically and intellectually still, you know God. And all of these questions are within the pale of the intellect or mind. When you rise above it, who will have a question? You become one with Him. It is His Will. All Masters say that it His Will. And that’s the only reply that you can give: ‘Because we have been sent here.’

“Why did He send us down? It is His Will. Why did He want all this world to be made? Well, if you go on like that: ‘Where was He sitting when He made this world?’ And that land—‘who created that land on which He was sitting?’ ‘Is the seed before the tree or the tree before the seed?’ You cannot know unless you transcend the three planes and the three attributes. Then this question does not arise. You see clearly that it is His Will.

“Before setting up a mill, the mill owner first has a wish or pleasure to do so. Then he opens it. After opening it, he has to abide by the requirements of running the mill. These considerations don’t help us. The main thing is that we are in a house that is on fire, that is burning. ‘Who set the fire in there? Why did he put fire to the house?’ Why not first get out and then ask and find out? Do you see! Get out of the building and see! Then find out why he has set it. [laughter]

“We are after happiness, you see: bliss and joy. We want to have it. Really, that bliss or joy is within us; because God is happiness, all wisdom, all joy; He is eternal. And all these qualities are within us, too. Don’t you find in Corinthians that it is said, ‘You are spirit in man, in body. Why are you afraid that you will die?’ Is it not so? God is eternal, and soul is also eternal. God is all wisdom; we are also wise. Everybody considers himself to be the wisest man in the world. Is it not so? It’s a reflection of that.

“And everybody is after happiness. If a man earns money, collects possessions, builds buildings and courts, what is it for? For happiness. But this happiness is only temporary; it changes. Real happiness lies within us. So long as we are identified with an outside thing, for the time being we feel happiness. Otherwise, when it is withdrawn, or we are withdrawn, we are unhappy. So let us be happy first. Do you see?”

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3 The entire conversation is published in Sat Sandesh, November 1975 (Vol. VIII, No. 11), p. 2, under the title, “The Whole System is Wrong.”
It was a very happy end of the day for all of us, and for Judith and me, it got even happier: we asked Mr. Khanna if we could stay at his house for the duration of Master’s stay, and he said yes! He gave us a little cement room in his basement, with a very narrow single bed which took up most of the room, and we were ecstatically happy! And indeed the next ten days were the best of our life up to that point.

Sunday, January 19, 1964

Today was the regular satsang day for the Washington initiates, so Master went to the Friends’ Meeting House, where satsang was held, and talked. To be there that day was a life-changing experience; I doubt that anyone who was there has ever forgotten it. We were in a downstairs room at the Meeting House; it was packed, and the atmosphere was absolutely electric. It was a prime example of the extra-physical dimension which is always a factor whenever a genuine Master speaks. He was standing at a pulpit, contrary to his usual preferred cross-legged sitting position; he started talking and power started flowing to each of us. He began:

I am happy to be amongst you again after three and a half months. We are all children of God. God is all Light and we are also Light, being children of Light. But our Light is enveloped by so many coverings, and we are so identified with the coverings, that we have forgotten ourselves. The cause of this identification is that the attention, which is the expression of our soul, is, through the outgoing faculties, diffused in the outside world. . . .

And he went on to describe the principles of Shabda Yoga in an absolutely memorable fashion:

You might have experienced in your own life, that when you are cut off from everything outside, you feel a sort of rest and peace: not every day, but at times. When you are quite absorbed and cut off from everything, you feel a sense of pleasure, rest, bliss and peace. Naturally, what happens? We are after having that peace prolonged. Naturally we want that. We are children of Light, as I told you. Like a candle’s flame, our source is up. Every man wants to go up. If you turn its face downward, even then it will go up. Our soul is of God, of Light. It is bound by the outgoing faculties in the body. When it is liberated, it will go up; this is but natural. Then, naturally, true rest comes. How? When we withdraw our attention from outside and enter the
laboratory of the human body. When you enter an air-conditioned room after having been in the burning rays of the sun, how rested you feel! It is something like that. You feel at rest. You have some glimpses when Master comes. Not only does he show you how to withdraw from outside and enter this laboratory of the human body, but he also shows you how to rise above the senses and have some experience of the beyond. When? When there is no questioning of the mind. When the intellect is at rest, that Truth naturally becomes effulgent, and you see Light. If you are questioning why this is so, why that is not so, why that has not come, then your mind is not still. It has to be stilled.

What you feel at that time is the experience of God, in the form of Light and Sound. The Master first gives you an experience of how to rise above this Iron Curtain of the human body; then, as you practice day to day, you rise above the astral body, the causal body and the supercausal body. Day to day you experience more bliss and joy. Saint Tulsidas says that when he rose above body consciousness and reached the causal plane and had an experience of bliss and joy, he thought, “That is the most and highest of all.” But after he had transcended the causal plane into the supercausal and beyond, he said, “The causal plane is perhaps only a washroom compared to this.”

Those who have tasted that bliss are here in the world, but they are bound—Masters go under the orders of God. They want to go back. When any of us also has some experience like that, we wish to go in there. Why don’t we want to go in there now? Because we find joy and bliss and happiness in outside things. And, moreover, we have never cared to analyze—to go into the matter—of what it is that gives us bliss in the outside things.

We are conscious beings. How can a conscious being have bliss or joy or happiness in material things? But we do feel it—How? Why?—We are bliss personified. God is all bliss, all happiness and all joy, and this bliss is also innate in us. So long as we are identified with something, we reflect our own happiness in that thing. When that thing is withdrawn from us, or we are made to withdraw from it, we feel unhappiness. So we should identify ourselves with something which is not changing. And that is God alone. Any happiness we feel with outside things, is not really lying in those things, but in our own Selves. It is reflected in things, so long as we are identified with them.

An awakened soul cries, “O, how beautiful You are! How beautiful, how all-wise!” He sees His wisdom in all things because he becomes a conscious co-worker of the Divine Plan. He sees that it is He who is doing it, not himself.

Naturally the question arises from a new man: “How did you get into this state? You say it is all beautiful; it is all glory; outside and inside, it is all His expression; God is Light; God is everywhere; He is the One who has always been the Doer. But how did you attain to this state? What did you do?”
That is a natural question. We are all, I think, seeking that state. The first step is: be truthful. *Be truthful.* If you don’t tell lies, you will change. Deeds of darkness are committed in the dark. You go and want to do it somewhere where nobody can see you. Anything that requires secrecy is a sin.

Two seekers after God went to a Master. The Master told them, “Look here; here are two pigeons. Take them away and kill them someplace where nobody sees you.” One was very active: he went around under the shade of a wall where nobody was looking, killed it and came back in a few minutes. The other poor fellow, wherever he went, did not find any place where nobody would see him. From morn until night he went around and around; and he returned in the evening unsuccessful. The Master asked him, “What? Haven’t you been able to kill it?”

“No, sir.”
“Why? Could you not find any place to do it?”
“No, sir.”
“And who was seeing you?”
“The very pigeon was seeing me!”

Follow the beauty of the sayings, I tell you. Live up to them, each one of you. You *must* be an ambassador, I tell you. Whoever has got the human body has the birthright to become God, I tell you. There is no exaggeration about it. But the pity is that we don’t follow it.

For that very purpose you will find that you have been given diaries to maintain. What are they for? Be truthful, in mind, word and deed. Don’t make false promises. Don’t think one way and say another. Let your heart, brain and mouth agree. What is the criterion of a truthful saying? That all these three—your tongue (what you are saying), your intellect and your mind—agree with what you have in your heart. Can you then do any evil thing? When you do anything and you are later on asked, “What were you doing?” and you say, “Nothing, sir,” is that telling lies? When you tell one lie, you have to tell hundreds of other lies to cover that lie. How we create more thorns for our own selves! With a truthful man, ask him something at any time and he says the same thing; he does not have to think about what he has to say. But a man who tells lies would have to think, “I told this man this thing, that man another thing.” He is all the time trying to reconcile things. But the cat must be out of the bag!

Even one thing: if you are truthful, you can change. So, naturally we want truthfulness first of all. But not so that anybody sees it: *you* see it; the God in you sees it; the Master Power within you sees it. That is why I say, *Be true to your own Self.* If you are true to your own Selves, you are true to your God, to your Master. If you are true to your own Selves, you have none to fear in the world—in the three worlds. This is the first thing that is required.
And further, when some God-in-man, the human pole where He is manifested, puts you on the way and gives you an inner contact, that God-Power is the true Master, not the son of man. That resides within you. Can you do any evil or bad thing, even when a child of five years of age is sitting beside you? You'll require secrecy. Our Master used to say, “When a child of five is sitting beside you you'll want secrecy.” If you are going to do some evil thing, you try to avoid being seen, although that very God-Power is within you watching your every action. How can you do any evil? So fear that.

Be truthful, I tell you. This is a very great qualification. We people don’t care. We sell the prophet Joseph for the sake of a few petty monies. You gamble your eternal life with a few mundane things. Be truthful. Have fear: He is seeing; He is watching. These are two qualifications.

The third thing is: He gives you a contact with the Word Power and demonstrates how to rise within and come in contact with the Naam or Word Power, the Light and Sound Principle. Be regular in contacting this, day-to-day. This is the Bread of Life. Don’t miss it.

And what will happen? You will have progress from day to day and have inner peace and inner joy. Any outward prayers or performances of rites or rituals you do will become blessed. When you say prayers, you will find Him in front of you. When you read scripture, it will always be vivid to you. Such things you will find. Naturally, you will have all peace. When your soul is withdrawn, it comes in contact with the God Power, which is Light and Sound Principle. The more the outer consciousness comes in contact with the All Consciousness, the more it overflows with joy and peace and all wisdom. God is All Wisdom.

Masters never speak at the level of the intellect; they speak as it comes. Emerson says, “The thoughts which come without thinking are always perfect.” What does the Master do? He loves all, even the sinners. For a sinner, He has more pity and more love, because He considers that he is a child of God. His work is to bring together all children of God.

God is all Light. That Light comes when we rise a little above the physical curtain; and then as we rise and shake off the astral and causal shackles, that Light grows more and more and compares in light to billions and trillions of suns.

Even then there is some duality. You see the Light. The seer and the seen are two. We still have to take a further step, mind that. There was a great sage, Shankara by name. He said, O God, I know there is no difference between You and me; but I am Thine, Thou art not mine; because a wave can be of the ocean, but the ocean cannot be of the wave. And when you see that Light of Life, you are absorbed into that Light. You become one with it. This is the ultimate goal. You are absorbed in that Light of Life, and you come into the
wordless absorption in the wordless state—call it by any name you like. This is the destination, the goal before each one of us.

We are fortunate we have the human body. How far have we developed? Most of our life has already passed. Fortunately, with the grace of God, we have met someone in whom God was manifested, and he put us on the way and gave us some experience to start with. Years have passed. Where do we stand? We are not further because we have not followed the things I told you about.

I am giving you in a nutshell the digest of what all the Masters gave when they came from time to time. It requires no change of religion, no outer school, no rites and rituals. Just rise above body consciousness. Make the best use of the preparatory steps you have before you. They are all meant for developing love and devotion for God. If you abide by them, then you must *take heed that the Light which is within you is not darkness.*

I have been giving these words to you from time to time in different ways. This is the digest of all that. I had the good fortune to come over here with the grace of God and to have met you, one and all. I love you, one and all—not for my own part, but the God in me, the Master in me. No obligation. If the Father loves His children, there is no obligation. Similarly, I have love for you, and I wish you to have love for God in me—and the God in you.

And what should be done? Obey. And you will progress. Fully understand the purpose for which the diaries have been given and live up to it. The more you live up to it, the more progress you will have. Those who have had some fortunate background, but are not obeying these things, will be surpassed by another who is obeying and might have started fresh.

The greatest part of the life of this human body has already passed; but for the sake of outward enjoyments, we are simply selling Joseph for the sake of a few pieces of silver. So just think carefully; I have nothing to impose on you; I appeal to your common sense for your own good and for my pleasure. Why? My Master—the God in him—gave me this duty. Whether I fail or not fail is not my job; I have to do my best. It is the God in me; and you will be helped without asking for it.

After a week or so I will be leaving physically, though not spiritually. This is the best golden opportunity we have had—these three or four months together. We cannot underrate the physical presence of the Master; but you will have the same radiation from thousands of miles away. God is within you. Master is God-in-man, not the human body, mind that. That is already within you. Just live up to it; you will derive the full benefit of the human body, and you will become, as I told you, the Beloved of the Master, too. Thank you.4

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4 The entire talk is published as Chapter 2 in Kirpal Singh, *The Coming Spiritual Revolution.*
We left the Friends’ Meeting House convinced that the day was as full as it could be; yet that evening Master came down to Mr. Khanna’s living room and gave another full-length discourse which has to rank among the most beautiful that I have heard:

There is a religion above all religions, that is one for all; that is Truth. It was given out by all Masters, whenever they came. We have forgotten it, that’s all.

I go everywhere. People of all religions invite me; they love me, and I love them. Perhaps their love is reciprocal or my love is reciprocal, I don’t know. But they do love me, and I love them. When I go to them, I see I am at home, because they also stand for the very same Truth. But while standing for this Truth, they have gotten into formations—watertight compartments. Sometimes, in the zealouslyness of being in that watertight compartment, they unfortunately establish divisions. But I take them from the viewpoint of the religion that is above all religions. The word “religion” purely means: re means “back”; and ligio, “to bind”: “to bind back our souls to God.” This religion is above all other religions, which are meant to lead us to this very high religion. We are already one; but unfortunately we have forgotten this. Masters see all of life only from its level as a man, or as a soul, or as the higher Truth. This duality has been shaken off, by the grace of my Master. I love all.

We are worshipers of Truth; we are to bring out the very Truth that has already been given. The pity is that people have forgotten it, that’s all. When I go to them, they claim me as their own. And first, I claim them as my own. That is how it is.

There is no dearth of outer forms of religions, but all these outer forms of religions are meant for that higher religion, which is one, or Truth. We should always have that ideal before us. There can be no duality, no strife, no concussion. The pity is that we do take up the way—apparently we try to follow that higher religion, but for want of practical progress, we do not have it at home in our hearts.

The present day is an age of the practical life. People do not believe unless there is something practical. So we must have all our Truth in a practical way, and it will appeal to all. This Truth will prevail. Times are changing. This is the only thing that can appeal to everybody. This is the only ground on which all of us can sit together.

So I wish each one of you to be practical. Do not try to reform others. Reform your own self. When you are reformed, all the world will be reformed. If anybody hates you, love him. After a while he will come around. If any man lowers himself, it affects him the most. If anyone has done anything wrong to you, and you also stoop to harm him, you do more harm to yourself first. This is what my Master once wrote to me:
“Many kinds of people come to the Satsangs: some come only to criticize; others come out of devotion.” He said, “If a bad man does not leave off his bad habits, why should a good man leave off his good habits?” It is not good if a man thinks that way: returning in kind whatever he receives. If you sense any evil, return it with love. That is all you have to do. That will give you peace first, and then others. When you hate anybody, perhaps not outwardly, but at heart, it reacts in the heart of the other. So, we should have air-conditioned hearts, into which no hate should penetrate. That is all I can say.

Once, it so happened in the life of Buddha, that some man came to him and began calling him names very angrily. He remained until it grew dark, and when he was going to leave, Lord Buddha told him, “Look here, friend. Hear me first. I ask you one question. If anybody brings a present to give somebody, and he does not accept it, with whom does it remain?” “Of course, with the one who has brought it.” “So, dear friend, the present that you have brought I do not accept.”

That will change your life first; that is the criterion. You might say, “A tit for a tat is all right.” But it should not be done that way, for if anybody does it, he goes down. When you return love, in the other way, that is God’s grace on you, and God is more pleased—the God in the Master, too. It is a very simple thing. For one slight shortcoming, we go on spoiling our own life. I do not mean to say that those who show hatred are doing good: no, they are also not doing good. They are harming their own selves, first. Where fire burns, the earth around it is heated first, then the heat spreads further. You should have pity on your own self, to save your own self.

To find God is not difficult, I tell you. To make a man is difficult. God Himself is searching for a man. He does not find a man. If, when two beasts fight, they lock horns, what is the difference between a man and an animal? Man is the highest in all creation. He is God in man. Even if you don’t take up the spiritual way and you live up to these things, I tell you honestly, you will find peace. You will have transvision; you can portend things. To be spiritual is not this, but it is a very good ground on which spirituality can dawn. Spirituality is just knowing oneself and being cognizant of God all the time.

I am telling you no new things. These same old, old things are given in our scriptures, but we don’t try to follow or understand them. Even if we have understood them, we don’t put them into practice. If you begin to love, you will find a change in your own self, even after a few months. The very same things that appeared to be very bad in the past will now appear to be good. A man who has changed in this way speaks in the heart, he speaks by radiation; his eyes speak; because thoughts are more potent than words. Silence speaks more than words, because thoughts are potent. Thoughts radiate. They radiate only the kind of quality which is within you: they are charged by that
quality. You will find the atmosphere will be charged like anything. There is no foe, mind that. Our own mind is the foe. Even the very atmosphere will begin to resound. This is what Christ meant when He said to shut yourself in a closet. “Shutting yourself in a closet” means that in your thought you will be wholly and solely with Him. If more than one sit together in that way, how great a radiation there will be! Satsangs are meant for that. Satsangs are of the Master, not of individuals. They help by radiation.

And more than love is devotion. Devotion is more than love. Love burns the lover, and devotion burns the one he is devoted to. The other takes all the burden. So, faith in the Master is a great blessing. It goes to sprout forth spirituality from within us. With it, man can work wonders.

Mind that, Master does not make slaves of you. He makes friends of you. He has respect for the God in you. He treats all alike, high and low. We are human beings, and God has made all human beings equally, with the same privileges. This is a very common-sense matter; and it requires no intellectual efforts. Live up to it, and you will find it to be true. The man who does it is paid then and there, because it gives him peace of heart. That is why Christ said, “Love your enemies.”

Some people went to Christ and asked, “What should we do with our enemies?” He said, “Your law says, ‘a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye.’ That formula was on account of people’s hardheartedness. I give you, ‘Love your enemies.’” That was a higher religion, do you see?

This is why I said, “There is a religion higher than all religions, and that is Truth, that is Love, that is Life, that is Light.” And those who follow the Masters do not walk in darkness. They walk in Light: not the light of the son of man, but the Light shining through him. We are worshipers of that Light.

I wish if I could go deep down into your hearts, I could convince you and give you an impetus to start that way: the sooner, the better. When you get strength you have simply become receptive. “Let you abide in Him.” That is the only way. You abide in Him only when you remember Him. Whatever you remember out of sweetness, reacts. That reaction draws you to abide in Him, and you receive that Godhead through receptivity. That is why it is said, spirituality cannot be taught, but caught. The more devotion and the more surrender we give, the more spiritual we can become. Even the worst of men can do this. The pity is that we do not surrender and we are not devoted. While saying we have love for somebody, we are not devoted. We have other devotions somewhere else. What kind of devotion is that?

Our Master Sawan Singh used to say of those who had talked evil of him: “I am very glad; in their zealousness, they remember me!” Once he went to a village in which there was much controversy. When he went there, the people received him with stones; and when Satsang was being given, they threw stones.
He turned to them and said, “I thank you. You have given me a very good reception. Thanks for the reception.” Now, with these words, they were changed.

So you love. In the beginning some people do not have love for want of right understanding. You must be true to your own self and to the God within you, that’s all. Have love for all. Many problems will be solved.

What is good, do at once; what is evil, delay. Make it a point. Leave it to some higher power. During this tour, I met with people from the Tyrol. Some Italians in the Tyrolean area had control over the people there. They were revolting, and they had bombs and other weapons. I met the governor. We had a one-hour talk. He said, “I do not know what to do. I don’t follow what is to be done.” I told him, “Delay. Light will shine.” And what happened? We are now in correspondence: War did not break out.

It can work wonders within our own selves. What does it cost any man? How much does it cost? Mind that, I have love for all. Even if you fight, I have love for both sides. I tell you honestly, I have love for those who are awakened, who have the right understanding; and I love the others for pity’s sake. I want to raise them up.

With Masters’ sayings, their very brevity is the soul of truth. Masters never give long yarns. They say in a few words and those words are pregnant with meaning. They never dwell on them. “Love and all things shall be added unto you”: only a few words. How can all things be added unto you? Try it and see. Practice it and you will find out. People do not realize the truth of it. Take one thing: take love, for instance; take truthfulness. If you do, you will be changed. And the highest practice, I would say, is coming in contact with the God-in-action power, Naam, or Shabda: then all virtues find their abode in you. They come of themselves: some by self-introspection, and others by coming in contact with the God-into-expression power. Naturally, they will come to you.

At this point, Bibi Hardevi (Taiji) came in and Mr. Khanna said, “I want to introduce a great lady—Madame Hardevi!” Master and Taiji both burst into laughter and Master said, “Great lady or big lady?” to which Taiji replied, “Big lady!” Then Master asked Taiji to sing one of his bhajans. He said: “This is a prayer to the Master to give us one bag of wine—[and Master paused here for a second]—of God-intoxication.” At which point the room erupted in laughter, presumably because the tension created by the idea that the Master would pray for wine had been relieved. The song had been written by the Master in his days of discipleship, was in Hindi, and was heartbreakingly beautiful.

When it was over the Master said:
God is an ocean of all intoxication. And those who are the mouthpiece of God are also rolling waves of intoxication. This is a prayer. For that intoxication, we come to the Masters, those who are the mouthpiece of God, those whose soul drinks deep of the intoxication of God, those who radiate and who overflow with that intoxication. We pray to the Master, “Master, give us one bag of that intoxication. Will you, like a tavern man, who gives to everybody, also kindly give us one bag of such intoxication, by drinking which we forget everything. And to that, you may add the intoxication of those who are overflowing with intoxication.” And he prays, “O Master, I have been searching for it in all temples, everywhere; yet, I did not find it. But when I came to You, You gave me one drop. With one drop from You, I got intoxication.”

There are two well-known stories in India. One is about Farhad, who was a lover of a princess, Shirin. He wanted to marry her. He was madly in love with her, and he was saying here, there and everywhere, “I will marry her.” That looked very awkward to the king. He wondered what to do about it and consulted with his minister. His minister advised him to order Farhad to build a canal down from the Himalayas: “Let him do it; he will die in the effort.” So Farhad began to excavate the canal from the Himalaya Mountains so as to pass the very mansion in which she lived. Love knows no burdens, no hardships; he did so and was successful: now the king had no other alternative. Again, he consulted with his minister about what to do. The minister said, “Send out a rumor that the princess has died.” When this rumor reached Farhad, he took an axe and struck it into his own head and died. And in the meantime, what happened? When the princess heard about it, she fell down from the roof and died.

This is the extreme of madness: it is madness itself. “But this madness should also be put into the shadow; You may give us such an intoxication that this story of Farhad will be eclipsed.”

There is another story about Majnun, who was a lover of a princess named Laila. He was so much in love with her. She used to give out alms every day to all people who came to her. One day, he also joined the beggars, just in order to approach her and get alms from her. She gave something to everybody; but when Majnun came up with the cup in his hand, she struck the cup from underneath, and threw it down, and it was broken. And Majnun was very jolly; he was dancing with happiness. People asked him, “What has she given you? She has given you nothing. She has only broken your cup.” “Oh, you don’t know what she has given me,” he said. “She has told me that unless you break this cup of the body and forget your own body consciousness, you are not fit to love.”
It was so, that when Majnun entered the town where Laila lived, he used to kiss the very ground on which she walked and the very walls and corridors of the houses of the town, because Laila lived there. Once he was seen kissing the feet of a dog. People asked him, “What are you doing?” “Oh,” he said, “One day I saw this dog going down the street of my Laila.” This is extreme madness of love. He says that such an intoxication may be given that throws all this madness of love into the shade by comparison.

We go to the Master to get such an intoxication, not for the performance of rites and rituals. This is a religion above all these things. Shamas Tabriz said, “If I leave the body, and my body is cut into pieces and put in some field as manure, whoever bakes the bread with the corn that grows out of that land and whoever serves it on the table” —he did not even mention anything about those who would eat the bread made out of that corn— “will be intoxicated.” This is what we are after. This is already within us; but when we come in contact with a mouthpiece of God, we get an impetus: it flares up. So, life comes from life. No books can give it to you, and no outer performance can give it to you. The Masters have said that you cannot find God so easily or quickly, even by saying prayers, performing rituals, giving alms, controlling your senses and having a life of continence, too, as you can by sitting at the feet of a Master. This is the way life comes from life. This is given to you when you develop receptivity. By devotion and surrender, you can develop this receptivity. You have nothing to do. This very thing becomes a part and parcel of your life.

Our Master used to tell a story in which some sculptors or portrait painters, who were foreigners, came to China to show their skills. The king agreed to give them a hall in which to do whatever painting they liked. Some Chinese painters also wanted to have an opportunity to show their skills. The king said, “All right; divide the hall by a curtain.” It was a big hall: one wall was given to the foreigners and the other to their own countrymen. They began to work on the walls. After some time, the painting was ready. The foreigners went to the king and told him, “Our painting is ready. Would you kindly come and visit it?” The king went there and saw that the painting was very beautiful: he was amazed at how lovely it was. As he was coming out, the Chinese painters also said, “Would you kindly have a look at ours?” “All right.” When the curtain was taken off, to the amazement of the king, the very same painting that was on the other wall was also on this one. It was exactly there, and still clearer than the other one; because in the original one, done by hand, little imperfect spots did show up here and there, but in the reflection, they were not there. He was amazed and said, “What have you been doing?” “We have done nothing, sir,” they answered. “We have done no
labor; we were simply rubbing the wall so much, from day to day, that it now reflects. That's all we have done.”

So, it is the love that reflects. That’s the rubbing that reflects the Master within you, which is “I, not now I, but the Christ in me.” That is devotion. There we are wanting. We may have love: I tell you honestly, “Love knows no burdens. Love beautifies everything.” And, “Love and all things shall be added unto you.” But devotion is still greater, and surrender, greater still. That love is love, where there is devotion and surrender. Where there is no devotion and surrender, there is no love. By devotion and surrender, you lose your ego. You reflect the same as He is, in you: you become He, Himself, without any effort. This is the highest of all.

Hafiz said the same thing as St. Paul: “Strangely enough, I have forgotten my body; whether I or my Master is here.” These are the words. “By name, I am called Hafiz; but I am He, and He, me.” This is what is called a Gurumukh, in the terminology of the Masters. A Gurumukh is one who becomes a mouthpiece of the Guru. That is God’s gift. That becomes the fate of those who have devotion and surrender.

This is the highest thing we have to learn. In love, too, we sometimes transcend limits. I remember I once wrote a letter to my Master, in which I wrote, “I pray You to give me love, a love which demands no recompense, a selfless love, such a love that does not transcend the limits of respect.” Sometimes, in love, we transcend the limits of respect. And what did He do? He read that letter and put it on His breast: “I want such people who want to love within respectful moods.”

These are the things we have to learn practically. It is not done by intellectual inferences; it is a matter of living. These are almost practically the same. We must learn to love with a love which is selfless, which rises into surrender and devotion. When you love that way, you become a Gurumukh: this is what is called “to become a Gurumukh.” When Master has to take over all the burden, you have nothing to fear. A child who has a mother has nothing to fear, nothing to worry about for its clothing and eating and care. We have to live up to it. You will find that in such a way, you will progress wonderfully. As St. Paul says, “You will feel that way: not feel; you will see that way.” He makes you a flute through which He breathes life into you, and you give unto others. Emerson said, “Those thoughts which come without thinking are always perfect.” Masters never speak from the level of thinking: “Now I have to say this thing; now, that thing.” They come of themselves.

So, a Master is God-in-man; do we see that? He does not assert; but He works as Christ and all other Masters said: “I and my Father are one. It is the Father who is working through me.” He is conscious, all the same. Sometimes Masters have to say who they are. When one of the disciples said to
Christ, “You have been speaking always of the Father. It would suffice us if you 
would show us the Father,” Christ grew indignant over it and said, “I have been 
so long with you, and you do not know it is the Father working through me?” 
Then He went so far as to say, “Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father.” 
They are conscious, although they work at the level of the man-body. 

Masters come from time to time: the world is not without them, mind 
that. It is not necessary that they follow the same lineage. No; they may be 
here, there, everywhere. That Power remains, working throughout the world. 
And wherever that Power is, you will find that He gives you some experience 
to start with on your inner way. That is the only criterion you can have. But, 
in due course, you will begin to observe Him within you. The only thing that 
is required is obedience. 

Our Master used to say, “Your whole life may be spent in search of a God-
man: that very period of search will be counted for devotion. If you come 
to the right person, with the grace of God, all your labors will be crowned 
with success.” Then you have nothing to fear. You have only to be devoted 
to Him. This is God's grace working everywhere in this materialistic age. 
There is an awakening, with God's grace. I have found it. On this present 
tour, I have found it. There is a great response everywhere for unity. Religions are 
trying to make the sub-sects of their religions merge into one. But what we are 
speaking of now is not the merging of all religions into one: let people remain 
in their own religions; but they should all sit together for the same higher 
religion, which is one for all. They should remain in their own religions and 
not change them, but follow the religion, which is one for all, given out by 
all Masters. These are the words you have to write down in your hearts, and 
never forget to live up to them. You will find a wonderful change; you will 
live and see for yourselves. 

In the beginning it might appear: “Oh, you are a fool. Such and such a man 
has done you wrong, and you are simply loving him!” Loving does not mean 
physically mixing. I mean: just have good thoughts for him. Blood cannot be 
washed away by blood. If there is filth in the gutters, it can be washed away by 
sweet waters of love. You may be thinking you are apparently losers; but you are 
not losers, you are gainers. The more you live up to it, the more you will find for 
your own self that you are progressing. You will have peace of heart. Don't look 
to the flaws of others: try to wash them with love. Tell others privately what's wrong. 
And you will also find improvement all around: first your own heart will be 
improved, and then others. Then, in whatever little time you put in for devotion, 
you will go quicker. That is because, as I told you, meeting God is not difficult: 
man-making is difficult. An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of theory. 
We should try to change our way of living at heart. That will give a lasting ef-
fect, and a substantial change will come about.
Whatever you hear, put in writing, and keep it with you. Otherwise, you will forget it. Try it from day to day, and see how you progress. In talks, you learn what you cannot learn by reading scriptures for a long time.

Master paused for a long time, and there was absolute stillness in the room. He said, “The very atmosphere becomes calm and quiet,” and conferred with Taiji in Hindi about another song that Master wanted her to sing—a poem written by Master to His Master Sawan Singh. Then he said, “We are here to be mad, now! I think we are talking about madness.” Taiji sang:

*Out of the madness of love we will see You;*
*The One Whom I love will come.*

And the Master said:

It so happened once, that I went to Amritsar, and Master was expected to arrive there. We were all sitting in expectation of His arrival, and the message came that Master was not coming. All were disheartened. Some people dispersed, and I remained there. It was also a madness, I would say. I wrote this poem: “He will come! I will see Him with my own eyes!” I was writing this and going around in madness; and after about an hour, Master came there. So great is the strong attraction of love! This is a poem written at that time.

Taiji sang again:

*Out of the madness of love, we will see You . . .*

**THE MASTER:** He *must* come!

*Out of the madness of love, we will see You;*
*The One Whom I love will come.*
*He must come! We will see my loved One!*
*Out of the madness of love, we will see You;*
*The One Whom I love will come.*
*Out of the madness of love, we will see You;*
*O Master Sawan, we must see You!*  
*O Perfect One, we will see You!*
*Out of the madness of love, we will see You;*
*The One Whom I love will come.*
THE MASTER: It so happened that He came after that. So, love is a very great power. Like a glass that does not show your face unless you put something behind it, similarly, the love-polish at the back reflects the Master within—the God within you.

*Out of the madness of love, we will see You;*

*O Master Sawan, we must see You!*

*O Perfect One, we will see You!*

Taiji found it difficult to continue, and stopped. There was a short silence. Then Master said:

When the clouds come, rain falls. It is the forerunner of God’s coming, when there is such a pining that nothing else remains between you and the Beloved, the Master. Once, while sitting in the Satsang, Rai Saligram came into that state of madness. The whole Satsang began to feel that same madness.

One day, we were celebrating the death anniversary of Hazur, and it happened that the whole Sangat began to cry.

So, love is everything. Love is devotion; and surrender is the most ideal. But love begins with: “If you love me, keep my commandments,” as Christ said. That does not cost you anything. You won’t be a loser, I assure you. In a short time, you will gain what you could not gain in a lifetime; because you will reflect the whole thing: like the painters, who came for this.

All right, God bless you.

And God blessed us indeed.

**Monday, January 20, 1964**

This morning, we had a meditation sitting with the Master, which was heavenly. Afterwards, a gentleman who had had a significant connection with one of the Radha Soami groups at Agra, asked the Master some questions relating to the ways in which his lineage was connected with that lineage. They were already talking when the tape recorder started (which may have been my fault, since I did a lot of the taping during these ten days) but the gentleman was very happy to be with the Master. The tape picks up with him asking, “You can get his darshan that way?” to which the Master replied:
“Aye, by receptivity. He’s ever with him, I tell you, ever since he is initiated. He never leaves him. But we have no time to turn to him, truly speaking. He’s waiting for you within.

“Once in the early beginning after I met my Master I put a question to him, ‘Well, what is a man to do who is cut off from outside and furthermore has not reached the Radiant Form?’ That was within a few days after my initiation—the very first two, three or four days. He said, ‘All right; we always think of our friends and of others, of this and that thing; then why not think of the Godman?’ After a few days I further questioned him, ‘What should be done, further?’ He said, ‘There is no need now of visualizing or remembering anybody. If you enter the room, you’ll find Him there.’

“Do you see? When a man is initiated, that Master Power, God Power or Guru Power resides with him from that very day. If you simply enter within, you’ll find Him. Before entering a room you might think of the man sitting inside or not, but if you enter it, you’ll find him. Is it not so? It is a very definite thing, but people don’t believe it, because they are not properly guided. People even don’t believe there’s light inside, honestly speaking.

“So that is why I say, ‘This is a religion above all religions.’ Religions are formed of rituals, dogmas, prayers, this and that thing; that’s all right—they are the preparation of the ground. Make the best use of them. But this is the true religion, and that is within each man. Any man can delve it out. A Christian may have it—may delve it out; just so, a Mohammedan, or anybody who knows how to go within. Some help is required in the beginning—without help nobody can go within.

“When one gets some experience to start with, why should he not progress? Maharishi Shiv Brat Lal was a direct follower of Rai Saligram, initiated by him. He’s a very literary man; he wrote, I think, more than four or five thousand books5 on Radha Soami Mat. He used to say, ‘Within six months you can go up.’ But that is not simply by the instructions given by mouth. That is by receptivity while living in close relationship with your Master. If you go to your Master and live for him alone and nobody else and be receptive, you’ll progress rapidly.”

5 This may seem incredible, but see Steve Morrow’s Introduction to Shiv Brat Lal, Light on Ananda Yoga, p. ix.
The gentleman said, “Well, Saligram himself must have been pretty well developed if it didn’t take him long.”

The Master replied, “Yes. Those who come in contact with them, they get development, you see, after all. They’re fortunate. Babuji Maharaj⁶ was with his mother at the feet of Rai Saligram.

“There are four who were noted disciples of Swami Ji. One was Rai Saligram and one was Baba Garib Das. They have their own lines. And one was Baba Jaimal Singh; and there was one more. So these four carried on. Baba Jaimal Singh was sent to the Punjab: ‘Go on, carry on this thing there.’ Rai Saligram and Mata Man-Devi,⁷ followers of Swami Ji Maharaj, directed him, along with Saligram, to carry on there. So Baba Jaimal Singh was sent to the Punjab; thither he had to go, to carry on there. Baba Jaimal Singh kept it pure, as a science. He did not mix it up with rites and rituals; of course, that is necessary for the commencement; but when rites and rituals come up, people are sometimes deluded—they consider perhaps that’s the only thing. Do you see? So he kept it pure and simple, as a science. That was carried on by Baba Sawan Singh. He instructed us to have a common ground for all so that no error may creep in. Times have changed, you see. Truth is the same.

“As I told you, I had a long talk with Agampas Sahib, the great grandson of Rai Saligram. He is an awakened man. We are after Truth, you see, that’s all. People asked Aristotle, ‘Do you love Plato?’ He said, ‘Yes, I love Plato.’ ‘And what else?’ ‘I love Truth more than Plato.’ I love Truth more than Plato. So we are lovers of the Truth, which is given out by those human poles. We have greater love for them for the sake of Truth, is it not so? Blessed is he who comes across such a person at whose pole that Power is working. And any man can be selected for that. It is His grace, not man’s selection, you see.

“In all religions there’s some reference to this thing; but there are longer ways to achieving it; these have been cut down to meet with the times. Both Kabir and Guru Nanak were such poles. They were contemporaries for 48 years. Under them that Truth went on. We are not fit for those old methods, you see. They are longer ways, time-consuming and hazardous. In the natural way, even children see light. That is why when small

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⁶ The last guru in the Soamibagh line at Agra; he died in 1949.
⁷ Also known as Radha Ji; the widow of Swami Ji Maharaj, she was also named by him as a successor.
children come up, they have light; because the slate of a child’s mind is clean; its attention is not so diffused as ours. We have too many irons in the fire, you see.

“So, the only success lies in the fact of continued devotion, surrender, with one-pointed attention. You may have in days, you may have in months, what you might not have in a lifetime. And blessed is the one who rises that way, whether he is in one school or the other. Any man living in any religion can delve it out; it is within him, is it not?”

At this point a lady came in and said, “Master, our daughter and youngest grandson came here, and I’d like to have you meet them.” And the Master greeted them so lovingly! He said, “All right, most welcome. Hello, hello, hello, hello, come on. What is your name?” And with some coaxing, the little boy told him his name was Matthew. And then someone asked, “Can we have meditation tomorrow morning?” To which the Master replied, “You can come if you like,” and added:

“So long as I’m here you can make the best use of me, that’s all I can say. But along with that, even if you sit in meditation here, put in time also during the day, in the evening, at night. Do you see? Simply sitting here alone will give you something; but we should continue it during the day, at night—give it more time and you’ll have wonderful progress. Here, it is only just to point out any errors—to give you a little impetus—like that. You have to put in more time—the more you can, of course.

“When I went to my Master, I was a government servant, I was a family man. I asked him how much time I should put in for meditation. He said, ‘Five to six hours daily, minimum, and the maximum that you can.’ Perhaps I was the greatest of all sinners, that’s all I can say! The more you put in of this time the better, because we have the ramifications of mind from births past, even in this life. Time factor is necessary. When I was in the Himalayas, I put in sixteen hours a day—sixteen hours a day. But we must develop more and more, you see; not by compulsion, but by sweetness.”

Rev. Emil Christesen, a Pentecostal minister who was Kirpal’s first American initiate, asked, “Do you see, then, that length of time? All the time you see something? Sixteen hours of duration—do you see all the time or do you just meditate?”
The Master said, “No, meditate and leave the body.”

Mr. Christesen said, “Oh, I was wondering myself, because I sit sometimes long and I see nothing, and then I sit a very short time, and I see something.”

The Master said, “No, no, that’s it. When you learn to leave the body and traverse in the beyond, you’re always conscious. The question was asked of Prophet Mohammed, ‘Do you sleep?’ He said, ‘My body sleeps, I don’t sleep.’ That is a developed state, of course. Every man can go up there; there is nothing strange about it. Regularity pays—regularity and sincerity; not by imposition—slowly. When a man gets some bliss inside, he would like to be there all the time, you see. We are disturbed by outside elements, that’s all.”

At this point Mr. Khanna commented, “Some people have been writing many letters to the Master on his tour. So that cuts away his rest, you know. He had to cut down his tour to reply to them. So I think that’s not fair.”

And the Master hastily replied, “No, no. Oh, no. I would request of you all one thing: that you remain in touch with me, that’s right—quarterly, by sending in your diaries, you see. The number of initiates is increasing day by day. And, in spite of all the instructions, I reply to a letter, it is received, and within a fortnight another letter comes in. If there is anything urgent, you’re welcome to write, you see. Anything urgent—life and death—you are welcome to write anytime. But regularly, as a matter of course, that should not be sooner than every three months, so that time may be given, you see, to everybody. Be regular; practice is required. When you understand it, follow it; go on with it! But keep the diary daily. Don’t postpone it till after three months; you may send it in every three months. If anything very important, very urgent, arises, you can send that directly. That is because the number is increasing, you see. At first, I advised sending in the diary monthly; then, after two months; then after some time I asked, ‘All right, send it in quarterly.’ That is easier for everybody. If there’s anything urgent, you’re most welcome, you see. Develop and see.

“When I was in service, I was a superintendent of a section. There were other superintendents, too. One superintendent was a member
of the Arya Samaj.\textsuperscript{8} He came and told me, ‘You are working in the office, with no hurry, no waste; calm and quiet; everything goes on in your section, and you’re never perturbed. The work that’s turned out in your section is almost double the others. What is it? What do you do? What can I do to concentrate?’ Then I told him what to do. That was long ago, before I met the Master. I told him something. After a month or so he came back: ‘Well, I sit. At my house the water tap goes on; I hear the sound.’ ‘Well, put in more attention.’ Then after two months, he came back again: ‘Now, in the beginning I hear the sound of the tap water going on, then I forget it.’ ‘Still go on further.’

“A man should be practical, you see. Worldly things come in. Nobody can say that all of his life is smooth. Life is a series of interruptions. \textit{Life is a series of interruptions:} sometimes good, sometimes bad. They come up as a result of the reactions of the past. You have got something to give strength to your soul. They do come up. If you’re regular in your meditations, they will not have a pinching effect. Do you see? Sometimes the severity is minimized—cut down, too—by devotion to the Master, and by devotion to the contacts within. So whenever any man gets sick, that Power is within you, seeing, watching, helping, you see, without asking for it. Then it will pass off. Sometimes a man is in very good circumstances, sometimes not in very good circumstances. And these are passing phases; they come and go. Do your best, and leave the rest to God.”

Then Rev. Emil Christesen asked, “When you say devotion of physical service, what actually are you referring to—outside or inside devotion of service?”

\textsc{The Master:} “Devotion of service?”

\textsc{Emil:} “Yes, in the outer.”

\textsc{The Master:} “Outer devotion is only putting in regular time and having love for all—for the God in all; that’s all.”

\textsc{Emil:} “Nothing else?”

\textsc{The Master:} “That’s all. Devotion to the meditations and love for all—for the God in them.”

\textsc{Emil:} “And then devotion of service from within?”

\textsuperscript{8} A Hindu sect, founded in the nineteenth century by Swami Dayananda, that went back to the Vedas (including the Upanishads) and rejected all developments within Hinduism subsequent to the Vedas.
THE MASTER: “I’m talking about the religion which is above all religions. Devotion may be to the practices in the outer religions, you see. Regularity, but with a heart full of love, that pays.”

EMIL: “When you said to me, I should give more devotion of service, I was wondering, just what do you mean by that?”

THE MASTER: “Do you know what devotion means? There is a difference between love and devotion. You are devoted to something when you take Him to be a superior power, when you obey out of love, taking it to be the ideal, with no question of compensation or consideration. Just as you breathe, going on with it, with no care as to whether it results in good or bad, that’s called devotion.”

Then the Radha Soami gentleman who had begun the conversation asked, “Wouldn’t the highest service to the Master be the devotion of body, mind and soul, all together, as in Parmarth or in meditation and with body, mind and spirit?”

And the Master replied, “Well, this is what is meant, you see—wholly and solely. Masters say, ‘Give your physical body to the Master; give every possession you have to the Master; give your mind and soul to the Master.’ Do you see? Guru Amardas says, ‘I’ve given everything to the Master: my physical body, my mind, my soul, my possessions.’ This is what Christ said: ‘Leave all and follow me.’ ‘All’ includes everything, you see. What more is wanted to be done? If you give everything, well, you’re free.”

Then Mr. Khanna said, “O.K. now, the time is over. Have your breakfast.” The Master said, “All right. Thank you!” And we had breakfast.

During that day a number of people noticed my state-of-the-art Roberts tape recorder, purchased earlier that year, which I had set up in the room where Master spoke, and asked me if I could make copies of the talk Master had given the day before at the Friends Meeting House, and I said that I could, if they supplied the tapes. So all that day and for the rest of the stay my principal occupation was making tapes, of that talk and many others; Doris Yokelson kindly donated the use of her tape recorder also, and utilizing both of them I made tape after tape, first of one talk, then another, and so on. It was blessed work and I was grateful to have it.
That night the Master spoke to us again in Mr. Khanna’s living room, which was actually two rooms which opened into each other via a large sliding door between them. Chairs were set up, and young people (including Judith and me) sat on the floor in two rows at the front; altogether, about a hundred people were accommodated, and the two rooms were packed every night and morning. On this Monday night Taiji sang with much poignancy a poem written by the Master to his Master, Baba Sawan Singh Ji. The poem tells of the anguish he feels in his heart on being separated from him. Then the Master said:

The hymn just now read out is a prayer from the disciple to his Master. He says: “It is you who have lacerated my mind, my heart. There is no remedy other than your own self. The remedy for the wound in this heart lies only in your hands. No other doctor can heal it. You are going away, but don’t forget us.”

That is a prayer. Well, Master does not forget—that’s right. But still, out of the anguished heart comes the words of the disciple: “For God’s sake, don’t forget us! We cannot forget you; but you also must not forget us. We are, after all, your own. If you forget us, who will heal the pain in our hearts? What will be our own remedy?” What remedy can there be for the heart which is aching to have a glimpse of the Master? Nothing else—no words, no consolation, will help.

In the time of Lord Krishna, there were many gopis who were very much in love with him. Once it happened that he remained away from them for some time—say, about six or eight months—and they could not reach him. They were crying disconsolately. (Separation is a very bad thing. Two times are very difficult for a man who has developed love in his heart for someone. One, the time which has just passed in awaiting him; and the other, when he leaves him. Both are hard times.) So Lord Krishna sent Uddho as a messenger to go and console them. “Console them: ‘Look here, God is everywhere; Master is everywhere; He is in your heart of hearts; He is the very controlling power of your own self in the body. Why are you worrying? He is the soul of your soul’ . . .” Uddho went to them and spoke to them the best he could. With all that, they listened to it very calmly and finally told him. “O Uddho, what you say is all right. But tell us, what remedy do you have with you for the eyes that are yearning to see the form of the Master?”

This is a prayer from the disciple to the Master: “Don’t forget us!” And usually you’ll find, as a matter of fact, that the Master himself never forgets. But the disciple cries, “I have only one heart and that you have now taken possession of; what am I to do? I can think of no one other than you yourself.”
There cannot be ten or twenty hearts. You cannot devote one heart here, another there, and then another there. It is only one heart. Well, it is the throne of God; don’t let anybody sit on it except God. What do we do? We let every worldly thing sit there, and we dethrone God.

Guru Arjan said, “The Master loves and remembers his disciples with every breath.” Can a mother forget her small children? She might be working here, there, or anywhere; she might be in the kitchen, and the child might be lying in his room; but there’s a connection. If the child moves, then her milk begins to come from her breast. If the little child cries, she at once runs to him and leaves everything behind, even the most valuable thing.

Similarly, we are all children of God—of the God-in-man. He does not forget us. But because of the yearning of the heart, his disciple does pray like that: “Don’t forget us. Even if you go away, we are still yours, after all.”

But I tell you, it is the mother who first loves us—the child. The child’s love is only reciprocal. The love that a Master has for his children—for his disciples—comes from the level of the God in him. He loves his disciples as hundreds of mothers won’t love their children. But he loves the soul, the development of the soul, with no consideration, no recompense; nothing of the sort. A mother may love her children with the hope that when they grow up they will help her and care for her in her old days. But the Master does not do that. He simply sees that they are all souls. The God in him thinks, “He is my child.”

The more we have yearning like that, the more our mind is cleansed of all the dross of the world; it is washed away with the tears that roll down from the eyes—that’s the water. With that water alone can the dross of the filth of many past births be washed away.

There are two ways to go to Mecca from India: one is on the sea, the other over land. But the way on the land is very sandy; there is a dearth of water; there are no communications through the deserts of Arabia. So it is very hard to reach the place of pilgrimage if you go on foot—or even on horses; and no car can cross the sands. But there is a way, across the sea, that takes you there in three days. So, somewhere Maulana Rumi said, “If you want to make a pilgrimage to God, go through the waters of tears. You’ll go quicker than you can on the land or through the sands.”

What is meant by that? Any prayers that are said, any rites or rituals that are performed or any scriptures that are read mechanically, with dry hearts, like a gymnastic, won’t help you to reach God. Your heart should be full, and that heart should overflow through the eyes.

Once there was a pandit who was relating the story of Rama, reading it out of the scriptures in Sanskrit. An illiterate man was sitting, listening to him.
and shedding tears like anything. The pandit thought, perhaps he has followed me very well. When the talk was over, the pandit called him and said. “You understood my sermon very well.”

The man said, “I did not follow a word of what you were saying.”

“What then were you crying and weeping?”

“I had the scene of Lord Rama before me; my heart was full and I was shedding tears, all the time watching that scene. I never heard a word of what you said.”

So this sort of love is the foreshadow of coming things. When rain is coming, there are first clouds. When there are blossoms in the fruit-growing trees, there is hope for fruit. Similarly, the heart which is full of anguish, which is yearning, which is overflowing with tears from the eyes, can reach God the quickest. And sometimes we never remember God. Days and days pass by, and we never think of Him.

Perhaps we have not seen all the aspects of keeping the spiritual diary. There is one very important thing about it; that during the day you are remembering the God-in-man; otherwise you won’t remember him. At least at night you will think back, “What have I been doing? I have to send in the diary!” Is it not a great blessing? We never realize the truth of the things that are given us. All the time you say to yourself, “O my Lord, I have not to do this, not to do that.” So you are always thinking of the Master or the God in him. Such a heart becomes the fittest to receive Him a quicker way.

So that was a prayer, so very full of pathos, of yearning: ‘O Master, you are going away, but don’t forget us; we cannot remember you unless you remember us.” Our love is reciprocal, as I told you.

So when two men—two disciples of the Master—sit together, naturally the remembrance of the Master comes, is it not so? This is the first reason why you are asked not to miss attending the group meeting. When you sit together, you think of the Master. And someone might say, of his own accord, “This is like this; the other is like that”: and that way, the remembrance is revived. Another thing is what Christ said: “When more than one man sits in my name. I am there.” And moreover, you will develop receptivity.

When Master initiates anybody, he resides with him from that very time. And he never leaves him, unless he takes him to the lap of the Father. That is what is called God Power or Guru Power or Christ Power. So, such an attitude, such time spent, makes us fit: and when it comes, just sit in sweet remembrance. You will have response when you are there.

This is one of the poems I wrote when I was away from my Master. This state of mind cannot be expressed in words. It has not been given to words to express the feelings of the heart, the yearning of the heart.
So, such an attitude radiates in the atmosphere. It goes to cleanse away all foreign, external thoughts for the time being. Just as when an eagle comes, all the sparrows fly away, so when the eagle of love comes anywhere, no thoughts arise there. So all Masters say, “The heart has been given to you as a sacred trust. Don’t misappropriate it. It is meant for God; let only God, and no other thing, sit on that throne.”

Suchlike prayers help you. These things gush out afresh from the heart; only suchlike prayers help. Sometimes we have models, specimens of prayers given by past Masters. But those are only the words they gave out. The words should come out—should gush out from our very hearts. Only a mechanical repetition of something cannot have an effect.

If you love Him, you abide in His heart: “Let my words abide in you, and you abide in me.” How can you abide in Him? When you remember Him. The more you remember Him the more He reacts—do you see? And what does it cost? Anything? And time flies away, like anything.

At the time of separation from my Master—one time it was for eight months—these things came out of my heart. The heart is only one, not two or three. How many have you got? One? Well? He wants your heart. When you give your heart, what remains? Where the heart goes, everything goes—both the body and the soul.

This is what is meant by surrender and devotion. Simply following in an intellectual way or by philosophical ways of thinking won’t help you. Hafiz said, “If the learned men come to know just an iota of the madness we have got yearning for the Lord, they will forget everything, and they will dance like anything.” Do you see? Such a heart is the abode of the Lord. Even when we say prayers, we are thinking of the worldly children and this and that thing. Tulsidas said, “Just clean your mind, so that God, your Beloved, may manifest Himself there.” Then he defines what is the cleansing of the heart. He says. “The heart in which no other thought other than that of God comes up is the pure heart.” A heart in which there is love for God, yearning for God, is a fitting thing in which God manifests. That is why it is said: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Purity means that.

And that ended that day.

**Tuesday, January 21, 1964**

Tonight was very interesting. The Master began by saying, “If there is any particular thing you would like, we can talk it over.” To which Mr. Khanna replied, “At the Friends Meeting House, Master said that he never asked his Master any question in his life, except three questions. I think
it would be very interesting to know what those questions were that the Great Master had asked his Master.” The Master laughed and spoke as follows:

When I went to the feet of my Master, after a few days I asked him, “This method is very perfect. What is the proof that it will remain even after you?” That was a very insolent question, of course. But I did ask him, because I was very much interested in the competency of the system. Everybody gets experience and advances on the Way so quickly, about which we generally know very little. This is the last, ultimate thing which we have to attain. But the Master’s grace is there: he gives it the very day of Initiation.

Then he said, “To whomsoever I will authorize, I’m responsible that this will continue. For others, I’m not responsible.” It naturally happens that when a Master leaves the physical body, so many people take up the Way, considering perhaps that it is a matter of honor or income. So he said, “To whomsoever I will authorize, I’m responsible that this will continue. For others, I am not responsible.”

Then further I questioned him: “Well, in what form will he be?”

He said, “He will be in the Sikh form.” You see? Some people, as they were not in Sikh form, began to imitate and adopt the Sikh form.

Last of all, I requested of him: “You give initiation from one end to the other on the very first day. Would it not be better if you gave lessons step by step?” Then he turned to me and said, “Do you know why this science has been forgotten altogether?” Then he said, “Suppose one man went to his Master; he progressed within up to two planes, three stages; and the Master passed away. The result was that he thought perhaps this was the ultimate goal. Another man went to his Master, and he progressed only two stages; and the Master left the body. He thought perhaps that that was the ultimate goal. The third one went to his Master, and he only developed to the first stage. He thought perhaps that was the only, ultimate goal. So, he said, “the whole thing is explained on the very day of initiation. Even if the disciple does not have the occasion to see him later in the physical body, he knows where he stands. That is why the whole thing is given the very first day—explained, and some experience is given to start with.”

These were the three questions I did ask him. Otherwise I learned all by sitting quietly at his feet. Just see: when a man is an actor, he acts in all phases of life. Whether he is eating bread at home or abroad, if you simply watch him, you’ll see so many beauteous things. Now we cannot see that beauty. Why? We just try to see through the very glasses we have formed for ourselves. From that level, we cannot look beyond. If you simply look on, then you will see.
The eyes are the windows of the soul. Radiation comes through the eyes and also through the whole body. If you simply remain attentive—I mean, receptive—within the field of the area of the radiation, you will receive life. With words, you only have what you ask. If you leave it as is and keep quiet, you will receive radiation. This is what man learns most.

It happened that I went to Berlin in 1955 on my return from the United States. There, as I did not know the German language, I simply engaged an interpreter to interpret what I said in English. (The interpreter was here the other day, too—here, no—I think it was in Miami.) Well, after a few minutes, the people in the audience said: “Look here, stop! You don't interpret correctly. We understand more from his eyes than from what you say.”

So receptivity gives more than words: it gives life-impulse. Even if you don't know the words “warm” or “cold,” you will receive warmth and coldness. Do you see? You are not in need of using the words “warmth or “cold.” It is more wonderful, of course.

That is why it is said that if you sit at the feet of some Master for an hour or so, in a quite receptive mood, you will gain more than you would by your drawing intellectual inferences for forty years—for a hundred years. There you speak and infer; and here, you receive that very thing which you have inferred. To think of a fire ablaze and warmth-giving is something else other than sitting by the fire. This is something like that.

And whenever one speaks, he speaks out of the abundance of his heart—out of what dwells in there. For instance, if the wind blows against a great conflagration of fire and passes to the other side of it, any men sitting on the other side will have a warm wind. And similarly, if the wind passes along any ground on which there is snow, those who are sitting on the other side will get a wind that is cold. The wind is the same. But it is a question of what it contacted as to which wind will be received—whether it contacted fire or snow. Similarly, if the heart in which the love of God and the love of all humanity is overflowing, any words he uses will be charged. Do you see? And anyone who hears those words will receive that very effect. If a heart is full of passions—evil thoughts, violence, so on—any words he utters will be charged. Do you see? And anyone who hears those words will receive that very effect. If a heart is full of passions—evil thoughts, violence, so on—any words he utters will be charged with that very thing. No matter how many sweet words he may utter, the charging will be the other way. If, for instance, you have love for someone and he sometimes calls you names, those names appear to be very sweet. Is it not so? It is just like putting flowers of very fragrant perfume in a room: anyone sitting in the room will have perfume. The perfume emitted by the flowers radiates throughout the whole room. Whether you put those flowers in a room or in a cloth or in the dust, everything will become perfumed. So, whoever comes within the field of action of the radiation of one who has the God-intoxicated way of life will have the same effect. That is why
it is said, “Spirituality cannot be taught, but caught.” Do you see? It cannot be taught; it is caught, like an infection.

This is what has been spoken of by all Masters: all scriptures said so. That is why Christ said, “Where more than one man sits in my name, I am there”—by radiation. The Master may be thousands of miles away, but when you simply become receptive, you will receive his radiation. You can hear men speaking from thousands of miles away through radio and television. Similarly, if you turn your face towards the Master, you will receive his impulses.

Once someone was asked, “Where is God? Where does God reside?” And he said, “If you want medicine, go to a hospital. And if you would like to have an education, find it in schools and colleges. If you’d like wetness, walk through the grass in the morning; there you will find all-wetness. And if you’d like to find God, where should you go? Where God resides—to His house.”

Maulana Rumi said, “It was asked of God, ‘Where do you reside?’ And Prophet Mohammed said, ‘God says, “I am so big that all my creation is not sufficient to contain me—I am still more. But strangely enough, I reside in the heart of a Master. If you would like to find Me, go there.’ ”

God resides in every heart, as well. But what is the difference between the two? In one heart He is made manifest; in the other He is not. Do you see? To have Him manifest within us, we simply have to withdraw our attention from the outside.

So it is a great blessing to sit by a living person at whose pole the God Power is manifested. One of the Hindu scriptures says: “You cannot reach God so quickly by reading scriptures, by doing penances, by observing fasts, by leading a life of continence and by controlling your senses as you can by sitting near a Master.” You may be reading scriptures from morn till night, but you cannot even have their right import without someone who has had that experience or has seen that which is given in the scriptures. Moreover, he is competent to give you something of that experience to start with. Understanding the scriptures at the level of the intellect cannot give you their right import. Why are there so many religions—schools of thought? Because the people who belong to them have not seen what the scriptures describe. Had they seen it, they would have said the same thing. That is why I say there is a religion beyond all religions, and that is the religion of seeing Truth—of finding Truth—which all Masters who came from time to time gave out. Those who have the good fortune to sit at the Masters’ feet and do care, have it. Those who live by what they say advance quickly, like anything.9

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9 The complete talk is published in *Sat Sandesh*, July 1976.
Wednesday, January 22, 1964

Tonight the Master began by asking Mrs. Hughes, his Representative in Kentucky, about Edward Strater, whom he had stayed with in Louisville about three months previously. Mrs. Hughes replied, “Mr. Strater? You asked about him?” To which the Master said, “Yes, yes, yes, yes. How can I forget him?” Mrs. Hughes said, “He’s just fine! He’s keeping his diary.” And the Master chuckled and said, “That’s all right. I have to remember so many people. You have to think of one man, and I have to think of so many. [laughter] And that is also not superficial; it is remembrance from the heart of hearts.” At which point Mr. Khanna announced, “Now Madame Hardevi will sing a song.” And indeed she did, a hymn to the Master: “It is strange, but people who are afraid to die come to you to learn to die untimely deaths.” And then the Master spoke to us about “Learning to Die”:

Whoever has been born must leave the body some day. There is no exception to the rule. This leaving of the body is what is called “death.” All men, whether they are high or low, rich or poor, have to leave the body. The man-body has been given to us only for a temporary period. This is a golden opportunity, for in this body we can know God and know ourselves. To know God, we must know ourselves first—who we are and what we are.

Most of our life has already passed. This physical body is the first companion that we have when we enter the world, but it does not go along with us. So, naturally, all the things with which we come in contact through this physical body cannot go along with us. A wise man is one who works with foresight: he asks, “What is that thing that we can keep, that we can take with us, even after leaving the body?”

All Masters say, “We cannot know Him unless we learn to die while alive.” The last enemy that we have to conquer is death. But how can we conquer death? There is no escape from it, no exception to the rule. Even the Masters who came here—the very incarnations of God—had to leave the body; and we also have to leave it. How are we to conquer death, when there is no escape? I think the only victory over it we can have is to learn how to die.

What happens at the time of death? The soul leaves the body: the life-force is withdrawn from underneath the feet, goes up and reaches the back of the eyes; the eyes are upturned, and the curtain falls. Now, if we know how to leave the body at will and rise above body-consciousness—if we die daily by learning to leave the body daily—then there is no fear of death. Death is no bugbear. It is a change from the physical world into the Beyond.
So all Masters who came said, “Learn to die so that you may begin to live.” Death appears to be a bugbear to each one of us. If anyone says, “Oh, you have to die,” we do not like to hear the word of death. But we have to leave the body.

Why are we afraid of death? For two reasons: one, we do not know how to leave the body. You might have seen on the faces of men dying what agony they are passing through. The second thing is, we do not know what our fate will be after leaving the body. Where are we to go? So these are the two main causes of fearing death. So Master says, “You must learn how to leave the body.” He tells people who are afraid of death to pass through this death process while they are alive; and there are many ways for that. Some are artificial, man-made. And some are natural, God-made. The man-made ways are difficult, arduous, time-consuming; and we are by heredity not fit for them. But there is a natural way, too.

When you leave the body, it is said, you see, that all glory and beauty lie within you. But now we have no glimpse of it, no experience of it. Tulsidas, a great Saint, tells us that when he left the body and reached the causal plane, it was so beautiful and so enchanting that he thought this is the best of all that a man can have. But, he says, when he transcended the causal plane into the Mahabrahmand, the pleasure and bliss that he felt there was so much greater than the bliss he had while in the causal plane, that it seemed in comparison to be a washroom. Do you see? We hear so much about the Beyond, but we still do not know how to leave the body and enter the inner planes.

So when Masters come they advise, “Learn to die so that you may begin to live.” One man went to Prophet Mohammed and said to him, “You tell us to learn to die, to die while alive.” And Prophet Mohammed said, “If you want to reap the full fruit of having the human body, then go, learn to die! Leave the body at will.”

Then the man was perhaps afraid of leaving the body, and he asked, “Is it a death that will lead me to the grave?”

And Prophet Mohammed said, “No, it is not such a death that will lead you to the grave; but it is a death that will lead you from darkness to light.”

This is what all other Masters said: “Is it possible to die, to leave the body at will?” Masters say: “Yes!” It was asked of St. Paul whether men can die. He said, “I die daily.” Guru Nanak was also asked, and he said, “I die a hundred times a day.” So all Masters give us that advice. Death now appears so fearful to us; but those who have learned how to die, to leave the body at will and traverse into the Beyond, who have tasted the bliss of the Beyond, want to leave the body; but they are controlled—they have to work in this plane under the will of God.
It so happened at the time of death of Maulana Rumi, a Mohammedan Saint, that as he was on his death bed and leaving the body, some friends of his came in and prayed, “O God, let him recover.” And he opened his eyes and said, “Let this recovery be for you.”

And they asked him, “Don’t you want to recover?” He said, “No.” “Why?” they asked.

He said, “In my daily life I could hardly snatch away some time to leave the body and go into the lap of my Father. The body stands in the way between me and God. Now the time has come for this curtain of the body to be rent asunder, once for all. Wouldn’t you like me to leave the body and go into the lap of the Father, once for all?”

Do you see the angle of vision? That is why it is said, “Why should we weep for the Saints? Why should we weep for the Master? They go to their Homes.” We should weep for those who have spoiled their lives; who have not learned how to die while alive. If you once know how to leave the body at will and traverse into the Beyond, to have an experience of that beauty and bliss, then naturally, you would like to be there. For that reason, you will find as Kabir says, “Every day man is dying. But he has not learned to die while alive—the true living—the true death, while alive. That is why he comes again and again.” Again and again: because man goes where he is attached.

Can we leave the body at will? That’s the point. Mirabai says yes. “Now I am convinced,” she says, “that my soul, my surat can traverse into the Beyond—can fly into the Beyond.” Tulsidas was asked the same thing, and he said that we can traverse into the Beyond. Who can? The Saints and others who sit at their feet.

So when you go to a Master, the first lesson he gives you is to die while alive, and how to die. He gives an experience of it; you forget your body for a while; and your inner eye is opened; you have the experience of God in the form of Light and Sound Principle. If you are regular in doing this from day to day, you will have no fear of death.

The hymn she was just singing was to the Master. It goes: “We have seen a very strange event. People are afraid of death, and yet they are coming of their own will and pleasure: they want to die while alive. And these same men are having their untimely deaths daily at the feet of the Master.”

Whoever can tell us how to leave the body at will and go into the Beyond can give us an experience of how to do it, by demonstration. Then, by regular practice, we must learn how to die at will. If we once know how to leave the body, then our whole angle of vision will be changed. The Master gives us some experience on the first day of initiation of how to rise above the body, of how to open the inner eye; he gives us something to start with. Then, by day to day regular practice, we learn to die.
Regular practice makes us regular. If you know how to leave the body daily, when the time of death comes, you will go willingly. So I have now, for instance: I am going back; I have no fear of going back.

Unless a man learns how to leave the body at will, how can he enter the kingdom of God? It is within you. “The kingdom of God cannot be had by observation; it is within you.”

This is the first step; it begins, you might say, where the ABC of Para Vidya, the knowledge of the Beyond, starts. This is a religion above all religions of rites, rituals and dogmas. It is one for all. Plutarch tells us, “The soul that is initiated into the mysteries of the Beyond has the same experience that it has at the time of leaving the body at death.” So, this is perhaps a very wonderful thing: people are afraid of dying, and they are willingly coming and asking, “Master, tell us how to die!” There is no question of being a Hindu or a Mohammedan or of belonging to any other religion. Those are outward forms—badges we are carrying. But this fate awaits us all, without exception. This is what the Masters teach. This is one thing that awaits everyone; and if you do not learn how to leave the body, you must be in the agony.

This is the mystery of life that has to be solved. “There are so many mansions in the house of our Father”; there are so many planes in all of creation. God has given us bodies, according to those planes, to work through, when we want to. But the pity is that we cannot transcend the physical body. All the methods that we follow pertain to the outgoing faculties. They are meant for the preparation of the ground, for developing love and devotion in us. They are good actions. But unless you learn to leave the body at will and be conscious of that God Power controlling all of creation, you cannot become selfless.

So all Masters say that the world at large bases its knowledge either on feelings or on emotions or on inferences, drawn to come to some conclusion. But they are all subject to error. Seeing is above all. Seeing arises when we shake off this physical body, then it develops more and more as we rise above the other bodies. The macrocosm is in the microcosm of the human body. We have bodies, relating to the various planes, that enable us to traverse those planes at our will and pleasure. Suchlike personalities who know the Way and can put you on the Way have been rare in the past, and are rare even now. To advance requires development by regular practice. Perseverance, steadiness and good character are three things of the utmost importance.

So the hymn that you have just heard was addressing the Master: “O Master, we see a very strange thing: we see that people are afraid of death, and yet they are coming to you to learn that very thing—how to die.” It is because there lies the door to heaven, it opens when you rise above body-consciousness. This is what Christ said: “Except you be born anew, you cannot enter the
kingdom of God.” And then Nicodemus said, “Lord, I am an old man; how can I re-enter the womb of the mother and be reborn?” And Christ said to him, “Marvel not I say unto you, you must be reborn.”

First learn to die. The first birth we have is in the flesh. This is the second birth: to be reborn. “Flesh is born of the flesh and spirit of the spirit.” The first is born of the “corruptible seed,” and the other of the “incorruptible seed.”

This is not a new thing; all Masters have been referring to it. In the olden days in India, the rishis had the custom to make children twice-born. Re-born or twice-born means the same thing. First they were born in the flesh; then they were made to be born into the Beyond—that is counted as being twice-born. That twice-born custom was performed only by the religious leaders who were competent to give the children an experience to be born anew into the Beyond. Even now the system continues. They used to give them the Gayatri mantra. They had the competency to raise their soul above body-consciousness and to open their inner eye to see light compared to the sun rising. Now the system is there; the same mantra is given; but they are not competent to give them the experience of being reborn or twice-born.

So these truths are not new ones. All past Masters always gave them out. These are the old, old truths that we have forgotten. You cannot learn them from those who are merely adept in the elementary steps; although we have many people like that.

At this point in the talk, the Baron von Blomberg came in, accompanied by Mr. Raymond Hoekstra of Dallas, Texas. Master greeted them very warmly, called for chairs for both of them, and told them, “We were just sitting here talking all about our problem of life—the main problem of life.” He then went on to repeat, for Mr. Hoekstra, almost word for word, the talk he had given up to now!—with many personal interjections addressed to him. I understood all this better a year later at the Third World Religions Conference in Delhi, when I got to know Mr. Hoekstra a little bit. He was a delegate to that Conference, as was I, and he gave an extraordinary address, speaking humbly and movingly about his city, the part it had played in the assassination of President Kennedy, how much he and others regretted this, and how he hoped Dallas would be permitted to atone to the world to some extent by being host to the next World Religions Conference. He also paid homage to the Master and other Indian spiritual leaders present by comparing their meekness and humility to that mentioned by Christ that would “inherit the earth.”
At close of the talk this evening, the Baron told the Master about a meeting of religious broadcasters the next morning which he and Mr. Hoekstra were attending, and he asked if the Master could come—obviously in connection with the World Fellowship of Religions. The Master said, “I will learn something,” and laughed. “A man learns and unlearns all through life, you see. Wherever I go, I go as a student. I’m still a student; I’ve been a student all through my life.” Then he asked, “Has anybody anything to say? Yes?”

Somebody (I don’t remember who) asked, “We have to rise above and overcome the body. Suppose a person has been initiated not too long and he passes on. Will the Master meet him there?” The Master replied, “Surely, surely. It is God in him, not the son of man, mind that.” But the questioner said, “No, what I mean is this: the Master meets him; he doesn’t go to the angel of death or anything?” To which the Master replied, “Well, look here, I tell you: Those who have got the contact with the God Power, with the Light within them, why should they go to the angel of death?”

The questioner said, “I’m not talking about your older initiates, but the new ones that have just come in.” And the Master replied, “The new ones, also. They must have some experience to start with. The seed is there; that is not lost, you see. That should have been developed; if not, well, even then the seed is not lost. Yes, please?”

Another questioner asked, “If the initiation experience is one to learn to leave one’s body in order to see God, are we to conclude that there is no hope or means for those who have not experienced initiation? Are they lost?”

And the Master said, “I tell you. There is food for the hungry and water for the thirsty. Demand and supply is the law of nature. Where fire burns, oxygen comes to help. The guru appears when the chela is ready. If a man has desire in his heart to know God, as God resides in every heart, He knows, ‘This child is after Me’; He makes some arrangement to bring him in contact somewhere where he can be put on the way. And who can put him on the way? No son of man can do it. When God has no equal, no brother, no father, no mother, who can give you a contact with Him? God is Light; God is Sound Principle, the Music of the Spheres. Wherever God is manifest, that manifested God at the human pole will be able to raise your soul
above body-consciousness and give you a contact with God Himself. And those who have the desire for it are having it. ‘Ask and it shall be given unto you.’ ‘Knock and it shall be opened unto you.’ Those who are ready are having it. This readiness might come as a reaction of the past. And sometimes, when a man passes through many vicissitudes of life, he looks to some safer haven. They have a sort of awakening; they have some inkling of a desire to know God. And God makes some arrangement for them. They are all children of God. God the Father loves the children. Those who are not initiated are not because they are not ready yet. If they are, they must have it.”

Then the Baron said, “Master, you indicated the other day that, without your knowledge, they have prepared a big celebration for you on February 9, that is, a convocation of Saints (Sant Samagam) through the World Fellowship of Religions: and they want to welcome you back to India. This is separate from the big birthday celebration to be held on February 6.”

The Master said, “Yes, they have sent me that word. I told them not to do it, but with all that, they have done it.” The Baron asked, “Are there to be two celebrations? The 6th and the 9th?” The Master said, “The 6th is continuous.” Then the Baron commented that fifty religions were to be represented, and the Master said, “There are many religions. There are Christians, too. I have been in contact with them, with all those people. That is why. They love me. I love them. It is God’s arrangement, not mine, you see. I am dragged on, like anything. It is His grace. This credit does not go to me, I tell you; it goes to God. I am the same man as you, you see.”

Mr. Khanna commented, “Every day somebody wants the Master.”

And the Master said, “Well, it is God’s grace. We had a response everywhere, with whomever we met, whether he was of one religion or the other, whether he was a social head or a religious head or a political head. And I see it is by the grace of God or the God in our Master—it is His grace working, you see. Master is one. . . .

“That’s the awakening; not from man, but from God above, everywhere. And we had a great response everywhere. Well, it is His work going on, you see. We find this awakening everywhere.”

And that concluded the evening’s discourse, but possibly not the evening. Because at some point fairly early on in the stay, and I think
it was most likely this night, but I’m not sure, the following occurred:

One evening after Satsang Master called another Satsangi and me to discuss a particular point which I do not now recall. When we had finished, and the other Satsangi had left, I was alone with him and Tai Ji, who was resting on the floor in a corner of the room. He was reading a letter from Nina Gitana of Kirpal Ashram, and commenting on it out loud. At one point he said to me, “She has two cats!” and chuckled. When he finished, he turned to me and said gravely, “She should be here with me. Why is she not here?” I said, “I don’t know, Master; maybe she can’t afford it.” He looked at me: “I will pay her way! Has she got a telephone?”—“Yes, Master. I think she does.” “Then call her, please, tell her I want her here with me and I will pay her way.”—“Yes, Master.” I did get Nina on the phone, after some difficulty, and gave her Master’s message: she said she would come immediately but it would not be necessary for Master to pay for it. I went back in. Master was sitting on the bed. He looked at me. “Where is your wife?”—“Downstairs, Master.”—“Call her. Tell her to come up.” I conveyed this to someone outside the door and went back into his room. He said, referring to Judith, “She is a loving soul, you see.” I agreed: “Yes, she is.” Just then she came running in, breathless, her dear face anxious and excited. Master looked at her, his face stern. “What do you want?” he said to her for all the world as if he was horribly displeased with her for barging in on him. She stopped dead. She looked at him first, then at me, then back at Master: “But I thought—they said—” Master shook his head. “What do you want?” he repeated, his face expressionless. Judith was totally bewildered. So was I. A little trace of a smile began in the corners of his mouth and slowly, slowly, his face cracked and melted into a loving smile. Gently, I would even say sheepishly, he said, “I was just joking, you see.” Then he spoke with us intimately about many things, including how much money we had spent following him: $1,100. He shook his head: “So much money! You must stand on your own feet.”

Thursday, January 23, 1964

Words cannot describe what tonight was like. I will reproduce the entire conversation—because that is what it was—but even so the humor, the gentleness, the wisdom, the extreme joy felt by all of us present, will not be and cannot be conveyed. In retrospect still,
thinking about this night all these many years late, the only word that comes to mind is “Wow!” That I should be privileged to sit at the feet of such a Master as he relates to his loved ones in such a way—Wow.

The Master began by saying, “It would be better if you were to ask questions; then we will talk on it. The general talks are routine, you see. Any particular points which you would like to have clarified, you can. Any of you?”

Barbara Kondos began by asking, “Sometimes it’s hard to distinguish when we are meditating and something comes to us, between what is a machination of the mind and what is truly a spiritual enlightenment. For instance, when we see ourselves inside or we will see things that are of a very mundane level that we are preoccupied with every day. I will sit in meditation; sometimes I don’t seem to have control over these things. I don’t want control over them.”

THE MASTER: “Your question is mixed up with so many things. What in particular do you want?”

BARBARA: “I want to know how to distinguish, or are we to distinguish, when these forms come to us.”

THE MASTER: “The main thing is, whatever form comes within, repeat the Five Names which are charged. Anything negative will eventually go away. Sometimes the Negative Power affects you with wrong things: then repeat the Five Names. For that purpose you have been given a safeguard against all of these things.”

Then Hope Skinner said: “I asked you—I think it was in California—sometimes in meditation I have this terrific vibration which I can’t seem to control. And you said not to think of the body. But sometimes it’s so very strong that I have to stop meditating. I get so nervous, and I feel as if I was being electrocuted or something. What can I do to stop that?”

THE MASTER: “Just do it in the right way. If you do it in the right way and don’t think of the body, there will be no trouble. If anything like that happens, leave it off, that’s all. And sit in the right way.”

HOPE: “It’s so powerful that I can’t help but think of the body.”

THE MASTER: “But it’s not like that every day.”

HOPE: “No, no, but at times. And then it rises to my throat and I feel as if I was choking.”
THE MASTER: “No, no. That is due to the wrong way of doing the practice. Prana is involved.”
HOPE: “But I don’t do any yoga techniques anymore.”
THE MASTER: “Choking of the throat cannot come unless prana is involved. Breathing is involved. First it goes slowly, at intervals; then it chokes you. That is the wrong way of doing it.”
HOPE: “But I don’t do anything since I was initiated by You.”
THE MASTER: “These are involved: you don’t do it purposely. While you are doing the practice, sometimes breathing is unknowingly involved; then naturally that choking arises.”
HOPE: “But you know, I’ll tell you something strange. I have had that experience mostly when I have meditated when you have been there. Now, in Vancouver in the morning meditation, I sat right next to you, and it was so terrific, I got that power so much it was terrible. I mean, it was wonderful, but it was almost terrifying. And it happens more when you’re around.”
THE MASTER: “It means that when I am around, there is radiation. The soul is withdrawn in a hurry. But your thought is not altogether free of the body consciousness. That is why breathing is involved and there is choking. And sometimes it happens out of emotions, too: emotions sometimes bring on choking.

“Look here, let us give an example in a worldly way. You are going to meet your friend whom you love: perhaps it is your father, mother, brother, or anybody. And he wishes you to come alone. And even though you are going to your friend, you take so many children and other things with you. You are going to meet him and there is no time for you to speak to him. And he will also not be able to devote his whole time to you, you see? This is a worldly way of thinking. Now you have to go to God. God is all alone. Is it not so? He has no father, no mother, no brother. So naturally He wants everybody to come to Him all alone. He does not want you to take anything with you: no worldly things; not even your body; not even your intellect. He says, ‘You come alone.’ Whatever little time you devote in this way will bear forth fruit.

“When we are sitting we are not to think of outside things, not to think of the body, not to think of the breathing, not even to think of
the thinking. We should be physically still and intellectually still, too. If you do it in the right way, there will be no trouble. You see?"

HOPE: “But if you’re intellectually still, you’re repeating the Five Names?”

THE MASTER: “Those become automatic. When you think of their meaning, your intellect works. If you don’t think of their meaning, after a few days they become automatic. Their charging helps. You are told not to think of the meanings, although the meanings have been given to you. You are not to visualize; you are not to think of the meaning of the Names. They will go on automatically. The charging helps. Simply look sweetly and be fully absorbed. It is a question of the seeing of the soul, of the attention. Attention is the outward expression of the soul. Just as the rays of the sun enliven and enlighten the whole world, similarly the rays of the attention (the attention is the rays of the soul) enlighten the whole body. If those rays are withdrawn, the body will be dark. When the sun sets, all rays are withdrawn and there is darkness. Similarly, the body will be darkened, and there will be no thought of the body. It is only your attention that gives you the feeling of the body. So if you do it in the right way, you will have no trouble. Errors do creep in automatically, generally. Then trouble arises.”

EMIL CHRISTESEN: “Master, may I ask a question?”

THE MASTER: “Yes, please.”

EMIL: “You are drawn into the Radiant Form of the Master within and you want to go higher; does the Radiant Form of the Master dissolve into the Word or Naam or does the Radiant Form of the Master continue and remain in the higher regions?”

THE MASTER: “In the lower planes it continues, but absorption comes at every plane. When you devote your whole attention into the Form of the Master, you sometimes become absorbed, but that continues in further stages. Absorption is better. It does become that Light. You are Light; you become one; you forget; but you are conscious all the same. It does come at every step. Ultimately it becomes One, and there is no Form when you are absorbed into Sat Naam. Then Sat Naam takes you to the stages where there is final absorption. Otherwise, that Form continues to work in the Radiant Form on the different planes.”

OLGA DONENBERG: “Master, I’d like to know when you are coming back again.”
THE MASTER: “Who, I? I will never go. [laughs] Why are you sending me? I won’t go. Physically I have to go, one way or the other. You are also not at home all day long. Now you are not in your home: physically you are not at home, but your thought is there. Is it not so? So I have come and God willed it. I have no wishes.”

SUNNIE COWEN: “Master, what plane are you in when you see the golden Light?”

THE MASTER: “That is just the beginning. But in that golden Light, the Form of the Master appears. That is not the lowest.”

SUNNIE: “That is not the lowest?”

THE MASTER: “The Form generally appears in golden Light.”

SUNNIE: “Is that the third plane or the fourth plane?”

THE MASTER: “It is just the beginning. The Master’s Form appears only when you rise above Trikuti. Yet even before that it does manifest to show that He is with you. Sometimes when you sit in a trance, the Form comes; but generally the Form appears when you cross the big star and the moon. Before that it manifests to give consolation to the initiated that I am with you, that that Power is with you.”

VIVIAN GORDON: “Master, if before one is initiated, one begins by trying to be honest with oneself, and although you may feel that so far as the rules are concerned—the diet or something—this would be no problem, but within yourself you know that you still do have doubts, would you welcome into initiation one who is quite willing to admit that there is doubt, but wants to try?”


VIVIAN: “Well, I don’t know.”


VIVIAN: “I suppose, for the uninitiated, it’s the fear of the unknown or a new experience.”

THE MASTER: “No, no. My point is: first try to understand the theory. Whatever you cannot understand, let that be clarified. Then take up the way. Full conviction will arise when you see things for your own self, when you are intellectually satisfied that these are the teachings of all Masters. Take it up as an experimental measure. Then, if you get something, naturally you must be convinced. Man cannot be convinced unless he sees things for his own self, and he testifies himself.”
VIVIAN: “Then, if you are not certain that you are prepared and that you have answered your questions—”

THE MASTER: “I tell you, I tell you. The man in whose heart this question of the mystery of life has entered is fit. It is God’s grace that this question has arisen. That day is the greatest in a man’s life on which the question of the mystery of life enters his heart. It cannot be stamped out unless it is solved. That this question has arisen shows that God wants to give you what you hunger for. ‘There is food for the hungry and water for the thirsty.’

“Now, there is the question of the ethical life. In the old days, there was the rule that when people came to the feet of the Masters, they kept them for a long time, and when they saw that they were fully developed, then they gave them the initiation. It is said that one King of Bokhara went to Kabir and lived with him for about six years. He was very obedient and dutiful. Mata Loi was serving with Kabir Sahib. She recommended the king to Kabir: ‘Here’s the king; he has been here with us for six years; he is very quiet, very obedient. Why don’t you give him initiation?’ Kabir told her that he was not yet ready. And Loi asked him, ‘Well, why is that, please? He is very quiet, very obedient and in every way amicable. Why do you say that he is not fit?’ Kabir said, ‘All right. When he goes out of the house, hide yourself in a place where he cannot see you and throw all the refuse of the house over his head and just hear what he says.’ When she threw it on him, he said, ‘Had this happened in my own country, I would have taken care of this!’ Then Kabir asked her, ‘What did you find?’ She told him that the kingship had not gone because he still said, ‘Had I been in my own country I would have done this and that thing.’ So then another five or six years passed by. Then Kabir said, ‘Well, now he is ready.’ Loi said, ‘Well, I find no difference between the first time and now.’ Kabir said, ‘Now again, when he leaves the house throw all this washroom filth over his head. Then hear what he says.’ When she did so he said, ‘Oh God, I am even worse than that! Thank you.’

