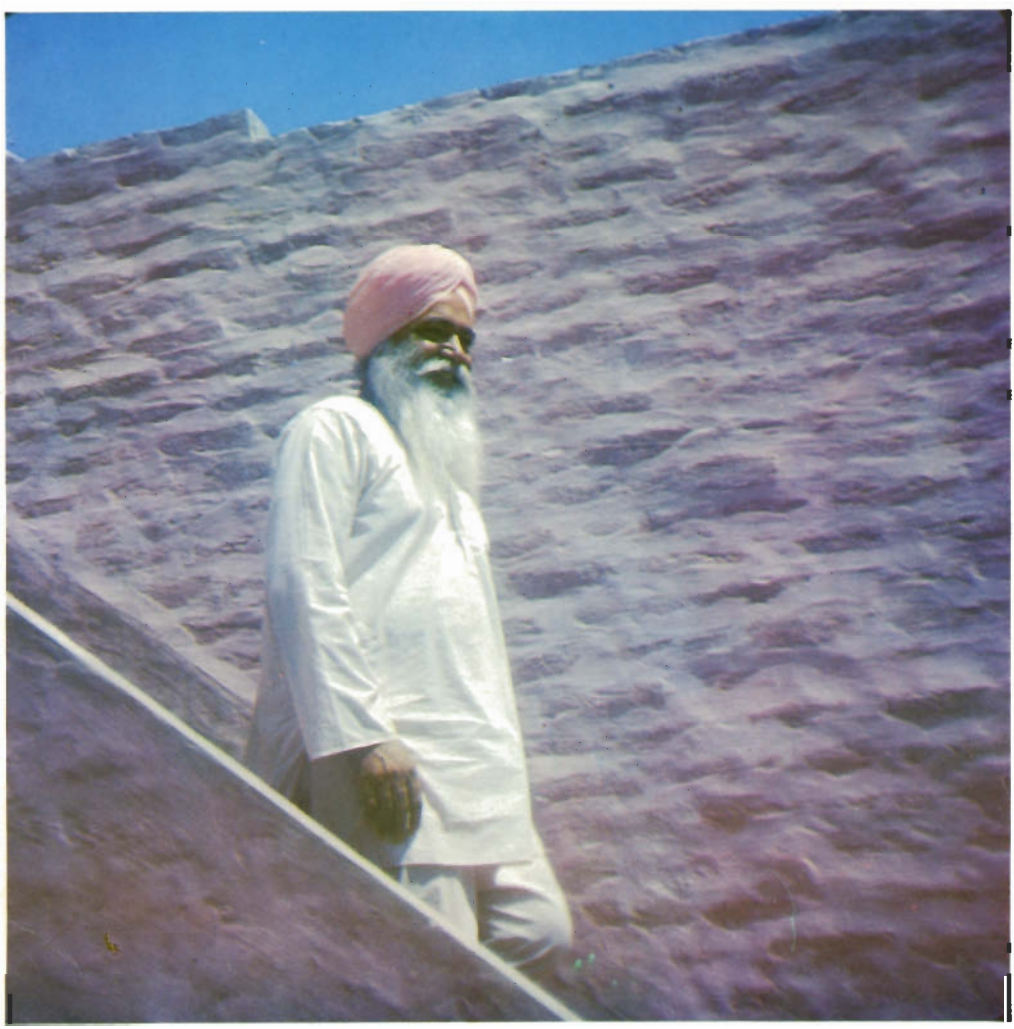
SANT BANI

The Voice of the Saints

August 1976



SANT AJAIB SINGH JI

PHOTO CREDITS All pictures are of Sant Ajaib Singh: Front cover, Eric Perkins; pages 1, 13, 17, Jim Russell; page 4, Kent Bicknell.

The Message of Love

from Sant Ajaib Singh Ji to the western disciples on the Second Anniversary of Master Kirpal Singh

SANT AJAIB SINGH JI HOLDING SATSANG LAST MARCH

Dear brothers and sisters in the West:

I send you Namaste and Love. Previously also I sent a message in the form of a tape recording, and it was that all brothers and sisters should be one and should meditate. Our Satguru, Maharaj Kirpal Singh Ji, came into this world with the message of love, and He taught us to love. And even now we should work according to His message and teachings.

Everybody should have love for all and should meditate. We can see Him and receive His love even now, if we go in. He is all pervading—He is residing in everybody. Unless we have more love for Him, and a keen desire to meet Him, we can't go in and see Him.

How can one love God if he or she is not loving His creation? One Saint says, "When a disciple meets a fellow disciple, both are happy

and both bow down at each other's feet." This only is the Path of the *bhaktas* or devotees and this only is the true discipleship. But the Path is very sharp and smaller even than the size of a hair.

The Guru will not manifest where disciples do not respect each other. Saints say that the Guru will never be with those who do not have love and respect for others. So all we *gurubhais* [brothers and sisters in our Master] should love each other, and whenever we meet any initiate of our Master Kirpal we should be very happy to see him and should understand him as our own brother. If we are treating others badly, Master will never help us and He will never manifest within us, because our Satguru has taught us to love. Our Master Kirpal Singh Ji brought many communities and religions together on one level and one platform; can't we brothers all sit together?

Why are we lacking in all this? Because we are not doing meditation and we have forgotten the Master's message. Even now, those who are meditating are accepting the Master's message and will. And they see Him. What was the Master's message? First of all, to "know thyself." We can know ourselves only when we rise above the influence of mind and Maya; then only will we realize for ourselves who we are. We are one ray of God. Our soul is of the essence of the Oversoul. And when we experience this within us—that we are all souls and of the essence of the Oversoul—we see soul in everybody and we love everybody, understanding him as a soul and not the body. It doesn't matter whether he is good or bad in nature—we have to love him, knowing that he is soul, and of the essence of the Oversoul, and that Master Kirpal is sitting in him.

It has come in my experience about Master Kirpal that He is the owner of all creation—that He is all pervading. In water there is Kirpal; on earth there is Kirpal. It was Kirpal, it will be Kirpal, it is Kirpal. Here is Kirpal; there is also Kirpal—that Kirpal Who gave salvation to our soul; that Kirpal Who has united us with our long-separated God, and even now Who is all pervading.

Those who are meditating can go and meet Him even today. And that Kirpal was never born; never died; and He was never in the cycle of birth and death. As long as there was *Hukam* [God's Will], He worked while staying in the body, and only with Hukam He left the body. He comes in the body with Hukam and leaves it with

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SANT BANI

The Voice of the Saints

volume one number two

August 1976

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With Sant Ajaib Singh in India

KENT BICKNELL

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following article is in two parts, reports of the author's two visits to Sant Ji. As the article makes clear, the trips differed radically both in purpose and content. The first visit was a joyful reunion of the disciple with the Master in His new coat. The second was a profound and sometimes very painful learning experience. But there is no doubt that what Kent learned and suffered he did on behalf of the Sangat as a whole; and whatever his failings were, they were the failings of the Sangat.*

The author, who is Principal of the Sant Bani Ashram School (hence the title "Principal Sahib"), has been an initiate of Master Kirpal Singh since 1968; he has prepared both parts of this article from extensive written and recorded notes taken on the spot.

1. *Rajasthan in April*

THE STORY of my journey really begins on the night Russell returned from India in February. As he told the story of his visit, of the joy of the dancing twinkling eyes of Kirpal in Ajaib, something in my heart began to sing and I wanted to go. Until that time I had felt no need to "find a successor" – my personal life was going smoothly and I was content. The idea of going began as an emotional throb and gradually settled into a rational drive to go. Since I had no money, however, I directed my attention toward the Master Power within and began again to meditate three (rather than two) hours daily, etc. I was rewarded, of course; enough so that I was able to resign myself to the idea of not going to India. When Jane Counter came back, I talked to her and felt more inclined than ever to go. The next day some totally unexpected finances arrived and the door was thrown open for my going. By the time I was ready to go, two more from Sant Bani Ashram were also ready: Robert and Wendy Schongalla. Bob teaches at the school; Wendy serves in the guest house. Wendy had applied for initiation from Master Kirpal, but He left before responding.

So, after the usual last minute scramble, we left for Delhi and arrived on the morning of Thursday, April 1, 1976. We were met by Papu (Raj Kumar Bagga) who had been waiting for three hours since our plane was late.

We arrived at the Bagga household and later were able to secure tickets for the train that evening to Ganga Nagar. I cannot overemphasize how moved I was at the love we received from the entire Bagga family. It was truly incredible.

APRIL 2: Well, we made it. It is very beautiful and peaceful and full of God's loving sweetness and service. We were sitting awaiting the arrival of Sant Ji, with sevadars hovering over us to flick

away flies, refill teacups, etc. Someone suggested that we look at the new bathing area – just built for us – and while we were there Sant Ji came. We met him in the courtyard and were so very warmly received. He was dressed in light pink clothing with a white turban. Over tea (prior to seeing him) I had decided that it was all right to be skeptical and I should be cautious. When we came in from the courtyard to sit, I found my mind caught in the "does he or doesn't he" syndrome. This was difficult because he kept looking right into my eyes and I felt like I had him on trial or something–I just prayed, "Oh God, you can see my every thought so I've nothing to hide." He was very loving and sweet.

After a short period my internal questioning subsided – he really can and does look so much like I remember Master. At first I thought not (that is, not a whole lot more than any elderly Sikh with Master's shape of beard and face). There is no doubt however that for me both his face and his eyes were Kirpal's. In fact I told him that although I knew the Master Power stayed the same but the form changed, it seemed as if the form had stayed the same also. The photos don't properly convey the likeness – it's very strong; essences, too.