“So man must be made. Man-making is difficult; the finding of God is not difficult. Now the times have changed. They are so materialistic, who is going to stay with the Master for years and abide by what He says? There is no time to spare and sit at the feet of the Masters. Even
when they have some difficulty in their meditation, people say. ‘Oh, I have to go to work.’ I say, ‘Can’t you take one or two hours’ leave?’

“The times have changed in the way that those who have got hunger in their minds are taken up by the Masters. The Masters take up the work of preparation of making a man as well as giving him the way—at the same time—and the maintenance of diaries for self-introspection from day to day is prescribed. The Masters give seekers the experience then and there, so that when they come in contact with that higher Light and Sound Principle, it will grow familiar and help them while they are at the same time weeding out all imperfections from day to day. They just say, ‘Take heed that the Light which is within you is not darkened.’

“So the present times have changed, and those who have an inkling, a desire, are put on the way. They are given some experience, with the grace of God, to start with. Otherwise people are not going to believe you. ‘Go on doing it, and you will have it after you do that. Do it, go on, do it. All help will be granted to you.’ People have been coming to me who have been initiated somewhere. They had been putting in meditation time of two, three or four hours daily. With all that, they got nothing, and they left it. If you get something to start with, then you can develop. So this present time has changed: the work of man-making is started side by side with the giving of the experience on the very first day. And when you see the experience—have the experience yourself—then I think you have something to stand on. There is no question of doubt. If doubt remains, it is only about how to live up to what has been given.

“Those who are in the intellectual sphere must understand the why and wherefore of things; otherwise they won’t take them up. Furthermore, they will require some evidence from the past Masters and also must see whether it appeals to their common sense. If they are intellectually satisfied, then they take it up as an experimental measure. Even then, they are very skeptical: this may not be for them. But when they have something to start with, there will be more. The maintenance of diaries is necessary to ‘take heed that the light’—whatever is given you at the time of initiation—‘is not darkened.’ This is how matters stand in the present days.”
HOPE SKINNER: “Master, this might seem an odd question: but, for instance, I have just recently moved to Denver, as I told you in Texas, and we don’t have a group there; Mr. Poncet and I would like to start one. We meditate in my little apartment—he and his mother and I, together. Does it do any harm if you go to another group that meditates? I mean would there be any conflict of vibrations or anything if we went and meditated with another group?”

THE MASTER: “What group?”

HOPE: “Well for instance, Self-Realization. They have a group in Denver where they just meditate, and they have asked us to come for meditation. I’m not doing, naturally, any of their techniques: I gave them up several years ago when I was initiated by you. But I was wondering if there would be any conflict of vibration or anything.”

THE MASTER: “The point is—did I tell you not to go?”

HOPE: “No, You didn’t.”

THE MASTER: “Now, a further thing: if you go there, don’t follow their way of meditation, but do your own. That’s one thing.”

HOPE: “Well, that’s what I mean—that I can go and meditate in my own way.”

THE MASTER: “Well look here, that’s one thing. The other thing is, when you—those who are on the same way—sit together, there will be more radiation. Do you follow my point? There is a radiation from the Master, too.”

HOPE: “From Yogananda, you mean,—their Master? Would it affect me?”

THE MASTER: “Oh no, no, I am talking about something else. When you go to somebody, don’t change your mode of meditation. And if you sit with those doing the same meditation, there will be more radiation. Do you follow me? I never stopped you from going any place.”

HOPE: “No. I didn’t know if there would be a conflict of vibration—if there was any from their—”

THE MASTER: “Don’t you follow now what I said? If you think of Swami Yogananda there, then there will be conflict. Because Yogananda is not there. Do you see?”

CLYDE DAVIS: “That follows the principle then, Master: ‘Where two or more are gathered together in my name—’ ”

THE MASTER: “Listen— ‘In my name.’ ”
CLYDE DAVIS: “That’s right—‘in my name.’”

THE MASTER: “You’ve got it. I don’t mean in any way to reflect on Swami Yogananda. I don’t mean that. One is a living force—radiation—going on throughout the world. When one or two sit in His name, there is radiation. Those who are higher, who have left their bodies, have to work through the human pole working on the human plane. Do you see? That is the law. I never stopped anybody from going anywhere. But I did suggest to you that when there is a group meeting, you must attend it, because you will benefit by the radiation.”

HOPE: “Well, I hadn’t gone, but I was just wondering about it.”

THE MASTER: “Now the matter is clear. But I never stopped you from going there. Understand the principles, you see. I will tell you what the old Egyptians used to do. They gave initiation; they gave the way. They did not give experience, I tell you. They just put them on the way intellectually and then told them to remain quiet for two long years. They were called mystes. And by putting in two years regularly on the way, naturally the way opened up; sometimes there were flashes. When the inner way was opened, they were called epopteias. Now the way is opened the very first day! You see the light; you have some experience.

“The best thing is, when you are initiated, don’t talk to anyone. Work for your daily livelihood. As for the rest, you need not talk to anyone. Talk to your Master. We talk to others. What loss is there? You talk to others: you want to show your superiority to others. Egoism is there, and you lose. Suppose, in a worldly way, you have a friendship with somebody, a love for somebody: you wouldn’t dare to let anybody know about it. Is it not so? Why? This is love. Why should you broadcast your love for God? You only want someone who can guide you. And it is the Master who can guide you. He does not say that you should leave your work. Earn your livelihood, bring up and nourish your children, keep up your body, and go on with it. Let the wild flower grow in darkness. We throw seeds anywhere: ‘I am doing it’; ‘I see that I am in a very intoxicated state.’ Others naturally ask why. You say, ‘Well, when I sit in meditation, this and that appears.’ Their eyes are on you. And you have not yet become perfect. What happens? They take you as the ideal. You stand between them and the Master. Where will you go? The man who follows you and takes you as a wrong ideal is first doomed, and your progress is retarded. This is a very critical point.”
“In a worldly way, when you are engaged or betrothed to somebody you think only of him. Don’t have any interest in anybody. Go on with it. You will find that sometimes people who are progressing begin to tell one another, ‘It is like this.’ The result is that their progress is lessened. And you will find many who say ‘We had more progress before; now we have less.’ And what is the reason for that? Do you follow my point? This is to be followed by everybody.

“When you are given it, go to the highest. Let others be the ones to say it. Then it’s all right. If you have, for instance, a little water with you, and you begin to sprinkle it, what happens? Be in contact with the perennial source. Then thousands—millions—may come. Then you become a conscious co-worker, conscious that it is not you doing it, but God doing it. These are the little things, I think, that stand in every man’s way. Those who have a little experience—for instance, they sometimes see the Master within—are, in a day or two, talking about it. Sometimes the Negative Power appears, and they are misguided. Some things come true, others become wrong.

“I sometimes get letters from people who write ‘Oh now the Master within me will guide me.’ I tell them, ‘All right, the Master is within you. If He guides you, write to me. Get it confirmed in writing by me.’ And the result is that those who follow them are retarded. Do you see?

“I don’t see why people are after becoming a Master. They may have that ideal before them, but they have not become Masters. When they become Masters, then let them say they are Masters. Even then they won’t say it. Those who are Masters, don’t say, ‘We are Masters.’ They say, ‘It is God’s power working. It is the Father in me doing it.’ They never say, ‘I am doing it.’ The son of man is differentiated from the God in man. But others, who have just a little experience, exert themselves.

“This is one of the causes of division in the groups. Some follow this man; some follow that man. The result is that there is a split. There is no progress. And this has also been the cause of dissension in the group, I tell you. I have watched it. Some begin to rule; still others are forceful; and naturally others disbelieve them. Then the dissension starts and the whole process is retarded. And that becomes a bad example for others.

“When you are put on the way, see where you are. Go up! Let people see only when you are in full bloom. Do you see? Don’t broadcast your
seeds. They will be eaten up by sparrows. Those who look to you will be having faith in you instead of the Master. They will think ‘He is also as good as the Master.’ The result is, that since you are not yet perfect, something wrong will come out of you; and, naturally, the whole thing will be very badly affected.

“When you are initiated, simply go on. You have been given the diary to keep. Remain in contact. If God wills it, He makes each one of you a Master. It is a selection from God, not from the men underneath: It is not a matter of voting, as you would select a minister or president. It is the God overhead. It is a commission from God. The soul trembles at considering the duty that lies on the shoulders of a Master. People think it a great privilege because they sometimes consider that other people have faith in them, and that becomes a source of income too. The result is that the one who places himself in this position is spoiled. His progress is retarded, and the progress of those who follow him is also retarded. Their ideal is changed. It is a very dangerous way.

“When you see the Master within, talk to Him. All right. Then remain in touch. Even then, I tell you, even if the Master speaks within you, you can never think: let your Master go and you remain. You see?”

HOPE SKINNER: “I see the Master within sometimes, but He never looks at me. He is either sitting in meditation or with head bowed or something.”

THE MASTER: “Just go into your diary, please. You will find the answer there. He is a very strict judge, I tell you; He does not spare me. [laughter] Surely, I must be truthful. Be a hard taskmaster: introspect yourself. When we write the diary, we make allowances. Treat yourself like a hard taskmaster.”

HOPE: “That’s the thing that has always confused me about the diary. That’s why I—really, I’m not making excuses—but that’s why I haven’t kept it.”

THE MASTER: “What?”

HOPE: “Because how can you be sure that you are being honest with yourself when you put down these things?”

THE MASTER: “I tell you, look here. When you are told to do a thing by a Master, why do you raise questions? That’s the first thing. If you don’t understand something, ask Him. Why do you discontinue? That’s the first thing, straight off. There is some reason for it.”
“The mind is a very cunning friend. He will deceive you. He says, ‘Well, look here, you cannot give all your imperfections. You are telling lies. Don’t do it.’ You see? ‘Wait,’ he says, ‘When you become perfect, only then do it.’ Both of you are caught. The point is, in the beginning you won’t find so many imperfections within you. The more you go into it, the more you will find from day to day. Those that become more numerous already exist, but we are not aware of them. Do you follow my point?

“First your mind had to think: ‘I am telling lies; I should not do it.’ Then it made you leave off doing your diary. When a thief is in the room, mind that, I will tell you, he will try to deter your attention to someone else. The thief says, ‘Oh, here goes the thief; there goes the thief.’ He never lets your attention be drawn to him.

“So the mind is a very cunning thief in the form of a true friend. He is like a very sympathetic man: ‘Look here, why do you send in the diaries? You must become perfect first. Then send the diary—not now.’ Do you see?

“Master said, ‘Do it.’ You disobey the orders of the Master and obey the dictates of your mind. If there is something that you don’t follow, ask Him. There is something behind it.

“At the start I know quite fully well that you cannot note down all the imperfections of the day. Do you know Pelman’s System of Memory—the system described as ‘How to Develop Memory’? Think of what you had been doing all throughout the day from the morning when you arose: ‘Oh yes, I got up: I answered the call of nature; I had a bath and some food; I went to work; work was finished; and I came home.’ One or two events might have come to your notice. But when you got up, what were the thoughts striking your mind? What others struck you when you were going to answer the call of nature, while bathing, and afterward? That requires going into. The more you go into it, the more thoughts you will find. In that way, one’s memory is strengthened without any payment. And furthermore, our level of criterion of distinguishing right from wrong is also changed.

“The more you learn and go into the scriptures, the more your angle of vision is changed. For instance, in the beginning it might be: ‘He told me lies, so I slapped his face. Oh, I did the right thing. It was tit for tat.’ That’s your angle of vision. You see? Later you may note: ‘Oh he called me names. All right.’ When you grow, you realize that when
someone calls you names or tells you something wrong and you also
call him names, the wrong multiplies: he tells you one thing, you say
two, then comes four, then eight—like that. If you had not returned
the wrong, it would have remained only one. Your angle of vision is
changed, is it not? Even if you don’t speak and somebody has thought
evil of you, you may feel at heart: ‘Oh, he’s a bad man.’ You have a reaction.
These feelings must be noted.

“There are two things: first, as you go into it, you will find a greater
number of shortcomings; and further, the angle of vision is changed.
This causes the shortcomings to become still more numerous. If they
grow in number, it means you’re progressing, I tell you: you know how
many shortcomings are within you. Then, when you weed them out,
they go down in number. When they are consumed, if you reflect, you
can read others’ minds, you can see what is going on on the other side
of the wall. The purpose of maintaining the diaries is very high, I tell you.

“Don’t follow the dictates of the mind. If you follow the Master one
hundred per cent, only then can you have the full mystery solved. We
only follow what we care to, modified by the dictates of the mind.
Some follow the Master ten per cent, some twenty per cent or forty per
cent: nobody obeys one hundred per cent. This is the one thing to be
learned. Then when something comes up, you will say to yourself, ‘Oh
yes. He is within me; how can I deceive Him?’ Your angle of vision will
be changing; and when you are changing that way, by outer self-in-
trospection and by coming in contact with that Power within, you’ll
progress like anything.

“Sometimes when Master’s Form appears, He is showing His back:
sometimes He keeps quiet; sometimes He is very happy; sometimes
He talks to you. If He turns away His face, it means there is something
wrong. We don’t know why. The diary is meant for a very high purpose.

“These certain things are not given in regular talks. When you ask
something, you get to the bottom of it and find out what is what. Each
man has practically the same problem, perhaps in a little modified form.

“If you keep your diaries regularly for three or four months, like a
hard taskmaster, you’ll change. Send me the diaries blank. What greater
concession do you want? Send them to me blank, and I will accept
them. How long will you dare to send them to me blank?—that’s the
point. You cannot send them that way.
“The mind, I tell you, is a cunning thief in the form of a friend. He will deceive you in a very noble way; he appears to be very friendly. But ultimately you’ll see that you are let down. When you follow, follow the dictates of Master.”

LEON PONCET: “Maharaj Ji, now you just gave very good examples, mostly concerning the thoughts we have.”

THE MASTER: “Thoughts are very potent, you see.”

LEON: “Yes, well, there is, of course, pride and envy and jealousy and resentment towards others and thinking badly about others; and, of course, purity or chastity in word, thought and deed. You’re sort of leading us very well; and I sometimes sit over this sheet, and I think: now what else is there that I have done wrong? And I’m just sometimes missing a clue. Is there anything else you would like to lead us to?”

THE MASTER: “That is just putting in time for meditation—coming in contact with the Light and Sound Principle within. That is what is wanted. That will help you; you will have more progress. Sometimes people bring me their diaries, and I see that their lives are very pure. They also put in two hours meditation daily. And yet there’s little or no progress. I told them: ‘If your diary is correct, then you should have gone to the third plane.’ Do you see? Do you follow me? If our lives are quite flawless, why should we not progress, especially after putting in time for meditation? If it is due to the wrong way of doing the practice, involving breathing or this and that, it should be set right.

“We deceive our own selves, I tell you. Whatever you remember, put it down in the diary. Try to think of every thought that struck you, not what your body did. Like a very hard taskmaster, I tell you, don’t spare yourself. As you don’t spare your enemy, don’t spare yourself. This is the most dangerous serpent in the form of a friend. He will deceive you. He will try to retard your progress and keep you led away to the negative things that will retard you from going on the way. And then, instead of seeing shortcomings within our own selves, we begin to doubt the Master. This is the work of the mind. He will do it. At least you see that there’s Light and there’s Sound. That much you see. Then why not progress further wonderfully? There’s something wrong.”

SUNNIE COWEN: “Master, what if you may have meditated when you became ill or you’ve been in the hospital, and you come back and you can’t fill in the diary? Or take me. Suppose I was in the hospital and
I could probably meditate twelve or fifteen hours, even while I was resting in the hospital. But suppose when I came home and I was recuperating—I mean, you can’t go back to pick it up because you haven’t had the paper with you, so you leave it blank because you don’t want to put in this time.”

THE MASTER: “That’s all right. If for some reason or other you cannot complete your diary correctly, but you’re watching your life, then you must be progressing, too. Sickness gives you more time for meditation, does it not? If you are putting in more time and there are no flaws, then you must have more progress. Is it not so? In this case you have not filled it in on account of your eyes not working; that has limited you. But the eyes won’t always be like that.”

SUNNIE: “No, with the eye I couldn’t meditate at all—I couldn’t move the eyeball.”

THE MASTER: “That’s all right. But still you could hear the Sound.”

SUNNIE: “Yes, that came in very clear, even without doing anything.”

THE MASTER: “That’s only a temporary, short period of difficulty that we have sometimes. Moreover, I tell you, no matter how painful it may be, if you are trained in a way to control your attention the pain won’t affect you. That is when you’re developed. Feeling comes only when the attention is there. For example, when you have to have an injection, if you just control your attention, it is not so pinching, not so painful.”

VIVIAN GORDON: “Master, I have another question: it joins on what you were saying.”

THE MASTER: “Yes, yes, most welcome.”

VIVIAN: “You say how our minds can deceive us and lead us away from the direction. Yet one does not want to enter into this as a purely emotional experience. Well, then how am I to come to decide, to judge? I have to use my mind.”

THE MASTER: “You’ll get help! You’ll get help.”

VIVIAN: “I see. But earlier you told me I must not expect to be able to understand and rationalize everything.”

THE MASTER: “Yes, intellectually you must grasp the theory. The work that has to be done by a learned man and an unlearned man is the same: you have to withdraw your attention from outside, still your mind, still your body and analyze yourself from the body. That’s a practical thing. A learned man says, ‘Why should I withdraw my
attention? What result will I get?’ There are two men: one is learned, the other is unlearned. If you order them, ‘Go up the stairs;’ the learned man says, ‘Well, how many steps are there? Well, if I reach such and such a place, what will happen? If my foot slips, then who will save me?’ He will consider so many things. The man who is unlearned, he’ll run up.

“A learned man must understand, for only then will he start. The other does not need all that botheration, I tell you. He will go ahead at once.

“Two men, one learned, the other unlearned, went to a Master to be put on the way. The Master told the learned man, ‘I’ll charge you a double fee.’ And to the other man who was unlearned, he said, ‘I’ll charge you only a single fee.’ The learned man said, ‘Oh, I know so much, I’m so learned, why are you charging me a double fee?’ The Master told him, ‘Well, I have to first make you unlearned and then you will do it.’ [laughter]

“Both have to do the same thing. The difference lies only in that a learned man who has inner experience will explain it in so many ways. Even an unlearned man who goes up, takes you up. He may not be able to quote from so many past Masters, or draw so many inferences, but he will give you this thing and he will quote only from the vocabulary of the environment of which he is in command. Christ spoke in the parable of the farmer who sows seeds: the seeds that fall on stony ground don’t grow; those that fall in the hedges grow, but are retarded; those that fall on the prepared ground will grow. Consider how he even quotes this example. Masters never were educated in any college or university. Do you know in which college Christ read or Guru Nanak read or Prophet Mohammed read? Do you know of any college? I don’t think so. It is an awakening from inside. They see. It is not a matter of inferences, feelings or emotions: it is a matter of seeing. They see, and they make others see.”

JACK SLATER: “Master, may I ask a question?”

THE MASTER: “Yes, surely, like an attorney. Even God is afraid of an attorney, I tell you.” (The room exploded into laughter at this point.)

JACK: “Master, before I ask it—”

THE MASTER: “No, no, you are most welcome. I’m just—I’ll tell you a story later on—”

JACK: “The Master is a great scholar, as we know.”
THE MASTER: “Is it?” [laughter]

JACK: “I’m sure His academic attainments have not thwarted His spiritual path. And therefore I would say that intellectual accomplishments can very often be helpful.”

THE MASTER: “Intellectual attainment is the garland of flowers around the neck of a practical man. He will explain things in so many ways. Whatever way he takes up, he will tell you something to prove it: at the level of common sense, too. But a learned man without any experience is something like a library only. There may be so many things in the brain; but to have libraries there cannot give you any practical experience. Learning is good, you see; I’m not denouncing it.”

JACK: “Well, now, I’m going to take the risk of asking a second question.”

THE MASTER: “All right, come on, please.”

JACK: “Which probably is an intellectual question, but it bothers me.”

THE MASTER: “Well, I will answer it to the best I know how.”

JACK: “And it is prompted by the discussion of this sister here on Yogananda. Now Yogananda was a great yogi. And in the Master’s book, The Crown of Life, the Master touches on this very subject in pointing out the highest plane of the yogis. And then he goes on to discuss four additional planes: Sach Khand and the three higher planes beyond that. It would be very helpful to me, Master, if you would touch on the subject and tell us a little about those four planes.”

THE MASTER: “I tell you. You would like to know about those planes from where—from the yogis’ point of view? From which point of view?”

JACK: “These are the four planes that the Master discusses which are above the highest plane of the yogis.”

THE MASTER: “I tell you. There are stages of yogis, too. Some are yogis, some are yogiraj or yogishwar: there are two stages of yogis. Yogis generally go to the first plane—Sahasrar or Sahansdal Kamal. A yogishwar goes to the third plane and dips into the beyond a bit. And the Sant is one who reaches Sat Naam, the true home of the Father, or true Father, you might say. There is also the Param Sant who transcends even those three higher planes and becomes one with the Wordless. These are the stages. There are many people belonging to the first stage and some to the second or third. There are few who really have transcended beyond the three. Those who are regularly in the
fourth plane are called Sants. The fourth plane is divided: some people mingle it into one, some into two. The true plane of Sach Khand—whatever it is called—is the stage of full effulgence of the wordless God into expression. And in the further stages there is absorption: Alakh, Agam, Anami, Soami, Radha Soami, or Nirala, or Maha Dayal, or whatever they are called. That is the stage of the highest, termed Param Sant. The Satsang path is that, you might say, of the Param Sant. So that’s the difference.”

JACK: “Now my limited intellect can almost picture Sach Khand, which the Master describes as pure spirit. But then the Master goes on to describe three planes above the planes of Sach Khand, which itself is pure spirit, and that’s hard for me to—”

THE MASTER: “No, no. Mark the difference in the words that I am using. I’ve said that Sat Naam is the full expression of the Wordless state of God: He is fully expressed. In the higher planes, the soul goes on being absorbed until it comes to the Wordless state, where there’s no Light nor Sound. Those are the above stages. Ultimately, in the Wordless stage, there’s no expression of Light or Sound. That comes only when it comes into expression. There are different divisions, you might say, of Sach Khand: Alakh, Agam, and the ultimate, wordless state that is called Nameless One, Maha Dayal, Radha Soami, and by so many other names.”

JACK: “Well, then, Master, would Agam be the first stage of manifestation?”

THE MASTER: “Generally, that power which is in full expression takes the form of a Guru. He is the Sat Naam working within the human pole. Then Sat Naam comes to absorb you further. So a Guru also has stages: Guru, working within the human pole. Then Sat Naam comes to absorb you further. So a Guru also has stages: Guru, Gurudev and Satguru. A Guru is working at the human pole, but it is God in him Who is working: he is conscious. Gurudev manifests when you rise above the physical body. That works in the second to fourth planes, up till the fifth, to absorb you in the Sat Naam. Gurudev means ‘The Radiant Form of the Master.’ Then Sat Naam is the true Satguru. That absorbs you by stages: Alakh, Agam, like that. So there are stages of the Guru, too. Everybody is called a Guru, but Guru is the name given to such a person at whose human pole God is working for the
guidance of mankind. Sometimes he is loving: sometimes he says, ‘All right, don’t do it,’ as an average man would. But inside he is fully conscious; He gives you the right guidance. And when you rise above the physical body, He comes to you in the Radiant Form called Gurudev. Gurudev means ‘Effulgent Guru,’ you might say. That guides you in the higher planes—the second, third and fourth—and absorbs you in the Sat Naam; and the Sat Naam further absorbs you in the Wordless state. But people generally make no difference: they say everybody is a Guru. Do you follow me?

“These things are given in the scriptures, but they are not differentiated. That’s the pity. We are not convinced unless we begin to see for our own selves. There was one devotee named Indra Mati, who lived in the time of Kabir. She went to the fifth plane and saw Sat Purush as Kabir. She told him, ‘Well, Kabir, if you were Sat Naam yourself, why didn’t you tell me before?’ How many are there, even now, who think Master is a Master? When everything goes all right, according to your own wishes, you say, ‘Oh, Master is great: Master is greater than God.’ And if anything goes against your wishes: ‘Oh, what kind of Master is that?’ The flaw may be lying within you or you’re not putting in regular time for meditation. And you say, ‘Oh, Master has failed.’ You are incompetent.”

HOPE SKINNER: “As a matter of fact, Master, I don’t want to take any time, but very apropos of that, two years ago, when I was still in New York and attending the Satsangs there, I slipped on the ice and broke my left arm. One of the persons attending the Satsang in New York said to me (I don’t think she was initiated but she had been coming there), ‘Why, I can’t understand how you broke your arm when you’ve got a Master.’ And I said, ‘Well, it could have been a worse thing. He saved me from—from breaking my back. I got rid of karma fairly easily.’ But she was quite indignant: how could anything happen to me when I had a Master?”

THE MASTER: “Master is there to wind up your actions— to wind up the whole account, like a bank which fails. Winding up, I tell you. The many things that are here brought into fruit sometimes make your soul stronger, too, and they lose all pinching effects. When you become selfless—well—you are saved. That’s all.”
HOPE: “Well, I was very grateful. I said, ‘Well, it could have been my back or my hip, but it was just my arm, I got off very lightly.’”

THE MASTER: “When a man is initiated, he should go on sincerely with it. He has no concern with anyone except the Master. Go on. When you get something to start with, what more proof is required? As you progress inside, you will be more convinced. But when we have a little progress, we sometimes are puffed up: ‘Oh, I know this—then do it; ‘I tell you, look here, do that thing; for if you don’t, I’ll curse you.’ And what is the result? The whole science is lost, I tell you. And such people become a defamation of the teachings. Go on with it. Any difficulty that you have will be solved of itself, unasked for.”

And so the evening ended.

Friday, January 24, 1964

Tonight Mr. Khanna asked the famous question, “How did you meet your Master?”, and the Master told him—and us—in a magnificent autobiographical survey of various parts of his life. This talk has been published in its entirety a number of times, and is easily accessible, but I want to include a few sections which deserve and require a very close examination.

Naturally, when I looked around, there were so many Masters. To whom should I go? We were three brothers. Two of us helped each other: “If you find any Godman, tell me; if I find one, I will tell you.” We were searching, you see.

So many men were having meetings of this kind. Once it so happened that my brother wrote me, “Here’s a very great man; a very great Master has come. Will you come?” I went there. I told him, “I have intoxication that continues day and night; but sometimes, after three, four or five months, it breaks for a day or two. And I am very much puzzled. Can you help me in that?”

What did he say? “You’ll have to lay down everything—your body, mind and soul—to me. Only then I can, I will, give it to you.”

I thought, “The man is after my body and possessions; my intellect and everything is to be blindfolded.” I paid him homage and returned.

Well, you see, surrender comes only when you see some competence. Devotion and love—one who loves—is something else. When you surrender, you have control of the one to whom you surrender: he has to take care of you.

So many came and passed by. I used to see one who was very God-intoxicated; but he lived in a way that nobody dared come to him. We used to meet all our friends, in the evening, outside. We were talking: “Is there any Godman we can find?”

Then I told them, “I’ve seen one man. He’s God-intoxicated, but he’s a hard nut to crack.” You’ll find that some are God-intoxicated, but they won’t let you go near them. You people have the privilege to talk, question, cross-question and criticize; this man would not suffer that. So I told them about that man. Our Master also used to refer to him; he also met him; his name was Baba Kahan. He lived in a naked state; there was a fire burning, amid filth; when there was heat, he was just fanning the other way.

I told them, “He’s got some intoxication.” Anyone that went to him, he would call them names. If they didn’t leave, then he would beat them. But there was something there: he would call them names, and people would still remain there. Sometimes they would get a beating, too. But for whatever purpose they went, that purpose was served: they had it.

I was reading in those days in school. I also used to go to him. He was just sitting on a platform here, in a half-naked way; I used to stand over there, watching people whom he called names going away. I stayed on until everybody left. Then he called me: “Well, Sardar, what do you want?”

I went to him: “I came only to see you.”

“All right, go.”

That’s how I had that connection with him. So I told one man, “He has something; but he’s a very hard nut to crack, mind that.”

Nobody suffers, you see. This is a very valuable thing. Who is going to give it to you?

“Well, all right; what shall I do?” he asked.

“Go and sit at night with him. Even if he says anything or calls you names, don’t mind it.”

He went that night; he stayed there. After eleven or twelve o’clock, Baba Kahan called him names and also beat him with his fist. He ran away. The next day, our party met together again, and I asked him, “How did you find him?”

“Oh, he called me names and beat me with his fist.”

“Well, don’t mind,” I said. “He’s got something. Don’t mind—go!”

So the next night, he again went there. Instead of only beating him, Baba Kahan . . . put him underneath a well. Again he went away. On the third day, I asked him what happened.

“Oh, yes,” I said, “but don’t mind, he’s got something. He’s guarding that wealth; he’ll not let you have it. Don’t mind; let him kill you; don’t mind.”

The night of the third day, he also went there. He . . . made a little wound with burning wood. He did not leave him. In the middle of the night, after
one o’clock, Baba Kahan asked, “What do you want, after all? Why are you coming to me?”

He said, “Well, Master, give me something.”

Then he made him to hear the Sound Current. Some people have it; they keep it very close-fisted. They don’t give it out.

So I went on like that. I used to pray: “O God, I’m convinced that without one who knows You, nobody can reach You.” It is a practical matter of self-analysis. God cannot be known by the outgoing faculties, by the vital airs or by the intellect. It is a matter of seeing: whoever sees can make you see. “I know there’s a need—definitely: all scriptures say so. I’m quite convinced, but where am I to go? Suppose I go to somebody who has not met You—what will be my fate?” I used to pray like that. “If You could reveal Yourself to the old saints—sometimes there are stories like that—‘why can’t You do it in my case? I’m convinced; I’ve great regard for that need; but there are so many Masters—whom shall I select?”

With this, my Master [Baba Sawan Singh] began to appear to me when I sat in meditation or when I was doing something. I thought perhaps it was Guru Nanak. He used to talk to me. In those days there was the first Great War, and my brother was on the Indian front along the Persian side. I used to traverse along with him and went to those places, here, there and everywhere.

I was very fond of rivers, ponds, water. Even in my young life, I used to go and sit by the waterside, or some river, the whole night through, in a calm and quiet place. The running water helps a little to concentrate. So this went on for some time.

In the meantime, I was first at Peshawar, and then I was transferred to Nowshera station: a river runs by there. I used to sit by that riverside for hours. Then I came to Jhelum side. That is also by the riverside, and I sat there for hours on end. I was very fond of swimming, too. (Just enter the river: if you’re not afraid, nothing will happen; it’s only fear that kills you. If you simply shake your foot a little or move your hands a little, you won’t drown.)

In the meantime, I was transferred to Lahore: that was also by the riverside. I passed my days there. There was also the river Beas: “Let me have a look at that!” One Sunday morning I left by train and detrained at Beas station. There was an old man there; he was a station master of the station. I asked him which side the river flows. He was a devotee of the Master: “Do you want to see the Master?”

“Does a Master live there?”

“Yes!”

“Where?”

“On the riverside.”
I told him, “I have two things now. I’ll enjoy the river scenery and also see the Master at the same time.” Then he directed me there.

Master was sitting upstairs; he was taking his meal inside. I went out and sat outside. After half an hour or so, he came out. I was wonderstruck: he was the same man who had been appearing to me for seven years before, from 1917 to 1924. I paid homage to him: “Why so late?”

He said, “That was the most opportune time that you are to come.”

So this is how I met the Master. “The Guru appears when the chela is ready”—even to the most skeptical mind. Perhaps none of you have been so
skeptical as I was. I was afraid, you see, lest I go to somebody who had not met God; and my life would be spoiled.

When I went to him, then—once or twice, every Sunday I used to go—he looked after me like a father looks after his son’s coming: “All right, arrange this room, bring this bedding,” this and that thing. I requested, “Well, Master, don’t you worry, I’m here, at your feet.”

“All right, now, you’ll have to look after this Dera; go on with it. Those who come, you’ll look after them.” These were the words he expressed, the very first time.

The next time there was initiation—this was early February—and all were sitting in initiation, Master said, “You sit inside.” I was coming. He gave initiation there; I was inside, sitting in his room. This is how I was initiated! I was waiting for him; perhaps he will call me—or what? I couldn’t dare move, because he did not call me. I was sitting inside. Then he returned. I asked him, “Will you kindly initiate me?”

“Oh, yes, surely.”

What the mystery of life is—what is a man, what is a soul—was solved in little or no time. . . .

When the Master was telling these stories, the figure that loomed over his search and early life, at least to those of us who were listening, was that of Baba Kahan. As the Master mentions, Baba Kahan also figured in the early life and search of Baba Sawan Singh, the figure Kirpal had been seeing within and to whom he was ultimately led. This is what Baba Sawan Singh has to say about Baba Kahan:

For a long time I associated with Baba Kahan. He usually remained in an ecstatic condition, which he developed after fourteen years of persistent and vigorous practice. I associated with him for several months and during that time he showed supernatural powers on several occasions. When I asked him if he would shower grace on me by initiating me, he answered, “No, he is somebody else; I do not have your share.” I then asked him to tell me who that person was so I could contact him. He replied, “When the time comes, he will find you.”

It has always been difficult for me to know what to make of Baba Kahan; what does a guru who strikes seekers with burning wood

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12 And for that matter, Baba Bishan Das, who played a somewhat comparable role in Sant Ajaib Singh’s life, and who also was “a hard nut to crack.”
have to do with the Path of Love? If confronted with such a person, my own reaction would be that of Kirpal in relation to the earlier “guru,” who wanted total commitment without showing any competence: I would “pay him homage and return”—as fast as possible. Yet the fact that both Sawan and Kirpal not only saw something in him but profited by it—learned from him, and, as is clear from Sawan’s request for Initiation from him, loved him—seems of the utmost significance to me. Perhaps I know very little; perhaps there are dimensions in human behavior and divine interaction which are hidden from me; perhaps there is something else working here which I will someday grasp. My own concept of what a Master or Sant Satguru is, is entirely based on my connection with Kirpal, modified only by my reading of the lives and teachings of past Masters (including the Gospels) and by my later connection with Ajaib. But neither my reading nor my connection with Ajaib would have meant anything to me if they had not been consistent with what I learned from Kirpal—learned not only by what he said, but by what he did and how he lived. It was the love and respect he gave me from the beginning, when there was not the slightest question of it’s being the least bit deserved (not that there ever was any question of that), which made everything else possible: that love and respect allowed me to trust him, and trust him I did. Had he acted toward me, or to others in my presence, the way that Baba Kahan did, I would not have been able to say, “Don’t mind—he’s got something!” At least I don’t think I would have. But who knows?

This talk contains so many jewels:

The first condition, I would say, of a Master, when he meets another Master, is that he will embrace him; he will rejoice. There’s no question of high and low. There was one instance in my life in which my Master Baba Sawan Singh met one follower of Rai Saligram, named Shivbrat Lal. He was a very advanced soul. At the first meeting, when they met, I was there along with them. He was bowing down to my Master, and my Master was bowing down to him. They were embracing. Why should not those who are on the way embrace? Why should they not feel joy? The very fact that they do not want to meet together shows that they are blowing their own pipes—they have not seen God, I tell you.

I’m very frank sometimes, with due deference to all. When they’ve seen the same thing, where is high and low? I see the God in you, you see the God in me; that’s all right. . . .
Then what duty is there further? The more you abide by His words, the better it is. I think that when you meet such a Master and live one hundred per cent according to His teachings, you cannot return to this world: you’ll go to the highest possible. But we don’t care; we don’t live up to what He says. That is why Christ said, “God is Light, God is Life, and God is Love.” This is known when you see Light, when you become conscious. And the way to that is Love. That is innate in us: God is Love and we are also love. For that reason, love is innate in everyone—in souls, in every soul. You’ll find that the word “man” is called in Urdu insan. Insan is “one who is love personified”: he must be overflowing with love and radiating love for all. That is but natural. That’s the criterion of a Saint: that he is overflowing with love for all, even those who come to praise him and others who come to criticize him. He loves them. He is polite; he is loving; he does not impose anything on them, but simply puts forward something.

And then, when it seemed as if the Master was finished and the question was answered, he had Taiji sing one of his bhajans, commented on it, and proceeded to deliver one of the most extraordinary talks I have ever heard, in which he wove recollections of his meeting with Taiji (Bibi Hardevi) and her husband,13 and the death of his son, with lengthy quotations from the Farewell Discourse of Jesus in the Gospel of

13 The jeweler Raja Ram of Rawalpindi.
John—quotations delivered from memory: I was taping this discourse and sitting on the floor about four feet from his feet. He had no notes or book of any kind, but was sharing something he loved enough to have committed to memory long before:

All Masters, whenever they came, said the same thing. The tenth Guru of the Sikhs said, “Hear ye all; I tell you the truth. Irrespective of whether you belong to one religion or the other, that makes no difference: through love alone you can know God.” All others also said the same thing: “Those who do not know love, cannot know God.” Christ said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” What did he say? “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you again.”

If two men, four men, love the same man, that is a point for consideration. True love is where there is no question of competition. When there are two lovers of the same Master, they compete: one says, “I should be in front,” and the other says, “I should be in front.” But love knows no duality, no competition, no anger, and no coming-to-the-front.

Just judge your love for the Master. Why does all this conflict remain among the followers? Because they have not got real love, I tell you. If they’ve got real love, love knows no competition. Each one will be happy the more he can put his shoulders to the wheel for the same Cause. Christ said further: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace will remain with you forever.”

So, as I told you, love knows no competition. When two followers of the same Master do not agree, one says, “I am in the forefront,” and the other says, “I am in the forefront.” What is the result? To me, apparently such a follower has no love for the Master—true love. He has love for the Master for selfish motives: he wants to come near to him, to the forefront of him. So, love is the remedy for all things: “Love and all things shall be added unto you.” That’s the pity: we don’t love.

And then Christ said, “As the Father hath loved me, so I have loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I kept my Father’s commandments, and I abide in His love.” He loved his Master, his God. He said, “I give you a new commandment: love one another.” There we are wanting, I tell you. I have been pressing this point
very much, ever since I’ve come. This is the only remedy for all our ills. If one man goes ahead, it is His grace.

In the beginning I used to put in more time. I was transferred to Rawalpindi. The first day I was there, everybody knew it: “A follower of the Master!” They were saying this and that thing. That even came to be known to Bibi Hardevi, who is sitting here. She never knew me before that. People said, “Well, he’s here; he’s a very great follower of the Master.”

She said, “What greatness lies in him?”

“He puts in six hours a day in meditation.”

She said, “All right, if he puts that in, then I’ll put in six—seven hours—and then I’ll meet him.”

Suchlike competition is good. You see, we want to eclipse others: we want to eclipse others by placing ourselves in the front. So she did not come to see me, I tell you, [laughing] for months on end. When she put in six or seven hours a day, then she, along with her husband, came to see me. And only when? When my son died.

I was quite jolly, and the doctor came in the night. He gave my son this and that thing. I told him, “All right, give him whatever you wish. He has to go; let him finish his give and take.” At about midnight, he took the breath of death: he had a long period of vomiting and became cold. I had sent for the doctor, and when he came he said, “I’ll give him some medicine and he’ll be all right.” But in the morning, my son was quite ready to go. The doctor said, “Oh, he now looks better all of a sudden.” I said, “Wait outside; he’s just going.” So I looked at him, and he passed away.

At that time, everyone came to see me. I’m relating this to show how [Taiji’s] family came in contact with me. She and her husband also met me, and they were wonderstruck: “Your son has died, and you’re quite jolly. It is not usual not to worry and to be like that.” A lot of people came to visit, and they said somebody in the Sikh temple had said that “here’s a true Sikh coming up. He is a credit to our religion.” And her husband heard about it and thought: “He must be a follower of my Master.” He never knew me before. He went and inquired about it, and it was so. He told them, “Look here, he’s my brother, who has been going and sitting at the feet of my Master.” So they came to pay me their condolences. And they were wonderstruck. What did I do? I gave them tea, and this and that thing. So, suchlike competition is good.

Now, what one man does, others reflect on it. Put your shoulders to the wheel. The more one progresses, the better. Why are there all these conflicts? Because we do not love the Master, truly speaking. If anybody has become the beloved of the Master, it is good; you should also become the beloved. See how the other one has become the beloved: “Why does the Master love him? There must be a reason for it.” Suchlike love knows no competition, no
saying, “Why has the other man gone forward?” Quietly and unknowingly, they are going on doing it. They won’t show what they are doing; they’ll go on and let others see for themselves.

These are the things that are required. Christ said, “Love one another as I loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man may lay down his life”—love knows service and sacrifice—“for his friends.” What did Christ say? Do you know? “Ye are my friends.” He did not want to make us slaves: Masters never make you a slave. The beauty of our Master was that he addressed us very respectfully—very lovingly. A Master never makes slaves of you; he makes you friends. And why? “. . . if you do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what the lord doeth: but I have called you my friends; for all things I have known of my Father, I have made known to you.”

Do you follow? There are some so-called Masters, I tell you, who treat others like their slaves—bought slaves—they make the best use of them. And I tell you, Master’s conditions are very strong. Anyone who wants to take the service of his other disciple-mates, without the permission of the Master, Master turns away his face from him. We consider it jolly: “Oh, everybody now loves me; he serves me; he gives me sacrifices; he gives me so many boons and donations.” We shouldn’t.

Whenever you have to compare, make the comparison that if one man does more, you will do still more. If he does, say, four hours of meditation, you put in five hours. That’s a good competition, is it not? But that we do not do; that is a pity. And this is the basic cause of all conflicts, of all differences of opinion. Formations are made when we are wanting in love, I tell you honestly. . . .

And so ended another heavenly day.

Saturday, January 25, 1964

Today was the day we celebrated the Master’s birthday; the only time it ever happened in the West with him physically present. Actually, it was early; he was born on February 6, 1894, and they had a monster celebration on the 6th in India after he got back. But we were happy with our (much littler) festivities, which in fact began with the issuing of his Birthday Message for 1964, which was done on Mr. Khanna’s copier in his basement the night before the celebration, in part by Judith and me, who were very grateful for the opportunity of helping. We loved the Message, which summed up everything he
had been emphasizing during his stay in America, and which read as follows:

Dear Ones,

May the grace of God be on you all.

We are seekers after Truth and for that purpose we have joined various religions, which are our schools of thought.

Truth is not the exclusive right of any particular creed, or place, or age. It is a human being’s birthright. Just as every human being has a right to breathe the air, and absorb the rays of the sun, we are all privileged to draw from the Unseen Source of Life, Strength, and Wisdom, which is within each of us. That infinite supply cannot be exhausted. Anyone belonging to any religion can delve it out from within with the help of somebody who is competent—call him by any name you like. Take all that you can. Not only will it suffice for you, but through it you will become instrumental in helping your fellows.

Your smile will inspire another to smile. Your strength will impel another to be strong. A noble soul always draws forth the noble quality in others.

God is love, and our souls are also love and it is through love alone we can know God. Love knows true renunciation, service, and sacrifice for the good of others without any consideration.

A true human being is one who is truthful, leads a life of continence, radiates love to all others for the sake of God residing in them, and knows “giving,” “giving,” and always “giving.”

We never lose anything when we give. When you give love, do you find that you have less love in your heart? On the contrary, you are conscious of an ever greater power of loving, but no one can be convinced of these things till he has applied them in a practical way. An ounce of practice is worth tons of theories.

It is a practical age; therefore, it is for us to make our idealism more practical.

Believe in God, Who is Spirit; Love—the principle of all things—Who is in me and I am in Him; Who resides in every heart. We should therefore love all mankind and others. If one cannot love those whom he sees, how can he love God Whom he does not see?

There is a Religion above all religions which teach rituals, dogmas, and doctrines. That is Truth. “Religion” truly means “re”—back—and “ligio”—which comes from “ligore”—to bind; i.e., to bind our soul back to Truth—God. You have to be born into the Truth.

All Masters who come from time to time speak of the same Truth. We are lovers of Truth. That is the True Religion, on the basis of which the whole world can sit together and the East and West could be united.
The purpose before me is to bring together all children of God (now forming part of various religions) to understand each other and find a way back to God. I am glad that I have found great response to this Message of Love, with the Grace of my Master—the Man-In-God.

My hearty thanks and best wishes go to all who have been helpers in this Noble Cause of Humanity.

Yours affectionately,
KIRPAL SINGH

For the celebration, the Friends Meeting House was acquired once again, and this time Master addressed us from a dais set up in the main auditorium; we sat around him on three sides. And what a talk he gave us! To a great extent, it was an elaboration or exposition on the Message we just read; he had it before him on the dais and specifically referred to it in the course of the talk. For my part, I had a terrible migraine that day; the over-the-counter medicine I was taking didn’t touch it, and I couldn’t sit in the hall for the whole talk; I left to take a brief walk around the neighborhood at least twice while Master was talking. I had pounding in the head and nausea, and nothing I did helped. Nevertheless, I was fitfully aware of how beautiful Master looked sitting cross-legged on the dais, and what wonderful and magical words were coming from him. Later I listened to the tape of the talk over and over again; it became one of the foundation stones of my life. This is what he said:14

We are all children of Light. I was wondering how I should address you, because I see you in me and me in you. I think the best way I can address you is as my friends. I have not made you slaves, but equals: because only an equal man can recognize what he is. Those under him cannot know him from that status. You are all my friends; I have love and regard for you. . . .

When the Masters came, what did they tell us? I mentioned it very briefly in a few words in my Message, too. They said, “Love is the way back to God. God is Love and our souls are also Love, and it is through love alone that we can know God, Love knows true renunciation, service and sacrifice. For whom? Not for the self, but for the good of others without any consideration.”

14 Among other things. The entire talk is published in The Coming Spiritual Revolution, pp. 177-193, under the title, “Love Is the Way.”
All Masters say that love is the way back to God. Read any scripture. And there we are wanting. We are very intellectual; we are very wise in all other affairs; but we are wanting in love. Love is not grown in any field; it cannot be bought at any shop. It is already within you, ingrained within you; it is innate. That love has simply been misfit. Where does that misfit love take us? To the body, to the enjoyment of the senses and to the attachments of the outside world. The result is, where do we go? Where we are attached.

So this love, which is misdirected, is called “love.” But if you look to its reality, you will find it is God in itself. Because God is Love and our soul is Love, when love is withdrawn from outside and we come within, we come in contact with All-Love. This is what is required. Christ said, “Those who do not understand love cannot understand God. Those who do not know love cannot know God.”

The tenth Guru of the Sikhs also gave us the same thing: “Hear ye all, irrespective of whether you belong to the East or the West, to one country or the other or to one religion or the other—I tell you the truth: God is had only through love.” But we have not understood the true meaning of love. We take it to be the enjoyment of the senses with the body and outside things. That is not true love.

Mind that, love is a gift from God to man. Love seeks union with the beloved. First there is yearning, there is pining. You want to see him, to be near him. What is love? What is the result of love? When love is there, whatever, for whomever, you are always, constantly in sweet remembrance of him. That is the outward token of love. First, you would like to be near him; then you would not like to disobey any order he gives. As Christ said, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” He said further: “I give you a new commandment, ‘Love one another.’ ” We say we love God, but we do not love one another. Why? All Masters say, “Love God, love thy neighbor and love all creation.” If we love God and do not love our brothers, then what does the Bible say? “You are a liar.” Do you see? “If you do not love your brother whom you see, how can you love God whom you do not see?”

So love, ultimately, after yearning, wants to be near him; to obey him: and then obedience will result in surrender. Obedience seeks the pleasure of the beloved. Why do you want to be obedient? You want to seek the pleasure of the beloved, whom you love. One who loves is a lover of the beloved, and one who obeys is the beloved of the beloved. If you love your Master, Master loves you. Those who are more obedient, who love him and never transcend any of his injunctions, become the most beloved of him. Ramakrishna was sometimes seen weeping for Swami Vivekananda when he did not find him.

We have not ever thought of the value of love. We say we are lovers of the Masters. Then why is there so much discord and disunion? When two men love the same thing there should only be competition of this kind: if one man
puts in six hours in meditation, you put in seven hours; if one man serves
selflessly, you do even more service than that; if one man puts one shoulder
to the wheel, you put your two shoulders to the wheel. This is what he really
means by love. About love, I say: one who loves is the lover of the beloved,
and one who obeys becomes the beloved of the beloved. Who is the greater?
And that love should also be within a respectful mood. Once I wrote my
Master a letter in which I said, “I pray, grant me love, your love; but that love
should be within respectful limits.” Sometimes, out of love, we transcend the
limits. Sometimes we want to overrule the one whom we love. That’s not the
way of the true lover. He received the letter and put it on his breast. He said,
“I want such a one who loves within a respectful mood.”

Godhood is the birthright of every human being. Fortunately we have that
birthright; it is the grace of God. And the grace of God has further descended
in that we have some desire, some yearning, for God. It is to achieve Him—to
find Him—that we have cared to join any school of thought or religion.

It is possible through love alone to become God, I would say. The lover
and the beloved both become one. Christ said, “I and my Father are one.”
And St. Paul said, “It is I, not now I, but it is Christ that lives in me.” This is
what is meant by the word gurumukh—Master is God-in-man, and a lover of
the Master becomes a gurumukh: he becomes the Guru—a Godman in man.
This is the ultimate feat of love, and this is the easiest way.

I remember a story that has just struck me: Lord Rama went into exile
for fourteen years. He went to the wilderness where many other yogis were
living. There was one lady there of a very low caste. She heard that Lord
Rama was coming into exile into the wilderness, and what did she do? She
thought, “Rama will be coming and he may be barefooted, so that the thorns
might prick his feet.” So she simply cleared the way of all thorns. And then
she thought in the heart of her heart, “When he comes, what shall I offer
him?” In the wilderness there is no food to eat, but there are berries every-
where. She began to pluck berries and taste them: those that were sweet, she
put in her pocket. So, she kept all those tasted berries with her.

Each of the yogis who was living there thought that perhaps he was the
greatest of the yogis and that Lord Rama would be coming to his cottage.
(Mind that, this I-hood—“I know better; I am better than all these others”—is
the last weakness that leaves a man, even the so-called Masters.) But where
did Rama go? When he went to the wilderness, he met the lady who had
collected the berries. And what did he do? She offered him those berries that
were tasted, and he ate them. Love knows no law. Love is above all. The yogis
living there had been doing penances for hundreds of years. Then he went to
them, and they came up to him and asked: “Will you kindly grace our cottage?”
There was a pond of water where they lived that was full of small insects. There was no other source of water, and they asked Lord Rama if he would just clean the pond of all dirt and insects by his grace, by putting his feet into the water. He said, “No, I think you are the greatest of the yogis. Why don’t you put in your feet, for they must be better able to clear up the pond.” They did, and the water remained the same.

Then they forced him: “Kindly put your feet into the water, and all insects will go.”

He said, “All right. It is up to you.” He also put his feet into the pond, but the insects were still there. Lord Rama had to demonstrate the greatness of love. True love does not know any show, mind that. He said, “I think it would be best if you called that bhilni\textsuperscript{15} and let her put her feet into the water.”

Then she came and put her feet into the water, and the pond was cleared. These are instances to show that love is a great miracle. God is love. Through love only you become one with God. You can become one with him whom you love. “As you think, so you become.”

But we have not seen God. How can we love? We can only love one whom we have seen, who is at the same level at which we are working. The Mohammedan scriptures tell us, “Each man must have some beloved.” What sort of beloved? Not one that leaves you, but is ever with you: one who does not leave you in this life and in the life hereafter. And who can he be? It is the God in him. Christ gave an example to show this: “So long as the branches are embedded in the fruit-growing tree, they give fruit. But when they are cut off, they cannot give fruit.” Then he said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches. So long as you remain embedded in me, you will bear forth ample fruit.” Do you see? This is what is meant by love. Hafiz, a great saint, tells us, “O God, people call me Hafiz, but I am no longer Hafiz. I am He Who lives in me.” So, for men, God becomes man and has love for His beings. In that man who has become one with God, God becomes man: God in man and man in God. This is the word I have given in this message, too. And who was he? My Master. I saw him; he was man in God. To love Master is to love God: the God in him, not the son of man.

Mind that, there is no \textit{sadhna}\textsuperscript{16} greater than love. All outer performances, rites and rituals and the saying of prayers are only meant for love. If you have developed love, everything is there. There is no higher law than love. And there is no goal beyond love: because Love is God and God is Love. In this way, God and love are identical, for the one who has Divine Love has reached God. He

\textsuperscript{15} A \textit{bhilni} is a very low-caste woman.

\textsuperscript{16} A spiritual practice or discipline.
is one with Him. That is why I said here that what the Masters taught in their lives is a religion above all religions: they gave out that very Love.

No amount of intellect can fathom God. No amount of austerity can enable you to attain God. Only when one loves Him and loses oneself in Him, can one find Him. It is only by the feat of love that you can lose yourself: when the two become one. And there are no other means, there is no other way back to God, except through love. . . .

This is the message that has been given by all Masters, whenever they came. I am giving you no new thing on this birthday, which you are going to celebrate. The true celebration of the birthday will lie in the fact that if you live, you have love. Have a life of love. “Love, and all things shall be added unto you.” To my mind, I don’t feel joy for the day I was born. I will feel joy only if the purpose for which I am meant is completed. Then I will feel joy. I quite appreciate that you have expressed all your love, devotion or surrender: you may decide among these in your own hearts.

I want you to love. That will give you physical health, moral health and spiritual health. That is the only way back to God. Physically it is not possible to be everywhere; but the God-in-man—God-in-him—is everywhere: that can materialize everywhere. When you rise above body consciousness, there also you can contact him and talk with him face to face. By God’s grace, working through my Master, you are all of you having some experience to start with, the very first day of initiation. Truly speaking, you are all on probation, but not on such a probation from which you can be discharged, mind that. In the outer world, any service on probation is subject to discharge if the work is not satisfactory. But this is a probation from which you cannot be discharged. But truly you become a follower when you meet the Master within and talk to him face to face. He is ever with you and you are ever with him.

I wish you all to progress on the way, to be regular in your practices and to lead a life of love. Love does not even dream of harming anyone. If you want to know God and you do not love the God in men—if you harm those where God resides—how can you expect to know God? This is what is wanted. As I told you, love is the innate quality of the soul. Love knows no duality. Oneness. I think that is why they say God is Love and Love is God.

I wish you to progress spiritually. Physically I have not been here for so many years, of course. But as I told you, I was with you all along in thoughts. You know this is God’s grace; and with the grace of my Master through whom He works, you will remain in my mind, so long as He wishes me to continue in the physical body. I think the best way of celebrating
this physical birthday is to live up to what the Master says, that’s all. And I
don’t want anything from you except love. You will be truly nonviolent; you
will be truly truth-speaking, truly truthful; you will become truly chaste,
because your love will go into the soul and not remain in the body; and you
will have love for all. Love knows service and sacrifice. *Love knows service
and sacrifice.* When you know love, you will give, give and give, with no
compensation. If need be, you will have to sacrifice yourself for the good
of others. If love always knows the betterment of the good of others, not
of one’s own good, then you will have to sacrifice your everything for the
sake of others. If you but learn this very lesson, I think there will be peace
in the world, peace all around: the kingdom of God will come on earth....

At this point, Master told the parable of Lord Vishnu, the gods and
demons, and not bending the elbows, which is related above in the
chapter, “The Coming of Kirpal”; then he concluded:

On this day I am giving you the best of all I think I have come to know,
and that is love. You must become conscious of yourself. God is Light and
Consciousness. That Consciousness is now enveloped by matter. You are not
matter. You are sparks of Light. Be one with the great conflagration of Light.

I think that in a few words, I have given you, to the best I know how, what
I came to know by a parallel study of religions and by sitting at the feet of my
Master. He had love for all. Sometimes people rake up many things. Once
it happened in his life that while he was speaking from a platform, some
people set up another platform near him and gave talks against him. He
never showed authority over anyone— “I dare you to say these things!” —or
anything like that. The poor fellows had no arrangements for food, because
they had to come from somewhere else and spread that propaganda against
the Master. So they had to arrange to bring food from outside. When they
had given all their talks against him, Master went there and said: “Brothers,
hear me. You are here all alone. Our kitchen is always ready. Have your food
here.” (“Have your food here, and carry on propaganda against me!”) This is
what is meant by “love your enemy.” Do you see? Without any consideration.
These are the words I have given you in this message. It is a practical experi-
ence. My Master lived it. And this is what the lesson is.

Master wrote to me. He wrote sometimes out of love. One letter has been
my guiding star all through my life. He wrote, “We saints come into the
world. We have no easy life.” He continued: “In the Satsang, so many kinds
of people come up. Some come to pray and to appreciate—they come to love
and surrender—and others come only to find fault, to criticize.”
He said, “If a bad man does not leave off his bad habits, why should a good man leave off his good habits?”

I think this is the sum of what I can give you. If you keep to it, God will help you. Whether I am here or not, the God in me, with the Master’s grace, will help you. Love knows no showing: he feels it at heart. He gave me one or two things: once he gave me a very big carpet; he gave me something to wear; he also gave me an overcoat. I am keeping them for worship, you see? Whom you love, you love his things, mind that. I was thrilled when I came to know this is Master’s. 17 . . . [There is a very long pause, while Master cannot speak because of tears.] “Love, and all things shall be added unto you,” that’s all right.

Have respect from the heart. It is not a matter of show. The more you live a righteous life and practice true living, the more you live up to what you are told to do, that eases my burden—my burden. You help me, that’s all I can say.

At the conclusion of the talk, Donna Jewell sang one of her lovely crystal songs in praise of Him Who had given her life; then all of the workers gathered to have their picture taken with the Master. Downstairs a crew of selfless servants (sevadars) had voluntarily foregone the satsang in order to feed the hundreds of people a meal made up of equal parts physical food and love, with a huge eggless birthday cake baked by Helen McDaniel occupying center place. When Master came down, the candles were lit and it was conveyed to him that he was supposed to blow them out. Quick as a flash, he pulled a handkerchief out of his pocket and waved it over the cake, putting them all out at once, to the vast amusement of the satsangis.

17 Master is referring to a carpet next to him. Just before Master began his talk, it was announced that the carpet on which he was sitting had been used by his Master. Upon hearing this, Master pulled the carpet from underneath him, and gathering it together, put it on top of his head. He then put the carpet next to him, where it remained throughout his talk.
One might have thought that all that was enough for one day; but no. At Mr. Khanna’s house that evening, Master came down and talked with us once again, so intimately and informally. He began by saying, “If you would like to have questions, that would be better. Any of you?” There was a long pause, and he asked, “What appealed to you about the talk which was given you this evening?” Emil Christesen said, “Fellowship with one another,” to which the Master replied, “Oh, that is the first thing, naturally.” Hope Skinner added, “The great love of God for His devotees,” and Mr. Khanna said, “I liked the great love for his Master.” There was a long silence and then Hope asked, “Master, is there an appointed time under divine law when a seeking disciple is led to the Master?” and Master said, “Yes—appointed.” And Hope elaborated, “For instance, you think that so many have been searching most of their lives, and studying and searching, trying to understand spiritual realization: and then all of a sudden, are led to a great Being to have that realization awakened with them; but they have spent perhaps half of their life just searching and searching.” The Master answered by giving the following talk:

The time spent in searching is counted. Our Master always used to say: “Let your whole life be spent in searching; don’t be afraid of it.” Whoever is really in search of a true Master, he gets a true Master. It is a life-and-death problem. To just surrender your soul to somebody! When you surrender, you become the Master, mind that. Take the example of a girl who is given away in marriage to her husband. In the West, it has now become more of a business—excuse me; but in India, once a girl is married, she never cares about how she will eat, where she will get her clothes from—nothing; she never dreams of it. When you give up everything to someone, he has to care for you. So when you surrender yourself to somebody, well, he is there.

It is told of Father Abraham that he went to a bazaar and purchased a slave. That was the custom in those days. He brought him home. He said to the slave, “All right, sit down,” and asked him, “Where will you sit?”

The slave said, “Wherever you want me to sit.”

“What will you eat?”

“Whatever you give me to eat.”

“What clothes do you require?”

“Whatever you like.”

Then Father Abraham heaved a long sigh: “O God, he’s better than I. When he becomes somebody’s, he has no choice left whatsoever—no desire.”
When you surrender everything to God and the God-in-man, where is the question of there being any desire left? He freed him: “Go! I must become such a slave of God.”

The time spent in searching is good: because those who have entered the field of intellect must be satisfied about the whys and wherefores of things. Otherwise, even if they take up the way, they won't progress; because the questions will keep rising up within them. First, search. And when you sit at the feet of Someone, stop all searching; stop all your mind’s ramifications; stop everything else. Go on with what he wants you to do. Do it! He never wants you to leave your homes or anything; he wants you to lead a certain way of life, that’s all.

We say so much, but we do not live up to it. “An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of theories.” I think each one of you knows so much. If anyone of you were asked to give a talk, you would give a wonderful talk; for we say, “Love all, hate none.” Yet how many are there who do not hate anyone? Saying something is one thing; living it is something else.

Even if you take one item and live up to it, you will change. All other things will come in—all virtues. First, take the outside thing: suppose you observe nonviolence. Then, you’ll have to control your tongue, first; you’ll have to control your thoughts (thoughts are potent—they react); you wouldn’t like to usurp any man’s rights; you will not disrespect anyone; you will have love for all—naturally, that follows. So, naturally, when you don’t want to harm anybody, even in mind, word and deed, you will never tell lies. Why do you tell lies? In order to tell lies, a man must have a very good memory. [laughter] Surely! If you tell lies, you will tell one man something, another something else, and a third still something else. And you must always be watching out: “Well, what did I tell him?” Just leave it, I tell you. If someone who has told a lie comes to you, listen to him; you’ll find that after he’s told it, he’ll say still something else again. All the time, he’s afraid lest his lie be found out. So, if you follow him quietly, say for a month or two or three, you will find that he will be saying different things, because he has a bad memory.

So if you have love, you won’t tell lies; you won’t hate anybody. Nonviolence means not hating anyone. If you tell the truth—observe truthfulness—other things will follow. Suppose you have done anything wrong. If anybody asks you, “What have you done?” and you tell the truth, then the cat will be out of the bag. You won’t tell lies. Have you thought anything against someone? If you talk to somebody against someone, naturally that goes around. A secret is a secret only so far as it remains within your own breast. If you tell it to some other person—your dear friend—well, he also has dear friends. [Laughter]
Take any one virtue; others will follow. If you come in contact with the Sound Principle, the Light Principle, within you, all virtues will come to you. Swami Ji (Shiv Dayal Singh) tells us: “Those who are thieves—those who do not devote time to the practices—always fall into the passions of lust, greed, anger and egotism.” These things naturally come up. And the more you come in contact with that inner Sound and Light, the more all virtues will come up. Guru Nanak says. “If you begin to hear the Sound Principle continuously, you will become the abode of all virtues.” One is interlinked with the other. Some people bring me their diaries, and they are very good diaries on the face of it: they also show some time put in for meditation. And their progress is not what it should be. I simply tell them, “Dear friend, if your diary is correct, you should have gone to the third plane.” We must be true to our own selves. You can deceive others—not the God in you; not the God Power or the Christ Power which is within you. Be true to your own self: you have nothing to fear.

So purity of life is required. You should start something; do something! And if you love, all things will also follow. Love is no sanctioned love; it is charity—love for God, love for all, for the God in them. Try to live up to it, that’s all. This is the main thing that is required.

How should you treat others? What should be your conduct of life? In one word, what is it?

Someone once went to Vyas, who was a great rishi, and asked him. “That which is called dharma—what should be the conduct of life that accrues peace and happiness?” And he said, “Look here. Treat others as you would like to be treated by others.”

If you speak ill of others, how would you feel if anyone spoke ill of you? If you rob others, think that if he is robbing you, how you would take it. This was what Christ also said. Whenever you are about to do anything, think anything or say anything, first think: if this very thing was going to be meted out to me, what would I do? How would you feel about it? Would you like it? I don’t think so.

So the conduct of life has to be changed. This is what is called true living; this is a criterion for it. We can deceive everybody, but we cannot deceive God. When a man lives one hundred per cent up to what the Master says—that is, to the God in him—I think he is sure to change. Of course, the disciple should not be in a hurry to go up; but if the Master is also inclined to take him up, then, that’s the way, that’s all.

It is God’s grace that you get something to start with, the very first day of initiation—any average person gets it, even children. What greater grace could there be? Live up to it. What docs it cost? We are so devoted to the worldly
things that we have never cared for our own spiritual health. But when you
have to leave this world—a notice comes to clear out of Washington [where
the Master is now speaking] by tomorrow morning at six or by twelve mid-
night—then what will you do?

Once there lived someone named Valmik. He was a dacoit, a very well-
known robber. A saint passed by; he looked at him. His job was to plunder
a man of everything he had, even to taking away his clothes and killing him.
When Valmik saw the saint, he said, “All right, what have you got?”
The saint said to him, “Why are you doing this, dear friend?”
“I have to live on it. My family is dependent on me; I have to earn money
somehow or other.”
“All right,” the saint told him. “Look here. This is a sin that you are doing.
Go home. Kindly ask your wife and children if they would share this sin with
you that you are now committing.”

He was a very active man and said, “If I go home, you will run away.” You
see, each man has to see from his own level of thinking.

“No, dear friend, I won’t go away; tie me to a tree, and then go home and
inquire of your wife and children whether they would share this sin with you
that you are committing.”

It appealed to him. He thought, “All right, I’ll tie him up.” He tied the saint
to a tree, went home, and said, “Look here, I plunder everyone and kill them
to bring home money and maintain you. It is a sin. Would you share this sin
with me?”

His wife said, “Well, why should I share it? I have to eat. Bring it to me in
whatever way you can get it.”

Then he went to the children and asked them the same thing. Nobody was going to share the sin with him. He came back.

The saint asked, “What did you find the replies to be?”

He said. “Nobody is going to share with me the sin I am committing daily.”
Then he awakened his soul. “Whatever is the sin I have committed, they
eat; everyone uses it; I am only after two loaves of bread. Then why should I
commit a sin?”

He refrained from it, and later on he became Valmik, a rishi—he turned
out to be a rishi. When he sat in samadhi, ants formed houses all over his
body. So the name Valmik means. “little people’s homes upon the body.”

If we think that what we earn is not rightly earned and we are committing
a sin, then leave it off. If you have simple lives, you will not have to commit
sin or do anything like that.

Our Master used to go to Baba Kahan, the very same man I mentioned
yesterday. When he went there, he always gave Baba Kahan some ten rupees.
One time when Master was in the field area, he earned much money. He had
a good amount of money, and when he went there he gave him the same ten rupees. Baba Kahan told him, “Look here, you have earned so much money, and you are giving me only ten? Haven’t you got any more money?”

“Yes, I earned some more.”

“All right. I want much more.”

Then Master told him, “You’ve become greedy.”

And what did Baba Kahan say? “No, no. You see, if you leave it there, someone else will take it away. I’m not to use it. My purpose in doing it is this: whenever you are doing your duty, you are not doing it very honestly; sometimes you waste a few minutes—sometimes in talking or gossiping about something. Whatever you have not been very honest in doing as your duty, that percentage should be taken out of your income and must be spent for the good of others—to give to the poor, to the needy—so that your income will be all pure.”

So earn your money, stand on your own legs and share with others; but this is not everything. The main thing is that your spiritual self should be pure. After all, everything will remain here, whether you have hundreds or thousands or millions of dollars. Of course, the way you have earned the money—that will go along with you. That concerns actions and reactions. So the conduct of life should be changed. Unless that is changed, even if you have the truth, nobody will care for you. People judge by the way you live.

[Master indicates Madame Hardevi (Tai Ji).] Her husband was a president of the Arya Samaj movement. He was very strict, and everybody was afraid of talking to him—very strict; he would not spare anybody. Whenever he came to us, we were all afraid lest we should say something that would bring his wrath upon us. Well, he was initiated by our Master. What was he doing? All throughout the night he was sitting, doing meditation—in the daytime, at work; at night doing that. He changed altogether. To the people who were afraid of him, he became very sympathetic, loving; giving to the poor; sharing with others; all for the good cause. When our Master went to, perhaps, Rawalpindi, many people came to him for initiation. Master said. “Have you heard any talks?” They said, “No. No, we have not heard any talks—nothing of that sort.”

“What have you seen?”

“We have seen that man who was made a man by coming to your feet.”

So, example appeals to all of us. Why are our satsangs defamed? We are responsible. Where there is love, there is love and sacrifice and service for one another. At least, if you live in an all-loving way, that will appeal to others—they’ll run after you. You may have the very high teachings, but if your life does not bear them out, then of what use are they? An example is better than a precept. In the early Sikh times, if any follower of the Sikh religion went to the court of the Mohammedans and said something, they would say. “A Sikh
can never tell a lie." Similarly was the case with our Master. In the beginning it was known to the courts that whoever went to him did not tell a lie.

So, life appeals to everyone. For instance, you are coming here; and if you are chaste, you are loving, you don't think evil of others, you don't rob others' rights, you are of help to others and, if need be, you sacrifice your interest for others, then naturally everyone will say: “What are you? Where are you going? To what person do you go?” One life is an advertisement, broadcasting to all others. So, the life is required. Our hearts should be pure: no ill-will for anyone; no usurpation; no domination; always giving, sacrificing, without any consideration. If you do good to others, and they do good to you, what is that? It is a business. If others don't do you good, and you still do them good—that is what is wanted.

I told you, I think in this evening's talk, that there was a group of people preaching against our Master, directly beside him, and they were very hard up, for they could not manage to get anything to eat and drink. And those that attended were about one or two hundred people. He knew they were preaching against him. With all that, he said, “Well, dear friends, you are having trouble getting your food; everything here is ready; you can have your food here morning and evening.”

These are the ways that bring us closer. If somebody does you good and you do him good, what is that? That is but natural; it is business-like.

It is told of Prophet Moses that some stranger came to him. It is a law among the Mohammedans, a custom, that when you eat food, never eat it alone. Call anybody—who is not eating food. The law mentioned, “Go up to the roof and call out. ‘If any man has not taken food, let him come up.’

“So a man came to him: the food was served; and he began to eat. And Moses very much resented it, He told the man, “Why don't you pray to God first and then eat?” He said to the man, “Get out!”

It is said that God inspired him and told him: “Well, Moses; he did not pray to God, yet I gave him food; why did you resent it?”

If you are business-like, where lies the superiority in you? Do unto others in a selfless way. If anyone does not love you, you begin to love him. Don't do anything to harm him; act in a friendly way—that will wash it away.

These are very minor things. I tell you, but they have a great effect on our meditations. The diaries were introduced with some purpose—to meet with the times. But if one does not live up to it, then it is his own misfortune. When I started this under the orders of my Master (you see, all people are getting experiences), they said, “Oh, he's failing; he's distributing this spirituality, and he'll be lost; he'll become bankrupt.” I told them, “Well, if it is mine, I will become bankrupt; and if it is my Master's, then how can I?”
Our Master used to say, “I can’t find any man who can distribute freely.” If someone is in charge of a store for distribution, the duty of that man is to give out to whoever needs it. But what results? You give something to those who respect you; to those who don’t respect you, you say, “Oh, stay away!” You’ll try not to give them anything.

These are very minor things, I tell you; yet you’ll find them almost everywhere in our daily life. If you have love for others, you’ll tell the truth. If you tell the truth, you won’t need a good memory, because you’ll say the same thing that you see. So, these little daily dyings spoil our life, not only by an act of commission, but even by thinking. Thoughts are potent.

These are no new things that I’m telling you. I think each one of you knows them; this is perhaps only a reminder. The more you live up to it, the more you will progress.

Try to live up to what you are told; in a few words, that’s all I would say. And love is a panacea for all ills. Your lives will change. Those who will come in contact with you will praise you—not you, but the movement, or the place where you go. That is true advertisement.

And that was the end of a long and beautiful day.

Sunday, January 26, 1964

Tonight for some reason—very conceivably again my carelessness, since I was doing a lot of the taping—the tape began while the talk was in progress. The Master was telling a story about Guru Nanak, the first Guru of the Sikhs, who was hired to sell grain in a shop. As he was weighing out grain for customers one day, he fell into a state of intoxication when he reached the number “thirteen”—teran—which, in Punjabi, also means “thine” or “yours.” The Master continued:

When he lost himself, repeating, “I am thine, O Lord,” he began to weigh out grain without stopping. The shop people were afraid he would give everything away and they went and reported it to their head: “What is happening to your store? Go and see! He is in intoxication, weighing out everything and repeating the words, ‘tera, tera’—I am thine, I am thine, I am thine.”

But when the account was taken, it was found that about 300 dollars or so were not due from Guru Nanak but due to him. It sometimes happens that when you are lost in Him, the God Power helps in a very mysterious way.

But how many are there who are really His? Can we say, “I am thine, O Lord, mind, heart and soul?” Physically and financially, a few like that might
turn up. But how many are there who, heart and soul, are His? Very few.

A real devotee of God is one who surrenders everything to Him: body, mind and soul. In that intoxication, Guru Nanak had gone on, weighing out, weighing out. If you become His, then, He is thine—yours.

Kabir said that all the world is gambling in worldly ways: some lose, some gain; and that goes on again and again all through life. He said, “Oh dear friends who are gambling in the world, I would like to show you by my example that I am also gambling.” And how? Gambling goes on between two men, is it not so? If you lose, you have to give away everything; if you gain, you have to take everything away from the other one. He said, “Look here. I am also playing at gambling—not with the world, but with God.” And what will happen? He said, “If I lose, I will become His; and if I gain, He will become mine.” Do you see? Both ways, he is the gainer.

So we play with the world. Why not play with God? It is great common sense: if you lose, you will become His, is it not so? And if you gain, then He will become yours: either way, you are one with Him. One who comes to that realization and is lost in the very utterance of the words. “O my Lord, I am thine,” forgets everything—his mind, body, everything. It is true devotion, true love. And love always gives—knows giving, not taking.

Once it happened in the time of the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh (these are God-intoxicated people, mind that), that he sat down and was praying to God: “O Lord, all of this, everything is Your emanation; it is Yours; You are immanent in every form; everything is Thine; You are all this that we see; it is all Thine; whether it is the earth or the sky or the stars or the rivers or the mountains, it is all You, Yourself, Thou, Thyself.” Then, in that intoxication, he said, “It is You, it is You, everything is You personified.” Then he began repeating: “It is all You, it is all You, it is all You,” and in that intoxication he sat for three days—lost.

This becomes the fate—how very rare! —of those who devote everything to Him. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was a Saint in Bengal, in India. Every Saint has his own saying that reminds him of God. Everywhere he went, he said, “Speak of God! Glorify God! Glorify God!” Once it happened that he went to a place where washermen were washing clothes. (Today there are machines for washing clothes. In the olden days in India, a regular place was set aside for groups of washermen who used to wash clothes.) He went there and stood beside one man who was washing clothes and said, “Glorify God! Say ‘God!’ ”—in his own language, of course: Hari bole. (Hari bole means “glorify God, think of God, glorify God.”) He said it once, twice, thrice. The washerman thought perhaps some beggar had come and wanted money, so he kept quiet. Again, when Chaitanya insisted, “Say ‘Glorify God!’ Why don’t you glorify God?” the washerman thought. “He will not let me go. I will repeat
what He says so that he will leave me alone.” No sooner had he repeated the very words, when he became intoxicated. The charging was there. He also began saying, “Glorify God!” The result was that all the washermen working there began to glorify God. Do you see?

This is the intoxication for which we go to God-intoxicated people. It cannot be had by reading scriptures. Prayers and rites and rituals are meant to lead us to that state.

Shamas Tabrez tells us, “If you glorify God in that way and become intoxicated, everything will become intoxication. Whoever you see will become intoxicated. He is in every form; He is immanent in every form.” Then he said, “Dear Friend, I have so much intoxication within myself, within my soul, that if I leave the body and my body is cut into pieces and put into a field as manure, the one who bakes the bread with the corn growing out of that land and the one who serves it (he did not even speak of the one who eats the bread made from that corn), will become intoxicated.”

After all, there is something which we do not know about so far. If we have a little drop of that intoxication, we will forget the world. For that purpose—for radiation—we go to the Masters. For those who are receptive, it works wonders. Just seeing such persons makes them intoxicated like, Maulana Rumi said, “a drunkard, who only by seeing wine sparkling in a glass, begins to dance up and down.” Similarly, when those who are intoxicated with the love of God look into the Master, they see that God scintillating within him. They become intoxicated; they look into his eyes, they see Him, and they dance up and down.

So these are the things which are the gifts you can get from a God-intoxicated man. It cannot be had by reading scriptures or performing outer rituals: those are steps to it, of course. Say prayers—be lost. When Ramakrishna Paramahansa said prayers, he was like that—gone. This is what is called the love of God.

So that is why it is said, “Love knows no law.” This is a gift; it cannot be had by books or by scriptures. Naturally, when you come across such an environment, you will feel radiation. The more receptive you are, the more you will become prolific.

We used to have incidents like these in the time of our Master [Baba Sawan Singh Ji]. Sometimes a person came up and stood by him and forgot everything. He stood with his eyes open and didn’t know where he was. That was intoxication.

So that is why it is said, “Spirituality cannot be taught but caught!”—by radiation. Generally, what we call love is truly no love. It is misfit love, mis-directed love. That love that starts with the body and ends in the body is no love; that is lust. If it starts in the body and dissolves in the soul, that is love.
There is a very great difference between the two: the first blinds your vision; the second love opens your eyes—you are in a transport.

If we just once have a little experience of that, then the world is nothing. When you fly in a plane 30,000-40,000 feet high, everything on the ground below appears to be very insignificant. Even the very mountains appear to be little mounds. Now, all the worldly things and possessions appear to us to be very important, very great; we have ambitions to have them. But as you rise above, they lose all their attraction. These are the wings of love on which one can fly to heaven. All performances of outer prayers, rites, rituals, are elementary steps meant for that. So, “As you think, so you become.”

In the Mahabharata epic in the Hindu scriptures, there is a story about Dronacharya. He was a very good archer, and he used to teach others archery. One day, a man of very low caste—a Bhil, someone considered to be of a lower order—came to him. (Although no one is of a lower order in the eyes of God. So Christ asked for water from a Samaritan lady, who said, “Why do you ask for it from us?” on account of having an inferiority complex.) The man went to Dronacharya and asked him, “Will you teach me archery?” Dronacharya asked him, “Who are you?” and when the man said he was a Bhil, he said, “No, no. I cannot teach you that.”

The man went away. But he had had a look at him, and he made an idol—a model—of Dronacharya at home and began to meditate on him, because he had seen him. That form manifested, and from that manifested form he learned archery. He performed a special feat in which he would shoot an arrow and seal the mouth of a deer with it. He had learned it by practice.

One day Dronacharya was passing by and saw an antelope or deer whose mouth was sealed with an arrow. He asked, “Who did it?” —because no one else besides himself knew that art. He came up to the man and asked, “Who is your teacher—your Guru?”

“Dronacharya.”

“I never adopted you as my student. How did you learn it?”

Then the man explained, “I just dwelt on you and made you manifest. I learned it from you.”

So much force love has! Against the will of Dronacharya he had learned that very art. “As you think, so you become.” And what did he [Dronacharya] do then? I think that was not very good. He said, “All right, cut off your thumb and give it to me as an offering,” so that he would not be able to aim that arrow.

So, you see, love means everything. Hafiz said, “If the learned people were to have a little drop of this intoxication, they would dance like anything.

18 The teacher of the five Pandava princes of the Mahabharata.
even more than we.” In due course it comes up; we must be regular, that’s all. When you become devoted, you will have all these things by receptivity. When Masters have to wind up your whole give and take of the reactions of the past, they don’t leave you only with that; they want you to have this intoxication: “All right, go on with it; you’ll have it.”

When there is love, then can there be anyone except the one whom you love? Yet there, also, is duality; and love knows oneness. The two become one in soul. You forget everything outside. The story of Guru Nanak I was just explaining is an example of this. There were instances like this in the lives of most of the saints.

At this point Mr. Khanna said, “We would like to show a little movie that Bibi Hardevi wanted to see.” And Master said, “Yes, yes, you are most welcome,” but while preparations were being made to show the movie, Master continued talking: “When one meets a true Master, there is nothing to fear. But he should be devoted. Listen to the tavern owner. Pray to him, ‘Give us some drops of that wine, by drinking which, we forget everything.’ And to that, add even more: the intoxication of those who, in their God-intoxication, have forgotten themselves.”
Taiji began singing one of Master’s bhajans in Hindi; after the first few lines, Master translated: “O Master, give me a drink, by drinking which I lose all outward consciousness. Either I remain or you remain; we have become one.”

Taiji sang another few lines, and Master said: “One Saint was ordered to be stripped of all his skin, and while he was in that intoxication, they stripped off his skin. He did not care at all about what was being done to him or what was happening. They pray, “Give us a little of that intoxication—one peg19 of the wine of that intoxication.”

Again Taiji sang: “All the world over, everyone hates the thought of separation: ‘It is mine, it is thine. Why must we divide this and that thing?’ They pray, ‘O God, give us that intoxication in which both thine and mine fade away.’ The very idea of mine and thine should fade away.”

Again Taiji sang, and again Master translated: “This is the feat of love: you want to be near him, to sit by him. Even then, there is duality; they want to be one.” Taiji sang again and Master said, “Now, what is the way? How can we drink that wine, that intoxication? He says, ‘O Master, it is through your eyes—you give a draught of it.’ The eyes are the windows of the soul. The radiation comes through in whatever color that soul is dyed. Intoxicated! ‘Master, it is through your eyes that you give pegs of wine like that.’ It is not a matter of reading and writing—it is a prayer of the soul through the eyes. In whatever color you are dyed that is the very color of the radiation. How do people become lusty? Through the eyes. How do you feel that others are angry? Through the eyes. When you are attached, your eyes have a strange coloring. So the eyes are the windows of the soul. ‘O Master, give me that wine; but that will come through your eyes.’ And when Masters transfer their Mastership, they give it through the eyes and not by document.”

Taiji sang and Master said: “That is why I say, ‘God is love.’ People ask, ‘How much time should we give for meditation?’ Now tell me. When I came to my Master, I asked him how much time I should give. I was a family man; I had to attend to my job. He said, ‘Five, six hours,

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19 None of us were ever sure exactly what Master meant by the expression, “peg of wine.” Sometimes we transcribed it as “bag of wine,” which may well be what he was saying (his accent lent itself to that possibility); but it certainly sounded to us like “peg.”
minimum; the most you can.’ [chuckles] That is His gift. It is had by radiation through the eyes. He is a very highly charged body. That charging gives a lift to everyone, and he sees light. What is it? A little charging, a little help. That’s all.

“All right, go on with your show now.”

And we did watch the movie, which was of an earlier part of the tour; I do not now remember exactly what it showed, but Master came and sat with us to watch it. In the beginning, the picture was not clear; it was very dull and faded, and Master said, “Fix your gaze on it; it will grow brighter.” Since this is what he said to us every morning as part of his meditation instructions, it was really very funny; and the room exploded in laughter.

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I do not now remember which day Master did the Initiation; it was toward the end of the stay, but more than that I cannot say. Neither do I remember much about the Initiation itself, although I was there, and there were probably forty or fifty people initiated. But there were several very interesting things (at least, I found them interesting) that happened in connection with it that I would like to share.

For one thing, the Initiation was postponed twenty-four hours for the sake of one man. Luther and Vandilla Walker were a middle-aged African-American couple from Cincinnati; Vandilla was initiated (and later served as the Master’s Cincinnati group leader). Luther, who worked as a Pullman (sleeping) car porter, was not initiated and wanted it. Mrs. Hughes, the Master’s Louisville representative, told the Master the night before the scheduled Initiation that Luther Walker’s work schedule on the trains would not allow him to be present for the Initiation; she said that he wanted it very badly and would it be possible to postpone it by one day so that he could get here? Master, without a second’s hesitation, agreed; and it was done.

For another thing, Jim Bax, my good friend dating back to the Coffee Corner, my former roommate, my fellow explorer of the Fourth Way who had been in effect the first Sant Bani Ashram sevadar, had been present with the Master during this whole time even though he was not initiated. Everyone, including me, assumed that he would take
the initiation; yet when the time came, he was nowhere in sight. He turned up later in the day and told me that one part of him wanted the initiation so much that he didn’t dare stay in the house for fear that he would succumb to it, because another part of him felt just as strongly that it was not his time; he spent the morning sight-seeing. This was the last Initiation of the 1963-64 tour; Jim actually received the instructions at the first Initiation of the 1972 tour.