We showed him the letter from Russell which Papu read to him. Ajaib took it and put it in his pocket. At some point I told him that we were confused because we wanted to see him but we also didn't want to disturb his meditations. He said it was no disturbance. He later indicated that our coming was part of His (Kirpal's) plan. First came Arran – after which he told Dogar Mal not to give his address to anyone. Then came Russell – he said no publicity to him. Then came Jim, Jane, and Ronnie; now we were here. He said this was all Master's plan unfolding; that those who go to Sach Khand see Master face to face and know. Then he was reminded of a shabd by a Muslim Master which he had the pathi chant: it had to do with the Guru planting a seed in the mind which, when watered with meditation and satsang, would become a fragrant blossoming tree. He told the story of Sawan: how one day he was walking and suddenly a sweet fragrance entered his being. Then he met a sadhu and knew it came from him. The sadhu said that the fragrance was there but very few smelled it.

After a while he ordered cushions for us all and I took the opportunity to slip to the floor. He insisted that I sit in my chair. He then told how he always tried to sit at Master's Feet but He insisted Ajaib sit next to Him – even on the dais. I said Ajaib was clean but I am dirty; he said it is easy to find God but difficult to become a man. God is looking for a true man.

He said we should take food, and, hearing the word *khana* (i.e., food), I said, "Khana," and gestured toward him, and everyone laughed. As the hour and a half (or whatever) raced on he looked more and more and more like I remember Master until he was that. Also his eyes. At first I had some racing horrible thoughts – even as we looked at each other – but I just prayed to Master for help and said how dirty I am. He said he appreciated our coming so far and now he could have our darshan.

As a final note he told us how the new manger collapsed on a sevadar and after five hours they got him out unharmed.

APRIL 3: Wow! It gets more and more amazing! I went to sleep at 11:15

and awoke at 4:15 for meditation. There were many sleeping in our quarters (they turned out to be Sardar Ratan Singh and friends, who brought food for us on a tractor from their home in 16PS, twenty miles away). In the morning we toured Babu Ji's garden, visited the village school, and saw the place where Arran met with Sant Ji.

Sant Ji came (for darshan) and I was as ready as I could be – he was so gracious and beautiful. I told him how grateful I was to be here, and he said it was all Master working behind the curtain. We were meant to be brought here. Later I said I couldn't understand why God was giving one so unworthy so much; he said, "Luck."

He was so gracious and humorous about my picture taking – hope they come out. As I sat he was overflowing as Master and Sawan (at one point). He is so full of love; the tape recorded the verbal. The carpet is of burlap bags sewn together; the trim on the wicker chairs is old bicycle tires. Such furniture made graceful by the love of the Lord.

Sant Ji told us how the villagers here were afraid that the Westerners would take him away to the West. He told of how they were abusing him at a Charan Singh satsang in Ganga Nagar on March 22 – "the dogs were barking." The villagers here made a joke and said that those dogs should go bark in the West so that we won't want Sant Ji to come there.

Sant Ji told us about a man nearby who had so much love that when Jim Russell and his party came he brought food. (This was Sardar Ratan Singh.) Last night he came in his tractor and brought stuff for us. This man built a place where Sant Ji meditated two years prior to Master's leaving the body. Sant Ji asked if we'd like to visit tomorrow: it's twenty miles away. I asked if he'd go also – he laughed and said he would. So gracious.

I asked if I could ask one more thing. He said OK. I asked if he could give some message for my wife. She was back home doing all the service and I was getting the benefit. He was thoughtful and then asked, "Is she initiated?" I said yes. Then he said "meditate" and we all laughed (after him). It was very beautiful. He asked how old my children were. I said, one and six. He held his hands apart showing the length of a baby. He said, "I have love for your children." He turned to Wendy and said the same. Later he said he would see our children when he came to Sant Bani Ashram.

I asked Sant Ji (during all this time I could no longer distinguish Ajaib/Kirpal) if he would visit the school also when he came (after he said he'd see our children). He said how could he *not* come? Heart speaks to heart. How could he refuse our love?

He was so sweet about the photos; earlier I'd noticed that I'd been waiting to take photos till Ajaib looked like Kirpal (through the viewfinder). I thought how insulted I would have been if an initiate of Sawan was waiting to take pictures until Kirpal looked like Sawan. I decided to simply take pictures of Sant Ji; I also realized that I wouldn't be surprised if he then looked *more* like Kirpal. All I know is he sure did to my physical eyes.

APRIL 4: I woke up at 2 a.m. feeling sick – took aspirin, and felt better eating only fruit at breakfast. I debated (mind) about going to 16PS – then knew I'd be better off sick in Sant Ji's presence than sick without him.

The jeep ride was surprisingly pleasant – ten of us. Driver, Sant Ji, Wendy and Papu in front; Bob, Babu Ji, Pathi

Ji, a daughter, a niece, and me in back. Through canals, dust, jungle, city, wild dogs – we made it in an hour and a half. We arrived at the home of Sardar Ratan Singh, after passing the place which he built for Sant Ji, where He meditated those two years.

After taking rest at S. Ratan Singh's house we walked (with Sant Ji leading) back to what I'll call Sant Ji's place. He set a very brisk pace for the walk (between a quarter and a half mile); we had had rest so I was in good shape. The first place we went was down into the room where he sat for full-time meditation. It was very small and bare except for a wooden bench for meditation. He told us that wood was good to sit on for meditation. I took a picture of him on the bench and also coming up the stairs. The room is kept locked now.

Later we went upstairs and sat on the floor for three hours, and Sant Ji told us many stories of his early life. I sometimes questioned him about dates but he told me that he had no head for dates. He spoke about Baba Bishan Das (his first guru; see SANT BANI, July 1976, for the basic outline of Sant Ji's life) and how he had once showed Ajaib Singh the spot of his (Ajaib Singh's) cremation in his last life. Ajaib Singh asked, "How can I be sure?" Bishan Das said, "Dig and you'll find the bones." Ajaib paid ten rupees for the digging and found the bones at quite a deep level.

Bishan Das told Ajaib Singh that he owed something to the lady who had raised him (his foster mother: his great-uncle's wife) and so he served her for three years, from the time he was 17 until he was 20. She was a wealthy lady with pony carts, etc., but Ajaib always carried heavy loads on his head instead of by wagon. People wondered why he did this. Once a sadhu came through and he could see that it was not really Ajaib who was carrying the load (i.e., since it was ordered by his Guru in payment of a karmic debt, God was doing it for him).

At this time also, Sant Ji told us very strongly: "Don't believe what you hear from others—see for yourself." He said that Akbar the Great once asked his minister, Birbal, to define the difference between truth and untruth, and Birbal said that it was the difference between eyes and ears. What you see you may accept as true; what you hear as untrue. He said that if we see any truth here, we may speak about it. *"It is a service to the Master to continue this work."* Don't worry about what you hear—ignore it.

Sant Ji told us a story about a Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) and a petty town official. The SDO and Ajaib were together when they were confronted by the official. He wanted Ajaib to admit that *Radha Soami* was the highest name of God. Sant Ji was silent, but the SDO got "vibrations" from him and spoke for him. Sant Ji said it was the same for Russell—if he feels moved to speak for Ajaib it is the Master Power working.

He asked us if we liked mangoes and we were very enthusiastic. He said he would send some to the ashram when they were in season. I told the story (prefacing it by saying that I had no idea if it were true or not) of Master, Taiji, and the mangoes: how I'd heard that Master once took some mangoes from a fruitbowl that Taiji had set out on a table for dignitaries, poked a small hole in each, sucked out the juice, blew them back up, and replaced them in the fruit bowl. Sant Ji said simply that it was a common occurrence. Then he said that Master resurrected the man-

goes. He said, "I also was a dead body until Master breathed life into me." He added, as he said often, that he was "the sweeper of the dust of the sangat's feet."

He told us that Master once asked his age, but he was afraid to tell Him because he knew there was a profound meaning to a Saint asking one's age. Master laughed and said, "Why are you afraid of my asking when people will be coming from America who ask?" (Jim Russell, who visited Sant Ji in March, fulfilled this prophecy.) Sant Ji also said that he had told Master (at the time that Master had told him to carry on the work) that he would have double abuse: from the Beas people and from Master's old disciples. Master embraced him and said that if a bad man won't leave off his bad habits, why should a good man leave off his good ones?

The last thing I remember from the stay in this room was that he again said that for protection from *kam* or lust we should run behind the Master in meditation.

Then we left that blessed room, went downstairs and out into the garden where he pointed out the mango trees. Then we walked back to S. Ratan Singh's house. On the way a disciple stopped in his jeep and asked if we wanted a lift; we declined, and then his jeep wouldn't start. As we walked on Sant Ji made a joke, threw back his head, clapped his hands together and roared with laughter.

We arrived back at the house at 7:15 p.m., with Satsang scheduled for 8. I was dead tired and glad for the chance to rest. I'd just fallen asleep when several people came into the room and said that Sant Ji had sent them because "Principal Sahib" (me) should have a rubdown. So I did. At Satsang we sat right in front of him, and I was so tired that I nodded off two or three times with my knees tucked up under my chin. I would snap awake and he would be looking at me with the gentlest, most loving smile in the world—that of a father to his young toddler son.

So it was a very full day, and we went to bed exhausted.

APRIL 5: This was a day of many visits to nearby houses, with tea and Satsangs at each. We went from Ratan Singh's house to the house of a retired police inspector, Kushi Ram. Then to the house of Chiman Lal, then to other places including those of relatives of Ratan Singh. It had rained during the night, which was wonderful: it kept the dust down. Sant Ji said that Master was celebrating our coming with rain.

I took the usual group photos at Ratan Singh's house and then a picture of the group around the jeep. We left his house and started down the road. I was sitting in back watching Sant Ji, who was looking straight ahead. There were no rear view mirrors. Sant Ji said a few words, the people in back turned and looked back down the road, and then began to speak loudly to the driver. He stopped the jeep and backed up, and then I saw two boys running after the jeep. It occurred to me that Sant Ji had been the first to speak, and that was while he was looking straight ahead, so I asked Papu what it was that Sant Ji had said. Papu said that Sant Ji had said: "There are two boys running after the jeep and we should stop and give them a ride." It was only a few minutes later that I told Sant Ji about the pond at Sant Bani Ashram—how Master had said in 1972 that we should develop the pond more, and in 1974 had clarified (without being asked) that we should make it bigger and deeper—we

"might find a spring there." Then I told Sant Ji that we had indeed found a spring. He replied that Saints know everything, but it is very rare that they reveal it—and it occurred to me that I had just had a glimpse of his own omniscience.

As we drove on, Sant Ji told us many more things about his life. I began by saying that his experiences with Bishan Das reminded me of the story of Baba Kahan as related by Master, and I told the story Master tells on tape about sending his friend to Baba Kahan who abused him, hit him, even struck him with burning wood. Finally Baba Kahan said,"What do you want?" and made him hear the Sound Current.* I mentioned that Master kept a picture of Baba Kahan at 207 Rajpur Road, and also that He had said that Baba Kahan was a "hard nut to crack." Sant Ji told us about some of his experiences with Bishan Das.

He said Bishan Das once grabbed his beard and slapped him twice in the face —but he *always* loved Bishan Das. Bishan Das told him: "I was a hard nut to crack, but you were harder because you cracked me!" People called Ajaib mad, and laughed at the way he was treated by Bishan Das; but he said that there was an old man outside Bishan Das's place, and that man would sing a shabd about the diamond hidden within each of us.

At one of our many stops this day we were sitting all alone with Sant Ji in a small room, where there was a fan blowing on us. Something caused me to relate to Sant Ji the story of Russell's telegram: how we at the ashram were all anxious to hear, and then came the cable: "HAVE FOUND AJAIB SINGH AND HE IS REAL WE LOVE HIM." I said when we got that cable, we were dancing all around. Sant Ji said, "That place (Sant Bani) is Master's base." Then he added, "Russell didn't find Ajaib; he found Master."

We left and went to at least two more places, both of them connected to Ratan Singh. The first place was a quick stop—darshan only. Toasted cardamum seeds were passed around as parshad, and while Sant Ji ate some, both Bob and I pocketed ours due to the state of our stomachs. On our way out I muttered something about how I thought cardamum might be a stimulant, and Bob said, "Sant Ji's probably giving us just what we need." We made our last stop, and Satsang was held in a small room where Sant Ji sat on a beautifully draped sofa. I was sitting in a chair at the back of the room, and again began to feel my eyelids droop. Suddenly Bob's comment about the cardamum came back to me and I ate a seed, shell and all, and I was wide awake for the rest of the Satsang.

After the Satsang, with my heart full of love, I said to Sant Ji: "I heard that you wear a colored turban so that you don't look so much like Master, but for me it doesn't work." He laughed and said, "I tried to hide myself, but if the Master within is directing you, I can't hide away."

This place was special for all of us because here we were allowed to serve the dinner to those who had been serving us, and also we took a tearful leave of S. Ratan Singh and his family. It was dark, about 8:45 p.m., on Monday, April 5, the fourth day of our stay. The ride home was quiet, with the two girls occasionally singing bhajans. We arrived at 77RB at 10:15 p.m.

APRIL 6: Today Papu got Naam. He was with Sant Ji all alone from 9 to

* See "How I Met My Master," *Sat Sandesh,* July 1975, pp. 5-6.

11:30 a.m. He floated back, bringing many oranges as parshad for all of us. His comment: "Sant Ji has given me very much wealth." Papu later told us that Sant Ji treated him like a son at the initiation.

Later we had a darshan which included a message to Russell that Sant Ji recorded; it came about half an hour into a four-hour session up in his room with Papu, Bob, Wendy, and me. I obviously couldn't even begin to describe what happened in that session except that I went through periods that never got lower than ecstatic joy. I was operating on a level of consciousness that I've never ever operated on before. At one point I realized that we were all like Frodo, given the ring, but we can do it, with His help.

The session was so unbelievable . . . I can't . . . we ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous: e.g., how to make pancakes (if you can believe it). It started off with his distributing parshad; he gave us cashews, raisins, and he pulled out a big bag of rock candy—huge—and he said, "For your families," and we really laughed. Papu had to go get something and Sant Ji started talking to me in Punjabi—he'd say a word and I'd repeat—then another word—we were laughing like anything. When Papu got back, Sant Ji told me, "You will learn Hindi—I think it will be easy. For me I think it would be difficult to learn English." He asked if we wanted to eat, and I said, "Yes, whatever you want." He said, "No, do *you* want?" and I said, "Yes," so Wendy cut up apples and he took the sections and gave them to us.

Several times it was very clear to me that he was either pulling things out of me that I needed to say, or else he was just reading everyone's thoughts and going right into things. I had said that the next time I come I would bring my wife, and he said, "You're coming again?" and I thought, "Oh God, I've invited myself!" So I'd been looking for a positive response and hadn't gotten what I wanted—consequently I felt slightly depressed that perhaps I'd asserted and gone against His Will. At that moment I was sorely wishing that Karen could have been there, sharing this with me. He was talking a lot to Bob and Wendy—saying such amazingly beautiful things. The conversation had moved around to when he was coming and I said, "Remember, you're coming for Wendy's birthday, the 16th of March," and he really laughed. He asked her what she had on her birthday and she told him about birthday cakes —how this time her daughters and Miriam (Russell's daughter) had made a cake for her. Then he asked Bob what he had on his birthday. They said they hadn't celebrated his birthday together yet, but that a year ago on his birthday was when they'd met. He was talking about how they had so much love for each other—and again my heart was heavy that Karen was missing—I felt only half. He said to Wendy, "I am feeling in my heart that Wendy is like my own dear daughter," and my heart just went THUNK! and I thought, Oh, I hope he'll say that about Karen some day. He immediately turned to me and said, "Your wife is sending her love to me through Wendy, and I am sending love back to her." I started crying and bowed down before him as the whole weight had been lifted. The love that was going between him and us was just amazing. It was pouring out from him but we were loving him back. He dropped another hint that he may be at Sant Bani sooner than March 13. He asked such sweet questions—like where the plane stopped; what kind and how

many coats should he bring; what kind of farming do they do in America; do they use irrigation canals?

There were some beautiful things—personal—that he said to all of us—like how he was going to feel it in his heart so much when we left and that his heart wouldn't be happy again until we were back with him or he was back with us. And he meant it—he really, really meant it! He said he wished that we were staying twenty days. He also said that he would arrange next time for us to go and meet many other devoted disciples such as Ratan Singh and share in their love. Wendy and Bob and myself all feel that he will be very happy to come and live at Sant Bani for a time.

That evening there was a wonderful Satsang and Charles Feinman, who had arrived the day before, showed the picture of his family. Also parshad, dried fruits and nuts that Charles brought were distributed—and Sant Ji made a joke because an overweight fellow got a rich date.

April 7: Charles, Wendy, Bob, Papu and I saw him from 8 to 10 a.m. and our jeep was supposed to leave at 11. I'd given some Bic pens for the office work, and when we came in Sant Ji had one in his pocket. He looked at us with those twinkling eyes and said, fingering his pen, "Now I'm an educated man!" Charles had a bag of toys he'd brought that his family no longer needed, and asked Sant Ji to distribute as needed. Sant Ji looked at each item carefully and returned most to Charles but gave a few to the sevadars—a yellow stuffed bunny to a fellow, a toy rolling pin to Pathi Ji's wife (our cook), and a *magnet* to Papu. It was a very jolly time. He distributed parshad.

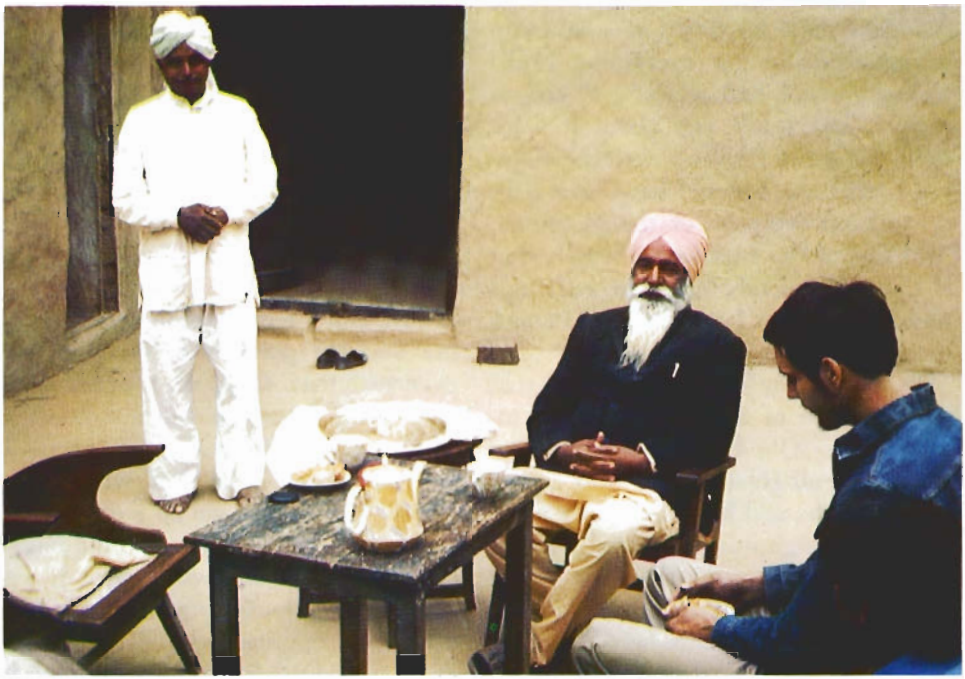
Sant Ji had a message for Sant Bani: that we should carry on the work in exactly the same way as when Master was in the body. He talked more about chastity—stressed the importance of making the home harmonious. Love and respect for your life companion—if you make each other life companions in the true sense, then that love is immortal. He mentioned the bhajan of Nanak about life fluid: 100 drops of blood equals 1 drop of life fluid; 100 drops of life fluid equals 1 drop of *ojas*.