Then we were all surprised that Vivian Gordon, who in the session of January 23 (see above) had engaged the Master with penetrating and heartfelt questions to which he had given extraordinary answers, did not take the Initiation but that her husband Ron, who had been present the whole time but had remained quiet and seemingly had little interest, did. Ron and Vivian, a young African-American couple with two children, had a remarkable life story: Ron was a physicist by training and education (he later was on the faculty of the University of Virginia for many years) who also owned a jazz nightclub and knew many cutting-edge jazz musicians (including John Coltrane) as friends. It was through that nightclub in fact that Ron heard about the Path: Donna Jewell, a devoted initiate of Kirpal, sang there and introduced him to the teachings. After the Initiation was over, four of us “young guys” in our twenties—Ron, Steve Douglas, John Pollard (Donna’s husband), and myself—went out for coffee and hung out together. It was a sweet time; it was also the last time I was able to relate to Ron in that casual way. Four years later he, Vivian and the kids were traveling cross-country in their station wagon; they were driving non-stop with Ron and Vivian taking turns, even as Judith and I often did. Ron was sleeping in the back of the car when Vivian fell asleep at the wheel and drove the car into a ditch; the car was totaled, but no one was hurt—except Ron, who was a quadriplegic for the rest of his life. He managed a full professional life despite that, and his strength, courage, and devotion to the Master became legendary in the sangat. He also became a mentor to me and one of my very best friends, whose memory I cherish and whose advice I still try to follow. Along the way, Vivian (who did get initiated eventually) and he were divorced; she had tried her best but the strain of care-giving a quadriplegic husband

20 Donna also knew Coltrane, who as the world knows was a spiritual seeker; she introduced him also to the Path shortly before his death.
became too much. But Master sent him an angel: Anne, a nurse from Kenya who became his second wife and who was a perennial source of joy and inspiration not only to him but to everyone who knew her. They are all three gone now; God bless them.

Monday, January 27, 1964

Tonight there was a wedding! Ted Hastings and Helen Goodnow were married by a Baptist minister in the Master’s presence in the same room at Mr. Khanna’s house where we had been having satsang every night. The minister was a friend of some of the local satsangis, and he was very respectful of the Master and did a beautiful ceremony, while Master watched and listened carefully. When the wedding was over, Master gave the following talk, which is basically a commentary on the Marriage Hymn, or Lavan, of Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, which is included in the Sikh scripture, the Granth Sahib, and which sees the outer physical marriage as ultimately symbolic of the inner marriage of the soul with God: the four circlings of the Sikh wedding ceremony represent the four stages of the soul’s ascent, as Master explains: 21

All Masters say that marriage is a sacrament, not a contract. This system began ages back. We are entering into life. For that, Masters always enjoin that we must have good lives: we should be righteous; that is, have good thoughts, good words and good deeds. All scriptures tell us that outer marriage means taking a companion in life for weal or woe on this earthly sojourn to help each other to know God, which is the highest aim before us in the human body. One duty of marriage may be that of begetting children; it is not 100% of our duties. We need a companion in life. Whoever God unites, let God disunite. It is the unseen hand of God working behind it, that brings two souls together to wind up the give and take of the reactions of their past.

But marriage is meant for a higher purpose of the union of soul with God. All scriptures and all religions tell us that. The Sikh scriptures have given as the first step that we should have righteous lives: good thoughts, good words and good deeds; and love for all: not to hurt the feelings of anybody. Naturally, love knows service and sacrifice. One who loves knows only to give,

21 Also in the Hindu wedding ceremony. In Richard Attenborough’s excellent film Gandhi there is a very moving scene where Gandhi and his wife reenact their wedding, including the circlings, for the benefit of two American reporters.
give and give: to help himself and to help others, too. An ethical life, with the normal duties of a householder, is a steppingstone to spirituality. The ultimate goal is to know God, and we should help each other to know God. The first step is an ethical life.

We have joined various schools of thought or religions for the purpose of having spirituality. What is spirituality? We are spirit in man. Spirituality is the subject of analyzing spirit from the bondage of mind and outgoing faculties, to know ourselves and then to know God. God cannot be known by observation: “You cannot enter the kingdom of God by observation.” These are the elementary steps of the outer religions we have taken up; the main purpose is to have love and devotion to God. Also, as God resides in every heart, and we are spirit in man, we should have love and regard for everyone: even of creatures, not to speak of human beings.

With that object in view, what have we to do? The ultimate goal of union of the soul with God is the true marriage. Naturally, to be married in the outward way, you have to call for the minister. Here a minister is supposed to be a very holy man, and he knows about the marriage business. Similarly, for the inner, true marriage of soul with God, we need somebody who knows the way and who is adept in there, in that subject. So, learn to sit at the feet of somebody who has known God, because we want to know God. Those who have known God have all said the same thing; of course, in their own languages. But the purpose is the same. What do they say? Man is the highest in all creation, and the highest aim before us is to know God. Remain in any religion you like. This outer union of two bodies—embodied souls—together, is the first step toward the ultimate.

The second step is to help each other to have union with God. That is the true marriage: the soul with God eternal. Mirabai said, “I now have the eternal marriage with God; now I have nothing to fear. He is unchangeable permanence; so I have a marriage that will never break.”

For that marriage, you will naturally need somebody who has that inner contact or achievement. Call him by any name you like: you might call him a minister or a Master or anything. He is supposed to have known God. In all churches, ministers are meant for that purpose. They should unite with God and help others to unite with God.

So, have pure lives and guidance: sit at the feet of somebody who has known God. What will he do? Naturally, if he has known God, he will know what are the helping and what are the retarding factors to the union of the soul with God. He will tell you how to withdraw the outward attention, which is the expression of the soul and which is now devoted to the world, from the outside and then how to rise above body consciousness and come in contact with God, Who is already there. Such a soul becomes enlivened,
you might say; the other souls are dead. (The attention of the soul, which is diffused in the world, becomes so identified with it, that it materializes.) They have died from the sense of consciousness; they are always thinking of matter and of outside things, they will know nothing further than that. Guru Nanak says, “Only he is alive, O Nanak, who is awakened, who is conscious of God”: as I see you and you see me. Only such a man is living; others are dead. This is also what Christ meant by “soul dies.” Soul does not die; this is the meaning behind it.

The first step is to follow outer righteousness: have chaste lives, truthfulness, love for all, and service and sacrifice for the sake of others. The first step is taken when you have this kind of life and you sit at the feet of somebody who knows the way—who knows God, who is united with God and whose soul is married to God, you might say. I think you remember that in your biblical scriptures, some of the saints said, “Christ has given me a ring.” That is the elementary step: the soul’s marriage to God. They became conscious of it, and they thought that their soul was married to God. When you have taken that step, consider that it is the first step: you are married to God; your soul is married.

The second step is what He gives you. He gives you a contact with the God-power within, which is called Word. The outer expression of Word has two aspects: Light and Sound. He gives you a contact with them. The result is that, day by day, you get more and more bliss and enchantment within yourself. Naturally, you become more attached inside and less outside. The result is that Sound begins to reverberate, and you hear. That is already reverberating, but we are not in contact with it. When you are given a contact with that Sound and Light Principle, you begin to hear that Sound all twenty-four hours of the day and night, without closing your ears. The result of contacting that eternal Sound or Music of the Spheres is that you are becoming more attached to that higher bliss than to the outside; then you are in the world and yet out of it. This is the first result. Passions do not assail you, because you have more bliss inside: your attention is always drawn by that higher power within you. You will feel that you are in the world and yet out of it. Just as, if you sit by fire, all cold is gone, and when you sit by ice, all heat is gone, similarly, the more you come in contact with the Light and Sound Principle within, the more you will become unattached to the world, and all passions will begin to leave you. When you have that realization in your life—that you are in the world and yet out of it—you take the second step towards the union of the soul with God.

What happens further? You begin to see Him within this temple of God, the human body. You see that the Light is within you, and you also hear the Music of the Spheres. Then, when that expands, you see that the whole of creation is
the temple of God. Wherever you look, He is there, and there is no place where He is not. That inner vision opens. When you see God within and all around you, you sometimes feel as if you forget yourself. When that realization comes, you have taken the third step toward the union of your soul with God.

And what comes last? You become one with God. You lose all individual consciousness, like a drop of water, which, when it unites with the river or ocean, becomes one with the ocean. Guru Ramdas said, “If there is such a man, who has become one with God, how would you define him?” He said, “Tell him that he is the same, that’s all.” This is the ultimate consummation of the soul with God: you become one with God; you see He is in you and you are in Him: “I and my Father are one.” This is the ultimate feeling. Feeling? No, seeing. It is not even seeing—seeing remains in the third stage. The ultimate is that you become one with Him. It is becoming.

This fourth stage is the ultimate goal. But still, those who attain that goal experience some duality. Shankara said, “O God, I know there is no difference between You and me, but I am Thine, Thou art not mine; because a wave can be of the ocean, but the ocean cannot be of the wave.” First, those who become one lose all “I-hood” and become the conscious co-worker of the divine plan; then, they become; they rise into Him. This is the ultimate consummation of soul with God: union with God.

This is the higher form of religion within each one of us; and for it, we have joined various schools of thought or religions. They have been a helping factor to those who have attained that stage. In the Sikh scriptures, the four stages are given, step by step. Generally a teacher gives the first step, and in all religions they give a little reference to it. What do they say? “God has united you; let God disunite you.” If you are together for the same goal, you will even live together after leaving the body, too. You are going the same way.

These are the steps, step-by-step, that we have to take to reach that ultimate union with God, called the true marriage of soul with God. In the Sikh scriptures, both aspects are given: first, the outer ideal; and then, with that—because it is not the end-all—the further ideal of the union of soul with God.

The grace of God working in some human pole—it is His grace alone—helps step-by-step to reach Him. If you meet such a Master in whom God is manifest, that manifested God will help you to take up the way, step-by-step. First, you become a normal, righteous man. You sit at the feet of the Master; you obey his orders; you love him. If you love anyone, you love his commandments. From him you get the Bread of Life and the Water of Life: you become spiritually strong. This is the first step you have to take.

The second step is when you become intoxicated with the Light and Sound Principle of God. You are in the world, yet out of it. Nothing can contaminate
you. The next step is, that whatever you see within you, you begin to see all around: the whole world, the universe, is the temple of God.

In the last step of all, first you become a conscious co-worker. You see that “I and my Father are one.” But still, sometimes you take a dip in the ocean and you become one, and then again you feel, “I and my Father are one.” Something has been given out by Masters as the ultimate goal, and that is to unite our souls with God: that is the true, higher form of marriage. If those two souls are put together, and their souls are married to God, they are one; they cannot be separated.

This is something given out by almost all Masters. Love is not love that changes from place to place. What is that love that changes and is here today, there tomorrow? Christ said, “If you cannot love your brother whom you see, how can you love God whom you have not yet seen?” This is a form of outer marriage, which is a symbol of the higher marriage that you have to attain in due course. Blessed is the one who has had the human body and his soul has united with God forever: he is one with God.

This is what is meant by the goal. God has united you. Continue, and go on through weal or woe to help each other, with the ultimate goal being to know God. Maintain whatever children you have, and set your lives as an example, so that the children may copy you.

Ever since I’ve come here, I’ve had the occasion to see three marriages. And others, also—hear me! Open your ears to hear. Instead of running here, there, and everywhere, either be purely chaste, or, if not, be married; it would be better. That is the last thing I would advise you. Marriage does not mean, all along, a sensuous life. It is a very noble thing: a sacrament. Help each other. But running here, there, and everywhere is not a good example. Either remain 100% chaste: good—I’ll wash your feet—or, if not, be married. That will help you on your way back to God. Christ said, “Husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the Church.” This is the highest ideal before us, even as married persons.

In the old days, in the times of the rishis, there were three grades of chastity. The lowest or third grade was of 12 years. The second grade was 24 years of complete celibacy. And the first grade was 48 years. Now, just look to our own selves. This is the power that makes body, mind and soul. We do not value this very important thing. We raise our buildings on sand. This is a very valuable thing: it is not meant to be given to a sensuous way of living. It is something that gives strength to your body, to your mind, to your soul. It is a very great helping factor.

Marriage is very noble. You’ll find that many Masters were married. They had one or two children, and that was all. When they took up the role of Mas-
tership, they left off all of that. This is a very valuable thing. The pity is that these things are not taught. We think it is below our dignity. But these are the things which I think are sapping the very life of the coming generation. We should wake up: it is time. I request those who come here to be chaste and to have very righteous lives. If they are married, they should be married in the true sense of the marriage, and help each other to know God; that is all.

For that purpose, they have the company of those who have succeeded that way. They can give you right guidance and can also help you on the way. And what is that helping? It is first the giving of the outer, righteous way of living and the inner, higher contact; and then, the development of it. First, we will see and find that the body is the temple of God. Then, that is developed further, and with open eyes we will see that the whole universe is the temple of God. And sometimes, in that intoxication, we will forget ourselves. So, it is a matter of seeing: not seeing, but becoming. The ultimate goal of soul is God.

Masters have been giving such teachings, but we simply ruminate over them and do not go into the right import of what they taught. These are only ceremonies that are performed, and ordinarily they are taken very lightly; but they are very serious; they have some meaning behind them.

From time to time I have been laying before you the digest, in a few words, of what I came to know intellectually and spiritually. Just strive to live up to it. Truth is above all, and true living is still above truth. If you have very chaste lives and a righteous way of living, you will have truth; and that will earn my pleasure, too, and the praise of all who see you. They will praise you, they will praise your school of thought, and they will praise the person at whose feet you sit. If you don't live up to them, you will simply spoil the good name of the school of thought and also the name of the Master at whose feet you sit.

This is all I would expect of you: love one another. Think no evil, say no evil, see no evil and hear no evil. If you do that, what will be the result? Thinking no evil, speaking no evil, seeing no evil and hearing no evil can only be done if you have love. If you start to think that way, you will develop love within you. It is all given in one word: “Love and all things shall be added unto you.”

It is said that St. John went to a school and gave a lecture. First he said, “Boys, love one another,” and he sat down. He was asked, “Have you anything further to say?” He said, “Yes—love one another.” Again he sat down. And for the third time he was asked: “Anything further?” and he said, “Love one another,” and sat down. “Have you nothing more to say?” they asked him. “Love and all things shall be added unto you,” he said.
Love always beautifies everything. Even if you see a sin in somebody, tell him privately. Reconcile it before you go to sleep. That is the best way. Otherwise, that thorn will be rankling within your mind, and it will grow more and more and more; just as, when you put a seed of pepper in the ground, it can bring forth hundreds of peppers. If you have good will and good thoughts, good will is like a mango that is put underground and grows hundreds of mangoes. So it is the law of nature: whatever thought you have within your mind will attract all similar thoughts from all the atmosphere. If you have one evil thought, all evil thoughts will develop in you. This is one thing. We must follow it. If we do not follow it, the spiritual diaries are meant to help us change. Man can change, after all. We must change. And this will also help you to progress in your meditation. With God’s grace, you got something to start with; but there is some flaw somewhere, which does not permit us to progress further from day to day. We should weed the flaws out, one by one. If there is no progress, look within yourself; do not look to others, but within yourself. You will find, if you do, rest, peace and joy. If anybody has done anything which is not up to the mark, tell him privately, in a friendly, loving way. He will come up. If you broadcast it and tell one person, he will carry tales to another, the second will tell a third, and so on. Each man has his own friend; and it goes around like wildfire.

What is the result? There is discord and disunion. First it affects us, and then anyone who hears it is poisoned. This is what is required of us, if we want to progress.

Physically I am now amongst you after eight years. Know that the God Power does not leave: It always radiates, even from thousands of miles, whenever you sit in His remembrance; it is not the physical body, but the God Power or Christ Power. It helps all along; it extends all feasible help and protection. But still, the physical presence or the Master cannot be underrated: it gives you something directly: radiation, intoxication, clarity: you understand things better. You have been having that opportunity, to the best I know how, with the grace of God and my Master. And I wish you to live up to what I know, to what I told you. I will be very glad to hear that you are all going on very amicably, very friendly, helping each other, dying for the same cause of God, all together. That cause of God is one for all humanity, not only for one religion or another: it is no reserved right of any religion. Spirituality is the birthright of every human being. We should attain it while remaining in any religion. Spirituality is just knowing oneself by analysis and then knowing God: knowing, then seeing, then becoming. That is why you will find in scriptures: be still—physically and intellectually—and know that you are God’s.

We are already divine in nature; we are not to put in something from outside. By simply withdrawing our attention from outside to within our own
selves, we will find that we are the same divine nature. Blessed are they who attain this ideal in the life of a man, and blessed is the school of thought from which many souls struggle to achieve it.

With God’s grace, you have been put on the way; you have also had some inner experience to start with. There is nothing to be disheartened about. You should now put in regular time for meditation, and God will help you: be rest assured. If you remain in contact, by sending in your diaries regularly, it is done only to bring out two facts: one, to show you where you stand; and two, for further guidance. That will go to make you regular in your meditations and progress from day to day.

At this point, Steve Douglas, a young satsangi who had followed the Master on the whole tour and was a good friend of mine, asked a question: “Master, I would appreciate it if you would explain about the diary, how we should use the slots allotted to selfless service. Some of the initiates thought perhaps they should mark when they err and have not followed through with selfless service, and some thought they should mark when they followed through with selfless service.” The Master said:

I tell you, selfless service means to have love for all. If your children are eating and other children in the neighborhood are dying of hunger, share with them. Share with those who are naked, those who are hungry, those who are thirsty, those who are needy. If you help others, naturally you will be helped. Help somebody with no compensation, with no consideration of whether you will have anything in return from them. Only give to the God in them. This means that the self expands: first, from yourself to the family; then, from the family to the class to which you belong; then, from the class to the religion; then, that self expands further to the country; and you become a patriot. In all of this, your self does expand; but there is also a danger. If your whole love expands to your family, then two families fight. Each one is fighting for his own family: the self has congealed in two different families. If your love expands as far as love for your class in society or your religion, you will love the men of your religion and hate others: there are religious wars, in which thousands of people die. If your love is just for your country and each man has love only for his own country, then, two great wars in which millions of people were killed, have shown what this causes. So our love should expand for the sake of God in all men. “Peace be unto all the world over.” This is what is meant by selfless service: our selves should expand. Perhaps this point is clear now, is it not?
Of course, while Master had explained beautifully what he meant by “selfless service,” he had not answered Steve’s question; so Steve said, somewhat shyly, “One thing further: when would we mark it in our diary?” To which the Master replied:

There is no need; that is only for your information. I told you that each man should learn to help others, to share with others. Otherwise, what is the difference between a man and an animal? Animals also care for their children; they fight for their children. If you touch the child of any animal, it will take away your eyes. If you do that, in what lies the superiority within you as a man? The superiority of man lies in the fact that he helps his own self and others, too: not only men, but even all other creatures, as well. If you learn to live for others, you are, truly speaking, a man. Stand on your own legs, first. Don’t be a burden on others. Then, share with others; the more you can give out for His sake, the more you will advance.

That column is only for your information. From day to day, your self must expand. If you see a man dying and you are not caring and enjoying yourself, this does not mean selfless service. There is no need for someone to come and appeal to you that this or that man needs you. If you see it, come by, and help him. It does not matter if others see it or not. God is seeing you. This is to be developed, side by side. If you don’t care for the hungry gods moving on earth, how can you have love for God? He is not in the heavens; he is everywhere, residing in every heart.

It is spoken of one bhakta, a lover of God, that he prayed to God, “Will you, O God, come to my house?” “All right,” He promised, “I will come today—be ready.” So he made great arrangements: he set beds of flowers; cleaned his house; cleared away all filth; made his place very neat and clean; and then, he waited at the door outside. From morn till night he was sitting there; and nobody came. God did not come. Perhaps he was expecting God to come wearing a very precious robe, with great pomp and show. It so happened that one old man passed by on the road and asked him, “Oh, dear friend, I am hungry. Will you give me a loaf of bread?” He did not care for him. At night, when he prayed again, he said, “O God, you promised you would come to me, but you never turned up.” “Oh, I did come, but you did not care for me. I was in the form of that old man.”

In everyone, He is. If we have developed in that way, then serve all: you are nearer to God; God is within you. Lord Krishna said, “Who is dear to me? The one who sees me in all and all in me; he is the dearest to me.” All Masters say that. This is what is meant by selfless service. It helps a good deal in your progress on the spiritual way. That, plus self-introspection—the
weeding out of all imperfections—both go to give you very great progress within on your spiritual way.22

At this point, Emil Christesen said, “Master, may I ask a question? There was an instance near my vicinity where I lived when a beggar asked for something to eat of a woman next to my place. I observed that. And she said, ‘Wait a minute, and I’ll give it to you outside.’ She prepared a nice butter and honey on white bread sandwich and gave it to him. And what do you think he did? He said, ‘Thank you,’ and after going away, he turned around and threw it in the bushes!” At this, many people laughed. But Master said, “Don’t laugh. There is no question of laughter. It is a serious matter. Those who think they are needy, help them. If you don’t think of any recompense—of any compensation—God compensates you. Whenever you go to help someone, you are compensated then and there. Your self expands: you feel a sort of joy by doing selfless service. Naturally it is paid then and there, when you feel like that.”

Leon Poncet then asked, “Master, many times people have approached me on the street, and they’ve begged for money; but before giving them anything, I’m always trying to have guidance to find out whether God indeed wants me to give to that man or not, because I know that many of them might use whatever they receive in the wrong way. You may give them money for food, and they may use it for liquor, for example.”

The Master said: “That’s right. Sometimes you will find that some beggars have amassed hundreds and thousands of dollars in their accounts by begging. (laughter) Yes, yes, I’m not exaggerating—I have found it that way. They are begging from morn to night; and when they die, they have thousands of dollars to their credit. And sometimes, at the back of it, they are not married to one, but to two or three wives at the same time. That is why you cannot differentiate; but really, they go by nearly every day, so that you will know some of them, if not everyone. For that reason, Masters have laid down: give

22 For the record, the Master did answer this question definitively a few years later in his circular letter, “On Keeping the Diary,” dated October 19, 1968. In this circular, Master advised that what is recorded in the Selfless Service column, No. 6, “should be looked upon as a failure to observe the virtue of Selfless Service towards others physically and financially.”
it to Master; he won’t keep it for himself. He will distribute it to the
needy; he knows where it is needed or not. That is one reason.

“What does a Master do here to live? A Master is one who lives on
his own pay and earnings and not on the earnings or donations of
others. That is the first criterion of a Master, given by all Masters. The
second criterion is that he has no pomp and show. He does not want
or accept any outside pomp and show to display how great he is. He
doesn’t let people put garlands over his head and say, ‘Glorify Master.’
He says, ‘I’m a man like you.’ You’ll find that. He sees where the need
is and where it is not. Where there is a need, we don’t give to it; where
there is no need, we simply give to it to certain places where there are
already thousands and millions of dollars.

“Mind that, there are more true beggars in the average class than in
the begging class. You will find there are more. They cannot go on, but
out of their self-respect, they would rather die hungry, than dare ask
for help. A little care should be taken. But don’t hate. Of course, if you
hurt and reject and hate everybody, you will not be giving where there
is need. Some people do need help.

“For that reason, Master sometimes says, ‘All right, give it to Master.’
He’ll give it where it is most needed. Nowadays, Masters say, it has
become a business. The pity is that people cannot differentiate. If you
find these two things, especially—that a man lives on his own earnings
and does not require any pomp and show—I think he is near to God:
go and ask, and he’ll give you anything. Now, go around, and you’ll
find how many are living on their earnings. The ministers and others
in all churches of all religions are paid. They are earning money with
that; they will act and pose.

“Generally, I tell you, that’s what they do in all religions. So, one who
stands on his own legs and shares with others is the one to really have
the company of and learn many things from. Selfless service means
just that: it requires no compensation.”

And Emil added, “Another thing I’d like to ask, Master, is regarding
the Shabd. If we are absorbed into the Shabd in meditation, isn’t that
a criterion that our sins will be eradicated through the Shabd?” And
Master said: “When you come in contact with the Shabd, the Sound
Current, the Word in you, you become selfless. When you become
selfless, all sins are burned away. The Masters do not touch these reactions
which are in fruit, called pralabdh: otherwise, a man would lie dead at the moment of initiation. Further, he lays down a conduct of life that is not to be transcended and gives the initiate a contact within, to be developed day-to-day. By developing it, he becomes a conscious co-worker. The more he comes in contact with the Light and Sound Principle within, the more he will become a conscious co-worker. When he becomes a conscious co-worker, he sees that he is not the doer; it is God who is the doer. And all those actions which have not borne fruit naturally become fruitless. They cannot bear forth fruit; just as any seeds, which, if once roasted in the oven, won’t grow if they are put in the ground. It is something like that.”

**Tuesday, January 28, 1964**

Well, this was the last full day, the last day of the program—the Master was leaving tomorrow morning—and we were all coping with the idea that the Master whom we had come to love so much, whom we had related with on a daily intimate basis, who had given us so enormously much, was going to be gone. That night he gave us the most powerful talk of the entire tour which struck directly at my two most vulnerable points: lust and anger. He said:

In a few words: man is the highest in all creation, and the highest aim that is before us in the human body—as has been given out by all Masters who came in the past—is to know God. To know God, we must know ourselves first. God cannot be known by the outgoing faculties, the intellect or the vital airs. It is the soul alone that can know God. But our soul is under the control of mind, and mind is under the control of the outgoing faculties. Our attention, which is the expression of our soul, is diffused into the world through the outgoing faculties and is so identified with them that we have forgotten ourselves.

As I told you, it is the soul alone that can know God. Like knows the like. Soul is a conscious entity; God is all consciousness. So the primary thing is that we should know ourselves. Whenever the Masters came, they gave out the same thing: Know thyself.

How can we know ourselves? We can by liberating ourselves from the clutches of mind and the outgoing faculties; or, you might say, by analyzing ourselves from mind and matter; or, still further you might say, by rising above body-consciousness. When you know yourself, you will see that that very God Whom you find within is already there.
You reside in this human body, and so does He Whom you are after. To find Him is the purpose for which you have joined various schools of thought or religions. He also resides within you: “The Kingdom of God is within you.” If you would like to find Him or enter this Kingdom, you will have to enter into the laboratory of your body. You might be seeking outside for years and years; you might be observing so many rites and rituals, performed at the level of the outgoing faculties; and yet, you cannot find a clue to His Kingdom. Guru Nanak says, “So long as you do not know yourself, you are in a grand delusion.”

It is a pity: we are the indweller of the human body, and that very Power that we have to find is also already there: a fish living in the water inquires where water is. In the scriptures you will find a description of what the Masters found in their lives when they came in contact with the God-Power. Reading the scriptures can flare up an interest in you to know Him and to have those very same experiences that the Masters had. But there the scope of the scriptures ends. . . .

How can you rise above body-consciousness? If you can rise above it by your own efforts, you are welcome to do it. If you cannot, you can seek the help of someone who goes up and has the competency to raise your soul, to liberate your soul, from the clutches of mind and the outgoing faculties, someone who is able to give you an experience of opening the inner eye to see the Light of God and opening the inner ear to hear the Voice of God. Call him by any name you like. He is a man like you in his outward appearance; but inside he is developed in that way. He has analyzed his soul from mind and the outgoing faculties; he rises above body-consciousness daily. This is what is meant when the scriptures say: “Learn to die so that you may begin to live.” This is what is meant when Saint Paul said, “I die daily.” This is what is meant by, “To be born anew.” This is what is meant when it is said: “The Kingdom of God cannot be had by observation; it is within you.”

In worldly subjects, we do need the help of someone who is an expert in them. If you need someone to guide you and help you in these subjects that have to do only with the outgoing faculties, why wouldn’t you need that help in the subject that starts when you rise above the body and the outgoing faculties? It is a matter of common sense. If you can do it alone, well and good. A blind man needs two eyes to see. So we need someone: “The Son knows the Father and others to whom the Son reveals Him.” And that Sonship continues.

This is what is before us, and for that purpose we have joined various schools of thought. You will find that whoever can withdraw from outside is not attached outside. Whoever is attached outside or is given up to outward
pleasures and lives a sensuous way of living, such a man is not fit. There are
five passions connected with the outgoing faculties, but two of them are the
most dangerous:

The first is **lust**.

The second is **anger**.

All are dangerous, but these are the most dangerous. And even between
these two, the first is more dangerous. Kabir says, “I forgive all sins; but not
those who are given up to an unchaste life.” These are his words.

Naturally the question arises: what can be said about those who are
married? All scriptures tell us what marriage means. It means taking a
companion in life to be with you in weal or woe on this earthly sojourn;
and to help each other to know God, which is the highest aim before us. One
duty may be that of begetting children; but it is not one hundred per cent of
our duties. About such a marriage, St. Paul wrote: “Husbands should love
their wives as Christ loved the church.” They should have chaste lives. **One
duty, as I told you, is begetting children.** When you have one or two children,
all right; set your example and make their lives sublime.

The first thing needed is a life of continence. The **rishis** called having a
life of continence observing **brahmcharya**. “Brahmcharya means control of
all the organs of sense. It does not mean mere control of animal passions.
If a man controls only one organ and allows all others to have free play, he
is bound to find his effort fruitless. To hear suggestive stories with the ears,
to see suggestive sights with your eyes, to taste stimulating food with your
tongue, to touch exciting things with the hands, and then expect to control
the only remaining organ, is just like putting your hand in fire and expecting
that it will not burn.”

Similarly, all other organs of desire are required to be controlled. All Mas-
ters have laid **great** stress on that very subject. These two things are specially
important. What does it all mean? All these five passions practically mean the
same thing; they hinge only on **desire**. To be desireless is to cut off, to exter-
minate, the very root of other things. Many Masters have come and said this.
Lord Buddha said, “Be desireless.” The tenth Guru of the Sikhs said, in his own
language, “Be desireless.” When you have no desire, there is no question of
anger. What is anger? When you want to do something or have something and
someone appears to be standing in the way—either directly or indirectly—that
impediment to the achievement of your desire causes anger.

When there is anger, what happens? You cannot speak slowly. Take the
example of a little rivulet or ordinary canal flowing strongly in a narrow chan-
nel. When there is no impediment in the way, it flows on smoothly. But if you

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23 Quoted from Mahatma Gandhi; see *Self-Restraint vs. Self-Indulgence*, p. 92.
put a big stone in it, the water retards and strikes against the stone, and two things happen: one, there is froth and foam, from the striking; and the other, there is noise. Similarly, those who become angry cannot speak slowly, and there is foam in their mouths. Then when there is any wish: “Oh, I must have it; there is no reason why I should not have it.” He puts in all efforts at having it; he makes parties, and this and that. When he achieves it, he does not want to leave it; he is attached. This is called attachment. And then he enjoys it.

So all five passions hinge on the one thing: desire. Out of these, as I told you, two are the most important, or the strongest ones controlling us in the body. All Masters have been saying that. They say, “Chastity is life”—here we lack very much—and “Sexuality is death.” Those who are not married should observe strict chastity. Those who are married should regulate their lives according to what the scriptures say. And what they say, I have just laid out before you. The Mohammedan and almost every scripture says the same thing... 

So, as I told you, control of the organs of sense is of the first importance: that is to have a life of continence. Lust assails us through the eyes. Do you want to save yourself? Don’t look into the eyes of others. Anger is flared up through the ears. How can you control it? Leave the place. The more you hear, the more your anger is flared up; and you won’t talk slowly. You will go on talking loudly; and what will be the result? There will be foam in your mouth, and you will not be able to speak. ... 

The human body is the highest in all creation, and we have it! If only we could withdraw! What is the best way to control it? Just control your attention, withdraw it from outside and bring it up to the seat of the soul, which is at the back of the eyes. This is the best way. When you have full control, this can be had by regular practice. Practice makes a man. You use your eyes and you may not see; with your ears you may not hear. When will this be? When your attention is controlled. 

I tell you, Prophet Mohammed said about these two things: “If you control two organs—the one between the two lips and the other between the two thighs—I am responsible for your liberation at the court of God.” Tulsidas said the same thing: “If you are truthful, have humility and are chaste, if you consider others as mothers, sisters and daughters, except for your wife” (and that also, only for a while; wives are not machines, mind that. Excuse me; I am a bit very clear today. They are not for that purpose. That is only one duty, not one hundred per cent of our duties.) — “I am responsible for you at the court of God.” And Kabir said, “I will forgive all sins; not him who is unchaste.” We have no chastity left anywhere, that’s the pity. 

These are the basic things that are flared up; others follow. To achieve God is just to have a pure heart. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see
God.” You are always thinking. Simply sit down and listen to what others are saying. Either they will be speaking of unchaste things—excuse me—or with animosity. What does this do? Any thought, I tell you, any intention that considers someone to be retarding us, to be putting an impediment in our way, turns into anger. That’s all. So we must have a life of contentment. All Masters say this is a necessity. All scriptures tell us to love God and to love all humanity; God resides in every heart. An ethical life is a stepping stone to spirituality.

Although there are others, these are the two main things. Here we fail very much. You fail with the tongue if you have no control over your eating or what you are saying. Think twice before you speak. “Will this word I am uttering carry an effect?” If there is any controversy, quietly follow what the other one is saying. If you are angry, mind that, never say anything. Keep quiet.

These are the ways to save yourself. But the highest aim is another thing. If you have love for God, and God resides in every heart, and we are of the same essence as that of God, then naturally we will have love for all and have no hatred. When you love anyone, you won’t harm him, you won’t usurp his rights, you won’t tell lies. All things follow love. So God is love, and love is the way back to God. For the way of love, it is necessary for you to have a life of continence.

This is, I think, the last talk I can give you. I have been referring to these things in my talks and enjoining you to maintain your diaries. Perhaps you have been thinking that I was talking to someone else. This is the stony ground on which you can raise your building of spirituality; otherwise, you are raising your building on sand. I think that the best I know and have found, I have given you. Man’s highest aim is to know God, and we should eliminate whatever retarding factors there are. Whatever are helping factors, we should adopt in our lives. Whoever has to solve the mystery of life, naturally the day this question enters his heart is the greatest day of his life: this question cannot be stamped out; we must find a solution, sooner or later. There is food for the hungry and water for the thirsty; where fire burns, oxygen comes to help. Demand and supply is the law of nature. God sees: “My child is after Me.” He makes some arrangement to bring you in contact with someone who has known himself and who knows God: who sees God as I see you and you see me. And he tells you how to control these outgoing faculties.

All outgoing faculties can be made to stand still if you control your attention. This is what the Masters have always given out: Surat Yoga—the way of attention, of controlling the attention. The Masters give you an experience of how to withdraw, how to analyze yourself, how to rise above body-consciousness and how to be reborn: “Except ye be reborn, ye cannot
enter the Kingdom of God.” It is a matter of pure self-analysis. Blessed are you. With the grace of God you have been put on the way. Christ said to his disciples: “Blessed are ye who see things that the old prophets and righteous men could not see. Blessed are ye who hear things that the old prophets and righteous men could not hear.” So you can see and you can hear. Is it not a great blessing of God? Go on further. Just self-introspect your life like a strict judge, like a hard taskmaster. Don’t spare yourself. And go on with your meditations; weed out all imperfections; send your diaries at regular intervals. Have love for all; love God; God resides in every heart. Those who do not love, cannot know God.

These are, I think the best things I could give you in a few words. Tomorrow, the last day, I will be physically leaving you. Please keep it in your hearts and live up to it. The more you live up to it, the more you will feel blessedness within you. Remain in any religion you like. Religions are our schools of thought, to know God.

I thank you all for all the cooperation and help extended by you—not in words, but in thoughts and deeds. You have been helping the cause of God: in other words, you have been helping your own Selves and helping me, too. My best wishes are always with you, and the God-Power is with you. He can never leave you. He will be extending all feasible help and protection to you.

I will be glad to hear from you about your spiritual progress at regular intervals, say, quarterly. Give what you want in brief. Long yarns won’t do. Suppose you write a letter of eight pages—sometimes people write ten or twelve pages. So what do I do? The short letters I reply to first. That is what I have to do. So write short, to the point, what you want. That Power is within you; it will compensate you straight off. Your diary shows everything about how you feel and any difficulty you have in your meditations. If there is anything special, you can put it down. That will help you, and I think I can attend to it more clearly. My correspondence is increasing by leaps and bounds, because the number of disciples is growing. And I wish each one of you to remain in contact and attend your group meetings. Those who are there, have love and respect for them. Love one another, for the sake of God and God in Master, that’s all.

I wish you all my best wishes and love. Tomorrow I will be leaving at about, I think, ten or eleven o’clock . . .

Here Mr. Khanna commented, “Master has been a source of great blessing. Even if Master goes away, he has left so much.” And Master said, “It won’t be lost if you simply turn your face to it. It is always fresh. Remain in contact. God will help you.” Mr. Khanna added, “He’ll be
coming back again, if all goes well”—but Master said, “This is all in the hands of God.”

Then someone, a Washington satsangi whom I didn’t know, said, “We want to thank all those who started Satsang in the United States; without them, we wouldn’t be here.” And Master responded, “Do you know how much love I have for them? If you people have any anger, send it to me. Don’t throw it here. Anything that is not good, throw in the wastepaper basket: consider it sent on to me. Love one another; that will help you. Be cordial and friendly when you see each other: when two disciples meet, intoxication comes up in the sweet remembrance of God and the Master. . . . All these nothings we should forgive and forget. These little daily dyings should be set aside. This is all, I think that will earn my pleasure. . . . All are on the same way, and how can the Father leave the children?

That’s all right. Thank you so much, each one of you.”

Epilogue

It was the 29th of January—the day the Master was leaving. He had been the focal point of our lives since September 1; our existence was measured by His Light—and now he was going. It was true that he had stressed more and more as the day of departure grew closer that the real Master was not the body but the Power working through the body; that what we were able to perceive through the lens of his body was only a tiny part of the whole of the Reality which that Power was; that if we would just develop receptivity to that Power, we would enjoy the same relationship with It as with the physical human being called Kirpal Singh: and physical distance was not and could not be a factor since that Power was within us. We knew that this was not only all true but a cornerstone of Sant Mat; nonetheless we were sad, because we also knew that the joy and peace and fulfillment that comes from physically sitting at the feet of the living Master is a unique thing in this world and we were about to lose it. Being with him made so many things self-evident: watching him move, hearing him talk, observing (insofar as we could) his essence, it was not necessary to read libraries

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full of books to discover the purpose of human life. It was only too clear that the purpose of human life was to become just like him.

There is a well-known story in India about a lion cub that was trapped by a shepherd and brought up with the sheep, so that it naturally assumed that it also was a sheep. Bleating and eating grass, it passed its days until a lion came along and saw what had happened: taking it to a stream, the lion made the cub look at both their reflections and then roared . . . Truly, this is the primary function of the Guru: to make us see what we really are and to encourage us to act accordingly. This he does by showing us himself.

The Master gave us a brief farewell talk in Mr. Khanna’s living room where so many beautiful Satsangs had been held. After the talk I was standing in the hall, thinking on the implications of the day. Master came up to me, looked into my eyes with more love than I had ever seen from anybody—more love than I would have thought human eyes could contain—and said my name so that it sounded like a caress, two or three times. Then he gently slapped me on my cheek—over and over again, first one cheek, then the other—all the time repeating my name. The slaps were very gentle; it would be as accurate to call them vigorous pats. Time stood still for me while he was doing this: caught up in his Love and lost in his eyes, I forgot everything but him and his love for me. I don’t know how long we stood there.

Eventually the long drive to Kennedy Airport in New York was underway (yes, we were driving to Kennedy from Washington). We drove to Staten Island via New Jersey and took a ferry to Long Island; it was obvious that we were late. Just as the ferry was pulling into Long Island, and we were poised ready to drive off, the Master’s car pulled up beside our own. Mr. Khanna leaned out to speak to me: “We are late,” he said. “Will you please stop at the first telephone, call the airline and ask them to hold the plane for a few minutes? If you do that we might make it.” My heart sank down to my feet. I knew that meant that neither I nor the others in my car would see the Master again till God knew when; obviously by the time we reached the airport, he would have already boarded the plane, since it would be held especially for him. Oh me. I looked at the Master: he was waiting for my answer, and it was clear to me that he wanted me to telephone. “Yes, I will do it. I will certainly do it,” I said, although the collective sadness
in the car hung heavily around me. I drove off the ferry, stopped at the nearest pay phone, got through to the airline, made my request and got an agreement from them. Then—

Then I went back to the car. It was pouring rain. I sat behind the wheel and my whole self rose up and protested over not seeing the Master one more time. Tears rose. “I must see him again,” I thought, “This can’t be the end. It can’t be. Oh Master Master I must I must see you again. Oh Master please!” I started the car and drove onto the road. It was dead silence in the car. No one spoke. The windshield was awash with rain and my eyes with tears—between the two I could hardly see; but faster, faster, faster I pushed the car, praying all the while— “It can’t, it can’t, it can’t be over. There must there must be one more time. Please Master oh please if you love me a little—just a tiny bit—please please please”—all I knew was that prayer and the gallons of water everywhere and the grim fact of driving.

When we arrived at the airport I parked and we ran breathlessly to the building, hoping to get one last glimpse of him before the plane took off—if indeed it had not taken off already—when to my astonishment I noticed several disciples standing around the door. What were they doing there? Why were they not inside seeing him off? Did that mean he had gone? My heart drooping, I grabbed one of them—Mr. Khanna’s oldest son—and asked breathlessly, “Where is he? Has he gone?” He looked at me strangely and said, “Yes, he’s gone,” and my heart sank down as far as it could go, and I surrendered to despair. Thirty seconds later it became obvious that there had been a misunderstanding for incredibly, impossibly, the Master’s car drove up to the door and he got out, gave us smiling darshan, and walked into the building. Almost immobilized with joy, we followed him in.

Piecing it together afterward, this is what happened: the driver of Master’s car had, due to the blinding rain, three times missed the turn-off to the airport and three times drove around its entire circumference before finally making the correct turn. The airline had held the Master’s plane fifteen minutes beyond take-off time, but when he still didn’t show up, it finally left (this is probably what Mr. Khanna’s son thought I had asked him). So—after some arranging, Master and his party caught another plane half an hour later, going via Frankfurt rather than Rome, and he gave us darshan for that time. Then he said goodbye and was gone.
BOOK FOUR

India: 1965
Standing from left to right: Russell Perkins, Bibi Hardevi (Taiji), Rev. James McWhirter, Judith Perkins, the Baron von Blomberg; sitting the Great Master.

Taken in Rajpur, March 1965, just after the Third World Religions Conference ended.
India: 1965

Transition: An Ashram in Its Infancy

The next few years, January 1964 through August 1972, were defined by my three trips to spend time with Kirpal in India: 1965 for three weeks, 1969 for six weeks, and 1972 for six weeks. Judith accompanied me on the first trip, joined me midway on the third, and went by herself for three weeks in the summer of 1970; I went alone in 1969. What was learned and experienced with the Master in turn reverberated on the growing pains of the (very young) ashram and its (naïve but well-meaning) inhabitants, and an increasing number of guests during this period.

As I remember, all of the New Hampshire winters of the 1960’s and ’70’s were severe; and the winter of 1964 was no exception. The night we arrived home at our now-Ashram in late January, the thermometer hit -20° F., and there was a ton of snow everywhere. Before we had gone down to Washington, we had closed up the Big House—the eighteenth-century Colonial where the Master had stayed—and moved into the turn-of-the-century Little House next door, which did not as yet have any modern conveniences, except electricity: no running water, no plumbing, no central heat, etc. The house was small—two rooms downstairs and one up—and we heated it with two wood stoves: we had gotten in a supply of firewood at some point in the fall. Three miles down the road, across the street from the General Store, there was (and is) Sheehan’s Spring, a gift of God to the people of the Town of Sanbornton: a pipe coming out of a mountain pouring beautiful clear water non-stop, night and day, forever. During the summer of 1948, when all the dug wells in town dried up, Sheehan’s Spring supplied the town with fresh water; and now, in the winter of 1964, it supplied the Perkins family and what guests braved the long narrow
snow-covered dirt road to find us. (We also melted snow on the wood stove, but that was not very satisfactory—a great deal of snow made very little water.)

I was not of course working, and this was a big problem. Luckily our expenses were minimal; we had been able to pay for the Ashram without having to take on a mortgage, and the only utility bill we had was electricity. With very frugal scrimping, we managed to get through the winter, and in the spring I was able to find not one but two jobs: 1) at the G. W. Griffin Co. hacksaw factory in Franklin, where I sat at a tempering machine, pushing hacksaw blades one after the other through fire and water—a job which I got with the help of Gerald Boyce, who had worked there as a trouble-shooter for many years, and who was now coming to satsang regularly and had become a good friend; and 2) as a garbage man: this was actually a business that I ran: I was able to take over a route that ran on Saturday mornings, pick up people's trash, and deliver it to the dump.

There were now five initiates of Kirpal in the area: Frank and Eleanor Irwin, who had been initiated by Millie Prendergast in November, after meeting the Master; David Wiggins, who was often away; and Judith and me. We met for satsang once a week on Tuesday nights in the Little House where Judith and I and the kids were living, due to the Big House being closed for the winter; Gerald Boyce came every week, and often Amy Sanville, our nearest neighbor. That winter there was a long thaw in late February which reduced the road to mud followed by a blizzard the first week of March. Because of the condition of the road, the plows could not make it past Sanville's, and our road remained impassible for two months. During that time we walked back and forth to the car (about half a mile) and held satsang at the Irwins' house in Franklin.

The following October we decided to have a one-year anniversary celebration of the Master's visit on October 11, and we invited Mr. Khanna to come up and hold satsang; we had three persons who wanted initiation and who had been accepted by the Master—Gerald Boyce; Judith Swart, a young girl from Vermont who had become very dear to us over the summer; and our neighbor, Amy Sanville—and Mr. Khanna agreed to come, give them the Initiation instructions, and hold satsang. It was a very, very sweet few days.
But by far the most amazing thing that happened to us in that year, prior to our trip to India in February, was my being asked to undertake the printing of the Master’s book, *The Wheel of Life*. I had, of course, worked as a printer (and had been trained as a linotype operator); but, as I have recounted above, I spectacularly lost that job just before the Master came on tour, and so had no access to conventional printing facilities. Frank Irwin, however, had established himself as a printer and publisher of miniature books, using a hand-fed platen press set up in his home, and that was how, eventually, *The Wheel of Life* was printed. But first the book had to be set in type, a job I was perfectly capable of doing and would have loved to do; but without access to a linotype, it had to be jobbed out. So getting that done, then getting the book proof-read and the corrections reset, took up much more time than I had counted on, and the book became a source of great worry and anxiety. I was still in the middle of all that when we received an invitation (from the Master!—via Mr. Khanna) to attend the Third World Religions Conference to be held in Delhi in February 1965. It was vastly improbable that we should go; but we did.

The Mission of Kirpal

All of you who have come with me this far will remember a number of references during the account of the 1963 Tour to the World Fellowship of Religions. Before I get into an account of that Fellowship, and of the Conference it sponsored, I want to take a few minutes to explore what it was that Kirpal was trying to accomplish through it, and why it was so important. At the time these events were happening, I did not really understand this very well; I thought I did, but there you are. Actually, I resented the attention that Kirpal gave to this, especially during the Tour, and this prevented me from any in-depth understanding of it. However, as later events unfolded (his resignation as President of the WFR; the founding of Manav Kendra; and the great World Conference on Unity of Man in 1974) it became clear that that which led Kirpal to undertake this work (he had been elected President of the World Fellowship of Religions when it began, at the First World Religions Conference in Delhi in 1957; the second Conference, at which he also presided, was held in Calcutta in 1960) was basic to his understanding of his mission as a whole and was in fact of the utmost importance to him.
As to what exactly this understanding of his mission was, let us go back to the evening of January 24, 1964, and consider what (among other things) the Master said on that evening:

*God is love and we are also love. For that reason, love is innate in everyone—in souls, in every soul. You’ll find that the word “man” is called in Urdu insan. Insan is one who is love personified: he must be overflowing with love and radiating love for all. That is but natural.*

That, according to Kirpal Singh, is what a “man” really is—“one who is love personified.” When he talks about “man-making”—as he does very often—this is what he means: enabling human beings—men and women¹—to come face to face with the deepest part of their own selves and recognize that that deepest part is indeed love—and to then live in such a way as to reflect that in all its implications. Both aspects of this—the journey within to the place where we can see that we are indeed love personified, and the journey without to the world around us with all its imperfect human beings who are nonetheless children of God and who need our love and our recognition of them as our brothers and sisters—were present in his mission from the beginning, as I hope this book will show. Those who emphasize the journey within and show us how to travel it are called “saints” or “mystics”; those who emphasize the journey without and show us how to travel that are called “prophets”; but Kirpal Singh was both. He was a prophet whose message was grounded in his own knowledge of the reality of human nature and its reflection of the nature of God. His mysticism was responsible for, and led directly to, his concept of the “spiritual revolution,” which, he says, begins with “right understanding”:

*We are living in Him, have our being in Him, He is in us, outside us, above us, below us. Like fish [in water] we have our existence in Him. That is right understanding. And further: God made man with equal privileges, all born the same way, no high, no low; all have got the same outer concessions—eyes, ears, etc.,—and all have the same inner concession: we are kept in the body by some higher Power which is the same for all. So this is right*

¹ Kirpal Singh used the English word “man” to mean “human” with no implication whatever of gender bias. For him, “man” translated insan as in the title of one of his earliest writings, *O Insan Apne Aap Ko Jaan*—“Oh You Who are Love Personified, Why Don’t You Know Your Own Self?”—translated into English as *Man! Know Thyself.*
understanding: that we have this thing—God resides in every heart—and that all is holy where devotion kneels, all are born with the same privileges from God—no high, no low, no East, no West. And this will result in right thoughts. . . . It is said of course that “East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet.” But there is no East and no West: the whole creation is the House of our Father. All countries are so many rooms in that House. It is we who made these things, on account of our want of right understanding. So this is one thing: if you have this understanding, what will be the result? Your whole angle of vision will be changed; you will see that we are all children of God, the same Father. The true Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man will be cemented. So this is what I mean by spiritual revolution—from Godlessness. 

This was said by Kirpal toward the end of his life; twenty years earlier he had expressed it this way:

Love then is the only true religion. . . . There is just one Creative principle for the entire creation. All are born of the light of God and the same light shines forth in all; and as such, none of his creatures can be dubbed as evil. Thomas a Kempis, in The Imitation of Christ, writes: “From ONE WORD proceeds all things and all things tell of Him.” 

And earlier still, he wrote this:

In worldly matters, we do seek the help of persons who are more intelligent and capable than we are. We also offer prayers for aid to God—the greatest power conceivable—and that, no doubt, is a correct approach to the difficult and baffling problems which confront us every day in the course of our lives. But to regard that Omnipotent Power as something separate and apart from us, and to appeal to Him as to an outside benefactor, is assuredly a sorrowful mistake which is made by us; for He is the very soul of our soul, and is ever working within and without us, and we, in fact, live and have our very being in Him.

There is a reason, in other words, why loving our neighbors as ourselves “is like unto” loving God with all our heart and soul: if we go deep enough within we see that our neighbor—and our enemy—is

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2 The Coming Spiritual Revolution, pp. 2-3.
4 Prayer: Its Nature and Technique, pp. 15-16
ourself, and that our inmost Self is indeed the reflection of God. Jesus
gave eloquent support of this in his famous story of the Last Judgment:

Then the King will say to those on his right hand, “Come, you whom my
Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since
the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was
thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome,
lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and
you came to see me.” Then the upright will say to him in reply, “Lord, when
did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When
did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe
you? When did we find you sick or in prison and go to see you?” And the
King will answer, “In truth I tell you, in so far as you did it to one of the least
of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.”

And we have seen above that Kirpal used to tell the following story:

It is spoken of one bhakta, a lover of God, that he prayed to God, “Will you,
O God, come to my house?” “All right,” He promised, “I will come today—be
ready.” So he made great arrangements: he set beds of flowers; cleaned his
house; cleared away all filth; made his place very neat and clean; and then,
he waited at the door outside. From morn till night he was sitting there; and
nobody came. God did not come. Perhaps he was expecting God to come
wearing a very precious robe, with great pomp and show. It so happened that
one old man passed by on the road and asked him, “Oh, dear friend, I am
hungry. Will you give me a loaf of bread?” He did not care for him. At night,
when he prayed again, he said, “O God, you promised you would come to
me, but you never turned up.” “Oh, I did come, but you did not care for me.
I was in the form of that old man.”

In everyone, He is. If we have developed in that way, then serve all: you are
nearer to God; God is within you. Lord Krishna said, “Who is dear to me?
The one who sees me in all and all in me; he is the dearest to me.” All Masters
say that. This is what is meant by selfless service.

And this in turn leads to the extraordinary comment he gave in an-
swer to a question during his third world tour in 1972:

QUESTION: “I don’t have a yearning to go home. I came on the Path
because I wanted to be a better human being, and I knew you could help.

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5 Matthew 25:34-40
I still don’t have the yearning to go home, I just want to be a better human being. What is the best way to develop?”

THE MASTER: “That’s all right. Man is one, as I submitted, who is of use to others. So you obey God’s order: ‘Who serves my humanity, he serves me.’ That’s the first step; that is a good idea.

“You see, there is a parable in the Upanishads. It says that there was one man who was very fond of helping others—selfless service. He was so fond of serving others because he saw that God-into-Expression Power in the human body. Christ said that if we do not love our brother whom we see, how can we love That Whom we don’t see? So human body is the expression of That. He also resides in the human body, and those whose yogic eye is developed, they see God in the human body. Outward temples are made in the model of man, they put symbols of light and sound in there. In churches, in temples, in mosques, the same symbols are there. Which is the best of all? The human body in which these symbols are manifest is the best of all of them.

“So only he will serve mankind who sees God in them. The more devoted he is, the more he will serve others. The parable says that that man who was very fond of serving others, naturally he was a man [insan]—because he was considered to be of use to others. Love knows service and sacrifice, you see? And he prayed to God, and God was very pleased with him, and asked him, ‘Well, will you come back home?’ (I am replying to your question.) He said, ‘Lord, I want to serve others; if I come to You, that would be no addition to You—I am merely a drop of the ocean of Your consciousness. So give me more time to serve others.’ That’s all right! That’s a good idea.”

On January 19, 1964, Kirpal described perfectly how what Erik Erikson calls “pseudo-speciation”—the process by which we decide that other human beings who are different from us are not really human beings at all and therefore anything goes—a process carried to its extreme by Hitler, but present in most of us to some degree—is formed:

We do not know who we are. A little child knows better than we. If you ask him who he is, he opens his eyes, opens his mouth; he feels it somewhere in here. As he grows older in years and you ask him, he says, “I am Mr. Such-and-Such.” Further, he says, “I am a Christian; I am a Hindu; I am a Muslim.” Again, further he says, “I am American; I am French; I am German; I am Indian.” Who is he? He is a conscious being. That we have forgotten. We go so

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7 The Coming Spiritual Revolution, p. 125.
8 Carol Lee Flinders, Enduring Lives, p. 149.
far away from our own Selves that we forget our own Selves. . . . We simply identify ourselves as belonging to one religion or the other or one country or the other. There have been religious wars and patriotic wars in which thousands and millions were killed, and are being killed. When Masters come, they give us teachings from the universal level. They consider all to be children of God, brothers and sisters in God, because all are maintained and controlled by that Higher Power. This is the true state of affairs we are in. . . .

And in October 1967, he elaborated on it in this way:

God is love. Our soul is of the same essence as that of God, so love is innate in us, and must have somebody to love. We are conscious entities and we have to make our beloved an all conscious God. But we are attached to our children, our families, our own society, religion and country.

There are some people who are Nero-like. When Rome was burning, Nero fiddled. In India too we had a king like that. His name was Mohammed Shah Ramila. The whole town of Delhi was on fire and the people sent in a petition to save them. He was taking wine at the time and was intoxicated. “All right,” he said, “put this petition into the cup of wine.” Suchlike people are everywhere. Their type is the lowest class. They are congealed with their own selves.

If your love is for your families only, then you will think only of their good. If each man has the attitude that his children must be fed properly, but others may go hungry, there will be a clash between family and family. The police stations are full of suchlike reports. Their attitude is good for their own families of course, but they will clash with others. If our love is for our own society or for the religion to which we belong, naturally we will love the men of our own society and religion more than anybody else. In family strifes, some people are hurt, their heads are broken. If we have love for our own community or religion only, what is the result? We had a clear show, a demonstration I would say, when Pakistan was formed. More than one million two hundred thousand people were killed on both sides, because they loved their own outer forms of religion. . . . So that results in the loss of thousands of lives. If our love expands, we love our own country. We think that a dog of our own country is better than a man of another country. The result is that we fight, and millions of people are killed. So this expansion of love, of the love of self, of the family, of the society and country is fraught with difficulties and dangers. The cost to life is more and more. Unless the love of our soul expands to love an all conscious, an all pervading God, there can be no peace.

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9 The Coming Spiritual Revolution, pp. 24-25.
10 Morning Talks, pp. 71-72.
Because he saw human beings from that angle of vision, he took a very dim view of the whole complex of nationalism, borders, and “immigration”:

Actually what we say we should do, we should live, then it’s all right. They talk of peace but are spending more and more on genocide each day. . . . If they talk of peace, then let them also have less armaments. More than half of the income of a country is spent on that, even more than half. And if this was spent for the good of the people, then? We are all brothers. Each country should advance as much as possible and be a source of help to others. You strengthen yourself and let others also have strength. . . .

The only thing is, we say something and then do something else. That’s the trouble. If the governments really want peace, then where’s the trouble? They should avoid encroaching on the rights of others; live and let others live; make their country so advanced and peace-giving that everybody else would like to come there. Now there are restrictions. You cannot go out from one country into another without a visa. You cannot leave a country without a passport. So these are strongholds, is it not so? We go around like prisoners. When I returned from the 1963 tour, the airplane was not in order; we had to stay in Cairo. So we were restrained. . . . “All right, leave all your baggage, all your passports.” If we had to go to the bank, there were two soldiers with bayonets this side, and two that side—to go to the bank! This is our fate. Just think . . .

There are so many governments. Each man should keep his country in a blooming state, let anybody come in freely and enjoy it, and then help others bring up their governments in the same blooming state. That should be the attitude.11

Of course, it was not only human beings he saw that way: the right understanding and angle of vision that enabled him to see all as God’s children actually extended to all forms of life, and he extended to animals, birds, fish, and the entire creation the same non-violence and love that he had for humans, leading to his concept of “land-service” and his advocacy and practice of vegetarianism, which he characterized as “the least pain-producing diet.”12 He remarked in 1955, “It is said, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself’; are these animals not your neighbors?” He was, however, very aware of the pseudo-speciation and holier-than-thou attitudes this also can lead to, and addressed that roundly:

It is very necessary to distinguish clearly the ends from the means. To lay too much stress on the means is likely to make us forget our objective and to become fossilized. Once we know, for example, that abstinence from all kinds of meat diet and spirituous liquors helps us on the spiritual Path, it is enough that we avoid them. But to take it as an end in itself is to miss the point. Offending others because they eat meat is worse than meat-eating itself. Hate the sin, but love the sinner. Live and let others live. Welcome those are who choose to come on the way, but we have no right to hate or offend others because they eat meat. Vegetarian diet is essentially a helping factor for those who would prefer to follow the teachings of the Master. Hafiz, a great [Muslim] Saint, says, “Drink wine, burn the holy scriptures, and put Kaaba, the house of God, on fire. You may do all this but never offend or molest anybody.” If you are really anxious to meet God you should not offend or molest the heart of anybody, which is the dwelling house of God.\(^{13}\)

It is certainly true that Kirpal’s main thrust throughout his life was what is called “spiritual growth,” or the finding of God by the seeker, through the system of meditation we have already explored called Shabda Yoga; and he very carefully instructed more than a hundred thousand seekers from all over the world and from all kinds of backgrounds in that practice. Yet as his words demonstrate clearly, he did not differentiate between the inner or “mystical” and the outer or “prophetic”; he saw them as two sides of the same coin and of equal importance. Further, while it is true that it is the inner realization of the oneness and universality of God that makes right understanding possible, the fact is that recognizing and living up to that oneness even before we have fully realized it is an enormous helping factor on the spiritual path: as Kirpal has said, selfless service “helps a good deal in your progress on the spiritual way. That plus self-introspection . . . both go to give you very great progress within on your spiritual way.”\(^{14}\)

Our First Journey to India

All of this leads up to the World Fellowship of Religions and, eventually, beyond that to Manav Kendra, the New Education, and the Unity of Man: his prophetic witness as a countermeasure to the terrible progress of human beings through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. In

\(^{13}\) *The Way of the Saints*, pp. 276-277.  
\(^{14}\) See above, p. 240.
the Presidential Address which he delivered at the Third World Religions Conference he gave to these ideals and what he hoped the WFR would become as powerful and eloquent an expression as anybody has ever given; we will examine that address very shortly. That he eventually came to the conclusion that the WFR was too flawed an instrument to serve his purpose, and went on to develop other instruments that pleased him more, does not diminish the importance and power of that Conference, or mitigate the grace and love that permeated it.

Of course, Judith and I understood very little of all this when we received the invitation to the Conference; from our point of view it was an opportunity, a blessed, blessed opportunity, to see our Master in his native setting in the land that had come to exemplify and embody our search for Truth, and that had been home to so many who had found it. We were terribly excited.

Something of our excitement, as well as our naiveté and the physical difficulties we encountered, comes across in what was my first published writing; called In the Presence of God, it was a pamphlet of seventeen 8½ by 11 typewritten single-spaced pages which purported to give to the American satsangis a sense of what it was like to be with the Master in India, as well as a description of Sawan Ashram and a report on the Conference. I am going to quote extensively from this account, although I do not like it much anymore: I speak too positively and assuredly about too many things I knew too little about for me to take it seriously as a description of the Master and his ashram. But it has its values: the first part was largely based on a detailed journal Judith kept until we came down with dysentery in the second week, and the whole thing was written within a couple of months of our return, so it is basically contemporary with the events it describes. At the time of course it was unusual: very few American disciples had been to India at this point. One who had, Rusel Jaque, whom Judith and I had befriended during the 1963 Tour, had stayed six months with the Master and written a beautiful book about his time there: called Gurudev: The Lord of Compassion, it had been extremely inspiring and helpful to us, and we studied it carefully before our own trip. Another, Lucille Gunn, a California lady, had spoken extensively about her experiences (both she and Rusel had stayed six months), and we had come to know her also in 1963. (She came back to India for this Conference, and we met her again.) There were one or two others as
I recall; but that was it. For some reason or other, it was not part of
the consciousness of the American sangat that they could actually go
to India and spend time with the Master there. Of course, jet travel had
only started in 1960 and that made a big difference: Rusel, who had gone
in 1958, had gone by boat, and that involved a huge investment of time.

Anyway, with some judicious (I hope) editing and commentary,
here are the excerpts:

From the Preface:

This report has been written in response to many, many requests from our
brothers and sisters in Him to “tell us all about it.” The bulk of it was written
in March and April 1965, shortly after our return from India; but I became
involved in the printing of The Wheel of Life and could not devote the time
and attention necessary to finish . . .

I have included many instances of the Great Master’s incomparable love
and solicitude for us, with the sole object of demonstrating His greatness;
that He should so act toward us, who are the least and lowest of His children.
For we hold no position in His Hierarchy, or for that matter in the world (at
this writing, I am earning my living in a hacksaw factory); nor are we great
mystics, but rather the rankest beginners on the spiritual path, struggling
toward the Light. But with all that, He does not discriminate, but gives all
that He has; we have only to take. This is true of all of us.

At an impromptu Satsang in Hardwar, Master handed out blessed parshad
(food) to the assembled devotees, but happened to miss one gentle ash-smeared
sadhu who became very sad. When Master finished, He looked around and no-
ticed that the sadhu had been left out, hurried to him, and gave him five or six
times as much as the others. So do not despair, my dear brothers and sisters, if
it seems to you that you are missing out; in the fullness of time, He will Himself
give to you out of His abundance—five or six times over!

I would like to record my deep and lasting gratitude to my wife, Judith
(and to Master for giving her to me) who not only wrote the personal dia-
ry-letter from which much of this report was taken (especially the first sec-
tions), but painstakingly and lovingly edited and typed the final copies. It is
really hers as much as mine . . .

Of course, all ultimate thanks go to our Beloved One, without Whom life
would once again reduce itself into absurdity. However, all shortcomings are
my responsibility.

Russell Perkins
Sant Bani, June 24, 1965
And this is from the introductory chapter (the “background” mentioned has been described above):

With all this by way of background, you can imagine our feelings when we received a printed announcement from Mr. T. S. Khanna, our good friend and elder brother and the Executive Secretary of the Ruhani Satsang, Inc., inviting us, In Master’s Name, to the Third World Religions Conference, to be held in Delhi, February 26–28, 1965. During the Master’s recent American tour (when we had the great good fortune of His company for almost three months after He gave us the great gift of accepting the humble hospitality of our home, Sant Bani Ashram, for one day and night) we had observed that a great deal of His time was taken up with preparations for this Conference, and with the World Fellowship of Religions, which was sponsoring the Conference, and of which He was President. We did not know or understand this aspect of His work, and in fact were made vaguely uneasy about it; but the knowledge that Master obviously thought it important and worth-while and the realization that He, after all, knew what He was doing, checked any negative thoughts in this direction. We still regretted our lack of knowledge, however; and the opportunity of finding out, at first hand, exactly what this phase of Master’s mission was all about, together with the almost unbelievable prospect of seeing our Master on the physical plane once again, gave us an uncontrollable desire to attend.

We wrote Master immediately to make sure He meant us, too, (always difficult to believe) and I told Him that “we would move heaven and earth” to get there, if He would give His permission; but that there were many obstacles in the way, that only His Grace could remove. Between the time I mailed the letter and the time we received His answer, all these obstacles fell away, one by one.

The main problem, what to do with our children, was solved when Judith Swart, dear friend and fellow initiate volunteered out of the blue to take care of them for us! What a selfless and beautiful thing for her to do! It was the main single thing that made it possible for us to go, and served as a foretaste of the many selfless and beautiful acts that we were to witness and benefit from in India. In the meantime, we said nothing to anybody (We had learned a long time ago that excessive talking about anything tends to dissipate it, and that those who talk generally do not do) as we did not want to do anything to jeopardize the trip. We went ahead and took care of passports, etc.; I got a three weeks leave of absence from work; and we waited for Master’s answer with daily mounting suspense and hope. The trip loomed before us like an elephant. More and more we wanted to go (if that were possible); more and more it seemed unbelievable that we could. At last Master’s letter came:
“I am glad for your overwhelming determination for coming to India on the eve of the World Religions Conference...You may please see to your affairs and if it matures we will be too glad to see you amidst us.”

Who can describe the ecstasy of that moment when the impossible becomes possible, the dream becomes reality, that which never could be suddenly and gloriously IS? Enough to say that our gratitude and thanksgiving to Him were never greater.

On the blessed night of February 19, 1965, Judith and I, accompanied by our dear sister and life saver Judith Swart, drove to Logan Airport, Boston, to board the plane for India. A small group of fellow devotees in Boston—Jim Forte who had been initiated with us back in 1958, Nancy Mosehauer, and Ted and Helen Hastings with little Johnny—came to see us off. With what feelings of expectancy and hope did we say goodbye to these dear ones, and climb aboard the plane that was to take us to an unknown world, and ...God!

This is from the second chapter:

Reunion with the Satguru

We arrived at Palam Airport, New Delhi, about 5:30 a.m., February 21. An hour or so through passport, customs, etc., and then we met the man who had come to meet us. “Mr. Perkins?” “Yes.” I turned around to see a man with a long white beard, a turban, and a beautiful smiling face, who tossed garlands of flowers around both of us. With him was a younger man, without turban and beard, whose name was Mohan, and who later became one of our best friends at the Ashram. “We are from Sawan Ashram,” the older man said. We were speechless with joy at our new friends, both of whom looked just radiant with love. He continued, “Would you like to take some tea, or go right to Master?” We assured him we would love to go right to Master!

As we started across the airport lobby, we could see through a big archway that dawn was just breaking; and on the forty-five minute ride to the Ashram, we watched Delhi wake up. . . . Men carrying jugs of water on bicycles, women carrying baskets and huge bundles on their heads (At the Ashram later we saw a man carrying a bed on his head!); men sitting by the street cooking chapattis over a small fire; men milking cows on the street; droves of cows and buffaloes, wandering freely anywhere. Altogether, a different world—how different, how really different, we did not find out until later. . . .

We drove, horn beeping almost constantly, and after a series of what seemed like near-accidents involving cows, buffaloes, bicycles, taxicabs, horse-drawn carts, and pedestrians (which we later learned were standard
and eventually got used to) through narrower and narrower streets, an incredibly sharp turn next to a river, then across a fantastic rumbly wooden bridge, and we were in Sawan Ashram! Our first impression was of trees and flowers, and the very beautiful but utterly simple white marble building where we stopped. This is the main building and houses Master's room, His kitchen, and the large room where He receives people, flanked on either side by a long row of rooms which house many of the Ashramites. We got out of the car in almost unbearable excitement, turned around and there was Taiji (Madame Hardevi), Master's most saintly hostess-dietician-major domo. (As He said later, “She is a big wheel.”) She hugged Judith and manifested great love. We were overjoyed to see her again; she had been just wonderful to us and to our children during the American tour. She showed us to the reception room where we waited a very short time, though it seemed like a century, for great Master to come. We heard that precious sound of Him clearing His throat, and I could see Him vaguely through the partially open door. Then He came out.

The human mind has great difficulty grasping and holding certain images and concepts, which are plainly and literally too much for it. One of these images is the face of the Living Master. Never in all the world is there or has there been such a face. It does not look like a man’s face, but like the side of a mountain. It is capable of expressing supreme love and compassion and peace; but it expresses simultaneously supreme strength and power. To attempt to describe it is utter absurdity; it is what it is, proclaiming to all who have eyes to see that behind this mask of skin there dwells He who has made us and Who sustains us and gives us life.

Judith began to cry. My heart was pounding, and I felt like I was discharging great amounts of electricity through my extremities. My breath came in short sharp gasps. I had a tremendous urge to go down on the floor and touch my head to His Feet, but some stiff inhibition held me back. The Blessed One was unbelievable. He took Judith's head and held it to Him for a long time. She did go down on the floor, sobbing uncontrollably. He said to her, “You think you are dreaming. You don't believe you are really here. Look at me.” He held out His hand. “Touch me.” Slowly she took His hand. Then He came over to me and hugged me. I almost died. He said, “You have been on my mind all along.” Then He sat down, and asked for the children. We told Him briefly about our dear sister and her act of selflessness. Then He said to me, “How is that Karma book coming?” (This was in reference to His latest book, *The Wheel of Life*, which Frank Irwin, a New Hampshire Satsangi, and I were printing.) I said, “It's coming.” He said, “It is due to your efforts.” I said, with great conviction and from the depths of my heart, “Not my efforts.” Judith
broke in: “He always worries that he is doing it wrong!” Master said, “Look here. You came here on the plane and your baggage was also on the plane. You didn’t try to carry the baggage on your head. You let the plane carry it. Is that not so?” I nodded happily (I can’t be anything BUT happy in His presence.) He asked some questions, and noticing Judith’s continued crying, said with great love and seriousness, “Be jolly!” —the same command He had given me in America. Then He asked if we would like some tea. Would we! So Taiji prepared it for us and Master served us Himself with His own Blessed Hands! Has there ever been such a Master? He extends Himself like this for the least of His children! Surely, to be at His Feet is a blessing not to be exchanged for anything or anybody in the world, now or ever.

While we were taking our tea, a man with a very humble demeanor and beautiful face came in, went down on the floor before Master, and kissed His Feet. Master said, with that combination of humor and love so characteristic of Him, “What? What is this?” and lifted him up gently. He told us the man was from Pakistan. Later we found out he was Master’s Representative in Pakistan, and a most extraordinary man who had suffered great persecution from the Pakistanis during the partition days, due to his faithfully following Master’s teaching on vegetarianism. Others also came in now, including the two men who had met us at the airport. When we were finished with our tea, Master said, “all right,” and led us out. As we stood at the door, He said, “You have come far, but—it is the same sky overhead—the same sun.” We said happily, “Yes, Master.” Then Taiji took us to our room. We realized all of a sudden how exhausted we were, practically fell into our beds, and slept all day.

This next section is from the chapter entitled

Sawan Ashram and Its Residents

This fantastic place . . . is only about two acres in size. In shape it is long and narrow. On one end it is bordered by the small river that separates it from the Shakti-Nagar section of Delhi. Along one side run the railroad tracks, along which trains run approximately every twenty minutes. On the other end and side is the Shakti-Nagar section of Delhi. So it is not really isolated or rural in any sense, yet there is a definite sense of being in another world when you cross that bridge and enter its sacred precincts.

As you enter the Ashram from the bridge, on the left is the main building. It is very long with many apartments. In the middle is a porch. Behind the porch is the big parlor where Master receives the endless stream of visitors
who come to Him. And behind the parlor is Master’s room, and the kitchen where His food, and that of certain very privileged, devoted souls, is prepared. On both sides, in two long wings, are quarters of the sadhaks (spiritual aspirants). Master’s quarters—the porch, the parlor and His room—are extremely simple and in excellent taste. The porch is a gathering spot for the devotees, who sit in meditation there and wait for Him to come out—which He always does, sooner or later. In the parlor the Ashramites gather, every evening, for Darshan (sight of the Master). He always comes and has a few words with them before they retire.

On the other side of the Ashram from the main building is a long shed, where meditations are held, and which serves as one side of the huge tent that is erected at the Great Bhandaras (celebrations) when thousands of disciples gather from all over India. Just above this, is the langar (free kitchen) where all the Ashramites and visiting devotees (including the thousands mentioned above) are served simple vegetarian meals free of charge.

In a separate, fenced-off section at the back of the Ashram is the guest house, now two stories high (The second story was being completed when we arrived.) and quite large. There is a beautiful lawn in front of the guest house, and flower gardens with greens and other vegetables growing amidst the flowers. Birds fly freely in and out of the Ashram buildings with no fear at all. . . .

The day at Sawan Ashram begins at 4 a.m., when a man goes around ringing a bell, and the people sit for their private meditations. Later there is a group meditation outdoors or in the shed under Master’s supervision. Tea (not breakfast) is served around 8 a.m. It consists of something small—maybe crackers or fruit. Lunch, a full meal, is served at 1 p.m.; tea again at 4 p.m.; and dinner, another full meal, at 8 p.m. So there are two large meals and two very light repasts in the course of the day. The food that we were served consisted mostly of white rice, cooked vegetables, various kinds of Indian bread, and a great deal of fruit. It was delicious. Everyone took great pains over both the preparing and the serving; we could not help but taste the love as well as the food.

During this time, of course, Master was extremely busy preparing for the Conference. He was gone frequently during the day, and sometimes until late in the night. So the highlight of our day was the evening Darshan, when many of the Ashramites gather in the parlor and on the porch just to see Him and hear whatever He has to say. During the first week, this was postponed until Master would return to the Ashram from wherever He had been; but this did not deter the devotees, who would sit patiently on the floor for hours.

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15 This schedule was followed at this time, but it had more to do with the Conference than with the usual Ashram routine.
We witnessed some beautiful and extraordinary sights at these evening sessions: I think the most moving was the sight of the Master’s whole family—His wife (a beautiful, kindly and meek elderly lady, very tiny and gentle); His son, Darshan Singh (a man of middle age with incredible eyes, who is very prominent in Satsang activity and is considered to be a great poet; he treated us with great love); His daughter-in-law (Darshan’s wife); and His two grandsons (one a strapping young man of twenty-one, the other a beautiful young boy of seven)—bowing at His Feet in utter humility and devotion. Surely when a man’s family, who after all know him best, kiss His Feet and worship Him as God—should not this give even the most hardened skeptic food for thought? The classic rebuttal to the claimed sainthood of any man is, “What does his wife think of him?” Well, in the case of our Great Master Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, His wife thinks exactly what the rest of us think: that He is the Word made flesh.

Frequently at these evening Darshans Master would give out blessed Parshad food, to our great delight. The grace and humility with which He performs this is a sight to see. On one occasion, after handing out one piece to everyone, He came back to me, and with that incomparable twinkle in His Eye, handed me another saying, “For your ashram.” So we carefully saved it and brought it back for our dear sister whose selfless service had made it possible for us to come. We had been praying that Master would give us something for her without our asking.

Generally, He does not give talks at these sessions, but simply talks back and forth in Hindustani with His disciples. There is a great deal of laughter and a general sense of light-heartedness. Later, after the Cowans and Mrs. Gunn came, Master spoke in English to a greater extent. (At first, He had spoken in English only to us.) . . .

Once, after the Conference, when I was coming down with dysentery, I neglected going to Darshan because I was sick. The next morning Master was in our room! “You did not come to see me last night,” He said gently, “and I was anxious about you. Are you all right?” What great love He has for even the least of us! Which of us can even begin to deserve the Grace He has drenched us in! After that, I made a point of always going to see Him in the evening, no matter how sick I was; because the thought of inflicting more duties on Him who has such a busy schedule as it is was just unbearable.

During the first week, however, we did not see much of Master except in the evenings. The whole Ashram was a hubbub of activity. Construction work was being done (The second floor of the guest house was just finished barely in time.) and people were arriving: Indian Satsangis, who were coming both for Master’s Birthday Celebration and the Conference, and who were being
Delegates to the Third World Religious Conference
housed in a huge tent erected especially for the purpose; and foreign delegates to the Conference, of whom some were Satsangis and some were not. Among the foreign Satsangis were: Mr. and Mrs. Walter Cowan (He is the Chairman of the Board and Vice President of Ruhani Satsang, Inc.); Mrs. Lucille Gunn of California; Miss Eileen Wigg of Toronto; Frau Bianca Fitting and Frau Brigitte Boehm of Germany; Madame Maryse Choisy and several others from Paris, including Betta Mohangue Joseph of the Cameroons and Sarah Plimpton of New York; and of course the well-known Baron William Frary von Blomberg of Hampton, New Hampshire, accompanied by his cousin the Baroness. The Baron is Co-president of the World Fellowship of Religions (Master is the President), and played a very important part in the Conference. In addition, there were many non-Satsangi delegates whom Master put up at the Ashram (listed later on, in the account of the Conference).

At this time, Judith and I were given the blessed opportunity of being of what little service we were capable of being (not much, I'm afraid); she was allowed to help Khuku [the Princess Devinderbir Kaur Narendra, a dear friend from 1963] get the rooms ready for the delegates, and I helped Chadda Sahib [H. C. Chadda, the Editor of the Master's Hindi magazine, Sat Sandesh—not at this time published in English] with proof-reading for the second editions of some of Master's books (Crown of Life and Prayer are being reprinted in very small editions, inexpensively, for India only). I was grateful for the opportunity to serve; I was also grateful for the opportunity of listening to Chadda Sahib talk about Master, as he has the soul of a poet and is very devoted. (He is in charge of all printing and editing work done by the Satsang. He and his wife, Bimla, who is a very important figure and hard worker in the physical managing of the Ashram, live at the Ashram and have devoted their whole lives and possessions to His Service.) He told me many fascinating things about the Master, such as that Master had originally made His translation and commentary of Japji many years ago as a disciple, and the manuscript had been lost; and years later, in 1959, He sat down and reproduced the whole book from memory in 36 hours! He mentioned that he (Chadda Sahib) had been an initiate of Baba Sawan Singh Ji (Master's Master); and when I told him that I had on several occasions witnessed Master turning physically into Baba Sawan Singh Ji while giving discourses, he waved his hand and said, “That's nothing!! That's nothing!! Here it happens all the time! And not just Baba Sawan Singh, either: Baba Jaimal Singh, Swamiji, Tulsi Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh, Kabir, and even some of the Rishis of ancient India—they have all manifested themselves through Master's form and demonstrated that He is Their true embodiment of today.”
He also told me how Master had once asked a disciple, while sitting on His porch, if he was practicing the Path and going within; the disciple had replied that he did not have time and was not able to meditate. Master looked at him and said with great feeling, “That is my misfortune and not yours! That is my misfortune and not yours!” Masters, of course, have to continue to descend into the lower regions until all their disciples have reached Sach Khand, as it is Their responsibility to see that we go on up. Therefore, the more we practice and meditate, and live by His Commandments, the more service we do Him, and the less of our karma He has to bear. This is why it is said that true Satguru Seva (service of the Master) is spiritual practice and going within.

Another thing for which we were grateful during the first part of the stay was the opportunity to get to know several Ashramites: Nana-kow, a young man from Ghana who was initiated in America and now is studying at the University of Delhi and living at the Ashram (he became one of our very best friends); Gyaniji, a tall Sikh gentleman with glasses, a very long graying beard, a loving twinkle in his eye, and a kindly smile, who is one of Master’s foremost workers (I think he is secretary of the Ashram) and was always very loving and considerate of us; Anita, principal of a girls’ college who left her job to come and wait on tables for us and the others, and serve us in the most menial way always with extreme love and humility; Gorkha, Master’s cook, whose eyes were so profound and penetrating I found it painful to look into them, and whose smile was so dazzling that it rivaled the sun; Dalip Singh Ji, the gentleman in charge of books, correspondence, etc., who is such a hard worker that it is said around the Ashram, that he was supposed to leave the body a few years ago at the age of sixty-seven, but that Master refused to let him go on the grounds that He needed him; Bhalla, a young and very devoted and enterprising disciple whom we were to see a good deal of during the Conference, who also became one of our very dear friends; Dr. Mool Raj, the Ashram doctor (homeopath) who helped us through our various illnesses with such humble graciousness and loving concern; Pran Bhatra, another youthful man and dear friend who was active in the Conference and who later saw us off at the airport on that final heart-rending night; Sethi, who has for many years worked on correspondence (he translated for us also); Hira, a very young man, age sixteen, who served and helped prepare our meals, and who knew only two words of English— “tea” and “Hello” —both of which he delivered with delightful good humor; Bhattia and W.S.Mongia, both of whom have prominent government positions and were very kind; and, in many ways the most extra-ordinary of all, Pushpa Kiran, Nirmal Kiran, and
Raksha Devi, three young girls whose devotion, humility and selfless service outranked anything we had ever seen before. I dislike to keep using superlatives, but that is all that is appropriate when talking about these dear ones.

There were, of course, many others, some of whom will be mentioned as we go on.

This next section is from

The Great Birthday Celebration

This year the Great Master had requested that His Birthday be celebrated on February 25, rather on February 6, which is the date of His Birth, as He desired that His devotees attend the Conference on the 26, 27, and 28, and most of the dear ones would not be able to come twice in such a short time. For several days Satsangis had been arriving from all over India, many from great distances, with blanket rolls, sleeping on the ground and eating chapattis from the langar. A huge tent was erected, under which the devotees slept, lived, meditated, and heard Master’s discourses. Many of them are well-to-do; many more are incredibly poor; they all sleep on the ground together, under the great canopy.

The Birthday Bhandara really began at about 10 p.m. on the 24th, the Birthday Eve. Before a congregation of several thousand (in the tent), a dozen or so devotees sang devotional hymns and prayers, one after another, many of their own composition. Nana-kow, Stanley and Edna Shinerock, and Judith and I found seats against the wall on one side and almost immediately a brilliantly-smiling young man named Brijmohan Sharma appeared to join us and translate for us, which he did so poetically and beautifully, and with such ease and facility, that it almost seemed as if Master were speaking in English!

While the devotees were singing, Master came and took His seat on the dais. He always sits cross-legged to deliver His discourses. With such great love did He look at the assembled dear ones! Slowly and compassionately He looks at each one present, and they for their part never take their eyes off Him. After the singing has gone on for half an hour or so, Master begins to speak. The words seem to flow out of Him like a gentle woodland brook, with no strain or effort of any kind; softly, musically, gently, into a silence so profound that no other sound is heard save the voice of the Blessed One. Thanks to Sharma’s beautiful translation, I am able to present some highlights; the theme was Obedience:

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16 This may seem extreme, and probably was, but these three took care of us during our bout with dysentery and made all the difference.
“Just saying ‘Yes! Yes!’ is not enough. You have to do what you are told.”

“If a father has three sons, he will love them all and give them bread; but for the one who is obedient, he will himself search for him and seek him out in order to give him the bread.”

“If you cannot please God-in-Man; you cannot please God. “

“You must OBEY and KEEP YOUR DIARIES. I tell you to send them in blank if necessary. Why do you not send?”