Sant Ji sent his love to our families. He told each one of us individually to love and cooperate with Russell. He said he'd be glad to see me in the school. I asked for a message for the school children and he said he sends his love to all—he will meet them there—they should wait for him to come. "Love is the true *sandesh* (message)."

Charles asked, "Did Master leave early?" Papu didn't understand so I paraphrased: "Some people say Master left the body fourteen years early because those around him didn't love him." When Sant Ji said, "It's true," it was as if a knife had entered my heart, and I would not have made it had I not been sitting in the presence of my old friend. Charles also asked if Sant Ji was still afraid of the work, and he said, "Yes." (And why shouldn't he be? Kirpal's disciples failed in their love—why will it be different for Ajaib?) God help us.

* * *

So we left his room at 10 and were due to leave at 11. I scribbled some notes in my book with a final entry: "P.S. I can't operate at this level for too much longer—I am very out of touch with my body." After writing that, I began to pack my bags. I was packing furiously—literally like a madman. Wendy asked me if she could help but I said no and went on with it. Just as I was finishing, Charles asked me what time I



Sant Ji with Babu Ji and Ronnie Yow, March 1976

had, because he had 10:25. I said I had the same, and he pointed out that we had 35 minutes to go, so why the rush? I was still dazed, and just laughed and said, "Oh yeah." I stepped out, leaving my bags on the bed, and Papu met me and said, "Come on—Sant Ji wants to see you." I spent the rest of the hour till 11 with Sant Ji. . . .

One of the first things I noticed as I entered Sant Ji's room was that he was sitting on his bed—this was really sweet for me as I was able to look up into his face the whole time. Also he didn't have his glasses on so he was just pouring his eyes into mine the whole time . . .

So now we are at the end of my stay at 77RB. We had the usual group photos and I was so happy just looking at him. Since I'd fallen apart in his room and he'd put me back together I was sure it wouldn't happen again and was just basking in the bliss. Then he looked at me and I bowed down before him. He raised me up and gave me a tremendous bear hug for a long time. He told me then to get in the jeep and I was in it like a shot! Soon after we left, and my last memory is of him stepping away from the crowd so that his pink figure was alone and contrasting against the mud walls of the compound.

2. Delhi in August

(Kent was sent over by Sant Bani Ashram specifically to assist Sant Ajaib Singh and His party in the obtaining of their visas for the proposed visit to America, and to accompany them on the airplane trip over. As everyone knows, at the very last minute Sant Ji did not come, but returned to his ashram in Rajasthan instead; in this article Kent explains why.)

On my last trip Sant Ajaib Singh gave me a lot, and I was happy to communicate almost everything I had to everyone. I had slides, I talked to people, and I felt fine about it. This time—honest to God—up until the morning I left India I would have been happy to keep every bit of this to myself. And one of the reasons perhaps is that it shows so clearly my own sufferings and failures. But I was told to communicate this to the whole sangat. So . . .

Papu told me that Sant Ji had told of a disciple of Sawan Singh who always said, "Oh, Hazur's doing everything, it is all Hazur's will." But he did not go inside, and he didn't really mean it. Sawan Singh was displeased because this man always said that. He was a successful businessman, and the day came when his business failed. And he left the Path.

So I now have a new saying. I no longer say, "Without Him I am nothing." I wish this were the case. But unfortunately, I have learned that without Him I am me.

When I left, Ajaib Singh was due to go back up to Rajasthan a couple of hours after I left, the ten o'clock train. He refused to travel first class; Papu pleaded with him, and I asked Papu to plead with him again, but I was with Papu when he bought the second class tickets.

I was sent over there, of course, with a specific goal: to help with the obtaining of the visas. And by the time I got there the visas had already been obtained. The timing was just exquisite on the whole thing. And I couldn't even get into India because of a new visa regulation: you can't get in more than once every six months without getting a visa. So I ended up going to Katmandu and in a roundabout way made my way back to Delhi.

When I got there, although mentally I had been saying to myself, This is all Master's will, It must be supposed to happen, etc., etc., I was very confused, I was worried, and I was thinking a lot about myself. And I've come to the conclusion that at this point in my life it's impossible for me not to do: it would be an illusion for me to go around thinking that I wasn't a big ball of ego. But I feel that He was showing me that the point is to do your best even with that. The point is not to moan and groan. I was shown in a hundred ways, many of them not very pleasant, how full of ego I am. And which of us is not? Would that we all were not . . .

By His Grace, I made it to the Bagga household in Delhi, where Sant Ji was staying, on Thursday afternoon (Aug. 12). As I approached the house, Satsang was just finishing and Sant Ji called me right to his room. He told me he'd been thinking it was me each time he heard a car motor, and that he had sent Papu and Pathi Ji out to the road to wait for me for one hour. He was very loving. He told me that he had received my letter (written in Hindi) today, and that it was very good writing, very easy to read.

I told my story about my trip to Katmandu and the other places I was forced to wait for flights, etc., laughing at the craziness of it all and, needing some reassurance, I asked if my trip was useless. Sant Ji said that Master meant for Dennis* to have that service (assisting with visas), but that our service was not wasted. He later told me that I was supposed to be here, which did relieve me. He said a lot of other things too, and it was a sweet session; but I knew something in me wasn't clicking.

I went to bed at 11:30 and woke up

* Dennis Huntington of San Francisco. See page 23.

at 2 a.m. for meditation. Papu and I saw him between 1:30 and 3 p.m. and again from 6 to 7:30. At the 1:30 session my mind was like a stallion—I was not totally at home in His August Presence and therefore very uncomfortable. He averted his attention from me which helped me relax considerably. Regarding my confusion and the *seva,* he repeated that I was supposed to come, and added that I had to go, eat, and drink in those places (Katmandu, etc.) with those people—it was the Master Power at work behind the curtain.

We spent about half an hour going over the map of Sant Bani Ashram in great detail. I pointed out everything and he asked me about more! Everyone's house by name, the school, the gardens—I told him there have been bears in the woods. I'd forgotten to point out the Shannons' house, so he asked me where Susan Shannon lived. He asked me what was in the gardens. He asked if there were any fruit trees, and I said we'd planted about forty this year. He said, "They will develop soon."

We got into a discussion about *seva* and the ashram and guests. He told me that it would be good to have a daily schedule for meditation and to include a period of organized *seva* [service] for the guests. If they cannot meditate, and use the time of seva for talk, socializing, etc., then they should be asked to leave. The seva period might be, say, an hour after lunch (when Papu went to Sant Ji at 77RB to bring him to Delhi, he found him in his underclothes working with the villagers preparing the land for the new Satsang Hall).

At the close of this first Friday session I indicated my thankfulness to him, and he said that it was Master's grace.

At the evening session, due to my preoccupation with my own failures and continued confusion over my role there, I asked a question which Papu was unable to make sense out of. It was a subtle question, and pivotal to the lessons I was being given, but I couldn't relate it clearly. It had to do with the fact that although Master is in control of all, isn't it also in the disciple's power to please or displease and therefore cause the Master to suffer? Enough of the question was communicated for him to say that we must "do our best—forget the past." Again he repeated that Master wanted Dennis to do the seva of the visas, but that love and seva of others will be rewarded—not wasted.

I showed him a photo of my family—Karen, Chris, and Nick—outside our house with snow on the ground. He looked at the photo for a long time with much delight. I showed him the Sant Bani Ashram publicity file and he was very interested—the newspaper photos of Bob, Eric, etc. He was specially interested in the photo of Russell shaking hands with the President of India in 1974. Now comes the mind-blower: He started to read the caption under the picture (in English!!)—"Russell Perkins of Sanbornton meets the President of India"—etc., etc. I wish I had a photo of the diameter of my eyes! We all simply roared with laughter when he finished and I thought, "Why, you sly old fox, you!" Then he read the title for my article in *Sat Sandesh* on the school at Manav Kendra: "Kent Bicknell, Principal of Sant Bani Ashram School, reports on the . . ." We spent several minutes on the word "human." It was terrific.

Papu left the room and Sant Ji told me he wanted a picture of my family with me in it. He said he was pleased with the way we showed our love for our families so openly, and that in India a man would be embarassed to talk

(Continued on Page 18)

A Letter to the Sangat

This letter from Sant Ajaib Singh to Russell Perkins is partly for Russell and partly for everyone.

New Delhi, 16 August, 1976

My Satguru Kirpal's Beloved, Dear Russell:

Much, much love to all of you. I am writing you this letter with Hazur's orders. Everything is in His will. Wherever He sends us we have to go; wherever He wants us to live we have to live. Not even a leaf can turn without His orders. The Creator of all the world, the Donor of life to everybody, He is sitting in all of us and helping us from within. He is doing everything behind the curtain. Blessed are the jivas who go within and contact that Power, and only those who go in have true faith and love for Him.

Satgurus are not body, but Satguru Power is working in their bodies. Those who attach themselves only to the body never get the most profit. But those who attach themselves to that Power manifest that Power within them—the Power which is widespread. Our Hazur is that Power.

I am returning to Rajasthan with His orders after staying for one month in Delhi. Because the atmosphere was not suitable for me, moreover, I was suffering physically with fever and vomiting and couldn't digest whatever I ate, so I was weak and helpless.

I appreciate your love and bow down to your love. Hazur is sitting in all of you. I hope that you will not be displeased with me and will forgive me. I am a sevadar, a shoe-wiper of the Sangat.

Kent knows more about my condition here; he will tell you. And if there is any true seeker, longing for initiation, you should initiate him. This is Hazur's work and not mine. Master will take care of those whom you will initiate. He will give the same profit as He was giving previously.

You have to understand yourself as a petty sevadar of Master Kirpal. He will take care of those whom you will initiate, as He did before. My true Master has given me this promise and He will keep His promise. You have to obey His orders and be in His will. There is no need to be perplexed and worried.

With His grace I will recover very soon after going to Rajasthan. This is also Hazur Satpurush Kirpal's order. In His will lies our welfare. It is good for us to be in His will and accept His wish.

Give my love to your family and all the Sangat.

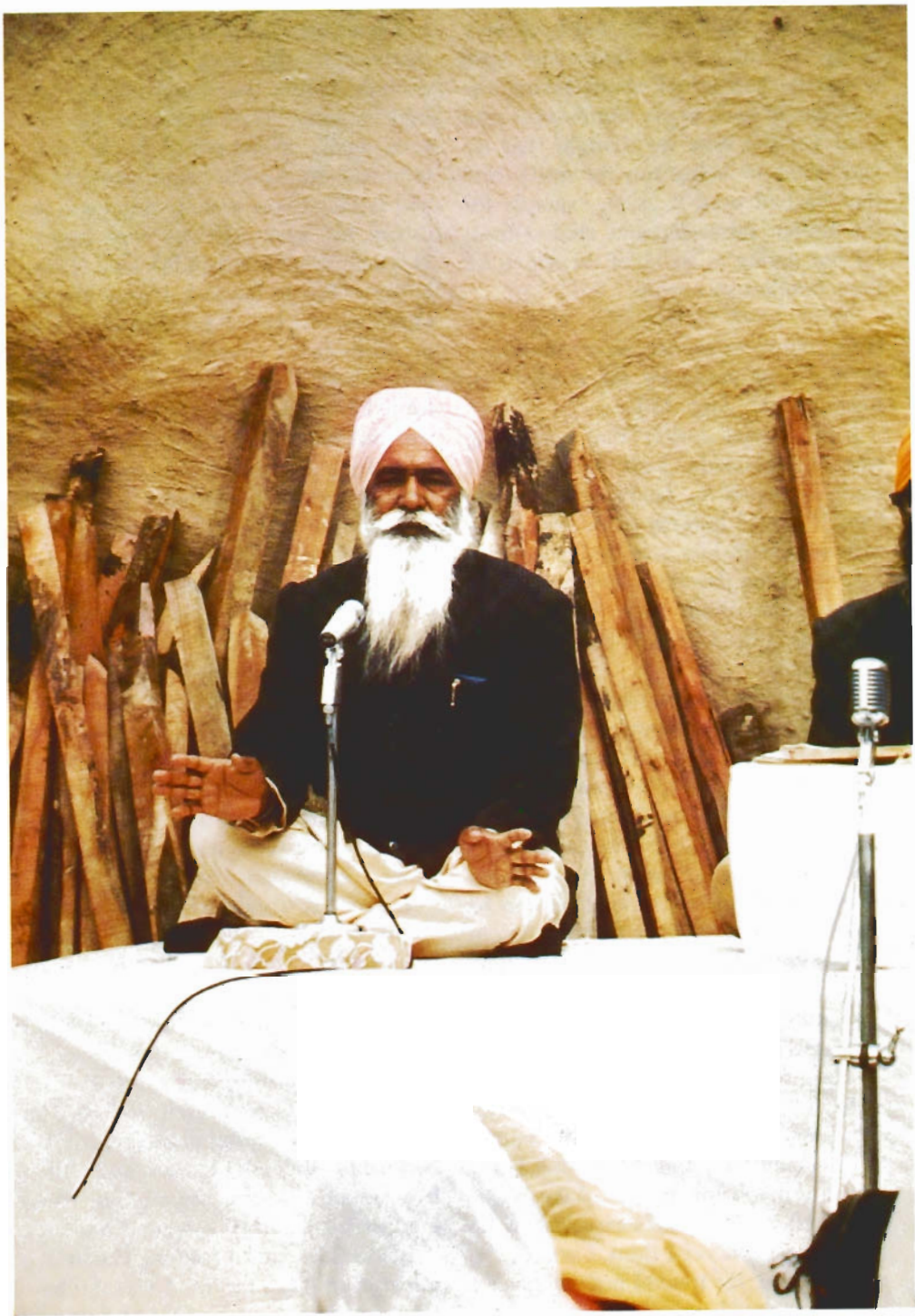
With all His love,

Your servant,

Dass Ajaib Singh

DASS AJAIB SINGH

P.S.—You have to meditate as much as you can, and those who come there should also do meditations. The fragrance of that will spread all over the world and Sant Bani Ashram will prosper by leaps and bounds.



(*Continued from page 15*)
about his love for wife and children so openly. He said that he had been very happy at Kushi Ram's house last April when we had asked about taking the rock candy back to our families for prashad (at the time we thought that we had erred in being too forward)—and that he had used it as an example for the Indian satsangis, and chided them for not daring to speak of their love for their families so openly.

* * *

[*The following section was transcribed from a tape made by the author that Friday night, Aug. 13.*]

I mentioned earlier that something was wrong inside. Last time when I came I opened my heart right away to Sant Ji; I told him my problems. Being so honest with him was really wonderful. This time there is a feeling that I'm holding something back but I'm not sure what it is. I tried to find out, but I don't know.

This morning he talked to me a lot about not being confused; I didn't say I was confused, but I was, and he knew it. He said, "Don't be confused and don't be worried; the Master Power is working behind the curtain and therefore it is really *wrong* to be confused when you are doing service, and to be worried." This afternoon I was sitting in the Air India Office for the second time that day and I thought to myself, Oh God, this is all so confusing; and immediately his words came back: Don't be confused.

Anyway it's like I've been . . . yesterday I saw him and I was really happy to be seeing him, and yet I think I just took too much for granted. Like I was his old friend, and that's exactly how he treated me, and yet I think I was in the wrong place. He treated me wherever I felt I was, but I wasn't fitting there for myself. So this morning we went in to see him and it was one of those "mind has been away from the Guru" times. Without the physical contact and not enough inner, the mind comes back into its own. When it gets in his presence again, it rears and bucks like a wild stallion. And he was looking at me and talking to me and my mind was just racing like crazy. It was very strange. It wasn't at all like I didn't love Him or believe Him to be real; it was just my mind twisting knives into me. He picked up on it—that's when He was saying all that about being confused—and He turned to Papa Ji and at that point it was just what my soul needed—a relaxation from His intent gaze and the tremendous guilt and torment I was feeling because I wasn't responding to it the way I wanted to. As I watched Him the waves of His love began to flow over me and I began to feel much much better.

He gave an example—He was saying, "If I know you, Principal Sahib, and you are my friend, do I need to go to someone else and ask, 'Is Principal Sahib all right? Is he this? Is he that?' No, I wouldn't have to go and get confirmation that you were a good person—because I know you: you are my friend."

Earlier I'd wondered if He ever said "Kent" or whether He always said "Principal Sahib"—I'd thought of asking Papu but I was ashamed—it reeks of ego. He started off on His next statement and it welled up silently in my mind—Oh, I wish He'd say my name—and immediately I was sick of myself and tried to undo my wish, saying mentally, *No, koi bad nahin*—it doesn't matter, and within five seconds he was saying my name loud and clear—then a second time . . .

It was a beautiful session. This trip is a maturing thing for me. I was thinking this afternoon how I was just flying as

high as a kite on my last trip until I hit the British Airways office on what I thought was the last day, only to learn that we were going to have to stay in Delhi four more days. That was the first time my spirits had sunk at all (and then they went crash, momentarily); but this trip started like that!—when I couldn't even get into India! And I spent half the day today in scooters. I was so tired that I was falling asleep over and over again in the scooter on the way home.

I mentioned the word "maturing" but other words come to mind like "sobering" and "profound."

* * *

Well, now it's in the early evening of the day before we're supposed to leave —Sunday night. Late this morning and early this afternoon I'd been feeling grumpy. I really wanted to be around Him a lot and yet I knew He was sick and needed to rest. (On Saturday afternoon He had said "No more Satsangs" so that He could rest.) And there was one time especially when Papu went in there to take Him His tea and didn't come out for awhile—and I felt really mad. I was feeling really sorry for myself—I wanted to get in there. I was bored and wondering what to do with myself, so I got the movie camera and, using blades of grass on a white cloth with blue embroidery background, Jawahar and I set up the movie title and I filmed it—first, "THE FIRST WORLD TOUR" then "SANT AJAIB SINGH—DELHI—AUGUST 16, 1976." We were on the front porch. Suddenly the door to Sant Ji's room flew open wide and He was standing in it. He looked at me and then closed the door really quickly. BAM! That was it, and I kind of—a pang of something went through me and I wasn't sure what to make of it. Then, after I'd finished shooting the movie title, I sat down in a chair directly across from His door. Still feeling sorry for myself, I had all these plans to say things to Papu like, "Look, put yourself in my shoes. Let's say I was in there all the time and you were on the outside"—so those were my thoughts; my head was full of all those ingratiating, awful ego-thoughts of self-pity.

Then He coughed; and I heard it. It got to me. It just got to me. I sat in that chair, staring at His door, and the closed box inside me began to open, and I wrote the following without effort:

"Now I am seeing a Saint suffer close up. I know Saints suffer, but now I am seeing it: hearing the dry cough; seeing the lines on the radiant face increase. And I know that I have contributed to this suffering—I have not done my best, and this is what is required so that He does not live in pain.

"Last time He was active and I was passive—He filled me with happiness. This time I am/have been expected to act; He is waiting. Who has not been remiss? Recall the words of Hazur Kirpal after His operation requesting us to introspect and change so that it may not happen again—and He left fourteen years early.

"He gives ONLY LOVE. This is Sant Mat, and as He told me yesterday, Sant Mat is a path of love which He has been on since childhood. He asks for love in return. Instead He gets me, coming with thoughts of self-pity, self-importance, ego-need demands. Why in God's name can I not just LOVE HIM? Love knows service and sacrifice—love knows giving—GIVE, GIVE AND GIVE. It is better that I go away and never see Him again if I continue on my path of take, take, take.

"He is Satguru. He needs nothing. His love for and from Kirpal is enough for all time. And the same may be said

for Christ, Mansur, etc. But who among us would nail the nails and strip off the skin? This is the mystery in my heart, the paradox of paradoxes which I tried to ask Him about but did not succeed; and it is also the central theme of my trip: The All-Powerful, All-Knowing, Timeless Satguru is dependent on the love of His disciples. *Shardik.* There are so many ways we can drag Him through hell—either through conscious or unconscious actions; or even by simply doing less than our best. He waits; He smiles; He laughs; He utters words of consolation and encouragement; and He suffers. Oh God, Kirpal, and Sant Ji, may I never forget this lesson You have given me."