After the Satsang was over, the devotees continued to sing, on and on into the night; I do not think they ever went to bed. (We did.) As I lay on my bed that blessed Eve, listening to the incredibly beautiful singing, punctuated by an occasional firecracker, I thought, “What dream is this? Who am I, that I should be here in this fairyland in the company of God Himself? Surely, surely God is good, and His ways are unbelievably strange, since there is no one under the sun who is less deserving than I, or has received more!” I was lulled to sleep by the singing.

Someone woke us at ten minutes to four, and we went out into a literal fairyland this time. Hundreds of candles were lit, all around Master’s house; balloons, fruit, and large posters in Urdu were hung and tied to the doors and walls. Firecrackers were being exploded and the whole Sangat was gathered in front of Master’s porch, singing hymns and eagerly awaiting for His Darshan. At last (about 4:30) the Beloved One appeared and spoke for a few minutes; there was no translation this time, so I do not know what He said. On His way back into the house, we were thrilled beyond words to hear Him speak to us: “Yes? You have come?” while those unbelievable eyes gazed full at us. That alone would have made it worthwhile to have gone to India.

Later, about 7:15, we went to Master’s parlor to be present for the presentation and cutting of the birthday cake. Master was very funny, as He really does not like all the fuss and celebration over His birthday; He puts up with it, like so many (how many?) other things, for the sake of those who love Him. (We were told that the year before there had been three times as much celebration, but that He had insisted that it be cut down this year.) For a long time, He pretended the cake was not there and refused to look at it; at last, He graciously cut and served it with His Own Blessed Hands.

About 10:30 a.m. the Beloved One held Satsang in the “Garden”, about ten minutes’ walk from the Ashram. This is a large piece of open land surrounded by trees, in which Master holds Satsang when the crowds are too large for the Ashram. There were five or six thousand present; many less than usual for His Birthday, we were told, due to the change in date this year. After Master’s discourse, Baron von Blomberg presented many of the foreign delegates to the Conference, and men were there with TV cameras. Master has great
difficulty moving about sometimes, due to the press of the crowd; this morning, as He left the platform, the crowd closed in on Him, and very patiently but firmly He kept asking them to move aside. Many of them try to touch His Feet; but He does not like this, and allows only a few to do so. (It is one of the most characteristic and oft-repeated sights to observe a devotee come up to Master and with great deliberation and seriousness bend down to touch His Feet; and the agility, adroitness, gentleness, and humorous affection with which Master catches them about half-way down and brings them up again, usually with a “What is this?”)

The whole crowd moved back to the Ashram for lunch; and the sight of thousands of people squatting on the ground, waiting patiently to be fed a simple meal from the langar, rich and poor alike, no distinction of caste or anything else, is surely one to live in the memory forever.

That evening really marked the beginning of the Conference, as Master had to be in two places, one after the other, in activity connected with WFR work. The first was tea at the “Awake O’Man” Centre in New Delhi, presided over by the well-known Swami Premananda, whom we liked immediately. He had asked Master to come and bless his latest book which he was presenting that afternoon. Master obligingly did so. (This sort of thing happened often during our stay. All the yogis and swamis in Delhi and Northern India recognize Master’s greatness, and He is constantly bombarded by requests to bless this, preside over that, be present here, help out there, etc. Wherever He goes He is the guest of honor and deferred to by everyone.)

We went to the headquarters of the Jain religion in Delhi for dinner. Before the meal, Muni Sushil Kumar Ji Maharaj, who is one of the leaders of the Jains, and the Sponsor of the World Fellowship of Religions, gave a simple discourse which was translated by Dr. Bool Chand, General Secretary of the WFR, and a devoted disciple of Muniji. During his talk, he touched on ahimsa (non-violence) and said that one reason he felt that Master should be President of WFR was that His life WAS ahimsa. We were very impressed by him. During his talk, Master sat up front, about six feet from us and we utilized the golden opportunity to gaze into His Incredible Face. Later, He moved to the head of our table, two seats from us!

After dinner, we rode back to the Ashram in the same car with Him; and He even, in His Infinite Grace, gave me the unbelievable honor of sitting next to Him in the front seat! It was like a dream—as indeed the whole trip was. Back at the Ashram, thousands of devotees were waiting for Darshan and Satsang. Master obligingly came out and, despite His incredibly full day, 

17 This Swami, who was a beautiful man and close to the Master, died in an automobile accident shortly after the Conference; he was missed.
went over to the tent about 11 p.m. and gave another discourse to the singing,
chanting multitude. For our parts, we fell into bed, utterly exhausted.

This was the next chapter:

The World Religions Conference

For those of you who may not know: The World Fellowship of Religions
had its inception in a series of religious conferences held all over India in
the middle and early 1950’s, under the sponsorship of Muni Sushil Kumar Ji.
These were climaxed by the First World Religions Conference held at Delhi
in 1957, also under the sponsorship of Muniji, at which time the World
Fellowship of Religions came into being by action of the delegates, with
Muniji as Sponsor and our Beloved Master elected unanimously as President. A
second conference was held at Calcutta in 1960. Both of these Conferences
were extremely well attended, but the vast majority of the delegates were
from India and other Asiatic countries; the Western representation was spotty
to say the least. It was to correct this situation that Baron von Blomberg
was named Co-President. He is a Roman Catholic layman, and disciple of
Master, who has vast contacts in the West; he accompanied Master on His
recent world tour and arranged many interviews with prominent leaders,
both secular and religious, including Pope Paul VI and many others, which
had as their aim the promotion and strengthening of the World Fellowship
of Religions.18

Of course, as we all know, Great Master has been emphasizing the basic
unity of all religions, the equality of all men before God, and the necessity of
each man (regardless of religion or race) to rise above body-consciousness
and contact the Light of God for himself, since 1948, when His Master, Baba
Sawan Singh, had appointed Him as His Successor shortly before His death.

He has stated many times that the basic similarity of the essences of the
various religions rests squarely and firmly on the rock of personal, first-hand
spiritual experience, referred to in all scriptures and by all prophets and
saints; which bears fruit in the twin qualities of love of God and love of man.
As a widely-known and acknowledged contemporary Spiritual Master, He

18 The Baron had, perhaps most spectacularly, arranged in 1962 for the Master to
be inducted into the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights of Malta—the “Knights
Hospitalers” of medieval history—the first non-Christian in history to be invited to
join. A moving account of the ceremony at Sawan Ashram, which prompted Prime
Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to send for Kirpal and have a long talk with him, can
be found in Bhadra Sena’s brief biography, The Beloved Master, written by his son,
Vinod Sena.
had been accepting disciples of all races and religions without requiring that
they repudiate in any way the church or community from which they came.
This was as true of Hindus and Muslims in India as of Jews and Christians
in America. Further, He had succeeded in abolishing all caste distinctions
whatsoever among His Indian disciples; giving to each one, regardless of
caste, religion, skin color, or national origin, the same first-hand experience
of the Light and Voice of God. So the aims and objectives of the World
Fellowship of Religions represented nothing new or different in any way
from the work that He had already been doing.

Some of the foreign delegates to the Conference like us were also disciples
of Master; but many were not, including some prominent clergymen and
civic leaders of the first rank:

From New York City came Archbishop Andrey of the Bulgarian Orthodox
Church—a beautiful, kindly old man who was imbued with the spirit of the
Conference and made an instant hit with the Indian people.

From Great Britain came the Reverend James McWhirter, prominent in
the Church of England, and editor of the Anglican magazine, Everyman’s
Weekly. From Vancouver, Canada, the Reverend Dr. J. Eric Baxter, pastor
of a megachurch there. From Paris, came Rabbi Zaoui, M. Brubaker of the
Muslim mosque, and Madame Choisy, well-known mystic, writer, and Roman
Catholic laywoman.

From California, the Reverend Dr. William McBirnie, prominent evang-
elist who gave the Conference its only taste of American evangelicalism.
From Israel came Professor David Flusser from an Israeli university and
Mr. P. Gordon, the Israeli Consul in Delhi. From Dallas, Texas, came Mr.
Raymond Hoekstra, prominent civic leader, businessman, and Protestant
layman, who has been working very hard to get the WFR to hold its next
Conference in Dallas. And there were many, many others—all told, sixty-five
from the West, and many hundreds from India and the East. All the religions
of the world, large and small—Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Muslim, Jewish,
Christian, Zoroastrian—were represented, and many sub-sects were also
included. Truly, it was a World Conference.

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19 Professor Flusser was introduced to me by the Baron as “someone who teaches
Christian origins at a Jewish university.” I found this fascinating, and I liked Professor
Flusser very much and enjoyed talking with him. Later I discovered that he really
was a world-class scholar: he figures very prominently in Edmund Wilson’s classic
The Scrolls from the Dead Sea.

20 See above, “Twelve Days Wonder,” the section headed “Wednesday, January 22,
1964,” for an account of Mr. Hoekstra.
The Conference actually began on Friday, February 26, the day after the Birthday Bhandara, with a meeting of the Subjects’ Committee. Here the resolutions which were eventually passed by the delegates were first thrashed out. They included a resolution supporting the concept of ahimsa (non-violence) as the keynote of Religion, and commending the work of the Ahimsa Research Institute, one of the affiliated bodies of the WFR; a resolution stating that “The cold war on the part of champions of proselytizing religions is detrimental to the very essence of religion and that it ought to be replaced by efforts to find common elements of moral and spiritual values”; and resolutions calling upon all “governments of the world to grant to their people the right to choose their own way of life according to the basic principles of Religion” and to “give to Religion full rights of association, propagation, and organization.” In addition, the basic resolution on Religion observed that man was distinguished from lower forms of life by his inborn moral and spiritual sense; that in order to develop that sense, “it is quite necessary to sublimate the animal instinct in man”; that this is possible through the “distinct disciplines” enjoined by Religion; that the denial of these postulates constitutes an impediment to peace and to the well-being of mankind; and proceeded to define the virtuous life as “justice instead of oppression, love instead of hatred, forgiveness instead of revenge, peace instead of war, truth instead of falsehood, persuasion instead of force.”

The public Conferences began that afternoon with the Great Procession. All the delegates, both Indian and foreign, who were physically capable of it, along with a significant amount of the population of Delhi, (I would estimate the number of participants at about fifty thousand: it might have been much more) joined in this mammoth and unforgettable parade from the Gandhi Grounds to the Ramlila Grounds (where the Conference was to be held) along the main streets of Delhi. Never in all my life will I (or any other Westerner who marched) forget that walk. Led by our Beloved Master, Muni Sushil Kumar Ji, and Baron von Blomberg, a good proportion of yogis, sadhus, monks, clergymen, laymen of all religious denominations including Swami Premananda, Yogiraj Ved Vyas, Swami Arvindanand, Acharya Desh Bhushan Ji Maharaj (a “sky-clad” Jain who wore no clothes)21, and many others, moved at approximately two miles an hour through a yelling, cheer-

21 A very loving and gentle man, he was indeed stark naked; slides that I took of him marching caused great consternation when I showed them to various satsang groups when we returned home. But, as I told them at the time, Master was very kind to him, marching next to him for a while with his arm around him. The “sky-clad” Jains are of course a very ancient order in India, dating back to the time of Mahavira himself, around 500 B.C.E.
ing crowd whose enthusiasm exceeded all my expectation. The feeling of taking part in a mass religious movement that meant something to the people at large—the masses—came over me, and I realized that India still takes religion seriously, and that there was a reason why all these conferences had been successfully organized in India. The crowd—both the onlookers and the marchers—were shouting at the top of their lungs. Some of their slogans were translated for us: “Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs—ALL ONE!” and “Brotherhood among all men—FOREVER AND EVER!” We kept stopping periodically for television pictures and others; then resuming, with more people each time. When we finally reached the Ramlila Grounds, we discovered to our dismay that the way the procession had chosen to come involved crossing a narrow wooden foot bridge with no guard rail over a drainage ditch fifteen feet below the bridge surface. Master, Muniji, and the other sadhus and delegates managed to get over with a minimum of difficulty; but somehow, we found ourselves caught in the crowd which was swarming in over the bridge and was being forcibly prevented from coming in. Both Judith and I panicked for a second; we were being pushed back and forth perilously close to the edge, and there seemed no way to get in to the Grounds, where Master was.

Then someone—I think it was our dear brother Sharma the translator, who had previously led us at a dead run from the back of the procession to the front, when we had arrived late—noticed our plight and stretched out a hand to Judith who was in front of me. I grabbed her hand in turn, and somebody—I think Mohan—grabbed Sharma’s hand, and the two of them pulled Judith and me through the crowd as though we were being pulled through a pipe. Never have I experienced the denseness of many humans at once quite as vividly as on this occasion. I truthfully did not think we would make it through. Judith was crying; I almost lost one of my shoes (and if I had lost it, it would have been gone forever); then suddenly POP! we were through into the vast open field of the Ramlila Grounds, and Master was coming toward us. “Are you all right?” He asked. “You are not dead?” We broke into laughter, and everything was wonderful again. But when we made it to our seats and sat down, we felt that we had put in several days’ work.

But it was just beginning. Because we were in the front row, and were too tired to move at first, it was some time before I became aware of the magnitude of the crowd and the true dimensions of the Conference, in terms of India’s popular support. But the grounds are a vast field, many times larger than a football field, with a huge marble platform about thirty feet high with a sounding-board roof, in the center. Imagine my surprise when I got up and looked around and discovered that the entire vast area was absolutely filled
with people, literally as far as the eye I could see! The size of the crowd was estimated at one hundred fifty thousand, and I believe it; it was mammoth. The opening session began with a series of prayers from all religions. After that the main addresses of the Conference began with the General Secretary’s Report by Dr. Bool Chand, Secretary of WFR; the Inaugural Address by Sri Morarji Desai, former Finance Minister of India; the address by Muni Sushil Kumar as Sponsor of the WFR; the fantastic Presidential Address delivered by our own Beloved One, Baba Kirpal Singh Ji, which has been printed separately by Mr. Khanna; the speech by the Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was the featured speaker; the addresses of Baron von Blomberg, Swami Arvindanand, Gulzarilal Nanda (the Home Minister of India), Satguru Jagjeet Singh, Swami Ved Vyas, Archbishop Andrey, and others. This was the most spectacular and best-attended session.

Of course, from our point of view, the big attraction at this session was Kirpal’s Presidential Address, which indeed was a blockbuster of a speech. He gave it in Hindi; the English version was made available later that day. Sethi, one of the Master’s corresponding secretaries, sat with us very near the front of the vast Grounds and was prepared to translate the speech for us; he indeed started to do so, but unfortunately a man sitting directly in front of us objected strenuously to the noise and Sethi stopped dead. Judith went down on her knees before the man and said, “This is our Master and we have come ten thousand miles to hear him; won’t you let Sethi translate?” But he totally ignored her, and Sethi would not resume on any account; so we had darshan for the length of the speech, which was heavenly, and then got to read it later. And this is what we read, and what the crowd heard, on that blessed afternoon:

The Essence of Religion

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 worshiped 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 Verdna, 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 Divan-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 the 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 greatest 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 thine enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father in heaven. Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father 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? Are we ready to serve one another with 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 and pious in our platitudes and pompous in our proclamations. With all our inner craving for peace, we have failed and failed hopelessly to serve the cause of God’s peace on earth. Ends and means are interlocked and cannot be separated from each other. We cannot have peace so long as we try to achieve it with war-like means and with the weapons of destruction and extinction. With the germs of hatred in our hearts, racial and color bars rankling within us, thoughts of political domination and economic exploitation surging in our bloodstream, we are working for wrecking the social structure which we have so strenuously built and not for peace, unless it be peace of the grave; but certainly not for a living peace born of mutual love and respect, trust and concord, that may go to ameliorate mankind and transform this earth into a paradise for which we so fervently pray and preach from pulpits and platforms and yet, as we proceed, it recedes away into the distant horizon.

Where then lies the remedy? Is the disease past all cure? No, it is not so. “Life and Light of God are still there to help and guide us in the wilderness. We see this wilderness around us because we are bewildered in the heart of our hearts and do not see things in their proper perspective. This vast outer world is nothing but a reflex of our own little world within us. The seeds of discord and disharmony in the soil of our mind bear fruit in and around us and do so in abundance. We are what we think and see the
world with the smoke-colored glasses that we choose to put on. It is a proof positive of one thing only: that we have so far not known the “Life and Light of God” and much less realized “God in man.” We are off center in the game of life. We are playing it at the circumference only and never have a dip in the deepest waters of life at the center. This is why we constantly find ourselves caught in the vortex of the swirling waters on the surface. The life at the circumference of our being is, in fact, not different from the life at the center of our being. The two are, in fact, not unidentical, yet when one is divorced from the other, they look dissimilar. Hence the strange paradox: the physical life though a manifestation of God is full of toil and turmoil, storm and stress, dissipation and disruption. In our enthusiasm and zest for outer life on the plane of the senses, we have strayed too far away from our center, nay, we have altogether lost sight of it; and worse still, have cut the very moorings of our barque and no wonder then we find ourselves tossing helplessly on the sea of life. Rudderless and without a compass to guide our course, we are unwittingly a prey to chance winds and waters and cannot see the shoals, the sandbanks and the submerged rocks with which our way is strewn. In this frightful plight, we are drifting along the on-rushing current of life—Where? We know not.

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 God-man 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 a practical guidance both without and within we are trapped in the magic spell of forms and minds, and cannot possibly reach at the esoteric truths lying under a mass of verbiage of the bygone ages and now solidified into fossils with the lapse of time into institutionalized forms, formulae 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 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 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:

1) *Learn to die so that you may begin to live.* And St. Paul significantly adds: *I die daily.*

2) *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 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 make 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 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 as the “Father of lights,” Nooran-ala-noor, Swayam jyoti sarup, 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 significance. Why? Because he has not actually experienced in person His 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 in churches and temples of ringing the bell or bells 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 thoughtfully and to reclaim our lost heritage. Everyone has in him, says a Saint, 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 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 verifiable results, quite precise and definite. By contacting the Light and Life Principles, the primordial 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 Naad 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 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 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 working 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
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 worshipers 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.

Further Sessions

The intermediate sessions were largely devoted to discussion and amplification of the resolutions mentioned above. There were many thought-provoking addresses, but of course the majority of the speeches were made in Hindi or other Asiatic languages which we were unable to understand. High spots among the speeches in English included two speeches by Americans: one by the above-mentioned Mr. Hoekstra of Dallas, who spoke humbly and movingly about his city, the part it had played in the assassination of President Kennedy, how much he and others regretted this, and how he hoped Dallas would be permitted to atone to the world to some extent by being host to the next World Religions Conference. He also paid homage to Master, Muniji, and other Indian spiritual leaders present by comparing their meekness and humility to that mentioned by Christ that would “inherit the earth.” The other American speech was by a Dr. Presser from North Dakota, who has been associated with a theological college in India for the last twenty years. His talk went right to essentials and discussed the growing strength of materialism and materialistic world-views, the state, and other non-religious or anti-religious forces, from the point of view of religion having abdicated various functions which
used to belong to her and now by virtue of this abdication, belong to these other forces.

The final session was again on a gigantic scale, with another huge crowd. High spots were the adoption of the previously mentioned resolutions by the delegates, and the unanimous re-election of Master and Baron Blomberg to new five-year terms. As they left the Ramlila Grounds, they were surrounded by a crowd so huge and enthusiastic that my heart went into my throat for fear; they were actually swept past the car that was waiting for them; at which point Mohan, who was the driver, climbed half-way up the car and screamed at the top of his lungs, “Maharaj Ji! Maharaj Ji!”; then by some miracle they managed to get turned around and back into the car.

After the Conference ended, we (i.e., the “foreign delegates”) were taken to the headquarters of Swami Arvindanand’s group, where we were ushered on to the stage in front of the filled auditorium and sat down on the marble floor—all of us, Archbishop Andrey, Baroness von Blomberg, and everyone. Master, of course, had the seat of honor in front. Many of the delegates spoke. Then we were served dinner—alas! it was real Indian food, spices, chili peppers and all. Even the roti [bread] was spiced. (At the Ashram our food was prepared Western style, in deference to our tender throats.) Many of us could not eat a thing; I managed to get down a little rice and roti.

The next day was so busy and packed full of activity that my head reels just thinking of it. It began with a great Reception for the Holy Men given by Master at Sawan Ashram and attended by all the delegates, both Indian and foreign; there were over a hundred guests, many of them in yellow robes or other distinctive religious dress. It was an extremely spectacular sight to see them all gathered together.

The Tea Party

An astonishing incident occurred during this reception or tea party: one of the guests present was a yogi named Surya Dev whom I had observed all week: he was an associate of Yogiraj Ved Vyas (later known as Swami Vedvyasananda, who was very laid back and jolly and whom I liked very much—he looked to me like the Cowardly Lion in the film version of The Wizard of Oz!— and who was becoming a prominent and hard-working associate of Kirpal) but Surya Dev was very unlike Ved Vyas: he had a shaven head and eyes which were both powerful and fierce; he obviously had power but he was also scary. At some point during the reception, this yogi lost his temper and erupted in a truly volcanic rage: I have no idea what about. Although I have all too
often erupted in rage myself, this was a new dimension to the whole concept of rage: he was literally foaming at the mouth and was in every way like a volcano. His power was emanating from him in waves, and everyone around was backing off (including us). Master saw what was going on and came over; he walked up to him, put one arm around his shoulder very lovingly, and put his other hand on Surya Dev’s face and brought it, gently but very firmly, down to his waist; and as he did so, all the anger and rage drained out of him. It was just as though he had turned on a faucet. Then Master lovingly patted him on the back and sent him off. I had never seen anything like it in all my life.

The next day I had an opportunity to speak with the Master privately and I asked him how a yogi who had obviously achieved power could be so vulnerable to rage. He said, “Ego is the last thing that goes; and until it goes, whatever power one achieves goes to strengthen it.” Which, as I reflected on it later, is why the Masters emphasize love rather than power, and why it is so important for spiritual seekers to not identify with whatever spiritual experience or progress they may have, but to see clearly that it is all the grace of God—also why it is often in the disciple’s best interest for the Master to keep what spiritual experience they may be entitled to in abeyance until such time as the ego is transcended.

The rest of the day was a hazy round of teas and receptions; Bhatra took us to the Mayor of Delhi’s office, then we went to the home of the Vice-President of India, then to the “Yoga Ashram” where Master was once again guest of honor and has agreed to serve as Patron, despite the fact that the yogis here teach only Hatha Yoga and have no comprehension of Master’s teachings or of Surat Shabd Yoga.

We witnessed here a demonstration of Neoli Karm, a yogic practice in which the stomach is churned around spectacularly. Kirpal had respect for hatha yoga, although he did not teach it; in 1969, shortly before I arrived for my second visit, a hatha yogi came to Sawan Ashram and at the Master’s request, demonstrated his ability to eat glass and metal. The Master pointed out to the assembled satsangis that he had achieved this ability through hard work and the focusing of his attention; if he could accomplish this much, what might we not accomplish if we applied the same work and focus to our spiritual practices? Although I
did not meet this yogi, everyone told me about him, and Jonas Gerard took many slides of him eating ball-bearings, fluorescent light bulbs, etc. Someone asked him if he could eat Khuku’s jeep, and he said, Yes, but it would take him a month or so.

While at the Yoga Ashram, we met a young lady from California named Linda Hess, who had met Master in Washington, D.C. in September 1963. She had attended the first Satsang in the Friends Meeting House through the ad in the paper. She had drifted away from Master after attending one or two Satsangs at Mr. Khanna’s house, and had hardly thought about Him since. She had come to this meeting also through an ad. She was teaching English and studying in India, and was in Delhi for only a few days. After talking with us, she decided to go back to the Ashram with us and talk to Master.

When we arrived Master was on the porch, talking to thirty or forty Satsangis. Linda went up to Him, and Master greeted her familiarly. She said, “I met you briefly in Washington.” He broke in, “Yes, I remember,” very emphatically and affectionately. She said, “I would like to ask You one or two questions.” He said, “One? Why not 101?” He told her to sit down and dismissed the whole crowd. They talked a few minutes and He told her to come back Wednesday morning. As He got up and started back into the house, He saw me and said, “Well? Are you going to leave me, too?” (This was in reference to the imminent departure of many of the delegates.) I said, “Not for a while, Master.” He laughed and looked lovingly at me, then went in. When Linda had her Wednesday interview, she decided she was not yet ready for the Path of the Masters.  

That evening at Darshan, Master spoke to the Cowans: “Your stay here begins tomorrow.” They laughed. Master said, “You came here for two weeks; your stay will begin tomorrow.” Mrs. Cowan said, “But, Master, we already have our tickets; we can’t change now,” etc., etc. But they did and later events proved again how Master knows exactly what He is doing at all times and has our interests in mind in whatever He tells us to do.

The rest of that week (our second in India) was dominated for us by our illness; both of us were very sick, Judith with diarrhea, I with both diarrhea and dysentery. We learned many valuable lessons through our illness, and also learned to appreciate the great love that was bestowed on us by many: Dr. Mool Raj, whom we grew to love dearly as we saw a great deal of him that week; the three girls, Pushpa and Nirmal Kiran and Raksha Devi, who nursed us so tenderly and affectionately that we grew to love them as our  

22 Although we did not remain in touch, Linda later became a distinguished Kabir scholar and translator of Kabir’s Bijak.
own sisters; Nana-kow, who helped us in so many ways; and above all, Edna Shinerock, who came and talked to us so wisely and beautifully and taught us so many things. Of course, Khuku, whom we pestered incessantly for this and that and always remained patient and loving. And, above all of them, The Great Master, who was especially loving to us whenever He saw us.

But we felt far from Him, nonetheless. He was so busy; and there were so many others who were so much more important than we were, and that we felt shy and backward about asking Him questions concerning ourselves. And there were things we had to know: we had heard rumors that He was going to take us all to Dehra Dun. If this were so, I thought that He might well want us to take a later plane than the one we had reservations for. In any event, we wanted to confer with Him about our departure date. Yet we could not seem to get in a position to speak to Him. Even when we see Him in the evening, we both are overcome with an overwhelming feeling of unworthiness at taking up His time; and it is very difficult for either of us to talk freely for this reason.

So we prayed for an opportunity to talk with Him. The next morning, when we both felt somewhat better, we went over to Master’s porch. There was no one in sight; and we sat down to meditate. As we sat, I prayed that Master would know our need and make it possible for us to talk with Him. Oh, the unbelievable Grace that hears and grants even our most inconsequential and trifling requests! We were not there two minutes when out Master came. He looked at us lovingly, then sat down in His chair and said with a huge smile, “Any problems?” With great gratitude and relief, I told Him we had tickets for a flight on midnight a week from that day and asked if it was all right with Him. He said, “No! I want you to stay longer!” We mentioned the children, and the Blessed One agreed that we should not neglect our responsibilities too long. Then He said that we were all going to Dehra Dun—I broke in, “Us, too?” He said, “Of course! What will you do here when I am gone? Look at the walls?” The upshot of it was that He suggested that we postpone our flight by two days, to get the full stay at Dehra Dun. Which, of course, we did.

I cannot close this section of the report without mentioning a comment of Master’s that we happened to overhear: He was speaking with someone in the Baron’s apartment, which our room adjoined, who apparently had mentioned something about Buddhism; for Master’s voice came very clearly: “I want you to be a Buddha, not a Buddhist!”
This was the final chapter, covering our last week in India:

In the Himalayas

We left for Master’s retreat at Dehra Dun on Monday morning, March 8. The day before there had been another Satsang in the Gardens; and that night we had all gone to the headquarters of the movement founded by the late Dadu Puja Chellaramji, which is close to the Path but in theory only. They take Shabd, for example, to mean external singing, or Kirtan. There Master had been guest of honor, as usual, and had graciously agreed to lay the cornerstone for a new building of theirs. They sang on and on for hours; but during that time I had the opportunity of observing Master closely; He was sitting up front, quite close to a large and detailed portrait of Guru Nanak, and I could not help noticing the quite remarkable resemblance between Them. . . .

Master graciously allotted the first day in Dehra Dun to all of us. In the morning, He and Mr. Cowan went over the corporation papers. 23 After they finished, He sat with us for a while, answering our questions. The Path of the Masters by Julian Johnson 24 was mentioned, and Master told how, when the manuscript of that book was completed, three copies were prepared by Dr. Johnson. One copy was given to Kirpal and the others to other prominent Satsangis. When Master read His copy, He went to His Master, Baba Sawan Singh Ji, Who was living then, and said, “This is terrible! He says the Christians are no good; the Hindus are no good; the Jews are no good; the Muslims are no good; what are we going to do?” Baba Sawan Singh suggested that He take Dr. Johnson aside and speak to him gently, which Master did: “Look here, Brother—you have done a very good job in presenting the teachings of the Masters—but don’t you think that to be quite this harsh on these religions is just going to antagonize people and hurt their feelings?” So Dr. Johnson revised somewhat the section on religion—except for the part on Christianity. When Master questioned Him on that he said, “My brothers in the West are so sound asleep, they will never wake up if I soften it!”

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23 The work in America, until now organized informally, was in the process of becoming incorporated, and Master had put Mr. Cowan in charge of that.
24 The first detailed exposition of Sant Mat in English, it was published under Baba Sawan Singh’s authority in 1940. Most American satsangis had read it, but it was controversial for, among others, the reason Master alludes to, and Kirpal did not like it all that much.
Madame Choisy commented that she had been working so hard preparing for the World Religions Conference and WFR work in general, that she had had no time for meditation. Baron Blomberg said that he understood that Master had said that his work was the equivalent of meditation. We looked to Master Who said gently, “Meditation leads to expansion of self. So does selfless service, if it is really selfless. So, when you sit for meditation, if you have been performing selfless service, you will get the same results in a much shorter time. But there must be daily contact with the Light and Sound within.” He also commented that it would be better for Ruhani Satsang representatives and group leaders not to hold equivalent positions in the WFR as they had enough to do already, adding that it was not necessary for WFR workers to be initiated.

Toward the close of the day we were seated at the further end of the “garden” (actually an orchard), asking questions and gazing alternately at Master and at the jungle-clad lower Himalayas directly in front of us. Master remarked, “That’s tiger country. Sometimes in the summer when it is very dry, the tigers come here and drink out of the reservoir.” (He has an irrigation system set up.) We expressed surprise, and He continued, “There is nothing to be afraid of. They only bother those in whom fear and enmity already exist.”

A little later Mrs. Gunn, nodding toward the Himalayas, said, “Master, give us the strength to climb the mountains within ourselves.” He said, “It is better that we pray, ‘Master, drag us up!’ ”

The next day, in Rishikesh, while stopping at a Government Rest House, we became aware that one of the Indian disciples had a toy scorpion with which he was teasing the women. Master noticed it, and asked for it. He studied it carefully for a while, then as casually as any schoolboy, He tossed it into Taiji’s (Madame Hardevi’s lap), who shrieked with good humor. Master roared with laughter. A few minutes later, Reverend McWhirter asked Master if one of the men present was “His disciple.” Master said with great seriousness, “I have no disciples. Only God has disciples. They love me and I love them. They are my equals, and I treat them that way.”

Then later at the Shivananda Ashram we watched Master and Swami Chitananda sitting side by side, cross-legged, on the floor of the latter’s tiny monk’s cell; and we heard the Swami say to us, very very earnestly. “You know, there are three things in a man’s life that are important. The first is the human birth; the second when the longing to meet God arises in a man’s heart; and the third” —here he leaned over and tapped Master gently on the thigh—“the third is when you meet a Perfect Master.”
On the same visit to Rishikesh where we met with Swami Chitananda, we also were privileged to meet the Maharishi Raghuvacharya, a well-known and highly respected Ashtang Yogi, who had been connected with Kirpal since 1948; he was well over a hundred years old but seemed for all the world like a man of 65. His ashram was just up the street from the Shivananda Ashram, and he and Kirpal related like old friends who were supremely at ease with each other. Nevertheless, Raghuvacharya told us categorically that Kirpal was his guru.

Later that week, I had the opportunity of watching Master as He presented the aims and ideals of the World Fellowship of Religions to groups of Dehra Dun citizens, businessmen, etc. in a series of meetings arranged by Baron Blomberg with the aim of establishing a WFR chapter there. His profound humility, His unlimited patience, and that absolute uncompromising honesty which is so characteristic of Him, made these meetings an education in themselves. He would mention the absurdity of discriminating between religions on the basis of supposed superiority of various dogmas, rituals, etc., and add, that for the first time in history, in the procession preceding the Conference, the various clergymen and religious heads marched “all mixed up: NOT according to which religion they belonged.” He would then go on to state with great conviction that the only real basis for the “Fellowship” of religions is the bedrock of individual, personal, first-hand spiritual experience in the depths of one’s own being; each one of us has to climb Mount Sinai and see and hear God midst thunder and flame.

After these meetings, Master would mingle and talk with the guests, in no way differentiating Himself or acting in any way superior. Most of these people had no real understanding of what He was; but His message was for them also: to explore their own religion to its depths, and make it part of their lives, living up to the teachings of whatever past prophet or saint they recognize. The final day we made a trip to Mussoorie, 7000 feet up in the Himalayas, where there is a girls’ college which has invited Baron Blomberg to be its President. The Director of the School, Dr. Pandey, is a member of the WFR, and has had many interviews with Master on Spirituality. For me, the day’s events marked a dream come true; for when I had first become aware that Masters existed, eight years ago, it was always in connection with the Himalayas. Now, as I watched Master moving about in front of this great backdrop of unbelievable snow-capped ruggedness, I realized that I was with a Great Master in the Himalayas! Did I ever really think, that day so long ago, that it would ever be? And with a Master? Truly, a Master like this One is not possible to imagine; He can only be experienced.
Also in Dehra Dun, we met a remarkable English woman disciple of Swami Sivananda who has become a nun; that is a female renunciate, Indian fashion. She shaved her head and wears the orange robe, and now has the name, “Yogishwar.” She always had contact with Sivananda within; but when Master came to England and she met Him, He told her of Sivananda’s death (which she had not been informed of). She was greatly drawn to Master and asked Sivananda within, “What should I do?” He said, “Take His Initiation.” So she went and asked Master to initiate her. He asked, “Why do you want it? You are initiated by Swami Sivananda.” She said, “But I know You have the power to take me up.” So He did; and she has been a very devoted disciple ever since. While talking with her one day, she mentioned that Swami Sivananda initiated in stages; that is, he would give part of the inner science, and wait until the disciple had mastered that before giving him more. I said, “But Master initiates all at once.” She said, “Yes, but He gives a very high Initiation; very few have the Power to give the Initiation He gives.”

On the last day of the stay, Swami Govindanand of the Shahanshah Ashram paid a call on Master. Of this man, Master had previously said, “He is like me and I am like him. He loves me and I love him.” When He arrived, Master called us all to come and meet him. As we were sitting around, he began to tell us things in Hindi. We asked Master, “What is he saying?” Master laughed. “I don’t want to translate, because he is saying things about me I do not deserve.” Naturally, we begged and pleaded. Finally, Master gave in. “He says that his Master—Shahanshah—had always wanted to make a trip to America, even had his plane ticket bought, but had always been prevented. Now, he says, his Master’s grace and power resides in me and works through me, in my American trips.” At this point the Swami broke out in a wide grin, and pointing at Master said very clearly in English, “King of Spirituality!”

The trip back to Delhi was via Hardwar, the holiest spot of the Hindus, where the Ganges comes out of the mountains and begins its journey across the plains. We stopped there for lunch and were greeted by thirty or forty devotees, who, Master told us, had not been informed of His coming; “They knew.” Before and after lunch, Master held Satsang on the banks of the Ganges; and what a sight that was; those dear, dear people—ordinary people, well-to-do people, and ash-smeared yogis and sadhus, sitting in a semi-circle around our Blessed One, with the Ganges behind, listening to His Words. And with such gentleness He speaks to them! with such Love! such deference and humility, and good humor! He turned to us Americans
and said, “These are your brothers and sisters in India.” What a family we have been born into! O, surely, surely God IS good!

That night, as we pulled into Sawan Ashram after a week’s absence, our first reaction was one of intense joy: “We are home!” And we both realized then, as perhaps not before, that Sawan Ashram WAS our home, our only home, on the physical plane. But immediately after, or perhaps simultaneously came intense grief: “We are leaving tonight!” Ah, dear God; so brief and flitting are moments of real happiness in this world of suffering. To discover our home—and in the same moment to leave it.

Before we left we had a last interview with Master, over which the curtain of privacy must be drawn. Some things are part of one’s inmost being, and to reveal them is to rip open one’s own body. Suffice it to say that I saw more, and learned more, and understood more, during that one brief interview than in all seven years previously on the path.

The time came to go; we said goodbye to all our dear friends: the Americans—our dear beautiful friends the Cowans and Mrs. Gunn; Frau Fitting and Frau Boehm from Germany; Betta from Paris, the Indians, especially, dear Gyaniji who was so helpful that night in packing, when our minds were swimming at the prospect of leaving; the three girls Pushpa and Nirmal Kiran and Raksha Devi, who were crying, and who had given us—after all the love and devotion and service they had showered on us—presents to take home with us for the ashram and for our children; and dear Nana-kow and Edna and Stanley, who had not gone to Dehra Dun with us. Master Himself came out to the car and gave us one final hug. Then, with our good and capable brother Pran Bhatra as our escort and guide, we pulled out of the Ashram toward the airport.

Maulana Rumi has said that a few minutes spent in the company of a genuine Master is better than a hundred years’ devotion without Him. I KNOW this is true. Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us join together in a continued and incessant plea to Our Beloved One to come here with us. If we make our prayer continuous and from the heart, and if we do our very utmost to abide by His Commandments, then such a mighty shout will rise up from this country that He will not be able to ignore it. Even so, COME, Dear Master.

And so my report ended.
India: 1969

Transition: Growing Pains

The years following that first trip to India were formative: the Ashram that Kirpal Singh had founded on our farm slowly and painfully began to take shape, and the local nucleus of initiates just as slowly increased. To manage an Ashram was not a task especially congenial to either Judith or me; it was not what either of us would have chosen for a lifework. We were both essentially private people, not at ease with more than one or two persons at a time, and loving regularity and the knowledge that when the day was over we would be alone and free. Well, that wasn’t meant to be: the days were never over, and before there was a sizeable community at the Ashram, there was no one but us to handle visitors who turned up in the middle of the night, seekers who arrived with no notice prepared to stay indefinitely, etc. Gradually, by trial and error, we learned how to cope with the infinite variety of tests and challenges that confront the budding ashram-proprietor. We made some horrendous mistakes, certainly; when I think of some of the things I have said and done, absolutely convinced I was right, I shudder; but despite the mistakes the Ashram emerged as an entity, and the group of initiates centered around it increased from three in 1963 to about twenty-five in 1969.

I continued to work at the Griffin saw shop until October 1965, when work got so scarce there that we mutually agreed I would be laid off. Those three years—1963, 1964, 1965—were drought years in northern New England, and in the summer of 1965 there was a forest fire on a neighboring property. The woods were terribly dry and the fire was terribly close: Judith, Miriam and Eric, and Judith Swart who was living at the Ashram, were all evacuated by order of the Fire Department, and went over to my parents’ house in Sanbornton Square.
Gerald Boyce (who was also living at the Ashram by then) and I were both at work; when we got home we saw what was going on and joined in fighting the fire. (In those days, there was not much of a Fire Department; the Chief and a few others were trained and knew what they were doing, but in the event of a big fire everyone was expected to jump in and do their best. I had fought several forest fires over the years despite not having any training at all.) The fire was raging just a few hundred yards from the Ashram center, closer than that to the boundary. It looked bad; but Gerald and I joined in, and we found ourselves working with a teen-age boy from the Square named Raymond Benjamin in one corner of the fire, using Indian pumps and shovels. We worked several hours without thinking about anything except the immediate work at hand; we hardly said anything to each other the whole time. It certainly didn't seem to us that were getting anywhere or accomplishing anything. But later in the evening Paul Abbot, one of the lieutenants, came by and whistled. “Hey—you guys have done a great job!” We stopped and looked around: it was true. There was no fire visible except a few little places here and there which we quickly dealt with. In the meantime, the wind had shifted, turning the fire at large away from the Ashram, and making it much easier to be vanquished, which happened before the end of the night.

That incident was a great lesson to me: Jesus tells many parables, both in the New Testament and in the Gospel of Thomas,1 about how the Kingdom of God proceeds seemingly divorced from human awareness. Years later in India (February 1972) I had occasion to apologize (with excellent reason, it seemed to me) to Kirpal for my lack of progress; he examined me closely, then said, “You have made progress. Man can’t always tell.”

In January 1966, after several months of unemployment, I managed to get a job as a linotype operator at the Argus-Champion, a weekly newspaper published in Newport, New Hampshire, about an hour’s drive from the Ashram. I was, by this time, very rusty on the linotype; but the Editor, Edward De Courcy, one of the finest men I have ever

1 Cf. Mark 4:26-29; also Thomas 97: “The kingdom of the Father is like a certain woman carrying a jar full of meal. While she was walking on the road, still some distance from home, the handle of the jar broke and the meal emptied out behind her on the road. She did not realize it; she had noticed no accident. When she reached her house, she set the jar down and found it empty.”
met and a wonderful boss, took a chance on me, hired me, and gave me the opportunity to reacquaint myself with my skills as a competent linotypist. I owe him a very great deal.

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For some reason, the next few years are proving to be extremely difficult for me to write about. I have been struggling over the last few weeks (months?) to find words that will do justice to the events of the late sixties at Sant Bani Ashram—and among the satsangis nationwide. It is not that I do not have memories; the memories are so volatile they come tumbling through whatever crevasse I open up. Many of them are beautiful; some of them are very difficult; many mistakes were made, by me and others, and are hard to face up to, some of them, even now. The period was defined in some ways by the physical absence of the Master: he did not return physically until 1972, and I did not go to see him in India until late 1969; he was of course constantly present in other ways, and the memories could be divided into those in which I was aware of that presence and those in which I was not. The local sangat grew very slowly, but the Ashram developed a reputation as a retreat place, and more and more people began coming for periods ranging from a few days to a few weeks.

We were blessed also during this period by the coming of dedicated brothers and sisters who helped in the (steadily growing) work involved in keeping it going: Judith Swart and Gerald Boyce, both of whom I have mentioned, were the first; then in no particular order (I cannot remember the particular order, actually) came Betty Shiflett, an older woman (though considerably younger than I am now) who proved enormously helpful in the practical daily stuff that needed to be done, and stayed several years (she left after the 1972 tour and became the resident at the House of Hospitality next door to Master’s Sanctuary in Anaheim, California); Jim Cluett, a young man from New Hampton School who stayed for several years, married Judy Sasser at the Ashram, and became one of my closest friends and my partner at The Sant Bani Press when it was founded; Kent and Karen Bicknell, friends of Jim (Kent had also been at New Hampton School and was a Yale student when we first met; later Kent became the Founding Principal of The Sant Bani School and Karen a prominent teacher there); and
Karl Riley, Christopher Gray, Corinne Tracy, Tim Gallagher, Michael and Marybeth Raysson, and so many others who gave so much. God bless all of them.

One of the first dear ones to visit the Ashram for a retreat was Arran Stephens, living in New York when we met at Mr. Khanna’s, who came to us shortly after our 1965 India trip. The Big House was still closed for the winter, in mid-March; Judith, Miriam, Eric, Judith Swart, and I were all living in our little house; so Arran joined us, sleeping in the only space left—on the floor under our kitchen table. He did this for a couple of weeks until I opened up the Big House and turned the water back on. Arran was a deadly serious meditator who made excellent use of his time at the Ashram; later he became the Master’s Representative in Vancouver and a very successful businessman.

The Snowmobile Affair

Starting in January 1967 (or possibly December 1966) a series of events occurred which had a profound effect on me and which in fact became one of the principle learning occasions of my life. I described this in a talk which I gave thirty years later as part of the series of commentaries on the Sermon on the Mount which was eventually published as *The Stranger of Galilee*:

In my personal experience there was a time when I was brought face to face with this in a way which I had never experienced before. The story also reveals the complex responses and feelings that arise when we feel we are being attacked unfairly.

In January 1967, there was a neighbor of Sant Bani Ashram [Orvalis Smith, called “Smitty”] who was a part owner of land that was bordered in three sides by the ashram, and which had no road frontage. He offered to sell us the land at what were then high prices, although it would have been a tremendous bargain in today’s market. Of course, we couldn’t see that at the time and refused to buy, so he started coming through the middle of the ashram with all kinds of snowmobiles, claiming it was his right of way. This “right-of-way” went between the big house and the present meditation hall, which didn’t exist then, down by the pond, which didn’t exist then, across from Master’s house, which didn’t exist then, and up into the woods to his ten acres.

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2 The absolute necessity of non-violence.
The first time he came through was just before Satsang on Sunday morning; I heard a tremendous racket and ran out. There were twenty-five snowmobiles coming down from the woods! I ran out and stopped them, and Smitty explained that it was a local snowmobile club that was considering buying his land—and if they did, they would use his right-of-way. I didn't know what to make of that; I stared at him, genuinely speechless. That night he came to see Judith and me, offering to sell us the land instead. We felt that we were being intimidated—"extorted"—and refused. From then on, snowmobiles coming through the "right-of-way" were a regular phenomenon.

When the snowmobiles started coming, I lost it. The idea of somebody claiming a right-of-way through the middle of the ashram—which at the time I completely identified with (and which at that time Judith and I personally owned, although that has not been true for a long time)—seemed so terrible it was beyond speech. Although none of those buildings existed then, I was aware that one day they or something like them probably would be built. So I forgot all about the teaching on nonviolence, and I went to a lawyer. He told me that we should file suit to "remove cloud from title," and I thought, "That's all right; we won't exactly be suing him."

When I filed suit, suddenly everything seem to shift up several gears. Smitty went berserk, and any time of the day or night, snowmobiles were coming through the ashram. I went berserk also; I jumped right in there with him. I couldn't bear it. I would walk the road at night, holding a lantern, waiting for them to come; I would do meditation and hear the sound of snowmobiles; it was absolutely an obsession with me. I would wonder, "Where is the Master? Why is the Master not here?" It seemed to me he just wasn't there for me.

We eventually got a chance to go south. Judith's aunt invited us to stay at her house in Florida for a while, and in late February we went down; I just wanted to stay away until the snow melted. I didn't know what I would do then. Just before we left, I wrote a letter to Master Kirpal in which I presented the situation, putting me in the best possible light, and making [Smitty] out to be a totally bad guy because of what he wanted to do; I told Master what I had done about filing suit and everything. He replied with this letter, dated March 10, 1967,—in my life a major piece of scripture:

Worry and hurry are the chief causes to dwell on by the mind. If you could just eliminate these two by resigning to the Divine Will and Pleasure of the gracious Master Power working overhead, you will be relieved of undue strain and stress. Please note it for certain that whatever comes to your account is in your best spiritual interests . . .
In context, that last sentence is extremely revealing. It has often been quoted as part of Master’s teaching, but bear in mind that what was coming to my account at that particular time was the worst possible thing I could imagine. I did not want to believe it was in my best spiritual interest; it seemed very clear that I should do anything to stop those snowmobiles. Master’s letter continues:

... and becoming a fit receptacle for the divine grace you have to inculcate a sense of self-abnegation and effacement without involving your mind. The more you are relaxed, reposing and receptive, more of ineffable bliss and harmony will fall to your lot. Just rise so high in the loving lap of the Master Power to consider yourself as a child, who would relish: “Thy will not mine be done.” ...

As regards the Sant Bani Ashram land dispute, it could have been better if you could have discussed it in all loving politeness with the party concerned. It would be still advisable to seek cooperation of Mr. Orvalis Smith through some common friend which may straighten the affairs with the grace of the Master. Such like impediments do obstruct sometime and cause disturbance. Howsoever patience, humility and loving kindness pays in the long run. You should play your part in as noble a manner as you possibly can do, and leave the rest to the Master Power.

That letter hit me like a nuclear bomb. I was in Florida when I got it, and I instantly saw that I had been wrong. It was one of those moments when you suddenly realize that everything you’ve done within the past few months—or perhaps within living memory—just isn’t making it. I instantly tried to do what Master said: I withdrew the lawsuit, and I contacted a mutual friend [Amy Sanville, our nearest neighbor] who was extremely unhappy about what had been going on. She was very, very grateful that I wanted to take a different tack and she arranged a meeting with [Smitty].

The first thing I said to him, because I was aware of what Master wanted from me, was, “I’m sorry. I’ve withdrawn the suit and I’m sorry that I caused you inconvenience, and you can use the right-of-way whenever you want.”

He said, “Well, I’m sorry I caused inconvenience for you, and I don’t want to use it anymore.”

I said, “No, that’s all right. You can use it! It’s O.K.”

He said, “No, no, I don’t want to. I promise you, I’m not going to use it.”
We shook hands, and he kept his word. He never used it; furthermore, a few months later he moved away.

Now I saw this dispute as an on-going thing that was going to happen. I thought I was going to have to defend my land forever. The lawyers had talked to me this way—this is the way lawyers think. As Master Kirpal once said, “Even God is afraid of an attorney, I tell you.” I did what the attorneys told me to do, but the funny thing is that a lot of other people had advised me in the same way because it seemed so obviously the thing to do. My father; a near neighbor who hated what was happening and thought we were being bullied; and many other people gave me the same advice. All those people were absolutely astounded, both at what the Master had told me and at the result. I met the neighbor at the store one night and she asked how things were going, and I told her that the Master had asked me to withdraw the suit and I was not going to sue him anymore, and I was going to let him do whatever he wanted. I also said he had promised not to do anything and the snowmobiles had stopped completely. She was amazed. Of course, I was too. When I had finally got around to caring about what the Master’s advice would be, I had also been astonished. But the fact is that this is an old, old doctrine, based on solid ground. When we operate from God’s angle of vision, it really does make a difference.

Reflecting on this affair from the perspective of fifty years further on, I see clearly that the root of the problem was my complete identification with the concept of “the ashram.” Very little had happened at the ashram at that point, but I was totally identified with the expectation that a lot was going to happen (which was accurate) and I understood that a right-of-way down through the center for the purpose of snowmobile access was going to throw a huge monkey-wrench right into whatever was supposed to happen. Nothing seemed more important to me at that time than that: it was absolutely imperative that I fight it. In so doing I forgot something of even greater importance, a mistake I would make again and again. God help me.

Depression

In the fall of 1967, I became terribly depressed. Nine years after my initiation, I realized that I was not progressing in meditation, and had made no appreciable progress in three years. In fact, to a great extent I had lost whatever I had once gained. By this time, my responsibilities
as a Representative of the Master had increased, not only because the Ashram and the local Sangat were growing, but because I was now authorized to convey the initiation instructions to those persons who had been accepted by the Master. This was a great honor and responsibility; I appreciated the honor but felt the responsibility very keenly. I was attacked by guilt feelings over being an unworthy representative. I was acutely aware of my failings as a disciple and felt like a stinking hypocrite whenever I held Satsang; and every time I failed in keeping any of the commandments, it just added fuel to the fire. I managed to work myself into a neurotic mess and almost threw away (again) everything I had been given; but the love, understanding and patience of my wife Judith and the Master’s letters to me combined into a stronger force working in the other direction. I was very frank and open in my letters to him and did not pretend I was feeling differently than I was; and he responded by writing me letters that I still treasure. Here is a paragraph from his letter of December 2, 1966 (written before the period of greatest depression but in response to similar difficulties):

“You need not dwell much on your personal character or impurities of mind. It amounts to self-pity. You will please appreciate that by watering the seedling at the roots, the plant thrives most and blooms in abundance. The holy Naam is the tried panacea for ills of the mind. Although it is a very happy augury to be conscious of one’s shortcomings, undue apprehension sometimes breeds morbidity which hampers inner progress. The conscious contacts of divinity within revolutionizes the thought pattern of the child disciple and he sees everything in much clearer perception. Slow and steady wins the race. Your job is to be implicitly obedient and humbly dedicated. It is for him to reward you for your efforts. Patience is the noblest virtue but it is the fruit of very long cultivation. Just learn to live in the living present with undivided attention and devotion. You should train your mind in such a manner that when you do anything required of you, there is no hurry, compulsion or resentment from your side. You will find that it will be helpful to you in all spheres of life including meditations. My love and blessings are always with you.”

This letter has been a constant companion to me over the years and, after Judith succeeded in helping me to change my perspective so that I was open to the Master’s words again, it was enormously helpful to me in overcoming my depression.
And then the following, dated November 24, 1967, written in response to one of the most depressing, despairing, bottom-of-the-sewer letters he probably ever received—a terrified cry for help on my part:

“You need not be skeptic about your restricted inner progress. It appears that you have been prey to undue skepticism on your part, thereby (causing) your inability to progress more on the holy Path. Suchlike feelings not only hamper inner progress but create more confusion and retard receptivity. Your job is to be earnestly and honestly devoted to your spiritual practices, and leave the results to Him . . . It appears that you have been deluded in your way by the intrusion of these morbid feelings which has resulted in a setback. . . . You should forget all about the past and be devoted to your meditations with renewed faith and you can still have it.

“Lust and anger are human elements. These can be subdued carefully by right living as discussed in the books and letters from time to time. If you will care to take stock of things, you will find much scope of gratitude as you have improved considerably in all spheres of your life with the grace of the Master.

“As regards your working for the holy cause in the capacity as a representative of the Master, you must know it for certain that the gracious Master Power has His immaculate ways of divine dispensation. He can take work from one and all who offer themselves lovingly. If you will inculcate a keen sense of humility by self-abnegation and effacement you will enjoy more ineffable bliss and harmony. Humility is the sheet anchor with the dear ones. It is an adoration of the Saints who work in this physical plane by keeping their divinity hidden from the public gaze. How safe and sublime it is to work humbly on behalf of the Master by rolling all credit on to Him. You are a personal testimony to the sacred truth that when you work for the Master for channeling the divine grace, how graciously you are compensated. The golden principle of attributing all success to the Master Power and failure to your own personal weaknesses to be overcome gradually should be followed lovingly. Ego is a human element. It is annihilated very slowly by meditating on the Sound Current and Light principles. Gradually it will dawn upon you that you are simply a doll in the hands of divine powers, dancing to His bid.”

With the grace of the Master, repeated readings of this letter, renewed applications to meditation and Judith’s loving help ultimately brought me out of my depression (which no one other than Judith and the Master knew anything about) and Master’s words quoted above—“Everything is still within you and you can still have it”—proved true.
Nevertheless, depression remained within me, often drowned out by the grace of the Master, but ready to surface whenever I was less receptive to that grace than I might have been. A few years later, in June 1972, my parents having moved to Florida, my mother was visiting her children in New Hampshire and staying with my sister Judy; she asked me if I would go down and stay with my father for a while, as she was worried about him. He had had a series of financial reversals, including the loss of his job, and, she said, he was “depressed.” When I got down there, he spoke with me very seriously, for the first time ever, about his problems, and he said that he had been diagnosed with “severe clinical depression.” It was the first time I had ever come across that particular selection of words, and the first time I had ever heard “depression” spoken of as a disease: something to be diagnosed. It did not occur to me, though, that what I had gone through a few years earlier had been the same thing; how could it be? I was initiated into Shabda Yoga, practiced meditation daily, had had the darshan of a living Saint many times—how could I have a “severe clinical depression”? It was many years later, after Sant Ajaib Singh’s passing, Judith’s death, my marriage four years later to Claudia, and my move to California—all of which resulted in a tremendous rearrangement of the basic stuff of my life—that I learned that, “Yes, I too could have a severe clinical depression,” and was informed about the biology underlying such a diagnosis; also the fact that a predisposition to such depression is often hereditary. I have taken anti-depressants off and on for a few years now, and they have helped; sometimes we can get ourselves in such a deep pit that we need a variety of helping factors to get us out. I am not sorry I have taken them: I need all the help I can get. Depression takes a terrible toll on the loved ones who live with us, as well as ourselves.

Shadows of the Future

Lord Kirpal used to say, “Coming events cast their shadows before.” In the summer of 1967 I was working four ten-hour days at the Argus-Champion in Newport: this was partly due to my two-hour round trip commute from the Ashram, but I was also scheduled from noon to 10 p.m. to allow me to do some drama criticism. In recognition of my background in theater, and because he was a generous loving guy who gave everyone as much of a break as he could, Mr. De Courcy worked
it so that I could attend the opening nights at the Lake Sunapee Play-
house in Georges Mills and write reviews for the next day and get paid
for it!!—which was a first! To get paid for writing! Wow! The reviews
were actually written on my own time after I got home, but the attend-
dance at the theater was counted as working time. I loved doing this,
and I worked very, very hard at it, and my reviews seemed to be well
received, which was gratifying.

Another thing that happened at this time that had reverberations
for the future was this: Judith and I had always loved Master’s extraor-
dinary talk on Simran, or the Sweet Remembrance of God—one of
the three fundamental practices of Shabda Yoga, and in the beginning
the most important, because it led to the other two. More than any
other of his writings, it explained the psychological dimensions of the
spiritual practices, and we found it immensely helpful. But it had been
out of print for years, and existed only in a mimeographed pamphlet
that was hard to read and now very scarce; many satsangis didn’t even
know it existed. Suddenly it occurred to us: why shouldn’t we print
it? Now that I again had access to a print shop, it was suddenly very
feasible. So we did: we paid the Argus-Champion to print it (I designed
it, set the type on the linotype machine, and laid out the pages; the
pressman did the actual printing) and we produced a booklet of thir-
ty-odd pages, with a picture of the Master on the cover, that I was very
pleased with. I did not think to get anyone’s permission to do this,
but Master didn’t mind: he wrote a very kind letter in response to the
copies we sent him which made us very happy.

But there were three nights a week when I was on my own for several
hours after everyone else had left. I did not always make good use
of that time, which caused me to eventually go back on the regular
schedule; but there were many nights when, working alone in the
deserted print shop, I became acutely aware that I was supposed to
edit a magazine. It was an overwhelming awareness that descended on
me all by itself, and it was almost terrifying in its strength and in
my confusion about it. It was so strong that sometimes I would find
myself on my knees praying, begging, “Master, where is my magazine?”
But there was never an answer.

Of course, I didn’t have the slightest idea how to go about it or what
magazine I was supposed to be editing; I had a vague notion that it
would be called *Essence* and be devoted to demonstrating the unity of all religions, as taught by the Masters; but beyond that I had no idea. Kirpal Singh’s magazine *Sat Sandesh* was at that time (the summer of 1967) published in Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi, but not in English, and I had no knowledge that that would change; so that possibility never occurred to me. And if it had, I would have assumed that it would be published in India, like the other versions; but I never thought in those terms at all.

In fact, *Sat Sandesh* began its English edition the following January, 1968; it was of course published in India, with Bhadra Sena, an initiate of Baba Sawan Singh and an old associate of Kirpal, as its Editor. Much of the editorial work was actually done, in the beginning, by Eileen Wigg, a young woman from Canada who was living at Sawan Ashram; and the first issues were very beautiful. We were all tremendously excited.

But there were distribution problems. To deal with those, the Master decided that all of the issues addressed to the Western Hemisphere should be sent in bulk (in practice, they were often sent over with disciples returning home) to Sant Bani Ashram where they would be mailed out individually! This was a tremendous honor and very much appreciated by us; and we organized it very carefully. Jim Cluett, who had just returned from a six-month stay with the Master a few weeks earlier, agreed to take charge of the work, and we set about it with enormous enthusiasm. It only lasted a few months, however; there were objections from the staff in India (which I never fully understood but which had something to do with a fear that the magazine would eventually be printed in America as well and the subsequent loss of control) and the work was taken away from us, to our intense regret. While it was still ours, however, an event occurred which had tremendous reverberations for the future.

Jim Cluett and I were working on a summer Sunday in the office we had set up on the second floor of the Big House for the purpose of distributing *Sat Sandesh* when we heard a car drive up; we looked out the window and saw a 1939 Buick sedan, exactly like one my father had owned for a few years which I, in one of my earliest driving lessons, had driven into the front of our store and dented the fender, with the license plate “RAMA”—a man dressed exactly like an Indian sadhu,
all in white, with long hair and beard, getting out. We looked at each other: “What is this?” We went down to greet him and he—at close quarters, obviously an American—introduced himself as “Ram Dass,” with no further explanation. He indicated that he had just returned from India and that Freddie Hooper, who worked for his father, had suggested that he might like to look us up: “They’re crazy the same way you are!” We talked some about different spiritual teachings, and it was very pleasant; but we really didn’t know what to make of him, and he left after a while. The next day Michael and Marybeth Raysson returned after having been away for the weekend, and when Marybeth heard about our visitor, she freaked out: “Do you know who Ram Dass is?” Well, we hadn’t known, of course; but when she told me he was Richard Alpert, I knew very well who that was: I had read about him and his experiments with Timothy Leary involving LSD for years. I also knew his father was George Alpert, the President of the New Haven Railroad, who had a mansion on Webster Lake in West Franklin, about ten miles from Sant Bani Ashram, and that that’s who Freddie Hooper had worked for. What I hadn’t known, but which Marybeth filled me in on, was that Richard Alpert had gone to India, met a yogi who had changed the direction of his life, instructed him in spiritual practices, ordained him as a sadhu and sent him back home with a commission to teach others.

Shortly afterward, I made the first of many visits to Webster Lake and gradually got to know this beautiful and extraordinary man. At that time he was living in his father’s mansion (the only one there) but he had made a kind of monk’s cell for himself in the rear of the first floor and there lived very simply and as much like an Indian sadhu as possible. We talked a great deal: of our experiences in India, of our love for and our experiences with our respective gurus (he always referred to his guru as “Maharaj Ji,” which means “Beloved Emperor” and is a common way of addressing one’s guru in India [Kirpal was most often addressed as “Maharaj Ji” by his Indian disciples]; we later found out that his name was Neem Karoli Baba and that he was a well-known yogi in the Himalayas). At that first visit, Ram Dass told us that he was teaching a few local young people on a regular basis, and he told us how that had come about: he had been at the Post Office in West Franklin and when he came out he observed a group of hippie-type
young people observing him very carefully; eventually one of them came over and asked him if he had any drugs. (They had made assumptions about him based on his, for Franklin, N. H., spectacular appearance.) He explained that he didn’t, but offered to give them what he had, and they took him up on it. That group of teen-agers was the beginning of what became an extraordinary mass movement of spiritually oriented young people over the next couple of years and which still continues; and it also had a very profound effect on the growth and development of Sant Bani Ashram. For that young woman who asked Ram Dass for drugs was Susan Dyment, who later became one of the very major pillars of the Ashram community and, over the years, my closest friend and spiritual advisor; she was (and is) truly Master’s gift to the Ashram, to the still unborn Sant Bani School, and to me. She and her then-husband, Joe Mathaisell, went from Ram Dass’s circle to Sant Bani Ashram (although never losing touch with Ram Dass) and brought many, many friends with them; and over the next couple of years no one visited the Ashram without going to see Ram Dass. For his part, he made it a point to attend the Friday night satsangs on a regular basis, and, when in the summer of 1969 his following at Webster Lake amounted to hundreds of young people from all over the country, he brought them all over to the Ashram (in two installments) for a joint satsang which was reciprocated a little later when we all went over there for the same purpose. One of the last things I did before going to see the Master in September 1969 was to visit Ram Dass at Webster Lake and tell him about my forthcoming trip; I remember that we lay on our backs on the grass, looking up at the sky, and talked about India.

Ram Dass left Webster Lake the following year and we gradually lost touch, although Susan Dyment and other initiates managed to keep in contact (Susan is still in contact, and visited him in Hawaii in March 2014). But he remains in my memory and my heart as a warm, loving, wise and very important presence—a person of great substance whom it was an honor to know. Thank God for him!
With the Master Again

During that summer of 1969 several other events occurred which, in retrospect, also served as shadows of the future. Probably the most important (certainly the one that made the biggest immediate impact on all our lives) was the decision of Jim Cluett and myself to go into the printing business. Jim had married Judy Sasser at the Ashram and had built a little one-room cabin that he and Judy were living in; he had spent six months with the Master in India in 1967, and we had become close friends and brothers: I often sought his counsel. We had had for some time the idea of going into the printing business together: I would handle the printing and he the business. The bank loan obtained to finance this venture, coupled with new low fares to India through group rates, made possible another visit to Master—this time for six weeks, and this time—reluctantly—alone. Both in terms of money and of the needs of the children, Judith and I sadly decided that this time I would go without her. It was the first time in our marriage that we had been separated for anything like that amount of time, and as I left her in Kennedy Airport, on September 21, 1969, my eyes filled with tears so that I could hardly see. Waves of homesickness and loneliness for Judith and Miriam and Eric haunted me through the course of the whole flight. I remembered the difficulties of the last trip with a real sense of foreboding, and all my sins and errors of the four and a half years since I had seen the Master crowded in on me. I was afraid of a reappearance of the culture shock that had plagued us so before, and, in short, I spent the plane ride in a self-induced neurotic terror. But it ended the moment we landed. For, by some miracle, this time, my second visit to India, I felt in every way that I was returning home. My initial reaction to the “feel” of India as we left the plane was one of love and joy. It seemed so right! Everything affected me exactly opposite from the first trip; that which had bothered me now delighted me. The crowds, the noise, the smells, the animals all over the streets, the incessant honking, the breakneck speed and ear-splitting velocity of popular Hindi—it all seemed like the appurtenances of Fairyland. I loved it all; I wanted to join with it forever. The letter I wrote to Judith on arrival says it all:
To my own soul, waiting for me half a world away:

Once again these eyes have seen the Word made flesh, and once again this mind just does not know how to cope with the fact of the presence of such a being on Earth. I had forgotten everything! But when I saw Him I remembered. He is so very, so unbelievably, so magnificently beautiful and massive and gentle and strong—I think He is the highest being ever to walk the earth. But all these words are silly, just like words uttered in His presence—silly because, when thrown against the screen of the reality they represent, they disappear. But if He sent me home tonight, it would have been so much worth it!

First I will just tell you what He said about you, then I will try to recount everything. Very soon after I saw Him, He asked, “How is your companion?” I started to say, “Fine,” but then remembered your sweet sad face as I had last seen it, kind of broke off in the middle, and ended up not saying anything, just gave Him your letter. He took it lovingly, then asked about the children. With no hesitation this time, I answered, “Good.” He nodded and said, “She has her own kingdom, you see... her own small kingdom. The children. They are her job.” He did not open your letter in my presence, but played with it, shifting it from hand to hand while He talked, for at least five minutes.

Now I will go back to the beginning and try to recount everything.

It seemed as if the plane-ride lasted half again as long as the one we took before, and it was composed entirely (it seemed) of mothers with children.

September 23
6:35 a.m.

I had got this far yesterday when we were called to supper and right after supper we went over for darshan, which was incredibly beautiful. Things are happening so fast that if I’m going to get anything written, I’m going to have to concentrate on the highlights, as all the time that Betty thought would be on my hands appears, as of now, to be non-existent. Last night at darshan Master said to me, “Today you rest. Tomorrow it will start!!!” But He had previously told [Jonas] Gerard that the time we ordinarily spend in working—8 hours—plus the time we ordinarily put in for meditation—2 to 3 hours, or 4—should be devoted to meditation while we are here. That is what is meant by “making the best use of your time.” I am going to try to work up to that—we will see. This morning I have already got 2 hours in easily—I was
up with the beautiful bell at 4. At 8 we will have a sitting at the guest house meeting room—Master arranged it last night.

So I will omit the plane ride and simply say that as the bus pulled away from Palam Airport (we took the free airlines bus to Connaught Place) I was overwhelmed with (a) a tremendous feeling of being home; and (b) a very strong sense of absolute rightness, of what I was doing. At Connaught Place we were met by Khuku, Edna, and Ram Sarup in the Studebaker. The sight of Khuku and Edna coming toward us through the bus window just about tore me to pieces. We learned that Master was not at the Ashram—Gulp! But He was due back any time, and He had sent the Westerners home early because the villages He was going into would be too difficult for them. So all our friends were waiting for us.

Master didn’t get back until late afternoon . . .

There is another thing, too, which I was not prepared for—the overwhelming effect that Sawan Ashram itself had on me, even before Master arrived. Shortly after we got there, I began to feel as if all my senses were turned on to the fullest possible extent, and I was getting everything at least double intensity—his place is Heaven on earth, there is no doubt about it—despite the incredible noise and activity, I would still rather meditate here than anywhere else.

The roofs have been taken off Khuku’s house and all the other buildings near it, so as to put second stories on them to prepare for the Conference. As a result, the guest house is more crowded than usual, and Tom\(^3\) and I are in with two lovely boys from Vancouver—David Leeworthy [now Kolin Lymworth] and Don Olson. We have a big airy room—second floor front—and I am perfectly content. Laura is with the Gerards who have a big apartment on the first floor which includes (so Edna tells me) her and Stanley’s old apartment and our old room. I would never have recognized it. Michael and Marybeth are on the second floor—they have a little kitchen with their room. Edna and Stanley are next door to us. Khuku and Eileen are also in the guest house, on the other side of us (including our old room on the second floor).

So much for all that—time is getting short—I will go back to yesterday afternoon and Master’s arrival.

Word came—He was here!—and we all went over in a group—I caught my first glimpse through a window and instantly realized that I had forgotten everything and how much the movies and pictures lie!!—and was completely dumbstruck. We went inside and Taiji set off a loud stream of Hindi in which the words “Russell Perkins” were included—and Edna and Khuku

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\(^3\) Tom Park and Laura Pomeroy, two young people who were living at Sant Bani Ashram at the time, flew with me, and stayed on for a while after I left in November.
practically pulled me up front—I guess, from what Edna said later, that Master was beckoning me—and Tom and Laura—to come up close, but I didn’t know it because, although I was looking at Him—how can we do anything but?—I was totally incapable of understanding what He was saying or doing—all I could get was the total fact of Him. Good God! After seeing Him once, how can we ever do anything silly or trivial ever again? What is the matter with us, anyway? How small, how small we are . . .

10:30 a.m.

I had to leave off this letter to go to tea, and then a sitting with Master, which was incredible—like a new initiation.

I will try to go back and pick up the thread, and hope that somehow I will get done with it before something else happens. But before I forget, tell Jim that it is vitally important that the printing business be established before I get back—very, very exciting things are in the wind. I think all of our dreams may be coming true. Nothing direct from Master yet, just hints—but a long talk with Edna. But please—keep it just in the Ashram—I will let you know everything as it happens.

Now, in the interest of moving along, and also because I don’t remember it all well enough, being practically out of my head, I will avoid a word-by-word account of the afternoon darshan, except to say that He was very, very sweet, loving, and gentle with all of us from Sant Bani, and He joked and teased with me just like He used to do—oh, how sweet, sweet, sweet He is! Oh, Thank God for Him! Who are we to even look at His back? And yet He loves us so! Oh God, the sweetness is so intense it is painful.

I will try to get my thoughts in order about evening darshan.

12:30 p.m.

Master was incredible at evening darshan. He asked how we all were, [Jonas] thanked Him for letting them accompany Him to the Punjab, Master apologized for sending them back early. Then Stanley mentioned (or Master asked about) *The Crown of Life* manuscript, which Stanley had gone over from the point of view of English usage, and Stanley said it was all done. Master then said, “Good! You can give it to him (pointing at me). He is my friend. (!!!) He has a printing press, you see. He is expert in that line. It is for this purpose he has come.” A little later (or maybe a little before) He said to me, “It is a very auspicious day—we are together again.”

Oh God! Can any joy be so unbearably great? I feel as if my well-being and sense of bliss and peace are going to explode right out of me.
There was a very funny interchange in Hindi between Master and an old man, whose daughter, a Ph.D., wanted to marry a man who was also a Ph.D., but whose astrological sign said that he would have to marry five times. The man asked Master if He would alter that. Master laughed and explained how His brother had a similar sign, had been married twice, both times the wife died; then he was contemplating marrying a third time, but asked Sawan Singh if he should. Hazur advised against it, he did not marry, and the pattern was broken. Master added: “He who writes your fate can alter it.”

At one point, Master asked me how things were at Sant Bani:
I said, “Good.”
He said, “How good? What do you mean, good?”
I: “A lot of people are coming, they are very beautiful people, and they love You and pay attention to Your words.”
He: “How are their meditations?”
Me: “I don’t know.”
Master (laughing): “Are their lives changing? That’s how you tell.”

A little later He asked me, “Any news?” I was struck dumb. He said, “Come on—I want you to tell me.” With tremendous effort, I said, “When I am with You, I am unable to talk.” He said, very pleased (I think), “That is but natural. When we used to go to our Master, we would have questions in our mind; when we entered into His presence, we would be—abashed. If you have something to say, note it down. Then it will not leave you.”

1:30 p.m.

I must bring this to a close, as we are going in town soon—maybe. Just a couple of items I picked up from [Jonas] and Michael about things that happened before I got there:

Bob Redeen⁴ [who had left the day before I arrived] had asked Master about Initiation—why the power was less in the U.S.A. than in India (i.e., why the experiences were usually less). Master said, “There is less power sometimes because some of the representatives over there think they are doing it.” !!!!!!

About His tour: He told Mr. Redeen that He would come to the West once more, the American part would last 4 months, and after that, He would stay in one place and people could come to Him regularly.

Dearest Love, I must go. The kitchen part is wonderful—everything provided, no worries. I have written too much to explain fully now, will try to do so

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⁴ An interviewer for the Voice of America, he later interviewed the Master for what became the opening chapters of *The Light of Kirpal*. 
later. I will keep you posted, with His Grace, on everything. If you could arrange to share this letter (or any parts you want to) with Kent and Karen and with Helen, I would appreciate it.

Much, much, much love,
Russell

He was very kind to me that first afternoon—he teased me and joked with me and put me at ease, knowing well how I felt. That afternoon session was short: we were all tired and the Master too had had a long and fatiguing trip. But that evening on the porch, in the midst of the blue India twilight air, whose beauty was almost sensuous, he was really extraordinarily kind. Never in all my adventures with him had there been anything quite like this: while I appreciated beyond expression Master’s kindness I understood well that this was a gift from him and was unearned by me. Why he was giving it to me I did not understand, but I certainly enjoyed it.

One shadow cast over that heavenly darshan was the noise from the television set in the Master’s parlor. I had noticed the TV that afternoon and had been shocked and disturbed: What, I wondered, does the Master want with TV? But in the wave of happiness that was washed away. Now this evening some disciples were sitting in the parlor with the TV turned on so loud it literally drowned out Master’s voice at times and we were sitting three or four feet away, some of us! Sadly I thought, even here, in the heart of the spiritual kingdom on this plane, even here in his own home, he has no peace; the Negative Power is plaguing him here as anywhere.

(I learned later that Master did not want the television set at all, but that Taiji and others really wanted it so he let them have it. Masters are not dictators; as he has said, “I have come to make friends of you—not slaves.”)

The Master said to me at one point that evening, “Today you take rest—tomorrow it will start!” and looked at me very significantly. I thought that seemed a little ominous, but he added that there would be a group meditation sitting for us in the morning, and he wanted me there.

The next morning he put us in meditation in a bare room with hard floors, no cushions, and no place even to support my back. Edna
suggested that I might try just sitting on the floor with no support like the others, but in those days I didn’t think that was important. I sat on the floor all right—there was no place else I could sit—but I worked out, with great effort, a jerry-built, very unsatisfactory arrangement that supported my back but also hurt—almost immediately after I started sitting.

But it didn’t matter. It didn’t matter because the Great Giver, who had given me so much already in such a ridiculously short time, was not finished: just after he ended the meditation instructions, when our eyes were already closed, he walked over to me and very gently put his hand on my head, with two of his fingers touching my two closed eyes. The second those fingers touched me, BANG!—it started! Instantly I was in the presence of the Master within and the next hour (or whatever time it was) was like a cosmic game of hide and seek—the Master laughing at me, teasing me, loving me, disappearing, appearing again, sometimes appearing twice at the same time, sometimes appearing with Baba Sawan Singh, his Master—but all the time laughing, teasing, loving, till it seemed that there was nothing else and that there had never been anything else than that blessed game with his Real and Radiant Form within. Such incredible aching happiness I had never known in my life before, even at his Feet! When the sitting was over, he asked me what I had experienced, and I told him; but I realized as I told him that he already knew it all anyway.

I reflected long and deeply on this, because it brought home to me more than ever before the truth that success in meditation is a gift of the Guru, and nothing that we can bring about. For four and a half years, much of that time under extreme mental difficulties, I had been sitting in meditation and had never experienced anything like I had this morning (and in fact, so strong was that gift that for the entire six weeks of my stay with him there was not a day when I did not have the company of the Master within). Yet literally at his touch the tenth door flew wide open and I saw. But I also realized that the gift doesn’t come into a vacuum—that without the years of struggle, despair, failure, and renewed effort that had preceded that morning, it wouldn’t have happened. The disciple has to work hard, but still he does not earn anything; all he can do is put himself into a place where he can receive that which the Master wishes to give him.
That 1969 trip still seems like the high point in my life—high in every way. I was high for six weeks almost non-stop (there were a few breaks, but it is very hard to remember them now). Nothing bothered me, everything seemed marvelous. Several days after we arrived I was awakened about 1:30 a.m. by the noise of dogs barking—it sounded like fifty of them. When I realize what it was, I smiled happily: “This too is a gift from him.” Then I started laughing as it went through my mind what my reaction would have been had I been back home!—I would have gotten up, gone out and done something about it. I laughed myself back to sleep, the sweet remembrance of him brushing my eyes.

There were two lines of action that the Master pursued with me during the first weeks of my 1969 stay. One had to do with the magazine *Sat Sandesh* and with printing his books in general, and the other with the management of Sant Bani Ashram. The latter surfaced first, with a question that I asked him at evening darshan: “Do I have the right to ask people to leave the Ashram if I feel that their staying is working against its purpose?” (I asked him this because there had been a few ugly incidents over the years, one of them just a few weeks before, of people refusing to leave and telling me that the Ashram was God’s house and I had no right to ask them to leave.) His reply was very supportive—more, in fact, than I had hoped for: “Surely—I have entrusted you with that task!” I was relieved and grateful. But he went on: “If people stay there too long there will be fighting, there will be bad vibrations in the place. One week, two weeks, three weeks—why should anyone stay longer?” Suddenly I felt as though the breath had been knocked out of me: I had always been very free to let anyone stay in the big house at the Ashram, and at this time the house was full of people, all of whom had been there for much longer than three weeks. Did the Master mean that this was wrong? Tentatively I asked, “You mean you don’t want anyone to stay longer than three weeks?” He looked at me intently. “If you have your own town, what is the use of that? And—“ he leaned forward—“if anyone refuses to go, tell him in my name to leave.”—“In your name, Master?”—“In my name.” End of subject.

That night I felt sick at heart. All those people! Most of them were very dear to me. To ask them to leave! And I felt terribly depressed at having been so wrong. How could I have gotten so far away from his
wishes? Late into the night I sat huddled in a little anteroom at the guest house. All the joy and euphoria of the first few days had vanished. The cold bath of his displeasure had washed it away.

The next afternoon I asked for a private interview with him. I asked him point-blank, “Did you mean yesterday that no one should live at the Ashram?” He said, “If they are helping, then it’s all right. But”—with great emphasis—“no one has a claim on it.” He then explained to me very carefully that the purpose of the Ashram was to provide a congenial environment for people to come and meditate full time for a short while, so that they could return to their homes and jobs charged up from their stay; that if all the space at the Ashram was taken up with permanent residents, then where would the guests stay? and that the criterion to determine whether any individual or family should live at the Ashram or not was what they would be able to contribute to the Ashram, both by way of seva or service—that is, how badly were they needed to get the necessary work done?—and also in terms of what they added to the atmosphere—that is, if anyone’s presence resulted in personality difficulties and/or fighting, he/she should leave. He explained all this very carefully and I was exceedingly grateful to him for doing so.

I left his presence not only with my euphoric joy completely restored, but with a very strong impression that Sant Bani Ashram would play an important role in his work in the future, and that was why he was being so careful in his instructions about it now.

**Sat Sandesh**

The Master also at this time asked me to edit his monthly magazine, *Sat Sandesh*. This was one of the great turning points in my life, and I will always have trouble believing the faith and trust that he so freely and undeservedly gave me—a college dropout, a competent printer to be sure, but an editor? How this came about makes a long complicated story which I will try to do justice to, but probably won’t:

The afternoon I arrived, Edna Shinerock told me that the Master wanted to talk to me about *Sat Sandesh*. I mentioned above that the first few issues, with Khuku and Eileen functioning as translators and unofficial managing editors, had been beautiful, and how much we had all appreciated them. But something had happened: the quality
of the magazine had been spiraling downward over the past year. By "quality" I do not necessarily mean the content: the Master's talks, which were the featured articles, were as beautiful as ever, but we observed that the English translations had deteriorated significantly, the articles by people other than the Master were often (though not always) questionable, and each issue was riddled with typographical errors and substandard English usage. The result was that the magazine had ceased to be a primary resource for people interested in learning more about Kirpal's teaching and had basically, for most of us, become irrelevant. I had not thought much about it, although I had certainly observed all this; but Edna told me that before Bob Redeen had left, he had talked very seriously with the Master about *Sat Sandesh*, and Master had said, "Well, Russell is coming next week; I will talk to him about it." And he did: he called me over to his house and gave me a recent issue and told me to proofread it: "Mark everything you find that is not right." I took the magazine back and began. Oh wow! It was riddled with errors from the first page to the last. By the time I finished there were so many proofreader's marks and corrections that my ink almost drowned out the printed type. I took it back to the Master; he studied it very carefully, noted each individual mark, turned the pages very slowly, and handed it back to me. He said, "All right; I am calling a meeting of the senior staff and you will show them this." Oh my God! I was going to show them this? What was going on? I said, "Will you be there, Master?" He said, "No, but I won't be far." A day or two later, he told me that the meeting was happening that evening. I dreaded it.

There were three men present at the meeting: B. M. Sahai, who was a professional journalist and had been doing most of the editorial work; Darshan Singh, the Master's son, who was an acclaimed Urdu poet and was responsible for the poetry that appeared in the magazine (and possibly other aspects); and Dharam Vir Sharma, the owner of the Kirpal Printing Press, who did the actual printing and publishing. I showed them the marked-up magazine, as the Master had instructed me; and their reactions were vastly different. Dharam Vir said very little; Darshan Singh also said little, but seemed quietly sympathetic; Mr. Sahai, however, erupted in anger and resentment: his professional pride was obviously an issue. I did not know what to say in response, except to point out that the Master had asked me to do this and I did
the best job I could. He wasn’t having any of it; and after a while (it was now around midnight) we went over to see the Master, who was still up and not surprised to see us. We went into his parlor, sat down, and what happened then I was able to piece together afterward, but could not follow at the time, since Mr. Sahai raged and stormed entirely in Hindi; I could not believe my eyes (and ears): he was arguing and raging at the Master!—who was completely calm and totally on top of the situation. At one point, he showed Mr. Sahai the pamphlet I had printed on Simran, and said in English, “He is here now; make the best use of him.” Then everything reverted to Hindi. A little later, the power went off and the session, without the slightest hesitation, continued non-stop in absolute darkness; after ten minutes or so, the lights came back on and again, nobody noticed. I understood, from the snippets of English here and there, that Master was asking Mr. Sahai to let me edit one issue with him, but that this was totally unacceptable. Finally, somewhere between 1 and 2 a.m., Master started to give us parshad but stopped when he got to Mr. Sahai: he said, “If you eat this now, it will poison you.” At that point, he dismissed us, and I went back to my room, where I couldn’t sleep but paced the balcony all night until the bell rang. I did not understand what was going on; how on earth could I teach a proud, sensitive, professional journalist his own business? At this point, as far as I knew, not a word had been said by the Master about my editing the magazine (although Edna had hinted to me that that might be a possibility), and I was sure that that was not what Master wanted: it was very clear to me that he would prefer that Sahai keep his job but just do it better. However, as it happened, Mr. Sahai never came back to the Ashram again and severed all connection with the Master who, somewhat later, told me I would be editing the magazine in New Hampshire.

From then on I saw the Master privately day after day as he instructed me carefully as to what he wanted regarding Sat Sandesh. Very early on he told me that he wanted me to show the marked-up copy to Bhadra Sena, who was the official Editor and nominally in charge, although he was quite old and had apparently had not had a whole lot to do with what actually went into the magazine, beyond contributing a column every month. But I knew that Bhadra Sena was an initiate of Baba Sawan Singh and a long-time associate of Kirpal, had written a brief
biography of him, and was very dear to him; and my heart sank at the prospect of my teaching him. I said to the Master, “But—but won’t he mind? He’s so much older and more experienced”—in my heart I was thinking, and so much closer to you—Master looked at me closely, then laughed and said with great conviction, “No, he won’t mind.” And in fact, he didn’t; we had a wonderful visit, he accepted the marked-up version with perfect equanimity, and I grew to love and respect him very much: we met and talked many times over the next few years. He introduced his daughter to me and gave me an article she had written on dharma, as well as some articles of his own; all these were eventually published in the magazine.