* * *

So that's what I've learned this trip. I've been close to the Guru and seen Him suffering, and this has made it very different from my last trip, in which I was passively filled with all sorts of happiness from the active Satguru. This time something had been demanded of me and there's no doubt of it, I failed. So after writing this thought, my prayer became that we would not cause the Guru to suffer. So finally my eyes, which had been so dry so much, began to mist up and in my heart I wanted to know what I could do. I closed my eyes and prayed to God and Kirpal, I prayed like anything to please lift that suffering. Then I said I should do Simran and I prayed as much as I could that any of the Simran I was doing wouldn't go to my benefit, but that it would go to help Sant Ji. And I realize in retrospect that that sounds impertinent, but that's what was in my heart.

Later, as I sat across from His door, every time I heard Him cough it would go into my heart like an arrow. Then the thought came to me—Oh God, what if He's so sick that He says He can't go? Then I thought—would we all say, "Oh, you must go, we've bought the tickets, everyone will be expecting you, you'll get better"? I pictured us doing that, and then I thought of the king's servant who was willing to smash the gold cup simply because his king said to, and I thought—NO! Papu and Pathi Ji and me, if He says He can't go, we would definitely say, "All right, you can't go. Whatever you wish."

I began to feel that a sense of purpose had come into my trip here, and it was painful because I was seeing it; but it inspired me to want to be able to give Him that which He asks. I wanted to change my path of take, take, take, to give, give, give.

After a while some Indian people showed up to see Him and they went into Sant Ji's room for a long time. By the time they left I'd reached that point where I wasn't expecting anything. I did not want Sant Ji to feel at all that He should do anything on my behalf, but Papu said, "Come on in."

One of the first things He did was to ask about my arms. I'd woken up Saturday morning simply covered with spots on my arms, hands, feet and chest. They really itched and people assumed they were bug bites. Sant Ji had said He thought the spots were from heat. So He took my left arm and gently bent it back so He could see it. He slowly rubbed two fingers along the worst area. Then He took the right arm and did the same. I looked at Him feeling joyful, but inside that joy was a feeling of . . . total awe for this Celestial Being sitting in front of me looking exactly like Kirpal in the *Wheel of Life* picture, and I said to Him, "You aren't taking my suffering from me, are you? I don't want you to do that," and the answer came back, very gentle and low, "You should have told me that before I touched

you." But He did take it away; the places that He touched never bothered me again.

From my heart I told Him that I was so low, and caused Him to suffer. He said, "Oh no; don't ever feel that I am taking on your suffering. I am serving you with love.". . .

He told me that my worries were His worries—that Swami Ji had said that too: "Your burden, your worries, are mine." He said, "Don't worry about anything. You have nothing to worry about." I asked how I could help Him, and He told me, "Bhajan." It was a profoundly moving and intoxicating session, and as we left the room, Papu said to me, "Happy?"

After eating, Papu, Pathi Ji, Sant Ji and I went out for about a half-hour walk—a really beautiful long walk. Pathi Ji taught me the chorus of a new bhajan —"Your love has given sight to my eyes, O Satguru"—and we talked a little in my broken Hindi. At one point we were walking along and someone said, "Baba Ji!" and came up and started pointing to a canal and Pathi Ji went over to see what was up. At first I thought it was a body in the canal (it was dark and I saw the man was holding something fleshy and slick) but it turned out to be the head of a calf that had fallen in this very narrow deep ditch. It was very frighened. I went and helped and the three of us pulled it out. We had a nice rest of the walk, and I went to bed very happy. I now feel like I'm ready to go back to America with Sant Ji.

* * *

Now it's Monday morning, Aug. 16, the morning of the day that we were supposed to leave, and I'll begin by saying what happened to me this morning. Because of rain during the night, I'd had to pull my bed right over next to Sant Ji's door—which was open. I woke up at 2 a.m. and meditated a couple of hours, and then went back to sleep for a while.

Papu gave me tea at 4:45 and I got back into my meditation. I was determined to sit without moving until the clock struck six or Sant Ji came out. So I kept on sitting and it was good. I heard him cough a couple of times and it bothered me; it didn't go straight to my heart, but it started. Then suddenly I heard Him really cough hard, and the sounds of someone vomiting—which went on for a while. Papu and Pathi Ji were running in and out. I tried to think that He would feel better now; that this was the last ridding of impurities in preparation for the trip. I continued my meditation past six, and after a while I started singing very softly to myself. Then it all just overwhelmed me and I buried my head in my arms and wept. Papu came almost immediately and said, "Sant Ji wants to see you." So I went into His room.

He had a pillow brought for me and told me to sit really close to Him. He went on to tell me how He was very sick; that what He needed was rest; and He was thinking maybe it was better if He didn't make the trip. Thanks to my preparation yesterday, it did not even cross my mind that He should try the trip. There was this counterpoint going on however, because someone had come into the room who kept wanting to get a doctor. In my heart all I could think of was, "Doctor! What Sant Ji needs is to get out of Delhi; and for the Sangat to do bhajan and simran: more, more, more bhajan and simran." Ajaib said He didn't need a doctor. I said (and He may have already been saying it) that I thought He should go to Rajasthan and rest for a few days. He said, "Yes"—with ten days in Rajasthan He would probably be O.K.

At that point I knew also that I was

supposed to go back tonight, because I felt I would be communicating these words to the Sangat. Then He dictated a letter to Russell. That took quite a while—He really put a lot of attention into it. [The letter appears on page 16 of this issue.] He emphatically confirmed that I should go back: that it was so important to do the Will of the Master, and that it was my duty to go back and explain things to the Sangat so that no one would be worried.

All this time the sorrow in my heart was not that He was not coming (but how I had looked forward to that plane ride) but that He was suffering and that I had contributed to it: I had failed to do my best. Then He said it was Master's will that He wasn't going today, and that He didn't want to do anything against Master's will. At that point I started crying and crying. He reached out His hand and placed it on my arm and said, "Kent, Kent, don't leave me crying. Don't leave me like this. I want you to be happy when you leave—not crying. Don't trouble me more." And I just cried—I was so upset that I was causing Him to suffer that I couldn't control it. And He continued with His tender, loving and sweet message not to cause Him more suffering. I couldn't help myself, so again He helped me: suddenly I felt all my suffering go into Him through His hand on my arm—there was a physical sensation of traveling energy, like a sponge soaking up water. Then I was able to talk again.

I told Him that my heart was clear and that I had many things to tell the Sangat. He told me to have a strong heart—not to be confused or worried. Have a strong heart, as it takes strength to do the Master's will. I shouldn't be failing. "If you fail, then what are others going to do?" He told me that He really had a lot of love for me.

I asked if it would be all right if I telephoned and let them know He wasn't coming because I thought it would be very difficult for me to arrive at the airport alone (where everyone would be gathered expecting Him!). He said, "Yes," and suggested that I could read the letter over the phone to Russell. He offered me money if I needed it (He has money set aside from His days as a land-holding farmer*).

I tried telephoning but at first I couldn't get through. At 4:15 p.m. (I had to leave for the airport at 7:30) He called me to His room. He was very ill: He had just vomited again, and His wrists were icy cold. Again He told me that when I take leave of Him, I must not be in a down state, as that will affect Him. He told me that sadhus have weak hearts that are easily affected, and that it's not good for them for those whom they love to be unhappy or worried. I was biting my lip—trying to control that which has been flowing all day and continues (O God, I never cried so much in all my life); and so He tells me not to leave Him in a sad state. It has got to be the hardest thing I've ever had to do; but I will try.

I asked Him one question: "How am I not to feel sad?" So He told me to write this down and gave the following message to Russell and me:

"Truth is always opposed. Don't succumb to any pressure, but carry out the Master's duties. Meditate, and tell others to meditate also. The duty of giving initiation has been given to you (Russell) and you have to carry that out.

"My health went wrong only because of Delhi. My body was made weaker and the fever and vomiting has not decreased. Because of my weak state, and

* From which all His personal expenses are met.

the need to rest, I find that I should not go to the States now. And all this is in Satguru Kirpal's Will. If Master will wish, He will give me the strength to serve you."

I asked Him if it was all right for me to keep a little space in my heart to be sad. He said He hoped I would have a sadness soon because my sins had separated from me. I also asked Him if I could cry some on the plane. He was patting my arm and shoulder. He told me not to make haste to come back because of worry about Him; I should carry out my duties, including bhajan and simran. I said, "You don't trust me now because I have a return ticket," and He really laughed and said I could do what I liked about returning. He told me to write Him immediately and explain what I had said to the Sangat.

He sent His love to everyone at the ashram. He told Papu to go get something and I figured out it was the picture of my family. When Papu came back with it we spent a long time talking about the snow, heating of houses, electricity, winter clothes, etc. He told me He had hoped to be meeting my family when He came, but now He would take this photo with Him to Rajasthan to remember them by. I told Him I was feeling stronger, and that I would try my best to leave in a happy state. He told me that if I left Him in a sad state it would take Him longer to get well.

I finally got the call through—shortly before I was to leave—to Karen, not Russell. By the time Russell got to the phone I could hear him but he couldn't hear me. I told Karen I was coming alone; that Sant Ji was ill and needed rest; that the Sangat must be happy and not confused or worried; that everyone must do more bhajan and simran; and finally, that we should pray, not that He come, but that Master's Will be done. He had given me this job to do, and in so doing had turned my thoughts away from myself. I went back after the call and told Him what I had said to Karen. Then I said, "You have made me so strong, that now I'm telling *them* to be strong and happy!" He sat up and said emphatically, "On hearing this from you, I will recover very quickly."