In these sessions with the Master, he laid down very carefully what he expected of the magazine; he told me that Khuku and Eileen\(^5\) would be doing the translating of his talks, and they would also supply me with material about his activities, and that I should work closely with them; he gave me a number of articles that had been submitted for publication, and told me that I should use my own judgment regarding them, whether to publish them or not; and he also told me not to be afraid to use my judgment regarding articles submitted directly to me. He told me emphatically not to send them to him first; that he trusted me implicitly and that he would be with me as I made decisions. As, indeed, he always was.\(^6\)

He also asked me to edit two of his books—Prayer and Naam or Word—from the point of view of the English language. This took up much of my “free” time while there, but was a blessed task for me, not least because of the many opportunities for being with him that came with it. He asked several times how I was doing, and examined my work. He objected to my editing only once, but that was a big one.

In his book Naam or Word are a series of quotations from various world scriptures and testimonies of meditators from different religious traditions, all making the point that meditation on the inner Light

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\(^5\) That is, the Princess Devinderbir Kaur Narendra and Eileen Wigg, who later jointly wrote the massive biography of Kirpal, Love, Light and Life.

\(^6\) Years later, in November 1972 in Anaheim, California, I was present when someone asked the Master if the articles in Sat Sandesh that were not written by him had any value. He said, “Those articles are seen by me; what more do you want?” Of course, they weren’t seen by him physically at all.
or the Sound Current was the most helping factor in their personal experience. Among the quotations was that of a Buddhist monk who related how the sound of bells from a nearby temple had sent him into Samadhi. Now the bell sound is the first significant inner sound usually heard by the practitioner of Shabda Yoga, and those who have heard it know that one aspect of this Sound is exactly like that of temple bells. This is no accident; after hearing the inner Sound, it strains credulity to believe that the outer sound is anything other than an intentional copy. But this particular quotation stated very specifically that it was an outer bell, and I had always wondered what exactly the story proved and why it was in the book at all. So as I was going over the second edition of the book which Master had given me to use as a manuscript (the version that emerged from my editing was published in 1970 as the third edition) I simply crossed the quotation out.

When Master examined the pages he of course noticed the large deletion. “What is this?”—“Well, Master, I thought—” I explained my lack of understanding to him. He looked at me with an expression of absolute amazement that anyone could be so obtuse, and he said, very patiently, and slowly, “It was not really an outer sound. He thought it was. How could an outer sound drag him into Samadhi?” I felt like an idiot. I saw at once the truth of his statement, particularly since I knew from my own experience that even a fully-instructed initiate sometimes can have difficulty differentiating the inner from the outer sound. So I said, “Oh.” He looked at me sternly. “Leave the quotations alone, please.”—“Yes, Master.”

At some point, the Master let me know that I was going to be printing three of his books—the above-mentioned two, plus The Crown of Life, which Stanley Shinerock had edited—as well as Sat Sandesh every month—at my print shop, which of course didn’t exist yet, but which I hoped Jim Cluett was bringing closer to reality every day. But there was another book in the works also: Stanley and Edna told me shortly after my arrival that Stanley had also edited a series of extraordinary talks that Master had given in 1967-68, and that he had given the manuscript to the Master. Shortly after, the Master handed me the manuscript of Morning Talks and asked me to read it; he said, “I think there’s a lot of repetition in it.” Well, I read it: there was indeed
a lot of repetition, but the talks were indeed extraordinary\(^7\) and I told him that I thought they were enormously valuable. He said, “Well, I’ll look them over again.” A few days later he said that the repetitions didn’t matter that much and told Stanley to arrange for the printing.

But the thought occurred to me: “Wouldn’t it be great if we—the as yet unborn Sant Bani Press—could print this, a new book, one that every initiate would want to read?” So I queried Edna about it.\(^8\) She looked doubtful, but said that she would mention it to the Master. A day or so went by, during which I fantasized obsessively about how delicious it would be to print the new book; then Edna said, “No, Master wants Morning Talks printed in India”; but, she added, “he would like you to check out the print shop where it is being worked on.” So, sometime after, Stanley, Edna, and I went into Delhi and I queried the printer about every aspect of the job. When we got back, we went into Master’s room, and he asked me what I thought: Would they do a good job? I said very arrogantly, “Yes, Master: they will do a good job, but not as good as I would do.” He laughed and said, “You demand first-rate; I am satisfied with third-rate; that’s the difference. But it’s all right; it’s your love.”

Days of Heaven

He gave us darshan twice a day during this period—sometimes for an hour and a half at a time. In the morning he would put us in meditation, leave the room, and come back usually in an hour, depending on circumstances. Sometimes the circumstances were spectacular: one morning he gave us the instructions as usual, told us to sit, left the room, and not more than ten minutes later a crew came into the room next to us and proceeded to rip up the concrete floor with pneumatic drills! They worked the whole time we were sitting; when the Master came back, he asked us how we did without any apparent awareness of what had happened. When we mentioned it, he laughed:

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\(^7\) Jim Cluett and my sister Helen, who had been present at many of the talks, had already told me how great they were and how much they hoped they would be published.

\(^8\) Edna was one of the Master’s confidential secretaries and had almost unlimited access to him.
“Well, you are supposed to ignore the outer disturbances and bring your attention inside.” We all said, “Yes, but”—and he laughed again. (Another time he put us in, told us not to move until he came back, and returned three hours later.)

After the meditation he would give us darshan for a while. Then in the late afternoon or early evening he would give us darshan again, usually on the porch of his house. He often, but not always, separated the Indians from the Westerners for these sessions: sometimes he would take Indians first, sometimes Westerners. Sometimes these meetings were deadly serious, almost heavy; sometimes they were full of happiness and fun. He did not allow darshan sessions to be taped during this period, on the grounds that the microphone would change things. The following year he did allow them to be taped, and it did (in my opinion) change things: the transcriptions of those sessions (1970-71) can be found in the book, *The Light of Kirpal*, and while they are fascinating reading, the subjective impact of those darshans seems very different—somehow more diffused—to me than those earlier unrecorded meetings. There were not very many of us at darshan in those days—seventeen was the largest number—and the atmosphere was unbelievably intimate. Sometimes the Master would have Taiji sing one of his own songs (rumor had it that he had written more than two thousand, although I never asked him if that were really true) and the air would taste like wine and we would be in Fairyland indeed. Other times we would ask him questions, some of which would please him and others not—like the time we asked him if it was all right to use cushions when we sat for meditation. “Cushions!” He looked at us: “Cushions are for old people!” We were shocked. Someone said what we were all thinking: “But, Master—we all use cushions!” Master laughed and laughed.

Another time someone asked what our attitude should be toward our parents. Master said we should love them. Someone else commented that his mother was terribly possessive and wanted to live next to him and dominate him. Master said in that case he could love her from a distance. I said that my mother loved me and I loved her, but I knew that she wished that I was not on the Path. Master smiled and said. “It is because she loves you that she wishes you were not on the Path! She thinks, ‘What is this crazy thing my son has gotten
into? It is your job to show her by your life that it is not crazy. After you have shown her by example, then you could talk to her about it: ‘Well, Mother, have you ever considered why it is that they ring bells in churches?’ Like that.”

Then someone asked how to deal with parents who are actively opposed to what he was doing, and who put obstacles in the way of his practicing the Path. How do we balance love and respect for our parents against our obligations to the Master and the Path, if they should conflict?

In response, the Master talked about his relationship with his own parents. He said that he loved them dearly and respected them very much; that he was an obedient son except when they wanted him to do something that he felt was wrong. Then he did not obey them. He gave us several instances. The first one is well known: his parents were meat eaters (the Master was brought up in the Sikh religion, and most present-day Sikhs do eat meat) and they naturally expected him to eat meat also. But he refused, even as a small child, telling his father sweetly that he did not wish to make a burial-ground out of his body.

The second instance involved the worship of the god Shiva by his parents and other family members. Master said that his family had an idol of Shiva erected in a sort of family altar. He said, “In the beginning I also worshiped Shiva. But later when I came to know that I should be worshiping the maker of Shiva, I left that off.” His family was upset, and put extreme pressure on him to conform; but he lovingly and cheerfully refused. Then, he told us, it happened that one night that idol tipped over, fell on the floor and smashed, and when the family discovered it they blamed him! They said that his obstinacy and refusal to do homage had angered Shiva and he had smashed himself to show his anger. Master said that all of his family ostracized him for months: they refused to speak to him or to take any note of him whatever. He said, “I didn’t mind. I loved them. I didn’t blame them; but I was not going to worship Shiva.”

His final instance occurred when he was a young man, just starting on his government career. His first day in the office was spent refusing bribes. Everyone who came to his desk tried to leave some money to make sure that his particular business would be taken care of, but the Master was adamant. “Am I not paid for the job?” His co-workers
advised him to conform—“We all do it; your predecessor did it”—but he refused. In the late afternoon a petitioner wouldn’t accept his refusal: he walked away leaving the coins on his desk. The Master picked up the coins and threw them after him, and the clatter of the coins hitting the floor alerted everyone in the office to what was happening. Someone informed his father, and that evening his father took him aside and told him that taking bribes was an accepted practice throughout the bureaucracy, that his refusal to do it would put a burden on all his fellow workers, and he should conform. But the Master said no.

Then he showed us the other side of the coin—the value of service to one's parents and the importance of their blessing. He said that in 1916 or 1917 his father had a severe stroke and forgot everything he had ever known—even things like the names of the parts of his body. Master said that he took care of him as though he were a baby, cleaned him when he soiled himself, and taught him to speak all over again: “Finger, thumb—like that.” After some time his father had another stroke which restored his memory of the past but caused him to forget everything that had happened after his first stroke. But when he came to know what the Master had done for him while he was so helpless, he became very grateful; and one night, while they were walking, he asked Kirpal if there was anything he especially wanted, adding that if a father’s blessing meant anything he would have it. Kirpal said, “As you know, my only wish is to find God.” His father stopped dead, turned to him and said with great assurance, “You shall certainly meet God!” And the Master leaned forward and told us with great emphasis, “From that very day, I tell you, I began seeing the Form of my Master within—from that day!” (This was in 1917, seven years before the Master met Baba Sawan Singh physically.)

So many are the memories of that blessed stay. Everything seemed touched with gold to me—even the shabby squalid streets outside the Ashram, where I often walked to get a Coca-Cola or some fruit in a nearby market. One day, standing in Shakti Nagar, I watched a bus come roaring around the circle. It was absolutely jam-packed, which was not unusual, but this particular bus had people hanging outside by their hands from the window along one side of the bus!—shifting the weight of the bus so much that it was tipped high on the other side. As I stared at it in stupefied amazement, the people hanging on
the side saw me, and waved their free hands, yelling and laughing in glee. That summed up for me the essence of India. What a country! Is it possible not to love a country where that could happen?

Sometimes as I was coming back to the Ashram after having been away for a few hours, I would think, “I am at my Guru’s feet! I am at my Guru’s feet!” and I would be filled with intense happiness.

One night we didn’t have evening darshan at the usual time because we were told the Master had gone to a political meeting. I was aware that Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, had consulted with the Master from time to time (as did both her predecessors) and we assumed that he was participating in the meeting in some way. Even when we learned that it was a huge rally at the Ramlila Grounds we still assumed he would be on the stage, because I had been present more than once when he had addressed huge crowds from that very platform. So we begged and pleaded to be allowed to attend the meeting, and the Ashram staff agreed. After many misadventures, including being totally lost in the vast caverns of the Ramlila Grounds, we stumbled around a corner to find the Master—sitting in the audience! Now the Master was very beautiful physically as well as spiritually. Six feet tall (unusually tall for an Indian), his massive face and long snowy white beard were enough to make him stand out in any crowd—apart from the radiance that always surrounded him. But this time it was not like that at all. Sitting in a seat with his knees crossed, his glasses on, listening intently to Mrs. Gandhi’s address, he did not seem especially pleased to see us and gestured emphatically to us not to greet him or make any sort of fuss over him. Taking a seat, I studied him closely and I realized that he was deliberately hiding himself: having withdrawn his radiance, he was sitting in the audience like any elderly Sikh gentleman, surrounded by thousands of people who had no idea at all who he was—and this was exactly what he wanted. If I did not know him very well, I thought, I would have had trouble recognizing him. When the meeting was over, he got up and left with the rest of the crowd. We went home separately, and when we reached the Ashram we discovered that he had not yet returned.

None of us felt like going to bed until we had seen him, so we waited up. Shortly after midnight, he came in. (We found out later he had been visiting terminally ill disciples.) Stepping out of his car He was
once again the King; walking past His loving children shedding light and grace as He went, He seemed to carry the Universe on His shoulders. What a metamorphosis from earlier that evening! Yet truly that had been the aberration and this was the norm. My head spinning with the wonder and power of the Guru, I finally went to bed.

The *Ramlila*

*Ramlila*, which translates as “The Play of Rama,” has two meanings: one refers to the play of Rama as God⁹—the *play* (from His point of view) that creates, sustains, and destroys the Universe—a concept central to the Hindu view of things, and a concept that Kirpal referred to several times in my presence; the other to the literal “play” or theatrical presentation which was adapted by the great poet and saint Tulsidas from his Hindi retelling of the Ramayana (*Ram Charitra Manas*, or “Holy Lake of the Acts of Rama,” usually referred to as the Hindi Ramayana). The Sanskrit epic was originally written ages ago as a spiritual allegory by Valmik, a bandit who became a saint, and was venerated as one of the two great Sanskrit epic poems that became Hindu scripture (the other being the Mahabharata, which includes the Bhagavad-Gita). According to tradition, the poem was written thousands of years before the events it describes occurred; after they occurred, the poem was taken as historical matter and the spiritual meaning was lost. To correct this, and also because only pundits or Sanskrit scholars could read it as time went on, Tulsidas, a sixteenth-century Hindu saint who was a Master of the Shabda Yoga, translated the Sanskrit epic into Hindi, the predominant language of northern India, and rewrote it in such a way as to leave no doubt of its spiritual meaning. It is this version of the Ramayana (which follows the storyline of the original very closely) which has become “the Bible of Northern India,” and which Mahatma Gandhi cited, along with the Bhagavad-Gita, as one of the two scriptures he could claim to know; it is Tulsidas’s version

⁹ The Sanskrit name *Rama* (pronounced “Ram” in Hindi) can mean both the human avatar of Vishnu and the personal God, and is used both ways in modern India. Thus the term *Ram Nam* (or *Ramanama*) can refer both to the practice of repeating the name of Rama, a kind of Simran or Japa, which was Mahatma Gandhi’s main devotional practice, and to the Sound Current: the ultimate Name or Word of God—God naming Himself.
that Kirpal knew and loved and commented on,\(^\text{10}\) and which Ram Sarup, his devoted and saintly driver, had memorized from beginning to end—equivalent in terms of both content and length to memorizing the complete works of Shakespeare. (Around Sawan Ashram, it was often said that Ram Sarup was the only one who gave satsang to the Master; because, when he was driving Kirpal, the Master would say, “All right, Ram Sarup, let’s hear the Ramayana,” and Ram Sarup would sing a portion of it for him. The epic is usually sung or chanted.)

The *Ram Charitra Manas* is considered to be the greatest Hindi epic poem, but many of the people Tulsidas wrote it for couldn’t read; so he himself dramatized it and made an epic theatrical spectacle (actually an opera, as the whole play is sung) which is performed all over northern India during the month of October. In Delhi, when I was there, there were fifteen or twenty different performances going on at various points all over the city; some took place over a number of days, others in one performance; some (such as the one at the Ramlila Grounds) before a crowd of 50,000 or so and done with amplification and masks that hugely augmented the actors so that everyone could hear and see; others were performed in a theater for all the world like an American opera. And it was one of the latter that the Master sent us to see. We were chaperoned and guided by Khuku, the Princess, who also provided a complete running translation for those of us lucky to be sitting close enough to hear it. I was sitting next to her, and I got the whole thing; and what a marvelous story it was! Consider, for example, the following story, told by Kirpal during his talk at the Birthday Celebration, January 25, 1964, among other places:

I remember a story that has just struck me: Lord Rama went into exile for fourteen years. He went to the wilderness where many other yogis were living. There was one lady there of a very low caste. She heard that Lord Rama was coming into exile into the wilderness, and what did she do? She thought, “Rama will be coming and he may be barefooted, so that the thorns might prick his feet.” So she simply cleared the way of all thorns. And then she thought in the heart of her heart, “When he comes, what shall I offer him?” In the wilderness there is no food to eat, but there are berries everywhere. She began to pluck berries and taste them: those that were sweet, she put in her pocket. So, she kept all those tasted berries with her.

\(^{10}\) See, for example, “Naam and Ramayana,” *Sat Sandesh*, August 1973, p. 6.
Each of the yogis who were living there thought that perhaps he was the greatest of the yogis and that Lord Rama would be coming to his cottage. (Mind that, this I-hood—“I know better; I am better than all these others”—is the last weakness that leaves a man, even the so-called Masters.) But where did Rama go? When he went to the wilderness, he met the lady who had collected the berries. And what did he do? She offered him those berries that were tasted, and he ate them. Love knows no law. Love is above all. The yogis living there had been doing penances for hundreds of years. Then he went to them, and they came up to him and asked: “Will you kindly grace our cottage?”

There was a pond of water where they lived that was full of small insects. There was no other source of water, and they asked Lord Rama if he would just clean the pond of all dirt and insects by his grace, by putting his feet into the water. He said, “No, I think you are the greatest of the yogis. Why don’t you put in your feet?—for they must be better able to clear up the pond.” They did, and the water remained the same.

Then they forced him: “Kindly put your feet into the water, and all insects will go.”

He said, “All right. It is up to you.” He also put his feet into the pond, but the insects were still there. Lord Rama had to demonstrate the greatness of love. True love does not know any show, mind that. He said, “I think it would be best if you called that bhilni and let her put her feet into the water.”

Then she came and put her feet into the water, and the pond was cleared. These are instances to show that love is a great miracle. God is love. Through love only you become one with God. You can become one with him whom you love. “As you think, so you become.”

This story comes from Tulsidas’ Ramayana, and both Kirpal and Sant Ajaib Singh loved it: they told it many times. It was thrilling and satisfying to see it acted out on the stage, accompanied by heavenly music. But it is perhaps difficult for westerners to see how profoundly radical—even revolutionary—this story is, when examined in the light of orthodox Hinduism (and remember, Tulsidas is highly venerated, both as saint and as poet, by orthodox Hindus). Consider the following points:

1) The character of Shivri (that is the name of the woman, although Kirpal doesn’t mention it this time, he does at other times; and she is very well known in Hindu lore). She is a bhilni, that is, a female bhil, a member of a very dark-skinned forest tribe that never fully assimilated to Hinduism
and was considered “untouchable.” She is also, of course, a woman, which makes her doubly objectionable to the yogis.

2) The nature of her deed. She loves Lord Rama and wants to serve him, so she not only cleared the path he would be walking on (a backbreaking endless chore), she picks berries to present to him; but she has no other way to find out if they’re good and not bitter than to taste them! A simple solution; but one that not only flies in the face of contemporary understanding of basic hygiene but more importantly in the context of the story it flies in the face of the orthodox Hindu understanding of the caste system. Because no Hindu of an upper caste (and Lord Rama, rightfully a king, is a Kshatriya, a member of the second highest Hindu caste, that of warriors and rulers) is supposed to ever have anything to do with food that a lower-caste person (let alone an untouchable!) has even cast her shadow on, let alone tasted! Yet Rama has no problem with this: in the play we first see Shivri picking and tasting the berries, then later presenting them to Rama; we see him taking them from her and eating with great enjoyment; and we also see Rama’s brother, who is devoted to him and has voluntarily accompanied him into the wilderness, react with absolute horror at what is being acted out in front of him.

3) Then, the yogis: Who were they? Long-lived Hindu ascetics, presumably successfully practicing Patanjali’s system of Ashtang Yoga (or Raja Yoga), and presumably having acquired what are called *ridhis* and *sidhis*, or supernatural powers, they represent what to the Masters may be the greatest danger of all: spiritual egoism, or pride in their advancement. In Book Four above I told the story of Surya Dev, the yogi who obviously had enormous power but who went into a towering rage at the Master’s ashram, and how Kirpal dealt with that. I said there that the next day

11 See Kirpal Singh’s magisterial *The Crown of Life: A Study in Yoga*, for a definitive explanation of all these terms (and many others).
I had an opportunity to speak with the Master privately and I asked him how a yogi who had obviously achieved power could be so vulnerable to rage. He said, “Ego is the last thing that goes; and until it goes, whatever power one achieves goes to strengthen it.”

4) Finally, Lord Rama’s solution: As Kirpal said, “Lord Rama had to demonstrate the greatness of love.” And he demonstrated that through the power of love, untouchable black women could surpass in holiness even avatars of Vishnu, let alone heroic renunciate adepts who are proud of their genuine accomplishments but who do not see that there are greater accomplishments that have passed them by.

Truly, a remarkable story. When we returned to the Ashram that night, Master was waiting for us; we were overjoyed to have his darshan, and he talked to us for half an hour about the play we had just seen, commenting on various points of it, including the story I have just cited. Truly, it was a wonderful, wonderful evening that I have never forgotten: now, almost fifty years later, it is as vivid as ever.

Roger and Me

Sometime toward the middle of my six-week stay, during which time several people had come and gone, Roger Foisy joined us. I knew Roger slightly: he was a Group Leader in Montreal, had visited Sant Bani Ashram once, and was greatly respected by many in the sangat. He was approximately my age, we had many things in common, not least love for the Master, and there was no reason, it seemed, why we should not be good friends and brothers. But somehow or other we managed to rub each other the wrong way almost from the time of his arrival; I never fully understood what was going on then, and I certainly don’t now. But before long I was ferociously judging him for just about everything he did or said, and I had very good reason to think he was doing the same for me. But the Master had other plans.

We heard that he was going to take a two-day tour of some villages and was taking Roger and me—and no other westerners—with him! The tour would end in Rajpur, in the foothills of the Himalayas near
Dehra Dun, where the Master had a house with an orchard and a spectacular view of the mountains, which Judith and I had visited in 1965; the others would be waiting for us there. This was exciting indeed; but I also felt a certain apprehension about being in close quarters with Roger all that time.

The night before we left, the Master took Roger and me into Delhi with him where he did a number of things, many of which I have forgotten: but a few stand out. As I recall, we went to a hall where the Master was welcomed as an honored guest; I do not think most of the people there were initiates, but maybe some of them were. The Master addressed the gathering and then the host took the stage and said that he had visited Baba Sawan Singh in the thirties and had asked him if he had any disciples who were really advanced; and that Sawan had mentioned Kirpal. He also said that he was convinced that Mahatma Gandhi was an avatar,\(^\text{12}\) and the Master seemed to agree.

From there we went to the Ramlila Grounds where the Ramlila was in fact being performed: a very different Ramlila from the one we had seen. There was a huge crowd filling the enormous stadium and I could see on the (very high) platform figures larger than life going through the story in what seemed like slow motion. I did not really get a clear picture of the performance, though: we had arrived near the end and, although we had taken seats in the audience someone came and invited the Master—with Roger and me!—to come up on the podium. We went up just as the actors were going off-stage and sat down on seats provided for us while the Master addressed the gathering. Talk about strange experiences! Wow!

One final thing about that night: the streets were crammed with people and cows, so much so that the car was stopped several times, once for nearly half an hour. The crowds were so massive that they surged back and forth around the car, occasionally moving it a little; but the Master was an ocean of calmness, totally undisturbed by the commotion around us. At one point he commented that it was a

\(^{12}\) The Masters distinguish between avatars (Sanskrit \textit{avtara}), who are incarnations of Vishnu, the Sustainer, whose purpose is to maintain a level of justice and harmony in the world, and saints (\textit{sant}), whose function is to take children of God back home. But it is not always a hard and fast distinction: as we saw above regarding Lord Rama, avatars sometimes do the work of saints, and vice versa.
non-violent crowd with no ill will. Eventually we made it back to the Ashram, much to my relief.

The next day the Master took Roger and me on the tour. We rode in a station wagon; Roger sat in the front seat with the driver; Master was in the back seat by himself (much of the time he was lying down); and I was in the way-in-back, sitting on the floor. I was in ecstasy: I had a marvelous, non-stop close-up darshan throughout the whole tour! I couldn’t ask for more.

We drove through rural India (my first intensive look), the Master wearing dark glasses much of the time. We stopped several times, once for Satsang, other times more informally. In the afternoon we reached our first destination: a tiny village in the middle of nowhere. After Satsang, which was held outdoors we all (the Master, Taiji, Mohan the driver, Roger and myself) retired into a nearby house, made of bricks without mortar, and with a dirt floor, to eat. Our meals were served to us on huge leaves, as is the custom in India, while we all sat cross-legged on the floor. After the meal, the Master lay down to rest and, following his example, so did we.

Later that evening we arrived in a small town called Kaithal, the Master’s main destination, where he held Satsang that night and initiation the next morning. That night after Satsang he sent a plate of

Roger Fosey is on the far right; I am next to him
parshad, the left-overs of his own meal,\textsuperscript{13} and later called Roger and me into his room and talked with us for half an hour. As we lay on our respective beds and reflected on recent events, Roger and I agreed that the Master wanted to unite us in brotherhood; and we promised each other that we would honor that. And we did: there was never the slightest difficulty after that.

The next morning the Master gave an initiation, which was highlighted by the presence of a “ringer”—someone who took the Initiation in order to prove it was all fake. The Master was well aware of him, gave him Initiation anyway (during which he had a significant experience) and then told him, “Well, you have got it now: you are in the jaws of a very strong lion.”

Then we left Kaithal to begin the drive to Rajpur. On the way he fed Roger and me a meal of fruit with his own hands—cutting, peeling, and handing it to us. Later he gave us candy for dessert. Roger, who was a naturopathic doctor—very diet conscious—did not realize the value of the parshad he was being offered and turned it down, whereupon the Master offered it all to me. I, having read all the right books, eagerly lunged for it, only to discover that it is not quite that easy: I got two of the three pieces being offered, but in my great zeal and eagerness, managed to drop one piece down behind the seat, where I couldn’t get it.

The End of It

We spent two days in Rajpur, very sweet days; the other Westerners (fifteen or so) were there when we arrived. When we got there, I found a letter waiting for me from Judith. There had been a number of letters both ways throughout the visit but in this one she revealed

\textsuperscript{13} There are three kinds of parshad, or food that is blessed by the Master and is therefore spiritually charged (although the word \textit{parshad} actually means “grace” or “gift,” and refers to anything given to the disciple by the Master, it is usually used for food): the food from the Master’s plate after he is finished eating; food given by the Master to the disciple without the disciple asking for it; and food that is presented to the Master by the disciple with the request to bless it. The first kind is very special in Sant Mat (this is the only time I recall that I ever received it) but is known in other esoteric systems also: it is a characteristic practice in Hasidic Judaism, for example, where disciples wait eagerly for the left-overs from the Rebbe’s plate.
to me that she was worried about my coming home because she was afraid of my generally critical attitude toward her and my bad temper. (At this point I should make it clear that, while I loved Judith very much and she loved me, I could be very difficult to live with. I have a terrible temper; most of the difficult times in our marriage came from my temper.)

It had been a very difficult letter for her to write, that was clear, and as soon as possible, I took it to the Master. I told him that I often lost my temper with Judith and that she was getting tired of it. He was not happy about it. “Well, look here!” he said. “Change places with her for a week and see how the shoe pinches! They work harder than men, I tell you: little, little things, but they add up. Smiling face, kind words: she’ll do anything for you. Change places with her! You’ll see.”

Not at all busy, the Master had much more time for us here than in Delhi, and we met with him about four hours a day. He sent for me often to discuss various matters concerning my new job as Editor of his magazine, so that I really saw him a very great deal. One morning he sent for me while I was still in my room (a little stone room in the rear of the house, which I loved) and he was waiting for me on the porch; he had an article that he wanted me to publish in the magazine. I went to sit on the floor, as usual, and he told me to sit in a chair. I demurred, saying I preferred the floor. But he almost fiercely pulled a chair over and ordered me to sit in it. I did, of course; and afterward I did some self-introspection about humility. Is it more humble to cling to the outward form of humility? Or to obey the Guru? What exactly was my motivation in trying to disobey him? It is true that I derived great pleasure, and felt a profound rightness, about literally sitting at his feet; but it is also true that on this particular occasion I was worried about appearances—about not appearing humble enough if anyone was looking. And while I was sitting on the chair I was very nervous whenever anyone walked by.

On the last morning in Rajpur I left my room at dawn and went down to a cement reservoir at the back of the retreat, where the view of the Himalayas was spectacular. The reservoir was empty, and it was a popular place for us to meditate in because we had heard that the Master was very fond of that place and often sat there. I was enjoying a sweet meditation when suddenly I was pulled out; I looked up and
saw the Master standing there. I was overjoyed. He looked concerned. He asked me if I wasn’t cold. I said that I was wonderful—especially now that he was there. He smiled and left. I went back to my meditation, the sweetness within now doubled by the sweetness without. A half hour or so later, I was again pulled out, this time by Mohan, the Master’s driver, who was standing there with a tall glass of hot *chai*—tea boiled with milk and sugar in the Indian way. He cleared his throat
and apologized for disturbing me, but the Master had sent me this tea!—Again overjoyed, I begged him to thank the Master for me, and slowly savored my parshad tea while gazing at the incredibly beautiful Himalayas and reflecting on the sweet, sweet love of the Master that expressed itself equally in great big things and in little, little things. I had never been happier.

The next day we drove back to Delhi via Rishikesh,14 and the Master visited his disciple and old friend, the Maharishi Raghuvacharya. One hundred and twelve years old in 1969, this great yogi gave every indication of being a man of sixty-five. He had met the Master in 1948, when he was in his nineties and the Master was meditating full-time in Rishikesh preparing for the commencement of his mission. When they met, Raghuvacharya, who was a widely respected and advanced yogi, was sitting with a group of his disciples; he astounded them by getting up and bowing down to the Master. The Master in turn treated Raghuvacharya as a good friend, and while Raghuvacharya did take initiation from the Master, and publicly acknowledged him as his Guru, the Master never treated him other than as an equal. To be with these two giants together was the encounter of a lifetime, and few orders have been more difficult to obey than that afternoon when he sent us off to Rishikesh to sightsee so that he could be alone with Raghuvacharya. How I wanted to stay! But I went, as we all did, and had a thoroughly miserable time.

The last day of my stay was November 2, 1969, and it so happened that a mammoth six-hour Satsang was held that day to commemorate the five-hundredth birthday of Guru Nanak. I woke up feeling ill, a touch of dysentery (only the second occasion on that visit that I was sick, by the way; the first also only lasted a few hours) and terribly depressed over leaving him. These six weeks had been so beautiful, and I knew that he had once again irrevocably touched my life and it would never be quite the same again. I felt that I had been able to understand and appreciate him on a new level, and that many things

14 Rishikesh is considered a very holy city by the Hindus; a number of yogis and renunciates live there or nearby, and Master spent several months there in 1948. He was friendly with many of the yogis; I have mentioned above in Book Four our visit to Swami Chittananda at the Sivananda Ashram in 1965. But his main interest there seemed to be Raghuvacharya.
that had been obscure before were now clear. I realized that my responsibilities had been greatly increased, and I had an intuition, in fact, that they would shortly be increased still more, in ways that I could not anticipate. Sitting on the ground in the early hours of that giant Satsang, before most of the crowd had arrived, watching the Master on the dais, he seemed so humble—almost vulnerable—to me. I remembered the time he had found me meditating outdoors in Rajpur and had sent me parshad tea; and suddenly the sense of his patient, painstaking, compassionate, infinitely caring love on the human level burst over me and I began to weep—great racking sobs that shook my body as all the gratitude and love that had built up over the six weeks struggled with the deep, deep grief over leaving him and it all expressed itself at once. That night I left; I did not see him again physically for two and a half years.
BOOK SIX

India: 1972
On the road to Pathankot. Judith with parshad grapes. (See page 373)
India: 1972

Transition: Growing Pains

The afterglow of my experience in India lasted for some time, although I began failing in one way or another even before I got off the plane. Still, as I had guessed, there were many challenges and responsibilities that were new, and with the Master’s grace, and by clinging to his blessed memory, I was able to pull them off, in most cases with a minimum of disaster. The whole project of getting the magazine going, combined with the equally demanding challenge of starting a printing business, took up most of my time. Simultaneously, the Satsang began to grow, and before long the growth had become increasingly fast: from an average attendance of twenty-five or so in the fall of 1969, it had increased to seventy-five by the early summer of 1970. This continued for some time, and in July 1970 we began construction of a large Satsang Hall at Sant Bani Ashram in order to accommodate the people who were coming.

The growth, from our point of view, bordered on the spectacular; people—local people—just started coming in much greater numbers than before. (At some point in the early spring of 1970, my ten-year old daughter Miriam looked out of her window and asked me why there were 12,000 cars in the parking lot! And indeed it seemed that there were that many.) Many of them, although by no means all, were young people who had studied with Ram Dass, who left the area at this time and suggested that his students might come to us; he also (I was told) left a sign on his door stating that he had gone but suggesting that whoever wanted to see him could go to Sant Bani Ashram instead. Actually, the first Ram Dass person to come to us was Sally Beaupre, who began visiting the Ashram regularly in the summer of 1969, before I went to India. But many more (including Sally’s cousin,
Susan Dyment, who was mentioned above) began coming after my return. In order to deal with the growing numbers of people desiring Initiation, and in order to make sure they had a thorough grounding in the theory of Shabda Yoga, I began holding a pre-Initiation class for three months: the time prospective initiates had to spend on the vegetarian diet before their applications could be sent to the Master. This class continued until the Master left the body in August 1974; and, while no individual was ever in it for more than three months or so, the attendance remained steady at twenty-two to twenty-four people the whole time. The difference between the scope of our work now and before my 1969 pilgrimage was vast.

Another new thing was the expansion of the work outside of the local area. I was asked by student groups to give talks at various colleges—Dartmouth, the University of New Hampshire, Colby College in Maine—and then the Master asked Judith and me to go to St. Croix in the Virgin Islands to initiate Jane Counter! We did go, stayed with Dick and Pat Newick,¹ met their two daughters Lark and Valerie, who became lifelong friends, held satsang, initiated Jane, and had a wonderful time.

The Ashram community was also growing, despite the fact that, in obedience to the Master’s instructions, I had “cleaned it out” on my return home. Actually, I had not asked a single person to leave; but I had called a meeting immediately and explained Master’s wish, that living at the Ashram should be based on a strictly “seva” basis, and that Master had explained that no one should stay longer than two or three weeks unless they were necessary for the maintenance of the Ashram. Within a short time, the vast majority of the inhabitants had voluntarily left, clearing the Big House for stays by guests for retreat purposes: and when the Ashram community began to grow again (as the increased responsibilities also increased the work) it grew in family units who built their own houses and became committed to the community in a far more total way than their predecessors had been. They understood from the beginning, for example, that they were there to

¹ Pat and Jane had come to the Ashram together the previous year, and Pat had subsequently been initiated but Jane had not. Pat’s husband Dick was a world-class boat designer who took us sailing in the Caribbean in his personally-designed catamaran—the first time I ever heard that word!
help, not to be helped. This was a very significant change in the development of the Ashram, eventually insuring a large number of children in the community and leading to the establishment, a few years later, of the Ashram School; and it came as a direct result of the Master’s direct order—an order which, in the beginning, I did not wish to obey.

Time passed. The Sant Bani Press was established in the nearby town of Tilton, and (eventually) flourished, not only as Kirpal’s publishing house, but also as a local print shop (the Master had written me, “Please do not turn down any work on the grounds that it is not spiritual”); the Master’s books were printed—first, *The Crown of Life*, then *Prayer*, and eventually *Naam or Word*, *Godman*, and *Baba Jaimal Singh*; *Sat Sandesh* came out every month, not without, in the beginning, many difficulties and mistakes; and, although the Master had not wanted us to print *Morning Talks*, he very graciously (to our surprise—we had not requested it and had no idea that it would happen) gave us the job of distributing it, and I drove a large rental truck to Boston and we picked up the whole shipment, which gave us a great deal of joy. Actually, almost everything that happened during that time gave us great joy; in many ways, it really was like a continuation of my India trip, and the Master’s presence was palpable throughout.

**The Satsang Hall**

I mentioned above that we began constructing a hall that July, as a direct response to our growth. Since the Ashram began in 1963, we had been holding satsang (and morning and evening meditations) in the main downstairs room in the Big House, the two-hundred year old colonial that was our principal building. But as the size of the group multiplied, it overflowed around the corner, across the hall, eventually outdoors!—through open windows, in the summertime. If I had to answer the call of nature during the satsang, I had to be very careful to avoid walking on people’s laps—they were sitting cross-legged on the floor, jammed in from side to side. It became very clear that we had to do something—exactly what, we were not sure. Then Karl Riley, the Group Leader on Martha’s Vineyard, who had lived at the Ashram for a while, volunteered to design and build a hall for us as a labor of love! God bless him! He had a plan in mind and he fulfilled it, beautifully—
as thousands of people who have meditated in it since can testify. The hall he built still stands and is in daily use, although a large addition was built in 1984 when the original hall had also become too small.

Of course, Karl had lots of help: people came from all over to contribute their labor, and the local people too enthusiastically joined in what became a festive community undertaking. It took us nine months to build it, but not one bit of labor went into it that was not volunteered out of love. When Kirpal returned in October 1972, he had a hall to speak in.

Surgery!

Judith went to India for three weeks in the summer of 1970; the Satsang Hall was completed in March 1971; and by the spring of that year it was being persistently rumored that the Master would be coming soon on his third world tour. I had also gotten the impression that he would be coming soon from my correspondence with Khuku and Eileen, who sent me the translation of the Master’s talks every month, and kept me posted on what was going on. So even though rumors were always circulating that the Master was coming and I had long since learned to be skeptical, this time I believed them—after all, it had been eight years since he had come! We were preparing in various ways for his coming when one night in late June the Master appeared to me and told me something. I could not quite remember what he said—I knew there was some blockage on my part—but because I was so sure that he was coming and because I wanted him to come with all my heart, it was not at all difficult for me to talk myself into believing that what he had told me was that he was coming. How overjoyed I was! I felt that I was the possessor of a delicious secret. For two days I hugged myself internally and thought about how soon the Master would be with us again. On the third day the cable that I had been expecting arrived. I tore it open eagerly—to find that it said that Master was doing well after his operation June 29 and that they would write with more details. It was signed by Khuku and Eileen.

Operation? The Master? For a few minutes the gulf between what the cable said and what I had expected it to say paralyzed my brain, and I struggled to make any sense at all out of the words. Then two realizations hit me at once, hard: First, that this was what the Master had
told me when he appeared to me two nights before (the evening of the operation)—he had told me of his operation and that he was *not* coming—I remembered now with a rush what he had actually said, but I *had been unable to retain it at that time* and blocked it and substituted what I had wanted to hear; and the second realization was this: that the Master (his physical form) was going to die someday. I had only briefly and fleetingly grasped this before, but now I understood that it was inevitable. I went deep into the forest and wept.

My experience with that particular manifestation of the Master speaking to me within taught me a great lesson: to make sure that I have *really heard* what the Master is telling me before jumping to conclusions about it. It also taught me to be healthily skeptical about other people’s experiences with the Master within: if I had had an insufficient capacity to hear and had ended up deceiving myself, so could others.

The Master’s operation was a serious one—on his prostate—and he was a long time recovering. His body had been exhausted for years, of course, and he kept it going by sheer will. (As I once heard him say, “A strong horse can pull a broken cart.”) Now weeks went by and we heard nothing. No material for the magazine—nothing. With a heavy heart I put together an issue—August 1971—from material that I had on hand, centering on the 1955 tour. I kept hearing rumors, but nothing I could trust, and yet I was besieged by people who assumed that I would know. Finally I wrote a letter to Eileen, begging her to tell me what was going on. I explained the situation from our end and by way of explaining how I felt, told her that I felt like getting on a bus and going as far away as I could. She did reply, explaining that the Master had requested that further word (after the initial telegram) not be sent until he was well on the way to recovery, as he did not want the dear ones to agonize over each stage of his recuperation. She said that the rumors were totally illicit and that I should pay no attention to them. She added, “I showed your letter to the Master and he read it [GULP!!] and said, ‘Let him run; the farther he runs, the closer he’ll come to me.’ ” When I read this, a tremendous wave of love came over me and my whole angle of vision changed.

With her letter came a detailed account of the surgery and recovery, and other material for publication in the magazine. And as soon as I
could arrange it, I made another trip to see him—my third. I landed in India on January 31, 1972, intending to stay five weeks.

Manav Kendra

When I arrived in Delhi, I found the Master was not at Sawan Ashram; he was at Manav Kendra in Dehra Dun, which he had been building for the last two years. So I got a taxi—the only feasible method of transportation—and took the five-hour drive up there. (I did this a number of times on this trip and the next; the taxis generally waited until the car was full, so that each passenger paid only his/her share of the total cost.) I had heard (and published in Sat Sandesh) a great deal about Manav Kendra, and the Master had actually shown me the site in 1969; the city of Dehra Dun is close to the village of Rajpur, where his house was; but this was the first time I had seen it since he had begun work on it. Since an enormous amount of the Master’s time and energy went into the building of this place, and since it loomed over and dominated the remaining years of his life, it is worth pausing a moment to consider exactly what it was and how it fitted into his mission as a whole.

The name Manav Kendra means “Center for Humanity,” and Kirpal dedicated it to the three aspects of his mission: Man-Making, Man-Service, and Land-Service. I quote here a few paragraphs from an article I wrote about it for the June 1971 issue of Sat Sandesh:

VISHVA MANDIR

The main function of Manav Kendra is, of course, man-making. This phrase, so characteristic of the Master, makes it compellingly clear that we are not yet really complete human beings; the possibility exists, no doubt, that we may become complete human beings, but until we are in complete control of ourselves, and sufficiently in tune with our deepest nature to understand, and spontaneously and joyfully live according to, the basic and universal principle of love, we are no more complete human beings than an acorn is an oak tree. To bring home this truth to us is, as Master says, “the

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2 It is important to remember that Kirpal used the word “man” in a completely gender neutral way always to mean “human.”

3 For which I used various sources, including especially a small anonymous booklet, Manav Kendra: What It Is.
portfolio of a saint;" and this he does out of his compassion, based on his own certain knowledge of what we can be.

This main aspect of Manav Kendra is called Vishva Mandir, which means "hall of universal worship." The hall itself will be the earth below and the sky overhead; in this way, there will be room to carry on the work already begun at Sawan Ashram on a much larger scale. It is anticipated that libraries containing scriptures of all religions, and studies and biographies of the great spiritual personalities of the world, will be a part of Vishva Mandir, so that anyone can see for him- or herself that all religions and all saints have taught the same truth: the necessity for each one to go within him- or herself and see God with his or her own inner eye, and ultimately become one with Him. Eventually, systematic courses of study and a university of religions may develop, taught and administered, of course, from the perspective of fully developed consciousness.

LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

The second aspect of Manav Kendra is man-service. This is for two reasons: (1) Serving others is one of the most effective ways to bring about the condition of heart in which real growth can take place, and (2) if people are served correctly in an intelligent and conscious way, many of the obstacles lying in the way of their own growth may be removed. In other words, as Master says, "a loving service adorns the server and the served alike." This function of Manav Kendra is discharged in several different ways, one of which is language schools. Obviously, one of the main obstacles in the way of universal brotherhood and peace is our inability to understand each other. If we cannot even understand the words that our brother is using, how can we go any deeper? This is especially true in India, where every province has its own language, and the national official language after 244 years of independence is still English—not native to anyone in the country—because it is the only language that is even partially understood in all parts of India. But it is just as much of an obstacle elsewhere, and the problems caused by our inability to communicate with each other are not separate from the problems caused by our inability to communicate with our selves. It is hoped that as the doors to other peoples’ cultures and traditions are opened, and man becomes less provincial and narrow, that he will be able to see things more clearly from the point of view of his own highest good, and not be so easily misled by professional propagandists and people with vested interests.

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4 In 1971.
HEALTH CENTERS

Another important aspect of man-service will be the free hospitals and medical centers. Here those who have competence and ability in one of the various branches of the healing science will share that ability with their brothers and sisters in God as an act of love. Because no system of medical science can claim perfection, and each one has undeniable advantages, it is hoped that qualified practitioners of all schools—Naturopathy, Ayurvedic and Unani, Allopathy and Homeopathy—will volunteer for this opportunity to serve their brethren.

HOMES FOR THE AGED

One of the least attractive features of the deepening of the Kali Yuga is the growing callousness toward our brothers and sisters who are in the evening of their lives. With the cult of youth prevailing everywhere, and the rate of change increased almost beyond endurance, the elderly are the real “forgotten people” of our era. In our zeal to prove how up-to-date we are, we waste no time in letting them know that they are useless and irrelevant; and it is little wonder that people look forward with dread to what ought to be the most satisfying and peaceful years of their lives. If those of us who still consider ourselves young will not love them for their sake, we might do so for our own; after all, we will be like that some day! And if we think that older people have nothing to offer, we might remember that while a long life is no guarantee of wisdom, yet there is no substitute for experience; and it is a foolish generation indeed that refuses to learn from those who have gone before it. The Homes for the Aged at Manav Kendra will thus serve a two-fold purpose: to provide homes for those retired children of God who are unwanted or unhappy elsewhere; and perhaps more important, to give them a significant role to play in the various supervisory capacities connected with the Center.

Lest anyone think that older people have lost the capacity to change or learn new things, let us remember that Guru Amardas, who became a great Saint, was not even initiated until he was 70 years old! As Master says, “Man learns and unlearns all through life.”

LAND SERVICE

The final aspect of Manav Kendra, land service, will find expression in the various agricultural activities planned for the Center. The Master says that each of us owes a debt to the Earth, which has supported and maintained us since our birth, and therefore we must serve the land as best as we possibly
can. The beauty of it is, of course, that by serving the land in this way, we are also serving humanity. Among the various types of farming will be included gardens and orchards (fruit trees have already been planted), cattle breeding, and dairy farming, to help make India's wealth of cattle more productive and to provide a plentiful supply of pure milk and dairy products: since health is more dependent on pure and wholesome food than on chemicals, inorganic substances, or artificial preparations.⁵

As all readers of SAT SANDESH know, the Master has devoted an overwhelmingly large percentage of his time and attention to Manav Kendra in recent months, and as a consequence a very great deal has already been done: leveling the ground, building the roads, planting trees, erecting the water tower, and, most recently completed, the construction and filling of the big lake or sarovar which is the central feature of the landscaping. Work has also begun on the buildings, and a few of them are completed. All of this work has been done voluntarily and joyfully, as loving service; and the Master himself has been the supreme example, inspiring and giving strength to all the workers to do as he is doing. He sees to each minute detail in the execution of the work, directs every operation, and serves all the devotees with food, both physical and spiritual. He has been working daily from 8 in the morning till 10 at night, and then going home to give darshan to the waiting Western disciples and to attend to his stacks of correspondence.

Thus we see that even in its building Manav Kendra serves as a model of what is possible for human beings to achieve when they are given right guidance and manage to forget their egos for a while.

Not mentioned in the above article but very much a part of the whole was the Manav Vidya Mandir or “Temple of Human Knowledge”: the elementary school that the Master set up and dedicated in June 1972 to provide education free of charge to the poor families in the area.⁶

⁵ Needless to say, the dairy farming practiced by the Master (as also by Ajaib Singh at his ashram in Rajasthan) was totally humane: the calves were allowed access to their mother’s milk; cows were allowed to lactate according to their own natural rhythm; and no animal was ever killed. (Compare Mahatma Gandhi’s prescription for dairy farming in The Gandhi Sutras, pp. 40-43.) Milk and dairy products produced in this way are eminently suitable for human consumption.

⁶ His talk on this occasion was published in Sat Sandesh a few months later, September 1972, p. 4; titled “Toward the New Education,” it is also included in the books The Way of the Saints and The Coming Spiritual Revolution. The Master’s thoughts on education were not only a vital part of his program for Manav Kendra: they are of the utmost importance in order to understand his views on the human condition and what can be done about it.
And it should be made clear that all the services provided by Manav Kendra were free of charge. I will only add that both the Sant Bani School and the Pyareo Home (for the aged), originally established in Sanbornton, New Hampshire, as part of the outreach of Sant Bani Ashram, were inspired by, and attempts to emulate the activities of, Manav Kendra.

I will have more to say about the Master’s plans for Manav Kendra and its significance later, especially in connection with the World Conference on Unity of Man; but to get a sense of what it was like to be there, consider the following from an article I wrote upon my return home in March 1972:

“The first thing you see, coming along the highway from Delhi, is the big water tower with MANAV KENDRA on the top. The second thing you see is the pool. Then a lot of images crowd in at once—Master’s buffaloes, the buildings, the spaciousness, the Himalayas along the rim that just take your breath away—and you realize with an awful thrill that you’re actually there.

“There is no doubt that when Manav Kendra is finished it will be one of the most beautiful places on this planet. Even now, raw and unfinished and muddy, it has the capacity to grip the heart and mind and soul in a way that very few places can. The pool is just unbelievable. No picture does it justice. Standing at its south end, looking across at the mountains, it seems very obvious that God piled up the mountains with one hand and scooped out the pool with the other. Inner peace comes of itself while standing there; more easily perhaps than anywhere except in the presence of the Master Himself.”

To Shave or Not to Shave

The huge thing coming up was the Master’s birthday celebration (February 6), which was being held at Manav Kendra that year. I will describe that in a moment; but first I have to deal with a personal trauma that had several facets, was in some respects very silly, and yet was tremendously difficult for me to deal with. I was never able to write or talk about this (except with Judith) after I got home, and this

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7 That is, the man-made “lake” (or “tank,” as it was called in India): the sarovar mentioned above. It was spectacularly beautiful.
TO SHAVE OR NOT TO SHAVE

is the first time I am doing so, with some trepidation: like many other aspects of this trip (and of my entire adventure with the Master), this story does not reflect very favorably on me.

I went with mixed motives. The years since I had last seen him had been good years for me, and I thought he would be pleased. My going alone, without Judith, was prompted as much by my desire to recreate my last trip (when I was also alone) as it was based on necessity. I had made many assumptions about myself and my importance to the Master and his work, and these were all shattered. The Master was very, very kind to me and in many ways He gave me exactly what I wanted; but he also showed me exactly where I stood spiritually—nowhere—and he showed me just how much my wish to be there independent of Judith was worth—by making me miss her so much I couldn’t think of anything or anyone else, and by calling her over from within for the final three weeks of the stay. It was a good lesson, one that I hope that I will never forget.

The first instance of the “shattering” I refer to above had to do with my beard.

I had had a beard off and on since just before the Master came in 1963; I had never liked to shave and had in fact experimented with it before I could really grow one. I had shaved it off a couple of times but by 1972 I was thoroughly and completely attached to it: I was in fact identified with it in a way that I did not completely understand. The Master had never given me any indication that my beard displeased him; every time he had seen me, including the 1963 tour and both my previous trips to India, I had had it; and of course he had a very beautiful beard of his own and had commented on some of the spiritual reasons for it.8 But as soon as I arrived at Manav Kendra I saw that something major had changed, and that was due to the influx of hippies in India.

Many of the Master’s disciples, of course, had come out of the hippie movement, and many more would do so in the future; but by and large they gave up drugs, illicit sex, and began to earn their own living if they did not already. In the meantime, however, a vast army of

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8 See Rusel Jaque, *Gurudev: The Lord of Compassion*, p. 61. In the Sikh religion, which the Master grew up in and the customs of which he followed, it is obligatory to neither shave nor (for both sexes) cut the hair.
hippies had arrived in India, supposedly seeking spiritual truth and visiting one guru after another, *without* making any changes in their lifestyle, and making it generally known that they had not. They did not realize it—most of them had almost no connection with ordinary Indian people—but this earned them complete contempt from the rank and file of India, which ballooned over into contempt for those gurus they visited. Of course, those seekers who landed at the feet of a genuine teacher and really wanted spiritual truth did change their point of view, sometimes radically. But the immediate problem for the Master was that a large influx of disciples who *appeared* to be hippies was seriously affecting the way his work was perceived in India. I say “problem for the Master”; actually, I am not at all sure that he cared very much about this. But his leading disciples cared *a lot*, and they let all the hippie-appearing disciples know it. By the time I arrived, almost all of them had cut their hair and shaved, and I came under intense pressure to do the same—mostly, as it was explained to me by Khuku and Edna, to not provide an example for the others.

I cannot tell you how devastating this was for me. Looking back on it from a perspective of forty-three years, it seems unbelievably trivial. But at the time it shook me to the core. I became very, very depressed. My depression was only partly because of the pressure to shave; it was equally due to my awareness of how hollow my spirituality seemed from the point of view of my reaction: I understood very well that the way I was dealing with it was very far from a mature spiritual perspective. I also by this time was missing Judith in a way that was visceral: she was everywhere I looked, and I saw in this also the hollowness of my wish to come without her so that I could recreate my 1969 trip. All three—the pressure to shave, the shame I felt at my reaction, and the shame I felt at missing Judith, which I interpreted as a failure on my part to be able to rise above things like missing your wife—drove home to me how terribly complacent I had become and what a silly excuse for a spiritual practitioner I was.

I was in a room in what became the hospital at Manav Kendra with three other people, one of whom, my friend (and future son-in-law) Jon Engle, was extremely kind and explained to me many of the

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9 For a very interesting account of one such seeker, see the article by Michael Barickman in the August 1981 issue of *Sant Bani* Magazine, p. 10.
ins and outs of the dynamic of this particular group, which actually helped me a lot. But by and large I couldn’t deal with any of it. I sat on my bed with a blanket over my head and meditated seven hours a day; I avoided social intercourse as much as I could (except for Jon) and struggled to understand what was going on and what I should do about it. I had during these few days a memorable interview with the Master, in which I asked him point blank if he wanted me to shave. He said, “Dear friend, that is completely up to you,” and I felt that he really didn’t care in the least whether I shaved or not. I also apologized for not having made any spiritual progress since leaving him, when he had given me so much on my last visit, and he responded by looking at me carefully; then he said, very objectively, “You’ve made progress,” and added, almost as an afterthought, “Man can’t always tell.” I left the interview greatly encouraged and resolved to shave off my beard as soon as possible; which I did, courtesy of a barber on the street outside Manav Kendra, who charged me the equivalent of fifteen cents and did a beautiful job. I did not grow my beard again until March 1978, when it came to me clearly that it was time.

The Great Birthday Celebration

We were told that at the January Satsang at Sawan Ashram in Delhi, the Master asked the congregation whether they wanted to celebrate his birthday in Delhi or at Manav Kendra. A vote was taken, and Manav Kendra was the overwhelming winner. It was announced that free bus service from Delhi would be provided for anyone who wanted to go up, and as always, free food and accommodations (mostly under huge tents) were available for all.

By February 4 (two days before the Birthday) tents were erected all over the Manav Kendra grounds—a huge tent in front of the main stage to serve as a shelter for Satsang as well as housing, tents in the back field, one big one marked SAWAN ASHRAM CANTEEN where you could purchase tea and sweets if you were so inclined—the disciples had begun to arrive, and we visitors from the West (a dozen or so) were moved from our temporary headquarters in the hospital (due to

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10 This account is based on an article I wrote on returning home from this trip that was published in the April 1972 issue of Sat Sandesh.
be inaugurated as such on the Birthday) to a bungalow about ten minutes’ walk away from Manav Kendra. On the afternoon of the 4th the first satsang was held: a relatively informal affair with Swami Arvindananda as guest speaker.

Then that evening the rain began. It came down in torrents all night and all the next day, knocking down and rendering useless every single tent, turning the whole of Manav Kendra into a vast sea of mud, and forcing a cancellation of the day’s activities. Thousands of people had their temporary homes literally washed out from under them, and all day long on the 5th, through the cold driving rain, busload after busload of pilgrims, with bedrolls and blankets, arrived eagerly and hopefully to attend the Satsang—and there was no place for them.

What did Master do? First of all, every available building at Manav Kendra, no matter its state of construction, was pressed into service. The hospital, just vacated by the Westerners (who had slept four to a room), was turned back into a dormitory with twenty to thirty in a room. The guest house, the Homes for the Aged, the dormitories for the workers, and the building which will eventually become Master’s house, none of them finished, were all utilized and thousands were taken care of in this way (although the amount of space per person was considerably less than most Westerners would like). For the rest, Master and his staff, working unceasingly all day long, managed to find enough accommodations in the Dehra Dun area to house all those still unprovided for.

And Master’s attitude was such a perfect example of his teaching. That night at darshan, calm and unruffled as ever after a day of wrestling with problems that would have buried any of us, Master said to me with his infectious chuckle, “Well, what do you think of all our accommodations now? (laughing) Are they quite comfortable?” That night the rain stopped; the next morning, the Master’s Birthday, dawned bright and clear and cold and beautiful—with the mountains reflected in the pool and the clouds like living things hovering overhead.

Master had asked that the 4 a.m. darshan (traditional on his birthday) be eliminated this year, and so the Westerners all stayed over in their

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11 It should be noted that heavy rain in the winter in India, while not unprecedented, is unusual; the rainy season (the monsoon) is from July to September, and significant rain at other times is rare.
bungalow. But I came out of meditation feeling very much like going
over anyway, and I found another Western disciple who felt exactly the
same way. So we encouraged each other and went over—and we found
that the Indian devotees turned up at 4 a.m. and Master came out and
gave them his darshan—just as if he had never asked them not to. . . .

The morning Satsang was held by the side of the pool, because the
area that had been set aside for Satsangs was sopping wet. So a tempo-
rary dais was erected and Master came over about 8 a.m. and put us
in meditation. What a sweet meditation that was! Sitting on the hard
ground, overtones of the storm still with us, the air fresh and bright
and cold, and the grace of the Master within. For forty-five minutes or
so the outside world was forgotten and all of us were absorbed inside.

Then Master came back, took us out of meditation, and the Satsang
began. Various swamis and yogis were there and spoke, and that
morning session was very happy and free. The guest speakers did not
speak too long, and one of them, Swami Ved Vyasanaṇa of Hardwar,
was a positive delight. This gentleman, a mahamandleshwar with
50,000 sadhus owing him allegiance, is one of the really important
Hindu leaders; yet he is very humble and deferential with the Master,
and his talk was full of good humor and laughter.12 Taiji (Bibi Hardevi)
turned up and sang one of Master’s beautiful songs; Bibi Lajo (Baba Sawan
Singh’s housekeeper for many years and the author of the Sakayan13)
made a surprise appearance and attempted unsuccessfully to garland
the Master (who will not accept garlands from anyone; his usual practice
is to take the garland in his hands and slip it over the other person’s
head before he or she realizes what he is doing); Master’s son, Darshan
Singh, up from Delhi, recited one or two of his award-winning Urdu
poems; there was a great deal of music, including a beautiful hymn by
the Music Master Pratap Singh Ji, the Master’s pathi; and the Satsang
concluded, after about four hours, with a beautifully serene discourse
by the Master.

While everyone was eating from the langar, Mr. Sethi, one of Master’s
secretaries, called me over. “I want you to meet someone,” he said.
He introduced me to the simplest sweetest poorest old man, wearing

12 He is the sadhu I mentioned above who reminded me of the Cowardly Lion.
13 A book, written in Hindi, of reminiscences of Baba Sawan Singh; several
excerpts from it were translated by Jim Cluett and printed in Sat Sandesh.
a turban and dhoti and little else. He said something in Hindi to the man, who came over and hugged me. And his hug was like a child’s hug: pure and gentle—very, very gentle—like a really young child. When he left, Sethi said, “That man has the form of the Master within twenty-four hours of the day and night. He is authorized to deliver messages from both Master and Baba Sawan Singh to others who cannot reach them inside. And he is a very simple man,” he said, “a very simple man. At his Initiation, he had a very high experience; but afterward, when Master was explaining that he had given them all some capital to start with, this man got up and said, ‘Where, Maharaj Ji? I don’t see any money.’ That is how simple he is.”

We all gathered again for the afternoon Satsang at 4 p.m. This time, the crowd was much larger (about 15,000 people—approximately half of what it would have been in Delhi) and the speakers sat on the main stage, which is a permanently constructed building with a roof and addressed the congregation as it sat on the regular Satsang grounds, still soggy but now usable. The honored guests included, in addition to the swamis already mentioned, Swami Govindananda of the Shahanshah Ashram in Dehra Dun; Maharaj Jagjit Singh, head of the Namdhari Sikhs and an old friend of the Master; and various Muslim, Sikh and Hindu leaders, both lay and clergy. As we were taking our seats, an old man, very rough-hewn and coarse and ragged, was singing his heart out to his own accompaniment on a tambourine over the microphone to the assembled sangat. The Master’s platform is not only open to the so-called leaders, but to the followers too; to the obscure as well as the famous; to anyone, in fact, who has something to say.

About halfway through the Satsang, the Master, Jagjit Singh, and a few others left the stage for a few minutes to dedicate the free homeopathic dispensary, functioning for the first time.

The following morning Master gave Naam to (or as we would say, initiated) about three hundred people. Of this number, a little less than half made contact with the Radiant Form of the Master inside, and about half of the rest saw the strong sunlight inside. Some of these people—these dear, dear people, our brothers and sisters—were moving beyond words. One lady was sitting there in all humility with no eyes on her face at all—not even the sockets; she had been horribly burned
in a fire, we heard. She got the Guru’s Form inside. A young Sikh man, smiling so broadly it seemed his face would split apart, was so bubbling over with primordial joy that he could hardly contain himself, nodding in ecstatic agreement with every word that Master said. A young, humble Muslim aspirant was given the Sufi mantra; that is, the five names that Master gave him were Arabic rather than Sanskrit and derived from the great Sufi Masters: Master is the embodiment and living fulfillment of both esoteric lines and can initiate in either way.14

In a few days the crowds were gone, and Manav Kendra became again the way I remember it: a place of quiet hard work and gentle loveliness. Memories crowd each other—walking around and around the pool at dusk, wanting to stop but being caught and held by the exquisite beauty and peace; taking a walk around the Center and meeting the Master unexpectedly (not possible in Delhi or most other places anymore, where there are always such huge mobs waiting for him); and sitting in the big room in the Library where Master is living for long, long darshans: an hour or more sitting at our Father’s feet and talking things over with him in the sweetest and most direct way imaginable. Oh Master! One night he thanked somebody for something, and said, “Thank you so much! What more can I say? In English you say, ‘Thank you,’ if a man gives you a million dollars or a pin off the floor.” What more CAN we say? Thank you for giving us life, Master; thank you for having it to give us. Oh Master! Where are the words?

With the Merciful Lion

As I said to the sangat when I returned home: “When you come into the presence of the Master, the one thing that’s always true is that nothing is what you expect. Looking back on it, it’s like a big kaleidoscope:

14 The mantra of Five Names that the Masters of Shabda Yoga give at the time of initiation consists of what Kirpal called the “original or Basic Names of God” as distinguished from “derivative or attributive” names of God. (The Way of the Saints, p. 109.) That is, the Names that Masters of the Highest Order give are based on their personal experience with the various manifestations of God in the different spiritual planes within. But these Names, when translated into ordinary human speech, take different forms in different languages; they have the same significance but not necessarily the same meaning. See Martin Buber’s comments on YHVH and HU, both Basic Names of God in Hebrew and Arabic respectively, in Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant, pp. 49-50.
preconceptions broken, Master’s greatness shown to me in ways I never really knew before. I went there full of self-importance: I had done all this work Master had assigned to me; I awaited further assignments—that kind of thing. Well, he was not displeased with anything. He didn’t say anything negative or positive. It took me a while to grasp: all He wanted to talk to me about was my own inner growth.

“He talked a lot about my ATTITUDE toward work. He said, ‘When you talk to people, make sure that they understand that you are telling them from the level of your understanding only. Don’t assert!’ Don’t come on as though Master is saying it. He said, ‘Whatever you do, don’t be the Master of the work assigned to you. Know you’re working for someone else, never forget that!’—very strong . . .”

Among a number of memorable occurrences during this time, the initiation of Tibor Farkas stands out. Tibor was a young man from Romania, now living in Montreal, an architect by profession, who had come to India to be initiated. We had returned to Sawan Ashram by this time, and Tibor joined us there. Although the Master initiated most seekers at the time of the monthly satsang, he elected to initiate Tibor separately, probably due to language difficulties. At any rate, he asked me (since I was a Representative!) to help Tibor with his application and answer any questions he might have; which I did. Kirpal had set up an application form which included the writing of a brief autobiography by the seeker, outlining his or her spiritual search; so Tibor filled out the form and wrote his life sketch. When he finished, I took it to the Master; he looked at it, examined what he had written, and said, “Hm! A long yarn.” Then he told me to bring Tibor. When I reached him, he asked me, “Did the Master read my life sketch?” I said, “Oh yes, he read it.” When we got to the Master’s room, he looked at Tibor and said, “I have not read your long yarn.”

Because of his schedule, he instructed Tibor on two separate days: he gave him the theoretical part (including the imparting of the mantra of Five Names) on the first day, and had him sit for meditation the second day. All of the westerners were allowed to sit in on the meditation,

15 Tibor later settled with his family near Sant Bani Ashram in New Hampshire and became a lifelong friend and an invaluable sevadar, contributing his expertise to the building of many of the Ashram and School buildings and to the construction, establishment, and ongoing management of Pyareo Home, among many other things.
but he asked only Kurt Hilger (a disciple from British Columbia who was leaving that night) and me to sit in on the theory. So there were four of us sitting along a long table: the Master, Tibor, Kurt, and me. It was a truly remarkable experience: I have, in one capacity or another, been present at thousands of initiations, but in many ways this was the most memorable. Master outlined the theory, gave him the mantra, answered Tibor's questions, and got up to go; as he did so, he looked at me in great good humor, eyes twinkling, and asked me, "How did I do?" I stared at him; he repeated, with a broad grin, "Did I do all right?" I stammered something incoherent, and we all left.

Of course, the Master's question went straight to the heart of my own vanity: I was, in fact, aware that I read the instructions well, was proud of it, and judged other Representatives for not giving the instructions as well as I did. Master of course knew that (although God knows I never told him!) and was instructing me accordingly. I got it; but he did it so lovingly and was so funny that it didn't hurt a bit. To paraphrase Mark Antony, "This was a Master! When comes such another?"

Many, many other memorable things happened on this trip, but for me by this time everything was coalescing around one thought: I miss Judith. She was everywhere; she dominated my every thought. And I was ashamed. For one thing, as I mentioned above, it uncomfortably exposed my desire to come alone to the Master's feet as supremely shallow and unrealistic, although this was hovering just below the threshold of my consciousness; much more out in the open was the thought: "Here I am with the Master: we're supposed to be above such things as attachment to wives." I was trying like anything to meditate, and through the grace of God it was not entirely fruitless, but I missed her so much.

There was a very special thing that Master did for me at the height of all this. He used to give darshan on his porch every night. This particular night I could see that it was going to rain, so I wanted to go over early. I ran over just as the rain was starting; I got to the porch and nobody was there but me, and Master came out the second I got there. He sat down just as though he was going to give darshan, even though there was nobody there but me. And he said to me out of the blue (I hadn't said a word): "Yes, what's on your mind? Speak up. Heart-to-heart"—So kindly. All during this time, Master was showing me, time and time
again, how he knows our innermost thoughts. So he pulled me out like that and I said, “Master, I am disgusted with myself because of the tiny amount of love that I have for you.”

He said, “How can you measure love? How can you measure it? It’s either there or it isn’t.”

I said, “Well, when thoughts of outside things come up in meditation, my mind clings”—

He said, “Look here, when thoughts of wife and children come up—You realize I hadn’t mentioned wife and children at all—“When thoughts of wife and children come up, don’t not love them”—He was sitting in his chair, I was on the floor, and he was leaning, looking right down at me—“Don’t not love them, love them for the sake of He Who has given them to you. Then you’ll be all right.” I was speechless; I said, “You can see the innermost thoughts of our heart, and yet you love us anyway! You love us anyway!” He just laughed. He was so loving, so kind. Many times when he would talk to me it would be like he was washing me with the gentlest kind of beautiful water. I would be shaking with happiness after just a few words like that.

But the following morning Master sent for me and told me that Judith was coming; he had gotten a telegram from her. He showed it to me. And in my such great wisdom, I thought, “She is coming; Master is giving me this because I missed her so much. It would be far better if I could rise above this.” And then she wouldn’t have to come. So—unbelievably—I immediately tried to persuade the Master that she didn’t have to come. I said, “Master, there’s a big time difference between here and there, so if we cable her not to come, she’ll get it in time and she won’t come.”

He just looked at me; He said, “She’s coming.”

I said, “But, but, but—she doesn’t have permission.”

He looked at me, and said, “She has permission.”

I said, believe it or not, “No, no, I know she doesn’t.” He just looked at me with a pitying look. And he said, “Get me her file!” I stared at him. Her file? You know, I had been in the room in the Ashram where the letter files were kept; there were millions of them, it was an enormous archive. I said, “Her file, Master?” He said, “Yes, it’s in the living room.” So I went in the living room and there on a couch, all by itself, nothing else of any kind in the whole room, there was Judith’s file, her
letter file. It had been taken out and obviously Master had used it. I brought it to him and he opened up to her last letter, which had been written before I left, and he said, “Read that, and you’ll see that she asked me if she could come.” I read it through and there wasn’t a word in it about coming to India, I promise you that.

At this point my mind was being pulled apart. I was reeling, so I said, “Master, um, there’s not a word in here about coming to India.” He took it and he read it through; he really concentrated, and when he finished he looked at me and sighed, “Well, not in an outward way, that’s true.” Suddenly the whole thing came into focus.

Then he looked at me and said, “Do you not think that I would like her to be here enjoying like you are enjoying? Do you not think that it would be nice for her to be here with me, just like you are here with me?” You know, in my heart of hearts I had wanted her to come so badly, but I had felt it would be such a failure on my part if it happened. It was such an egotistical way of looking at the whole thing, and he set it straight in just a second. She came, and it was wonderful to have her there.

Her plane was delayed twenty-four hours, and in the meantime Master had gone back up to Manav Kendra; I met Judith at the airport and we took a taxi up there. We were eager to see the Master, and we found him walking around Manav Kendra, supervising the construction that was still going on. When he saw Judith, the first thing he did was make a joke!—He looked at us, looked at her, and said, “I heard the plane was delayed because Edith was too heavy,”16 with a big smile; then he took our two heads and pushed them together—clunk—so that they were touching, and said, “This is the way I want you to be here, together.”

This is from a talk I gave when I got back:

“Our habit, even when we’re with the Master, is to think always in our own terms, so that we ask questions and conversations take place in a frame of reference that is entirely of our own making. It is very rare for Master to violate that; it’s like a game He plays. If you select a frame of reference, He’ll play the game within that. But if you’d selected another one, you might find out a lot more, or if you just leave it open to Him—anything could happen. These

16 Master Kirpal often addressed Judith as “Edith,” pronounced by him “Edd-ith,” sometimes even in letters; we never found out the significance of this.
are subtle things . . . in the Master’s presence there is nothing that cannot and should not and does not lead to growth, nothing . . .

“You see, Master has two kinds of beauty. Actually, He has fifty thousand kinds; but He has two main kinds. I am talking about physical beauty. The first is his beauty near at hand, like when you’re sitting on the floor about six inches away from Him, and you’re looking into His face and you see every nook and cranny of the boulder that His face is, and you wonder how on earth God could create such a face as that. That’s one kind of beauty, you see, and you’re looking into His eyes . . . sometimes I would look into them and my eyes would hurt, and I could only concentrate on one of His eyes at a time—I could not focus on both eyes at once. And I found it very difficult to answer Him when He talked to me: I would have to avert my gaze for a second in order to make my mind work enough to come up with the answer that He wanted. Because it’s really true that looking into His eyes you begin to withdraw; there’s no doubt about it, the withdrawal process starts.

“The other kind of beauty is His beauty at Satsang. He’s sitting up there on the dais, and you may be quite a distance from Him, no doubt, but He’s sitting up there and He is a lion. That’s His name, you know—Kirpal Singh means merciful lion—that’s His name and that’s what He is. And those days in Meerut He was sitting up there holding Satsang, and the most beautifully exquisite experience is watching Him—even if you don’t understand a word—watching Him make His points with His hands, the way He’d move His head . . . Sometimes He talks for three hours, more usually two. He never stirs from His waist down. From His waist up, He’s swaying. He’s looking, He’s darting His eyes—He looks at the whole congregation, He notices everyone. He’s so ALIVE! You look at Him and the life that’s coming from Him is so tangible, you think, Oh my God, how beautiful, how much beauty can there be in the world? So that’s what it was like at Meerut . . .

“At Manav Kendra there’s a little old woman that lives there: she looks about ninety. She’s all bent over with a big hump on her back. She walks around mumbling bhajans and moves very slowly with great difficulty with steps and things. So one day we were all following Master along this path, and Master’s walking very fast—He just floats along (and by the way He walks just as fast as He did before His operation, and in every way He appears to be more healthy, more vigorous, more active, and more youthful than two years ago)—anyway we were all coming along this path in a big cloud following Master and there was this little old woman up ahead, and there were three stone steps in the path and she started to go up them, with great difficulty. And Master, never even breaking His stride, just reached down and put His hand under her elbow, and it looked from behind as though He just lifted
her up the three steps and set her on the top. And then He kept on going. She knelt right down on the ground and took the dust from where His feet had been and put it on her forehead. The way He did it, the whole feel of the thing, was just so beautiful . . . there were so many things like that.

“Sometimes there’s a certain kind of Indian disciple who has a certain way of looking at the Master which to me is meaningful beyond words. It’s a smile, but it’s a smile that’s so extreme that it seems like their face is going to break in two. And there’s tears in the eyes along with it. Whenever you see that expression, you know that just being with the Master is almost knocking them out. And Master was so loving to people like that—He pats them on the face, He sits right down with them . . .”

Judith and I had three lovely weeks together with Kirpal, and we grew closer together than we had ever been. Toward the end of the stay we heard that the Master was going to Pathankot, a town way up in the Punjab on the Pakistan border, and that he was going to take a few of the westerners with him, including Millie Prendergast, Steve Melik, Judith and me. We were very happy, until we learned that it was an eleven-hour drive and we would not be in the Master’s car. I got very depressed; when I had gone with the Master on tour previously, as I recounted in Book Five above, I had always ridden in Master’s car; now an eleven hour drive? Through Indian back country? Without the Master? I dreaded it.

We all got loaded up and packed in and off we went; a couple of hours out—no sign of the Master anywhere—BANG!!—a flat tire, called in India a “puncture.” We climbed out of the car while the driver went to work on the tire, turned around—and there he was! He had driven back specially to check on us. We were ecstatic. He gave Judith a big bunch of grapes and told her to distribute it as parshad. We all took one grape apiece: she ended up with all the rest! He hung out with us while the tire was being fixed, and then we started off again. Before the trip was over there were two more punctures, and each time the Master was there. When we arrived, I said to Judith, “I was dreading this day, and it turned out to be one of the most beautiful days I have ever experienced!” She agreed.

We were not there very long before I got sick. The chronology is now hazy in my mind but there were many things that might have contributed to it. The second night it was bitter cold and pouring rain,
and satsang was under a big tent which was made up of little tents put together. I was sitting right under the crack where two of the tents (supposedly) connected and I was rained on the whole satsang. I tried to move but couldn’t; the place was too crowded. The following morning it was a bright sunny day, but still very cold. Again the satsang was under a huge tent which was absolutely jam-packed with thousands of people; we were all sitting on the ground cross-legged.

This is what I said about that satsang when I got back:

“There was a Satsang the morning of our last day, and despite the fact that I was sick as a dog, I wanted to go to it . . . In both good and bad ways, that Satsang was something. I was sick in a way that’s almost indescribable. I was sitting cross-legged on the ground. In the morning it was cold, but as the day went on it got hot, and I was dressed for the cold morning, with long underwear, etc., and as the day went on I really began to stifle. Master gave the longest talk without a doubt that I’ve ever heard Him give anywhere—three hours exactly, of which only a phrase or two were in English. And for the last two hours of that three-hour talk I was in such intense pain that I had to sit absolutely straight because any other position put too much pressure on me . . . with all that, Master’s face was so beautiful—I was sitting there looking at it, I couldn’t believe it. I kept getting sicker and sicker, yet I kept looking more and more at His face and I realized I would rather be there than anywhere else in the world doing anything else. You see, you can’t—pictures don’t get it, movies don’t get it, you have to see it with your own eyes.

“Everything about the Master is so subtle. Like when He makes a point He smiles, just a little bit of a smile, and the subtle beauty of that smile just floats out across at your heart . . .”

In Pathankot just before we left, Master sent for me. When I told him I couldn’t believe that in two days’ time we would be in the United States, he said, “Who says you are leaving, who says? You will take me with you. Wherever you are, I’ll be there.” And then he did something very interesting: he asked me if I needed money.

Now I have mentioned above how he had twice asked me if I needed money during the 1963 tour, and I turned him down both times; and how I had mentioned this to Mary McTier and she had said, “Why shouldn’t you take money from him? You take everything else from him.” And I had thought about it and decided that the next time the Master offered me money, I would take it. So . . . when Master
called me in, I saw that he had his money box (a metal box in which he kept donations in American money) with him. He opened it up and said, “Do you need money?” I remembered what Mary had said, and I remembered my resolve. I still didn’t want to ask for it, so I said, “Master, whatever you want to give me, I will take. It’s up to you. I’m happy with whatever you want to give me.” He said, “All right,” and he counted out, “Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty—is that enough?” I said, “Master, it’s up to you. Whatever you want to give me, I’ll take.” “Fifty, sixty, seventy—how about that? Is that enough?” I said, “Master, it’s in your hands. Whatever you want to give me, I’ll take.” He kept on going, and I ended up with somewhere over a hundred dollars—a very significant amount of money (more so then than now) which I felt very funny about taking, but which he obviously wanted me to have.

The sicker I got, the more receptive I got. I was physically so out of it, but I was feeling so much love for him. On the afternoon of the last day in Pathankot, Judith and I were in our room—I was wretchedly sick and she was taking care of me. I had begged her to go and have darshan, so that at least she should not waste our precious last day, but she refused on the grounds that I needed her. God knows it was true—I felt as if I was coming apart inside. It was just after the three-hour Satsang I described above, and I was, in addition to being very ill, utterly exhausted. I lay on the bed like a piece of dough—no life, no spirit, no anything. Suddenly, I became aware that it was time to go and see the Master. I got up off the bed and said to Judith, “All right, let’s go over.” On the way over, though, I got cold feet and began to be apprehensive: it is not a light or easy thing to knock at the Master’s door and request admittance—not for me it isn’t. Greatly do I prefer for him to ask me first; then I know for certain that it is his will. So this afternoon I said to Judith, “I’m not going in unless someone in high position tells me it’s all right.” I was thinking of Bibi Hardevi or Mohan, Master’s driver. But before I even had a chance to knock, the door opened and the Master himself was standing there: “Come in! Come in!” (Judith said, “Is that high enough authority for you?”) We went in and Bibi Hardevi was waiting, with tea—our tea!—in cups and a bunch of shawls—our farewell gifts—on her lap. The Master in his great kindness let us stay with him all afternoon, and while he did not take away my illness—when I did leave him I was as sick as ever—
somehow he worked it so that it did not matter while I was with him, and that love filled afternoon in one of the farthest corners of India, that he had called me to from a sickbed, was without blemish.

The next morning we had to leave him very early, for the eleven-hour drive back to Delhi to catch our plane home. We said goodbye to him before dawn; the last thing he did was to give me parshad Anacin and tea. We went and sat in the car and once again I wept as though my body encased the flood. I cannot describe my feelings at parting from him—the deep, deep, deep grief. It is like no other sadness in the world. It is having to say goodbye to all your deepest and most cherished hopes; it is finding your reason for existence and then saying goodbye to it; it is turning your back on your original face before you were born. Such is the true Guru, and such is the grief at leaving him.
BOOK SEVEN

The Return of the King
The Master at the Satsang Hall, Sant Bani Ashram, October 1972
With him are Ann Sirrine and B. S. Gyani Ji
The Return of the King

Despite the Master’s June 1971 operation, he had been vigorous and strong throughout our stay in early 1972; but I was never to see him that way again. When we met next, the following September in Washington, D.C., he had aged a million years. What I did not know for some time yet was that shortly after we left India in March 1972, he journeyed to Rajasthan where he met with his beloved gurumukh disciple, Ajaib Singh, authorized him to convey initiation, and transferred power to him.¹ This did not of course render Kirpal powerless; the power of the true Master is measureless, and he could give an ocean’s worth away and retain just as much. Indeed, some Masters have had several disciples to whom they transferred power. But in retrospect it can be seen that it marked the beginning of the end, and he was never quite the same after that.

The Third World Tour Begins

The Master’s third world tour of 1972 does not, by and large, rank high in my treasure-house of memories of him; this is partly because his noticeable age and weakness depressed me, and partly because the huge crowds that now flocked around him added a new—and very difficult—dimension to the whole business of seeing him. Everything in 1972 was multiplied by ten. In 1963, one hundred persons (approximately) had met him at the airport when he first arrived; in 1972, it was almost one thousand. This ratio continued throughout.

The Master left India for Germany, the first stage of the tour, at 2 a.m. on August 26, 1972. It was said that twenty buses had been hired

¹ This was more than two years before his death—unusual but not unprecedented. Swami Ji transferred power to Baba Jaimal Singh in the early 1860’s, and did not leave his body until 1878. See Kirpal Singh, *Baba Jaimal Singh*, pp. 46-50.
to carry satsangis from Sawan Ashram to the airport so that they could have darshan to the last possible minute. A dais had been built at the airport, and twelve thousand were there for satsang, held just before he boarded the plane. He was accompanied by B. S. Gyani Ji, Harcharan Singh, and Bhalla Sahib, but not by Taiji and Khuku, who had accompanied him on both of his previous tours. Gyani Ji, Harcharan, and Bhalla were all devoted sevadars; Gyani Ji was more or less the administrator of Sawan Ashram, and he wrote the detailed account of the tour which appeared in *Sat Sandesh*. I knew all three from my trips to India, and they had all been very kind to me: Gyani Ji, especially. Taiji’s absence was noteworthy; she was getting old, and her health was not good. It must have been very hard for her; the Master referred to her at the conclusion of his first talk on the tour, at Cologne, West Germany, on August 26—the evening of the day he left India: “I wish you all progress, you see. I address my loving words to you, and also the love which has driven me here despite all the hurdles on the way. I give thanks to Taiji who has sent me here. . . .”

The Master spent a month or so in Europe: several cities in Germany, then Zurich, Milan, Paris, and London; and arrived in the United States on September 19. Judith, our son Eric, and I were there to meet him, along with a full contingent of Sant Bani Ashram sevadars taking a few days off from our non-stop preparations for the Master’s coming there a month later, and at least a thousand others. The first ten days or so were spent at the home of Mr. and Mrs. T. S. Khanna, who were living at this time in an exclusive neighborhood in Oakton, Virginia. The neighbors objected strenuously to large numbers of cars and ragged-looking young people hanging around, so the word was out not to go there for darshan, but to be satisfied with the public meetings held at the American Legion Hall in nearby Fairfax. Nevertheless on the first night the Master personally asked Judith, Eric, and me to come over to see him, and we went. A very, very sweet darshan it was, too. The next night there were quite a few more people there, and the third night a mob; and watching the Master I had a distinct feeling that he was not pleased

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2 *Sat Sandesh*, November 1972, p. 6. Gyani Ji’s tour account is in the issues of *Sat Sandesh* from October 1972 through February 1973; these issues were reprinted in book form as *The Third World Tour of Kirpal Singh*. My comments on this tour are confined, for the most part, to my personal experience of it.
with such a large number of people being there. This made me uneasy, and I resolved not to go the next night.

After Satsang the following evening, therefore, I announced in our hotel room (a large two-room suite that many of us were sleeping in) that I was not going to go over that night. Some of the people were willing to go along with whatever I did, and others were determined to go anyway, which was certainly their right and, for all I knew, their duty: who was to say I was right? They left, and the few of us remaining sat around and discussed the Path. I spoke of how the most beautiful moments—in fact, the only moments that really counted—in my life were those moments at the Master's Feet. Our dear sister Amy Hart said, “Why aren't you there now?” The second she said that, I felt as though I had been hit by lightning. I knew she was absolutely right: not only should I be there, but I must be there, that the Master himself wanted me there—the same way I had known it in Pathankot, only two or three times as intense. I said instantly, “I'm going over! Anybody who wants to go can come, but I'm not waiting!” I raced down the stairs, jumped into the car and drove off—along with Judith, Eric, Amy, Shirley Tassencourt and Kathy Osinski, all of whom had been in the room and had also made it into the car. Like a madman I drove the ten miles or so to the house—the urgency was unbearable, and I felt that I had made a terrible mistake and the only way I could rectify it was to get there as quickly as possible. We pulled into Mr. Khanna's front yard, raced into the house—and found no one there at all—no one at all except the Master, sitting cross-legged on his bed and beaming at us! I didn't stop to wonder where everyone else was; I threw myself at his Feet, grateful beyond words. He said softly, “Where have you been?” I just looked at him; what could I say? He continued, “Were you lost?” and smiled. I said, “Yes, Master—I was lost, all right, but I'm found now!” He laughed.

Then followed twenty minutes of the sweetest, most loving darshan imaginable—with just us! At the end, Mr. Khanna came upstairs; seeing us in the Master's room, he called up the others from downstairs in the basement, where every soul in the house had been waiting—except for us. Master gave them a few minutes too, then dismissed us all. I felt his love that night as much as I ever had.
“Don’t Bend Your Elbows”

We could only stay a few days; there was way too much work at Sant Bani Ashram to stay away any longer (although Judith and I managed to squeeze in a couple of days in Philadelphia). We left Virginia the evening of September 25; but at 4 p.m. that day the Master gave an incredibly powerful talk: in it he reiterated the story he had told so many times about the angels and demons and feeding each other, and used that as the basis of an unbelievably beautiful exposition of how satsangis should live. The talk can be read in its entirety in _The Coming Spiritual Revolution_ but a few excerpts cry out to be paid attention to:

All Masters who have come bring the religion of love. . . . God is love. Our soul is of the same essence as God—it has love innate in itself—and the way back to God is also through love. In the Bible is given the same thing: _Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself._ Kabir and all other Masters have said the same thing. . . .

So if we have love, we must give to others the best we can. If you make others happy, you will be happy yourself. If you make others miserable, then you also will not be able to escape the misery. So once it so happened that Lord Vishnu, who is the aspect of God in charge of maintenance, invited all the angels and others of opposite qualities, to a feast, and he arranged for them to sit in rows facing each other. Then Vishnu said, “Well, dear brothers, dear friends, all this is for you—eat to your heart’s content—but there is one condition laid down: Don’t bend your elbows!” Those who were only demons, or whatever you want to call them, thought, “Well, strange enough! If we don’t bend our elbows, how can we put the food in our mouths?” They considered it for long, but they could not comprehend it. They said, “Lord Vishnu is just mocking us,” refused to eat anything and left the place in disgust. But the angels who were sitting there said, “These are the words of Lord Vishnu; there must be meaning behind them, something we don’t follow.” After calm consideration it struck them: We can feed each other! So it was very easy. And all ate as directed.

What does all this mean? If we make others happy, we will become happy. If we put others in bad condition, we will be put in bad condition. So, if we want to be happy, we must make others happy.

And moreover you will find: Once a devotee prayed to God, “Please come to my home, my prayer is, you will please visit my home.” God promised, “I will come,” on such and such a date. The devotee made all arrangements,
you see, decorated his house with flowers, cleaned it throughout, and put on really clean clothes. He sat at the door and waited for God. From morn to night he sat there, but all who came was one old man passing by who could not even walk properly. The old man said, “Well, I am hungry, give me some food—half a loaf of bread, please give me!” Nobody listened. So he passed on. That night, the devotee said to God, “Look here, you promised and you never came. I made all arrangements for you!” But God said, “I did come, and you would not even give me a half a loaf of bread.”

So God resides in every heart. No heart is without Him. We are all brothers and sisters in God. We are of the same essence as that of God, and God also resides in everybody. He is the Controlling Power within you. So, if you love, well, love is God; God is love; and the way back to God is also through love.

So to earn money is all right; but that money should be earned to let you stand on your own legs, pay off all debts to those connected with you by reaction of the past, and also share with others who are needy, who are hungry, who are in bad condition. If you have love for God, won’t you give everything to others? Because we congeal everything to ourselves, you see, the result is selfishness, tyranny, sucking the other man’s blood; is it not? Just as the parable shows: “Don’t bend your elbows.” I think if you would do like that, you would eat more—if others put in your mouth, is it not? . . .

So this is one thing: If you love God, all things shall be added unto you. God resides in every heart. You will love all—even animals, even birds. Once in the days of Lord Buddha, there was one hunter who sent up an arrow and hit the wing of a bird and made it limp, so that it could not fly. And the bird went up to the Buddha—because man radiates whatever is in him, and love was in him and the bird came up. So the Buddha took him and put him under his arm and said, “This bird is mine.” The hunter said, “No, it is mine.” But the Buddha said, “If it had been yours, it would have gone to you.” Do you follow? Those who radiate love, everybody will be yours. But our love should not be acting and posing; our thoughts are very potent. They are radiated. Others do know at heart what you are doing.

We left Virginia immediately after the talk and drove all night to get home; but the beauty and the sweetness of it remained in our hearts throughout the coming month.

Return to Sant Bani Ashram

In October he returned to Sant Bani Ashram for the first time since his initial one-day visit nine years before. Both the Ashram and the Master who had founded it had altered much in outer appearance: the
Ashram had grown many buildings, including of course the Satsang Hall, and also a small house built especially and only for the Master’s personal use as a labor of love by the devotees of the area; and the Master had aged so that it was a visible effort for him to walk around the place he had once enjoyed so much, and after a few tries he was eventually driven from one place to another in a car—over the same paths and walkways he had practically bounded over on his first visit. Nevertheless, I referred to his five-day stay at the time as “five drops of eternity,” and that remains an excellent description. Despite his weakening physical condition, or perhaps because of it, his spirit burned more intensely than ever; and those five days were, in terms of Sant Bani Ashram, both a fulfillment and a foreshadow—an end and a beginning.

He was due to arrive on Monday morning, October 16, and Jim Russell and I drove down Sunday night to Boston, where he was staying at Millie Prendergast’s house, intending to stay overnight and escort him up to the Ashram the following day. (The dear ones at the Ashram were still working feverishly to finish up everything, including especially the Master’s house, before he arrived.) Jim and I walked in to his room, and he greeted us with, “I am ready to go!” (Gulp!) “You want to go tonight, Master?” “Yes, I am ready.” He was giving a talk that night at the Lowell Lecture Hall at Harvard University and we arranged to go up immediately after he was finished. In the meantime, I hurriedly called home to inform the sevadars at the Ashram what was happening; they were overjoyed to hear it, but it meant of course that they had much less time than they had expected to finish the preparations. In the event, we did indeed drive up that night; our dear brother and friend James Nicholson from New York, who drove the Master all over the East Coast, drove him, with Gyani Ji, Harcharan, Bhalla and Millie; and Jim and I followed.

When we arrived, late at night, he had all the Ashram sevadars into his (brand-new) house for one of the most incredible darshans I had ever experienced. He sat with us so lovingly in the living-room of his house, and reminisced with us about the 1963 tour and his visit here then, and the differences in the Ashram between then and now. He was very pleased with his house which had been designed, and the building of it supervised, by his loving disciple Tibor Farkas, whose
memorable Initiation in India I have described above; he joked with Judith and me about “our traveling home,” a reference to the Corvair which we had rigged up with a mattress in the back so that Miriam and Eric had a space of their own to play, eat, and sleep in. The weather was cold, but the Master said with a big smile, “Love knows no cold.” There was lots of laughter and a tremendous amount of love; he gave us all a very great deal that night.

The next morning he put those of us who were there (many people had not arrived yet, since he was supposed, according to the schedule, to be driving up that morning) into meditation, after giving a short talk in which he commented on the radical changes that had taken place at the Ashram since he had been there nine years before. He also quoted Thoreau: “Blessed are those who do not read newspapers, for they shall see Nature, and through Nature, God”—he actually said it twice!—while smiling directly at me. I was of course addicted to reading newspapers, and continued to read them for years; it is only lately that I have come to appreciate the profound truth behind that remark.

That night he gave the first of a series of extraordinary talks. By that time, many, many people had arrived, and we suddenly discovered that our impressive new hall, which had seemed so enormous when we built it, was nowhere near big enough to hold everyone who wanted in. There were close to a thousand people at the Ashram by now, and the normal seating capacity of the hall was somewhere around three hundred. What to do? What we did was what became known all over the country as “The Sant Bani Squeeze”: jamming people in so tight that there was not an iota of space between them. This way we managed to get around seven hundred people in the hall. But that wasn’t everybody. We set up the main room of the Big House as an auxiliary space, with speakers piped in from the Hall, and we announced that Master would come down and give darshan to the people there after he finished his talk; that filled up too. But that still wasn’t everybody. Finally, the overflow (about fifty people, as I recall) stood outside the Hall in bitter October weather and had darshan through the windows.

The Master began his talk that evening by saying, “Today is the best time to embrace each other. We are all brothers and sisters in God.

3 Now of course that would be illegal.
So welcome you are to Sant Bani Ashram! They say that two kings cannot live together in one country, but hundreds of beggars can. All right. You have come to Sant Bani Ashram: simply hear; just look to the purpose for which you have come. That’s the main thing.” He then proceeded to give a marvelous talk which has since been published in *The Coming Spiritual Revolution* under the title, “This World Is Not Your Home.” It is well worth studying carefully. At the conclusion of the talk, he took a couple of questions, then said to me (at this point I was standing beside him), “So many people standing outside in the cold—can’t you accommodate them?” We did our best, and a number of people were brought in; but still there were some left outside. Master said so compassionately, “God bless them—part of my attention will be outside with them.”

The questions he was asked included this one: “I don’t have a yearning to go home. I came on the Path because I wanted to be a better human being, and I knew you could help. I still don’t have the yearning to go home, I just want to be a better human being. What is the best way to develop?” The Master’s answer, which I quoted in Book Four above and reproduce here, deserves to be examined very carefully by anybody who is really interested in how he viewed the importance of love and service of humanity in its relation to spiritual development and transcendence; it is extraordinarily illuminating:

“That’s all right. Man is one, as I submitted, who is of use to others. So you obey God’s order: ‘Who serves my humanity, he serves me.’ That’s the first step; that is a good idea.

“You see, there is a parable in the Upanishads. It says that there was one man who was very fond of helping others—selfless service. He was so fond of serving others because he saw that God-into-Expression Power in the human body. Christ said that if we do not love our brother whom we see, how can we love That Whom we don’t see? So human body is the expression of That. He also resides in the human body, and those whose yogic eye is developed, they see God in the human body. Outward temples are made in the model of man; they put symbols of light and sound in there. In churches, in temples, in mosques, the same symbols are there. Which is the best of all? The human body in which these symbols are manifest is the best of all of them.

“So only he will serve mankind who sees God in them. The more devoted he is, the more he will serve others. The parable says that that man who was very fond of serving others, naturally he was a man [*insan*]—because he was
considered to be of use to others. Love knows service and sacrifice, you see? And he prayed to God, and God was very pleased with him, and asked him, ‘Well, will you come back home?’ (I am replying to your question.) He said, ‘Lord, I want to serve others; if I come to You, that would be no addition to You—I am merely a drop of the ocean of Your consciousness. So give me more time to serve others.’ That’s all right! That’s a good idea.”

There were a number of memorable small-group darshans held in the Master’s house; of course, only a few could come in at a time, but we worked very hard to insure that everyone who was there got in to see him at close quarters at least once. At one of these darshans Chief Louis Nielsen of the Sanbornton Police Department came to see the Master. Chief Nielsen was a very unusual policeman; he had spent a great deal of time in Japan, being stationed there after the Second World War, had married a Japanese woman, and had developed a great appreciation of Eastern thought. (He had a wonderful collection of samurai swords which he had shown me.) He was a very good friend to the Ashram and he hit it off beautifully with the Master, for whom he had great respect: he spent most of an hour with him, during which they laughed and talked like old friends.

Another memorable darshan involved the Wiggins family: this was a remarkable Sanbornton family with (eventually) three generations of initiates. The patriarch, Rev. Howard Hare, a retired Methodist minister
(not himself initiated), came to see the Master, accompanied by his family members. The Master treated him with great respect and talked with him at length. At one point, the Rev. Mr. Hare said, “I feel peace in your presence, sir, but I can’t call you Master.” The Master said very deferentially, “What is your age, sir, if I may ask?” Mr. Hare said that he was 87. The Master said, “All right, just take me as your younger brother.” This conversation echoed down the years of the Wiggins family, and Mr. Hare subsequently cited it many times as an evidence of the Master’s humility.

And perhaps the most memorable darshan of all of them involved our beloved daughter, Miriam. I have mentioned above how she was totally captivated by the Master in 1963 and how loving and gentle he was with her. She and Eric both were initiated into the Sound Current at a very early age, and for a time they both meditated joyfully every day. But as the years passed and Miriam grew older, she lost interest in the Path and developed a rebellious streak which worried Judith and me; we did not always respond with wisdom to her concerns. And when the Master returned, she attended the satsangs but refused to go with us down to the Master’s house for darshan. When we told the Master about this, he immediately said, “I will give her a tea party.” And he did: Miriam went down with us to his house, and the Master had the tea things out on a table, poured the tea for her himself, and engaged her in conversation throughout. The thing that impressed me the most was his evident caring: this twelve-year old girl really mattered to him. He made that very clear.

(A year later, after Miriam had started high school and was worrying Judith and me still more, I was in India with the Master and started to express those worries to him. He stopped me dead: “DON’T WORRY ABOUT HER! I WILL TAKE CARE OF HER!” I didn’t; and he did.)

Another beautiful thing that happened was the Master’s visit to The Sant Bani Press. Only the people who worked there (which at that time included Jim Cluett, Tim Gallagher, Michael Raysson, Danny Paul, and myself) and their families were invited; he greeted us all, examined everything—the printing press, the linotype machines, the paper cutter, everything—and then stood on the bank of the Winnipesaukee River 4 just outside and gave us all darshan.

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4 One of the sources, along with the Pemigewasset, of Thoreau’s Merrimack (as in A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers).
The Gift of the Living Master

Because of the problem of seating capacity in the Hall, we scheduled a number of satsangs outdoors, just outside his house by the side of the pond, where there was plenty of room. This worked fine in the daytime, although it was cold; but at night (and, in deference to people's work schedules, we did have some satsangs at night) it was impossible. On the evening of his departure, what I later called “the night of amazing grace,” Thursday, October 19, 1972, in a hall packed so tight with children of God that not one more could possibly squeeze in, he gave the talk that has since been published as “The Gift of the Living Master,” a few excerpts of which follow: 5

He began by saying, “I may submit to you—this is my last talk here—that the subject of spirituality wholly hinges on the word ‘Master’ or Guru. If you understand the word ‘Master’ or Guru, you understand the whole theory of the teachings of the Masters.” He then proceeded to define those terms in this way:

All scriptures that are available to us speak of the unavoidable necessity, I would say, of the existence of a Master or a Guru or a Saint. This is no new

5 See The Coming Spiritual Revolution, pp. 129-147.
subject. Even in the old days when Masters came on the scene, this question was considered to be very important. Guru Nanak took four trips: one to the North, to the Himalayas; one to the East, to Burma and China; the third to the South, to Ceylon; and the fourth to the West, Persia, Arabia, Jerusalem, Egypt. When he went to the Himalayas, the Siddhas put a question to him: “Who is your Guru?” and he told them, “Shabd is my Guru.” Do you know what is meant by “Shabd?” God is Ashabd, Wordless, Nameless; when It came into expression, It was called “Word,” It was called Shabd, It was called Naam or “Name.” So he said, “My Guru is Shabd—the God-into-Expression Power is my Guru. God is my Guru, and He will lead me into the Absolute God.”

The Tenth Guru refers to his past lives—which very few Saints have done. He said, I was undergoing great penances, great meditations—ultimately I realized that God was within me and I in Him. God ordered me to go to the world. I told Him I did not want to come back. Who is ready to leave that blissful state and come to the world? You see, when the Masters come, they are ordered to come. Nobody would like to leave that place of permanent peace and joy to come down. . . . But God ordered me, “All right, you go.” “What for shall I go?” And He said, “I have sent so many before; they all gave out their message, but ultimately, they asked all to worship them. (We worship the incarnations, you know. Only a few Masters who were sent by God, you might say, gave out: “My Father has sent me.” Kabir said, “I am the messenger of God, I was sent by Him to communicate the message He has sent; He remains contacted with me.” See?) And the Tenth Guru says, I submitted to His will and pleasure. And he came here and said, Do you know who I am? I am the servant of all of you. I am no more than that—a man like you. Of course, God has sent me. Then what you want? He said, Worship God and God alone. Then, because it has become the custom, the common people began to praise him, as they did with all those sent by God, you see. And they forgot the Name of God. So he put a great admonition: Whosoever shall call me God will go to Hell.

Kabir was asked, “Who is your Guru and Master?” He said: The One Who has sent me, He is my Master, I am His slave; I am His messenger. Prophet Mohammed said the same thing: I am a mere messenger. You see? Rasul means, “he who brings the message of God.” Similarly, Kabir said, My Master lives in me but He lives above all these outgoing faculties.

So they are quite conscious. They are sent by God. They are Word made flesh. And they say that Word resides in every heart, and you are to worship Him and Him alone. Have respect for everybody, but One is to be worshipped—
God. So all Masters who have come, they are working to just unite you with God. Go back to your Home. They help you to go back Home, and also give you a contact. Because where is God? He is in the same body in which you are living. . . .

So who is a Master? God resides in everybody; a Master is one in whom He is manifested. In all of us, He is there; He is the Controlling Power; but He is not fully manifest. So what is the work of that manifested God? He says, I will give you eternal life, and those to whom I have given, they will never perish—I am quoting Christ’s words, you see—never perish, and there is no power which can snatch him away from my hands. Swami Ji\(^8\) also referred to that: In whomsoever I sow the seed of Naam, even the Negative Power has no control. All other Saints say the same thing.

So what do Masters do? Those who come to him may leave him, but the Master never leaves them. That’s one thing, you see. Our Master used to say, “He has got a long rope.” . . . So blessed you are; you are fortunate you have been given that seed—with God’s grace, with the grace of my Master, of course. That will never perish. That Power never leaves you. When I came on my first tour, people asked me, “When is Christ returning?” I told them, “Has He ever left you?”—because we have got his words with us: Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.\(^9\) If He is not leaving us, how can He leave us? Come again? He never leaves! He manifests from time to time at different human poles to guide the child Humanity. He is always, at all times, even now—every time—because that is the Divine Link. For those who are hungry, there is food; for those who are thirsty, there is water—and that Water of Life or Bread of Life, they give: they come down to give. . . .

You know, they know what their work is: They do that much as they are instructed to do by God. They are not bound by any outward opinions; they carry on His work. This is one phase of it, you see? Who can lead you to God?—Do you know? Guru Nanak says, The One Who is called God, He is One; and One goes to express that unlimited Power. We say, “God is One,” because we are finite and we have to address Him in finite terms; there are no other words, you see. So he says: God is One; He is Ruler of all three planes; He is ever true, eternal; He is permeating all creation. He is the Controller of all creation; He is the Maker of all; He is the Ruler of all. No other Power is above Him. He comes into expression of His own Self; He is not brought by

\(^8\) Swami Shivdayal Singh of Agra, known affectionately and respectfully as “Swami Ji Maharaj”; he was the guru of Baba Jaimal Singh, and the spiritual great-grandfather of Kirpal.

\(^9\) Matthew 28:20, followed by Hebrews 13:5.
anybody. What is said further? It is a gift from his Master: *Satguru parshad* . . . *God gives you God as a parshad to you!* You see? . . .

The Master gave initiation the next morning. He had instructed me to screen and prepare potential initiates all week long, and I had been doing so: about twenty-five persons had been accepted and we had set aside the main room in the Big House for the initiation, leaving the Hall for everyone else to meditate in. But when I arrived at the Big House on the morning scheduled, I found that the number had doubled overnight! Not only were most of these persons unknown to me—they had not been screened and some of them had very little idea of what they were doing—but the capacity of the room reserved for the purpose was nowhere big enough to handle fifty persons. The fact was that Mr. T. S. Khanna and Mr. Reno Sirrine, who were the Master’s principal Representatives, had strong views about this “screening” and they were just offering the initiation to anyone and accepting all. I did not feel that I was in a position to object but I really didn’t know what to do about the space problem: if we used the Hall for the initiation, which was one obvious solution, where would everyone else meditate? I ran down to the Master’s house and explained the situation to him. We were in the living room of his house, both standing. When I finished, he stood for a few minutes, looking at me, his eyes twinkling. Finally he said, “Weed out ten.” I stared, not comprehending. He repeated, a bit sharply, “Weed out ten. There are too many.” I blurted out, “You want me to weed out ten of them, Master?” He said, “Yes, surely.” Suddenly I had a mental picture of myself explaining to Mr. Khanna and Mr. Sirrine that I had been told to weed out ten of the very people they had been so actively encouraging to be initiated, and I laughed. I laughed long and loud, and it was a laugh of disobedience; for with that laugh I made a choice—I decided not to do what the Master had told me to do. It would of course have been very difficult for me to have done it, and again it might well have been misunderstood by others as some kind of an ego trip. So I took the easy course, and disobeyed.

Master watched me laughing very closely for a few minutes; then he also laughed. I did not feel that he was specially surprised or angry at my disobedience; I doubt that he expected anything different. When he finished laughing, he said, “Use the Hall for the initiation. It doesn’t matter about the others. They don’t have to meditate this morning.”
The matter was settled; I had got what I came for; I went up and arranged for the initiation to be given in the Hall. But many, many times since that day, especially when I have felt content with myself, complacent, like a good obedient disciple worthy of being emulated by others, I remember very clearly the Master standing there, saying, “Weed out ten,” and me laughing and refusing to do it, and I know that I do not have even the beginning of an inkling of what obedience means, or what is meant by self-surrender.

The Master left later that day for Kirpal Ashram in Vermont (he spent one night there and transferred to Burlington where Nina Gitana had arranged for him to be invited to speak at the University of Vermont). Before he left, he gave us a beautiful farewell darshan outside his house by the pond. Oh, it was hard to let him go! When his car finally pulled out, I went into his house, got between the big curtain and the picture window which it covered, and wept.

The Tour Continues

After the Master left Sant Bani Ashram, we followed him everywhere we could. The Press was still operating; *Sat Sandesh* was coming out every month; so our opportunities were somewhat limited. We did see him in Vermont, and then we made plans to join him in Denver; five of us—Judith, Gerald Boyce, Tibor Farkas, Joe Gelbard and me—
were going to drive in our Chevrolet station wagon, non-stop, taking turns driving. We planned to accompany him on the rest of the Tour that way, although I knew I would have to leave at some point and come home in order to get Sat Sandesh out. Years later, I gave a talk at Sant Bani Ashram\textsuperscript{10} in which I recalled driving non-stop through the night from Denver to Vancouver:

There is an incident that I’ve never told publicly, but today I feel like telling it: During the second half of the 1972 tour, five of us were following the Master in a station wagon. We were trying to get everywhere the Master went. (Of course, he was flying and we were in a car.) It was a job. We took turns driving. The hardest part was driving all night from Denver to Vancouver through the Rockies, so that we would get there before he did. (We left Denver early, with his blessing.) I was driving and at one point I hit a deer. The deer [a big antlered buck] was suddenly there, and I didn’t have time to put on the brake, it all happened so fast. He turned a total somersault and went off into the woods. He didn’t seem to be hurt, but the car was, and we had to stop at a gas station and have the radiator fixed where the deer had impacted the car. I asked the guys at the gas station what they thought—whether the deer was hurt or not—and they said, “No, if he was hurt, he wouldn’t have taken off like that. This happens around here a lot.” So I took that as a gift of grace also, that the deer wasn’t hurt.

Later on in that same trek, I was lying in the back of the station wagon, trying to get some sleep and as I was lying there [and the car was speeding through the Rocky Mountains in the middle of the night]—I don’t know if I can do justice to this; maybe I shouldn’t even be talking about it—I became aware that the Master was tending me, that He was by my side and He was taking care of me the way that a mother takes care of her little child. It was so powerful!—and I had been feeling so alone—the wind was howling, it was November in Wyoming, we were a long way from our goal—and I became so aware of His tenderness—the infinite love He has for us. And that is the reality. It’s like that all the time. We become aware of it very, very sporadically, maybe, but it’s happening all the time—a constant presence. That is the way He relates to us: with the infinite tenderness of a mother. . . .

I remembered a story that Khuku, the Princess Devinderbir Kaur Narendra, had told me: She was the daughter of the Maharajah of Jhind, and was married to an Indian Air Force officer who was killed in a plane crash. Being a widow, especially a young widow, is not an easy fate for a Hindu wife, even for royalty;
there is no possibility of marrying again (for women—it’s not a problem for men) and very little else most can do. But Khuku found the Master and came to live at his Ashram.

She told me that very early in her discipleship Master took a number of sevadars, including her, to his retreat at Rajpur, near Dehra Dun, and after some time told her that he and everyone (except her!) were going back to Delhi, and he wanted her to stay there and look after the house. She said that this terrified her: as a princess, and then as a wife, she had never been alone. She put up a brave front, but when Master and the party left, she broke down. Waves of fear engulfed her, and she was almost paralyzed with fright—which was compounded when she saw a light outside the window. What was that?!! She crept to the window and looked out and saw that there was a man with a lantern outside walking around the house. When the man came closer, she saw it was the Master!!—doing sentry duty for her! She couldn’t believe it; she kept looking; but it was true. Master was out there, going back and forth, back and forth, around the house, all night, watching over her. She understood that this is what the Master does, what he is always doing: watching over us to keep us safe, to ease our terror, no matter how irrational or misguided it may be.

We did make it to Vancouver and then drove all night in a pouring rainstorm to Berkeley, California, where the Master was staying at the home of Stuart and Shilla Judd, old friends of mine from the Coffee Corner and the 1963 tour, who were Group Leaders there: he would be holding satsang in the San Francisco area for a week or so. That is where I left: I flew back to Boston, took the bus up to Franklin, New Hampshire in a driving blizzard, was met by Kent Bicknell at the bus station, we tried to get up one hill, then another, then a third, back to the first one, the snow all the while getting deeper and deeper,—finally made it!—spent the next week getting the next issue of Sat Sandesh out—was driven by George and Debbie Lisi to the bus station—back to the airport—then rejoined the Master (and Judith!) in southern California, and very happy I was to be there.

In Los Angeles, the Master spent a lot of time in the company of Yogi Bhajan, which some of us (particularly me) resented; we wanted him to spend it in the company of us, no doubt. One sweet afternoon at the home of Lucille Gunn in Glendale, the Master was asked why Yogi Bhajan, who lays so much emphasis on the Sikh Gurus and their

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11 Of course what we would consider Master’s body was well on the way to Delhi.
writings, should teach Kundalini Yoga which is explicitly condemned in these writings. The Master laughed gleefully: “I don’t know! Ask him.” Someone else asked him why Jesus was the only Master who had died for the sins of the world. He laughed again, not so gleefully this time: “All Masters have died for the sins of the world.”

The tour continued through Dallas, St. Petersburg, eventually Fort Lauderdale. It seemed as though it got harder and harder to get to him at each place. In Fort Lauderdale the crunch was immense: it was his last stop in the United States and people came from everywhere to see him for one last time. The numbers were so many and the difficulties so multiplied that I almost gave up but not quite. One day was set aside for the disciples and the Master to be together at Birch State Park. It was a lovely day, beginning with meditation and darshan. Private interviews followed. At some point I was wandering alone in the Park when, as I was crossing a road, I met Jim Russell in his car. He invited me to accompany him while he returned to his hotel (which was also Master’s hotel) on some errand or other. I accepted. As we left his room and were standing by the elevator, I had a sudden impulse and said, “Suppose we push “5” (the Master’s floor) instead of “1”, and see what happens?”—Always adventurous, he said, “Fine!” and pushed “5”. We arrived at Master’s suite to discover it almost completely deserted—everyone was at the Park. Only the Master himself and Harcharan Singh were there. Harcharan met us at the door. “Oh, good!” he said. “The Master wanted to see you. Here—this is for you!” and gave me a fuzzy Polaroid picture of Master and Yogi Bhajan sitting on a brass bed at the Yogi’s headquarters in Los Angeles. I didn’t like the picture and I was still feeling unfriendly toward the Yogi, so I took the picture, resolving mentally not to publish it or do anything with it. I put it in my pocket and Jim and I went in to see the Master who was sitting on his bed. He smiled and said to me, “Do you have something for me?” I could not think what he meant, unless it was the picture that I had just been given, so I pulled it out of my pocket and gave it to him. He smiled, took it, and then proceeded to autograph it—thus turning it into a valued possession, and handed it back, saying flatly, “You will print this in Sat Sandesh.” I said, “Yes, Master,” and I did.\footnote{January 1973, p. 26}
The Coming Spiritual Revolution

On one of the last nights in Florida—December 7, 1972—he gave a remarkable talk on “The Coming Spiritual Revolution,” which, the longer I live and the more I read it, seems to me to be absolutely essential reading, digesting, and acting upon, for anyone concerned with the way the world is falling headlong down into the pit of hell. I have since published a book of Kirpal’s talks under that title, and this was the first talk in the book. It can be read there in its entirety, but certain sections of it demand to be singled out:

Dear brothers and sisters, the people are crying for peace. How can we have it? Peace should start from our hearts. We should give out peace as prayed by Guru Nanak: Peace be all the world over, under Thy will, O God. And for this, naturally, there must be a spiritual revolution.

The world is already in revolution; but this revolution should be different. This revolution should not be of the body, but against the evil propensities of the mind which keep us away from God. This will be achieved if we give right understanding to the people at large, which will result in right thoughts. First comes right understanding; then come right thoughts, which result in right speech, and right speech will result in right actions. The whole thing starts from right understanding.

So you will find right understanding first lies in recognizing that there is a Maker of the universe Who is the Controlling Power and permeates all Creation . . . So this is the first right understanding: We are living in Him, have our being in Him, He is in us, outside us, above us, below us. Like fish [in water] we have our existence in Him. That is right understanding. And further: God made man with equal privileges, all born the same way, no high, no low; all have got the same outer concessions—eyes, ears, etc.,—and all have the same inner concession: we are kept in the body by some higher Power which is the same for all. So this is right understanding: that we have this thing—God resides in every heart—and that all is holy where devotion kneels . . . So this is one thing: if you have this understanding, what will be the result? Your whole angle of vision will be changed; you will see that we are all children of God, the same Father. The true Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man will be cemented. So this is what I mean by spiritual revolution—from Godlessness . . .

Every human being has a secret chamber within himself, which is called the “closet of the body.” That is higher than the mind and heart both, and provides mind with understanding to a certain extent, and the heart with
feelings of love. This chamber is the Kingdom of God within us. This is the crest jewel, the pearl of great price. The Saints, when we come in contact with them, open this chamber by withdrawing all our attention from outside. The test of a true Master is the fact that in his company, the smallest realm opens up within us, and the Light, Divine Light, the God-into-Expression Power, is seen. Christ said, “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” Prophet Mohammed said, “The light of Allah is found where? In the human temples.” Why am I quoting these things? Because right understanding was given by Saints and Masters coming from time to time. Lord Krishna said, “I will give you divine light and you will see my glory within.” Buddha said the same thing: “Every man possesses the bright mirror of illumination.” This, all the Buddhas realized. Buddha further proclaimed that, “The way of the illumined ones is the growth of snowdrops behind the eyes”; and then Christ came, and it was as if a few crocuses opened their eyes to the winter sky. But now the time has come when we can have a rebirth; this is what Christ spoke of when he said that the poor in spirit shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

So springtime is upon us now; there will be more fragrant Saints, I would say now, who will come up and give us through the grace of God, a contact with the God-into-Expression Power. And this is the revolution, the spiritual revolution, which is coming up—an awakening all around. Why are all these people coming, you see? In the past, these things were told in the ears of the disciples after a long time of testing. Now it is given out from open platforms; people are having it without distinction, whether they are ready or not ready, they are getting something. This is what is needed—the times have changed now. And Masters come from time to time to bring these things into the experience of others who are born as human beings . . .

These were among the last public words he spoke in North America. He flew to Mexico on December 10, then to Panama, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela; then back to India, arriving there on January 2, 1973. The third world tour was over.
BOOK EIGHT

The Unity of Man
The Master with Yogi Bhajan in the lead car of the great procession through the streets of Delhi that began the World Conference on Unity of Man
The Unity of Man

India: 1973

The following September I was overcome by a strong desire to see my Master again. Judith did not feel she could go with me—it seemed as though one of us should stay at the Ashram as its work was growing by leaps and bounds—but she gave me her total support, and we agreed that we would take turns from then on. This was a very interesting and satisfying visit, during which I learned a great deal, some of which I am still processing.

When I arrived in Delhi, I learned that the Master was up at Manav Kendra, so I took a taxi and went up. There were other people in the cab, but by the time we were close to Dehra Dun I was the only one left. The driver stopped in a village for some reason, opened his door suddenly without looking, and a man on a bicycle rode right into it and was knocked off his bike and into the street. He was very angry, and berated the driver, who did not apologize (although he was completely in the wrong) but responded by yelling back. Within seconds a huge crowd had gathered; everyone in the village, it seemed, had formed a big circle around the taxi and they were all furious at the driver. It was very ugly, and I was very apprehensive: so far, no one had noticed me, but when they did? Oh me. But just as the fury rose to a crescendo an old man, obviously a village elder, came up to the taxi, talked briefly with the driver and the man on the bike, and calmed everyone down within seconds; and we drove on. Twenty minutes later we arrived at Manav Kendra, and very glad I was to get there. The Master was giving darshan at his (now functioning) house, and I very gratefully went straight to his feet and told him what had happened. He did not seem surprised. After the darshan was over, one of the people there told me that about a half an hour before I arrived, Master had abruptly got up, left the room and went outside, where he stayed.
for several minutes; then he came back and resumed the session without a word of explanation. Nobody knew what was going on until I arrived and told my story.

On one of the first nights there I was pacing around and around the beautiful pool he had built when I looked over and saw him on the back porch of his house which was next to the pool. At first I thought he was asleep—he was sitting in a chair, unmoving—but looking closer I saw that he was in samadhi—he was radiating Light, and his face which in repose now looked older than old, had merged with that of his Master so that I was looking at both their faces at once. It was an astounding sight and despite my years with him, new to me: I had often seen him turn totally into Baba Sawan Singh, but I had never seen them co-exist in the same space before. I was very grateful to be granted this extraordinary privilege, and I gazed at him for what seemed like many hours.

When I returned home, I gave a talk that tried to give some account of what the trip was like (I published it in Sat Sandesh under the title, “With the Incarnation of Love”):

There is a story of Chuang Tsu that says that one night he dreamed he was a butterfly, and when he woke up he wasn’t sure if he was a man who had dreamed he was a butterfly, or if he was a butterfly dreaming he was a man. It’s such a different world, over there with him . . . He’s such a blazing incarnation of love. The day before I left, He asked me, “Well, what have you gotten? Have you received anything?” And I couldn’t tell him; I couldn’t tell him, because it was too much. My eyes filled up and I tried to tell him, but I couldn’t. But he gave me exactly what my soul cried out for. And while it was a short stay—less than three weeks—there’s a phrase: “Short but sweet.” I don’t think it could have been any better if I had been there three years. And Master is not bound by time; if we went for one day, he could give us in that day what we need . . . if we let him.

The darshans were beautiful beyond words. One night, after he had been silent for some time, he leaned forward and said with great emphasis, “I have just one thing to say to you: You are all running a race. Try and finish first. Don’t look to see what the other man is doing, whether he is running ahead of you or behind you. Don’t look to the left or the right. Just have the ruling passion to finish first—the RULING passion.” He said that on several occasions. And thinking about it, I realized that so much of our energy goes into looking at what the other man is doing, one way or another. If we think he’s ahead
of us, we get jealous; if we think he's behind us, we get critical. If he's doing something we don't like, we worry and worry and worry. But all we have to do is aim for that finish line and go there. And it's so clear that this is what Master wants from us. All he wants is for us to head for that finish line and get there. And we're not racing against anybody—we're not racing against ourselves either. We're just racing to get there, as fast as we can. If everyone finished at the same time, that would please him the most! He doesn't care who finishes ahead of who; he just wants each one to go as fast as he can and get there—and get there.

He talked about gratitude, too. He went over some of the points in the Thanksgiving talk that He gave in Anaheim last November. He said to us, “Be grateful. The earth was once asked, ‘How do you bear this tremendous burden of everything standing on you?’ And the earth replied, ‘The only thing that's hard for me to bear is someone who's ungrateful.’” He said if a man has ten things that he wants, and there's an eleventh thing that he does not have that he wants, he'll forget all about the ten things that he has and worry about the eleventh thing that he doesn't have. That struck home. Many things that he said like that really struck home to me, and I thought: “This is what I do.” And I would pray, “Please Master, make it so that I'm not that way: so that I am grateful.” And I would realize how much of our experience with the Master is tied up with what we want from him in a personal, demanding way. We want him to notice us, to call us by name, to recognize us. I want that, too. But this time I realized, “Who am I to want these things? This is the Master! This is the incarnation of Love sitting here in front of me, and I want him to notice me?” At some of the most beautiful charged-up darshans of all, he hardly looked at me once the whole time. But he didn't need to because—I realized—He's always looking at us. He's always aware of us. And he's always giving. When he looks us in the eyes, that's a special thing, but if we're open to receive it we're getting it all the time. He said that in connection with people over here; He quoted Kabir as saying that “if a man lives beyond seven oceans—America is beyond seven oceans, is it not?—beyond all oceans?—and directs his attention this way, then? He'll get it!” And he will. It's a matter of whether we let him or not. One of the last things he said to me, as I was saying goodbye, was: “If you let me, I'll go all along with you.” If you let me, I'll go all along with you. It's up to us. And I see very clearly that we have problems, sometimes connected with our own selves and sometimes with others—problems so huge that we just can't see our way out of them—and the answer is simply to accept the love that the Master wants to give us. He wants to give it to us. It's pouring out from him—literally—sometimes you can almost see it, coming from him in huge waves.

And this is why, you see, the Master gives essentially the same talk over and over again, and explains things in the same simple basic way. Even at the darshans sometimes, he would give almost a standard talk. With such
love he would tell it, glancing deep into our eyes. And he would so sweetly say those things we've heard him say over and over—"God is love; soul is of the same essence as that of God," and so on. The point is that these teachings represent the answer to all our problems when we apply them. But the trouble is that we give assent to them with one part of our being but not with all our being. So when we do apply them, when we do Master the favor, you might say, of taking him seriously—about surrender, and really doing what he says—then these huge engulfing problems clear up. Their strength is given to them by our attention.

Of course, he always says, "If you love me, keep my commandments." I think it's important that the "love me" comes first. If we love him, we can keep his commandments. To try to keep his commandments without loving him—that's a hard thing. Sometimes you hear people talking about the commandments in terms of repression and strain, and this and that. Well, it's not like that. To talk about it that way is like talking about playing left field in a basketball game. It has nothing to do with what Master wants. We love him; because we love him, we find great pleasure in doing what he asks. It's the thing that gives us the most sweetness.

One time he asked me if I had any questions. And I didn't. He said, "Well, you are silent; that means either you are empty or you are full. Only the half-full make noise." And He told a story of the Emperor Akbar the Great and his minister Birbal. Birbal was Akbar's favorite minister, and all the others were jealous of him because Akbar loved him so much. And it so happened that Birbal came from a very low-class family—illiterates. And Birbal's enemies reasoned that if Akbar knew the truth about Birbal's family, he wouldn't love him anymore. So they arranged for Birbal's father to receive an invitation to visit Akbar at the palace. Birbal understood what was going on, and he said to his father, "All right, Father, you can ask him a few questions—how his health is and how the government is going—but after that, remain quiet. No matter what he says, keep quiet"—because he was afraid that his father would make a fool of himself. So his father came and visited Akbar, and did what he was told; and the next day Akbar said to Birbal, kind of scornfully, "Well, what would you do if you met a foolish man?" And Birbal said, "I would keep quiet."

Another time he was talking about the difference between acting and posing and really having something, and he told about a very learned man who had a brother, and everyone said, "Well, he is so learned, his brother must be learned, too"; but he was ashamed to admit that his brother was not a learned man. So he took all his books and piled them up in his house, in such a way as to make a path running through the books, and then he made his brother walk through them. Then when he was asked if his brother was learned, he said, "Oh yes, he has passed through all that."
At some of the darshans we had to wait a long time for the Master to come, because he’s still so terribly busy, working eighteen hours a day. But I loved the waiting, because I realized that I would rather be waiting for the Master than any other thing except being with the Master. Once, after a specially long wait, he came in and said so sweetly, “I have kept you people waiting a long time today. But waiting has its own bliss, does it not? Its own sweet bliss. Because when you’re waiting for someone, you are sitting in sweet expectation of the one for whom you are waiting—is it not?”

When those darshans were over, I would leave and go back to my room and I’d feel so unbelievably happy it was like my whole body was singing. I’d try to walk, but it would be like I was bouncing and floating both at once. The happiness seemed to stretch my whole insides tight, there was so much of it.

Someone asked him about worrying about results during meditation. He said, “You plant a seed in the ground; then every day you dig it up to see how it’s doing; what happens?”

Master went away for a couple of days while I was there. That was a hard thing—the hardest thing the whole time. For ten days the darshans seemed to have been getting better and better each time—each one seemed more beautiful and powerful than the one before it. Just walking over to Master’s house was heavenly. And I knew in my heart that it couldn’t keep on like this—the pattern was going to break. There was no outward indication of it, though, and while we had heard at the beginning of the week that Master was going to go to Dehra Dun without us, nothing more was said, and his presence was so overwhelming that the idea of his leaving was unthinkable. And the next morning he was gone.

You know, I almost went insane. I had really been feeding on him; I was being sustained by his presence. I would wake up in the morning and think, well, in just a few minutes I’ll see him. And during the day I would think, pretty soon I’ll be seeing him. And now he was gone. And my mind felt like it had been put in a cage three times too small for it. And the thought was pounding, I MUST go to Him, I must, I must. I was all set to take a taxi and follow him on my own. But I didn’t.

And later I realized that this was a very important thing: that it was absolutely necessary for separation to occur at that point. And eventually I grew to thank him for that as well as for all the other gifts. Separation is also a gift. Believe me, we cannot spend more time in his presence than we can assimilate.

One evening Mr. W. S. Mongia, from Meerut, asked the Master if he would speak on prayer. The Master gave him the funniest look and said, “Have you read the book Prayer?” And Mongia Sahib said, “Indeed I have, Sir.” Master

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1 Prayer: Its Nature and Technique, by Kirpal Singh
looked around at all of us—his eyes were twinkling like anything—and he said, “Go read it again!” Then he talked about prayer: how those prayers are successful when your heart, mind and tongue all agree. He said that generally they don't agree. He said, “We take the Master’s words and we modify them with what we want to put in.” And that’s where we get into trouble. . . .

One night I just thanked him for being here. He said, “Why? Why not thank the tailor? If a coat fits well, will you not thank the tailor?”

He said to us once, “You people in the West, you have two days a week off. Is that not true? Two days a week?” “Yes, Master.” He said, “Why not use them for meditation?” Then he looked at us and said, “Or perhaps only one day?” Because this is a strong and serious business, you know; the opportunity is given to us to find God. We put everything else first; we think that because two hours a day is the minimum, that's all we have to put in. We think if we put in more, we're being ascetic; but we don't do it in an ascetic way, that's the point. If we love somebody, we think of their pleasure, we do things that will please them and that makes us happy. That’s where our pleasure lies. If our pleasure lies in having them please us, then everyone knows that’s not love. So if we love him, we will do what makes him happy because really, that makes us happy. It's a very beautiful, very sweet thing which has its roots in the fact that it is first He Who loves us; our love is reciprocal.

The two days that Master was gone were very sobering. I put a lot of time in meditation and of course as the weekend went on, each passing hour brought his return closer and that made it easier. And on Monday morning I was really happy again. First we heard he would be there about noon; then two o'clock; then four o'clock; then six o'clock. Now during those two days that he was gone, ten new people arrived, including Bob and Susan Pearsall and their two children from our Satsang. And this first day, Bob was feeling a little sick to his stomach, probably from the water, which tends to make you queasy for a couple of days, until you get used to it. So he thought maybe some Coca-Cola would help. It was quarter to five when I learned this. Now Master was due back at six; but I had a very healthy intuition that he was coming sooner. And I was over at his house on the porch, waiting for him with my whole heart, and looking forward to seeing him so much I can’t tell you. And I thought: Well, if Bob had a Coke, it would help him, and I’d sure like to see him have it; so I asked around but there was none available, or so it seemed; I would have to leave the Ashram and go to a store and buy one. But I was afraid to leave the Ashram because I knew Master was coming soon, and I had been waiting two and a half days to see him. I really didn’t want to go. Selfless service said to go and get it for him; longing for his darshan, which I wanted so badly, said to wait there so I wouldn’t miss him. And I debated and thought it over and paced back and forth. Finally, I thought: “Well, you never
lose anything when you give”—remembering the Master’s words. I thought: I’ll get it for him. And I started off. I got all the way out to the main gate by the bridge, and just as I reached there I heard someone yelling, “Maharaj Ji! Maharaj Ji!” I looked up and there was Master’s car coming across the bridge! I jumped back, and as he came around the corner, I was standing there—all alone. I had the first darshan of anyone at the whole Ashram! When he saw me there, he moved across the back seat and smiled so beautifully and greeted me out of that window. And I just melted inside, you know—because, you see, you never lose anything when you give. See? After a struggle, I took it on face value, and it was right! Not only did I not lose anything, but I gained so much! I ran back to greet him as he got out of the car—and someone turned up with a Coca-Cola for Bob! They had heard me asking and gotten one for him. So he got it, and we all had darshan, and everything was perfect, and that is what I would say is the truth of the matter—that everything is perfect. It is we who make the flaws. Even if somebody or some circumstance seems to be wrong, all we have to do is run that race and get to that finish line, and leave the rest to Him. . . .

I had a long talk with him about the work here and the way I sometimes feel—sometimes it seems like a lot (when I forget him) and I get a little discouraged. And he said, “You forget that you are not alone. There is Someone working over your head. Never forget that.” . . .

In the same issue of Sat Sandesh (October 1973) in which this talk was published, I included a short note on the status of Manav Kendra at this time:

Manav Kendra is functioning in a very impressive way already. The School (the Manav Vidya Mandir) now has 78 students, all drawn from the poorest of the poor in the Dehra Dun area—kids who would have no chance whatever otherwise. At Master’s insistence, the teachers and students alike sit on the floor to show their essential equality—and the entire School is run on the principle of Love; Master having stipulated specifically that there should be no fear. The children are just beautiful—shining faces, bright eyes—they seem happy beyond words to be there. Whenever we would pass one of them, he or she would fold his hands and say with enormous enthusiasm, “Good morning, sir!” in English.

Miss Sati, the capable and dedicated Principal, told us that Master had visited the School on four occasions, and that the children had been taken to see him a number of times. She said that some of the children often joined her in meditation by the pool, and while not initiated or even from initiated families, many of them had revealed that they were seeing Master’s Form within.
The curriculum is standard: Hindi is the medium of instruction, but they also learn English, at Master’s wish, by first learning meaningful phrases: “God is love”; “As you think, so you become”; “Be good, do good, be one,” etc. Later they will learn how to write them. Music plays a large part, as do practical things ranging from how to brush their teeth to how to plant vegetables.

All of the students take one meal a day at Manav Kendra, and twenty-five of them take all their meals there. There is no telling the impact of Master’s love on these kids (including one or two from Tibetan refugee families), most of whom are from illiterate homes and live in an abyss of ignorance and poverty unknown to us over here. He has given them a Life...

The free hospital is also functioning, with two hundred patients a day making use of its facilities. So far, it is taking only outpatients; eventually, it will be expanded sufficiently to include bed care as well.

Needless to say, both school and hospital are totally without charge, and the effect of Manav Kendra on the life of the local poor is already immense.

While I was there, he gave me the manuscript of a talk entitled, “Five Dacoits Are Looting While Man Slumbers,” which I published in the November 1973 Sat Sandesh, and which has become, over the years, one of my very favorite writings of the Master. While we were talking, he said to me, very seriously, “If a man is given the job of cleaning twenty rooms, and one day his master says to him that now he should clean only one room—should he complain?” I was taken aback, but I managed, “No, Master.” He said, very thoughtfully, “No, he shouldn’t complain; it is up to the one he is working for to decide that.” Later, when I went through the talk he had given me, I found this:

I remember, Hazur [Baba Sawan Singh, his Master] once sent me an order. Sometimes it happens that if an individual is heading straight for his target, others create propaganda against him. Due to this type of propaganda, Hazur ordered that I should attend only the satsang at Ravi Road Lahore, and should not visit anyone. I said, “All right, whatever are his orders.” I got a lot of rest during those days—something like a servant who normally cleans twenty rooms being told to clean only one and leave the rest. I had more spare time, so I wrote the book Gurmat Siddhant, a big book of over two thousand pages. . . .

On another occasion, the Master was talking about the concept of yugas, or ages: the different periods of the life of the earth. This un-

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2 See The Coming Spiritual Revolution, p. 94.
derstanding of history, which is roughly common to both Hindu and Buddhist, as well as ancient classical, thought, postulates that there are four different ages: the Sat Yuga, or Age of Truth—the Golden Age; Treta Yuga, the Silver Age; Dwapar Yuga, the Copper (or Bronze) Age; and Kali Yuga, the Age of Time, the Dark Age or Iron Age, in which we are now living. The combined total of all the Yugas is roughly four million years, and, according to the Hindu scriptures, at the end of the Kali Yuga there occurs the pralaya, or dissolution, in which the lower three worlds—the physical, astral, and causal planes—are dissolved and the living entities in them comatose, for the same length of time—four million years. When the dissolution is ended, the cycle (called the Day and Night of Brahma) begins all over again. This is presented in the scriptures in a straightforward way, and there wouldn’t seem, according to them, to be much doubt about the way it works. But the Master had been talking over the past few years about the coming Golden Age as though it were imminent, a sort of variant on his idea of the coming spiritual revolution; he had been saying things like, “The Golden Age will be born out of the darkest part of the Iron Age.” This night also he spoke like this; so I asked him how what he was saying was compatible with the traditional view of the yugas and the Day and Night of Brahma. He said, “It is only sometimes like that; not all the time.” I asked, “And this time it will be different?” He said, “Yes.”

Finally, on October 7, 1973, the Master welcomed with great honor a distinguished guest at Sawan Ashram: the Most Rev. Nichidatsu Fuji of Tokyo, President of the Japan Budh Dharma. The venerable bhikshu, accompanied by an entourage of his disciples beating on drums, arrived at the Ashram at 4 p.m. and was greeted and garlanded by the Master. They spoke together through interpreters for over an hour in the Master’s reception room, discussing among other things the forthcoming World Conference on Unity of Man to be held in February. Then, at the Master’s request, the monks led all present in a Buddhist prayer, following which the Buddhist leader gave a short discourse in Japanese, which was translated into Hindi by the interpreter. Following the conference, a meal was served the honored guests in the dining room.

I had been hearing about the Unity of Man Conference ever since my arrival; but this visit by the Buddhist master was my first vivid impression of the reality of it. The Master had mentioned it several times, as had
others at Sawan Ashram, and it was obviously something that everyone thought was important. But I didn't get it. I saw it through the lens of my own desires, much as I had the Master's time with Yogi Bhajan in the States: my measure of importance in regard to whether or not I should visit India was how much time I would get to spend with the Master, and great Conferences did not measure up on that score. My feeling was, “Been there; done that.” I had participated in the 1965 Third World Religions Conference; how many Conferences did I have to go to? Besides it didn’t seem right to go twice in three months or so when Judith had not been at all. So I left India resolved not to attend the Unity of Man Conference, and this resolve remained right up almost to its eve.

To Go or Not to Go

The first page of the January 1974 issue of Sat Sandesh carried this announcement:

INTER-RELIGIOUS

WORLD CONFERENCE ON UNITY OF MAN

Organized by MANAV KENDRA in collaboration with various social and religious organizations in India and abroad

Vigyan Bhavan & Ramlila Grounds, Delhi

There is one caste, one religion, and one God.
There is only one caste—The caste of humanity.
There is only one religion—The religion of love.
There is only one Dharma—The Dharma of Truth.
There is only one God—The Omnipresent, The Omniscient, The Omnipotent.
There is only one language—The language of the heart.

KIRPAL SINGH
SPONSOR, Inter-Religious World Conference of Unity of Man

THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON UNITY OF MAN which is being held in Delhi on February 3, 4, 5, and 6, 1974, is an inter-religious international gathering of the highest importance. Such Conferences have been organized
in the past at the level of religion and consequently have not been able to achieve integration in the required measure. A significant feature of the proposed Conference is that it is being organized at the level of man as envisaged by the Rishis and Saints so that it may lead to true integration.

We hope that the Conference will be a memorable event and rallying point of fraternity of man, spiritual awakening and moral regeneration. A large number of nationals of many countries have already extended their cooperation to the Organizing Committee and it is expected that about 2,000 delegates from India and abroad will participate. It is estimated that more than 100,000 seekers after truth will gather in the Ramlila Grounds to hear the distinguished speakers.

Dr. V. V. Giri, President of India; Dr. G. S. Pathak, Vice-President of India; and Srimati Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, all of whom have evinced keen interest in the activities of Manav Kendra, have been requested to address the Conference.

In a letter dated December 7, 1973, the Great Master Kirpal Singh made it plain that the general public as well as initiates were invited to attend the Conference and that there is no need to obtain permission from the Master to visit India at this time.

For the initiates, of course, this last point was of the utmost importance. It was not at all a routine matter to get permission to visit the Master; he often turned people down. To be able to go see him in India without even having to ask? This was a huge thing for the initiates; in the event, about four hundred ended up going, to an Ashram that had never housed more than thirty or so Westerners at one time.

The announcement continued with a long listing of the various sponsors, patrons, etc., who were taking part, and with a brief mission statement of sorts, part of which I will quote:

Charles Colton has said, “Men will wrangle for religion, write for it, fight for it; anything but live for it.” Even today many strifes and riots are started in the name of Religion. This has adversely affected the present generation so much that its consequent aversion to religion can easily be understood. It is disassociating itself from the age old moral laws of society and feels proud and adventurous in refuting religious beliefs. We find “just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.”

In view of this, true ethical teachings in the religious traditions of mankind must be reinterpreted and reinvested with meanings appropriate to the current situation. Though humans do need economic and political advancement,
they also need creative moral values. We have reached a point in history where
we have to transcend the narrow confines of religious sectionalism, racism,
communalism and even nationalism to move towards building of a World
Community. One of the programs of the Convention will be to highlight the
essential unity of the basic moral principles contained in almost all religions.
The very aim of the Convention is to strengthen the moral, spiritual and reli-
gious values of mankind throughout the world.

The challenging task before the religious and spiritual leaders is to bring
about a radical change in the ethical, educational and economic status of
humanity. All values are interlinked and interdependent. Economic uplift
is essential, because “a hungry man is an angry man and to talk of God to
him is a mockery.” In fact, religion has always been opposed to all kinds of
monopolistic institutions and controls over things provided by Nature like
land and capital. No religious leader or prophet has ever lent support to the
ideals of wealth accumulation and exploitation. . . .

Now the Master did not write this: it does not bear his signature and
the subsequent paragraphs speak of him in the third person. Never-
theless, he quoted from it in his major address at the Inaugural Session,
and it would never have been published as an official statement on
behalf of the Conference without his approval. Anyone, in fact, who
has read his writings carefully will recognize themes that surface over
and over again, and were indeed very important to him.

Notice that the sponsoring organization is Manav Kendra. These two
enormous projects—Manav Kendra and the Unity of Man Conference—
which took up so much of his time and attention during his last years—
were, I believe, two aspects of one deadly serious attempt to elevate the
status of humanity as a whole—not just his initiates. His reference to
prophets not supporting “the ideals of wealth accumulation and exp-}
loitation” should ring true to anyone familiar with the Bible: if there is
one theme that resonates through all the Biblical prophets (including
the Virgin Mary and Jesus) it is that God is not happy with people who
accumulate wealth and power and use it to exploit and manipulate people
less powerful than themselves. Consider the following:
Listen to this, you who crush the needy and reduce the oppressed to nothing, 
You who say, “When will New Moon be over so that we can sell our corn, 
And Sabbath, so that we can market our wheat? 
Then we can make the bushel-measure smaller and the shekel-weight bigger, 
By fraudulently tampering with the scales. 
We can buy up the weak for silver and the poor for a pair of sandals, 
And even get a price for the sweepings of wheat.”
The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob, 
Never will I forget anything they have done.

AMOS 8:4-7

Disaster for those who plot evil, who lie in bed planning mischief! 
No sooner is it dawn than they do it, since they have the power to do so. 
Seizing the fields that they covet, they take over houses as well, 
Owner and house they seize alike, 
The man himself as well as his inheritance. 
So the LORD says this: 
Look, I am now plotting a disaster for this breed 
From which you will not extricate your necks; 
You will not hold your heads up then, 
For the times will be disastrous indeed. 
That day they will make a satire on you, 
They will strike up a dirge and say, 
“We have been stripped of everything; 
My people’s land has been divided up, 
No one else can restore it to them, 
Our fields have been awarded to our despoiler.”
Because of this, you will have no one 
To measure out a share in the LORD’S community.

MICAH 2:1-5

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; 
And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; 
Because he has looked upon the humiliation of his servant. 
Yes, from now onward, all generations will call me blessed, 
For the Almighty has done great things for me. 
Holy is his name, 
And his faithful love extends age after age to those who fear him. 
He has used the power of his arm, 
He has routed the arrogant of heart. 
He has pulled down princes from their thrones and raised high the lowly. 
He has filled the starving with good things and sent the rich away empty.

The Virgin Mary, *The Magnificat*, LUKE 1:46-53
And everyone knows the following two quotes:

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, “In truth I tell you, it is hard for someone rich to enter the kingdom of Heaven. Yes, I tell you again, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone rich to enter the kingdom of Heaven.”*

MATTHEW 19:23-24

The love of money is the root of all evils . . .

I TIMOTHY 6:10

And there are many more. I have written above in Book Two that Kirpal was a prophet as well as a saint; and Manav Kendra and the Conference, along with every word that he uttered during this time as well as a number of other ventures such as his presence at the Kumbha Mela the following spring, were his two culminating prophetic statements.

More and more the Conference seemed to be important. But I was torn: I really did not want to go. All the reasons I mentioned above seemed as valid as ever. No, this one was not for me. As various Satsangis from our area left to go, I kept not sending letters to the Master explaining why I wasn’t coming. Finally, when my friends Tim and Sally Gallagher left, I tried to send a letter with them but I could not write it and I gave up. A few days later I realized, just as I had in the motel room in 1972 and at the ashram in Pathankot, that the Master wanted me there and I had to go. So I went. When I got there, about fifteen people told me, “Master said you had to come. He said it was your job to be here.” I found out that about two weeks before someone asked Master if I was coming, and Master said, “Of course he’ll be here; he must be here; it’s his job to be here.” But when Tim and Sally (to whom I didn’t give the letter) arrived and they were asked, “When is Russell coming?” they said, “Oh, he’s not coming.”—“Not coming! But Master said he had to come.” What to do? Should they cable? Finally Edna said it was not necessary to cable, that Master would take care of it; and he did.

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3 All these quotes are from *The New Jerusalem Bible* translation.
The Great Conference Begins

The Conference can be understood on several levels. In retrospect, knowing that the Master’s body was going to die six months later, it seems almost that it was an excuse for getting as many of his children as possible to come so that he could say goodbye. But that is not the whole truth. In fact, he cared enormously about abstractions like “unity of man” and “universal love.” No one ever lived who did more to make those abstractions real in his own life, and if all the participants at the Conference did not share his total honesty and unbounded love for human beings just because they were human beings, it was not the Master’s fault. He could take the rankest cliché about love and/or service and make it as fresh and exciting as if it had just been thought of, because he actually lived those clichés and had done what the rest of us pay lip service to. Consequently, the Conferences presided over by him cannot be discounted.

I arrived while preparations for the Conference were still in full swing, although nearing completion. As I got out of the cab and walked through the gate of the Ashram, I was overjoyed to see the Master’s car coming toward me; he stopped it and greeted me so warmly! He said softly, “So you have come.” I said, “Yes, Master, I have come. Thank you for bringing me.” He laughed and drove on.

I found the Ashram a dynamo of activity. New buildings, and new stories on existing buildings, were going up everywhere; most of the accommodations were in rooms that still bore the marks of (slightly) wet cement. I was in a room with seven others; all the rooms held at least that many, some many more. The meditation shed, a long low building on one side of the Ashram that Master used for putting people into meditation, was still being used that way; it was also doubling as a carpenter shop, and the power saws and other implements were going full blast the whole time we were sitting in meditation. The Master didn’t mind a bit: he expected us to be able to sit under any circumstances, as I had observed a number of times in the past. And, in fact, meditations in that shed were sweet and fruitful. I would give anything to be back there with the Master putting us in meditation, power saws and all.
A Summary Report on the Conference

This is the report on the Conference which I published in the February 1974 issue of Sat Sandesh. This article has a very special place in my memory, as I will explain later, and it gives a good overall view of what the Conference was like. The article was titled: “The Conference is Over—The Challenge Continues,” and was subtitled, “A report on the World Conference on Unity of Man, held February 3-6, 1974, in Delhi, under the sponsorship of Sant Kirpal Singh Ji.” This is what it said:

From every point of view, the recent World Conference on Unity of Man was a tremendous success. First of all, it was unique—the first of its kind, as Master said, since the time of Ashoka. While conferences at the level of religions have been held many times and many places, this was the only time in modern history that men had been brought together at the level of man—no labels interfering.

Second, the participation was truly encouraging. Really top-level religious, social and political leaders from India and abroad put their shoulders to the wheel and worked together humbly and lovingly to make the Conference a success. Religious leaders who came and blessed us all include the Venerable Nichidatsu Fuji, Buddhist leader from Japan; Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, the distinguished Sufi mystic and head of the International Order of Sufis; Yogi Bhajan, head of the Sikh Dharma Brotherhood and the Healthy Happy Holy Organization (3HO); Acharya Sri Tulsi Ji, well-known Jain leader and sponsor of the Anuvart movement, dedicated to promoting the non-violent, vegetarian way of life; Swami Ved Vyasanand of the Gita Ashram, Hardwar, head of 50,000 sadhus; His Grace, Dr. Angelo Fernandes, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Delhi; Muni Sushil Kumar Ji, Jain leader; Lama Kushak Bakula, Head Lama, Ladakh; Rev. James McWhirter, Editor of the Anglican monthly, Everyman; Mufti Atiqul Rehman, well-known Muslim leader; Swami Chetanand Chidakash, head of the Swami Hem Raj Mission, and many, many others.

Social leaders participating included Kaka Sahib Kalelkar, Raja Mahendra Pratap, Pundit Sunder Lal, and other veterans of the Gandhi revolutionary movement who paid for their convictions with many years of their lives.

But perhaps the most surprising aspect of the Conference to a foreign observer was, as Reno Sirrine mentioned in his opening talk, the astonishing degree to which the upper levels of the Indian Government participated. The Conference was opened by the Vice-President of India, Dr. G. S. Pathak; the Peace Conference (the second session of the Conference as a whole) was
inaugurated by the Defense Minister, Sri Jagjivan Ram; the Open (principal) Session featured an address by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi; and the Closing Session was addressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sri Swaran Singh. Srimati Sarojini Mahishi, the Minister of Civil Aviation, addressed the inaugural session, and Dr. Karan Singh, the Minister of Health and Family Planning, opened the panel conference on religious unity. In addition to these, many other Ministers of the Union of India, Members of
Parliament, and state officials addressed the Conference or took part in the panel discussions. Truly it seems a hopeful sign that so many really high officials of the government of the second-largest nation in the world were willing to appear at the Conference under the sponsorship of our Master and speak in such idealistic terms. As Reno Sirrine commented, hopefully some of that dedication to unity would wash over to America.

The third really encouraging thing was the amount of popular support the Conference generated. Attendance at most of the sessions was about fifty thousand, and the gigantic procession which opened the Conference inched slowly through streets jam-packed with interested and cheering people. What a feeling of participating in a movement that meant something was generated by marching in that procession! Almost a mile long, it moved for more than two miles—from the Gandhi Grounds to the Ramlila Grounds—led by an elephant, with the Master riding most of the distance in an open car with Yogi Bhajan, Mr. Khanna, and Mr. Sirrine, throwing flowers to the people as he passed by. Behind his car marched the delegations from various countries—Australia, Austria, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, England, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malta, Nigeria, Thailand, and the United States were all represented at the Conference by delegations of varying sizes; altogether about two thousand delegates (including those from India) attended.

In retrospect, the predominant emotion associated with the Conference is joy: joy that at this particular time in which mankind is suffering so terribly, in so many ways, so many people had the ability to see that the cause of that suffering is the separation of man from man, and the willingness to try to do something to end that separation; joy that so many leaders of really great stature in all spheres of life were ready and willing to join forces with our Master; and joy above all that there is such a great and beautiful spiritual leader in the world today who loves us and cares about us, and who is able to command the respect and love of great men as well as you and me.

At the first Satsang held after the Conference, Master made the following comments:

"The Conference is over, and the loving efforts of all of you, of one label or another, are appreciated; God takes work from everybody. I think this Conference was the first of its kind held since the time of Ashoka. Other conferences have been held at the level of religions; this was at the level of man.

"We have thanks for all who helped; many who came could not find time to speak, because there were so many and such a short time it was not possible. They won't mind.

"The question now before us, in connection with the ‘Unity of Man’ is this: We should live up to it. And explain to others so that they also may realize this
unity. If we do that, the Conference will not be over without any fruit. And that fruit will come up if we all lay our heads together and find out ways and means to make the purpose for which this Conference was held to be effective.”

And that is the continuing challenge before us all; in that sense, the Conference will never end. Each time we see God working through our neighbor, our enemy, our brother; each time we resist the temptation to consider our welfare ahead of our brother or sister human; each time we see that whatever human being is in front of us is not meant for our pleasure or gain or exploitation, but is a child of God—the work of the Conference will be carried on that much further. And if, through laying our heads together, really imaginative solutions are discovered that will help alleviate human suffering and reduce our separation from each other, so much the better.

The Remodeling of Our Destiny

The Inaugural Session, held at the Ramlila Grounds immediately on the arrival of the great procession on February 3, 1974, was opened by the Indian Vice-President, and addressed by many. But for many of us the highlight of the day was the Master’s address, which was published under the above title, and which brought out in stark relief what he looked for from the Conference. He began with a quote from Thomas Carlyle: “A mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one,” and proceeded as follows:

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS: I am happy to greet you all, who have gathered here from all over the world. In this momentous session we have to explore and find out ways and means to cement and strengthen the solidarity of mankind. Nations, like individuals, are swayed by passions, prides and prejudices which create chasms in the real social order which are very often difficult to span. We are living in an age of decadence, when moral and spiritual values are at their lowest ebb. With all these drawbacks and the numerous divisive tendencies, there is still a ray of hope of regeneration and reorientation. This very hope has brought us together.

I thank you all for the loving response to the call for remodeling of our destiny to secure a lasting peace.

It is said that “East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet.” That may have been true at one time or another, or for the author of the dictum, Rudyard Kipling; but certainly it carries no weight with men of God in the present scientific age, when distance and space are fast losing their significance, and efforts are being made to establish interplanetary contacts.
The various countries of the world are just like chambers in the House of God, housing different nations. Distinguished from one another by geographic, climatic and historical conditions, facial contours and complexions, languages and dialects, diet and apparel and modes of worship, all people conditioned by these divergent factors form the great organic whole called humanity.

With all these seeming differences and distinctions of color, creed, and caste, and these diversities in his modes of living and thinking, man essentially and basically remains man in outer appearance and inner make-up. Unity already exists in the human form, since each one is born the same way with the same outer and inner construction, and each one has a soul which is of the same essence as that of God. We are drops of the Ocean of All Consciousness, Whom we worship as the same God, calling Him by different names. Holy men say that the human body is the true temple of God, and that He resides in the temple made by Him in the womb of the mother, and not in temples made by human hands, and that the human form provides us with a golden opportunity to realize Him.

Man has three aspects: physical body, intellect, and a conscious entity. He has progressed physically, intellectually and mechanically; but despite this, he is unhappy and has not developed spiritually. He has developed his head and not his heart, and his scientific knowledge is misdirected to fiendish malevolence. It has created a spiritual vacuum. We stand in the middle of a two-fold crisis: a state cult of militarism, euphemistically called “patriotism” on one hand, and an apathy to spiritual development through knowledge of the True Self on the other. In the absence of any positive thinking on both these levels we are morally regressing, and in this sad predicament we cannot have lasting peace. Guru Nanak therefore prayed, “O God, the world is aflame and has passed beyond our care. Save it by the means You consider best.”

The problem before us is how to bring about a change in man’s heart and effect his inner conversion so that he can see truly and clearly and learn to discriminate between truth and untruth. Since this lies beyond the scope of body and intellect, it can only come about through an inward illumination of divine wisdom in the sanctuary of the soul. This is the individual aspect of the matter. We also have to forge abiding bonds of kinship among the nations of the world so that they will treat each other with genuine courtesy based on inward love and friendliness, and seek the welfare of all members of the human family, transcending their political ideologies which create rivalries and international tensions.

During my last foreign tour I was asked on television in the United States, “How can peace be cemented?” I told them, “Peace can be cemented only
when men rise above ‘isms’ and Presidents and Kings rise above countries.”

To remain in any “ism” is a blessing, if we keep in mind the ideal for which we have joined it, and rise into universalism; but if we stick obdurately to the “ism,” the result is again narrow-mindedness and selfishness. Similarly, if Kings nourish their gardens well and keep them blooming in all respects, they should let all other countries bloom the same way and further the cause of human happiness; otherwise there will be conflicts and wars. It has been our endeavor of late to find a common forum and meeting ground where such momentous issues could be discussed dispassionately by separating the non-essentials from essentials and eliminating differences, in order to find unity in diverse thinking and bring abiding peace on earth: complete concord and amity in all spheres of our life.

In order to understand this worldwide movement in which we are participating today, it is necessary to review its background. Religious contacts between East and West were established as far back as 1893, when the patriot-saint Vivekananda went out with the message of the Upanishads and Gita and represented India at the Chicago Parliament of Religions. His life and living showed a practical way to demonstrate the essential unity of all religions, to proclaim the message of which he founded a chain of missions in the name of his Master, Paramhansa Ramakrishna. Ten years later, in 1903, another young savant, Swami Ram Tirath, presented the philosophy of Vedanta to the West in such a lucid manner that he was hailed as a “Living Christ.” Thus the way was paved for the next great step, the spread of spirituality or mysticism—the bedrock of every religion. In its pure essence, this implies the awakening of man to a consciousness at once supra-sensible and supramental—an immediate revelation. All mystics, Eastern and Western, have believed in the possibility of direct communion with the Spirit and Power of God through love and contemplation, without the aid of reason and logic. It puts man on the road to inwardness (not to be confused with escapism), with an active living morality as the essential prerequisite. This is the religion of spirit, or the science of the soul, and through it an individual finds his proper relation to the universe by establishing contact with God through His expression, the power called Naam, Shabd, Kalma or Word, which is the Maker, permeating and controlling all creation. The relationship with this power is achieved by developing reverence for life at all levels of existence without distinguishing between high and humble—including man, bird, beast, and the lower species. The non-human forms are the younger members of the family of God.

This idea of the sanctity of life is a living religion of love in the innermost part of our being. True theism cannot be reasoned out intellectually or felt on the level of emotions: it proceeds from true knowledge, which is an action
of the soul in perfect harmony beyond the senses. This is what is called “spirituality”—the contact of the soul with the Oversoul—and it is achieved by rising above body consciousness through practical self-analysis, a demonstration of which can be given by an adept in the process. We call it *Para Vidya* (the Knowledge of the Beyond) because it lies beyond our sensory perceptions.

This science of the soul is not something new; it is the most ancient teaching of all. The way back to God is of God’s own make and stands on its own, without the necessity of scriptural support to uphold its authenticity. But unmistakable references in the scriptures of all religions from the earliest times to the present day do bear witness to the Unmanifest Reality in its primordial form of Light and Sound.

In the present age, saints like Kabir and Guru Nanak revived the ancient teachings of the sages of the past. In more recent times the torch was kept alive by their successors until the spiritual mantle came to hallow the personality of Baba Sawan Singh Ji, who during his long ministry of forty-five years (1903-1948) gave it the widest distribution possible. In 1911 he began the work of revealing the Gospel of Love, Light and Life to the Western world as well.

Ruhani Satsang was founded in 1948 and dedicated to the task of imparting purely spiritual instruction, shorn of all ritual and ceremony and free from embellishment and symbol, to all classes of humanity. Followers of different faiths, beliefs, and creeds meet at Sawan Ashram—which became its permanent center in 1951—and address large masses of people coming from different walks of life, who are eager to learn and understand the elemental truths which form the quintessence of all sacred scriptures. The discourses converge on the common theme of establishing direct touch with Reality, and attempts are made to reproduce and correlate, in simple understandable language, the sayings of sages and seers of all times. Presently this is being spread in 209 centers all over the world, which have helped considerably to remove to some extent artificial barriers of race, language, and religion, and brought many kinds of human beings to worship the Nameless Being with so many names.

By the grace of God, a new field unexpectedly opened up in 1957 when Muni Sushil Kumar Ji sponsored a Conference of World Religions with the idea of forming a World Fellowship of Religions. As a result of further deliberations there did come into being a Fellowship including most of the faiths of the world, and I was elected its President. Three World Tours were undertaken and four World Religions Conferences were organized in India, besides regional conferences in other countries. The purpose was to disseminate the idea of universal fellowship among people professing differ-
ent faiths and beliefs, and it brought about broader and better understanding and a sense of mutual trust and confidence at the top level among the representatives of the various religions.

But while the religious leaders were coming closer, a danger was developing among the followers. Instead of making religion a cementing force, they made it an instrument to serve their vested interests and began to form communal groupings bearing the labels associated with their “isms”—fortifying them with artificial walls of hatred and distrust. One wonders how a person professing religion, which is a link between man and God, can run the risk of forgetting that he is a man born with the same privileges from God as those he hates, and that he is a conscious entity which is a drop of the Ocean of All Consciousness.

To combat this danger of religious chauvinism, it was thought necessary to start the work of regeneration from the roots. Man-making must take precedence. This can only be done by inculcating in people generally the humanistic ideas of unselfish love and selfless service, with special emphasis on man service, land service and animal service (animals being our younger brothers and sisters in the family of God). This idea took concrete shape in 1969 with the decision to set up Man-Making Centers or Manav Kendras here in India and abroad.

In India a Manav Kendra has been started at Dehra Dun at the foot of the Shivalik Range of the Himalayas. It has set up a hospital, a home for indigent elderly people, and a school for the children of poor families in the area. A provision for farming and cattle-raising on modern scientific lines is a part of the project. Eventually we hope to see a university, fully equipped with the original scriptural texts of the religions of the world, so that comparative studies of the truths contained therein may be undertaken, and a language school to overcome linguistic difficulties.

This convention aims to unite all mankind on the common ground of service to fellow human beings and faith in Divine Power, and to accomplish that, it urges the religious and ethical leadership of the world to shed apathy and aloofness and assume a more prominent role in human affairs. Such conferences in the past have been organized at the level of religions, and consequently have not been able to achieve integration in the required measure. A significant feature of this conference is that it is being organized at the level of man, as envisioned by saints and prophets like Socrates, Buddha, Mohammed, Christ, Kabir, and Nanak, so that it may lead to true integration. The challenging task before the religious and spiritual leaders is to bring about a radical change in the ethical, educational and economic status of humanity. Economic uplift is essential, because “a hungry man is an angry man” and to talk of God to him is a mockery.
I am confident that each one of us fully realizes the significance of this cosmopolitan meeting and will extend his whole-hearted support toward the fulfillment of its objectives: developing human understanding and heralding the unity of mankind. Let us pledge ourselves to this task, transcending all narrow allegiances and commitments, and stand united and resolute until its ultimate fulfillment.

The World Peace Conference

The second session, named as above, was headlined by the Defense Minister, Sri Jagjivan Ram. This may seem incongruous, but this Defense Minister was a very remarkable man and gave a very remarkable address. He was a Harijan—an Untouchable—in India, the lowest of the low—and had risen to one of the highest posts in the land. He also had a personal, warm relationship with Kirpal Singh, and visited him regularly for counsel and advice. I found his talk one of the most interesting of the entire Conference. He began in Hindi, then switched to English, and this is what he said:

The Master greets Jagivan Ram, the Defense Minister of India; and Swami Ved Vyasanand of Hardwar is on the left.
Friends, I would like to say a few words for delegates from other countries. What I have said is that we have been considering the essential unity of all religions, that the basic principles of all religions are the same or similar. . . . But what I emphasized was the scientific unity of man. When the universe was created, man was created as an entity which has remained unchanged. Though there are many genera and species in the plant and animal worlds, man is just one species. There are races among man—the Negro, the white man, etc.—yet they are all of the same species—the species of Man (Homo sapiens). The Brahmin and the scavenger continue to be of the same species. Different colors, languages, food habits, dress habits, and religions have not changed this basic fact—that man is one species.

I would go a step further and say that man has got all the attributes of God—since “God created man in His own image.” Potentially, those attributes are there; but as long as man is controlled by Satan the differences between him and the Almighty continue. The moment he gives up Satan he begins to attain the attributes of God; he can become omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent—this is not an imaginary idea; some men have attained this. This is what is meant by “God created man in His own image.” He will continue unchanged through the ages.

So there is unity of man, logically; because one of the scientific definitions of “species” is that there is attraction between male and female of the same species. There is no attraction between male and female of different species. And if there is an unnatural attraction, well, no progeny will be produced. Progeny can be produced only by male and female of the same species. So here is scientific proof that the Negro and the white man belong to the same caste; the Brahmin and the Harijan to the same caste; the Hindu and the Muslim to the same caste. And I regard it as an insult to that great Power Who created this universe to regard men as belonging to different castes.

So there is essential unity of man from the religious point of view and from the scientific point of view. According to all religions, all men should be treated as belonging to the same family. Then where is the necessity of destroying each other? No person will destroy the members of his own family, unless he has been afflicted by madness. So all those who are indulging in acts of extermination of large numbers of people are no doubt afflicted by madness. And those people who have nothing of their own—or you might say they have the whole world as their own (holy men)—they can bring the madmen to their senses.

It is just by ignoring these basic and fundamental principles that there is so much imbalance in the different countries of the world. The developed countries have so much they can’t use all they produce; they are living in luxury, in some cases have reached the limit of luxury; and there are multitudes
of people who cannot get the bare necessities of life. We let this imbalance cause bitterness and conflict and ultimately, if permitted to develop, the destruction of mankind. Again, the words of these wise men could create a sense of uprightness among the developed nations, the affluent societies, to take measures so as to reduce the imbalance between the countries.

In the same way within the various countries are differences of development among sections of society. Some sections are rich and affluent; others, though they work hard to produce the wealth of the country, are deprived of the fruits of their labor and do not get the bare minimum of life. That also has to be eliminated. If it is not, it will constitute a danger to all that is good in human society.

So disparities and imbalances will have to be eliminated, and for that a revolution is necessary; not a political revolution, but a revolution in the mind of man—so that he can evolve as a real man. That revolution can be successfully created by these people [referring to the various spiritual leaders and holy men on the stage] who have nothing to lose and nothing to gain—nothing to lose, that is, except the misery of mankind; nothing to gain but the bliss of mankind. It is therefore very heartening that we have gathered together here under the auspices of these wise men who have been trying to arouse the conscience of man so that he can see the good and separate himself from the evil. Fortunately, the different societies of the world have come to realize that misery anywhere in the world constitutes a potential danger to prosperity everywhere in the world.

As I said in the beginning, I came here to say a few words, not as Defense Minister of India, but as a student of truth. I successfully fought war with Pakistan; but even at that time when I was on the verge of repairing the aggression of Pakistan, there was always a conflict within myself. War, it is said, is dehumanizing; war is brutalizing; mind loses all its good attributes during wartime; but I asked my soldiers and officers even during war to maintain certain laws of humanity. I told them, “If you go to the other country, you treat every female of that country as your mother or sister”—and they did; I am proud of my soldiers. But then I thought that some missile by my soldiers or the soldiers of Pakistan might hit some innocent mother who is unconcerned with the war, who might not know why this war has been launched; or suddenly a child is hit by a missile and is dead—can there be a more inhuman act than this? Can there be a greater sin than this? But the enlightened people of many nations are indulging in this sin in order to establish the supremacy of one nation over another. Cannot these people be brought to their senses? Can we not stop these actions of madness? And it can be done by these people [the holy men].
Let there be a slogan among all the citizens of the various nations; let the slogan be that there is no greater crime than war. And I am saying this as the Defense Minister of India. I possess all these weapons of destruction and I have to, because I have to safeguard the borders of India. But there is always a conflict within myself. I will always try to ward off wars as long as I can.

The effect of war today is not localized; with the development of science and technology, with science having overcome the limitations of time and distance to a great extent, it is all pervasive. We have seen that the war between Israel and the Arab countries—a war in one corner of the world—has affected all the citizens in all the countries of the world. The debacle of petroleum and its products has affected citizens of India in every city; it has affected people in Washington and New York, in Moscow and Peking, in all the countries of Europe. So when we know that the effect of war today affects all the citizens of all the countries of the world—isn’t that enough for all of the sensible persons of the world to put their heads together to devise methods by which war can be eliminated and ruled out of sensible human society?

And I think, if all the thinkers and leaders of religion of the world make it an article of faith that there is no greater crime than war, then perhaps man will dream of a better world, a happier world, and he will regard another man as his own image and treat him as a member of his own family. The disparities, inequalities, imbalances, from which human society is suffering today stand in the way of the full development of man—he has not been allowed to attain his full stature because of them. The oppressors suffer more than the oppressed, the exploiters suffer more than the exploited, and the sooner this revolution comes to us the sooner there will be development of the whole man. Then we will appreciate that our neighbors have the same feelings that we have, and what oppresses them oppresses us as well. If this revolution comes—and it can come by the teaching of these people—I have no doubt that the world will become better and happier.

Well, friends, I am happy to be in the company of so many emancipated souls. What you see here is a galaxy of emancipated persons, and according to Hindu tradition, a few minutes in the company of emancipated persons provides one with bliss. So I am happy to be here.

With these words, I declare this august assembly open.

Spotlight on the Panels

That afternoon—the afternoon of the 4th—the Conference split up into four panels or seminars, in which different aspects of the idea of the unity of man were examined in depth. These four panels were:
1) Unity of Man—One World; 2) Current World Problems Affecting the Unity of Man; 3) World Harmony; 4) The Essential Unity of Religions. The Master visited all the panels, but addressed only the first. This is what he said:

Dear Brothers and Sisters: I have to say a few words on inner concentration and connected thoughts. To achieve eternal unity one must be able to get self-consciousness and try to recognize that great Power Who is controlling the world. You all know that the human body is one and we believe that it consists of five elements and that there is a Power behind it Who is controlling all this system; so we must try to understand this truth and have the reflection of the Divine which is in man.

Of course, you all know that to get any fruit some labor is required, and to be self-conscious we must struggle until we get it. We have before us many examples of our ancient leaders like Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and most of us are following their path; some of us have achieved something in this line.

It is very difficult for narrow-minded people to adopt this path and to meet each other. We must exercise in the right direction. The present urge for unity is a call for self-consciousness, and we must be eager to achieve it and share our good efforts to achieve it. I stress that we must go ahead on the path of oneness of man which is the real path of God, and whatever differences come in our way must be removed in a coordinated manner. If you have faith in Him you can change your fate, as well as others’ fates. My best wishes are there and I hope you will come to this conclusion. Thank you.