* * *

I left about three-quarters of an hour later. I quickly said "good-bye"—He was standing at His window watching me go, and I said "*Sat Sri Akal*" and drove off. On the plane I wrote and wrote and slept and wrote. And now I am home. I am happy. I am not confused or worried. I am overwhelmed at the profoundness and realness of the Satguru. I pray that my heart may never again be so hard that it takes His suffering to awaken the love in it. O God, thank You.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dennis Huntington of San Francisco, who was mentioned briefly in Kent's article as the person who assisted Sant Ji's party in obtaining their visas, has just returned from Rajasthan and reports that Sant Ji is feeling better and that it is possible that He will come to the West in 1977. A full account of Dennis's trip, plus a sampling of his many pictures, will appear in the next issue.

* * *

Many people have expressed interest in visiting Sant Ajaib Singh at His ashram in Rajasthan. Sant Ji has requested that all such trips be coordinated through Sant Bani Ashram. Further information will appear in the next issue.

"What Makes the Desert Beautiful is that Somewhere it Hides a Well" *

WENDY SCHONGALLA

FROM the Autumn of 1975 until my initiation on May 27, 1976, I was the only person living at Sant Bani Ashram who was uninitiated—except for the children living here, of course. And while words cannot convey the sweetness of living at the Ashram, neither can they convey the difficulty, the strangeness, of living in the Master's house, so to speak, without being able to do His work, which is meditation.

I was feeling this past winter that the inner life was a play of two seasons: the season of feeling needy and parched and the season of having one's thirst for help watered; and of these seasons, each was hidden in the other.—"The graces of God will flow provided souls are ready to receive, and get lonely and pure by rooting out all personal confidence and placing it wholly in God." (St. Teresa of Avila) Well, I thought I was willing to get ready for the Master. It seemed, in fact, I had been trying to do this for a long time. But, to provide—of one's very being—that place which will hold the well-spring of His light and life when one must admit to such a poverty of remembrance in daily living? You ask yourself, what can come out of zero? How *ever* will I attract the Master? And how subtle this always wanting to *be* something in and of oneself—even (one imagines) the desert that will hold the Well of Him.

The tension of this waiting time was not entirely without comfort or direction from within. It's just that the more I cared about the Path, the more deeply I hoped for desire and willingness to follow it, the more profoundly different the inner climate would be from anything I could expect. It seemed that a fundamental ignorance had led me to presume that longing for God was something to be found in and exerted from one's personal self. Yet, the exceedingly rare experiences that I could call God-longing were, paradoxically, just that—God longing, i.e., His using my life to express something of Himself. I, personally, was empty at the time.

Thirsted-after assurance did come at Christmas and I knew that somewhere on earth was One *perfectly* self-empty—the Son did exist "in all the fullness of the Father." This was the first thing. Then, later, in a moment that harbored no fear of the inner blindness and lostness nor any desire for super-sensual experience (in a sense I'd become too dumb for that), I just came fully to a place where there was no hope of seeing God without *seeing* God. I was simply and completely, blind and lost. Perhaps it was as near meekness as I've ever come, and if so, as near Truth. So pregnant with His Absence that His Absence summoned Him.

I want to relate one other 'moment' of the time before we went to Rajasthan, because it recalls for me the divinely tender, even playful, aspect of the Lord: In Autumn I was learning to bake bread. And, simplistic as it might sound to some, the first day that I was working at this myself, I asked God to tell me when the dough was sufficiently kneaded. After a time, to my delight—and astonishment at the way it happened—the dough leaped from the

* Antoine de St. Exupery, *The Little Prince.*

board . . . like a little goat; it was so nimble. And then, this event seemed to bloom itself further open and I knew that when I was "sufficiently kneaded" to "leap at the sight of the living God" it would happen.

And it did.

—He surprised us in His courtyard. He gathered His children to Him; and never, essentially, did we veer from Him.

From the time our jeep left the city of Ganganagar and began driving through country reminiscent of the American Southwest (my family lived in Arizona for several years) I felt we were nearing a home place. The Sheherazadian touches of brilliant peacocks, a quiet covey of dust-colored pea-hens, the flashing through the trees of wild parakeets with their long irridescent green tails, women in bright, flowing skirts and shawls pounding dirt out of cloth alongside irrigation canals, the fragrance and then the sight of a small, walled citrus grove, only thrilled a heart that was already growing by the mile more thankfully amazed that each moment further into the desert we went, the more I should feel I was coming home. Yes, even then, while we were being physically carried to Him, mind stabbed heart with the question—"Even if I know who He is, will He want me?"

—I tell you His eyes are light-tunnels. I could not look out of Them. It is not a rational process to recognize the Saint.

—The basket I hold out to Him is full of holes. The Prashad of His giving of Himself fell through me everywhere. No doubt. What is recalled in words here is the substance of what I could catch, not what He gave . . . His giving is perfect. But I have found the Weaver Who will mend me.

The first time Sant Ji spoke to us He talked about the seed of a tree; you can't really imagine the grown tree coming from it, but as you nurture the seed, then bit by bit you see the tree. Well, my rational mind was trying for all it was worth to pin down the whole event of being there before I could even live into it. And this merciful task of the seed and tree let me off its hook. I knew that I needn't try to encompass rationally what was happening nor exert to believe any particular thing about Ajaib Singh. I just need be there.

"Your Father knows what you need before you ask him." That phrase returned again and again as the unburdening of one fear after another commenced and I found my questions ripened and then answered before I could even speak them out loud. Days with Him were an accruing of faith and gladness. He pulls that out of us. We don't have to strain to get it.

One afternoon towards the end of our stay there was darshan in Sant Ji's room which was particularly sweet. And afterwards, walking barefoot with Rob down a dust path between fields of green and golden wheat, I felt I'd come into an inheritance as the child of a King. There is a flowering vine, something like morning-glory, that winds itself around the wheat in those fields. And when we returned to the courtyard of the Ashram I asked Papu what its name was. He answered that there was no name for it, that it is just a wild grass. Then Babu Ji added that it was useless; and he further pointed to the wheat I'd carried back in my hand and said, "*That* is the wheat." All I could think of was that Sant Ji was the wheat, and I wanted to bind myself to Him like the nameless, useless grass bound itself to the wheat.

Once Sant Ji said He felt bad that Ronnie Yow and I had spent a lot of money to come there and had got nothing—meaning we had not received in-

itiation. But I was so stunned by this concept of "nothing" that I could only look at Him helplessly. No word in defense of His gifts came. Later He asked directly what were my feelings. I replied that I hadn't come for initiation, but to find out if He were my Father. And sitting there, allowed to feel towards Him the loving abandon of a very young child and the tenderness of an elder child, I really didn't care when I got initiated. Just whenever it was His Will. He said, "You are my real daughter. Real and true."

Another time: "I was happy to know that you serve;"—referring to the guest house at Sant Bani Ashram—"and you should go on serving as you have been." I was shaking my head as He was saying this, because in view of the *seva* extended to us I fell far, far short of loving service. It had become so clear that the sevadars, out of their love for Him, were serving us as though we were He. I told Sant Ji this, and added that I had not known seva before coming there, but that I hoped I would be able to do it now. He said, "That is why the Master brings you here—so you can learn."

I did come to feel a burden, but it was the burden of capacity, of the cup that had run over . . . such a little cup for so much Grace. On the morning we were to leave, I just felt numbed out. Kent was alone with Sant Ji in His room. All the men seemed to have dispersed. I was sitting on a rope bed, terrified that I might show no emotion when we left and appear utterly ungrateful. The women with their babies, and the girls also, padded softly into the room and soon began saying their names, one by one. I understood that I was to repeat each name after it was spoken. One woman sat down beside me, took my hand and began pressing it, turning it over and over. Slowly she twirled the gold wedding ring against my finger. I took the ring off and handed it to her and she passed it to the others. My hair was gently pulled back and it was noticed that I wore no earrings. Someone asked about a braided yarn bracelet on my wrist that had been a present from one of my daughters before we'd left on the trip, and one of the dear girls who sang the bhajans and who had asked about the 'bracelet' told the others its story . . .

Now, when I am remembering these moments the women return to me in a mood of doves, their voices like the soft calling of mourning doves – soothing and sweet to the heart. But it was a kind of agony then because I couldn't really speak with any one of them, and I was a dry ache of apprehension and unfeeling.

Suddenly Sant Ji came. Everyone materialized in the court-yard. The pictures were taken with our faces bathed in that dazzling sun. Still I felt nothing. I stood up, and He was looking at me. And that Glance did it: In the winter I had sung to my Master in the darkness of His absence

> How shall I know my Father?
> Were the whole earth over a desert,
> for Him alone would my soul rise
> to swim in the sparkling of His Eyes.
> He alone can draw from the dark well
> of this life
> the only prize worth having.

Now, at the moment of departure from His Presence, a pouring out of wordless tears . . . He had 'awakened that intuition in me that I begin to Love Him.'*

* O Thou Fount of Mercy, abide ever in my heart; and awaken that intuition in me that I begin to love Thee."
—Guru Arjan Dev Ji

SANT JI'S MESSAGE OF LOVE

(Continued from page 2)

Hukam. He disappears for those people who are not doing meditations, but He never disappears for those who are doing meditations and who are contacting Him.

Why do I always praise Master Kirpal?—and why am I so grateful to Him? Consider, that if one man loses some gold, and somebody helps him to get back the gold, with which he makes many buildings and does other things—whom do you think he will thank? Will he thank the gold?—or that man who helped him to get back his gold? In the same way, Master Kirpal Singh Ji united us back with the long-separated God; so I am always grateful to Him that He has united me and us with our long-separated God Who resides within. That is the reason why I am always grateful to Him. He is the King of Kings—He is the donor—He is full of mercy, and He came down to be kind to us and to love us. Even now He is showering mercy and blessings and grace while residing in Sach Khand. He is merciful to everybody. There are no differences—He is above the pairs of opposites.

We should also try to become beggars for His mercy and blessings, and we should become claimants of His mercy and blessings. How can we do that? We can do that when we obey Him, when we work according to His message and teachings, and when we do the practices regularly which He taught us when He initiated us.