Frederick Aye, a satsangi from Ghana, spoke briefly and to the point on “True Love” at the second panel:

My subject will be true love, and I will be very brief. All human beings are told that God is love and, if they have been created by God, they are the creatures of love and they must love their fellow beings. But we find in actual practice that from the day we are born we imbibe religious hatred, fanaticism, etc. We are taught that our religion is the best and also that if we achieve materially, it will be in our best interest. So it becomes the duty of those people, young or old, who have got some spiritual enlightenment to teach what true love is and how we should love each other. We should first set examples ourselves by good deeds rather than by preaching to others. We should have the feeling and desire to share everything that we possess. That will be the guarantee for unity of mankind. Thank you.
Kaka Sahib Kalelkar, a longtime coworker with Mahatma Gandhi who had worked closely with the Master in the establishment of the Manav Vidya Mandir, the School at Manav Kendra, spoke on “Love as Fearlessness” at the third panel, on world harmony:

Our greatest strength must be love which is fearless, non-violent love. It is time the world was viewed as a great family; I think it is ripe for the establishment of a familyhood of all religions, all cultures, and all races. If it doesn’t come about, a world war may well happen; and with the present development of science it could be an unprecedented disaster.

Sant Kirpal Singh Ji is doing this work—that of making all religions and races one—and as a humble servant of Mahatma Gandhi, I congratulate him for organizing this conference. Now we have to establish that familyhood—through love, complete fearlessness. If we want to establish peace, we have to work for others. Sant Ji wants us to give thought to these things, and to do service for the whole world. We are in a country where people of all races and religions are gathered together. We must love each other. All our energy should be saved for actual work.

We invite Muslims, not as Hindus, but as members of one human family. We should have hope for our towns and villages. In the villages, people do not understand economics; but they understand religion and they understand culture—that has been the tradition of our country. We must now have a great organization and go to the villages and tell the people the central part of their religion is to love others. We must ourselves stop hating others and start loving; mere speaking won’t do. Under Sant Ji’s initiative and guidance, we should have small groups all over the world; we should, as members of the same family, build a new culture, a new civilization.

Science is very useful, because scientists worship truth. We want to make science more spiritual, and only saints can do it.

So I express my gratitude to Sant Ji for organizing this international conference. I belonged to Mahatma Gandhi’s group; I was Vice-Chancellor of the university started by him, and worked under him for fifty years. Sant Maharaj is doing the same work which Gandhi Ji asked us to do—establish harmony and unity of man. Religions are different, but we are all bound together by love. My definition of “love” means fearlessness—you don’t threaten anybody and you don’t fear anybody.

The fourth panel was one of the high points of the Conference for me. A few minutes before the panels began, while I was wondering which one(s) I would attend, Darshan Singh, the Master’s son, came
up to me: “Why aren’t you going to your panel?” “My panel?!!” “Yes! You are on the panel on the essential unity of religions.” “I am? Why didn’t someone tell me? I haven’t got anything prepared—” But that was no excuse. He insisted that I had to go and be on it; so I went. Now, my bewilderment was extreme. I knew that friends of mine who had been invited to address various panels—Arran Stephens, Sean Sieglen—had been working on their addresses for days; but no one had ever said a word to me about being on one of them. What to do? Luckily, I was one of the last speakers on the panel, which included Dr. Karan Singh, the Minister for Health and Family Planning of the Republic of India; A. J. Srivastava, one of the prime architects of the Conference; and Reno Sirrine, who was a good friend as well as one of the Master’s principal Representatives; and was beautifully presided over by the Archbishop of Delhi, Dr. Angelo Fernandes (so I was in pretty heady company!). While the others were talking, I went over in my mind what I might say, and this is what I eventually came up with:

**DEAR FRIENDS:** Some of the most pleasurable moments of my life have been spent studying the scriptures and traditions of all religions. Though I am a Christian by birth and bringing up and love the Bible dearly, I have also loved studying the lives and teachings of Milarepa, Ramakrishna, St. Francis of Assisi, Guru Nanak, Kabir, and many others too. And there are certain things that do run through all of their teachings, even though there are outer differences; if it weren’t so, I don’t think it would be possible to read the writing and lives of all of them and get the same degree of inspiration.

There is one thing that is found in every religion and is basic to the religious way of looking at the universe; and that is, coming to grips with the fact of death. Everyone dies; and yet life as it is set up in the world is predicated on the assumption that we will never die. People work, take on connections, and treat each other as though they were going to live forever. And if we look into our own actions and ways of life we will find that this is so.

Jesus told a story about a farmer whose harvest was in, and he was content within himself and very happy; and God came to him and said, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” So suddenly all that he had done became irrelevant; it just didn’t matter anymore. If we go into the lives of these great saints and prophets, we find that what they did and said was relevant to the fact of death. After all, the only thing that happens to everyone without exception is death; it seems that any way of looking at life, or any school of thought, that doesn’t take death into consideration is silly.
So that’s one thing that we find in every religion. The other thing is this. Everybody knows that when Jesus was asked what the two great commandments were, he said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” But what a lot of people don’t know is that Jesus didn’t invent those commandments; they are found in the Law of Moses, who gave them out twelve-hundred years before Christ. So when Christ gave out those commandments as the essence of his own teaching he was showing in a very beautiful way the continuity of God’s revelation.

A little later Peter and James and John witnessed Jesus’ transfiguration; but when they saw him transfigured, he wasn’t alone—Moses and Elijah were with him. You see? Two great saints who had come before. And so, even though Jesus was manifesting the greatness of God working through him at that point, he was also showing that he was not doing anything new; that those who had come before were with him.

In the same way, when the Koran was revealed through the Prophet Mohammed, explicit references were made many times to Moses, Jesus, Abraham, and many others who came before him.

And when Guru Arjan compiled the Adi Granth, the scriptures of the Sikhs, he not only included the teachings of Guru Nanak and his successors, he also collected the writings of Sheikh Farid, of Kabir, of Sheikh Bikhan, who were Muslims, as well as those of Ravidas, Ramananda, Namdev, etc., who were Hindus. And if he had known any Christian saints, he would have included them too.

Closer to our own time is the life of Ramakrishna, who demonstrated very dramatically the essential unity of religions by becoming, actually becoming, both a Christian and a Muslim at different times, as well as being a Hindu. And everyone knows Mahatma Gandhi in his prayer meetings used to have read out the teachings of all traditions.

The point is that each of these great men demonstrated graphically that he was not doing anything new, that the people who came before him are those from whom he derived what he had. So all religions must be respected: as the great Buddhist Emperor, Ashoka, said, “He who reveres his own sect and despises the sects of others has failed to grasp the basic truth of religion.” How much trouble, even in the world today, is due to just this: the inability to grasp that God reveals Himself to different people in different ways. The way we think He comes is not necessarily the only way or the best way; it may be the best way for us. As Frederick the Great said, “In my state each man is free to be saved after his own fashion.”
The content of this continuing revelation, as we have noted, is the necessity of loving God and loving man. This is a conference devoted to the idea of the unity of man, and I think that this unity is oneness—not a collecting together, but a looking deeply and seeing that we are one. In the parade yesterday we were all shouting, “All mankind is one.” And this is the point: the commandment, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” can be lived up to when we see that our neighbor is our self. When we hurt others we are hurting our self; when we serve others we are serving our self. The Sermon on the Mount can be understood only when this is grasped, and the great Christian saints have understood this. I have gone into the lives of St. Francis, St. Anthony, St. Theresa, St. Ignatius, and they did understand this; but so can we understand it.

And it’s not even a matter of understanding in any abstract way. Our neighbor is not all humanity spread out en masse; our neighbor is whoever we meet each day. If we are married and have a family, our neighbor is, to start with, our family; and who do we take for granted more? Whether we are married or not, our neighbor is anyone we meet at the moment we meet him, even if we don’t like him. Liking has nothing to do with it. We love him for his essence, for what he is. The point of the parable of the Good Samaritan is that the Samaritans were despised by the Jews of that day; they were what we would call a minority group.

So loving God and our neighbor is something for each minute of the day: not just once a week on Sundays, or Fridays, or Saturdays, or whenever we go to the temple. It is something to be done once each second, I would say. Because it’s important that we never lose sight of the fact that we must respect and love each man’s way of being—his essential “is-ness”; as it is said, “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.” Thank you.

This talk was well received—I was interrupted by applause a couple of times—and giving it was a real high; I had no doubt that the Master was supporting me every minute. The fact of it—that I could actually pull something like that off, with his help, despite having no time to prepare—gave me one of the most exhilarating and satisfying senses of accomplishment I have ever felt. After it was over I was floating, and I listened to the Archbishop’s concluding remarks, which immediately followed mine, with tremendous enjoyment. Among other things he said:
... We can’t pretend to be having a loving experience of God Who is the Father of all, and ignore any single person who goes by the name of man.

And now I want to ask you to pause a while and ask yourselves: *What are we doing to each other in the world of today?* No man is an island. In an interdependent world, it is a common good of all men that must be part of the quest—if we are wedded to any religion whatsoever. Material progress today has outstripped the mind, and threatens to do so even more. It is time the spirit caught up with the race, to give the much-needed soul to society and the world and this whole entire enterprise in which we are engaged. Such a goal, which must always have this in mind—wholeness of life, for each and all—is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

There are many obstacles to be met with, and they must be faced. But when the world is burning and rotting to pieces, how can we who profess a religion and an experience of God—how can we sit on the sidelines and watch? Isn’t it for all to enter the fray?—in whatever way they can, to contribute their insights, their vision, their dynamism, their motivation, whatever they have, in the service of God’s children as a religious experience? Stemming from the personal intercommunion which they have with God Himself?
Religion—our experience of God and our dealing with each other—has to be situated in the reality of today's world. We cannot afford to bypass the legitimate hopes and aspirations and strivings of the working class, for instance; their aspirations to equality and to responsible participation in the economic and cultural fields and in political activity. You may wonder how I am deliberately straying into these fields. Man and his life are intertwined with all these activities; and if we want wholeness of life for each man, and all men, and wholeness of life in our approach to God, then we have to touch all these. But: with a breath of the spirit.

In India, the U. S., and Europe today we have secular states—naturally so—where no premium is put on any religion and all are free to worship in their own way and follow their own paths. In India, our constitution guarantees your freedom to practice, preach and propagate, within the limits of law and order, your own religious convictions and faiths. The United Nations is also a secular organization. But isn't it sad that in this whole process of the modern, secular world, which is trying to create some sort of cooperation and brotherhood, striving after peace in a variety of ways—isn't it sad that religious motivation is not in the picture? Isn't it sad and isn't it almost futile for people to think that this development in its true sense—wholeness of life for each and all—can be had without bringing in the insights, the values, the vision, the strength, the force, which comes from religion in one way or another? The harnessing, therefore, of religious motivation for the process of development, brotherhood and peace, is one of our big challenges in the world today: not just that we personally relate well with God, ourselves, and each other, but that we reach out in ever-widening circles to bring people of all faiths together in this fashion.

What is the quality of life today? Who has this wholeness? Three-fourths of humanity can't have it because they lack the simple preconditions for human existence. And those who have too much, they cannot be said to have wholeness of life; they have to be cut down to size in order to have wholeness of life. Why can't our relations one with another in the world of today be so organized, be so inspired, that all can grow in this fashion? That's God's plan.

When two people get married in a church, there are two places where the couple kneels down; but notice they are not facing each other. Though they are going to take each other for husband and wife and live with each other for the rest of their days, the two kneelers are facing the altar, God, and the future.

In that I see a method of approach: that we can work together and learn to appreciate and understand each other and go from tolerance, which is only a beginning, to respect and reverence for each other—to fellowship in the full
sense. And it’s through living and working that this happens; not just by talking about it. So as a practical measure, I would like to suggest that this is the kind of thing that could be done everywhere. I think the task is the creation of unity of conscience. Nations are made up of human beings, and the real task is to build brotherhood, harmony, concord, peace, into their minds.

The independent investigation of Truth will lead to this: the acceptance of the oneness of humanity; the conviction that all men are brothers and that they must work together—for the full human rights for each and all who are called by the name of man. Universal brotherhood and peace is of great importance, but to achieve this we need a unity of conscience, which means the abandonment of all prejudices which divide men into hostile sects, groups, etc. And a unity of conscience must be created and deepened around the basic convictions shared by all living faiths.

Where will the force come from to bring this about? From a deeper interiority which will make each of us full harmonized human beings. Signs ourselves, and symbols of that wholeness of life which we want for others, and the dynamic, corporate quest for which is what I call Peace—Shalom. The distinctively human part of us—our freedom in the spirit—must be given full play; only so will we be able to transcend our limitations and become Peace ourselves.

If experiencing God in this fashion, the mystic element of religion referred to just now—if experiencing God in the intimacy of the heart (in true bhakti)—if this became the experience of men everywhere, then they would live in harmony with themselves and with those around them, and bridges of understanding and brotherhood would be built at the grass roots level. And therein lies man’s greatest hope for brotherhood and peace in the world.

I was very impressed with the Archbishop; he seemed to me to perfectly understand the Master’s call for a spiritual revolution as well as the tremendous spiritual force embodied in Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, of which he was a major contributor and participant: Pope John had nominated him to be a member of two commissions on that Council. For the Gandhi Centennial Year (1969) he served on the National Integration Committee of India and, as the Wikipedia article on him comments, “In many respects he was Gandhi-like in both attitude and lifestyle.” This certainly connects with my impression of him. Later he helped found, and served as first President of, The World Conference on Religion and Peace, and continued to address and live the principles of human unity he laid out in his talk above. He died in the year 2000.
Mrs. Gandhi’s Address

The Open Session, as the third day of the Conference was called, was highlighted by the speech of Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India. Mrs. Gandhi, the daughter of former Prime Minister (and Indian founding father) Jawaharlal Nehru, was at that time probably the most
powerful woman in the world, and one of the most powerful persons of either sex. She, like her father and her immediate predecessor Lal Bahadur Shastri (who had addressed the Third World Religions Conference nine years earlier), did visit the Master from time to time and sought his counsel. She also began speaking in Hindi and switched to English. Her talk was very moving:

Since we have many friends from outside the country, I would like to say just a few words in English. It was a very good idea of Sant Ji to call this conference of all religions. As I said in Hindi just now, one of the books that had a profound influence on me when I was quite small was called *The Essential Unity of All Religions*. I saw from it how in fundamental thought, in the encouragement of an atmosphere of love, of harmony, of cooperation, of helping others, all religions had a deep message to give. We in India have for many years tried to practice these ideas, but being human beings we are full of failings and we do not always live up to our ideals. . . . There has always been materialism and evil in the world, but along with that, there have also always been forces which have tried to combat them, which have tried to forge a path of peace and harmony. Today perhaps we need this more than ever before, not because man is worse, but because he has more power to do bad things. And we see that this power, which could have gone such a long way in relieving the sufferings of the many people who have been deprived, underprivileged and oppressed through the ages, is used for warlike efforts, for threats, and for creating disharmony rather than cooperation.

So conferences like this, with different trends of thought and philosophies coming together, may find a way which can inspire people today to give of their greater knowledge, their greater capacity, their greater power to forge a new path for mankind. Many people have written that 1973 was the end of an age. We do not know what the new age will be like, but it will be different. In what way it will be different lies in the hands of all of us, especially the young people—because it is they who will make this new age. It depends on them whether they want to follow the path of peace and develop the capacity to create harmony, to create better understanding out of the ancient truths. A remarkable thing about these truths is, that although they are ancient, you will find that they apply to modern life—in the context of what is happening today, they are relevant; they give the answers we need. But unfortunately the world doesn’t seem to have time to think, to study these things, to find

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4 1973, the year prior to this Conference, was the year of the Bangladesh War and the subsequent splitting of Pakistan; that is presumably what Mrs. Gandhi had in mind.
out their deeper meaning; time to let them act and to take real strength from them. . . .

So the challenge which faces humanity today is greater perhaps than any challenge it has faced before. But along with the challenge is the opportunity. Never have we had such an opportunity for molding a new way of life, because with better communications, as was said just now, distance is not a barrier. The seas, which we thought divided one continent from another, are like bridges which join the continents together. The mass media also gives the opportunity of bringing different thoughts to different parts, of creating a better understanding between peoples, and only out of understanding can grow friendship. Out of friendship can grow cooperation, and out of cooperation can come peace for the individual, for the group, for the nation, and we hope for the world as a whole, so that we can go towards what many people have dreamed—the concept of one world. In our philosophy it has often been said in many different words that all of the human family is one, but before it was just a very distant ideal; people regarded the human family perhaps as only those people who lived around them, because they couldn’t see any farther, they were not in touch with others. But today we have the opportunity of being in touch with people no matter how far away they live—not only through words, but through bridges of understanding, of thoughts, of concepts—and we should use this opportunity for strengthening the forces of peace and understanding.

We are talking here of harmony, of peace, of the oneness of man; but I am very sad that in my own country there is a great deal of disharmony. There are forces of violence—forces which want to exploit the difficulties between people. Sometimes we quarrel over religion, sometimes over caste, or language, or we quarrel over some small dispute between one state and another; and the net result is not the spirit of peace and harmony, but the spirit of disharmony and the spirit of discontent. We are facing very great difficulties, but the question is, how do we combat them? How do we get the strength to meet them and to find a way out? It cannot be through disharmony.

We are naturally very sad when people die through these violences, whether it is because of those who themselves do violence or those who try to prevent them; and our full sympathy is with the families of the bereaved, with those who have suffered in other ways. But when we look back after some time we find that these kinds of eruptions do not achieve what we want. They achieve only disharmony and encourage what is not good in man (because each of us has the good and the bad). It is up to us which part we encourage, we allow to come out. And this I think is the message this Conference can give to India, which needs it just as much as the rest of the world. . . .
Farewell

The final day of the Conference was the Master’s birthday and an early morning session (5:30 a.m.) was scheduled to celebrate it. While the Master said not a word in English during the whole session, it remains in my memory as the most powerful and charged Satsang I have ever attended. Master had never been more beautiful: sick, exhausted, eighty years old, he radiated love and easy good humor, deferred constantly to Yogi Bhajan (half his age), refused to give a proper discourse or to speak in English or to give out parshad—all of which was expected by various members of the audience. Instead, he conducted what looked like a good-humored private conversation (that just happened to go out over the microphone) with Yogi Bhajan and Pir Vilayat Khan in Hindi, then asked the Yogi to translate for him. At the end, rather than giving out parshad, he requested Yogi Bhajan to give it out, and himself took the first parshad from the Yogi’s hands. A gesture of humility that was astonishing under the circumstances: the tent, after all, contained fifty thousand persons who were disciples of Kirpal Singh, who were there to celebrate Kirpal Singh’s birthday, and who wanted Kirpal Singh’s parshad. All in all, a very interesting morning.

After the Conference was over, and I had returned home, what stayed with me most strongly was gratitude for the personal grace that the Master had given me by allowing me to see him privately so often when he was so terribly busy and there were so many others pressing on his time. Night after night I would find myself at his feet in his living room, with a very few people or sometimes alone, with little or no effort on my part. On one occasion when I was sitting on the floor at his feet and we were alone, he said, out of a silence, “You should make the pond bigger.” This was a surprise! I had to think very hard to remember that his last words to me as he was leaving Sant Bani Ashram in 1972 were, “Develop the pond more, please.” He was referring to the pond which we had dug at the Ashram and which we were standing next to at that moment. Other people had also heard him say that, and it had been recorded on tape: but because of the expense and difficulty involved in pumping the pond dry and getting the bulldozers in again, I had chosen to interpret his remarks as meaning that we should beautify the land around the pond and make it more suitable for meditation. In
retrospect, that seems like a real cop-out on my part, but I had convinced myself that that was what he meant, and then forgotten about it. Now he was being very specific: “You should make the pond bigger.” I stupidly asked, “You want us to make the pond bigger, Master?” He nodded. “Bigger—and deeper. Who knows? You might find a spring!” I promised him that we would do it as soon as feasible and the following August, when he left the body, the work was just beginning; and while I was in India in connection with his passing, Judith wrote me that the bulldozer had uncovered a spring.

The Conference ended that day—the Master’s birthday—and although I was asked to address it, the brief talk I gave was not nearly as satisfying as the panel had been. By this time I was getting sick: the weather was cold, and many of the western disciples were coming down with one thing or another. Dr. Richard Cardozo, a heart surgeon from New Hampshire and a good friend, was treating a line of twenty to thirty people every morning, and I was feeling miserable: headache, cold symptoms, exhaustion, you name it. This may well have colored the (almost) disastrous series of mistakes I made in the following days. These of course were the last few days I ever spent with him on the physical plane; although I didn’t know it, he did. During those days it so happened that I was often in the position of having made up my mind and decided something, and then discovered that everything was entirely different. The following is adapted from a talk I gave a year later, reminiscing about the Conference:

At the Satsang after the conference was over, one of the conveners announced that there would be a meeting right after the Satsang of the following people; and he read off a list of names, which included mine, and we were all supposed to come and attend. We were going to discuss things about how to carry on the work. But I didn’t want to go to that meeting in the worst way. I was tired; I was sick; I had just been to Satsang, and I wanted to go to my room and meditate. I did not want to go to the meeting. But I felt—“Well, Master said it was my job to be here, and my name was called; I have an obligation; I had better go.” So very reluctantly I went—very reluctantly. I went in and Mr. Srivastava was there, and Mr. Sirrine, and they motioned me to a chair near them which happened to be near the head of the table. I sat down; but I was very disgruntled. The meeting began: It was back and forth and peoples’ opinions and my headache got worse. All that stuff gives me a terrible headache. And I didn’t say anything; I just don’t feel I have got the strength
to push through that wall of constant verbiage. So I listened and this man had this opinion, and that man had that opinion. *All of a sudden the Master came in.* No one was expecting him. When I realized he was there, I turned around and it was like the sun had just come out on a gray day. He was standing there in the room and it seemed like he was ten feet high and too tall for the ceiling. He came in and took a chair . . . the chair next to me! He was six inches away from me at this meeting that I hadn’t even wanted to attend! He was so close it was like I couldn’t see anything, the light was so dazzling. He pulled up his chair to the table and took part in the meeting.

I had to move my chair over to make room for him. He squeezed in between Mr. Srivastava and me and sat there; and I had marvelous darshan for at least a half hour. Not only that: the whole feeling of the room, everything that happened at the meeting, went shooting up ten degrees. All of a sudden the verbosity stopped. All the opinions, all the ego play that was going on just vanished, and we got right down to essences. There was no fooling around.

And there were a lot of things that were like that. One night I had failed very badly. I was feeling very self-important, and Michael Grayson asked me something, and some of the things I said he didn’t like, and he let me know it, and I lost my temper at him. I really got angry, and I told him off. And then I went right over to Master’s house, because I had to go over to look at pictures for *Sat Sandesh*. I didn’t expect to see Master. But I went over carrying this thing: that I had lost my temper and had violated the sanctity of the ashram—only I wasn’t thinking of it in those terms yet. I was still feeling self-important and complacent. It hadn’t fully dawned on me what I had done.

So I went over to Master’s house and I went into the reception room and Master was there! He was giving darshan. So I sat down in a far corner. And he saw me and called me up. He made me sit about two feet in front of Him. And I never in my life experienced such love from him as he gave me that night. He said, “Thank God you have come!” . . . I was sitting there and he was beaming this love at me. He asked me when I was leaving and I said, “Wednesday night.” This was Sunday night. He said, “You should stay three days longer.” “Oh, I can’t, Master! I have too many things to do; people expecting me,”—this and that. He laughed and said, “That’s all right;” and then he said, “What are you going to write about the conference?” So I told him some of the things I had thought of. He said, “You had better write it here while it’s still fresh in your mind. When you get home it will be stale.” And I said, “Oh no, Master, I always write better back there.” He said, “All right.” You know, he continued to love me even though I had gone over there with the weight of the anger and loss of temper hanging over me and then I had twice argued with him! He had told me two very specific things and I had said, “No.” So I went back to my room. My stomach was upset and I couldn’t sleep all night; I sat there in bed,
trying to sleep and the events of the evening were going around and around in my head. Suddenly I began to see things: first of all, that I had sinned very badly, I had lost my temper, I had gone to Master with that on my head and what had he given me? Total forgiveness, absolute love. Don’t think for one minute that he can’t see what a person has done. He can. I’ve had experience with that a hundred times over. He knew exactly what I had done, but he gave me love anyway. Then he had given me two specific commandments. For all my talk about obeying the Master 100%, I had done what any idiot could have done and said, “No.” So all that was going around in my head and I spent the whole night in meditation. (I couldn’t sleep—it was no virtue on my part.) So I sat six or seven hours that night; I couldn’t wait for the morning to come. I was going to put everything right.

The first thing I did, I found Michael, at whom I had gotten angry, and dragged him over to that same room where I had lost my temper because the same people were there, and I apologized to him and begged his forgiveness. He forgave me totally; he said, “Fine, didn’t care in the least, excellent.”

So that was one thing. Then I went running over to Master’s house. I said, “Master, I want to stay longer. You told me to last night. Did you really mean that? I was thinking that you were just being polite” . . . He said, “No, no. It’s up to you; you know better. Whatever you want. No imposition. If you can stay one or two days more, might be good. But it’s for you to say.” “I want to do what you want, Master.” He laughed; then I said, “I’ll write the article here.” He said, “No, no. You know better. Whatever you think.” I said, “No, Master. You know better.” And I went down to the ticket office that day and the only flight I could get was exactly three days later than the one I had had.

When I got back that night, Master said, “Are you going to write the article here—or there?” I said “Here, Master.” He said, “Good! Then you’ll have to stay longer.” So I knew it was the real thing.

Well, in those three days I did write the article5 and I gave it to him to read and he read it and told me he liked it which was a very sweet thing for me . . . and many things happened that made it a good thing that I stayed that long. But I didn’t want to, you see. This is an important thing, the way Master works with all of us on every level. He does not impose. When we become disciples of a real Master we don’t become slaves. He is not a dictator or a tyrant. He gently points out to us what would be for our own good. If we take it, O.K.; if we don’t . . . well, He never says, “Bad person! You’ll have to pay for this!” He never talks like that. He says, “No, no, you know better. It’s all right, no imposition, whatever you want.” He talks like that; He leaves it up to us. It’s because of the inherent dignity of the human being, I would say,

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5  This was “The Conference is Over—The Challenge Continues,” printed above.
that he acts this way; because as he has said (quoting Jesus), “I have come not to make slaves of you but to make friends of you.”

On the last day of my stay, Reno Sirrine had an interview scheduled with the Master, and Reno, knowing it was my last day, very kindly asked me if I would like to come with him. I didn’t say much during this interview, but Reno talked with the Master about a certain very sticky situation involving two satsangi married couples, the husband of one and the wife of the other having fallen in love; they had recently left New Hampshire and moved to California, and Reno was very aware of them. He asked the Master if he would intervene on the inner planes. The Master said, “No; Maulana Rumi says that God Himself cannot change a man who does not want to change.” Those were among the last words that I ever heard Master say, and I have never forgotten them.

That night I was feeling sad and depressed over leaving, even though he had given me another hour and had teased and joked with me and allowed me to sit there while people came and went. I did not feel the
deep intense grief that I had felt in the past on leaving him; felt instead a dull depression, like a toothache, and a feeling of wanting more. As we said goodbye to him for the last time—about sixteen persons were leaving that night, including several group leaders—Jim Russell and I were at the end of the line as we filed past Him at the door. When we reached him, he put out his arm and stopped us from continuing and made us sit down again. He heaped parshad on us—bags and bags of sugar candy—and gave us the sweetest goodbye imaginable. When we got up to go, I felt happy and fulfilled and very, very grateful. It was the last gift he gave me as Kirpal Singh.

Six months later, on August 21, 1974, we all received word that he had died. It was the end of our world as we had known it.

The Master’s Last Message

The Master’s last circular letter to his initiates, issued on May 15, 1974, was titled “On the Unity of Man,” and seemed to me then, and seems to me now, to be of the utmost importance:

1. Man, the highest rung of all creation, is basically the same everywhere. All human beings are born the same way, receive all the bounties of nature in a similar manner, have the same inner and outer construction, and are controlled in the physical body by the same Power, called differently as “God,” “Word,” Naam, etc. All human beings are the same as souls, worship the same God, and are conscious entities; being of the same essence as God, they are members of His family, and thus are related to each other as brothers and sisters in Him.

2. All awakened and enlightened Gurus and spiritual teachers who came to this world at various points of time and in various parts, have invariably emphasized this Truth in their own language and manner. According to them all human beings, despite their distinctive social orders and denominational religions, form but one class.

3. Guru Nanak, the great teacher and the Messiah of peace, said: The highest order is to rise into Universal brotherhood; Aye, to consider all creation your equal.

4. India’s ancient mantra, Vasudeva kutumb bukam, also lays down the same basic principle that the whole world is one family. However, it is common knowledge that despite long and loud preaching by various religious and social leaders professing the Unity of Man, the world today is torn by strains
and tensions of every kind, and presents a sorrowful spectacle indeed. More often than not we see individuals at war with one another and brothers at drawn daggers with their own kith and kin. Similarly, nations are constantly involved in conflicts and clashes with each other, thus spoiling the peace and tranquility. It seems that the root cause of this present-day situation is, that the Gospel of Unity of Man, however well accepted in theory, has not struck home to humanity at large and is not put into practice. It is only a form of slogan-mongering done with calculated motives.

5. It is universally accepted that the highest purpose of this human body is to achieve union of the soul with the Oversoul or God. It is on this account that the physical body is said to be the True Temple of God wherein He Himself resides. All religions spell out the ways and means of meeting the Oversoul or God; and all the ways and means so suggested, however different looking, lead to the same destination, so that one need not change from one religion to another for this purpose. One has only to steadfastly and genuinely tread upon the lines drawn by the torch-bearers for achieving the goal.

6. It is necessary, however, that greater effort should be made toward the realization of Unity of Man. We have to realize that every human being is as much a member of the brotherhood as we are, and is obviously entitled to the same rights and privileges as are available to us. We must therefore make sure that while our own children make merry, our neighbor’s son does not go without food; and if we really practice this, much present-day conflict will be eliminated. Each of us will develop mutual recognition, respect and understanding for the other, thus wiping out the gross inequities of life. In this process, as the mutual recognition and understanding develops, it becomes a vital force generating a reservoir of fellow feeling which in turn will bring culture and ultimately humility—the basic need of the hour.

7. The holding of the World Conference on Unity of Man in February 1974 in New Delhi was a clarion call to the world. This conference was perhaps the first of its kind since the time of Ashoka the Great, held at the level of Man with the noble purpose of fostering universal brotherhood leading to universal harmony. This message of the Unity of Man must reach every human heart irrespective of religious and social labels so that it comes home to every individual, enabling him to actually put it in practice in life and pass it on to others; in this way, the entire human society could be reformed. Truly speaking, Unity already exists: as man—born in the same way, with the same privileges from God; and as soul—a drop of the Ocean of All Consciousness called God, Whom we worship by various names; but we have forgotten this Unity. The lesson has only to be revived.
8. The so-called world-wide campaign for Unity of Man is not intended to affect the existing social and religious orders in any manner. In fact, each one has to continue to work for the upliftment of man in its own way as before. Additionally, however, this campaign has to carry the clarion call of Unity of Man to as large a mass of humanity through its own vehicle as it can, so that the message cuts across the barriers of misunderstanding and mutual distrust and strikes home to every human heart. Further, the said campaign has to be carried out not by intellectual wrestling, but with optimum desire and anxiety to put the Unity of Man into practice so that it becomes a real living force. The method of propagation has to be by self-discipline and self-example rather than by declarations and proclamations.

9. It would be prudent to clarify that the campaign for Unity of Man has to be carried out above the level of religions without in any way affecting any religious or social orders. It has to obtain in practice the blessings and support of all those who believe in the Gospel of Unity of Man, and could give it strength by taking this Gospel to every human heart around them and convincing them of the need of its acceptance in daily life. It will neither be tagged with Ruhani Satsang nor with any other similar organization. The enthusiasm of its admirers will be the real force working behind the campaign.

10. It is therefore earnestly requested that all those who believe in the Unity of Man and wish to carry its message must work ceaselessly so that it may reach the loneliest corner of the world. A World Conference on Unity of Man may be arranged in the West as was done at Delhi in the East—both ultimately work as one whole.

KIRPAL SINGH
BOOK NINE
Reflections
Reflections

A system in which the teacher is so central to every aspect of the student’s outer and inner discipline and progress and without whose instruction and guidance nothing could be done, must lay great emphasis on the principle of Grace, and mystic literature is not wanting in stressing and underlining this aspect. But if from one angle it is the Master who bestows everything upon the disciple, it must not be forgotten that in doing this he is only repaying a debt he owes to his own Guru, for the gift he bestows is the gift he himself received when he was at the stage of a disciple, and so he usually never claims anything for himself but attributes his power to the grace of his own teacher. Besides, from another angle, everything is in the disciple himself and the Master does not add anything from outside. It is only when the gardener waters and tends the seed that it bursts into life, yet the secret of life is in the seed itself and the gardener can do no more than provide the conditions for its fructification. Such indeed is the function of the Guru.

KIRPAL SINGH, The Crown of Life, p. 174

I have tried in the preceding pages to give some idea of the enormousness of what Kirpal was like, and how the fact of that enormousness affected and shaped my life. Many, many others of course also experienced that enormousness; I have focused on my experience because that is what I know. But I thought, as the Conclusion of this book, that the reader who has made it this far might be interested in the experiences of other disciples of Kirpal.

He was indeed universal: people saw in him their own particular focus of devotion, whatever that might be. I have mentioned above that Dr. Wava Sanderson, who was the Group Leader in Boston at the time of my Initiation and a devout Christian, told me, when I asked her what her first impressions of Kirpal were: “When I opened the
door, I saw Jesus Christ standing there.” I have also mentioned that Kaka Sahib Kalelkar, a long-time disciple and fellow worker of Mahatma Gandhi, said at the Unity of Man Conference that:

Sant Kirpal Singh Ji is doing this work—that of making all religions and races one—and as a humble servant of Mahatma Gandhi, I congratulate him for organizing this conference. . . .

So I express my gratitude to Sant Ji for organizing this international conference. I belonged to Mahatma Gandhi’s group; I was Vice-Chancellor of the university started by him, and worked under him for fifty years. Sant Maharaj is doing the same work which Gandhi Ji asked us to do—establish harmony and unity of man. Religions are different, but we are all bound together by love. My definition of “love” means fearlessness—you don’t threaten anybody and you don’t fear anybody.

And Lama Kushak Bakula, Tibetan Buddhist, Head Lama of Ladakh in the Himalayas, and Member of the Indian Parliament, said this on the occasion of Kirpal’s birthday, February 6, 1973:

The ideals which Sant Kirpal Singh Ji has put before us today were propounded long ago by Tathagata Buddha: that the way to salvation lies through the observance of chastity, truth, and non-violence. Sant Ji’s teachings are the same as Buddha’s. Sant Ji loves all mankind. He does not recognize any distinction between man and man on the basis of birth, caste, or status in society. Equal love and respect for all religions and scriptures, simple living, love for all creation, non-violence in thought, word and deed, restraint in speech, always discoursing on Dharma, and a life of solitude away from the glare of publicity—these are some of his other traits. At the ripe old age of 80 he is still busy in spreading the message of Truth and true knowledge. Seekers after Truth come to him from all parts of the world for counsel and guidance.

In this vast country of ours, there are as many Paths as there are types of trees. But the principle of love of man cannot be restricted or confined. According to Goswami Tulsidas, God is limitless, His story too is limitless. Sant Kirpal Singh Ji’s teachings open the way to happiness and joy abounding and are of practical utility. . . .

Sant Ji is an embodiment of humanism and beneficence. The greatness of his personality lies in his simplicity. He has awakened spiritual consciousness in people in India and abroad. He has given new light to the world. The whole family of man owes a debt of gratitude to him. Blessed indeed is Sant
Kirpal Singh Ji, the miraculous light-giver, who is keeping alive the great traditions of this country. Spiritually centered, he is always at the service of the afflicted and the downtrodden. The more we study his personality and his works the more he rises in our estimation. His holy voice rings with a message of hope and cheer to despairing humanity.

In conclusion I pray to the Tri-Ratna [the three-jeweled one] that there be peace in the world; that we should all follow the great Masters and keep our hearts pure; and that Sant Kirpal Singh Ji may enjoy long life, for the benefit of mankind.

Thus Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists could see him as the embodiment of and successor to Christ, Gandhi and Buddha; and that was certainly my understanding of him.

The following articles were all written by disciples (the first two by disciples of Baba Sawan Singh) and, with one exception, were all published in Sat Sandesh. They are a small sample of many; taken together, they do provide a wider picture of how Kirpal worked and how people responded to him than any one person could provide.

Bachan Singh

Bachan Singh was a carpenter—a Satsangi—a disciple of Baba Sawan Singh Ji. Here is his story—how he came to the feet of his Master and various incidents in his life—as told to the Sat Sandesh staff, and as published in the February 1970 issue of the magazine.

From childhood I had a strong desire to find God. As a small boy I promised myself that one day I would meet God and I would put my arms around Him, and He would also hold me tight and I would say, “Hello God, who are you?” Those were childlike thoughts, but the desire stayed with me and when I grew into manhood I was still searching for God. Being a Hindu I frequented the temples and, with unswerving constant faith and sincerity of heart, offered my devotions to the various images installed there. Many years went by without any experience of God, who it seemed did not choose to come to me. Finally I thought that perhaps God did not come to Hindus, so I joined the Sikh faith and started attending the gurudwara to listen to the sacred words of the ten Gurus, contained in the holy book—the Guru Granth
Sahib. The words of this great book served to increase my devotion, and I would listen, enrapt in the chanting of the verses. However, as time wore on and I was no nearer to the Truth, or any real experience of God, I began to suspect that God was not to be found in buildings. Although the Sikh religion had given me added incentive to desire God-knowledge, and had been the means of increased devotion growing in my heart through the beautiful words of the great Gurus, the words were just words after all, and I was still far from God. Once again my mind filled with confusing thoughts, so I stopped frequenting all holy buildings, concluding that there was no God anywhere.

Life was frightening, having no God. I felt alone and very bewildered. With no God and no Truth in the world, what was the purpose of living? These thoughts went round and round in my mind for days, until at last I decided that the best thing was to commit suicide and finish my purposeless life. I made my way to a deep well outside the town. Before making the jump I suddenly remembered that I had read somewhere that one should sit down quietly with closed eyes and think deeply before starting any important task—so I sat down beside the well, deep in thought. While in this position, I saw a smoky haze come in front of me, through which a figure emerged—a thin-faced man with a turban and white beard; I thought that it must be Guru Nanak [the first Guru of the Sikhs]. He smiled at me and told me not to worry. When I opened my eyes, there was no one there, but I felt strangely at peace, so I got up and went back to the city. Some days passed without seeing any more of the beautiful figure, whose presence had given me a surge of hope within my heart, so I began to presume that it was not really a vision but a dream.

The thought of ending my life again arose and I resolved that the second time I would make the jump. As I reached the vicinity of the well once again, with my eyes open I saw the hazy mist coming and then the same figure of the bearded saint appeared. This time he comforted me, telling me not to worry—“You will get what you want,” he said, and with this he left me. Such demonstration of power before me, without even closing my eyes and sitting quietly, impressed me greatly and I felt that God was telling me that He really did exist. So I turned around and went home.
Some years went by without any further experience, and although my faith in God had been somewhat restored, I kept away from religious places. My work as a carpenter took me once to a building in Daryaganj, Delhi, where I was working on the first floor. A fellow carpenter was also working there and one day he said to me. “My Guru has come to Delhi, and he is going to hold Satsang on the floor above.” I told him that I had no desire to go, but due to the loudspeakers I could hear the talks from where I was working. The sound of the speaker’s voice and the nature of his talks were very attractive and seemed to draw me from inside myself. My friend was missing from work for four or five days and when he finally turned up I was a little annoyed and asked him why he had left the work without any warning. He told me that his Guru had taken the train to return to Beas, and he had suddenly jumped aboard also, to spend some more time near his Guru and had therefore been staying in Beas. I told him that it was very strange that a man could leave his work to run after a guru, but my friend assured me quite confidently that his Guru was God Himself in human form. “How can you be sure?” I asked.

“But because he gives practical experience and shows you the Truth inside yourself,” replied my friend. A peculiar feeling filled my heart and I quickly asked him to describe his Guru. He then described perfectly the same holy figure I had seen some years before. “You must take me to him!” I said, full of excitement. My poor friend explained that he had just returned from there and could not afford another trip immediately, but when I offered to pay all his expenses, he would not hear of it “What? Take another man’s money to have the darshan of my Guru?—never!” He said he would gladly take me and pay his own expenses.

When we arrived at Beas station it was very hot and we had to walk a considerable distance to the Dera [something like an ashram], and after a few minutes walking I began to feel sick with the heat. Just then a huge cloud came and obscured the sun’s rays, and remained overhead until we reached the Dera. Satsang was going on, and there, seated on the dais, was the man whom by now had come to mean so much to my anxious hopes for the future. My desire to get near him was very strong. At that moment the rain started to fall in large drops.
The Master stood up, saying that the Satsang would be postponed to enable the people to go to shelter. Everyone stood up, and I took the opportunity to push through the crowd until I was right at the front, very near the Master’s feet. Suddenly the rain stopped, and the Master sat down again. All the people including myself sat down also, and the Satsang was resumed. Baba Sawan Singh Ji, the great Master who had appeared to me at the most difficult moment of my life, looked directly at me and smiled—in that moment I knew that I belonged to him. That is how I met my Guru and was initiated there at Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, afterwards returning to Delhi a much happier man, having found that which I had been seeking for so long.

Regularly I would visit Beas to have the blessing of my Master’s darshan. His private farm was at Sirsa, and the followers were delighted when they were allowed to visit there and help in whatever work was going on. We used to take one month’s leave each year to spend there on occasions when the Master was in residence. This selfless service was done with great love in our hearts and an overflowing joy at being near him. During one visit I was spending my days doing some carpentry work, and in the night I would help with the building that was going on. One night we were building a high wall, and the Master was sitting in a chair nearby, watching the work. The kitchen bell rang suddenly and the Master advised us to go and have our evening meal. Everyone left, but I was anxious to complete the section I was working on, so I thought I would go in a few minutes’ time. However, I went on laying bricks, and forgot everything else, until I realized it had become dark. I was on the top of a ten-foot high wall and there was no ladder to climb down. My head started to spin—if I slipped I would fall on the stones and probably break my neck. Some yards along the wall the height was only about six feet, and if I could get to that place, perhaps I could jump to the ground from there. Slowly, feeling very frightened, I walked along the wall, looking only at my feet so that I might not lose my balance. Being so deeply engrossed in all this, I had not noticed that the Master himself was standing some distance away, watching my movements. As I started to walk, he also walked toward me. When I finally jumped from the six-foot wall I jumped right into the Master’s arms, which were extended to catch me. He held me, and I was so surprised I was speechless. He smiled and said, “Now you can
ask me who I am.” My thoughts flashed back to my childhood, and I knew, deep in my heart, that my Master had always been with me.

I remember once when I was walking along the street in Sirsa I saw the Master’s car travelling toward me. Baba Sawan Singh Ji was sitting inside and I folded my hands, delighted to have his darshan. The car stopped and the Master put out his hand to beckon someone. Although he was looking in my direction, I never imagined that he wanted to speak to me, so I quietly stood there. Again he gestured, and wondering who the person could be I turned round, but there was no one in sight. The realization dawned upon me that the Master was calling me—the life just left me and I trembled, thinking, “What have I done now?” The Master was waiting, so somehow I managed to push myself to the car. The Master said, “Bachan Singh, go to Delhi and settle down there. Do not live in your village anymore.” (I had been staying in the village where I was born, for some time.) “I am going to be in Delhi and there will be work for you there.”

I left my village and went to Delhi. Not knowing anyone and having no money, I built a small temporary hut from mud to live in, and with my carpenter’s tools I went from house to house looking for work. My efforts were successful and with my Master’s grace I found plenty of work. Some people even trusted me with large sums of money to purchase wood. I would ask them, “Why trust me with so much money—you do not know me, I might steal it,” but they would insist that it was all right. So with all the blessings from my Master, I prospered. We should be grateful for material blessings, but they have little value compared to spiritual things. Great sorrow came upon me, when the news came from Beas that my Master had left the world. It was a blow that took the joy out of working and indeed from every phase of life. It was something that a person cannot describe.

Several months later I learned that Sant Kirpal Singh Ji, my Guru’s most devoted disciple, had come to live in Delhi to carry on my Master’s work. I went to Radio Colony where he was living to have his darshan. Naturally there were questions in my heart as I went—would that same Power be in him, as it was in my Master? Was he truly the appointed one to continue the great work of giving the holy gift of Naam to the seeking souls? From the first meeting I was given such strong assurance that has never since been broken. While sitting at his feet,
his face changed completely, and there appeared the face of my own Guru, Baba Sawan Singh Ji. I saw this not once, but many times.

Although I lived many miles from Radio Colony, I would go there every evening after my day’s work, to sit for one or two hours with the Master. One evening, for some reason the Master was very stern with all the people present, telling them to go to their work and not to while away so much time there. Pondering over the Master’s words, I walked slowly to the gate, but on hearing my name I turned and saw the Master coming towards me. “Bachan Singh, come at 7 a.m. tomorrow, for there is some work for you.” My mood changed at once to happy rejoicing that the Master was not annoyed with me, but had actually called me for some work.

The next day I arrived at his house sharp at 7 a.m. and the Master was waiting. He climbed on his bicycle, telling me to do the same, and I followed him, cycling for about four or five miles across a wilderness, which nowadays is fully built up. Eventually we came to a plot of wild land near a railway line. There waiting were four or five other people and we all went around the plot to inspect it. There was an old well in one corner in a half-ruined condition, and a bucket and rope beside it, which presumably some people were using to draw water for washing clothes, etc. One of the disciples picked up the bucket, cleaned it with water and clay and drew some clear water from the well. After standing it on the side of the well he folded his hands to the Master and requested that the Master please quench our thirst. Straight from the bucket, the Master poured water into our cupped hands—and one can say that this was the very first blessing from the Master upon the future Sawan Ashram site—that very place where he would quench the thirst of ages for many thousands of souls.

The work began soon after that, clearing the plot, cutting unwanted bushes and trees. The willing devotees carried clay on their heads to level out the surface. I am reminded of one instance when the Master himself picked up an empty basket and put it in front of those who were filling up. But they all folded their hands in protest saying, “No, no, Maharaj Ji, not you.” The Master asked, “Is there no one who will obey, and fill up this basket for me?” I was there, and I stepped forward, “Yes, I will obey,” and I filled it up, pressing down the mud until it was overflowing. Then with difficulty I lifted it up and placed it on
the Master’s head. Folding my hands together I said, “Maharaj Ji, you can take any burden.” The Master laughed and walked away with the basket.

Many people came to serve, and the Master gathered them around and said, “I do not want people who are conscious of their wealth. I only want the poor and 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.” It was very beautiful to see men and women, sometimes coming in cars and wearing expensive clothing, but not caring at all, bending their backs to the muddy work. Everyone had smiling, soil-streaked faces as they blended the work with joyful singing of holy hymns. Those were very wonderful days, not easily forgotten. I worked there day and night. I had Rupees 100 when we started, which I spent gradually, on myself and others, so I borrowed 100 more, and that went too. The news reached me that my hut had blown down in a storm, so I had no home, little clothing and no money; but inside me there was a deep sense of happiness and well-being from the privilege of working near the Master.

In those days there was a small group of people who were against the Master starting an ashram and were trying to break the satsangis away through various means. They came to me frequently, and repeated many times that the Master was not Baba Sawan Singh’s true follower, but was instead the negative power. After many attempts in vain, they almost convinced me one day, and I began to wonder about it. However, I thought that before making up my mind I should go to the Master once more. Arriving at the Ashram, the building of which was now basically complete, I saw the Master standing there as if awaiting me. He looked at me as I approached, and suddenly I could go no further, for there, standing behind him was my Master, Baba Sawan Singh, and behind him was Baba Jaimal Singh Ji. Baba Sawan Singh Ji looked at me significantly, and putting his hand on Kirpal Singh’s shoulder he said to him, “This is all yours; you have to look after many souls.” I saw Sant Kirpal Singh Ji fold his hands and bow down to his Master, saying, “Whatever you wish.” With deep sadness I realized how foolish I had been to allow people to influence my thought, and faith in the Master. Many, many times have I had this wonderful experience of seeing my Master appear with Sant Kirpal Singh Ji. I have never told
these things to anyone, but today I feel there is some purpose in doing so. I pray that I will always be grateful to my Master and to the present Master, for the kindness, love and protection they have showered upon me.

Dr. H. M. Brock

Dr. Brock, a Port Angeles, Washington dentist, and his wife were the first American satsangis ever, and he was also the first Western Representative of a living Master. Letters to Dr. and Mrs. Brock, along with references to them in letters to others, take up a large proportion of the various compilations of Baba Sawan Singh’s letters (Spiritual Gems, The Dawn of Light, published at Beas, and Foreign Correspondence of Baba Sawan Singh published by the Vancouver Sangat). He never met Sawan Singh physically; his first encounter with a Master in the flesh was with Kirpal in 1955, as he relates. This account is taken from the August 1971 issue of Sat Sandesh, page 18, and originally appeared in the booklet As They Saw the Master, published in India in 1956:

It was in the year 1910 or 1911 that Mr. Kher Singh Sasmas came to us and told us of the then Living Master—Sawan Singh. We were given the initiation by Mr. Sasmas under the directions of the Master. In our correspondence, I at one time asked [the Master], “In case he passed on before I did, would I know who the new Master would be?” and he said I would. So I was quite satisfied when Mr. Khanna put me in touch with Sant Kirpal Singh.

In India there is a background of thousands of years of recognizing the spiritually enlightened ones, while to us in this country the coming of such a one is new and of great importance, and we hope to have the Master back again at an early date. In Sant Kirpal Singh, I think everyone recognizes the unbounded spirit of love that permeates him and everything HE does, regardless of who or what people are or may have been.

The letter of Baba Sawan Singh that Dr. Brock refers to above has been published in various places, including Spiritual Gems; the following is taken from a facsimile of the original typescript with Sawan Singh’s signature, and was published in the January 1979 issue of Sant Bani Magazine, page 27:
You may ask any questions you like; there is no restriction. Your question as to whom to look for guidance if the present Master goes out of life is very appropriate. The Master leaves the physical frame in its time like other people but remains with His devotees in the astral form as long as the devotee has not crossed the astral form. All internal guidance will be done by Him and it is He Who will come to take charge of the soul at the time of death. And in case the devotee rises above the eye focus now and meets Him daily, he will meet Him inwardly there as usual. He will continue to discharge His inward duties of guidance as before, only He cannot give instructions outwardly for the simple reason that He has left the physical vehicle. The functions which could be performed through physical frame only will now be done by the successor. All outward guidance will be done by the successor and the devotees of the Master that is gone will love the successor no less. They will get the benefit of the outward instructions from the successor. Correspondence will be done with the successor and you will know who the successor is. (December 17, 1925)

Dr. Ann Martin

I never met Dr. Martin, of Nashville, Tennessee, and all I know about her is what she writes here; but her account of her time with Kirpal during the 1955 tour, entitled “Nine Days with the Living Master,” and also published in the booklet As They Saw the Master, meant a very great deal to me when I was first coming to the Path. This booklet was one of the first writings on the Path that I ever read, and Dr. Martin’s article, the centerpiece of the booklet, spoke directly to my heart: everything she wrote corresponded exactly to what my idea of a “Master” was. She begins her article with a long account of her search for Truth, culminating with her contact with Kirpal’s teaching. Asking the Master by correspondence for Initiation, he told her to meet him in person in Louisville during his stay there. We pick up her account at that point:

In Louisville she [the writer—she refers to herself throughout in the third person] took a room at a hotel, and contacted someone whose address had been given her. She was told to go direct to the house
where the Master was in residence, which she did. As she walked up on the porch, a man met her saying the Master was busy at the moment, but would see her soon, and asked her to have a seat and wait there. She sat down in a swing, and she doesn’t mind telling you that her thoughts were beginning to pile up on her. All at once, as she sat there
on this strange porch, in this strange town, amid people whom she had never seen or met before, she began berating herself. Her thoughts went on a rampage, and she asked herself, half angrily, what was she doing there? Had she suddenly taken leave of her senses, to leave home on a mission of this sort, when she knew that every attempt she'd ever made fell flat? What did she expect to find here?

About this time she glanced up, and walking towards her was a Godman. She was first stunned by the sheer beauty of the person approaching her. His gleaming white finely-woven garments, his bearing, his eyes, his smile, his very expression of all-embracing understanding and love seemed to swamp her. It swept over her like a sudden storm of inexpressible Joy! Before she could get close enough to put her hand in His, she knew her search was ended! . . .

There are no words adequate to use in describing one's first meeting with the Master. All the joys one can conjure up in one's mind vanish when compared to the actual joy that is there. Words are of no use here at all, they fall like spent bullets, when one tries to tell of his feelings when he first comes face to face with the Great Beloved Master. Everything seemed to come to a complete standstill for the writer. She felt bathed in the purest holy light imaginable, and Earth—even time itself—seemed no more. All she can remember of this meeting is that she got up out of the swing and met the Master. She heard herself say, “OH! YOU are the Master!” Any other words, if there were, she does not recall. There must have been other words, but her heart suddenly was so full of joy and gladness that she could hardly stand it, for she felt surely it would burst within her for the joy that was hers at this sacred moment in her life. . . .

Shortly afterwards she went back to her hotel with instructions to be back early in the morning for Initiation. After Initiation, which the writer knows was her real birth into the Kingdom of Heaven, the Master asked her where she was staying, and when she recovered from a surprise that busy as he was, he could be concerned with a single individual, she told him she was staying at the Brown Hotel. He asked her to come to his place and stay, but she demurred, saying she was a complete stranger there and felt she might intrude. The man who first met her and told her to wait for the Master quickly stepped to her side and said: “It is a great honor that the Master has asked you
to stay under his roof! Do not refuse him.” I immediately sent for my 
bags and remained in the Master’s house the balance of my time up 
there. . . .

People address him as “His Holiness.” Some resent this title, yet even 
this is not good enough for one as holy as he. For those of us who have 
met him and sat at his blessed feet know that he is most holy. He does 
not ask that he be so addressed, but he will not deny one the privilege 
to address him what one wishes. . . . One evening, he was invited into 
a beloved disciple’s home and cookies and lemonade were served as 
refreshment. The dear little hostess did not offer the Master a cookie, 
and the writer suggested that she do so. “But, I thought he would eat 
only foods prepared at his own residence,” she said apologetically, 
but held the tray of cookies towards him, and with the most beautiful 
smile ever to grace a human face, he said, “Is it your wish that I take 
one?” “Oh, yes, Master,” she said. And he took a cookie and ate it. Such 
is the Master. His kindness envelops you like a cloak. He is the most 
benevolent, the most gracious, the most humble, yet the greatest 
personality, ever to walk on this earth.

The writer was so deeply impressed with the fact that no matter how 
many people happened to be at his residence where he held Satsang 
every day, they were always fed at meal time, and there was always a 
crowd . . . No one was allowed to go away hungry or unfed. It was a 
miracle, no less, to have crowds coming and going, all the time, as was 
the case here, and to be completely cognizant of everyone’s comfort 
and well-being. It is a task for a large well-equipped ménage, but not 
so here. Two or three at the most kept a smooth-running household 
and all were supplied food regularly. The writer recalls that several 
times she was busy somewhere off in a corner by herself, forgetful of 
food itself, but she was always sought out and called in to eat. Even 
those who were quietly out doing secretarial work or meditating were 
not overlooked.

Aware of the fact that she was partaking of food and lodging without 
paying, the writer attempted to do something about it. She decided that 
she would go every day and bring in a basket of groceries. Accordingly, 
she secured the services of a car and went and bought some groceries. 
Mr. Khanna, the Master’s representative, met her and asked her what 
she had brought and she said, “Some groceries.” He reprimanded her
severely, yet very gently and sweetly: “This sort of thing is not done in the Master’s house. He provides everything! All is free, free as the air you breathe! Do not do this again, please.” “But I feel I should pay a little something,” she remonstrated. “The Master does not accept gifts or money from anyone! He gives, he does not take,” the man said, and so the writer obeyed, with untold wonder growing in her heart. There was nothing to pay. There was no one to whom anything could be paid. There was no one to take any money. The writer tried vainly to reimburse someone for the days she spent there, and to no avail. And when Mr. Khanna told her of the man who had sent a check for $5,000, that the Master returned to the sender because he does not accept gifts, she understood what he was trying to tell her. “The Master is not interested in money or gifts. All he is interested in is your soul, and that you do the things that he teaches you to do,” said Mr. Khanna, and the writer turned away with the wonder of things growing and growing in her heart. In these days of fee and money grabbing and stress and turmoil, here was one who did not love money, who is only interested in your soul and your happiness and well-being! Strange things these—almost too much for one to believe, and the writer doubts if she could have believed all these things had she not witnessed them with her own eyes and ears, and experienced them in her own life.

Wherever the Master went, carloads of people followed him. I mean those of us who would not be parted from him, who clung close to his beloved side, and there were many of us who would not stay a moment longer than necessary out of his blessed presence. Did this bother him? No, his patience never seemed to run out. If the writer got a little impatient, his loving eyes would seek her out and one look into them made her want to fall at his feet for forgiveness. His eyes sought you out, not to correct you, or to chide you, but to lend you aid in your own little struggles, which he knew were going on inside his beloved ones nearby.

The writer recalls with vibrant memories the many wonderful things about her Beloved Master that are impossible to put on paper. His complete indifference to people’s shortcomings; the time he always had for all who came to him; His graciousness in granting audiences to all who asked for interviews. There were times when the writer herself felt chagrined at her inflated ego, taking up the Master’s precious
time by insisting on pouring out a gushing stream of her own importance and discoveries, etc., and never giving the gentle Master an opportunity to say a word. How many times has this disciple looked into the kind, gentle, love-filled eyes of her Beloved Master as he sat patiently through some person's verbal catalog of all he'd read and found and concluded about religion, listening, giving complete audience as though he were the only other man in the world beside himself. Did the Master try to deflate one's ego? He did not. People would come and take up the Master's time, not to listen to him, but to talk about themselves. Yet the Beloved Master always had time to attend to them. And this disciple saw the true greatness of her Master in all these things.

The writer would have thought nothing of it had the Master said, "I am too busy. The man must get rid of his own importance before I can talk with him. I cannot waste precious time on him," and she was surprised that this did not happen, for the Master truly was very busy always. A man once showed up when the Master was extremely busy and this disciple thought, surely now the Master will tell him he is too busy, and she watched the Master's face for perhaps a fleeting shadow denoting his displeasure, for this was surely an intrusion. You see, she was taking dictation from the Master to assist in the heavy correspondence, but, as though his own favorite or most beloved son demanded a moment of his time, he gently laid down his pencil, weighted his mail so it would not blow away, excused himself (we were sitting out in the garden among the trees) and followed the man to a distant nook of the garden, and there they sat for over an hour. From time to time the writer glanced up from her work to see the man's hand flailing the air, and to hear his voice droning on and on. It is the greatest lesson in patience and humility ever taught.

As the writer looks back over those eventful days of her life, the thing that seems to stand out the most in it all is that the Master seemed to be love itself, love personified. His absolute magnificence, as he moved about among us, is indescribable. His graciousness, his impartiality, towards us all alike was something unheard of. You knew when he looked at you that he was seeing another child of God, no matter how you may feel about yourself. He did not look at YOU, nor Jane, or Mary, nor John, nor Bill, for personality means nothing to him. But he looked at you as though he were looking at a child of God
... No tongue can tell, no words can express, the absolute serenity and peace that was and is the writer’s because of her short association with the Great Master.

One day a trip was suddenly planned. We piled into cars and there was quite a parade of us, all our cars keeping close together. We were to visit the Hermits’ Tunnel, a place on a mountain side that had been blown out of solid rock for a railroad tunnel, and then finally abandoned for some reason. The man now owning the place invited the Master to visit his place, which really was unique. It was here that the writer saw the Master in a different setting. The summer was hot, and the lowlands seemed to sizzle with the dry heat, but up there it was cool and pleasant. We were all more or less like children, tramping all over the place, so glad to escape the heat and rush of things, and the Beloved Master seemed to enjoy the fun as much as the rest of us.

In fact, this writer cannot recall one instant that the Beloved Master’s face was not all bathed in a most pleasant, happy, peaceful expression. He was always like a proud, loving, happy father with an adored and adoring family about him all the time, and the constant sweetness of his expressions of all-embracing love is beyond human description. . .

Of course, everyone wanted to make the Master most comfortable, but he would have none of it. He found himself a place to sit down with the rest of us, and became one with our pleasure and sweetness that day. Someone handed him a bottle of soft drink and asked him if he would hold it while she took his photograph. He smilingly obliged. I should say he happily obliged, because there was not the least bit of condescension about him. Whatever he did to make another happy was done in all love and humility, and he always considered the desire of others where he himself was concerned.

The writer was never critical, but here she was at the apex of her whole life, she felt, and naturally she was on the alert for the least fault or imperfection to show up. Too much in her was at stake. She had too much to lay at the feet of just anyone. Could she be blamed for being watchful and careful? Was there any discord about this Godman? About him maybe a little, but in him? Never! Like a beautiful, calm, white lily he was there in his own serenity and peace; no matter what swirled at his blessed feet, HE WAS PERFECT. The world troubled him not. He knew those ready for him would find him, and so his calm spread over
all about him like a mantle. No wonder people flocked about him. No wonder they followed him in crowds wherever he went. . .

And in all this, not one time did the writer catch a glimpse of impatience or displeasure. Nothing but perfection ever showed up in the Master, and this perfection was as natural as the radiance to the sun itself. But how can it ever be described? One may as well try to describe the perfection of the sun, or to watch for the very sun to make a mistake or to prove itself unworthy.

Estella Brooks

*This article was published in Sat Sandesh, October 1974, but was written somewhat earlier.*

In the year 1955, I lived at 125 S. Whipple St., Chicago. At that time I had only four children living with me. We occupied a six room apartment on the second floor. One of the six rooms was very small, just large enough for a single bed and one other piece of furniture. So I gave this room to my little girl, about nine years old.

She couldn’t sleep—at always complaining of seeing a man standing over her. At times she would scream for me to come and see him; when I would reach her I wouldn’t see anyone. I would take her in my arms and assure her no one was there, only God watching over her. As time passed on she became nervous and afraid to stay in the room, so I moved her out. I decided to make this into a prayer room since it was so small.

I set up my altar in this room. On the altar I placed my Bible in the center; a statue of Jesus directly behind the Bible; on the right side of the statue of Jesus I placed the statue of the Blessed Mary; on the left side a statue of St. Joseph. The next step down I placed a statue of St. Anthony on the right and Blessed Martin on the left. I also put up a white candle, three of my astro-colors, and a brown candle. These candles I kept constantly burning. I would also burn incense to my delight. Always when I would go before the altar, such an inspiration I would get!

One day in this year of 1955 (I forget the month), I went into this little prayer room to the altar. I don’t know what happened;
but I couldn’t see anything on my altar but my Bible in the center. There was a strip of newspaper across my Bible with writing on it in heavy black ink. I quote: “Stand still—where you are.” After I read this, I looked on the left side,—there was a big pan of incense that looked like sandalwood. It frightened me and I turned away from the altar.

I started out of the room: I caught hold of the doorknob to turn it, and I noticed the whole side of the room just opened up like a sliding door was there. In stepped Master Kirpal Singh as He looks today. I was so afraid I tried to get out of the door. I held on to the doorknob and fell to the floor on my knees. He held out His hands to me and said, “Get up, don’t be afraid; who are you serving?”

I replied, “I am serving God.”
He said, “Who is God?”
I said, “God is Spirit.”
He replied, “I am Spirit.”

So the fear began to leave me, as I caught hold of His hands. As I began to feel embarrassed, I recall He disappeared.

As He held my hand, He said, “This is the way I want your altar.” It was cleaned off. No statues, no candles, just my Bible and the big pie-pan of sandalwood incense.

Thanks be to God, after a few years passed by I came to know Who the man was that visited my home. Today, being an initiate of His Holiness Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj and a member of Ruhani Satsang, with hours of meditation under His guidance, I am truly inspired.

Ingeborg Gutwenger

This beautiful article was published in the March 1973 issue of Sat Sandesh, following the author’s trip to India that year:

It was a great blessing for me to be able to take part in the Birthday Celebrations of the Great Master Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj. For ten years it has been my fervent wish to visit my Master in India, His physical home, and He in His kindness agreed to give it to us.

The reason for this wish of mine was a very peculiar experience that changed my life: I was born in Vienna, Austria’s capital. After I
married, we moved to Innsbruck, a beautiful small town in the Alps, where we live with our three children.

In 1962 I fell ill with acute glomerole nephritis, i.e., kidney decomposition, which was declared incurable by the doctors. They told me that I had to face death within six weeks or so. My husband and I felt very helpless and despairing. Seeing no other way out, we knelt down in prayer and cried from the bottom of our heart to Jesus, as we were taught as Catholics.

Our prayer was answered in a very wonderful manner, though in an entirely different way than we expected. The same night I had the following dream: A man from the East with a white turban on his head, radiating heavenly light and glory, stood before me. Humbly he said, “I will help you.” I felt that I was healed instantaneously. Next morning, full of happiness, I told my husband this experience. He was dazzled and said that I should not pray to a man with a turban, but only to Jesus. We were at that time very strict in our Catholic confession.

Our life changed more and more through His great love and grace. I was healed indeed. The doctors were puzzled and since they did not want to admit that I was healed, they tried to find some symptom of a disease. They could not find anything, and I did not need them anymore.

From then on we led an inward life, reading scriptures like the Bible, Yogananda, Aurobindo, etc. As if attracted by our longing, many missionaries of different sects visited us, but none of them could convince us. Then, sometime in July 1963, that is, approximately one year after my healing, I saw in our town a poster reading “SELF REALIZATION—GOD REALIZATION.” I never notice posters, but that one caught my interest. Although it did not show any picture but text only, it enticed me in a way I cannot describe. I was keen to attend this lecture. I got my husband interested in it, too, although it was not easy.

The lecture took place in our town hall. The clergy of our big religious communities, as well as of many sects, attended it. All were much impressed; but foremost it was I who was deeply moved and surprised: because I recognized in the lecturer, Master Kirpal Singh Ji, my Savior, the one who appeared in my dream. His wonderful face, full of mercy, radiated the beauty of God. I felt warm in my heart, saved and happy. My husband, too, felt God’s Power working through
the Master. Both of us asked for Initiation, and got it—which means the opening of the inner eye and the experience of God’s Light and Heavenly Melody within.

Now, ten years later, I am fortunate to be with Him in His Ashram. It was only after my arrival here that I became aware of another aspect of our Initiation in Innsbruck. Here I learned and saw how big a number of people usually get initiated in each town the Master visits on His tours, or in the sittings here in the Ashram. Sometimes this number runs into hundreds of people. It makes me almost giddy when I realize that the Master had to come specially to little Innsbruck, the only town He visited then in Austria, to initiate both of us, my husband and myself—and only both of us, for no one else asked for it.

Heartfelt prayers are said to be efficacious; my little heart’s deep prayers to Christ or God were listened to, and the Great Master living on earth who dispenses and carries out His Will, picked up two people who lived in darkness and brought them to the Light. He came into one of the smallest countries of Europe, even into one of its smallest towns, to initiate us. He, the Founder of Manav Kendra!—I cannot express my feelings in words; I can only thank, thank, thank, and congratulate India that on her soil lives such a true and Holy Master. Likewise, I wish for every single man living on this dark earth to come in touch with Master Kirpal Singh Ji’s Light that is given gratis to all who seek it earnestly.

“KNOCK AND IT SHALL BE OPENED.”

Geoff May

*Geoff, an old friend of many years, recently wrote me this remembrance:*

I remember during the ’72 Tour (and I really don’t recall how it happened): I was sitting on the floor in His house at Sant Bani. I remember also that you and Mr. & Mrs. Khanna were there standing in the side doorway. Other than that I only recall that there were about 15-20 initiates sitting on the floor. A door to the right and to the back opened; and He walked into the room. It is the only time that I had the great good fortune to be this close to Him. The room, quite literally (at least for me), filled instantly with a soft, golden light that was more intense right around Him. And He, also quite literally, filled the room with
His presence. He was “bigger than life” so to speak. He sat down (on a couch?) right in front of me. My jaw had to have dropped; and my smile seemed bigger than my face. Also, as He moved toward me and especially as I looked into His eyes, I felt as though I was being pulled up and out of my body. It was a sensation that I experienced over and over again during that visit every time that I looked into His eyes. In retrospect I wish very much that my faith was strong enough not to let go of His gaze; and let it take me wherever He wanted. What a fool! I think of it very often to this day especially when I am struggling. I can’t remember a word that He said. It was all about “being with Him.”

Shirley Tassencourt

Shirley practiced Zen Buddhist meditation successfully (I was told—not by her—that she had attained kensho four times) for many years under Yasutani Roshi and Philip Kapleau Roshi before coming to Kirpal and taking the Initiation into Shabda Yoga in 1969; since then (she is now in her nineties) her absolute dedication to the Master and his practice has inspired, and continues to inspire, generations of satsangis. The following was transcribed from a tape letter sent by Shirley just after her return from India in January 1974, and was published in the November 1974 issue of Sat Sandesh under the title “The White Brilliance.”

I’ve been home in my mansion a day or so now. I look out on the palace grounds around my house, all sparkle in sun and ice, and I wonder if it’s real. And then I wonder if India was real. And finally the only reality I can settle for is Master’s eyes. But when His eyes are closed, where is the real? OK, then that thing that goes somewhere, when His eyes are closed, that’s it. When India is gone and the United States has fallen into the ocean, I’m going to be holding on to that thing that goes somewhere when Master’s eyes are closed.

You know what Master said the other day? “God is omnipotent. He can do anything—except one thing—bring a man to Him who doesn’t want to come.”

Would you believe that Master came to the gate to say goodbye? You know, when the taxi’s late, and somebody forgets something, and the Governor has to be escorted to the gate—when there is a convergence of incidents like this, you know that Master has his finger in the pie.
And you know from the waves of love that follow that taxi, thick as pudding, that Master wanted to say goodbye. It’s not special in that it happened to me, but it’s special in that it happened to me who disobeyed Master. The beginning of the last week Master told me not to do Simran for a week, to break the habits of my Buddhistic practice, and do only Bhajan. Well, I did mostly Bhajan, but from time to time He would put us into meditation, which was Simran, where I couldn’t do that other position all the time, and I couldn’t bear to stop meditating. So I kept trying to follow His directions for Simran exactly. I was determined I would. I sat all day January 3rd in Master’s House. Usually we sit from 7 to 10 in the morning and 4 to 7 or 8 at night. That morning I just turned around, faced the wall, threw a blanket over me completely so that I looked like furniture, and no one bothered me all day. I came out of Bhajan once, to hear Master having a private interview with someone on the other side of the porch partition. He was saying to a girl, “Mind your own business,” and I figured that was for me. And as I was there feeling truly humble, and not wanting to intrude even a body’s worth, the fingers went right back in my ears. After a while being with Master, there is such proof that He knows everything about everyone, what you are thinking moment by moment, that you become very alert as to what He might want of you.

Well, later on the Bhajan I was doing became Simran, and I was picking up all the sounds of the House with my refined hearing. It was like wearing an invisible cloak and being in the center of the Godman’s earth-family. Taiji would go by, her great frame moving on no-nonsense feet; the doctor, the secretaries, gatekeepers, the chauffeur Ram Sarup.

(In Baroda, Ram Sarup Ji came out on the lawn after Initiation was long over. I was seated under some bushes, still in a bliss daze, although it was now late afternoon. He squatted beside me and took my hand and kissed it. “Good meditations?” he asked. All I could do was grin from ear to ear. At the moment neither of us spoke English. He just sat there and held my hand, and I felt it was from Master. And he said, “I am Ram Sarup, eighteen years with Master.” Then he looked at the lines in my hands, and got up and walked away.)

Dear Gyani Ji in his exquisite voice I would hear answering the phone in the room next to me; and the tall narrow Sikh who walks on cat feet, I am sure passed back and forth many times, but I never heard
him. I smelled the food cooking—just to smell it was to eat it. And then I heard Master’s footsteps walking across the room behind me. Everything in my body was pulled up as He walked by, and after He passed it receded. I could just hear Him saying in His abrupt way, “Cement.” And I could hear Master in the kitchen with His people. From now on He wouldn’t live in my mind in some cloud or in some hotel room, but I could remember Him now with His people in His home. I felt like a small child drowsing in the family room at a too-late hour, not seeing or active, but lying awash and aware of the warm currents of friendly family activity.

There were three cautions in the meditation instructions: not to stay in the body, not to try to go out of the body, look in front of the forehead but have no tension in the forehead. I tried all day, but there was no way. I had to transgress one or the other. What a Zen koan! Finally in total fatigue I said, “OK, God, You’ll have to do it—I can’t. I quit.” And I just sat there like a stone. I had tried as hard as I could, with every hair follicle as the Zens say. There was nothing more I could do, which I guess is what God was waiting for. Anyhow, things went well after that. Then I had to work to keep abreast of God. Besides giving you a flavor of Master’s House, what I’m wanting to tell you is that even though you disobey Master, if you disobey Him just because you’re trying, in the only way you know how, to be with God, if you can’t stand not trying to be with God, He honors it, and He comes to the gate when you leave. I’m not advising disobedience; if I had been able to follow His way step by step I would have been the winner. But if you do the very best you can with all your might, He secretly hangs diamonds in your eyes.

Well, I was leaving at 10 o’clock at night. My plane didn’t leave till five the next morning; I had been planning to take a taxi at 3 a.m. A German woman was leaving at 10 p.m. and somehow hadn’t made arrangements, so I was asked to go with her to straighten things out since she didn’t speak English. I was so intoxicated by this time I would have said yes to anything. The taxi which always comes to the gate of Master’s House was late. The German woman forgot something. I stood at the gate waiting, alone. Master’s House was lit up and there were many shoes outside the door, so I knew He was taking care of the Indians now. He is like a Father with a babe on each knee, His
Indian babe and His foreign babe, and He bounces us and laughs with us alternately.

Edna Shinerock from Toronto, who had just returned to India to help the Westerners (incidentally, she spent six years here before) asked the gatekeeper to let me just go to the door for a last peek at Master. He looked very solemn, so we both said, “Just a little peek.” He opened the gate and took me to the door of Master’s living room, where a conference was going on in one corner. My eyes searched there for Master but didn’t find Him. A little clump of Indian ladies parted, and there was the Satguru in a chair opposite the door. I dropped to my knees wanting to make myself small, feeling an intruder. The gateman said, “Go on in.” I said, “Oh, no,” feeling I had no right. Again the clump parted. Master looked right at me, and He gestured the ladies aside, and said, “Come here, come here.” In an instant I was at His knee, and on mine. I looked into that Heaven above me. Certainly there were those eyes that had become the center of my world, and that beard. But at that moment there were no parts, just a total Heaven above me. There was no coming or going; there was no room and no people. The weight of His wonderfully large hand patted me twice on the shoulder, and my head rested on His chair. And He said, ”All right now, all right, go jolly.” It was a father saying, “There, there, little one,” and I didn’t know this body could contain such gratefulness.

And then He said, “Are you the only one leaving?” and I said, “No, there’s another lady,” and He said something else, all twinkly of eyes, which I intuited as the door by which I should leave. I backed across the room, watching God as long as I could. I went to pick up my shoes on the porch, and collapsed to my knees beside them, overcome. The gateman looked on compassionately. I pulled myself together and went outside the gate, dropped into the shadow by the wall, and wept and moaned with open mouth like an animal. The German lady reappeared, and Edna came out of the dark court. The taxi drove up. And at that very moment the gate light turned on. Edna, who knows all the clues, said, “Master’s coming out.” And there He was in the misty light, escorting a local dignitary to the gate. The man disappeared into a car. Master turned to us. The delicate light fell on His face, and twinkled and sparkled in His eyes. He was laughing, “Now you’re going, now you’re going . . . but don’t you go,” He joked with Edna. He put
His hands together to each of us. And Stuart was there, Stuart was blessed, too. He was escorting us to the airport. Master, still smiling, said, “Help them,” as He gathered up our luggage in one of those quick gestures of His. Immediately twenty people fell on our little pile and instantaneously the bags were in the car. In the same spirit we jumped in. I leaned across my friend in the back seat, my face out the window to watch the brilliant white crown of His turban, the brilliant white crown, the Brilliance . . . “Go.”

As the taxi pulled away, I turned to look out the back window, my mind reaching out to touch what was receding, like a three-year-old. And then the sobbing began. No outer crying. The “I” was ready to go, it was time, and I was filled to the brim. There had been no flavor of self-pity, only joy. But deep within, the soul was being torn from its source, and the crying was all of the body, like the deep trauma of childbirth when mother and child are pulled apart. The spasms stopped after a bit, and I sat up and was full of smile. Stuart was holding one hand; the German lady was rubbing my cheek. “It’s OK now, it’s OK, really,” I laughed. “Let’s go jolly now.” And I leaned back in the cab and fell into a deep, dark, almost like sleep, and it seemed minutes later we were at the airport. The German lady got off OK. Stuart stayed till midnight. We had some delicious American food at the airport, a cheese sandwich and French fries. You should have seen us glowing over this remarkable food. In this western atmosphere I drank some water, the first I’d done that in India, outside the Ashram. And all we could do was smile like idiots, thinking of this day that had just passed, and of our Satguru, who had been pouring buckets of love over our heads.

You see, at Darshan that evening, Master had given us the Darshan of all Darshans—a half hour in which He spoke not, but just sat with open eyes, feeding us and feeding us. I was right at His knees, since it was my very last Darshan. There was nothing between us. I fell into His eyes and stayed and stayed. We were like puppies at the teats of the mother, and He let us drink and drink. I would say inside, “Oh please, Master, a little more”; my wish, in truth, meaning “a little forever.” And He just sat, turning His lion head from side to side slowly, with those great luminous orbs that swallow the soul and take the body’s consciousness into the Land of Light.
Once He asked, “What is it meant in the Scriptures when Christ says, ‘Eat of me and drink of me’?” and someone started into a lengthy explanation. In a small, burning voice it said, this voice from me, “Master’s eyes.” And then He began, “Eyes are the windows of the soul . . .” and talked about drinking spirituality from the Master. A little later He looked at me and said something I didn’t hear. Afterwards one of His Indian staff came over to me and said, “Do you know what Master said to you, about you? ‘When the pitcher is full, it makes no noise.”

All I would say in thinking about His eyes—if you can in any way arrange it, please go and study what is what at the feet of the Living Master. Find out about what is your Self and what is the world in the orbit of His eye-sweep. Reading His books refines and informs the mind, but to come to Him mindless is the only way to the secrets of God or the self. We have these preconceptions about our lives, what we can do and what we can’t do; we build these little prisons about and then have to work within them. Master often said, “Impossible is only in the dictionary of fools.” Impossible is one of the mind-jails we put ourselves into.

Master said many times we must come to God alone. He often quoted from the Scriptures where Jesus says, I have come to separate mother from child, husband from wife . . . I’m not quoting exactly, but you know the reference, I hope. He cautions the young couples who come together, “Please don’t know what each other is doing.” You can only be with God if you are with God alone. There can be nothing between you and God, not husband, not family, not body, not mind. When you come here you must polish and polish to get everything off the wall, and then you must polish so fine, to clear the self of everything that stands between you and the Master, so that the wall becomes a mirror. Only then, when you can reflect perfectly, when there is not a speck of dust between you and the Master, can you really be with God.

I remember one girl who was having a lot of trouble with the meditation practice, and was really pressing Master for help. She asked Master how she could keep her mind focused. He said, “Just look at the area in front of your forehead as you look at me now.” And she said, “Oh, but it’s so easy to focus on you.” And Master answered, “If you could really focus on me, you’d see nothing but light.”
My plane was several hours late arriving in Delhi, so I spent about six hours, half-awake, half asleep on the floor that night in the Delhi Airport. The benches were all occupied with sleeping people. In India, one gets used to the idea that the floor is the bed and wherever you are is home. So I put down my poncho and my pillow and sprawled across my baggage and slept with one ear open to pick up information about my flight. The plane was luxurious after a month of cold nights and unadorned quarters. I found, however, that very shortly the super-hot dry air was swelling the membranes of my nose, and the super-comfort of the seat was arching my back in a most uncomfortable position. By the time we got to Germany, I had a case of dysentery in full swing (it might have been that water I drank at the airport) and I looked back longingly at the recent trip I had taken with Master on tour to Bombay, in the old Indian bus. At the time I thought I was putting up with a lot, and rather well, I commended myself from time to time. Indian buses are something else. Seat space per individual is about two-thirds American buses. The seats are straight up. At my seat there was no room under the seat in front for feet, and besides, I had to put my stuff, like sleeping bag and coat (which I found I needed in the cold night), where the feet go, so actually I sat cross-legged on the narrow seat, my knees resting on my baggage in front of me, most of the way.

The Indian buses create their passageway by constant use of the horn. This is not only for other cars, but perhaps mostly to deflect the sacred cows, who wander down the middle of the road. The Indians are a lung people. They have voices of wonderful proportion, and they all can project naturally in the way only the finest actors know. The tour bus was all satsangis, half Indian and half western. It was one of Master’s gifts to put us in this living situation where we would come to know each other in a real and loving way. It was beautiful to watch this grow from our initial strangeness with each other. Well, at any rate our Indian friends would do bhajans and chants and songs, and the horn would blow, and the bus would rattle, and you would try to faithfully meditate, as you swayed first against your partner on the right and then your partner on the left, or as you stayed alert to catch the little old lady Indian friend in the aisle seat who kept nodding off her seat into the aisle and sleep. Knowing that everything you do with Master is a lesson, all I could figure, since Master has said over and over again,
“Your only purpose in being here is to meditate,” is that this was my chance to learn how to meditate in the midst of chaos. It’s interesting, as the disciple becomes stronger in his practice, the ante goes up. The stronger you get, the more is asked of you spiritually. It’s an exciting equation. Anyhow, I was truly amazed that after a while, with Master’s great grace and constant presence, I began to have blissful meditations in the middle of this circus. My companions were kind and didn’t speak much. One couldn’t, not knowing English, and one didn’t. That’s the hardest burden of all, friendliness. It will take you away from the Master when nothing else will.

Our bus trip required endurance and looseness. We got off to a late start; we were to leave at 10 a.m. and we left at 5 p.m. The Westerners were in their seats more or less from noon on, expecting to go any minute, while the Indians had a lovely social life around the bus all afternoon, knowing full well that you don’t go until you go, so enjoy yourself wherever you are. And this is the looseness required. Since we left seven hours late, we couldn’t stop that night for sleep, only for supper, a beautiful supper-feast at four a.m. at a satsangi’s hotel, and a half-hour rest before we again resumed our thirty-hour uninterrupted drive. In those bus seats, this is where the endurance was required. A great rejuvenation came to save us that night, however, when Master appeared for a short Darshan. Usually the westerners were given a preferential place right in front of the Master. We came from the bus into a not-large room filled with Indian satsangis, who were seated from the Master’s chair back. The little space in the back of the room was for us. Master appeared and the whole tired body became alive again. The Indian people, as usual, folded up into their smallness to make room for many, accentuated the contrast between man-size and God-man size. Master sat over them and among them like a mother hen with her chickens. I’ve never seen such a beautiful view of Master. What I was watching was ravishing.

I was so happy to be in the back, seeing it. Master got up and the way parted between the bodies that were also rising for darshan. As I struggled to get my stiff body up, I rose to stand only a few inches from Master’s face. He paused there to say something to the crowd, and what I drank there at that moment kept me going the next day.
Looseness is required by the westerner when we stop by the road for rest stops. Rest stops mean: the women eliminate on one side of the bus, and the men on the other. Central India is quite stark, so don’t expect we went behind a bush. Most of us assumed looseness of act, but not in truth, so constipation prevailed. Endurance was required as we pressed on into the second night sitting bolt upright. Some people were familiar enough to sort of lie on top of each other. Joan could double up enough to sleep in my lap, and my little Indian grandmother, Nani as I called her, would nod asleep on my large shoulder until the bus careened the wrong way and she’d go flying toward the aisle and I’d grab her.

Speaking about careening—somewhere along the route, I don’t remember where, we came around a bend and there was a wagon drawn by oxen directly in front of us. The bus driver, not a satsangi but hired with the bus, swerved wildly to avoid it. The bus teetered and tottered, and then came back up to upright, and we went on. He turned around about ten minutes later and said something to one of the Indian satsangis by his seat: “When I swerved around that cart, I saw that Master of yours.”

Our bus driver was endurance personified; but after thirty hours of driving, he said he had to rest. We had been traveling throughout in very desolate country. We were wondering where we would go. One satsangi knew of a Jain temple nearby, so we arrived at the great two-story door and then went into the huge interior court and were led to one end, where an attendant began unlocking doors into the monks’ cells. The cells were completely bare, whitewashed small rooms with slate floors. We gratefully put our blanket or bag on the hard floor, and slept like rocks on the rocks. I was so happy in that little room, I don’t know why. It was one of the high points of the trip for me.

We were up at four and off again. In the great black of the courtyard, tea makers were boiling the tea, while showers of sparks flew from a fancy charcoal apparatus. Ginger tea, in the black black before dawn. It was too early even for the dogs who lay curled like doughnuts about the tea place. The gear was retied on top of the bus, and the people went in and off we went.

When the road went through villages, we would find the eaves of stone and thatch houses almost touching the bus. If the gates were open, we
could glimpse the living courts of the homes. There was much charm and wholesomeness, in spite of our cultural aversion to the dirt and poverty. In one remote hill village, evidently we were the spectacle of the year. All the children turned out, surrounding our exit from the bus, and watched from head to toe. Even after twenty minutes, while we had tea, they stood unmoving—all those black eyes and motionless faces, just watching and watching. Our traveling Indian friends were great elder brothers. They helped us in many kind, sensitive ways. They helped us manage all these ways of doing things. My neighbor, Nani, would even massage my legs when she knew I was getting stiff. The men always helped us with our purchases so we wouldn’t be overcharged. In some of the more sophisticated villages, if there was any smartness towards foreigners, they would stand between us, or tell the villagers to go away. They would point out the best walls to unload behind in the villages, or show us where clean water was to be found. The land became so picturesque from the hill country to the coast that I had to forcibly limit my looking to wide-spaced intervals, so that meditation could go on. There was such beauty in the stark use of this stark land, and even on the poorest bodies in the country was the brilliant turban or skirt or blouse that sang among the tans and browns of the land. Always one or two brilliant notes moving across each hill of many acres, sometimes with goats or cattle, water-buffalo or camel, natural movement under the sun. The open spaces were truly open, no fences between neighbors.

In the midst of nowhere, we came to the village of the Temple of Rama. A white marble courtyard was the cleanest place I had seen in India. In the center was a temple of Rama, a Hindu deity. The temple itself was a total gesture, I would say a stone sculpture of the rising out of the body into the Light. It was completely carved in small six-inch friezes, all the way to its slender pinnacle. The carving was exquisite, truly a museum temple. The interior light was mysterious and beautiful. In the center was a box, or home of the deity, Black Rama, a more than life-size figure dressed in silken clothes, with shiny black lacquer skin and white, white eyeballs. Continuous chanting was going on, to the front and left. On the right a priest offered the guest a dole of milk, to be taken in the cupped hands, sipped and the remnants pressed over their forehead. How different this dramatic ritual from our meeting with the living Deity.
We arrived in Baroda at the large guest house where Master was staying, and where the satsangs were held outdoors on the large lawn. It was a lovely clean, clean place. We tumbled into a little anteroom, hot, dirty and exhausted. We could hear Master in the next room. Just that begins to make things change inside. The door opened, and there He was, so large and so living and so loving. “So you came!” He said, with that strong abruptness and twinkly eye. And all our tiredness and heat and filth were taken from us, and we sat in the cool shadow of our Deity; and all about us there was profound calmness and repose. And Master said, “I’m sorry you were inconvenienced. This is your choice. I’m always being tossed about—that is my fate; but you don’t have to do it.”

If Master hadn’t sent us off to our quarters to clean and rest our bodies, I don’t think anyone would have thought of moving. For when the soul is cleansed and rested, who thinks of the body? We were staying in Baroda for several days, so Master could officiate at the opening of Manav Kendra, and also give Initiation. We were staying at a hotel about five blocks from Master’s place. Every day we’d walk back and forth several times. The first time I almost stepped on a body wrapped in burlap, sleeping on the sidewalk. I withdrew in culture shock. Wow, it’s really true: people do live on the sidewalks. By the time our stay in Baroda was over, the burlap body became the most potent symbol for my spiritual ambition. To become so nameless, so homeless, so much a part of the ground that you are not even seen—if only this could happen to me, not in the physical, but in the realm of Self. This was my greatest wish.

We were so lovingly cared for by the Baroda satsangis. One particular family held langar by their house. It was such a rare, beautiful example of total selfless service by each member of the family, each in their own way, and by many others who also helped. Langar was for several hundred people. Long strips of burlap were laid on the earth, and leaf plates and bowls were set in front of each guest. Loving initiates served us, urging us to have more, more. The effect of being served with love is a special blessing. Between the gifts of Master and His loving initiates, we were just bursting with love ourselves.

From the beginning, Bombay held an ominous presence. The drive through the heat of the city, and the gritty dark gray of the pup-tent districts, where families live in what and on what only God knows,
set the stage. Our residence, a health clinic building, was possible, but hardly a place you rush to return to.

Even the clues from Master that first night’s Satsang made me feel alert about Bombay. To me it seemed as if He, too, was enduring in Satsang that night. The next day there was a bus strike. There was political unrest as well, and we were not allowed to go out at all. By six that evening the strike was settled. We hoped to go to Satsang by our bus that night, but our driver wouldn’t chance it, for fear the bus would be overturned. One of our Indian friends spoke with Master, who was staying about a mile away, and permission was given for us to walk over for Darshan. No traffic was moving yet, so we walked down the middle of the road, all thirty-some of us. The atmosphere was very tense. People watched us carefully. Probably Westerners aren’t often seen in this part of town, let alone walking. We came to a block of dismal pup-tents that housed the poorest of the poor. Children came as if out of the ground, and soon there was a flock of over a hundred children, at first begging, and then taunting, and then screaming at the tops of their lungs. They were all the same color of dark gray, clothes, skin, hair, all—all the same color. It was like a grotesque surrealistic scene. The screaming was high-pitched and grew to fantastic proportions. If we weren’t going under Master’s invitation to come, I should have been totally unnerved, but knowing we were in Master’s hands, it was just a powerful phenomenon to be observed. It reminds me now of a conversation Master had with someone, asking about how things were in America. The American described the energy shortage, and how people were beginning to hoard, and Master said, “It’s a very good time and a very bad time. Spiritually, things are getting better.” And Master said he had heard some people were going to the hills. He said, “Satsangis need not go to the hills. Master Power will take care of them even in bad situations.”

Well, here we were in a bad situation; I was thinking how lucky we were to be in Master’s protection, as the children began to grab at people’s clothing. And just then a police car drove up and the hundred children were swallowed up in the pavement. In seconds, not one was to be seen.

We arrived at Master’s quarters. He kept right on with His work as if He were totally alone, until all of us found a little place to sit in His
room, sort of giving us an example of how you do one thing wholly and solely. And then when we were all settled, He looked up and gave us wholly and solely of His love and His good humor. The unspoken story of our walk over remained, as it always does with Master, carefully unspoken.

We were all glad to leave Bombay, and with another day’s drive reach Kalyan. We arrived after Satsang began, but our places in front of Master’s dais were roped off and reserved. Master looked so happy here. We knew we were at a place where He is much loved. Even though the Satsangs were in Hindi, it didn’t matter. After being with Master a while, the soul realizes that Master is the Mantra, the mandala, the meditation and the Satsang; and then one’s whole attention becomes stuck to the Master, like Brer Rabbit stuck to the tar-baby. When you first arrive, you are painfully separate. Pretty soon, one paw gets stuck, then a foot, and then an elbow, and after a while you’re stuck all over to Master. Your eyes follow every motion, every expression; your ear follows every sound (for expression, not caring for meaning). If you’re close enough, your eyes move as His eyes move, never separating. Those twin beads of Heaven are your Salvation, and you hold on to those sparkling orbs with a desperate tenacity. And one day the eyes turn to you, and because of it you will have strength to face squarely something you haven’t faced, or it will deepen your love, as it must be deepened if one is to move at all in one’s practice, or it will still the mind and pull the attention into fine focus. And slowly you begin to realize, to really understand why the Saints of old would do anything for just one glance from their Master.

For me there was a very interesting and educational prelude to this trip. It happened on the third morning I was in India, at the morning Darshan. Master went right around the room, asking how many hours each had put in in meditation. He was as gruff as I’ve ever seen Master. There seems to be a tendency for Westerners to visit and socialize in this freed-from-worldly-obligation environment, and many answered two to four hours. He very firmly inquired, “What did you do the rest of the time? You are here for the primary purpose of meditating; that is all. Why do you only put in two or four hours?” And then He came to me. Now, for months I had been deeply attached to the idea of long meditations at the Ashram. The day before, my second day in India,
I went out of the Ashram a few blocks to get some fruit, and to see what this place India I had come to was. I was totally overwhelmed by the sights and smells and sounds, and my mind couldn’t comprehend this subtle survival situation. That night as I sat for meditation, the images rose again and again. I had heard we were going to be allowed to go with Master on tour to Bombay soon, and I thought, “How can I go on tour and meditate, if I can’t even go to the marketplace for half an hour without being utterly distracted? I must stay here and meditate,” and I began to bask in the idea. It would be quiet, no interruptions. I could probably avoid the dysentery that many people were having just then. And I rationalized my giving up of Master’s Darshan for my creature comforts and undisturbed meditations by concluding, “When Master gets back, I will be truly receptive after ten days of meditating, not gross, as I am now.” I pushed out of mind the hypocritical statement I had made to Master in my plea to come to India—“Even one day with Master would be worth the trip.” And here I was giving up ten days with Master for ten days of comfortable meditation. I tell you all this in detail, so you can see how precisely Master is correcting us, when often to others He seems as if He has misunderstood, or has not answered the question.

“So, how is your meditation?” He asked me, and I described the light I had seen in the first two days, and suddenly I saw a way to ask about the tour trip, and settle my intention not to go. “After a trip across the bridge yesterday,” I went on, “I couldn’t meditate at all.” “How long did you shop?” He asked. “I have a question, Master,” I interrupted very assertively and rudely. “How long did you meditate yesterday?” He asked. “I meditated ten hours, and I shopped for half an hour, but I have a question.” And very, very forcibly He said, “If you will please listen to what I have to say to you first, then I will answer your question.”

I should have been crushed, but a big fat ego merely dents. “You went shopping for ten hours,” He said in gruff amazement, “and meditated for half an hour?!”

Even as I began to correct the statement, I knew He was taking away my pride in sitting long hours, and I was grateful and quiet. He was also putting out the fact that, though the body sat for long hours, the mind was across the bridge. Others tried to correct His apparent misunderstanding. He ignored them and talked to me about being
wholly and solely where you were, or taking Master with you to the marketplace. And then He said, “Now, what is your question?”

“I understand, Master, we may be allowed to accompany you on your tour. If I can’t hold my meditation after a trip to the market, how shall I sustain meditation on a ten-day tour of India?” Surely this excellent logic would secure a reprieve from the trip, I thought. Master, still in a gruff way, said, (everything I was saying sounded virtuous and logical on the outside, but on the inside every motive needed correction) “I never encourage these tours. It’s hard to meditate, and very distracting. I do not ask anyone to come.” And then in a tone of utter humility, “Some people find it useful to be with me, but others . . .” and He didn’t finish the sentence.

I was cut from my head to my toes as He said this. My heart lay open finally. There was no question, no hesitation, of course I was going on the tour. Oh Beloved Master, thank you for your strong and kind teaching.

Well, the trip was, as you know by now, a vital experience for me, not only in my meditation practice, but in my self-introspection. I mean, when you are in America, it’s very easy to be unselfish and give of your much to the needy, but when you have only one coat, or a few dysentery pills, and someone else is cold or needs the same medication you may need tomorrow, you see very soon where you stand. But more than both of these, it was ten days to fall down to the ground in love with the Godman, for which I am eternally grateful.

At our first morning Darshan after returning, I raised my hand. “I was the one who wondered if I should go on tour. I want to thank you for the gift of the tour.” “How do you give thanks? Where is it? You can give me money or straw, but how can you give me thanks? Thank God; that’s all. You are the ones who were inconvenienced. Travel is travail. I am used to being tossed about, day and night, but you people . . .” and then He paused, “. . . love knows no burden.” And then He gave me such a look of love, I couldn’t begin to tell you.

Oddly enough, that day I had to go into Delhi. Someone was taking me to do the family-presents thing, and by this time I was just following what had to be done next. We got in the cab and someone complained about the terrible horn, but I didn’t hear it. We went to a store of Indian crafts, which should have blown my craftsman’s mind,
and I could hardly bear to be there. I only wanted to stay with that look of love Master had given me. I'll take this and this, and this and this—and almost where my hand fell made the decision. Stuart had to pick out my gift to Andy and help me with Jesse's. I took the Master to the market, not because it was good practice, but because He had fallen me in love with Him. Amazingly enough, the gifts were correct, I find now that I am home and have given them out.

When you are with Master, He teaches all the Scriptures through the living situations He puts you through. He communicates clearly and precisely with few or no outer words.

You know how I admire Zen. Well, Master is by far the greatest Zen Master of all times. Talk about the wordless doctrine! Such proof have I had this month that Master knows everything that is happening to His dear children. One this week asked Master if He ever withheld experience from His disciples. “No, it’s you that withholds the experiences, your lack of attention.”

On New Year’s Eve I sat on the roof of the Guest House at the Ashram, too happy to go to bed. The moon sat in the sky, untipped, a perfect cup, holding all the gold of the sun in crescent light. I wished upon a star this body here could become a simple moon vessel, to hold the golden liquor of Kirpal. Even Master says, “Impossible is only in the dictionary of fools.”

Fletcher Lokey

Fletcher, whom I have known and loved since 1970, has lived many years at Sant Bani Ashram and contributed an enormous amount of seva during this period; this talk was given on his return from India after a stay of several months before, during, and after the Unity of Man Conference. It was published under the title, “Wake Up and Run!” in the June 1974 issue of Sat Sandesh.

One of the most precious jewels that I discovered in India is that the greatest happiness of all is that happiness which comes from trying to do the Master’s will. It’s a hard thing; yet if we just make the effort to do it, the rewards seem to come of themselves. There was one very sweet experience, rewarding for me because I had the good wonderful grace while I was there of being able to serve Master in the work, a great deal
of which was aimed at trying to help everything run smoothly. Great numbers of people who are greatly enthusiastic about being there with the Master often require a little bit of shepherding, so one of the things that we asked one day at Dehra Dun was that people, rather than following the usual practice of immediately jumping up when Master was finished giving darshan and following him out to the car and following the car back to the house and crowding around him, would please just remain seated and make a path down the middle and let Master walk out; and as soon as he had gone, we should get up quietly and go our ways. We asked this because large crowds were beginning to arrive for the Sawan Singh bhandara [April 2—the anniversary of Sawan’s leaving this plane] which was just a couple of days away, and we hoped we could give a good example. So we made this request that people would do that, and after darshan Master got up and a way opened up in the middle, and he walked down and he greeted everyone and when he came to the end, people were still seated (generally we would have been all up and pressed around him). And he turned around and he looked and he said, “All seated? How well!” and walked out. He was so pleased! Such a simple thing as that, and he was pleased. We had shown him respect; what we did was more respectful than the outer
show of crowding around trying to get one inch closer to the physical body of the Master; and he was pleased.

You know, on the physical plane there is nothing that is quite as much pleasure as having the Master’s darshan. There is nothing like it, but it is a physical level thing; and the thought occurred to me that, as much pleasure as we get from that, yet it is possible that the actual benefit from being somewhere else—of giving that physical level pleasure up in order to follow the Master’s wish—could very well be greater. The whole game—the whole work that we are trying to do—is to get Home, to get back to the Father. Whatever gets us back to the Father the fastest is what Master wants for us the most. Any time we put in effort toward that goal the Master is most pleased with us; but we are at the level of understanding where we can only see what is pleasing to us; and as I said, on the physical level there is nothing that is more pleasing than to sit in the presence of the Master.

One of the things that came up out of the Conference was that there were huge numbers of people there and, as time went on, it became apparent that many of them were hoping to stay as long as they could; it’s natural. Who is there who really wants to leave the Master? And it became apparent that Master in his own quiet and loving way was asking people politely to please think about going home. So there was this very sweet day when a group of people were going back to Delhi in order to voluntarily move their departure dates forward. So there were eight or ten of them, and after meditation and questions and answers and a short heart-to-heart talk, Master said, “Yes, you are going now; well . . .” and he asked an Indian man who was there to please sing a bhajan for them; and he sang a very beautiful song. I found out afterward that it was a song written by Master himself, and he gave a translation of it after the song was over; it was about the yearning of the child disciple to be with the Father, the Master, and it was so sweet. He was—I can’t describe it; he was talking in a way that I don’t believe I’ve ever heard him talk before. There is no way that I can describe it except that he was very soft and gentle and sweet; perhaps he was feeling a yearning for his Master at that time. One line of the song stuck in my mind: I don’t think I’ll ever forget it, it was so beautiful. He said in the song, “O Master, that place where you reside is such a beautiful place, even Your shoes are more fortunate than me; they are always
at Your feet.” So he went on talking about how beautiful it is to have yearning for the Master, and he began talking about how it’s a gift of the Master to put us into that yearning; and he told the people as they were leaving, “You are going away because the Master loves you very much. He wants you to have that yearning; that pain is a gift from the Master.”

Those people were voluntarily surrendering the opportunity for a few more days or weeks in the presence of the Master in order to follow what they perceived to be the Master’s wish. In response to that, the Master came out and directly told them that he was sending them away because he loved them so much. Because more important than being in the physical presence of the Master and having his blessed darshan, better than that, is to be in His Will, whether we see it or not. It’s like in order to regard something as being beneficial to us we want to make sure that we see the benefit coming—that it comes in a way that we can see and understand. To give up the desire to have it that way is very difficult; it’s an act of faith, an act of trust.

There was a very sweet exchange that I had with Master. Toward the end of the time that I was there, one of the jobs that I was doing occasionally was to count the hands of the people as they raised their hands when Master asked who has seen this light, who has seen that light (after the meditation sittings). So this morning I was counting, which is difficult in a large crowd with some hands going halfway up and some of them all the way up; as you are counting you come to one and you say, “Did I count that one or not? I don’t know”—so in this particular category of light I counted and said, “19, Master”; and I looked at the sheet and I saw him writing out “21.” I figured, well, there were some people sitting behind me that I didn’t see or something. So the next category came and as I was counting I fumbled again, and the thought crossed my mind, well, I missed it, but so what? That’s the best I can do, I’ll get as close as I can; and I went on counting. I said, “32, Master.” He looked at me and said, “Count correctly, please.” I said, “Did I count incorrectly?” He said, “Yes,” to the great amusement of the crowd. So again, in the next category, the hands went up. I tried to count, and I said, “36, Master,” and he said, “40.” He said, “I count too, you know.” What could I do? I knew he was right. (You know, we so often slip. We realize so many times that Master
knows what he is doing, that he really is competent, he really is aware, he really is in charge; yet when we forget that, we slip right back into thinking that he is just a man there. So many times I saw Master finish the counting for all the categories in a large crowd of fifty or sixty or a hundred even, and then he would point to someone in the crowd and say, “You—what did you see? Your hand didn’t go up!” He would do that time after time; he really is aware!

Anyhow, the next morning after this little experience of counting wrong and being corrected, I was very, very careful about my counting, and I counted very slowly, very precisely, and I said, “21, Master.” And he looked at me and said, “Ah, you’ve become accurate.” It was a little thing, but you know—I may have sounded as if I was criticizing people before for enjoying physical level contact, especially personal attention contact, with Master—it’s just as sweet as it can be.

There was another real jewel of understanding that I’ve come away from India with. Because of my job of keeping track of people—their names, departure dates, etc.—I had to talk with people constantly. And in the process of doing that, I heard so many people, so many times, say things that were the same things that I was saying to myself all the time. We have troubles; everybody has troubles; that’s true; but I found that so many people had exactly the same problems and they were expressing those problems in exactly the same words as I was to myself. And when someone says that, you want to say to him, “You too?” All of a sudden it becomes so clear that it’s not as big a problem as you thought it was. I heard Master say so many times that everyone’s problems are the same; when you see everyone in the same rut, it makes your ruts seem smaller—as if to say, “You are having the same problems? Somebody is fooling both of us somehow, somewhere . . . ”

There was for me a very moving and gratifying experience involving another person who was having difficult problems, and it was so beautiful to see the problems worked out. There was a man who had been initiated during Master’s 1972 tour, in Washington, and he came on the 9th of March; and since I had the job of the guest book, I greeted him and we began talking. It was so sad; he had been initiated in Washington, but he told me that he had already been initiated by another Master before that, and he was traveling around, going from place to place, earning some money here, taking a train there. His plan
was to spend a couple of months, maybe even a couple of years, going around India and visiting various ashrams, and getting initiated by as many Masters as he could. It was a very difficult thing to listen to, because you feel like grabbing him by the lapels and saying, “Please, dear brother, you just don’t understand.” But I thought, Oh, dear Master, please do something. He was a very nice guy; I liked him right off. As time went on he seemed like he was going through some difficult things inside; I didn’t know what. One day he went up to talk to Master after darshan: “Master, I’ve been using—I was initiated by you in Washington, but I was initiated by another man before; since I’ve been initiated by you I’ve still been using the same mantra the first man gave me.” Master said, “What?” and began to question him: Who was this other Master? What did he teach? Why did you come to me for initiation? And he came down very—not sternly, not coldly, but very firmly and directly, and said, “You must make up your mind.” He asked him if he thought he was the gainer or the loser by coming to the Master’s path; “You must make up your mind what you want and you must row in one boat.”

Afterward I saw the man sitting back in his seat, and he was in tears and sort of shaking, and had a very strange sort of not-here-at-all look in his eyes. I so much wanted to help him; but really what could I say or do? It was something that really was in Master’s hands; I just hoped and prayed for the best for him. But the next day I thought I would offer him just one little piece of advice; I wanted to say, “If you really want to know what to do, if you really want to satisfy your questions about it, Master has said: practice it, do it for one month, follow the instructions explicitly—do your meditations regularly, faithfully, accurately, follow the commandments, keep your diary—and see at the end of the month what’s there.” I started to tell him this, and I said, “Give him just one month—” and he said, “That’s all right; I gave him ten minutes last night. I’m satisfied.” And from that time on you never saw such an enthusiastic satsangi. When he left, I asked him what his plans were; for all I knew he was still going to go around India. He said, “I’m going straight home, get a job and settle down.” I felt so good; the man was so sweet and so much wanted to have something higher in life; and now by Master’s great grace he was steered a little bit straighter.
I myself went there with very strong preconceptions. It’s funny; we insist on having conceptions of what the Master is like, what the Path is like; we insist on having a picture of it, and we work through that—that paints the scenery for us and provides the framework for the rules that we select to live by day by day. But really it’s a matter of letting these things go and simply following directions. Master doesn’t make any mystery, any secret, of what it is that he wants us to do; he puts it out there in plain English. But we take those things and, as he has often said, we fit them to our own ideas.

Anyway, I went there with problems—exactly the same problems that so many others were there with—and there were painfully difficult feelings inside, and I was looking for a great gift of grace. I came there looking for that gift, wanting it, wanting Master to do everything for me. And the very first night I was there, at darshan, Master came in and sat down and said, “Yes? Any questions? Anything?” And right behind me there was a girl who immediately said, “More help please, Master!” in a very devoted way. And Master looked at her right in the eye, right over my shoulder so that I knew that he was answering my own question, and said, “Are you ready to receive?”—so direct, not in any way cold, but it was almost the heaviest thing that I have ever heard. I was there looking for the gift, “Whenever you like, Master, go ahead and give it to me,” and he just told me—if you are ready to receive. The Master really is competent; he knows what he is doing; he knows us inside and out; and when we think, please give me something, Master, I want it—it’s as if to say, Well, maybe he doesn’t know that I really want this or maybe he’s not aware that I really need this so much. It’s as though we don’t really have faith and trust in him, that he will give us what we need; we have to go and beg and plead for it.

Once he said that when he was a disciple he never once asked his Master for anything, anything at all; and he said, “Do you think that the Father will withhold anything that you need? There is a father with two children. One child says, ‘Father, please give me food and clothing and shelter,’ and the father gives them to him; but the other son doesn’t ask for them, yet he gets them just the same; he gets them without asking.” So I held up my hand and asked Master: “Well, can we not, Master, then, ask for at least help in our spiritual progress—I mean, to ask and pray for your help in that way?” Because I understood that
it’s not necessary to ask for lollypops or help with the mortgage; but I wanted to ask him about those things that were really beneficial because so many times I had tried to pray for those things. He looked at me and he said, “What did I say?” I said, “Well, Master, you said that you never asked for anything.” And he said, “Well?”

It’s a very hard thing; it’s a gurumukh thing to do; and yet there is no effort that goes unrewarded, there is no step forward that is not met by more steps forward from the Master.

He has given us as a general rule for living our lives that you never lose anything when you give. The thought occurred to me one day—how much more then, to give to the Master? Would we lose anything? And what Master wants us to give is our very selves—our egos.

One of the things I’ve heard Master say so many times: “Now I give you the cure for all these ills, I give you the answer to all your questions, I give you the solution to all your problems; and that is meditation. You are given contact with that direct Power from God which is all the food that you need.” I had heard him say that so many times, and every time you nod—yes, yes—but it’s one of those things that if you can understand it a little more than you did before, it’s like seeing it for the very first time—it’s like a complete revelation; and even just one little step higher than that is again a complete revelation in itself. And I realized that all these problems that we are confronted with, all the problems that we carry along with us all the time, all the problems that I took with me when I went, were really and truly answered by doing what we are supposed to do.

Master said something one day that struck me, and as I was keeping a little journal I entered it that evening when I was writing out my thoughts. He said, “There are two worlds; there is one above the eyes, and there is one below the eyes”; and that night he said, “If you will go above, this world will disappear,” and I nodded, I said yes-yes, and I put it in my journal because it sounded like an important thing to hear and an important thing to remember. All these things that we keep, all the little incidents, all the little cosmic things that Master says, we note down in our memories and we jot down in our notebooks; and they stay in our memories and in our notebooks. But anytime that you have even a tiny little practical experience of those things of which Master speaks, then you remember that you have heard them millions
of times before and you just shake your head and wonder how you never heard. You never heard because you just never had practical experience of it, that’s all.

And that same understanding was then brought back to what Master has said so often, that meditation is the answer to all these problems. And it had just never occurred to me that what he meant was: It will not answer your question, it won’t solve your problems, it won’t pay the mortgage—but what it does is to put those problems in their proper perspective. Those questions are questions at their own level; if you see even a smidgin higher than that level the problems don’t go there. The things that we go through in physical life are not useless and purposeless—if they were, we wouldn’t be going through them—but they belong in one place; and if even for a moment you can be disentangled from them, then for that moment they vanish. Then when you see them again, you say, “Ha ha, problem, I saw you vanish; I know you’re not real!” For as long as we see clearly, it’s so clear; and when we remember that clarity, we can have the benefit of it. If we forget, then we simply work again from that level and again the problems are real, they cause pain, they cause worry, they make us unhappy.

All the happiness that I found while I was there, and all the happiness that I have brought back, all stems from one thing: having had a little bit of experience of doing what Master has been trying to tell us to do all the time. When you are in His Will, when you are following instructions, you are happy every minute; when you are not, you are not always happy. Nevertheless, it’s an easy thing to forget; and unless you hang onto it every minute you can slip back and the mind goes downstream by its very nature.

It makes daily life into something different than it was before. It used to be that meditation was an ingredient in the makeup of the day-to-day life. You get up in the morning, you meditate some, you have your breakfast, you go to work, you come home, you read a book, meditate some, go to bed, try to get up again in the morning. Whereas now it should be that daily life is just an ingredient in meditation. Meditation is the real life and daily life is a part of that.

There were two answers Master used to give to the questions about difficulties in meditation; either “No, no, no, that’s the wrong way of
doing it; please put your whole attention into the center,” or, “Look to your diary, please.” Failure to follow instructions is the source of all our difficulties: either we are not doing the meditation right or we are not doing things right during the day, and the two are part of a continuous one. The daily life is just the higher life brought down, working on a different level—when we are not directly trying to contact that.

So these are the things that Master by his grace saw that perhaps he could give me. All the difficulties, all the pains and troubles that I was carrying with me, simply disappeared into thin air. For a time I walked closer to the truth than I had been before, and I was just all happiness; and every time that I remember that, I become all happiness again. It sounds strange to say, “Gee, I’m glad to be back,” because we are supposed to want to be in India all the time; but what we want is to be with Him, and to be with Him does not mean to be in India: to be with Him means to be in His Will. And it flows so powerfully; when you have it, you just want to run so fast, as fast as you can, to keep it. Master told one lady who asked him for a message to take back, “Tell those who are asleep to wake up and tell those who are awake to run.”

There was one French lady, so sweet, she didn’t speak a word of English; when her departure time came I took her the guest book and got somebody to explain to her in French what was wanted—name, departure date, and the section for remarks, whatever she wanted to say. So she went and consulted with her French-speaking friend who knew a little English and composed what she wanted to say: I watched her writing in English. She wrote, “I dance my happiness.”

And I just feel that same way; I thank the Master for all these things and thank God for the Master. All these things are freely given; it should be as plain as day to all of us that Master loves us so much that there is nothing we can’t have, if we will just follow instructions. Would He hold it back? What does He want?—to take us back Home. He has been there, He knows what it’s like, that’s the only thing that He wants for us; and there is nothing that is held back. It is so plain and clear. So . . . I have been filled with happiness—so much that you just wish your heart were bigger so that it could break more.

The last words that Master said to us before we left were: “When you go back, people should see that you are a changed man; people should see by your behavior that you have been here.” And then he said, “God
bless you all.” It’s just such a precious thing to have, and I thank you for your patient listening; because when the heart is full all it wants to do is run over and give to everyone else. Thank you.

Farewell

We conclude with Kirpal’s own concise summary of the mission of his life, as given in his Birthday Message of 1959:

Dear Ones:

On this day of my physical birthday I wish you all happiness.

Human birth is the highest rung of all creation. It is really a rare blessing you have got. This has been given to you for attaining Divine Realization and Spiritual Perfection. It is a supreme opportunity for striving and obtaining a sublime experience of All-Consciousness. It is to be utilized for this great purpose. The various religions and faiths are so many methods evolved for fulfilling this great purpose of human life. This is the one common basis of all religions.

You have been put on the way and given a conscious contact with the God-Power residing within you. You have to develop it by regular practice from day to day.

To attain this Goal purify your nature by living a good life. Manifest truth, purity, love, selflessness and righteousness in your life and activity. Give up all hatred, eradicate egoism and anger. Eschew violence; pledge yourself to love, sincerity, humility, forgiveness and non-violence. Abandon war. Abandon lust for power. Fill thy heart with compassion, mercy and universal love. Let the Law of Love prevail amongst you, which should be radiated to all nations and races. Let true religion of heart be the ruling factor of your lives. Love God, love all, serve all and have respect for all as God is immanent in every form. Preach the Gospel of oneness, spread the message of oneness, and live a life of oneness: there will be peace on earth. This is the mission of my life and I pray it may be fulfilled.

With fondest love to all,

KIRPAL SINGH

February 6, 1959
Epilogue
There are a couple of areas that, after reading over all that I have written, I feel need to have a further exploration. One involves the Coffee Corner and its people; the other a major dimension of Kirpal’s understanding and explanation of the universe and how it functions—the juxtaposition of power and love.

Epilogue

Further Reflections on the Coffee Corner

I have not done justice to the world that I refer to in the course of the book as “the Coffee Corner.” The narrative of the book demanded that certain people and events be emphasized and other people and events be mentioned in passing or (in the vast majority of cases) be left out altogether. And this is a shame: because it was the totality of the world that was the Corner and the totality of the people in it that gave birth to the search and the consummation that meant so much to those of us who were involved in it. Many, many people contributed to the search and consummation in indirect ways: sometimes knowingly, sometimes not; but they still contributed. And I am grateful to them all. A number of Corner people who were not part of our initial search did become seriously involved in spiritual practice subsequently: Edna Frost, Shilla “Mitzi” Andrews, Stuart Judd, Carole Adams, Dave Barbero, Billy Barnum, were all eventually initiated into Shabda Yoga; Dave Barbero, his wife Diane Loukas, and Margo and George Lockwood became serious students of the Gurdjieff system; Charlie Barber, an admirer of Thomas Merton, made pilgrimages to and went on retreats at the Cistercian monastery in Spencer, Massachusetts. Some of these I have mentioned above and some of them not; but I am grateful to all of them.

I am grateful also to those friends who were not interested in spiritual searches, who may or may not have considered them a waste of time and totally irrelevant to what they felt was important, but who
were very important to me personally and were enormously helpful to
me as I groped for understanding. Long all-night conversations and
discussions, sometimes very heated conversations and discussions,
helped me clarify my own position and get my thoughts in order—
often very badly needed order. David Harris (who had been a close
friend and sometime roommate since my days at Gordon College),
Joe Sulat, Leo Giroux, Bob Bruce, Jan Daley, Harold Ferner, Norbert
Nunes, Jenna Worden, Rick Lloyd, Mary Persons, Lamar Bledsoe,
Myrna Welch, Lois Ginsberg, Arthur Yanoff, Bud Stevens, Ed Kytta,
and many others, some whose names I have forgotten, all were my
friends and all gave of themselves to me. I thank God for them all.
I have long since lost touch with them; many of them I know have
passed on; but God bless them all, wherever they may be.

Of course, by ordinary standards, certainly by the standards of the
1950’s, or even by the standards of the Masters, the Corner could be
considered a disreputable place: we had opted out of the ‘50’s consensus
regarding success and respectability—“making it”—although many
of us had jobs much of the time, including me, and those of us who
were artists of one kind or another were passionately interested in
creating masterpieces; many of us were sexually promiscuous, when
we could be; and most of us drank alcohol (almost always beer) as a
matter of course. (But alcohol and nicotine were the only drugs that
we used; I was not aware of any others during my time on the Corner.)
Still, somehow or other, out of the depths of this sensuous alcoholic
neverland, came the strong spiritual current—the tidal wave—that
swept us off our feet and carried us into the arms of God. And the
fact is, as I look back over the sixty years that separates the now in
which I write from the then that I am writing about, I have no negative
memories at all of the Coffee Corner. (God knows I am not advocating
an undisciplined alcoholic sensuality as a way of life; many years of
spiritual practice—and of life!—have taught me the supreme value of,
and the happiness that follows from, chastity, sobriety, self-discipline
and non-violence, when they proceed naturally from the growing
understanding of the individual. It is no doubt necessary to be aware of
our negative impulses and not indulge them; but the harm that comes
from forcing ourselves into molds that we have not yet grown into,
and then pretending to ourselves that we have, cannot be overstated.
Kirpal has made this point very clearly,¹ and Sant Ajaib Singh brings it home in his well-known story of the swan and the crane. ²)

The Corner people were certainly not saints, and I probably never stumbled more in my journey toward God than when I was there; but the fact is that every person I knew, every event that occurred, every mistake I made, I remember with sweetness and gratitude that I could have had such an experience, and that it could have led to what it led to. Thank God.

There were two friends from the Corner who somehow did not make it into the narrative, and yet they influenced me in ways that resonate down to the present day. One was Larry Knight; the other, who became my mentor and inspiration and one of my very best friends, was John Merenda. They both deserve some attention.

Larry was somewhat older than I; how much older, I was never sure: he was basically ageless. A neatly-dressed and well-groomed, very pleasant, African-American gentleman, Larry spent so much time in one of the Corner restaurants that Jenna Worden christened him, “Lawrence of Bickford’s.” I liked him enormously, not least because we had one huge thing in common: like me, Larry had attended an evangelical college (in his case, Moody Bible Institute in Chicago) with the idea of becoming an evangelical minister; like me, he was not an evangelical minister, but was on the Coffee Corner instead. But there the similarities ended: because Larry still identified with the evangelical world-view in a way that I did not. My attitude toward the evangelical position at this time was somewhat ambiguous—if someone criticized it I would defend it, and I never doubted the divinity and importance of Jesus—but basically negative: I was too close to what still seemed to me the mental traps that I had been in to be able to look at them at all objectively. So I did not, at this time, see much in common between the Path and Christianity, and I didn’t have much interest in trying to. But talking with Larry Knight changed that.

Larry knew about the Path and our interest in it, and he had questioned me several times about various aspects of it; he was basically troubled by it, as a good orthodox evangelical Christian

¹ *The Crown of Life*, p. 138
² *The Jewel of Happiness*, pp. 22-23.
would be, by what seemed to him to be its heretical aspects, and by my willingness to abandon the evangelical faith for something so alien. But he was a very open-minded guy, not dogmatic or judgmental, and always willing to learn; so we had some great discussions. One night in particular, as I remember, we talked until dawn over countless cups of coffee at a table at Hayes-Bickford’s, and hashed out every aspect of the Path (of course, within the limits of my understanding of it) as it related to Christianity. At the conclusion, as we were leaving, Larry said, “Well, as far as I can see, as far as what ultimately counts is concerned, we differ only in this: I maintain that God came down into a human body to save humanity once; and you maintain that He is doing it continually.”

I was stunned when he put it that way; I had certainly never thought about it like that; but on reflection, I agreed with him, and that particular insight opened up a series of doors for me: it prepared me for Kirpal’s intimate knowledge of the Bible, and for the fact of his having memorized long sections of it; it opened me up to the research I did for years, culminating many years later in my time at Harvard Divinity School, into Christian origins and the way in which the early Christian groups—Valentinian Gnostics, Ebionim, Johannines, followers of Thomas, and others—interacted with each other (and the way in which I found the teachings and insights of Kirpal reflected in them many times over). This research I found fascinating; and it ultimately led to my book, *The Stranger of Galilee: The Sermon on the Mount and the Universal Spiritual Tradition*, in which it all came together. All of this I owe to Larry Knight and that memorable night-long discussion into which we both put our whole selves and during which we listened to each other.

John Merenda was a paraplegic. When he was twelve years old, he had been playing with a friend on the roof of the triple-decker apartment building where his family lived in Revere, Massachusetts, just north of Boston, when he fell off the roof. His friend, terrified, ran home and told no one. John remained in the street all night, unable to move, until he was discovered in the morning and taken to the hospital where he had the first of thirty-two major operations; he never walked again. He came to the Corner via Kimon Loukas and
quickly became one of my closest and dearest friends. He loved jazz and introduced me to Sidney Bechet, whom I had never heard of, and taught me to appreciate Billie Holiday—particularly her great song, “Strange Fruit,” which was also new to me. We spent many nights together walking all over Boston until dawn—that is, I walked and pushed him in his wheelchair, although he was absolutely capable of taking himself anywhere he wanted to go: he had once navigated the distance from downtown Boston to his parents’ home in Revere in his chair—a distance of seven miles, across curbs (long before ramps and handicap-conscious legislation were in effect—of course, all the bouncing up and down did a major number on his body) and up finally a long, long hill. He went regularly to Massachusetts General Hospital for checkups and befriended and mentored the new paraplegics there, who revered and idolized him—they were in awe of him, actually: “You really go up and down over curbs?”—I only wish he had lived long enough to see the new era with disabled access and ramps everywhere.

Once when I was down and out and had been thrown out of the apartment where I had been sleeping by one of the guys who rented it (he had decided I had been there long enough without paying anything) on the eve of a job interview which held great promise and was very important to me, John took me in to his ground-floor apartment just off Beacon Hill, and let me stay there until I was back on my feet. (Thanks to John, I did get the job—stack attendant at Widener Library at Harvard—and it made a huge difference.)

John was one of the sweetest and gentlest people I have ever known; he was also fearless, strong and very honest. Once I had a dream in which he was not a paraplegic: he had never fallen off the roof. In the dream he was an arrogant, nasty, bullying kind of guy. When I told John about the dream, he said, “Yes! That’s exactly the kind of kid I was, and the kind of guy I would have grown up to be!” The rumor around the Corner was that his family, of Sicilian origin, had Mafia connections; I don’t know if that was true.

John was a good friend of Judith also; she loved and admired him as much as I did. During the tumultuous beginning of our relationship which I have described above, he was a rock: his love and support for us, and his belief in us, never wavered. When our son Eric was born,
we gave him the middle name “John”—partly, as we said at the time, in honor of the many saints of that name (John the Beloved Disciple, John the Baptist, John of the Cross, etc.)—but mainly in memory of John Merenda, who died around that time, age 32.

John was never part of our search, but he was very aware of it and very supportive. He attended satsang once; but the effort involved in getting him up the steep outside stairs into the chapel at 202 Commonwealth Avenue (four of us carried him up in his wheelchair) must have been very off-putting, and he never went back. I did give him many of Kirpal’s short writings, which were basically all we had: a couple of pamphlets and a number of mimeographed circulars; and we talked about the Master and the Path on many occasions. I was told that shortly before his death he had expressed a desire for Initiation, and that he was hearing the Sound Current very clearly; I have no doubt whatever that the Master has taken care of him and that he is proceeding toward God on one plane or another at breakneck speed.

But John’s biggest contribution to my understanding of the implications of the Master’s teaching came as a result of his reading one of the circulars I have mentioned: titled “The Message of Love,” it was Kirpal’s Birthday Message for 1955, and essentially a long hymn in praise of love as the basic fact of the universe. It was not one of the circulars I had given him; he had gotten it from someone else, probably Kimon. I didn’t give it to him because I didn’t like it; and I didn’t like it because of my intellectual arrogance, which was then (and unfortunately is now) one of the major causes of my stumbling. I have mentioned this above in connection with my evangelical career; it didn’t stop when I came on the Path. When I had read “The Message of Love,” it hadn’t appealed to me: the emphasis on love seemed cliché-ridden and sentimental—somehow unworthy. Don’t ask me why I thought that: my attitude seems unbelievably silly to me now. But that was then.

John however had a different idea. We were talking about the Path one day and he happened to mention how much he liked “The Message of Love.” I was astonished: “Yeah?” “Yeah,” he said. “It’s exactly the message the world needs.” I went home and re-read it very closely (I had read it very superficially before—just skimmed it): if John Merenda thinks this is great, maybe I’m missing something! And I did
indeed discover that I had missed a very great deal. Not only was the message not cliché-ridden or sentimental at all, it was revolutionary. Consider:

“The performances of countless austerities and penances, each followed by acts of charity; the observance of innumerable fasts, each attended with thousands of prayers; and keeping of sleepless vigils for myriads of nights, will not be of any avail to thee if thou injurest the feelings of a single individual.” This was given out by a great saint named Maghribi Sahib.

Again Hafiz says, “Drink wine to your heart’s content, burn down the holy Koran (which everyone considers a sin) and consign to the flames even the sacred Kaaba if you will, but injure not the feelings of any human being.”

The things described are considered grave sins, but Hafiz says that even committing these sins is far better than injuring the feelings of a human being.

Again Sheikh Saadi proclaims: “Unless you love God’s creation, you cannot have God’s grace; for those who serve His creation, serve Him the most.”

How on earth could I have missed this? And this is only one tiny section of a long message, all making the same point! As the years went by and I came to know the Master (insofar as I can be said to know him, which is perhaps not very much) personally, and as his books and discourses became generally available, I saw how very, very basic this particular aspect of his teaching was, and how much it was reflected in every part of his life and being: how very, very important it was to him. But it was John Merenda, God bless him forever, who first opened my eyes to this and allowed me to see the Master and his Path through the clearest lens of all—the lens that was dearest to his heart.

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The Two Ways

“But [Elijah] went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.
And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.
And he looked and behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head, and he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.
And the angel of the LORD came a second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.
And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.
And he came thither unto a cave and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?
And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away.
And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind, an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake:
And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.
And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. . . .”

I KINGS 19:4-13
“God hears the cry of the ant before He hears the cry of the elephant.”
Guru Gobind Singh, often quoted by Kirpal

“Satguru loses and lets the world win.”
From the Granth Sahib, often quoted by Kirpal

One winter night, during my years on the Corner, I was walking in front of the Lobster Claw, when the door opened and two policemen came out escorting another man between them. The policemen were each over six feet tall, young, and muscular; the man was about five feet five inches tall, soft and pudgy, well-dressed and middle-aged; he was also very drunk, which was obviously why he was being ejected. When the cops got him out to the sidewalk, which was right in front of me, they proceeded to methodically, viciously, and with great enjoyment, beat him up. They were careful to not hit him anywhere that would leave a mark: they used their night-sticks, and they concentrated on his stomach. They knew that he was too drunk to remember; and they knew that I didn’t count—I was a nothing who nobody would pay any attention to. If I had raised any objections, I am sure they would have done the same to me. In any case, I was too stupefied to do anything: I just stood and stared. Eventually they loaded him in their car and drove away.

Now this was not racism: the man they beat up was white. Nor was it classism (unless indeed it was reverse classism): the man was beautifully dressed and obviously well off. But by allowing himself to get so drunk the man put himself in the position of those who suffer under racism and classism: that is to say, he made himself powerless. And the policemen carry with them all the power of the state, from the President on down: it is theirs, to do with as they please. And this business of power—the desire to control, to force others to do what we want them to do regardless of their interests or desires or needs—is the curse of the three worlds (in Sanskrit: *Triloki*): it is the reason the three worlds—the physical, astral, and causal planes, the worlds in which the Law of Karma and the principle of reward and punishment are operative—are fallen.

The Masters of Shabda Yoga, when they are talking about God, distinguish sharply between *Kal* and *Dayal*:
Kal (Time) or Dharam Rai (the Lord of Judgment) is the Negative Power, the Lord of the Three Worlds; he is the embodiment of power and control: through his imposition of the Law of Karma and all its rewards and punishments he keeps the jivas or bound souls going round and round in the cycle of transmigration. According to the Masters, he is not evil, even though the Christian understanding of Satan is kind of a caricature of him: he is absolutely fair and just, giving to each soul exactly what it deserves. He was originally a part of God, one of the “sixteen sons” or transcendent qualities that God separated Himself into which made the Creation possible; the quality of Time/Judgment/Limitation when separated from the whole was not able to stand by itself and fell, disastrously from the point of view of the lower universe.

Dayal, on the other hand, is Mercy: the Positive Power, He is the God Who loves us because we exist and Whom we love in the innermost part of our being—and who comes down into the Three Worlds, into the realms of Power, as a still small voice, the embodiment of forgiveness and love: our paracletos, our advocate or defense attorney, as Jesus put it—not our judge; He takes our part in opposition to the judge/prosecutor who is Kal. He is our advocate: that is why the Masters have consistently maintained that they have not come to make us slaves but friends. They are the embodiments of Dayal, not Kal. The true God manifests as the loving owner of the still small voice because that is His nature; that is Who He is. And if we understand this, it can explain a very great deal about the ways the Masters work when they come among us.

Of course, it also has to do with the nature of growth and the way in which we become more capable of receiving and assimilating that

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4 Compare the character of Tititi-Hoochoo, the Great Jinjin, in Tik-Tok of Oz by L. Frank Baum.

5 See John 14:16, 26; and 15:26. Often translated “Comforter,” the basic meaning of the Greek word paracletos is “advocate.”

6 See The Ocean of Love: The Anurag Sagar of Kabir, pp. 23-36 in particular, although the whole book deals with this in general. The same story is told in the Kabbalah, where Kal is one of the ten sefirot, or aspects of God, called Din (Judgment) or Gevurah (Power), is contrasted with Hesed (Love), and after its separation and subsequent fall is known as the sitra ahra or “the other side”—a euphemism for the evil one or Satan. See Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, pp. 262-263, among many other passages.
which the Masters want to give us. Growth has to come from within ourselves; our Master can show us the way by example and precept, but he can’t order us or compel us to grow. We have to handle that ourselves. That is why the Master, like the God of Love and Mercy that he is the representative and embodiment of, is not a dictator but an example and a guide; dictators and those who exercise power and compel others to do this or that, whether they are called “spiritual Masters” or whatever, show by their fruits that they are representatives and embodiments of the Lord of Judgment; and we can decide for ourselves whom we wish to follow.

I saw many instances of this unwillingness to order his disciples around (and heard of many more) in my time with Kirpal; I have mentioned some of them in the course of the narrative. But one I haven’t mentioned seems worthy of consideration. During my visit in September 1973, I learned that one of Kirpal’s oldest American disciples had published a pamphlet claiming that he had reached Sach Khand and was now a Master, and that he had done this without getting the permission of the Master first: he claimed that he had authority from within. It so happened that Kirpal, night after night, after the group darshans were over, called three of us—Bob Redeem, a newscaster for the Voice of America; Wolfgang Sprenger, a young man from Washington whom I knew well and who was close to the disciple who had authored the pamphlet; and myself—and discussed with us all manner of ramifications of how this kind of thing could happen, why it might happen, and how to deal with it if it did happen.

He mentioned the case of Paul Twichell, who had taken initiation from Kirpal in 1955, gone on to write the book, *Tiger’s Fang*, about his inner experiences and, when the Master refused permission to publish that book, changed the names of Kirpal and other spiritual personages, and published it anyway; after which he founded the Eckankar movement and became a multimillionaire, while denying that he had any connection with Kirpal whatever. The Master said that he had taken Twichell up and shown him a few inner things, and that Twichell’s ego had run away with it and assumed that he had achieved all that there was to achieve; and that the same thing was happening here. I was reminded of what he had told me back in 1965 when the yogi who obviously had power had lost his temper and erupted all
over the Master’s tea party: that ego is the last thing to go, and what we achieve before ego goes strengthens it. Ego, of course—the sense of “I-hood,” which the Buddha pointed out long ago doesn’t really exist and which Kirpal often referred to as “the fake ego”—is the ultimate trap of the Negative Power, the Kal: it is what he uses to build the entire structure we call *Karma*—the whole ultimately unreal paraphernalia of microscopically calibrated rewards and punishments—that we are enmeshed in. But as long as we think it exists, we are caught. Thus the feeling, “I am spiritually advanced,” can be the most dangerous stumbling-block of all. That is why Baba Sawan Singh wrote in precisely this context, “Humility is the armor of the Saints and their devotees.”

Anyway, I found those extra darshan sessions for the three of us extremely precious and I did my best to assimilate and digest the things he was saying. But there was an extremely interesting sequel. On the last day of my stay, someone came to my room and told me the Master wanted to see me. I was overjoyed to hear it, and went bounding over to his house. He was not in the downstairs part where he usually received guests and gave darshan; he was upstairs in his own room—a simple cement room with a rope bed and nothing else. He was sitting on the floor, surrounded by secretaries: he was working on correspondence. I knew that his procedure usually was to dictate the general content of a letter to one secretary, then to proceed to another letter and another secretary, and when the first secretary had a rough draft ready he would go over it, make any corrections he wanted to, and okay a final draft, and so forth. His correspondence at this point was tremendous, and there were at least seven or eight secretaries in the room, maybe more, all working simultaneously on letter after letter.

When I came in, everything stopped, and the Master handed me a letter: “What is your opinion of this letter?” I looked at him, and I looked at the letter: it was a letter from him to the disciple in question, the one who had authored the pamphlets. “My opinion, Master? You want my opinion?” “Yes, yes! Read the letter and tell me what you think of it.” I looked around the room: everyone was looking at me, waiting for my reaction. What in earth was going on?

Well, I read the letter. It was a remarkable document. One page, single-spaced, four paragraphs, as I recall; the first three paragraphs
were a straightforward description of the difficulties and troubles ahead for him if he continued on the course he was following, and which made plain that the Master wished him to stop; the final paragraph very lovingly gave him permission to do whatever he wanted to do.

I looked up at the Master. I reflected that he undoubtedly wanted me to be honest, although I was thoroughly confused as to why I was there and what my opinion was going to accomplish; so I said, “Well, Master, uh, I think, uh, that if you send the letter like this that he will just go by the last paragraph and do what he wants.” There was an audible reaction—“Aha!”—from the secretaries, who obviously had expressed the same opinion—but the Master took the letter back, read it over again, then said to me, “You mean to say that he will pay attention only to the last paragraph and ignore the others?” I said, “Yes, Master; that’s what I think.” He threw the letter to one of the secretaries and said, “Let him then.” And that was it: I was dismissed and went back to my room.

I pondered this incident long and hard, and several things became clear to me as time went by. First, that objectively speaking, my opinion was worthless: it was brought in only to teach both the secretaries and myself something very basic about the way the Master operates. Second, what is that way? It is his responsibility to make the facts and implications of any course of action known beyond any doubt; but then it is our responsibility to act on it. We have his permission to be idiots, if that is what we want. Growth comes only when we recognize the applicability of what he is pointing out to our own situation; if we don’t recognize it but do what we are ordered to only because we are ordered to, we may gain something but we don’t grow—which is why the Master does not usually put us in that position. Of course, all these things are points made by someone who is looking from the bottom upward; to someone, like the Master, who is looking from the top down, a whole different set of constructs apply.

But the fact remains that the Master is not a judge, he is an advocate; he comes into the world of Karma, of reward and punishment, of Time and Limitation and Definition (Maya), as a still small voice working in opposition to all the fundamental assumptions of that world: to demonstrate that Love is indeed the core of the universe, as Rabia put it, and drowns out judgment, punishment, and revenge every time.
Appendix
The 1967 Circular Letters

The year 1966 had seen a serious rift develop among the Master’s disciples; while the disagreement involved only secondary matters (whether or not the sangat should be incorporated as a non-profit religious organization), it interfered seriously with the spiritual growth of the disciples. The Master had made it very clear to Judith and me (and all the others who were present) during our 1965 visit to India that he wanted the incorporation to happen, and he issued public statements to that effect thereafter; but prominent disciples (including leading Representatives) and others who looked up to them as authorities, had a different idea; factions and parties developed; people took sides; and this series of circulars was issued in response. The Master does not address the issue of incorporation per se at all in these letters; he is concerned only with what really matters, which is what makes them so powerful and so timeless. They are all available in book form (some in Spiritual Elixir, some in The Way of the Saints) but they deserve to be presented one after another as written, as they together constitute perhaps Kirpal’s definitive statement of his priorities.

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 and 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 on 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?

The 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 grief-stricken human beings. They are unhappy because they are drifting away from Him ever more. 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:

(i) “He who loveth not his brother abideth in death.”
(ii) “My children; let us not love in word, neither in tongue but in deed and in truth.”
(iii) “Beloved; let us love one another [especially those who are linked with the silken bonds of love of true brotherhood at the feet of the Master] for love is God and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.”
(iv) “He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.”
(v) “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: (i) Love of God, and (ii) Love of man. 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.”

—KIRPAL SINGH

January 21, 1967

Dear Children of Light,

I send my hearty love and blessings to you—one and all—on this, my seventy-fourth physical birthday.

I am a human being (ensouled body) like each one of you. All are human beings first, bearing the badges of one or the other religion. All mankind is one with the same privileges from God—namely, born the same way, having the same construction of their bodies—outer and inner—and the same conscious entity (a drop of the Ocean of All Consciousness) enlivening the body. To be born in a temple is good as it works as a casing of the kernel of Truth alive, but to die while congealed in the casing and forgetting the kernel of Truth within, is debarring one from the Truth which is a heinous sin.

In my heart I have a vision of fraternity of spirit. Organized religions, with too much emphasis on outer forms and rituals, become fortified compartments of egoistic power more than instruments of service or aids of self-realization. These inevitably result in quarrels with one another.

We need a simple movement of the spirit, with harmony and brotherhood of humanity and love for man, bird and beast. I take religion as a Yoga of life with love—Yoga means the control of mind and subdual of desires vitiated with egoism. This will lead to real happiness if we renounce the fruits of our actions and work as instruments or puppets of the Lord. Let our actions be an offering to the Lord. Mind that
spirituality is non-egoism. May our selfless work for spreading this Message of the Master, which is God’s work, draw many unto Thee, O Lord, and may our name be forgotten.

Let us belong to the Kingdom of the Master—the Word-made-flesh—and dedicate our life to the service of the Master, Who is the beauty of the simple life and selfless service. Let us follow the Master and make His noble teachings as a part and parcel of our lives and attune ourselves with Jyoti [Light] and Music of all harmonies reverberating in all creation, which will open our inner eye and will leave no room in our hearts for spite or hatred for others. We will be brothers and sisters who are united in unbreakable bonds of spirit by the Master.

Your heart will be filled with love and compassion for all that live, sentient or insentient, namely man, beast, bird and all nature. We should lead and teach a life of compassion and love to all beings on earth.

“He really knoweth who loveth and serveth all,” is the Message of the wise ones of Humanity like Buddha, Christ and Nanak. It is the Message our daily life and modern world so piteously need.

I wish you to progress spiritually and to lead a life of righteousness—good thoughts, good words and good deeds. With all love,

Your own,
KIRPAL SINGH

April 2, 1967

Dear Children,

On this auspicious day of the blessed memory of my Master Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, I send you my hearty message.

You have been put on the broad way back to God. If you want to develop on the way of new life, you should be broad-minded and be not intolerant. You should not behave like a frog in the well. But give the hand of fellowship to all working for the common cause of the Master, and rise above petty considerations to the heights of life through the power of inner silence brought about by meditation. Try to dive deep into the depths of the heart, and avoid superficial life. This can only be activated by love, selfless service and sacrifice for the higher purpose
of life. A dedicated life knows no burdens or sufferings. He lives for God’s work and as such leads a life of detachment.

There are two ways—one leading to life and the other to destruction—called Sharey Marg and Piray Marg. Piray Marg relates to objective life and appears all beautiful and easy to follow but it results in hatred and malevolence, rigid ideology and obsessive self. The way of Sharey Marg lies in developing inner silence, which is harder to find. It is an uphill task and takes hard work of mind and body and purification of spirit.

When you will become broad-minded and have risen to the heights of life by sacrificing everything, you will find a vision of the Lord working in all alike, in saints and sinners, in all humanity and in all creation, in all birds and beasts, in all religions, in all scriptures and in all prophets.

In silence we test ourselves to find weaknesses to be weeded out. We have to wrestle with darkness and develop moral muscles and receive the message of the spirit. We must be, for some time at least, alone with God. When we enter more and more into silence, our desires will be eliminated, purity attained and the body and the mind sanctified, and we taste the Elixir of Naam Divine and know how sweet the Name is.

In silence the heart illumines; veil after veil is removed. In the heart shineth the Light, and the very silence becomes vocal, giving vent to the Music of the Spheres reverberating in all creation. When the Light is seen shining within your heart and the Music of the Spheres becomes audible, you behold the Light in all: that is, outside you see the One Light in all. This is the Universal Vision that the One is in all and all are in One. Blessed is he, the man of Illumination, for wherever he be, he dwelleth with the One Eternal.

Such is a blessed one who belongeth not to this color or caste or creed; he Belongeth to all. The great mystic Rumi says:

I am neither Christian nor Jew
Neither Gaber nor Turk
I am not of the East—I am not of the West
Not of the land am I—Not of the sea
I belong to the soul of the Beloved
I have seen that the two are One.
And One I see —and One I know
One I see —One I adore
He is the First —and He is the Last
He is the outward —and He is the inward too.

This is the ultimate Goal before each one of you. I wish all who care, to achieve this Goal. All feasible help of the Master will be at hand.

With all love to each one of you,
Yours affectionately,
KIRPAL SINGH

June 6, 1967

How fortunate you are that you have been initiated into the secret inner Path leading to the Kingdom of God; the Kingdom that comes not by observation (without), but that which lies within you. Know you not that you are the temple of the Holy Ghost? Verily you are so, and you have witnessed within yourselves the primal manifestations of the Godhead, no matter at what level, according to your mental makeup and the receptivity developed by you. You have seen what many prophets and righteous men desired to see but did not see, and you have heard what they desired to hear but did not hear.

God is Spirit and can only be worshiped in Spirit. You must therefore try to rise over and above the body consciousness and strive to arise into the consciousness of the higher order—I mean spiritual consciousness—rather than remain tied to your own persons or in fact to any other person, howsoever great he may appear to be in his own eyes or in the eyes of others. Principles are higher, much higher, I would say, than personalities. Persons may come and go, personal cults may linger for a while, yet principles, the spiritual values, last and last beyond time. Your main concern should now be to develop the inner experience granted to you. Love the God-in-action Power with all your mind, with all your heart, with all your strength and with all your soul. This will enable you to expand beyond all measure, so as to embrace the totality of His Being, far above party affiliations, party politics and all politicking.

A tree is known by the fruit it bears. Do glory unto the God-Power and you shall be glorified in return without any effort on your part.
That is the law. And again, a fruit laden tree bends with the weight of the fruit it bears. Try to cultivate and attain the divine virtues of love, humility and understanding for all. Who is there under the sun who has no failings and shortcomings? *With all our righteousnesses, we are but filthy rags.* Be polite and courteous with all. Courtesy costs you nothing but it pays rich dividends.

Human heart is verily the seat of God and must be kept sanctified at all times and at all costs, no matter what the sacrifice. Learn to live peacefully and amicably with each other, giving due regard to the feelings and sentiments of others. “By love serve one another” should be your rule in life. A loving service adorns both the server and the served alike.

The above injunctions apply equally, nay with greater force, to the Group Leaders and Representatives of the Master, for they have to set a better example to all those who are within the sphere of their influence. They must know that they are just instruments in the Divine Plan and not the flywheel running the plan itself; and unless they work smoothly in loving harmony and cooperation, they are bound to generate heat by constant friction, damaging not only the quality of the work but even themselves.

*Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its savor, where-with shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing.* Should the protecting hedge itself start nibbling the farm enclosed in its fold, you can well imagine what would remain of the farm: a pestilence-stricken arid ground of no consequence.

It hardly serves any useful purpose to cast aspersions upon anybody or assign motives to whatever one says or does, for it is not given to us to read anybody’s mind when we cannot read even our own. *Judge not, lest ye be judged* and found wanting in the Divine Scales. Therefore, arraign not anybody, much less your colleagues and brothers in faith. In the case of honest differences of opinion, which sometimes may arise, try to iron them out lovingly and in private, rather than wash the dirty linen in public meetings and public places, spreading a nauseating foul smell around you. If you cannot do so between yourselves, for one reason or another, you will do well to refer the problem to the Master for solution and reconciliation of the apparently divergent views. I, therefore, enjoin on all of you to keep loving and friendly
relations among yourselves as children of the same Father and do not do anything that may make anybody raise a pointing finger at you and bring disrepute to the Highest Knowledge—the Science of the Beyond—which you have come by after an evolution through ages past. “Ye are the light of the world” and hence should keep this light aloft on the hilltop so that those who see it, even from a distance, are encouraged to seek you for advice and bless you for your sage counsel and the Master Power that helped you to it. As such, you are to help your brothers in faith, keeping them firm in their loving devotion to the Master instead of coming in between them and the Master—for all belong to Him.

All of us are, in fact, fruit-gatherers in the vineyard of the Master. We have nothing in us to recommend us to His Grace. The puppets in a pantomime show dance not by themselves but by the wire-puller behind the screen. To assume any importance, in doing the Master’s work, is not worthy of noble souls, as you are.

We are all of the Master and for the Master, but not the Master—Gurbhais and not the Guru—or Guru-Power is only in one commissioned from above. The Master knows best how to carry on the Divine Plan. Let us, therefore, submit our individual wills to His Will and not appropriate to ourselves any credit for the gifts freely and lovingly bestowed upon us by Him. After all, what is there in the conduits that simply pass on the refreshing and life-giving water that comes from the overhead reservoir (the Master Power).

The greatness of the Master is not to be judged by the strength of his following or by the outer glamor of his court. He is not after wealth nor after name and fame nor after the numbers that follow him. He, standing on the hilltop, knows in what hearts the fire of anguish is smoldering and, like oxygen, comes in so many diverse ways to fan the flames of loving devotion in them. So nobody should feel that he or she is indispensable and therefore put on airs which others may resent or cavil at. Remember that we cannot add to or detract from the glory that is His. If we can be of any service in His Cause, that may, on the contrary, be taken as a privilege coming from Him in His Grace.

In the end, I hope that every one of you, whatever your position in life, whatever your place in the administrative setup for furthering the Holy Cause, will contribute his mite, as best as possible, in a spirit
of loving and selfless service and try to enrich himself inwardly by living in peace and amity in his respective circle, radiating nothing but fragrance to all around him, as so many children in the one Grand Family of Man.

One thing more, which I cannot help but emphasize for the benefit of all the dear ones on the Path: If at all, any of you, at any time, feel that you are the most favored in divine manifestations, you should try to exercise restraint and observe decorum in society, rather than be carried away by the emotional tide that may take you off your feet. Humility is the first and last adornment that embellishes the noble soul.

My best wishes are ever with you and nothing will give me greater pleasure than to see you all, well set on the spiritual Path, with appreciation of each other, moving shoulder to shoulder, forming one spiritual phalanx so that those who see you will admire you and get inspiration from you.

Wishing you, one and all, God-speed on the God Way,

Yours affectionately,
KIRPAL SINGH

July 1, 1967

Dear Ones:

On this auspicious day of the Birth Anniversary of Hazur Maharaj Baba Sawan Singh Ji, I send you one and all, my heartiest wishes for your progress on the spiritual way back to the Home of our Father through the Natural Yoga of Light and Life and Love—the Surat Shabd Yoga.

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. There are many aspects of His Divine Life, but I will now dwell on the two most important ones, namely, 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.

All Masters, such as Jesus, Mahavira, Buddha, Kabir and Nanak, etc., of the past, and Ramakrishna, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, Sadhu
Vaswani, etc., of recent days, radiated this divine luster from their personalities.

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 life worth living is life in the Spirit. Its basis is humility. We should be reduced to a cipher and God becomes all. “Let us be perfect as our Father is in Heaven.”

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 thralldom 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.

The way to true blessedness is the way of humility and love. He who is humble has no problems. He has God as his Guide. Significant are the words of the shepherd boy singing in John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress:*

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{He that is down need fear no fall,} \\
\text{He that is low, no pride;} \\
\text{He that is humble ever shall} \\
\text{Have God to be his guide.} \\
\text{I am content with what I have,} \\
\text{Little be it, or much;} \\
\text{And Lord, contentment still I crave,} \\
\text{Because Thou savest such.}
\end{align*}
\]

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:

\[
\text{How does the sea become the king of all rivers and streams?} \\
\text{Because it lies lower than them.}
\]

St. Augustine said the way to God is, “First humility, second humility and third humility.” He who is proud of possessions or of learning or of authority will not go to any Saint unless he is humble. Even if he goes to the Saint, but considers himself superior to Him, he will not listen to Him. A glass which is kept above a tumbler of water will remain empty—until it is put below the tumbler. You know what you know; just listen to what the other says. Perhaps we can learn something from him.
Yes, the branches of a fruit-laden tree bend of their own accord. Even so, the man who, losing himself, finds God—finds Him everywhere and in everyone—bends before all, offers homage of his heart to all. This is true humility. It is not a forced sense of lowliness. Such a one lives in unity with all. He is in others and others are in him.

It is the fake ego-self that gives rise to the sense of discord and separation. When the illusion of ego is broken, one feels, “I am not apart from others, but others are parts of the One—God—The Master—and all of us are engaged in the same service of God.”

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.

Wondrous are the words of the Sufi Saint, Abur Hassan:

*Brothers! This is the Law:*
*He who cometh nigh to God*
*Loseth what he hath,*
*Aye, he loseth himself,*
*But gains instead the Gift Supreme,*
*The gift of humility.*

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.”

“Humility,” says Lacordaire, “does not consist in hiding our talents and virtues, in thinking ourselves worse and more ordinary than we are, but in possessing a clear knowledge of all that is lacking in us, and not exalting ourselves for that which we have, seeing that God has freely given it us, and with all His gifts, we are still infinitely of little importance.”

So the truly humble man may accept sometimes the praise which men give him, and quietly passes it on to God, keeping nothing for himself.

The man who is not truly humble behaves in a very unnatural manner when he is not praised by men. He becomes upset, loses his patience and even becomes angry. He repulses them with his irritation and creates for them an awkward situation. Sometimes he suppresses his feelings and remains silent; but he cannot forget the things that are said about him; they haunt him again and again, and do not give him peace of mind.

The humble man makes no fuss. He is at harmony with himself and others. He is gifted with a wondrous feeling of peace. He feels safe and secure, like a ship in harbor, unaffected by howling storms and lashing waves. He has found refuge at the Lotus Feet of the Lord and the storms of changing circumstances have no power over him. He feels light as air. The burdens which we carry all our life—the burden of the self and its desires—he has 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 be humble regards himself as a student. He learns many new things, but what is more difficult, he unlearns many things he has learned. A scholar came to a Saint and said, “O Seer of the Secret, tell me what I may do to live the life divine.” And the Saint said to him, “Go, unlearn what thou hast learnt and then return and sit before me.”

He who would walk the way of humility must renounce his earlier ways of living. 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.
November 11, 1967

Dear Children of Light:

Blessed are ye, who, for the sake of righteousness, offer to work in the vineyard of the Master, and more so, those who are actually engaged in the work. It is indeed a rare privilege which comes in one’s way as a matter of grace, and not because there is anything special in us, and we must not on that account feel elated and exalted. On the contrary, we should thank our stars for having been given such an opportunity, and try to serve the noble cause with contrition and humility. It should always be our earnest endeavor to make ourselves worthy of the trust and responsibility with which we have been entrusted, in spite of our weaknesses and shortcomings.

It would always pay us if we occasionally make a pause, to take stock of what we are, for at times we are carried away in our zeal to limits; limits beyond the limits of reason. The human mind is very tricky and treacherous. In diverse ways, quite imperceptibly, it starts playing antics. At times, we begin to feel that we are God's elect. We know full well the Divine Plan, and that the power of God cannot but work through us. We should know that we are yet on the way to perfection, and not in any sense near perfection. Perfection is the goal that has to be achieved. Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect is what Christ taught two thousand years ago, and his teachings are as true today as they were then.

A disciple is not above the Master, nor a servant above his Lord. It is enough for a disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. We have therefore to develop in us the virtues of the Master and the Lord. And what these virtues are is the next question. Humility is their greatest embellishment. Humility first, and humility last, is what they preach. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. So the emphasis here is more on “poverty in spirit” than on anything else. This, then, is the keynote for all who work for the sacred cause.

Next comes LOVE—love for one and love for all. Love thy neighbor, for love is the fulfilling of the law of God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love. A little leaven of love will leaven the whole lump and infect all those who are around you. Again, perfect love casteth out
fear. Whenevsoever there is the least fear lurking, know it for certain that love hath not yet perfected in that heart.

Naturally enough, from love spring forth the ideas of service and sacrifice. Love believes in giving—giving away the best you have and not accepting anything in return, for that would be a barter and not love. “Service before self” is what love teaches. By love, serve one another, is what the Apostle Paul taught to the Galatians, and through them to all mankind. If we look critically, we will soon realize that all service which we seem to be doing to others is not to anybody else, but to the ONE SELF-SAME SELF, pervading everywhere and in all, including our seemingly individualized self clothed in raiments of flesh and bones. This being the case, there is no ground for claiming any credit whatever. Loving service must therefore flow freely, fully and naturally, as a matter of course, refreshing all hearts, for it will convert the otherwise dreary and desolate earth into a veritable garden of Eden; for which we so earnestly pray every day, but find it receding from us, the more we wish for it.

Where loving service begins to flow freely from the innermost depths of a heart, that heart naturally gets saturated with the milk of human kindness and becomes meek, as meek as a lamb. Freed from the thorns and thistles of arrogance and pride, one becomes harmless as a dove. He cannot then injure the feelings of others, by thoughts, by words or by deeds. He would ever fear to judge others and make unruly remarks and comments. Judge not others, lest ye be judged and found wanting by the Great Judge. This thought would keep him on his guard. Human heart is the seat of God, and should in no wise be injured. A Muslim dervish goes to the length of saying, Burn the holy Koran if you will, and raze Kaaba to dust, but injure not a human heart for it is the seat of God. Courtesy, you will realize, costs nothing, but pays rich dividends. It is from the abundance of heart that the tongue speaks. If you studiously cultivate purity of heart, your tongue will automatically become honeyed sweet. A tongue-cut is always deeper than a sword-cut, and remains ever green and gangrenous. We should avoid all idle talk, for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

These are just a few of the axiomatic truths that have been placed before you for your guidance and welfare, so that you may benefit
therefrom—not only yourself, but you will be able to benefit others as well by your noble example. An example is better than hundreds of sermons and an ounce of practice works more than tons of theoretical disputations and dissertations.

One thing more: There is a growing tendency with some persons to make divisions among the Satsangis—“good” Satsangis and “bad” Satsangis. All Satsangis are Satsangis, and one who has been chosen, called, justified, accepted and glorified by being linked with the living strands of life within, the Light and Sound of God—the Audible Life Stream—is truly in touch with Truth (Sat) and accordingly is a Satsangi. To classify Satsangis into good and bad Satsangis is hardly justifiable, for it is said, God first created the Light; We are all children of the Light; The whole creation sprang from the Light; Why then dub anyone as evil? This being the case, we are all equal in the sight of God. Whosoever thinks otherwise has, I am afraid, not yet come by the rudiments of the sacred science. Some may be slow and some rapid in their inner development; that is quite a different thing, for each one has his or her peculiar background and mental make-up, as coming from past incarnations, but to give a bad name to any is not justifiable in the least. And if one does that, he shows a bad taste and the sooner he rids himself of this habit, the better it will be for him and for all concerned. A child is dear to the mother even if he/she is smeared with filth, and the mother washes him down with love and hugs him to herself. Know it for certain, that he who feels exalted is abased, and he who humbles himself is exalted. A tree laden with flowers and fruits bends with their weight; while the palm tree that stands tall and erect bears nothing. Again, a tree is known by the fruit it bears. Be ye truly the children of Light and shed light to others that they may take heart, and your light prove a lamp unto their feet; and that they may not stumble, but are guided to the Way of God, for therein lies your duty to God and the Power of God with which you have been united by the grace of the Master Power. If you will live up to these instructions, it will hasten the Master’s coming to you, to see you all in loving harmony.

I may add a few words about Initiation into the esoteric science of the soul, before I close. Initiation, you should know, is granted not haphazardly or for the mere asking, but according to certain inner principles. Your recommendation is required so that you may be
satisfied, as far as possible; so that you may have no qualms of conscience afterward and feel hurt if anything goes awry in course of time. Sometimes it may even happen that certain individuals may not, according to ordinary standards, appear to be qualified for the gift of Naam; and yet Naam is given to them simply because it is ordained from above. So these are matters which can not, in all instances, be judged on the human level.

With all love and kindly thoughts for all,

Yours affectionately,

KIRPAL SINGH

December 16, 1967

Dear Ones,

I am sending you Sat Sandesh,¹ the message of the Lord, all saints and prophets have been bringing from time to time for the guidance and uplift of man. Kabir says: “I am the knower of the True Home of the Father and have come to give you the message of God.”

God’s message is:

“I am the Lord of all creation. Man is the highest in all creation. He is next to Me. I have given equal privileges to all mankind. They are born in the same way and with the same outer and inner construction. This is the golden opportunity you have been given to know Me. Ever since you were sent down to the world, you have not returned to Me—the True Home—but have stuck fast in the enjoyments of mind and outgoing faculties so much so that you have forgotten even yourself, what to speak of Me. I sent saints and prophets to awaken and to bring you back to Me but you did not care to come. Instead of appreciating their services, you have been molesting them.

“I sent Christ—the Word made flesh—who reminded you vehemently: change your mind,² for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Religions came into being to keep the teachings of all such Masters afresh. Religion in its pristine beauty means a living reality. It is a state

¹ This was the opening article in the first issue (January 1968) of the English edition of Sat Sandesh.
² The literal translation of the Greek metanoite, often translated, “Repent!”
of universal God-consciousness, in which you live, move and have your being in My loving presence. All your activities or institutions should have been inspired by love of Me. Then there would have been left no stranger, no alien, no hatred, and strifes would have been unknown.

“If you like to seek Me, conquer all fears; this you can achieve only when you shake off attachment for wealth, family, body, as one and all are Mine, and have been given to you to make the best use of them to reach Me. This detachment of heart can only come when you love Me ‘with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.’ This is true renunciation which is the highest expression of religion.

“All saints and prophets I sent to the East or West—their lives were filled with the rapture of the vision of the unity of all races and religions in the spirit. The outer world is the expression of the mind. Unless you first establish unity in your hearts, you cannot develop unity of all men.

“There are two methods by which you can achieve this end. One is the interior method of meditation to go into the silence of the heart where flows the fountain of My love, all bliss and joy. You must be reborn; except you be reborn (or twice born) you cannot enter into My Kingdom which is within you. Those who have once drunk the water of life from this fountain are intoxicated forever and love flows out from them in all its joy and gracefulness to all humanity—overflowing as they are with the love and intoxication of Me—giving vent to ‘peace be unto all the world under Thy Will, 0 Lord.’ Mind that it is not religion that failed you; it is you who have failed religion.

The second method is to understand the meaning and the purpose of knowledge which in one single thought is ‘service’ to all My creation—men, beasts, birds, etc. The meaning of true life is service and sacrifice.

“So long as you want, first and foremost, to be blessed yourselves and you expect others to minister to you, you will remain a stranger to the way of spirituality. When you will wish others to be blessed, you will begin to speed on your way back to Me.

“Let you not be a reformer to whip others into goodness, but be a witness of the Great Love radiating all love in thought, word and deed. Be an example rather than give precepts to others. You are indulging
in oceans of talks but how many ounces of action? An ounce of practice is more than tons of theories. ‘Wanted: Reformers—not of others, but of themselves.’

“Religion decays when forms and rituals become more important than Me [God]. The inner light within you fades away giving place to intellectual acceptance of dogma or creed which you hold tenaciously, for the vindication of which you willingly lay down your lives. Religion further decays when neither I[God] nor the Church rules you, but you become slaves to mammon and material power of the once virile religion; only the form remains ending in selfish ends by the so-called defenders of faiths and contractors of religions.

“You are all dear to Me, sweet children, I advise you all, residing anywhere, to sit together as brothers and sisters and understand each other. Dissolve all differences and misconceptions: you are already one as man, as soul (conscious beings), as followers of the same Master Power—and I reside in each one of you as the Controlling Power keeping you in the body. Remove all duality and otherness. You will be able to sit together only in My name and will realize this unity in Me in the company of saints.”

May this lesson go out to the hearts of each one of you on this blessed Christmas Day and New Year’s Day so that the purpose of life is dedication to the Eternal and the meaning of life is consecration to the Eternal Value of life.

May the benediction of the Master shine upon you forever and forever more.

With love and best wishes,

Yours affectionately,

KIRPAL SINGH

December 28, 1967

Dear Souls:

Before the year runs out, I would like all the children of light to manifest that light in abundance, and take care that it is not darkened through any default. You have had an experience of this light, the light of God; the light that never is on sea or land, but burns day and night, unquenchably, in the human breast. Let this light be a lamp unto your
feet, and serve as a beacon light and signal fire to the world-weary traveler trudging on the sands of time in search of a haven of peace. All of you must know that you have voluntarily and joyously taken upon yourself a great trust and responsibility—an obligation which you have to discharge under the Law of Divine Dispensation, and it is your proud privilege and a sacred duty to serve the great Cause which is so very dear to the Master.

All the Initiates of the Master, wherever they be—in the East or in the West—form one great family of the Master and as such are equally dear to me, and nothing will give me greater pleasure than to see you all living in loving peace and harmony as His children, serving one another with love in your hearts. Love is the highest and the greatest attribute of God, and all other virtues flow on their own from it.

All of you have been put on the Godway, which of course is the same. It is now for you to hasten the advent of the Master within you, and thereby complete your Guru-bhakti, or single-hearted devotion to Him. The proof of this you can experience within you as the self-luminous form of the Master appears, stays with you, talks to you face to face, and helps you within by instruction and experience, in the same way as he does without: Behold! I stand at the door and knock, and if any man hear my voice, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. From here begins Naam-bhakti, or devotion to the Holy Word, and it is the Master’s job to make you proficient in it, and lead you to perfection and make you perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Thus you see you have all been put on the Path leading to God. The proof of the pudding, however, lies in tasting it. The more you will taste of the Truth in you, the more your life in a work-a-day world will reflect the Light of God in all your dealings with one another, and you yourself will feel that each day sees you nobler than before as you tread Godward.

It is from amongst you that representatives, group leaders, and workers are chosen by the Master for administrative convenience, to carry on the work efficiently—to wit, to arrange spiritual get-togethers (Satsangs) for mutual help and benefit. My Master, Hazur Sawan Singh Ji, used to say that Satsangs served a very useful purpose as a protective hedge around the field of Simran and Bhajan, so that these
vital and life-giving processes continue to develop and thrive, in spite of the otherwise busy life in the family, in society, in your respective avocations, and the like.

I cannot help emphasizing that all Satsangis, whatever their qualifications and the degrees of advancement, are equally dear to me. With all our seeming righteousnesses, we are yet far from righteousness, for none are righteous in the real sense of the word, and there is no ground for us to feel exalted simply because we had the good fortune to work in the vineyard of the Lord. On the contrary, this very thing—the work entrusted to us so graciously—casts upon us an added responsibility to make ourselves worthy of it.

I would very much like you to forge and strengthen loving links in the ever-expanding fraternity that is ours. The representatives should, in a missionary spirit, travel from center to center in their areas so as to see things for themselves at each center, and strive to make them live centers in the spiritual fabric, and in a loving spirit, exchange their views with one another, and offer suitable suggestions for improving the position wherever necessary. To facilitate work at each center, we should set up small committees of three to four members with the idea of division of work as may make for more efficiency and better understanding, and also enthuse a spirit of good will and fellowship among all who are engaged in the holy work. It may be worthwhile to establish separate study circles for mutual discussions on one or the other spiritual subject, so that those participating in them get a training to give small inspiring talks on their own, and be able to keep the work going without any let or hindrance. A small lending library with essential literature on Sat Mat will be a great help to all, old and new Satsangis as well as fresh aspirants for and seekers after Truth.

A tree is known by the fruit it bears, and so we should act and behave in a manner that glorifies God and is befitting to us as children of God. It will be a healthy beginning if representatives, group leaders, and workers invite each other for talks and addressing the Satsangis and others interested in the subject in their respective areas; and the invitees in their turn should give out their best to their listeners without in any way interfering with their susceptibilities and loyalties as may tend to estrange them from each other, and cause any to stumble on the way. This, it is hoped, will in a way help to expand the “Self” in
you, and your hearts will go out to serve the Lord whenever and wherever you may get an opportunity to do so. This is the greatest service that one can do to oneself, and to the self-same Self in others around you, and those with whom you may come in contact from day to day.

Those going around in connection with Satsang work at different places should not accept any offering whatsoever for their personal benefit. However, they are allowed to share lodging and simple food with the dear ones, if possible and necessary. The travel expenses and other allied charges incurred may be debited to Satsang funds. The non-acceptance of gifts for personal self is one of the prescriptions given by the ancient sages for persons living the spiritual life. It will be easy to see how this rule becomes more important for those who are in their service to God, and have been placed in a position of public authority. It is the duty of the spiritual leaders and counsellors, whatever their capacity, to remain impersonal servants of all. Since the acceptance of gifts involves one, even against his or her will, in some measure of obligation to the giver, it may cause unwittingly a lowering of his or her ideals. This should be considered sufficient to avert serious difficulties that could arise from laxity in this principle.

In this respect it would be worth your while and profitable for you to read this, along with the previous circulars of June 6, 1967, and November 11, 1967, together with the Birthday Message of July 1967, as all of these, including this one, present an integrated view of true living as enjoined by the Masters.

I would also greatly appreciate it if you would chalk out the lines for yourself, and also send periodical reports on the progress made from time to time. The Master Power overhead, I am sure, will help us to achieve the desired results. My best wishes are with you.

With all love, and more of it,

Yours affectionately,

KIRPAL SINGH
Russell Perkins was born in Florida in 1935. Brought up in New England, his evangelical career and study for the ministry, subsequent search for Truth, and initiation by the spiritual Master Kirpal Singh of Delhi, India, are all dealt with in this book.

Now retired, Russell has a Master of Theological Studies degree from Harvard University; was Editor of Sat Sandesh and Sant Bani magazines from 1970 to 1987; published Kirpal Singh’s books at The Sant Bani Press, Tilton, New Hampshire; and taught at The Sant Bani School, Sanbornton, New Hampshire from 1975 to 2002, and subsequently at Sonoma State University, Laney College, and The Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (now Sofia University), all in California, where he now lives.

He served as a Representative for Sant Kirpal Singh from 1967 to his death in 1974, and for Sant Ajaib Singh from 1976 until his death in 1997.