Hazur used to say to leave a hundred urgent works for attending Satsang, and a thousand urgent works for meditating. He used to say that as our body needs food in order to work properly, in the same way our soul, which is hungry from ages and ages, also needs food. And meditation is the food of our soul. He used to say that unless you give food to your soul first, never give food to your body. First of all it is meditation. Miss the worldly affairs; but never miss meditation. So meditation is a necessity, and it is the first thing; it is most important. If we will not meditate, we will forget the message and teachings of our Master, we will be divided into parties, we will forget meditations, and we will forget Master's theme. And then lust, anger, greed, attachment and egoism will conquer us.

Swami Ji says that those who are not meditating are suffering. Sleep and laziness trouble them, and they fall in illusions. So those

who do not meditate become lazy and spiritually poor, and they fall in the great illusion. What is the great illusion? The great illusion is, that what we see according to our own level—that this is my community, this is my religion, I am a learned man, I am intelligent, etc.—is reality; but Saints see this world according to the other level, and they warn us that nothing will accompany you after you die. Not your wealth, not your health, not your sons, not your daughters, no skill will accompany you, not your intelligence—nothing will go with you. The only thing which will accompany you and help you is God-Satguru, Who has initiated you and taken responsibility for you—and Whom we are not loving today.

So Saints say that if you will not meditate, then these things will put pressure on you because lust, anger, greed, attachment, egoism, all lie within. Nothing comes from outside. If we manifest Naam within us, then "where there is Naam there will be no *kam*." *Kam* means "lust"—and where there is lust, you can't manifest Naam within you. As day and night cannot exist at one time in one place, similarly Naam and *kam* cannot exist at one time in one place. When the eagle of love comes, there is no place for the small birds of sins. So everybody has to meditate; meditation is the first thing. When we will meditate, love will be manifested automatically within us. And if love is manifested within us, since God is the form of love, God is manifested within us. Guru Gobind Singh said, "I am telling you a true thing—a true formula. Listen very carefully: Only those who love can know God."

So the first thing is meditation and the second thing is love for all. If we will meditate, love will start manifesting in us. Meditation and love go side by side. So as I told you first, when a disciple meets a fellow disciple, both should be happy seeing each other, and be respectful, and have love. And they should understand each other better than themselves. That only is *bhakti* or devotion. But the path of devotion is sharper than the razor's edge. We have to prepare ourselves to walk on that path. Moreover, that Path is thinner than the thickness of a hair. So we have to walk on that; we are supposed to walk on that; we have to prepare ourselves to walk on that Path. Where disciples do not have respect and love for fellow disciples, the Guru will not come.

The five dacoits will find no place where the Guru's love is there. There will be no party propaganda, and there will be no other evil

things. So we have to do meditation as our Master has taught us. We should be responsible for our own selves, and we should remember that our Satguru has told us to meditate; and we should meditate. Generally what do we do? We do not meditate, but start finding fault and commenting on others and abusing others. We do not save our own house which is being burnt by the fire of lust, anger, greed, attachment and egoism, but we are carrying water for others. So Kabir says that those who do not meditate but teach others will get sand in their mouths. One who is not worried about his own farm but is only concerned about others' courtyards—what will happen to him? His farm will be destroyed.

So what do we have to do? We should think as to whether we are protecting ourselves from all of these bad deeds or not. Are we being looted by them?—or are we protecting ourselves from them? Because the power of destruction is residing within us, and so is the power of survival. Badness is within us, and so is goodness. We have to select the path, either good or bad. If we want to meet the Satguru within, we have to choose the good path.

When Hazur Maharaj Baba Sawan Singh Ji left the body, people celebrated the "death" anniversary on the 2nd of April. But Mastana Ji—an advanced disciple of Baba Sawan Singh Ji (I had many chances to be with him and listen to his Satsangs)—what did he do? He celebrated the *birthday* of Baba Sawan Singh Ji, and he always used to say that Master never dies. Guru Nanak also said, "My Satguru is ever and ever. He never comes; He never goes. He is immortal; He is all pervading; He never dies." Mastana Ji had manifested Sawan Singh in him, and that was why he could say that Master never dies. He had manifested the truth within him. And when people celebrated the death anniversary, he celebrated the birthday. He used to say, "Why did you have a guru who is subjected to death and birth?" So now, as to those who are saying that Satguru Kirpal Singh has left, I truly say about them that they have never smelled the fragrance and were not aware of Master's power.

Master Kirpal—Who is the Master of all creation and Who was never in the cycle of birth and death—is even now residing in the higher planes. Those who are approaching Him are receiving His message and seeing Him. But those who are not approaching Him are wandering here and there and asking others. This is not a matter of asking; it is a matter of experience. Those who go to higher planes

are aware of every Satsangi's position in meditation. One who is standing on a high place sees everything. There is no necessity for asking a wrestler, "Are you stronger than me?" Wrestlers know the wrestlers; Saints know the Saints. One who reaches Sach Khand knows how far the other goes; but those who are not going in, how can they know who has attained what position? If by asking they believe somebody for a while, then after a few days they do not believe because of the mind. Mind is there for deceiving. That is why Saints say, "Go in and look within. Manifest the Shabd Naam within you—that Shabd which you can't describe in words. It is a matter of experience and seeing, so *go in.*"

Kabir says that Shabd is not body; it is bodyless; it cannot be described in words. Go in and see that Shabd working in your body. That is why Saints and Masters give us Simran, so that we can rise above our body and reach up to that bodyless Shabd. Unless one rises above this body, and Master's body, he can never progress because neither the Guru's body is going to live forever, nor the disciple's body is going to live forever.

In reality, what is the form of the disciple? The soul is the real disciple—not the body—and Shabd is the only Guru. The Guru is not the body; moreover, the disciple is not the body. Our soul is the disciple of the Shabd which is working in the Saints, and that is our real Guru. When seers and sages asked Guru Nanak, "Who is your Guru?", Guru Nanak replied, "My Guru is Shabd. My soul is the disciple of the *Dhun* [Sound] which is coming from Sach Khand." When our soul wakes up and Shabd is manifested—at that time every problem is settled within, and there are no questions whether our Guru is Shabd or Naam, or whether our Guru is body, or whether the Power which is never involved in birth and death is our Guru.

Kabir says that we have the body of the Guru, but we have not realized the real Shabd Guru. We are attached to the body, and as long as that body remains in front of us we say, "Yes, Sir, Yes, Sir—Our Master, our Master," but as soon as that body goes away from us we wander here and there and go astray. What was required at that time? As long as that body was in front of us we should have taken His help to improve ourselves, to remove our shortcomings; but at that time we were never worried about meditation and progressing. And now when that body has left—that body has gone away—we go astray of the Path which was shown by Him. During

this time also we are not seeking somebody's help to benefit ourselves. Even now those who have manifested Kirpal in them advise us to love each other and manifest the Truth in ourselves. Even now we can progress on the Path which was shown by our Master. Even now we can reach the goal if we seek somebody's help who is perfect.

Perfect Saints who have earned their meditation will never say, "I am your Guru," but on the contrary they will fill us with the love of Master Kirpal. They are here only to help us remember and to fill us with Master Kirpal's love. When Baba Sawan Singh Ji left his body—this is a well-known fact you may be aware of—when he left his body, at that time those who loved and came to Kirpal Singh received the same love and were benefited by Him because He was a true disciple—a perfect Saint. He had love for and was always praising His Master, Baba Sawan Singh. Accordingly, those who went to Mastana Ji also received love and were also benefited. So Kabir says, "The Guru says to respect the Saints, and Saints say to worship the Guru. Living in the company of the Saints you can go up to *Agam*" (the plane above Sach Khand; the unreachable plane). A Saint says this because he has experienced that and has manifested his Guru within. He says that this is his personal experience, and we should also try and go ahead. He inspires us. We can understand him as our brother, friend, or whatever relation you feel like giving him; but he will never become your Guru.

No Saint up to now has come into this world saying that he is a Guru. Perfect Saints will never say, "I am your Guru, or Master, or Pir." Our Hazur, Master Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj, always used to say, "Understand me as your brother, your friend"—but He never said, "I am the Guru."

So now we should take benefit from any perfect Saint who has earned meditation and who is immersed in the love of Kirpal. He is intoxicated with Kirpal's love, and we can also gain something from him: we can also take a drop of love from him. The only thing is that we are not to understand him as our Guru. And moreover he will never become your Guru, but he is your true servant. He is the server of the Sangat. Hazur told me, "You have to understand yourself as a server of the Sangat—a shoe-wiper of the Sangat." He told me that if we will become more humble, then Master will shower more grace on us, because water will always flow down to the lowest place; it will never remain on the high place. Guru Nanak also

said, "Those who will become humble will get more and will carry more. The branch of a tree which carries the most fruit bows down." In the same way a perfect Saint will never understand himself as great, but shows himself as a servant—and there is no doubt that he is the true *sevadar*. He helps us as a true *sevadar*, and helps us to remember the love which we have forgotten.

So we should take benefit of his company. All of us should sit together and love each other and remember our Master Satguru Kirpal Who is waiting even now to receive us in Sach Khand. And I tell you truly that even now, even today, if any disciple vacates the nine openings and rises above the outgoing faculties and reaches behind and between the two eyebrows, he will *see* how Hazur is working there—how Hazur is present there.

If we say that we will not go to school and that the teacher should do our work—how is that possible? It is the student's duty to go to school, and after that it is the schoolmaster's duty to teach him. Master will never come in the nine openings, so you have to vacate the nine openings and reach the place which you are shown by the Master—behind and between the two eyebrows. So it is the duty of the disciple to reach that place behind the two eyebrows after controlling the outgoing faculties. There you will see how Master is working.

So everybody has to meditate and they should earn their meditation—Shabd Naam—and always feel Master Kirpal's presence at every place. See Him in all; He is sitting in all. Thank you.

Dass Ajaib Singh

AJAIB SINGH